Joshua and Judges:

A Sociological Analysis of Hebrew Biblical War Narrative in its Ancient Near Eastern Context



D.Phil Thesis and Abstracts

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This thesis is dedicated to my biggest supporter and proudest friend Darren Taylor who passed away on May 16, 2016. You are dearly missed.

Trevor Pomeroy

Abstract

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Descriptions of warfare persist throughout the Hebrew Bible as well in the extra-biblical texts from the ancient Near East. This thesis seeks to discern what is common among ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, and what is distinctive about the accounts of warfare in the books of Joshua and Judges. This research aims to address the question: What purposes within the context of warfare in the ancient Near East, do warfare accounts fulfill and might the accounts of warfare in Joshua and Judges serve a similar function? While others have examined the Hebrew texts concerning conquest and warfare the purpose of such scholarship has often been to gain an ethical understanding of the texts by answering the question: How could God (whether as a literary figure in the text, or as an actual being) command or allow the violence described in the Hebrew Bible? This thesis argues, however, that the texts ought first to be understood for what they are, that is war narrative, and within their wider purpose *qua* war narrative. While others have sought to understand biblical accounts of warfare in their ancient Near Eastern context, these studies lacked the benefit of current sociological theory concerning the emergence of warfare. This thesis brings current sociological insights into the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare, to bear on the ancient Near Eastern texts and the books of Joshua and Judges. In doing so, this thesis illustrates that there are persistent themes that run throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts. These themes are equally present in the books of Joshua and Judges and they appear to reflect and contribute to the social, ideological, and military forces necessary for the achievement of ancient Israelite military goals.

Long Abstract

1. Introduction

The introduction provides this thesis' central argument and an overview of how the argument will be presented. This thesis argues that ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts reflect and, therefore, reinforce the sociological factors that are essential if large-scale organised violence (i.e. warfare) is to emerge among a distinct group. The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate that the warfare accounts found in the books of Joshua and Judges fortify the same sociological factors, which contribute to military efficacy, as the warfare accounts of their ancient Near Eastern counterparts.

2. Previous Approaches to the Hebrew Biblical Texts That Describe Warfare

This chapter constitutes the literature review and examines the previous approaches to the texts, which describe warfare in the books Joshua and Judges. A large portion of the review is dedicated to a consideration of attempts to understand the texts from the perspective of ethics. That is, most scholars who express an interest in warfare in the Hebrew Bible seek to write an account which, through varying degrees of contextualisation, makes the harrowing accounts congruent with current Christian, Jewish, or secular ethical perspectives. Such ethical approaches to understanding these texts do not, and cannot, serve as a hermeneutical key to appreciating the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible because they fail to contextualize the texts concerning warfare within the conceptions of warfare held by ancient Near Eastern peoples, and they fail to appreciate the way that warfare overturns normative cultural taboos.

Here, contextual and historical approaches are also addressed. Many scholars have placed the question of ethics aside and sought to understand the texts in their ancient Near Eastern context via comparison and contrast with texts which describe warfare from the Israelites' ancient Near Eastern counterparts. This way of engaging with the texts has been adopted in this thesis, however, it is not desirable that this thesis becomes merely an exercise in discerning what is held in common, and what is distinct about warfare accounts in the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, insights from the sociology of warfare are introduced in order to give context to the interpretation of the data concerning ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those within Joshua and Judges, which is the focus of this thesis.

3. The Sociology of Warfare

This chapter constitutes this thesis' section on methodology. Herein will be discussed insights from sociology concerning the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare. A brief review of the development of this largely overlooked area within sociology will be discussed, including an examination of conflicting views regarding the emergence of violent behaviour among human beings. This will then lead to a discussion of current sociological insights into those factors required if human beings are to act effectively as an organised fighting unit capable of killing (that is, despite moral apprehension) and defeating an opposing force. In effect, knowledge concerning the sociological underpinnings (as opposed to 'forces')

necessary for the emergence of warfare forms a hermeneutic that accommodates the data within ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those of the Hebrew Bible. Other approaches, including attempts to understand the texts from an ethical view, usually anachronistically, leave numerous outlying elements which then need to be 'explained' after the fact. This thesis, however, demonstrates that ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those in Joshua and Judges, reinforce those sociological underpinnings and, therefore, contribute to the military efficacy of their respective audiences.

This chapter includes an examination of the way that the development of the sociological foundations of organised violence are on display within ancient Near Eastern sources. This addresses potential problems such as anachronism concerning sociological analysis of ancient Near Eastern texts. Furthermore, it illustrates the processual nature of the sociological factors in question.

4. The Sociology of Warfare and the Hebrew Bible

This chapter illustrates the development of the sociological underpinnings (again, not 'forces' or 'causes') of organised violence within the narrative arch of the Hebrew Bible. The texts from Exodus to Deuteronomy reveal the same processual development of the sociological underpinnings among the Israelites, as that of their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. That is, it parallels the discussion concerning the development of the same sociological factors within the ancient Near East more generally, which were described in the previous chapter.

5. The Divine Mandate and the Kingship of YHWH

This chapter considers, arguably, the most obvious of themes, that is, the divine mandate to wage warfare, which serves to justify, morally, the violence to be carried out. Here, Assyrian, Hittite and Egyptian examples are discussed before an examination of the same theme within the books of Joshua and Judges. This discussion leads inevitably to a consideration of kingship in the ancient Near East and the distinctness of the kingship of YHWH as a theme in the books of Joshua and Judges. It becomes apparent that YHWH's kingship is an essential component of Israel's unique manifestation of the sociological factors under consideration. YHWH's kingship is a theme that runs throughout Joshua and Judges, but its relationship to Israel's military efficacy (that is to the narrative's audience) appears to have gone overlooked in the scholarship concerning these texts. To clarify, this thesis considers the role of the narrative rather than any purported history in the text. That is, this thesis is not attempting to prove that Israel, as described in Joshua and Judges, actually possessed the sociological factors in question, or that the warfare described was actually carried out. Rather, the concern of this thesis is to reveal the presence of these sociological underpinnings within the text. It argues that to the extent that these factors are reflected in the text they are reinforced amongst the text's intended audience to the benefit of Israel militarily. Whether they are a reflection of the presence of these factors within an historical pre-monarchic Israel requires delving into issues of dating and the delineation of sources in Joshua and Judges, which, due to the immensity of the task and the disagreements among scholars, must be left for a separate project. Although, it should be stated that this thesis will certainly have repercussions in this area.

6. Divine Assistance in Battle and Obedience

This chapter illustrates the ubiquitous nature of this theme throughout the ancient Near East, which has been discussed in other scholarship. What has not been elucidated, however, is the relationship between assistance in battle, or even the sole waging of warfare by a god, and obedience as a requirement if such assistance is to be available. This chapter reveals the way that obedience to a king (in this case YHWH) in the books of Joshua and Judges is particularly necessary if there is to be divine assistance in battle. It further argues that obedience, even to laws that are not immediately seen as military, is not just spiritual piety, but is essential to the entire hierarchy of authority as well as the ideology which upholds it. It is via the theme of divine assistance in battle that the writers/redactors of Joshua and Judges express the necessity of obedience. Such obedience, it is argued, is essential to Israel's hierarchy of authority and the ideology that underscores it; and, therefore, to Israel's capacity to wage war.

7. Fear and the Ban

Fear is a common theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts and the Hebrew Bible's accounts of warfare are no exception. The fear that is on display in the narratives of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts both emboldens those who constitute the group from which the narratives come (whether Hittite, Assyrian or Egyptian) but also casts fear into the hearts of any potential enemies. That is, those who are exposed to the bas-reliefs, inscriptions and stelae which convey messages meant to control a defeated populace, or terrify a group which may come under attack. The same is on display in Hebrew narrative described in Joshua and Judges. Similar to the two preceding themes, this theme also reinforces both the social organisation, including the hierarchy of authority, and the ideology (largely by way of the texts which describe the ban) necessary to uphold the social structure necessary to be successful militarily. This chapter illustrates the necessity of violence in a way that is 'performative' if it is to have the desired terrifying effect. Included within such performative violence is the way that a defeated populace is treated and put on bold arrogant display in order to terrify potential enemies. Of particular ideological consequence is the treatment of defeated ancient Near Eastern kings, something which YHWH is conspicuously immune from. Such fear is not merely meant to terrorize potential enemies and embolden soldiers within the in-group. Rather, it is also a means of reminding those exposed to such warfare accounts of the hierarchy in which they play a committed role, and the ideology (e.g. the divinely imbued authority of a king or judge), which sustains the social structure essential to Israel's military survival.

8. Demonization of the Enemy

This chapter is particularly dependent upon a clear understanding of the contents of chapter three. One should already be aware of the difficulty and, therefore, the necessity of the sociological elements necessary in order to turn human beings into organised groups of disciplined killers. An essential component if an ideology is going to lead to, or encourage, violence is the belief that one's enemies are evil. The divine mandate, described in detail in chapter five, is the underscoring ideological

component necessary if a social organisation is to believe their cause is just. Its antithesis means precisely that the enemy's is unjust. However, if this is to be true, then it necessarily follows that the enemy is evil. Furthermore, contrary to the opinion of many, it is demonstrable (again, this is discussed in detail in chapter three) that human beings are inefficient and unmotivated killers, that is, without a potent legitimizing ideology and an efficient bureaucracy of coercion human beings do not kill in a fashion which could be called warfare (i.e. in large-scale organised way). This illustrates that demonization of the enemy is an essential aspect of such potent legitimizing ideologies, describes its presence throughout the ancient Near East and within the books of Joshua and Judges. It ought to be noted, again, that this thesis is discussing narrative and no attempt is made to either prove the existence of an actual invasion of Canaan, nor to discern whether the Canaanites could actually be described as morally inferior to Israel or not. That is, it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that the Israelites were no different, morally, from their ancient Near Eastern counterparts; rather, it illustrates the way that the same narrative theme is present.

9. The Destruction, Burning and Cursing of Conquered Cities

Cities were the places that a group's ideology and social organisation were most on display, and where a group's ideology was most proliferated—from the central temples of the city-states throughout a group's entire social organisation. Along with their obvious outward military structures and defenses, they were the space wherein a populace's ideology—the same ideology essential to their capacity to fight—was most manifest. Therefore, urbicide is a central component of the defeat of a given enemy. Included within such defeats are descriptions of city walls and structures, including their burning. The burning of defeated cities was essential as it melted the bricks that possessed inscriptions and reliefs conveying the ideology of a defeated people. Central to such defeat was the destruction of temples along with the destruction and removal of the statues of the gods of given city-states.

This chapter illustrates the ubiquity of this theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including the cursing of destroyed cities meant to keep defeated people from rebuilding them. It then describes the presence of the same theme throughout the books of Joshua and Judges. It is essential to the argument of this thesis as it is urbicide which particularly betrays the concern with the destruction of, not just a given populace, but their respective ideology upon which their hierarchy of authority and social structure depend. That is, it most aptly illustrates the way that the factors which underscore a group's capacity for organised violence are deliberately attacked and undermined throughout the ancient Near East.

10. Conclusion

This chapter will review the argument throughout while highlighting the insights derived from applying this thesis' specific methodology concerning the sociology of warfare. Included in these insights are the way that divine assistance as a narrative theme reinforces obedience; the relationship between belief in YHWH's kingship, Israel's social hierarchy, and Israel's military efficacy; the connection between urbicide and ideological destruction; the unique nature of the Ark of the Covenant relative to the statues of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts towards the protection of Israel's ideology, and the stirring of fear in their enemies; the way that the destruction of Jericho's wall exhibits YHWH's kingship; and the role of,

specifically, performative violence in the maintenance of Israel's ideology and social organisation to the benefit of Israel's military effectiveness.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are in accordance with the *SBL Handbook of Style*:

ACEBT	*Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en bijbelse Theologie*
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ARAB	*Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia.* Daniel David Luckenbill. 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926–1927. Repr., New York: Greenwood, 1968)
ARI	*Assyrian Royal Inscriptions.* Albert K. Grayson. 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1972–1976)
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006)
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research* (formerly *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*)
Chm	*Churchman*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
Int	*Interpretation*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TUAT	*Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments.* Edited by Otto Kaiser (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1984)
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WW	*Word and World*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebräistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

1. Introduction

The hermeneutical key by which to properly understand texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible is warfare itself; and what constitutes the waging of successful warfare in the Ancient Near East. Appreciating descriptions of war, which occur in the Hebrew Bible, through a war-narrative lens is a matter of first importance, even while appreciating that there are other approaches to understanding the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible. We need to understand the underlying sociological components of war in order to highlight those elements which constitute war narrative. War generates a culture all its own with its own set of norms that are plainly distinct from what might be considered everyday reality. For this reason attempts to understand (or even worse, to justify) war narrative ethically, or as part of a wider literary and theological context, have always fallen short and/or met some level of inadequacy.

It is essential to understand the sociological underpinnings of warfare in order fully to appreciate the normative elements of ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts. After a discussion of the sociology of warfare we will better be able to understand why war narratives were essential to ancient Near Eastern military projects and why they were distinct. That is, warfare is a liminal state rather than the norm, the typical rules, which govern daily praxis, are often overturned; activities, which are taboo, become demanded. Because the typical conventions of a culture or society are overturned during times of war, the heuristic key to understanding war narrative can only *be* war.

The second chapter of this thesis will examine the ways that the violent texts within the Hebrew Bible have been approached in the past. These approaches have

been dominated by attempts to understand the texts ethically, that is, to reconcile stories, such as those in Joshua and Judges, with mainstream Christian and Jewish values. Some scholars, however, have made efforts to contextualize Hebrew Biblical warfare accounts within those of the ancient Near East more generally. That said, the shortfall of all of these approaches, is that none have had the benefit of current sociological insights concerning the emergence of organized violence.

The third chapter of this thesis will address the sociology of warfare, as it is warfare itself which often forms the context from which these narratives appear. Here, the sociological factors that underlie the emergence of organised violence (i.e. warfare) will be delineated and discussed.[1] This will include a discussion of current sociological insights into those factors required if human beings are to act effectively as an organised fighting unit capable of killing (that is, despite moral apprehension) and defeating an opposing force. In effect, knowledge concerning the sociological underpinnings (as opposed to 'forces') necessary for the emergence of warfare forms a hermeneutic that accommodates the data within ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those of the Hebrew Bible. Other approaches, including attempts to understand the texts from an ethical view, usually anachronistically, leave numerous outlying elements which then need to be 'explained' after the fact. This thesis, however, demonstrates that ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those in Joshua and Judges, reinforce those sociological underpinnings and, therefore, contribute to the military efficacy of their respective audiences. This chapter includes an examination of the way in which the development of the sociological foundations of organised violence are on display within ancient Near Eastern sources. This is meant to offset anticipated arguments which suggest that applying current

[1] Considerable attention is given to a working definition of 'war' in Chapter Three. The reader will see that how one defines war is at the centre of the disagreements amongst historians, sociologists, and sociobiologists particularly.

sociological insights to ancient Near Eastern evidence is anachronistic. Furthermore, it illustrates the processual nature of the sociological factors in question.

Chapter four will illustrate the incorporation of elements of statehood within Israel, which are required, according to the sociology of warfare, if large-scale organised violence is to emerge. This chapter outlines the development of the sociological underpinnings (again, not 'forces' or 'causes') of organised violence within the narrative arc of the Hebrew Bible. This thesis will show that the texts from Exodus to Deuteronomy reveal the same processual development of the sociological underpinnings among the Israelites as that of their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. It parallels the discussion concerning the development of the same sociological factors within the ancient Near East more generally, which are described in Chapter Three. Appreciating the way that the narrative reflects reality *vis-à-vis* the sociology of warfare is important because it helps us to understand the value of narrative in glorifying and maintaining the required social underpinnings if a group is to be effective militarily.

Chapter five, concerning the divine mandate and the kingship of YHWH, considers the most central theme which serves to justify, morally, the violence to be carried out. Here Assyrian, Hittite, and Egyptian examples are discussed before an examination of the same theme within the books of Joshua and Judges. This discussion leads inevitably to a consideration of kingship in the ancient Near East and the uniqueness of the kingship of YHWH as a theme in the books of Joshua and Judges. It becomes apparent that YHWH's kingship is an essential component of Israel's unique manifestation of the sociological factors under consideration. Although YHWH's kingship is a theme that runs throughout Joshua and Judges its relationship to Israel's military efficacy (that is to the narrative's audience) appears to

have gone overlooked in the scholarship concerning these texts. To clarify, this thesis considers the role of the narrative rather than any purported history in the text. That is, this thesis is not attempting to prove that Israel, as described in Joshua and Judges, actually possessed the sociological factors in question, or that the warfare described was actually carried out. Rather, the concern of this thesis is to reveal the presence of these sociological underpinnings within the text. It argues that to the extent that these factors are reflected in the text they are reinforced amongst the text's intended audience to the benefit of Israel militarily. Whether they are a reflection of the presence of these factors within an historical pre-monarchic Israel requires delving into issues of dating and the delineation of sources in Joshua and Judges, which, due to the immensity of the task and the disagreements among scholars, must be left for a separate project. Although, it should be stated that this thesis will certainly have repercussions in this area.

The sixth chapter of this thesis discusses both divine assistance in battle and its relationship to obedience. It illustrates the ubiquitous nature of this theme throughout the ancient Near East, which has been discussed in other scholarship. What has not been elucidated, however, is the relationship between assistance in battle, or even the sole waging of warfare by a god, and obedience as a requirement if such assistance is to be available. This chapter reveals the way in which obedience to a king (in this case YHWH) in the books of Joshua and Judges is particularly necessary if there is to be divine assistance in battle. It further argues that obedience, even to laws which are not immediately seen as military, is not mere spiritual piety, but is essential to the entire hierarchy of authority as well as the ideology which upholds it. It is via the theme of divine assistance in battle that the writers/redactors of Joshua and Judges express the necessity of obedience. Such obedience, it is argued, is

essential to Israel's hierarchy of authority and the ideology that underscores it; and, therefore, to Israel's capacity to wage war.

Fear is a common theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts and the Hebrew Bible's accounts of warfare are no exception. Therefore, fear is the focus of the seventh chapter of this thesis. The fear, which is on display in the narratives of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts, emboldens those who constitute the group from which the narratives come (whether Hittite, Assyrian or Egyptian) and also impacts potential enemies; that is, those who are exposed to the bas-reliefs, inscriptions, and stelae which convey messages meant to control a defeated populace, or terrify a group which may come under attack. The same is on display in Hebrew narrative described in Joshua and Judges. Similar to the two preceding themes, this theme also reinforces both the social organisation, including the hierarchy of authority, and the ideology (largely by way of the texts which describe the ban) necessary to uphold the social structure required to be successful militarily. This chapter illustrates the necessity of 'performative' violence if it is to have the desired terrifying effect. Included within such performative violence is the way in which a defeated populace is treated and put on bold and arrogant display in order to terrify potential enemies. Of particular ideological consequence is the treatment of defeated ancient Near Eastern kings, something that YHWH is conspicuously immune from. Such fear is not merely meant to terrorize potential enemies and embolden soldiers within the in-group. Rather, it is also a means of reminding those exposed to such warfare accounts of the hierarchy in which they play a committed role, and the ideology (e.g. the divinely imbued authority of a king or judge), which sustains the social structure essential to Israel's military survival.

Chapter eight concerns demonization of enemies and is particularly dependent upon a clear understanding of the contents of chapter three. One should already be aware of the difficulty and, therefore, the necessity of the sociological elements necessary in order to turn human beings into organised groups of disciplined killers. An essential component if an ideology is going to lead to, or encourage, violence is the belief that one's enemies are evil. The divine mandate, described in detail in chapter five, is the underscoring ideological component necessary if a social organisation is to believe their cause is just. Its antithesis means precisely that the enemy's cause is unjust. However, if this is to be true, then it necessarily follows that the enemy is evil. Furthermore, contrary to the opinion of many, it is demonstrable (again, this is discussed in detail in chapter three) that human beings are inefficient and unmotivated killers, that is, without a potent legitimizing ideology and an efficient bureaucracy of coercion human beings do not kill in a fashion which could be called warfare (i.e., in large-scale organised way). This chapter illustrates that demonization of the enemy is an essential aspect of such potent legitimizing ideologies, and describes its presence throughout the ancient Near East and within the books of Joshua and Judges. It ought to be noted, again, that this thesis is discussing narrative and no attempt is made to either prove the existence of an actual invasion of Canaan, nor to discern whether the Canaanites could actually be described as morally inferior to Israel or not. That is, it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that the Israelites were no different, morally, from their ancient Near Eastern counterparts; rather, it illustrates the way in which the same narrative theme is present.

The destruction, burning and cursing of conquered cities is discussed in chapter nine. Cities were the places in which a group's ideology and social organisation were most prominently displayed, and where a group's ideology was

most proliferated—from the central temples of the city-states throughout a group's entire social organisation. Along with their obvious outward military structures and defenses, they were the space wherein a populace's ideology—the same ideology essential to their capacity to fight—was most manifest. Therefore, urbicide is a central component of the defeat of a given enemy. Included within such defeats are descriptions of city walls and structures, including their burning. The burning of defeated cities was essential as it melted the bricks that possessed inscriptions and reliefs conveying the ideology of a defeated people. Central to such defeat was the destruction of temples along with the destruction and removal of the statues of the gods of given city-states. This chapter illustrates the ubiquity of this theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including the cursing of destroyed cities meant to keep defeated people from rebuilding them. It then describes the presence of the same theme throughout the books of Joshua and Judges. It is essential to the argument of this thesis as it is urbicide, which particularly betrays the concern with the destruction of, not just a given populace, but also their respective ideology upon which their hierarchy of authority and social structure depend. That is, it most aptly illustrates the way that the factors which underscore a group's capacity for organised violence are deliberately attacked and undermined as a matter of course throughout the ancient Near East.

Chapter ten is the concluding chapter of this thesis and it will review the argument throughout while highlighting the insights derived from applying this thesis' specific methodology concerning the sociology of warfare. Included in these insights are the way that divine assistance as a narrative theme reinforces obedience; the relationship between belief in YHWH's kingship, Israel's social hierarchy, and Israel's military efficacy; the connection between urbicide and ideological

destruction; the unique nature of the Ark of the Covenant relative to the statues of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts towards the protection of Israel's ideology, and the stirring of fear in their enemies; the way that the destruction of Jericho's wall exhibits YHWH's kingship; and the role of, specifically, performative violence in the maintenance of Israel's ideology and social organisation to the benefit of Israel's military effectiveness.

2. Previous Approaches to the Hebrew Biblical Texts that Describe Warfare

In this chapter we will examine the previous approaches to the texts, which describe warfare in the books Joshua and Judges. A large portion of the review will be dedicated to a consideration of attempts to understand the texts from the perspective of ethics. As will be demonstrated, most scholars who express an interest in warfare in the Hebrew Bible seek to write an account, which through varying degrees of contextualisation makes the harrowing accounts congruent with current Christian, Jewish, or secular ethics. Such ethical approaches to understanding these texts do not, and cannot, serve as a hermeneutical key to appreciating the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible because they fail to contextualize the texts concerning warfare within the conceptions of warfare held by ancient Near Eastern peoples, and they fail to appreciate the way in which warfare overturns normative cultural taboos.

This chapter also addresses contextual approaches. Many scholars have placed the question of ethics aside and sought to understand the texts in their ancient Near Eastern context via comparison and contrast with texts that describe warfare from the Israelites' ancient Near Eastern counterparts. This way of engaging with the texts has been adopted by this thesis, but it is not desirable that this thesis becomes merely an exercise in discerning what is held in common, and what is distinct about warfare accounts in the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, insights from the sociology of warfare are introduced in order to give context to the interpretation of the data concerning ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those within Joshua and Judges, which is the focus of this thesis.

2.1. Attempts to Understand the Texts from the Perspective of Ethics

Exploring the ethics of the warfare episodes in the Hebrew Bible, particularly when God is portrayed explicitly commanding violence, is certainly warranted. Especially when we consider how accounts of warfare have been used historically to justify particular conflicts. To conduct such an examination properly, however, one must appreciate the texts and their purpose amongst the groups in which they are created. This requires, first and foremost, an immersion into the 'intellectual framework'[2] of the ancient Near East, and an appreciation of the way that warfare is a liminal state that generates exceptions to normative taboos.[3]

Six distinct approaches to understand the violent texts in the Hebrew Bible have been outlined by Davies: (1) the evolutionary approach; (2) the cultural relativists' approach; (3) the canon-within-a-canon approach; (4) the holistic approach; (5) the paradigmatic approach; and (6) the reader-response approach.[4]

According to Davies, the *Evolutionary Approach*, a view held by nineteenth century scholars such as Arnold and Maurice,[5] argues that:

> The more primitive concepts of Israel's early period gave way, in time, to more advanced and cultured ideas as God's people gradually developed their moral perception and felt their way on matters of religious and ethical import.[6]

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[2] Carly L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 6.

[3] This failure to contextualize the violent texts in the Hebrew Bible appropriately is described by Crouch:

> The tendency in biblical scholarship (and even ancient Near Eastern scholarship, in which the personal attachment tends to be less) to recoil in disgust at the more violent descriptions of war has usually aborted prematurely any attempt to explain or understand these acts in their own context. Where warfare is concerned, scholars seem to have observed reports of violence with total disregard for context, apparently presuming that ancient peoples engaged in violent practices despite consciously and knowingly considering them immoral. Ibid.

Indeed, this is the case, and is a reflection of the fact that war is *de facto* deemed immoral in modernity, particularly after the devastating wars of the 20th century. In the past, however, and certainly in the ancient Near East, war was just another part of life, neither moral nor immoral, but something that was deemed necessary at times. That is, war, could be just, or unjust, depending on the circumstances.

[4] Eryl W. Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible: An Examination of Some Proposed Solutions,' *CurBR* 3 (2005): 197-228.

[5] T. Arnold, *Sermons* II, 3rd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1844); F.D. Maurice, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1841).

Here, the argument is that the morality of the Israelites progressed, whereas the Hebrew biblical texts that describe violence and warfare being commanded by God reflect an early, less developed understanding of God and morality. This view, however, has problems on two fronts. The first is that it presumes a limitation of sorts upon God's capacity to reveal his will for Israel regarding what is just. This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the view that the precepts of YHWH are right, and replaces it with the view that the precepts of YHWH are right 'for now'. One may argue that YHWH's commands to wage war do not fall under what would be considered precepts *per se*, but to accept that view would be to forget Deuteronomy 20, wherein war, and indeed the ban, are explicitly commanded. The second issue with the evolutionary approach is that it fails to consider how the text functions in the context within which it was written and was promulgated. That is, it presumes a current and, therefore, more evolved outlook and thus is not able to avoid anachronistic judgments regarding the text.

The second approach outlined by Davies is what he calls the *Cultural Relativist's Approach*, which is a view upheld and displayed in the works of Hobbs and Mason.[7] Here, Davies tells us that it is argued that 'the texts of the Hebrew Bible evolved out of a particular historical, social and cultural situation and must be understood in the context of the society for which they were written'.[8] Indeed, this is certainly true, however, it is still an attempt to understand the texts ethically, and anachronistically. That is, the word 'relativist' implies a concern with ethics that implicitly suggests that the texts exhibit behaviour that is immoral in our own context, but moral in its 'original' context, whatever that may be. In this way, it is not so

[6] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 200.
[7] T.R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989); R. Mason, *Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1997).
[8] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 205.

different from the evolutionary approach. That said, an appreciation of the texts in their own historical, social, and cultural context is certainly necessary for effective exegesis.

There is another approach outlined by Davies, which he calls the *Canon-within-a-Canon Approach*, and is a view characteristic of Wright and Dunn.[9] In this view, one

> recognizes that we are bound to find in the Hebrew Bible material that we will regard as offensive or unpalatable, and it invites us to sift through the biblical texts in search of what we may find useful and valuable as a source of ethical guidance in our lives.[10]

Here, it is maintained that the reader should pick and choose which texts are appropriate for moral imitation. Scholars like Dunn maintain that this is what individuals and religious traditions do anyhow. He says, 'the fact is, like it or not, that we each one individually, and as part of a particular tradition, work with what amounts to a canon within the canon in order to justify the distinctive emphases of that tradition'.[11] There are two issues that this view raises. The first is an ethical one, that is, given that people pick and choose which texts they wish to imitate, that it is up to individuals and traditions to pick whichever they like. This, given the violence of particular texts, is clearly problematic. The second issue is that this view presumes that the Hebrew Bible is a collection of texts *meant* for moral imitation. This may be one aspect of the Hebrew Bible, however, we know that the Bible is full of characters that are 'moral', 'immoral', or 'sinful', disobedient and obedient in varying degrees. In any case, this view is not primarily concerned with any context other than one's own, which is clearly problematic when it comes to gaining a proper appreciation of particular texts.

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[9] G.E. Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); James D.G. Dunn, 'The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture,' *Chm* 96 (1982): 104-122, 201-225.

[10] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 208.

[11] Dunn, 'The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture,' 115.

Similarly, the *Holistic Approach* is the opposite of the Canon-within-a-Canon Approach. This is a view, maintained by Childs, Sanders and McEntire, which says that rather than looking for ethical guidance from particular books of the bible, instead one should consider the ethical perspective of the Hebrew Bible as a whole.[12] That is, we should 'not try to elicit ethical norms from isolated texts but look, rather, at the broader picture and go by the general impression of the biblical message as a whole.'[13] Perhaps a fair enough view when it comes to eliciting ethics and values from the Hebrew Bible, however, it is also a view which limits one's scope from incorporating an adequate appreciation of the more challenging books of the Hebrew Bible. That is, whether it intends to or not, this view encourages one not to engage deeply with the texts concerning warfare and violence in the Hebrew Bible.

The next approach sounds very much like the Holistic approach just described, however, rather than being focused upon the text, the *Paradigmatic Approach* focuses on ethics. Here, it is maintained that one should not be concerned with the details of belief and practice outlined in the Hebrew Bible but, rather, with the 'broad, general principles that guide us in our ethical decisions-making'.[14] Craigie and Kaiser uphold this view.[15] However, for reasons similar to the Holistic Approach this view is problematic so far as it advocates that one ignore specific texts, or consider them less valid, somehow, than others, and inadvertently prompts readers to avoid complicated issues and difficult texts such as YHWH's command to kill the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 20:16-20).

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[12] B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (London: SCM Press, 1985); J.A. Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); and Mark McEntire, *The Blood of Abel: The Violent Plot in the Hebrew Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999).

[13] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 212.

[14] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 215.

[15] Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); W.C. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983).

Finally, the *Reader-Response Approach* maintains that 'readers of literature have a duty to converse and interact with the text, and that literary compositions must be read in an openly critical, rather than in a passively receptive, way'.[16] This is the view expressed by Niditch.[17] Here,

> instead of tacitly accepting the standards of judgment established in the text and capitulating uncritically to its demands, they [i.e. the readers] must be prepared to challenge its assumptions, question its insights, and (if necessary) discredit its claims.[18]

That is, critical engagement with the text is necessary and that it is appropriate to engage critically with the text on ethical issues. Niditch accepts this view but adds that 'contextualization and identification' are recommended.[19] That is, the reader-response approach does not necessarily presume that one read texts and engage with them without an appreciation of their context.

All of these approaches, however, may be much ado about nothing. This is because the narratives concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible are describing events purported to have taken place in the past. They are not *prescriptive* in nature. That is, they are not texts that are written so as to tell the reader/hearer what to do. The exception to this is Deuteronomy 20, which *is* prescriptive (also not a narrative, but a description of Israel's rules of engagement). However, it is clearly referring to the conquest of the land of Canaan specifically and, therefore, lacks any prescriptive force outside of that context. That said, it has to be admitted that the warfare accounts in the

[16] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 218-219. This is the approach utilized by Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Also cited in Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 222.

[17] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*.

[18] Davies, 'The Morally Dubious Passages of the Hebrew Bible,' 219. Square brackets mine.

[19] Susan Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' *WW* 15, no. 4 (1995): 402-411, here 404.

Hebrew Bible have been used to justify everything from colonial invasions to the crusades.[20]

2.2. Contextual Approaches

In contrast to the preceding attempts to appropriate the Hebrew Bible's warfare accounts ethically, Niditch recommends that readers engage with these elements of the biblical narratives. She suggests both contextualization and identification:

> If we explore not just Deuteronomy or Joshua, but a wide and representative range of texts dealing with war in Israelite literature, we find, in fact, that … Israelite views of war are many. Views of violence in war, of the role fighters should play, of causes of fighting, and of treatment of enemies, military and non-military, reflect a complex culture allowing for various views of war-related issues, some views overlapping, some contrasting.[21]

This is certainly true, however, as we will see, there is usually a common underscoring ideological element beneath views, which on the surface appear to contrast with each other. Before we get to that, however, we need to discuss the six Israelite ideologies of war, which are present in the Hebrew Bible that Niditch outlines.

The first she describes is the ban, which we will discuss in detail in chapter seven, section two. The ban (חרם) refers to the killing of every living thing in a conquered area of Canaan as per YHWH's command (Deuteronomy 20:16-18). Niditch explains that the ban itself can be further separated into two categories. These are the Ban as Sacrifice and the Ban as Justice. The Ban as Sacrifice 'is an ideology of war in which the enemy is to be utterly destroyed as an offering to the deity who has

[20] Niditich affirms the use of colonialism and the crusades as examples here when she states, 'The third response is, for me, the most troubling, a process of judgmental identification. Who are the new idolaters worthy of destruction? Falling in the biblical medium, St. Bernard thought they were the Muslims, Cotton Mather thought they were the native Americans of New England'. Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 403.

[21] Ibid, 404.

made victory possible'.[22] However, she admits that we do not know if the Israelites ever actually fought wars solely 'motivated by the ban as sacrifice'.[23] Nonetheless, she cites the Moabite Stone's description of King Moab's 'imposition of the ban (*ḥerem*) against an Israelite city in his famous victory inscription',[24] as evidence that the 'notion of devoting human conquests to the deity, be it the Israelite Yahweh or the Moabite Chemosh, existed in Israel's immediate world of thought',[25] which is certainly the case.

The Ban as Justice is the second form of the Ban ideology which Niditch describes. When the ban is applied as justice it describes the enemy being 'totally annihilated because they are sinners, condemned under the rules of God's justice'.[26] Niditch tells us that this allows mass killing in war to 'be rationalized' allowing accompanying guilt to be 'assuaged'.[27] The ban as justice means that the Israelites are 'regarded as God's instrument of justice, and the enemy is a less-than-human monster who must be eradicated (Deut 7:2-5, 23-26)'.[28] In chapter eight we will illustrate that demonization of the enemy and the view that one's king and god is the administrator of justice is a common theme which runs throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts. However, with few exceptions (such as the Moabite Stone), Niditch's contextualization is limited to the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, she does not consider the ubiquitous nature of this theme throughout the ancient Near East as part of her analysis.

[22] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible,* 28-55.
[23] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 405.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 56-77.
[27] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 406.
[28] Ibid.

The Priestly Ideology of War is the next one that Niditch has discerned and it is specific to Numbers 31.[29] Here, like the ban as God's Justice, 'the enemy is regarded as deserving of God's vengeance and is almost annihilated', except that 'virgin girls are spared'.[30] Incidentally, so are children and livestock, which is important given that these too fall under the ban when it applies. Because there is stress upon what is 'clean and unclean', Niditch concludes that this ideology constitutes a post-monarchic, Priestly, 'glitch'.[31] This glitch, she says, is because 'female children who have not lain with a man are clean slates in terms of their identity, unmarked by the enemy, and, after a period of purification, can be absorbed into the people Israel'.[32] Thus, Niditch attempts to understand this apparent exception to the *ḥerem*. Except it is not an exception. In fact, it is not the ban at all. As Niditch herself points out the root חרם is not used once in Numbers 31,[33] but this is not even the main reason this is not a ban text. The main reason it does not qualify as a ban text is that the Midianites are not in the land of Canaan. The ban (Deuteronomy 20:16-18) only applies to those in the land that YHWH is described giving Israel, that is, the land of Canaan. In defeating Midian, however, the Israelites are acting in perfect accordance with Deuteronomy 20:14 which allows them to take as booty 'the women, the children, livestock and everything else in the town, all its spoil' (Deuteronomy 20:14). This is exactly what Numbers 31:9 describes the Israelites taking. Therefore, discerning an entirely distinct warfare ideology on the basis that women are allowed to live, and that this is somehow divergent from the norm for ban texts, is to create a 'glitch' where there is not one. In any case, Niditch is certainly correct in her assessment that there is something unique about Numbers 31. That is, the emphasis

[29] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 78-89.
[30] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 406.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 81.

upon purification, which is not mentioned in other cases where booty is permitted to be taken. On this, she appropriately distinguishes a uniquely 'Priestly' influence within the narrative.

The third ideology that Niditch discerns is 'The Bardic Tradition of War'.[34] She distinguishes 'bardic' accounts of warfare on the basis of their 'beautiful and traditional narrative style' that 'glorifies warriors, their courage, daring, leadership, and skill'.[35] These accounts of warfare describe war as sport, replete with taunting as a type of 'war behavior'.[36] Here, Niditch includes biblical narratives that this thesis does not place within the realm of warfare proper, that is, accounts of individual warriors and their deeds, rather than accounts of large-scale organised violence. She includes, for example, the dual between David and Goliath, and the 'exploits of Beniah' (2 Samuel 23:20-23).[37]

Niditch names another type of warfare as Tricksterism.[38] In warfare accounts displaying tricksterism Niditch tells us that an underdog must use 'deception or trickery to improve his lot'.[39] Niditch considers tricksterism to be 'akin to guerrilla warfare' so far as there is 'no code in the fighting'.[40] In its implicit lack of good sportsmanship, Niditch holds Tricksterism to be antithetical to the Bardic ideology just described.

Niditch next describes what she calls the ideology of 'Expediency'.[41] Here, 'anything can be done to achieve objectives' and 'to subjugate the defeated enemy'.[42] She includes the wars of Abimelech as an example of this; however, she also admits

[34] Ibid, 90-105.
[35] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 406.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible,* 90-91.
[38] Ibid, 106-122.
[39] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 407.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 123-133.
[42] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 407.

that 'his eventual failure is a critique of this ideology'.[43] Indeed, Abimelech is addressed in detail in chapter five and it is clear that Abimelech's tale is certainly a cautionary one.

Niditch's last ideology of warfare that she describes is the ideology of 'Non-Participation'.[44] This is the ideology at work wherein God's miracles effectively win Israel's battles for them 'through the performance of miracles'[45] and is 'reinforced by prophetic injunctions not to rely on mere humans and their governments for salvation'.[46] Here, one thinks immediately of Exodus 15 and other situations wherein YHWH's assistance is the deciding factor in combat. This thesis will argue that such descriptions of YHWH's assistance are meant to convey YHWH's kingship and are dependent upon Israel's obedience to the precepts of YHWH. So far as YHWH's assistance is dependent upon Israel's obedience, these texts perform a necessary function towards the reinforcement of Israel's social organisation to Israel's benefit militarily. This will be described in detail in the sixth chapter of this thesis. Like Niditch, Wood similarly delineates numerous approaches to warfare that are on display in Hebrew Bible.[47]

Niditch describes six distinct ideologies at work within biblical accounts of warfare. In contrast, this thesis will convey that Hebrew Biblical war narrative reflects, and contributes to, *one* underlying ideology necessary to mobilize Israel for military purposes. That said, classification is helpful, and the categories, which

[43] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 124.
[44] Ibid, 134-149.
[45] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 407.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Wood maintains that most of the warfare described in the Hebrew Bible can be characterized as active, however, other wars are arguably passive (e.g., Exodus 14-15). Others, it is argued, are examples of total war (included are the *herem* texts); still others are redemptive wars (e.g., Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-9); pacifist (here Wood cites Elisha's non-violence); and still others are examples of just war wherein Amos' oracles against foreign nations is cited. J.A. Wood, *Perspectives on War in the Bible* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998). Again, such descriptions of apparently variant approaches to war offer little more than helpful categories of classification.

Niditch has outlined, serve to give scholars a means of discussing distinct warfare accounts. The weakness in Niditch's approach is her limiting her context to the Hebrew Bible itself. That is, Niditch does not concern herself with extra-biblical descriptions of warfare from the ancient Near East. It is because of this that she discusses, for example, the burning of cities as something that runs throughout the Hebrew Bible and states that 'burned with fire' is 'typical ban language'.[48] However, if she were better acquainted with ancient Near Eastern war narrative writ large she would have known that virtually every description of the conquering of a city includes a description of its burning and cursing, particularly Assyrian accounts of warfare. Therefore, while it is true that it is 'typical' *vis-à-vis* 'ban language', more importantly, it is typical of ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts generally. Because her examination of warfare in the Hebrew Bible limits itself to the biblical canon itself, she concludes that 'the history of attitudes to war in ancient Israel is complex, involving multiplicity, overlap, and self-contradiction'.[49]

For a more literary examination one need only look to McEntire's work. McEntire's methodology is that of rhetorical criticism and he applies his approach to seven specific violent episodes in the Hebrew Bible in particular: Genesis 4:1-16; Exodus 1:8-22; Exodus 11:1-12:39; Joshua 6:1-27; 1 Samuel 4:1-22; 1 Kings 12:1-20; and, 2 Chronicles 36:15-21. Like Niditch, however, McEntire similarly limits his examination of these violent episodes to the context of the Hebrew Bible and does not take into account extra-biblical accounts of warfare. Furthermore, his primary concern is the narratives' ethical implications. McEntire tells us that the questions he attempts to answer are 'What view of the world and how it works emerges from the biblical

[48] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 81.
[49] Niditch, 'War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels,' 408.

text? and, In what way do we apply this worldview to our own world?'[50] That said, he opens the concluding chapter of his work with a rhetorical question asking if the violent plot he believes he has exposed by way of his examination of the violent episodes is at 'The Heart of the Hebrew Bible?'[51] While not the heart *per se* this question directs us towards how the Hebrew Biblical accounts of warfare ought to be read. That is, by treating the texts concerning warfare as normative, rather than exceptional, and then seeking to understand the purposes of the text within its own context, we may approach something that could appropriately be called a hermeneutic of war.

The title of Craigie's book reveals the approach of his project, so far as he clearly wanted to reconcile his Christian vision of God with the descriptions of war in the Hebrew Bible. He titled his work *The Problem of War in the Old Testament.*[52] Hobbs famously responded to this title in his own work asking 'for whom is warfare in the Old Testament a problem?' He answers,

> It is clear from a reading of the Old Testament itself that the act of war was *not* a problem for the ancient Israelites. The Old Testament is full of examples of warfare, and there is no evidence to suggest that warfare *per se* is regarded as even a necessary evil. It is taken for granted as a part of life in the Old Testament.[53]

This thesis, after a considerable examination of extra-biblical source material,[54] maintains that Hobbs is right about this and, therefore, warfare accounts in the Hebrew Bible are not treated as exceptional but rather as normative.

Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible: New Perspectives is a collection of essays that was published in 2015. Olyan has drawn together noteworthy essays by several prominent scholars who have explored violence in the Hebrew Bible throughout their careers, notably, Lemos, Niditch, Wright and Olyan himself. Essays

[50] McEntire, *The Blood of Abel*, 11.
[51] Ibid, 160.
[52] Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament.*
[53] Hobbs, *A Time for War*, 17.
[54] See sections 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 5.1; 6.1; 7.1; 7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.3; 8; 9.1; 9.2.

include topics such as the trafficking of women (Niditch), urbicide (Wright), violence against corpses (Olyan), and genocide (Lemos).[55] Lemos and Wright both bring current scholarship concerning their respective topics to bear upon the texts they examine. Niditch makes use of social scientific theory in order to gain greater insight into the rape stories in Genesis 34 and Judges 19; wife (or woman) stealing in Deuteronomy 21, Numbers 31, and Judges 21; and the story of Jephthah's daughter in Judges 11. All of these essays are cited throughout this thesis.

The attempts to understand the violent texts of the Hebrew Bible from an ethical perspective places them in contexts that they were not meant to speak. As we shall see, warfare generates exceptions to ethical norms,[56] however much these exceptions may be unwanted; that is, warfare is a liminal state. This is why it is essential that we seek to understand Hebrew Biblical warfare accounts in the context of other war narratives from the ancient Near East. Furthermore, this must be done with an appreciation of the social mechanisms that lead to and perpetuate militaristic goals.[57]

Because they fail to appreciate the way in which warfare overturns normative cultural taboos, the ethical approaches that have been outlined do not, and cannot, serve as a hermeneutical key to understanding the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible. Bahrani tells us that

[55] Saul Olyan, ed. *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible: New Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[56] See Chapter Seven in particular.

[57] Other scholarly works which contextualize warfare accounts within Ancient Near Eastern accounts of warfare include: Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1989); Hobbs (1989); K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Lori L. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence: A New Historicist Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996); and, Pekka Pitkänen, *Joshua,* Vol 6, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary,* ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010).

> war is a strictly organized activity that at the same time allows for forms of behavior that are non-normative and taboo. Like the festival and some religious rituals, war occupies a place outside; it is a phenomenon that stirs and interrupts.[58]

Therefore, if a method of understanding the texts concerning warfare seeks to fit them into an ethical paradigm that does not apply to them, we should expect to be dissatisfied.

2.3. 'Historical' Approaches

Von Rad's seminal work on warfare in the Hebrew Bible originally published in 1952,[59] as well as Smend's work published eleven years later,[60] had an enormous impact on research in biblical studies. Consistent with the prevailing rationalism and demythologization of the period, both were concerned with the historicity of the events in question and attributed descriptions of YHWH's miraculous saving actions (e.g. Exodus 14 and Joshua 6) to later theological redaction.[61] Smend sought to explain the theologizing of what he considered historical events within an understanding of the Sinai covenant.[62] Smend also, *contra von Rad*, argued that Israel did not wage war as an amphictyony, but that only individual tribes went to war.[63]

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[58] Zainab Bahrani, *Rituals of War: The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 13.

[59] Gerard von Rad, *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952). This work has been translated into English by Marva J. Dawn, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991).

[60] Rudolf Smend, *Jahwekrieg und Stämmebund: Erwägungen zur ältesten Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprcht, 1963). This also has been translated into English by Max Gray Rogers, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

[61] Specifically, post-Solomonic redaction. See Gerard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel,* 74-93.

[62] Rudolf Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation: Reflections upon Israel's Earliest History* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 109-135. Lind does the same except that he maintains that the Sinai covenant did not exist in tension with warfare (as per Smend). Rather, says Lind, the covenant 'was caused by an event that had happened within warfare itself, the escape from Egypt by prophetic agitation and miracle. This event, occurring within the institution of warfare, provided the basis for the new structure of the Sinai covenant, the rule of Yahweh founded upon Torah and prophetic word'. Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1980), 32, cf., 170.

[63] Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation*. Stolz did not even think there was an Israelite amphictyony and that individual tribes possessed contrasting ideas about warfare, adding that 'holy

Neither scholar appreciated that warfare accounts routinely recall events in ways that exaggerate the role of gods and kings. This thesis demonstrates that this was done both to please the king (or god) and to inspire devotion and obedience to a character essential to the ideological justification to go to war.[64] That is, descriptions of miraculous events are typical of the way warfare is remembered and described in the ancient Near East so far as they seek to forward an ideological agenda. Of course, significant redaction may still take place, however, redaction is not indicated on account of historical events being interpreted theologically. That is, descriptions of the miraculous do not, by themselves, indicate redaction. This is because glorification of the strength of kings and the assistance of gods is commonplace in ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts that are written contemporaneously with the events they describe. For example, bas-reliefs, which are datable to the lifetimes of the kings they glorify, similarly describe the assistance of gods.[65] They reinforce the authority of the rulers, the ideology, and the social structures to which the readers and hearers of such accounts are committed. Therefore, we should not expect ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts to read as mere factual description of past events. Furthermore, that they do not read as merely factual accounts does not in itself indicate that theological redaction has taken place, let alone redaction that is generations removed.[66] If this were the case, we would certainly have found examples of such dry retellings in the

war' was an invention of the Deuteronomists. F. Stolz, *Jahwes und Israels Kriege: Kriegstheorien und Kriegserfahrungen im Glauben des alten Israels* (AThANT, 60; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972).

[64] These issues are will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

[65] Numerous examples are cited in this thesis. See sections See sections 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 5.1; 6.1; 7.1; 7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.3; 8; 9.1; 9.2.

[66] Pitkänen describes how Younger proves that 'the genre of Joshua 9-12 is perfectly compatible with other Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts that demonstrably do not in any way result from a long oral tradition (Younger 1990) … These Ancient Near Eastern sources were generally pretty much contemporaneous with the events they describe, and thus there is no need to assume a long prehistory for a biblical text that depicts similar events'. Pitkänen, 58-59. This criticism can equally be levied against Lingen's *Les Guerres de Yahvé* wherein it is argued that divine intervention is attributable to post-exilic redaction on account of the post-exilic community's lack of military capability; that is, such redactions were meant to encourage continued trust in YHWH despite their exiled circumstances. A.V.D. Lingen, *Les Guerres de Yahvé: L'Implication de YHWH dans les Guerres d'Israël Selon les Livres Historiques de L'Ancien Testament* (LD, 139; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990).

royal annals of ancient Near Eastern empires by now. The fact that we have not is all the evidence one needs to appreciate that warfare accounts throughout the entire ancient Near East are distinctly theological texts.

The scholars we have discussed so far primarily tend to limit themselves to the Hebrew Bible in their seeking to understand its accounts of warfare. However, there are several scholars who are interested in comparing and contrasting them with extra-biblical texts concerning warfare. These scholars include Hobbs,[67] Kang,[68] Younger,[69] Crouch,[70] Rowlett,[71] and Pitkänen.[72] Similarly, this thesis takes other ancient Near Eastern war narratives into account. Weippert's influential critique of von Rad's work was based largely upon his (Weippert's) comparison of Israelite descriptions of warfare in the Hebrew Bible with Assyrian accounts.[73] Thompson has attempted to discredit such a contextual approach arguing 'that because Israel was unique in the ancient Near East (Israel alone developed real historiography), the relevance of the comparative material is questionable'.[74] While it is true that Israel is distinct (as all ancient Near Eastern cultures are), especially in its historiography, we should not discount a methodology of comparison and contrast on account of findings made *by comparison and contrast*. This is especially true given that Israelite culture has much

[67] Hobbs, *A Time for War*; Cf. T.R. Hobbs, 'Experiment in Militarism,' in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, eds. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 457-480.

[68] Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*.

[69] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*.

[70] Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East*.

[71] Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*.

[72] Pitkänen, *Joshua*.

[73] Such comparative work led Weippert to conclude:'Die hier beschriebenen Bräuche und Vorstellungen stehen im Zusammenhang gemeinaltorientalischer, höchstwahrscheinlich gemeinantiker Kriegspraxis und –ideologie'; adding that 'weitere Detailuntersuchungen notwendig'. M. Weippert, '"Heiliger Krieg" in Israel und Assyrien: Kritische Anmerkungen zu Gerhard von Rads Konzept des "Heiligen Krieges im alten Israel,"' *ZAW* 84 (1972): 460-93, here, 491.

[74] R. J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism Since Graf* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 118-120.

in common with its contemporaries.[75] The importance of contextualizing texts such as Joshua is described well by Younger:

> If one compares the conquest account in the book of Joshua with other ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts, one will gain a better understanding of the biblical narrative. Such a method offers control on the data. It is exactly a lack of controls which has contributed – at least in part – to some of the interpretive problems in Old Testament studies.[76]

It is such lack of contextualisation that has contributed to the interpretive problems previously described in the work of Niditch,[77] and with the majority of the preceding attempts to understand the texts from an ethical perspective. Hess is persuaded by Younger's approach, concluding that

> Recent studies have revived an earlier hypothesis which identified priestly editorial work in Joshua … However, the identification of a series of Deuteronomistic and priestly editorial layers in the book of Joshua cannot be accepted without qualification. There are difficulties with assumptions that Deuteronomistic theology must be confined to the period of Josiah and with the analysis of the Joshua narratives divorced from their Ancient Near Eastern context …Younger has demonstrated that the relationship of the central historical section of Joshua 9-12 is too close to that of contemporary (1300-600 BC) conquest accounts (which themselves are normally used as historical sources – though biased – by historians of the Ancient Near East) to allow certainty of identification of later insertions. Thus statements about the work and words of God are not later insertions into a battle chronicle, but are an essential feature of all Ancient Near Eastern battle accounts. The theology and the narrative should not be separated.[78]

This thesis will show that the same is true for war narrative in the Hebrew Bible more generally, especially the accounts in Joshua and Judges.

The primary focus of this thesis will be an examination of the warfare accounts in the books of Joshua and Judges. They will be examined in light of the sociological underpinnings of warfare as determined by modern sociological studies concerning the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare. Hobbs sought to understand the warfare texts of the Hebrew Bible in a military light, however, as with Rowlett (and Niditch to an extent), his sociological concern was group identity. When he turned the lens to warfare itself, it was with dated

[75] Younger similarly maintains that 'this objection should be spurned'. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 53.
[76] Ibid, 52.
[77] See sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this thesis.
[78] Hess, *Joshua,* 33.

sociological theory, which presumed the existence of homogenous military cores (in the form of pre-existing military organisations) that then 'affect host societies'.[79] This is no longer a view held by most sociologists of warfare. This thesis will go into detail regarding current research concerning the sociology of warfare in the next chapter, wherein we will see why Hobbs' view is problematic.

Rowlett compares war rhetoric in the book of Joshua to Neo-Assyrian war rhetoric. A focus upon Neo-Assyrian war rhetoric is most suitable according to Rowlett's view because she sides with the mainstream Josianic dating of the book of Joshua. She argues that the Josianic period mustered a need for increased national identity, thus, like Hobbs, her sociology is focused upon group identity rather than the social mechanisms that underscore warfare itself.[80] She agrees with scholars who consider Joshua to be a thinly veiled Josiah.[81] In order to appreciate what we ought to expect from texts that commemorate warfare, this thesis will turn the sociological lens to warfare itself, rather than focus upon group identity. That said, we will see that group identity is a corollary of both the ideology and social organisation required for military efficacy. Having discerned that the warfare accounts of the Hebrew Bible share the same normative elements found throughout the ancient Near East from periods which even predate the Amarna letters (i.e., 14th century BCE) to well past the Babylonian Exile, this thesis will not confine its consideration of ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts to the Neo-Assyrian. Rather, unlike Rowlett, we will consider Assyrian, Hittite and Egyptian accounts of warfare where applicable. Numerous themes persist from the Early Bronze Age to the period of the exile, from

[79] Hobbs, 'Experiment in Militarism,' 464. While this view is no longer dominantly held in sociological circles, some in International Relations still hold to a similar view. See, for example, Theo Farrell, *The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2005), 4-8.

[80] Rowlett states that, 'The Book of Joshua reflects a combination of coercion and an attempt to harness the energies of the population by invoking their loyalties through a sense of identity. Narratives of identity require a set of axiomatic principles, inscribed in the text, to distinguish between "us" and "them" (the Other)'. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 12.

[81] Ibid, 47.

Egypt to Assyria. This thesis will show the same themes are present in the Hebrew Bible's warfare accounts. However, space dictates that our consideration of the Hebrew Biblical accounts of warfare remain limited to the books of Joshua and Judges.

It is worthwhile at this stage to conclude this review of the literature concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible by clarifying why this thesis is unique. The studies which have preceded this one either: (1) were focused upon the ethics of warfare; (2) failed to contextualize Hebrew war narrative within the war narratives of other ancient Near Eastern peoples; or (3) contextualized the war narrative, but offered only further descriptive insights. This thesis, however, utilizes a methodology which accommodates the data concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible. In doing so one is not left wondering how to understand particular outlying elements on account of their being either (a) a miraculous depiction of one event or another, or (b) a seeming departure from ethical acceptability. This thesis accomplishes this by bringing current sociological theory concerning warfare to bear upon Hebrew Biblical war narrative. Furthermore, the narratives are also contextualized within other ancient Near Eastern war narratives, which offers, as Younger has said, 'control on the data'.[82] Within the context of extra-biblical ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, and with an appreciation of the sociological factors, which necessarily underscore large-scale organised violence, one is left with an appreciation of the normativity of Hebrew Biblical accounts of warfare.

[82] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 52.

3. The Sociology of Warfare

In this chapter we will consider insights from sociology concerning the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare. A brief review of the development of this largely overlooked area within sociology will be discussed, including an examination of conflicting views regarding the emergence of violent behaviour among human beings. This will then lead to a discussion of current sociological insights into those factors required if human beings are to act effectively as an organised fighting unit capable of killing (that is, despite moral apprehension) and defeating an opposing force. In effect, knowledge concerning the sociological underpinnings (as opposed to 'forces') necessary for the emergence of warfare forms a hermeneutic that accommodates the data within ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those of the Hebrew Bible. Other approaches, including attempts to understand the texts from an ethical view, usually anachronistically, leave numerous outlying elements which then need to be 'explained' after the fact. This thesis, however, demonstrates that ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those in Joshua and Judges, reinforce those sociological underpinnings and, therefore, contribute to the military efficacy of their respective audiences.

This chapter includes an examination of the way in which the development of the sociological foundations of organised violence are on display within ancient Near Eastern sources. This is meant to offset anticipated arguments that suggest applying current sociological insights to ancient Near Eastern evidence is anachronistic. Furthermore, it illustrates the processual nature of the sociological factors in question.

3.1. Human Beings and Violence

It is the assumption of many that human beings are, essentially, violent animals. That without rules, laws, regulations and enforcing bodies, human beings would habitually engage in violent activity. Such a view is popular and understandable given our apparent preference for violence in film and other pop culture mediums. Also, it has had its share of notable proponents. Thomas Hobbes, for example, famously understood the original 'state of nature' of human beings as inherently violent.[83] It turns out, however, that our apparent preference for violence (that is, in film etc.) is due to our being so bad at violence and its being so rare, rather than because of any kind of state of nature. It is worth quoting Malešević at length here:

> On the contrary it is precisely because we share a normative abhorrence towards violent behaviour, are generally – as individuals – feeble executioners of violent acts and much of our daily life is free of violence, that we find wars and killing so fascinating. They are fascinating because, from the everyday standpoint, they are rare, difficult and strange. Our obsession is rooted in our fear and awe of something that is not common, usual and regular but extraordinary and, as such, in some respects incomprehensible. Since inflicting harm on other humans goes so much against the grain of our socialisation and is not something we ordinarily see or participate in, it becomes enthralling. Rather than being a sign of our 'essentially violent nature', the human fascination with violence and war is a good indicator that these phenomena are odd, unusual and atypical. We are curious about something we do not know and rarely, if ever, experience, not with something that is ordinary and ever present. Violence attracts our attention precisely because we are not good at it and do not encounter it on a daily basis.[84]

Of course, there are exceptions to Malešević's theory, that is, some sociopaths and psychopaths who sincerely do revel in the misery of others, as is the case with mass

[83] 'So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.

The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation. The first use Violence, to make themselves masters of other mens persons, wives, children, and cattell; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in the persons or by reflexion in their Kindred, their Friends, their Nation, their Profession, or their Name.

Hereby it is manifest that during the time when men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre is of every man, against every man'. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1651]), 88.

[84] Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

murderers and serial killers. However, for the typical human being, Malešević's point stands; that said, Hobbes' view remains popular.[85]

There is, however, an opposing view, which sees human beings in a more favorable light. This view, which we owe to Rousseau, though certainly many before him espoused it as well, is that it is peacefulness which characterizes human beings. Violence, when it breaks out, is due to particular 'social ills'.[86] This is the perspective that is 'is currently echoed in much of the literature that dominates such fields as conflict resolution and peace studies'.[87] Here is Rousseau himself, describing rights to private property as a source of violent behaviour:

> The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said 'this is mine', and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this imposter; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.[88]

If the previous perspective belongs to the 'political realist' then this one can be said to be that of the 'political idealist'. According to Karsh, for the political idealist

> peace, not war, constitutes the natural human condition. This is because there exists a "harmony of interests" among human beings wherein the interest of the individual (and by extension, the nation) and that of the community (or the community of nations) fully coincide.[89]

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[85] Immanuel Kant adopted a view similar to that of Hobbes in his later writing:

> The state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state (*status naturalis*); which is rather to be described as a state of war: that is to say, although there is not perhaps always actual open hostility, yet there is a constant threatening that an outbreak may occur.

Immanuel Kant, 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay (1795),' in *Early Notions of Global Governance: Selected Eighteenth-Century Proposals for 'Perpetual Peace'*, ed. Esref Aksu (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 180-229, here 185. This view is based on an, arguably, cynical view of human beings. As a result it is popular among those who consider themselves to be 'political realists'. Those who identify as political realists tend to believe that 'war is an inevitable outcome of human insecurity and the desperate quest for power it generates. In realist thinking ... the world is a violent, hostile environment, in which the will to self-preservation rules'. Efraim Karsh, 'The Causes of War: Introduction,' in *War*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 65-70, here 66. Indeed, this view is popular among those who would use fear to manipulate people.

[86] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 2.

[87] Ibid.

[88] J. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (New York: Dover Publications, 2004 [1755]), 27. Also, Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 2.

[89] Karsh, 'The Causes of War: Introduction,' 66.

This view is similarly problematic and perhaps most importantly, it runs counter to the archaeological record and the discoveries made by those engaged in anthropology. Gat tells us that

> contrary to the Rousseauite imagination, the evidence of historically observed hunter-gatherers and, more dimly but increasingly, that of palaeo-archaeology shows that humans have been fighting among themselves throughout the history of our species and genus, during the human 'evolutionary state of nature'.[90]

The previous two perspectives are clearly directly antithetical to each other. Furthermore, neither captures what is true about the relationship between human beings and violence. Here, it is helpful to ask if sociological theorists may have any insight into the relationship between human beings and violence.

Malešević specializes in the sociology of warfare, and he tells us that the two opposing views we have examined 'misdiagnose social reality' and suffer from the same lack of 'the sociological eye'.[91] That is, there is a failure to appreciate the paradox at the heart of the debate, which is this: When there is a group behaving in a way that is consistent with Hobbes' understanding of our 'state of nature,' they are doing so for reasons that can be considered Rousseauian.[92] Malešević explains that 'as we need others to kill so we also need others for whom to sacrifice ourselves. Our social embeddedness is the source of both our selfishness and our altruism'.[93] This certainly seems correct, however, to know for sure, we need to consider the literature concerning the sociology of warfare more closely.

3.2. The Sociology of Warfare

The long and varied history of disagreement among those who have attempted to explain the emergence of warfare have largely hinged upon how one defines war. Carl

[90] Azar Gat, *War in Human Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 664.
[91] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 3.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

von Clausewitz famously asserted that warfare was a 'continuation of policy by other means',[94] which, we will see, appears to be the case. However, in this view one is clearly presupposing the existence of the state, politics, and therefore, policy. Clausewitz wrote:

> War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on by other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means. War in general, and the commander in any specific instance, is entitled to require that the trend and designs of policy shall not be inconsistent with these means. That, of course, is no small demand; but however much it may affect political aims in a given case, it will never do more than modify them. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation form their purpose.[95]

Keegan has said that Clausewitz's theory presupposes statehood saying that 'it implies the existence of states, of state interests and of rational calculation about how they may be achieved. Yet war antedates the state, diplomacy and strategy by many millennia'.[96] That said, does war actually predate the state? Again, this depends upon how we define war. Here is Keegan sounding considerably like Hobbes:

> Warfare is almost as old as man himself, and reaches into the most secret places of the human heart, places where self dissolves rational purpose, where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct is king.[97]

Keegan, however, is clearly speaking about something different than Clausewitz, whose views (that is, Clausewitz's) were formed in relationship to the Napoleonic Wars. So far as Keegan considers war to be 'almost as old as man himself' Keegan reveals that he has a very broad definition of war—one that includes the battles and skirmishes which certainly took place between rival groups prior to the social stratification and urbanization which is commonly used to define the dawn of human civilisation. In fact, Keegan does not really believe that war can be defined at all. He asks, '"What is war?" ... I have called into doubt the belief that there is a simple

[94] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. James John Graham and Louise Willmot (Ware: Wordsworth, 1997), 87.
[95] Clausewitz, 87.
[96] John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2004), 3.
[97] Ibid.

answer to that question or that war has any one nature'.[98] Keegan argues, therefore, that Clausewitz did not allow for a consideration of 'the endemic warfare of non-state, even pre-state peoples, in which was no distinction between lawful and unlawful bearers of arms'.[99] Attempting to correct Clausewitz's theory, Keegan states that 'war may be, among other things, the perpetuation of a *culture* by its own means'.[100] Malešević, however, maintains that such culturalist-naturalist theorizing like Keegan's requires that the groups that waged such 'wars' were 'inherently homogenous, clearly bounded and stable entities ... [wherein] groups acquire[d] individual attributes and personality traits such as will, emotions and intentions'.[101] Here, Malešević is saying that for Keegan to defend his claim he is forced to make sweeping cultural generalizations. This, however, is a large claim and so it requires further examination.

Malešević's first critique of Keegan's work involves his analysis of the Graeco-Persian wars of the fifth century BCE. Here, Keegan says that 'the Greeks took pride in their freedom and despised the subjects of Xerxes and Darius for their lack of it, their hatred of Persia was at root nationalistic'.[102] Similarly, while discussing the Mongol invasions under Genghis Khan, Keegan describes Mongol warfare as 'an extension of the primitive urge to vengeance on an enormous scale'.[103] Malešević explains why this is considerably problematic:

> This strategy of attributing individual character traits to large ethnic and national collectivities while also psychologising them in the process (i.e. despising and hating Greeks; intelligent 'warrior race' of Turks; the irrational peoples of the Balkans; and the primitive and vengeance-prone Mongols) is a sign of an extremely feeble analysis. Not only is it highly unlikely that hundreds of thousands of individuals who nominally belong to a particular

[98] Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, 386.
[99] Ibid, 5.
[100] Ibid, 46. *Italics* mine. Though referring to an earlier edition of Keegan's book this has also been cited in Malešević*, The Sociology of War and Violence*, 65.
[101] Ibid, 182.
[102] Keegan, *A History of Warfare,* 192. Cited also by Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 182.
[103] Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, 204. Cited also by Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 182.

> ethnic and national collectivity will share the same personality traits, but it is also practically impossible to empirically verify such sweeping claims. Furthermore, statements like these firmly reify and simplify group membership: instead of analyzing complex, contradictory and fluid processes that characterise group formation, the naturalists simply take groups as unproblematic cultural givens that act in exactly the same way as individuals do.[104]

Here, Malešević observes that cultural naturalists akin to Keegan do not appreciate the complex and sometimes contradictory means by which group identity is formed.

Perhaps even more problematic, however, is Keegan's definition of warfare is too broad. Malešević explains that 'the naturalists make no distinction between war and psychological responses such as hostility, aggression, desire, anger, fear or even martial practices such as fighting and killing'.[105] Conversely, Malešević's definition of war is one that Clausewitz would have agreed with, as Malešević insists upon warfare's inherently political dimension. War, says Malešević, 'is first and foremost a social institution that reflects social structure and involves not only the actors taking part, but also connects with wider social networks and in the process legitimises and is legitimised by political and ideological authorities'.[106] Sharing Clausewitz's view that warfare is inherently political, Malešević says that

> While Clausewitz was right that war is a form of state policy, what is sociologically more interesting is to study wars through their own unpredictable dialectics. If wars were only just another type of policy (though 'by other means'), an activity controllable and regulated by omnipotent states, then warfare would be utilised much more frequently and would be an easily justifiable practice. The fact that the initiation and the conduct of wars remains a highly contentious, thorny, polarising and volatile activity, an activity that generates its own dynamics, indicates that warfare is much more than just a tool of state power. War is an autonomous sociological phenomenon often capable of creating new social realities.[107]

However, arguments can be mounted against Malešević's and Clausewitz's insistence upon the political dimension of warfare.

For example, Gat argues that war's being 'customarily defined as large-scale organized violence is merely a reflection of the fact that human societies have become

[104] Ibid, 182-183.
[105] Ibid, 183.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid, 252.

large and organized'.[108] Gat's view is that war is sociobiological, therefore, according to Gat, war in large-scale societies merely appears different from that of human beings' pre-state counterparts, that is, the difference is superficial. He says that

> what makes 'war' *seem* different from other intraspecific deadly conflict is the same process that has transformed human existence in general over the past 10,000 years: the adoption of agriculture that led to the emergence of large-scale societies and, later, state societies, made all human activity – including that of fighting – far larger in scale, highly co-ordinated and integrated, and coercively hierarchical.[109]

It is not that Gat is incorrect, in fact, he is certainly correct in that violent conflict has always existed and that to the extent that human societies become large-scale and organised they will display commensurately large-scale and organised warfare. The problem with Gat's sociobiological view is not that it does not explain human beings' propensity (however limited) for warfare, rather, it is that it does not explain enough. That is, the levels of violence that human beings are capable of under certain conditions are not explained by reference to a need to biologically reproduce, or have access to scarce resources, although it certainly does explain some violence. The issue here is that

> human sociality has evolved to such levels of complexity that it now involves distinct layers of social action not found in the rest of the animal kingdom. In other words sociobiology ignores the unintended products of human action such as social structure, culture and ideology but also institutions and social organisations, which have acquired substantial autonomy and are able to generate new social dynamics.[110]

Malešević is certainly correct about this. A look at modernity and its institutions should be all one needs to confirm the validity of Malešević's point. Modern police forces, armies, governments and their policies can all collapse with the failure of a modern civilisation, but no one can doubt that these things have a force of their own within a well functioning modern society. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the rise of the city-state in the ancient Near East possessed similar complexity and

[108] Gat, *War in Human Civilization*, 664.
[109] Ibid, 664. Similarly, see R. Shaw and Y. Wang, *The Genetic Seeds of Warfare* (London: Routledge, 1989).
[110] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 56.

advancement. They also possessed social structure, culture, ideology and social organisation which had considerable autonomy apart from mere biological fulfillment. At issue here, again, is Gat's definition of war. Gat includes in his conception of war all fighting and killing, thus he misses 'its social origin, function and structure'.[111] Aggression—a psychological reaction, however violent—is not the same as war, which is a social phenomenon, requiring 'organised social action, collective intentionality, the systematic use of weapons, sophisticated linguistic coordination and ritualism'.[112] In this light, Malešević argues that in many ways 'war is the exact opposite of aggression'. [113] This is why modern peace and conflict studies departments, in trying to predict the emergence of war, never obsess about sociobiology, but rather about geopolitics. That is, it is the latter that one needs to appreciate in order see the fault lines which exist between groups that possess the capacity for large-scale organised violence and the means of using it.[114]

It is for these reasons, given we are discussing groups which have, among other things, developed city-states, complex historiography, governments replete with law codes and the capacity to enforce them, that this thesis focuses upon warfare as a large-scale organised activity. That is, it takes Clausewitz and Malešević's understanding and then considers ancient Near Eastern texts in its light, to see what, if anything, may be gained from sociological insight into the texts concerning warfare. This is apropos so far as this thesis is seeking a deeper understanding of the texts concerning warfare that have emerged from a dynamic and complex society, namely

[111] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 57.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] 'Large-scale organised violence' has become the normative definition of warfare utilized among those engaged in 'warfare studies' and/or 'peace and conflict studies'. See, for example, Deborah Cowen and Emily Gilbert, eds., *War, Citizenship, Territory* (London: Routledge, 2008); and Farrell, *The Norms of War*.

Israel, through a closer examination of extra-biblical ancient Near Eastern material which also emerged from complex socially stratified state-level groups.

So what, according to Malešević, is required if human beings are going to act out violently on a large and organised scale? There are two essential elements which Malešević has identified that underscore the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare. He calls them: (1) The *Cumulative Bureaucratisation of Coercion*; and (2) *Centrifugal Ideologisation*.[115] These will be discussed first, following that this thesis will present a third necessity to complete a trinity of requirements.

3.2.1. The Cumulative Bureaucratisation of Coercion

Weber convincingly described the firm structure of routine and rationality which characterizes modern life, noting importantly, the way in which it affects everyday praxis. He famously highlighted the movement from types of social action usually called 'traditional' towards those ruled by instrumental, that is, ends-based or value-based (i.e. economic) social action; meaning that personal (or nepotistic) relationships became replaced by laws, rules and bureaucracies, with commensurate regulations.[116] What is true of groups in modernity is similarly true of any group that makes a similar movement towards large-scale social organisation, particularly statehood, although admittedly this may be in varying degrees.[117] However, in principle, it is as much the case for those living under the bureaucracy of Hammurabi as those living under the bureaucracy of Westminster. Rules may change, justifications may take different

[115] Malešević, *The Socioloy of War and Violence*, 4.
[116] M. Weber, *Economy and Society* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).
[117] It is important to note that high levels of bureaucratic coercion can and do exist in extra-state groups as well, such as modern terrorist organisations, or organised crime groups. That is, 'social organisation' or 'bureaucracies of coercion' are not limited to nation states, however defined.

forms, economic ends may appear different, however, Weber's analysis of such transitions is still apropos, and, we will see, is, to an extent, visible in the Hebrew Bible as well.[118] For our purposes, however, we need to highlight Weber's most significant contribution in this area, which is his diagnosis of the root of such bureaucratisation; that is, warfare. Weber notoriously said that because discipline is integral to bureaucratic rationality, and that 'military discipline gives birth to all discipline',[119] warfare, therefore, is foundational to bureaucratisation. Similarly, Marx, an avid reader of Clausewitz, noted the parallel between military organisation and the growth of labour division, saying:

> Just as the offensive power of the squadron of a cavalry, or the defensive power of a regiment of infantry, is essentially different from the sum of the offensive or defensive powers of the individual cavalry or infantry soldiers taken separately, so the sum total of the mechanical forces exerted by isolated workmen differs from the social force that is developed, when many hands take part simultaneously in one and the same divided operation.[120]

Here, Marx is arguing that there is a relationship between military efficiency and workplace efficiency so far as both are improved through effective social organisation, or bureaucratisation. Malešević maintains that it is important to emphasize that 'this process of bureaucratisation which in its rudimentary form emerged with the birth of warfare in the late Mesolithic era has been constantly expanding since'.[121] Malešević defines the *Cumulative Bureaucratisation of Coercion* in this way:

> [It] is a historical process that for the most part does not go against the grain of popular doxa: although it is essentially a coercive mechanism it is not something superimposed on individuals against their will. Instead, it is a process that entails tacit and sustained support at all levels of society... [it] is cumulative because it is an ongoing historical process that involves the constant increase of organisational capability for destruction; it is bureaucratic since it entails ever-expanding bureaucratic rationalization in the Weberian sense, which originated in the military sphere; and it is coercive since it involves not only the control and

[118] This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

[119] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1152.

[120] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, [1867] 1976), 308. Foucault has similarly noted the way that 'Marx stresses the analogy between the problems of the division of labour and those of military tactics'. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 163.

[121] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 6.

> employment of violence and the waging of wars but it is also able to internally pacify social order by establishing the monopolistic threat on the use of violence.[122]

Given Malešević's definition, we should expect to see such bureaucratic lines of authority established along pre-existing lines so as not to run 'against the grain of popular doxa'; a cumulative movement towards statehood and the capacity for increasingly effective warfare, with a commensurate capacity to internally (that is within a group making such a transition) pacify social order. In the next chapter and those following we will see that this is all on prominent display within Israel's overarching narrative describing their movement from the Exodus towards their capacity for warfare, which is on idyllic display in the book of Joshua; as well as the way in which certain cautionary tales in the books of Joshua and Judges reveal the consequences of actions which run counter to such a cumulative movement. Admittedly, this may seem strange given issues around dating the texts of the Pentateuch and the books of Joshua and Judges. That is, it is not generally maintained that the books were written in the order in which they appear, or that they accurately describe Israel's history. However, it is, nonetheless, worthwhile revealing the way in which these books display the development of Malešević's categories within Israel for two reasons. First, it helps us to appreciate the texts concerning warfare in a new light—that is, in that they reinforce the sociological underpinnings required for Israel's capacity for warfare. Secondly, it may also meaningfully contribute to discussions concerning the dating of specific texts.

The cumulative bureaucratisation does not 'entirely determine human behaviour',[123] rather, it assumes our active engagement. Malešević adds that 'there is no effective use or threat to use violence [that is, large-scale organised violence]

[122] Ibid, 7.
[123] Ibid, 7.

without developed social organisation'.[124] Again, 'human beings as individuals are circumspect of, and incompetent at, violence',[125] which is why such levels of social organisation are necessary. Following Weber, Malešević reminds us that 'it was warfare that gave birth to, and consequently depended on the existence of, large-scale social organisation'.[126] Therefore, we should expect to see that military threats to a group's well being will give rise to social organization and ideology, in a mutually reinforcing way, for the maintenance and reinforcement of the group's capacity for survival. 'All bureaucratisation', according to Malešević, 'is deeply rooted in coercive control … In this sense a factory worker, a civil servant, a teacher or a nurse are, in a general sense, governed by the very same principles of bureaucratic organisation as soldiers and the police'.[127] Such coercive social organisation requires, and is enforced by, clear authoritative hierarchies, loyalty to given organizations, and 'legal codes that stipulate penalties for noncompliance'.[128] Malešević explains that 'bureaucratic domination rests on the inculcation and control of discipline and remains dependent on disciplined action, it requires and demands obedience'.[129] We will examine in detail the necessity of obedience and its enforcement within groups which must enforce obedience endogenously, rather than exogenously, in the chapter concerning 'Divine Assistance in Battle'.[130] Collins maintains the same view as Malešević and states that war is

> the deliberate effort to inflict disaster upon the social organization of one's opponent. For what succeeds in war, and what is capable of resisting it, is fundamentally sociological. It is social organization, rather than physical bodies and physical equipment, that is the object of the maneuverings of combat. Armies fight, not in order to kill soldiers, incapacitate weapons,

[124] Ibid, 6.
[125] Ibid, 8.
[126] Ibid, 6.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] That is, Chapter Six, especially 6.2-6.3.

> and take ground, but to destroy the ability to resist. Organization is both the weapon and the target of war.[131]

Given all that has been said so far, it should come as no surprise that there is a direct correlation between the rise of civilisation and the rise of warfare:

> There was little, if any, warfare before the origin of civilisation. Thus, it was the early Bronze Age that is both the cradle of civilisation and the cradle of war. It is here that one encounters large-scale violence operating as a politically motivated organised social practice.[132]

One can immediately, therefore, appreciate why we ought to examine the biblical texts concerning warfare in a sociological light, as it is precisely in the Iron Age period which follows that the biblical narrators claim the story of Israel begins.

War, however, is not fought with social organisation alone. It is essential to the emergence of organized violence, however, social organisation would not exist, nor be maintained for very long, without an underscoring ideology to uphold it. Furthermore, warfare without the understanding of a social group's members (or at least a significant percentage of its members) that its actions are morally just, would never take place. Violence potentially could, but not large-scale organised violence, or warfare. Therefore, ideology is necessary for the emergence and preservation of social organization, and as both a motivating and justifying factor of large-scale organized violence.

3.2.2. Centrifugal Ideologisation

According to Farrell, 'Ideas shape the way humans make war'.[133] They also shape our social organisations. Malešević tells us that *Centrifugal Ideologisation* binds social organisation together, and morally justifies any organised violence that it carries

[131] Randall Collins, 'Violent Conflict and Social Organization: Some Theoretical Implications of the Sociology of War', *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 16, no. 4 (1990): 63-87, here 63.
[132] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 93.
[133] Farrell, *The Norms of War*, 1.

out.[134] Traditionally, 'ideology' has been seen as a 'rigid, closed system of ideas that govern social and political action'.[135] This, however, is erroneous in Malešević's view, and he maintains that it ought to be

> conceptualised as a relatively universal and complex social process through which human actors articulate their actions and beliefs. It is a form of 'thought-action' that infuses, but does not necessarily determine, everyday social practice.[136]

That is, while we must consider the role of ideology we should not confuse our use of the term with definitions which suggest that human beings are coerced by ideology as though we were automatons who do not also conceive of a given ideology's underlying ideas and give intellectual consent to them. Rather, it must be understood that we contribute to and perpetuate ideology—purposefully, though not necessarily knowingly. Malešević describes the development of ideology in a way that communicates its dynamic, rather than rigid nature, preferring the term *ideologisation*. He says it is a 'complex process whereby ideas and practices come together in the course of legitimising or contesting power relations'.[137]

This ideologisation process is *centrifugal*, according to Malešević, because it:

> Spreads from the centre of social organisations (or social movements, or both) to gradually encompass an ever wider population…because it is created by the political and cultural elites, it initially originates in small circles of dedicated followers and it radiates from the centre of the ideological activity (i.e. the state, religious organisation, military institution or the social movement) towards the broader masses of population.[138]

Here, the 'elites' simply refers to those in power and with influence. That is, a society does not require a rigid class system (for example) for the process of ideologisation to be centrifugal, as the elites can be defined simply as those with the power and influence to perpetuate ideology.

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[134] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 8.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid, 9.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid, 10-11.

Finally, it is important to appreciate that one of these two categories does not necessarily precede the other. That is, both centrifugal ideologisation and the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion mutually grow together, reinforce each other, and are interdependent. Malešević says that the

> strength and pervasiveness [of centrifugal ideologisation] are dependent on mutual reinforcement: while the social organisations help disseminate and institutionalise the ideological message…groups in civil society and family networks buttress the normative scaffolding which ties the ideological macro-level narrative with the micro-level solidarity of face-to-face interaction.[139]

Appreciating this mutual reinforcement is a paramount concern as it prevents one from mistakenly presuming one has a causal priority over the other. While an ideology buttresses the social organisation through which it is promulgated, the social organisation similarly upholds the ideology upon which it depends. A common worldview is, of course, to be expected amongst small social groups. However, large social organisations capable of large-scale organised violence require yet larger, potent and authoritative ideological promulgation and buttressing.

Finally, it is worth quoting Malešević at length in order to appreciate the importance of understanding the social with respect to warfare:

> It is the internal disciplinary effects of social organisations that make soldiers fight by inhibiting them from escaping the battlefields and it is social organisation that transforms chaotic and incoherent micro-level violence into an organised machine of macro-level destruction. However, no social organisation would be able to succeed in the long term if its actions were not popularly understood as just. This is particularly relevant for organisations that utilise violence since violent action per se is nearly universally perceived as an illegitimate form of social conduct. Hence, the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion often goes hand in hand with the legitimizing ideology.[140]

Here, Malešević admits that a bureaucracy of coercion could, in theory, be coercive enough to make soldiers fight without a coherent ideology. However, if such soldiers are to be *willing* killers then, of course, we should expect to see a legitimising ideology concurrently with the requisite social organisation—and we almost always do. Indeed, exceptions to this are rare and would involve soldiers being coerced

[139] Ibid, 11.
[140] Ibid, 9.

entirely by bureaucratic coercion such as threats of death if they run or refuse to fight. No state will last long, however, if it does not have a legitimising ideology to underscore and uphold its coercive capacity as rebellion, mutiny and general disobedience would rule.

There is a third requirement, however, for large-scale organised violence to become manifest that Malešević does not explicitly discuss. That is, along with a potent legitimizing ideology and bureaucratic coercion (social organisation), there must be a third—that is, a *need*, or at least, desire. Smith has persuasively argued that despite the posturing, the demonization of enemies, and the very real bureaucracies and ideologies which underscore organized violence, nonetheless, they

> are "really" all about something else, such as capturing scarce resources, controlling the bureaucratic apparatus, or establishing imperial control of others. People want to be in control of others and to be free of the control of others.[141]

This need could be security, but it may also be resources due to environmental scarcity. Of course, as we have already seen with the other two, that is, that they are interdependent, this third factor similarly is at play in the ideology and social organisation. That is, we should not expect land and/or autonomy, for example, to be separate from the ideology, but a part of it—if it is indeed land which constitutes the need.[142] However, it would be wrong to presume that such a third element, however required or desired, is enough to bring about and maintain large-scale organised violence by itself. Again, this is because violence comes unnaturally to human beings on a large-scale. Homer-Dixon has stated that 'environmental scarcity is never a sole or sufficient cause of large migrations, poverty, or violence; it always joins with other economic, political, and social factors to produce its effects'.[143] This is why this thesis

[141] Philip Smith, *Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, the Gulf War, and Suez* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4.

[142] Thomas F. Homer-Dixon addresses this third element in particular throughout his book *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1999.

[143] Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*, 16.

maintains the requirement of all three factors. This is particularly true in cases of genocide, which we will see contributes to our understanding of the texts which describe the ban, for, as Du Preez has pointed out: 'It requires a great vision to justify a great wrong'.[144] Therefore, we should always expect an underscoring ideology to coincide with environmental scarcity (or another need or desire), which is insufficient by itself, if large-scale organised violence is carried out by one collectivity against another.

Malešević, like Weber and Marx, maintains that the very existence of statehood owes warfare a debt; that is, 'state formation is directly linked to violent subordination and territorial expansion of one group over another'.[145] While this is true it, nonetheless, oversimplifies things for, as Malešević tells us, in order for conquest to occur 'a substantial degree of social organisation and centralisation had already to be in place'.[146] In contrast, it has been maintained that Akkad owed both its expansion and existence to warfare—specifically those conquests of Sargon I. Of course, it is true the Akkadians used warfare for expansion. In fact,

> most of the preserved historical documents from Mesopotamia and other early civilisations are records of various military undertakings and wars which can easily create the impression that the pre-modern world was nothing more than a giant battlefield.[147]

Nonetheless, the necessary preconditions for large-scale organised violence existed for some time *before* Sargon became the first-recorded emperor of history. Liverani tells us that, 'In no case is the Akkad empire an absolute novelty, it is rather a point in

[144] Wilhelmus Petrus Du Preez, *Genocide: The Psychology of Mass Murder* (London: Boyars/Bowerdean, 1994), 35. Cited also in T.M. Lemos, 'Dispossessing Nations: Population Growth, Scarcity, and Genocide in Ancient Israel and Twentieth-Century Rwanda,' in *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible: New Perspectives*, ed. Saul Olyan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 27-66, here 44.

[145] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 95.

[146] Ibid, 96.

[147] Ibid, 95.

a process which already had its precedents'.[148] At this point we must ask, what, in terms of social organisation and ideology, was in place before Sargon's rise and the Akkadian Empire's subsequent expansion? If Malešević is correct, we should, rightly, expect to see both the requisite social organisation within Akkadian society concurrently with a potent justifying ideology for the warfare they carried out.

3.3. The Ancient Near East and the Sociology of Warfare

The following discussion will not go into too much detail as it could take us far from the central topic of this thesis. That said, the next few pages will be given to establishing that Malešević's theory stands with respect to the Akkadian Empire which is worth establishing for two reasons. The first is that it helps us avoid the charge of anachronism, wherein one might choose to argue that social theories such as Malešević's only apply to modern societies and warfare. Secondly, the Akkadian Empire is squarely placed within the origins of early civilisation itself and the concurrent growth of statehood, which helps us establish the connection between statehood and large-scale organised violence; that is, war.

3.3.1. Akkad and the Cumulative Bureaucratisation of Coercion

Sargon emerges on the world stage immediately after a period that historians call Early Dynastic III, which is typically divided into two parts: ED IIIa (ca. 2600 – 2500 BCE) and ED IIIb (ca. 2500 – 2350 BCE). Sargon rises to power in 2334 BCE.[149] It is important to highlight this as the ED III period exhibits both the cumulative

[148] Mario Liverani, 'Akkad: An Introduction,' in *Akkad: The First World Empire*, ed. Mario Liverani. Vol 5 of History of Ancient Near East Studies (Sargon srl: Padova, 1993), 1-10, here 3.

[149] Nicole Brisch, 'History and Chronology,' in *The Sumerian World*, ed. Harriet Crawford (New York: Routledge, 2013), 111-27, here, 119-20.

bureaucratisation of coercion and the centrifugal ideologisation necessary for Sargon to accomplish his military conquests and establish himself as the world's first emperor. The *Cumulative Bureaucratisation of Coercion* was described by Malešević as the processual growth of social organisational structure that requires the tacit approval and action of human beings at all levels of the given hierarchy, and which requires 'continuous ideological legitimation'.[150] Such social organisation is required because, with few exceptions, 'human beings as individuals are circumspect of, and incompetent at, violence'.[151] Notably, 'in addition to military conflicts, the royal inscriptions of the ED III period often mention the building of temples in various cities'[152] which indicates a significant measure of social organisation, as well as ideologisation.[153] The ED III period also describes 'the first king in Mesopotamian history to institute reforms and release his citizens from work obligation, including debt'.[154] The king in question was Emetena, or 'Entemena', the ruler of Sumerian Lagash ca. 2400 BCE. Emetena's reforms point to the kinds of 'economic and social problems'[155] that are well known in 'later periods of Mesopotamian history'.[156] This tells us that the social organisation was such that it required bureaucratic means to bring about reform, which indicates a high level of social organisation centred on the authority of the king who had the power to bring about the required changes. Unsurprisingly, Brisch also tells us that there is 'frequent mention of military conflicts in the royal inscriptions of the ED IIIb period'[157] indicating 'that there were power struggles among city-states'.[158] This illustrates that the response to a military group

[150] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 7.
[151] Ibid, 8.
[152] Brisch, 'History and Chronology,'119.
[153] Ideologisation will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.2 of this chapter.
[154] Brisch, 'History and Chronology,' 119.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid, 120.
[158] Ibid.

with superior social organisation, which underscores their capacity for combat, is an increase in commensurate measure of social organisation. This indicates that the expanding cumulative bureaucracy of coercion expands well beyond the confines of particular groups, however defined. This is because even fending for oneself without central administration and social organisation against an enemy with both would be an impossible task, much less conquest.

There are indications that such high levels of social organisation existed a millennium earlier. Uruk had become the 'greatest city of the age' with a population of 40,000 to 50,000 people as early as 3500 BCE.[159] Furthermore, Uruk, and other cities were 'ruled by a hierarchy of priests and kings', which 'were always dependent on town councils for making major decisions. They organized a central hierarchical government overseeing a stratified society'.[160] Furthermore, as city-states develop division of labour commensurately increased. During this period people increasingly moved into cities and away from mainly agricultural occupations and began to take up 'non-food-producing occupations', which included occupations 'such as priests, scribes, craftsmen and merchants'.[161] Notably, soldiering emerged as an occupation as well.[162]

'There is no doubt', says Brisch, 'that the state of Akkad created a new paradigm of kingship and statehood in early Mesopotamia – that of the territorial state

[159] William Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36.
[160] Ibid, 37.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Hamblin tells us that 'the development of economic specialization gave rise to military specialists, who would develop into military professionals, elites, and ultimately martial aristocracies'. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC*, 37. Similarly, Malešević explains: 'The availability of storable food provided further impetus towards establishing long-term settlements – city states – which became densely populated and hence provided a large-scale labour force and contributed further to economic, political, religious and military specialisation and the development of social stratification. Although the overwhelming majority of the population were peasants, regular access to stored food created a situation whereby some peasants could also act as soldiers when the need arose'. Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 94.

seeking to expand its boundaries and seeking to institute a centralised rule'.[163] Given what we have discussed concerning the need for social organisation and potent legitimizing ideology if conquest with centralised rule is to occur, how do we account for the success of Sargon, who is viewed as the founder of the Old Akkadian dynasty? Notably, Sargon, once he defeated a city-state, left most of the administrative structures intact.[164] Administrative structures indicate complex social organisation and the capacity to maintain it. Sargon's leaving most of them intact reflects his appreciation of their necessity to the stabilization of conquered areas and his further expansion. Such levels of social organisation led to Liverani's conclusion that Sargon is, in fact, 'pre-Sargonic'.[165] He adds that while Akkad is 'considered the starting point of a process', it is, in fact, 'a culminating point'.[166]

Having discerned this, however, we know that legitimizing ideology for conquest and to uphold a group's social organisation, is also required. It has already been indicated that prior to Sargon's expansion there were priests and temples in Akkadian Mesopotamia. Still, ideology, theological or otherwise, is not enough to indicate that it *de facto* underscored violence on a large-scale. What do we discover when we examine the ideology which was present? Is there evidence of centrifugal ideologisation before the conquests of Sargon? Does Sargon also reflect a point of culmination in this regard, rather than a starting point?

[163] Brisch, 'History and Chronology,'120.
[164] Brisch, 'History and Chronology,'121.
[165] Liverani, 'Akkad: An Introduction,' 4.
[166] Ibid. In fact, complex social organisation is visible in Mesopotamia well before ED III. A millennium earlier than Sargon, from the late Uruk period, we have fragments of text which document 'over 120 categories of specialized administrative and priestly personnel in some sort of hierarchical order…The ranked list starts with an entry that on the basis of later parallels may be interpreted as 'king.' Subsequent entries are not all clearly understood but include the titles of administrators and lesser officials in charge of various state institutions including individuals in charge of the administration of justice, the city assembly, plowing, sowing and other agricultural activities, temples, etc'. Guillermo Algaze, 'The End of Prehistory and the Uruk Period,' in *The Sumerian World,* ed. Harriot Crawford (New York: Routledge, 2013), 68-94, here 80.

3.3.2. Akkad and Centrifugal Ideologization

Malešević explains that 'traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquests and coercive forms of governance'.[167] Regarding Akkadian Mesopotamia, Hamblin tells us that 'the centralization of power in the hands of allied royal and priestly classes was associated with the emergence of a divinely mandated martial ideology'.[168] He adds that 'the kings and priests embarked on a flamboyant program of monumental building of immense temples, palaces and city fortifications' as early as the Late Uruk period (3500-3000 BCE).[169] It was the temples that were the most extravagant of the building projects.[170]

There was a developing ideology, which correlated with the building of these temples. That is, it was during the Late Uruk period that 'a royal ideology of divine kingship developed in which the king was chosen by the gods as his representative on earth'.[171] Sometimes, the king was viewed as the son of a god, and sometimes as 'a god incarnate'.[172] The emergence of organised violence under a ruler requires moral justification. During the Late Uruk period an ideology emerged and was perpetuated by the belief that 'when the king acted as warlord, he was acting under the express command of the gods as revealed through divination and oracles. The gods themselves were the ultimate arbiters of war'.[173] Furthermore, 'the patron goddess of

[167] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 9. Also, Malešević describes the centrality of religion for large-scale social organisation in the ancient Near East: 'What was also important for the long-term success of this process [of growing social organisation] was a degree of societal solidarity enhanced by shared religious tradition'. Ibid, 94.

[168] Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC*, 37.

[169] Of course, such temples are also indicative of large-scale social organisation. Ibid.

[170] 'The most lavish building projects', says Hamblin, 'were temples, such as the great Eanna ('House of Heaven') temple complex at Uruk (CAM 61-3). None the less, massive monumental fortifications were also built, such as the great mud-brick wall of Uruk, built around 3000, which had a circumference of six miles; its ruins can still be seen 5000 years later. By the Early Dynastic period all Mesopotamian cities were fortified with such huge mud-brick walls'. Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Ibid.

Uruk – where we first see evidence of this new ideology – was Inanna ('Lady of Heaven', the Akkadian Ishtar), patroness of love and war'.[174] This martial ideology is expressed in the art that has been left to us from the period.[175] 'The glorification of the martial deeds of the gods, legendary heroes, or kings clearly points to a fundamental martial ideology as a significant indicator that Mesopotamia had crossed the military threshold by the mid-fourth millennium'.[176] The historical record, therefore, describes the presence of military ideologisation in Mesopotamia at least 700 years before Sargon.

The 'Priest-King' phenomenon also emerges during Late Uruk period.[177] 'Priest-King' images display a male figure who is engaged in martial activities, which include 'fighting enemies, assaulting fortified cities, transporting captives by boat, and torturing or executing bound prisoners'.[178] It is difficult to discern whether the priest-king images are historical, idealized, or a combination of the two. However, it can be said that 'minimally, the Priest-king iconography demonstrates that martial kingship was ideologically highly developed in Uruk by the late fourth millennium'.[179] An inscription, left to us from the temple in Nippur, states that Sargon 'won thirty-four military campaigns and destroyed all his enemies and "as chief of the

[174] Ibid.

[175] 'The earliest Mesopotamian art was largely ornamental and often abstract. This type of art continued throughout the Late Uruk period, during which we also find the first ideologically-rich martial art, from both sculpture and cylinder seals'. Ibid.

[176] Ibid, 38.

[177] Ibid, 37. Algaze, when describing the Priest-King, explains that 'much of Uruk art…deals with the ideologically charged activities of a larger-than-life bearded male figure, who wears his hair in a chignon and sports a net-like shirt. Typically depicted as a hunter of wild animals and men, as a leader in battle, as a fountain of agricultural wealth…and as the main officiator in various religious rituals'. Algaze, ' The End of Prehistory and the Uruk Period,' 80.

[178] Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC*, 39.

[179] Ibid. Similarly, Malešević explains that 'the gradual development of a polity's organisational power went hand in hand with the proliferation of elaborate belief systems centred around the emperor who was depicted and perceived either as a god or the deity's only legitimate representative on earth. Although the historical evidence is largely lacking on how ordinary peasants understood these religious doctrines it seems from the scant archaeological findings that most shared the belief in the divine origins of their rulers. The political power of rulers was enhanced as much by military victories as by these shared beliefs in serving the real divine authority'. Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 95.

gods" permitted no rivals'.[180] Such a military conquest could only have taken place under such a divine king ideology if it have been in place for hundreds of years before Sargon, along with a commensurate degree of social organisation.[181] While describing the Victory Stele of Naramsin (ca. 2254-2218 BCE) Bahrani has said that

> the king's deification is the primary feature that stands out in the relief. The horned helmet he wears is a direct signal. The iconographic helmet corroborates the written accounts that describe his deification and strengthens his divine status by means of the image.[182]

She adds that 'the image is not just concerned with divine kingship or the declaration of the king as divine; it is about the king as one who defeats and subjugates others through war, violence, and physical aggression'.[183] Similarly, the divinity of the Babylonian king Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE) is conveyed via the Codex Hammurabi stele.[184] Hammurabi stands in front of the god Šamaš in the top frame of the stele. Bahrani tells us that this illustrates that:

> He enters his world. The spaces of the sacred and the profane are merged in ways that are perhaps more alarming than the Victory Stele of Naramsin or Naramsin's transfiguration of himself into divinity. Hammurabi has come face-to-face with the god. He is smaller than the god Šamaš, yet very like him in many respects.[185]

In ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts the roles of gods and kings routinely overlap indicating the prevalence of divine kingship ideology throughout the Levant.

It is important to describe the way that ideology is perpetuated throughout the ancient Near East so that we can appreciate the role of Israelite oral historiography. Younger describes the way that Egyptian imperialistic ideology spread:

> With regard to the diffusion of the Egyptian imperialistic ideology, it is very clear that the message was communicated by the visual, oral and written modes. The publication of the texts on the outside walls of temples, on stelae set up in key locations throughout the empire, and the very nature of the hieroglyphs themselves demonstrate that the messages of the texts were intended for the public and that some attempt at a high-redundance message was being undertaken. Since the temple-centred towns probably formed the backbone of urbanism in

[180] Ibid.
[181] The essential elements of social organisation include, 'writing, social hierarchy, a significant population density and rudimentary elements of statehood'. Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 95. n. 4.
[182] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 106.
[183] Ibid, 107.
[184] Ibid, 114.
[185] Ibid, 118.

> Egypt during the Empire period (ca. 1500-1200 B.C.), the diffusion of these messages was greatly enhanced.[186]

The same can be said of royal ideology everywhere throughout the Levant. Consider the following from the Annals of Shalmaneser III (859 – 824 BCE):

> I massacred them. I carried off their spoils. I made two stelae of my royalty. I wrote on them the praise of my power. I erected the first at the beginning of his cities and the second at the end of his cities, where the sea begins.[187]

The role of erected stelae in conquered areas with respect to the perfusion of ideology cannot go underestimated. The following is from the Shalmaneser III's 'Marble Slab':

> I went to the mountains of Ba'li-ra'si at the side of the sea and (lies) opposite Tyre. I erected a stela of my royalty there.[188]

Such statements concerning the erection of stelae are common. This same slab describes Shalmaneser stating:

> I went up on Mt. Lebanon. I set up a stela of my royalty with the stela of Tiglath-Pileser (I), the great king who went before me.[189]

Stelae, and other reliefs were an essential means of spreading ideologisation regarding a king's authority, especially in conquered areas.

It is essential to understand that gods, kings and land were considered intimately linked throughout the ancient Near East. Gadd tells us that 'God and king are two conceptions so nearly coupled in the oriental [sic] mind that the distinction is constantly blurred'.[190] Smith gives a clear description of this link that is worth quoting at length given its centrality to appreciating ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, and Israelite warfare accounts particularly:

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[186] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 189.

[187] dīkta(GAZ)-šu$_2$-nu a-duk šal-la-su-nu áš-lu-la II ṣa-lam ŠAR$_4$-ti-ya ēpuš ta-na-ti kiš-šu-ti-a ina libbi al-ṭu-ur ištēn ina rēš URU^{MEŠ}-ni-šu$_2$ šanû ina qa-ni URU^{MEŠ}-ni-šu ina rēš tam-di áz-qu-up. F. Safar, 'A Further Text of Shalmaneser III from Assur', *Sumer* 7 (1951): 3-21; E. Michel, 'Die Assur-Texte Salmanassars III (858-824),' *Die Welt des Orients* 2 no. 1 (1954): 27-45. Translation from R. Borger, *TUAT*, ed. O. Kaiser (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1984); Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 103.

[188] a-na KUR-e ^{KUR}Ba-a'-li-ra-'a-si ša pūt(SAG) tam-di ša pu-ut māt sur-ri al-lik ṣa-lam ŠAR$_4$-ti-ya ina lìb-bi u$_2$-te-ziz. Translation from Borger (1984); Transliteration updated from Younger's, 106.

[189] a-na ^{KUR}Lab-na-na lu e-li sa-lam ŠAR$_4$-ti-ya it-ti ṣal-me ša Tukul-ti-apil-é-šár-ra ŠAR$_4$ rabî(GAL-i) a-lik pa-ni-ya ú-še-ziz. Transliteration from Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 106.

[190] C. T. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 33. Cited also in Gary V. Smith, 'The Concept of God/the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible,' *TJ* 3 NS (1982): 18-38, here, 32.

> Israelite kings ruled, shepherded and governed their people, sat upon a throne in a palace, judged important court cases, and were the commanders-in-chief of the army just like the kings in other neighboring nations. But the Israelites did not believe the human king was a mediator between God and men, or the one who integrated and harmonized man with the natural world, as was the case in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Israelite king was not deified and did not serve in the cultic drama which re-enacted a divine battle in the New Year's festival. Human kingship in Israel was introduced well after the formation of the nation, so this institution appears less significant than kingship in cultures around Israel.
>
> These factors draw the focus of attention to the unique character of Israel's true king, Yahweh. This uniqueness does not deny certain conceptual or functional similarities with the ancient Near Eastern ideas about the kingship of the gods. Three primary components which unite themselves in the Israelite metaphor of God as king are similar to those used in other religions: (a) Yahweh (as other gods) is Lord and king of the world; (b) Yahweh (as other gods) is a mighty warrior who destroys his enemies; and (c) Yahweh (as other gods) is a judge over his kingdom.[191]

Throughout this thesis we will observe that normative elements of ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts similarly persist in Israelite warfare accounts. Characteristics, which are typically exhibited by kings throughout ancient Near Eastern annals, are attributed to YHWH in Hebrew accounts of warfare—particularly in the books of Joshua and Judges. This highlights, therefore, YHWH's sovereignty *as king*.[192] The remaining chapters of this thesis illustrate how such normative elements of ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts reflect and reinforce the ideologisation and social organisation necessary for the emergence of large-scale organised violence. Bahrani informs us that 'deities were associated with particular cities as patron gods'.[193] This association between land and gods was so strong that 'the removal of the god from the city had disastrous consequences. The god was exiled. He (or she) went into a form of occultation wherein divine power and protection were removed from the city'.[194] Given such a strong relationship between gods and land, it comes as no surprise that a people with a god and a nomadic past (at least so far as such a nomadic past featured prominently in their cultural memory) would have had a correlating belief in a *promise* of land from that god.

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[191] Ibid, 33.

[192] Smith reminds that 'Martin Buber defines Israelite religion as the belief in the kingship of God'. Ibid, 33-34.

[193] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 165.

[194] Ibid. Representations of divine presence and agency are discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.2.

While those in fortified city-states had gods in their central temples, the Israelites required an element of their narrative, which illustrated the presence of YHWH and his promise to them—this, of course, is accomplished via the Ark of the Covenant. The intimacy of these themes will be drawn out in chapters six through eight in particular. This thesis will reveal that the Hebrew Biblical warfare accounts possess themes which persist throughout the ancient Near East; and how those normative elements reflect and reinforce the social organisation and ideologisation necessary for the capacity for large-scale organised violence.

4. The Sociology of Warfare and the Hebrew Bible

This chapter illustrates the development of the sociological underpinnings (again, not 'forces' or 'causes') of organised violence within the narrative arc of the Hebrew Bible. The way that the texts from Exodus to Deuteronomy reveal the same processual development of the sociological underpinnings among the Israelites as that of their ancient Near Eastern counterparts is remarkable. That is, it parallels the discussion concerning the development of the same sociological factors within the ancient Near East more generally, which were described in the previous chapter. It is important to appreciate the way that the narrative reflects reality *vis-à-vis* the sociology of warfare. This is because it helps us to appreciate the value of narrative in glorifying and maintaining the required social underpinnings if a group is to be effective militarily.

4.1. The Hebrew Bible and the Cumulative Bureaucratisation of Coercion

In the preceding section we noted that before Sargon had his military success the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion was firmly established. Notably, we will see that the narrative describes that the same is true for the Israelites before they cross the Jordan and begin their conquest.[195] Early in Israel's narrative, prior to there being large-scale social organisation (which was characterized by laws, rules and bureaucracies, rather than social organisation dependent entirely upon nepotistic relationships)[196] among the Israelites, YHWH is described doing Israel's fighting for

[195] It is necessary to remind the reader here that we are concerned with what the narrative is conveying rather than what may, or may not have historically happened so far as describing what the narrative is conveying reinforces the social organisation of the text's contemporary audience.

[196] See the previous chapter, especially section 3.2.1, for a reminder of this disctinction *vis-à-vis* Weber.

them (Exodus 7-11, 14).[197] That is, until they were attacked by Amalek and his men (Exodus 17:8-14). When the Israelites were attacked Moses commanded[198] Joshua to 'choose' (בחר)[199] men and to then go fight Amalek and his soldiers (Exodus 17:9). The narrative describes the battle as having been long and close though finally won with YHWH's assistance via a 'rod of Elohim' (Exodus 17:9). In the aftermath of the battle, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, expresses his concern for Moses so far as Moses is Israel's sole judge. Jethro suggests that Moses should establish other judges as officers (Exodus 18:19-26), suggesting that improved social organisation was required to become more effective militarily.[200] These officers served both civil and military functions; therefore, it would be inappropriate to separate the social organisation of Israel from its military organisation.[201] This is in keeping with the reigning theories of Weber, Marx and Malešević, that state level social organisation and hierarchy has its origins in required military organisation, or a bureaucracy of coercion.[202] As we have observed, however, social organisation is also the means by which prevailing ideologies are promulgated and reinforced. Such would be particularly important for a group like Israel in a pre-monarchic, pre-centralisation period. This is because both would have to be reinforced endogenously as it would have lacked the typical state structures of its city-state contemporaries.

[197] John I. Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary 3 (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 192, 234, 238.

[198] Notably, Moses is clearly in command of Joshua who is himself depicted immediately as a leader in war. Beer described Joshua as 'Der eigentliche Heerführer' and Moses as 'der Oberfeldherr'. Georg Beer, *Exodus*, Handbuch zum Alten Testament 3 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1939), 92.

[199] Here 'choose' or 'pick out' (בחר) suggests that Joshua is to select 'a fighting elite'. Durham, *Exodus*, 235-6. The LXX specifically singles out 'strong men' (ἄνδρας δυνατοὺς).

[200] Knierim notes 'die strenge Struktur der militärischen Organisation von Ex 18'. Rolf P. Knierim, 'Exodus 18 und die Neuordnung der mosaischen Gerichtsbarkeit,' *ZAW* 73 (1961): 146-71, here, 168.

[201] Ibid, 168-71.

[202] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 5-8; Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1152; Marx, *Capital*, 308; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 163.

4.1.1. Social Stratification

The first census of Israel is described to have been done according to clan and ancestral house (Numbers 1) and then each group are said to have been enrolled as in an army (Numbers 1:19-43) with the exception of the Levites, who had been designated priests with the purpose of looking after everything relevant to the tabernacle (Numbers 1:48-54). Noth has said that the census in Numbers 1 was 'part of the constitution of the external organization of Israel, just as similar kinds of surveys were probably usual among confederated communities in ancient times.'[203] Numbers 1:2 (reiterated for each tribe in verses 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42) describes that the census was to be of all Israelite males twenty years of age and older who were able to go to war.[204] Therefore, it is clear that 'the census had a military function.'[205] Mendenhall has said that censuses everywhere have had 'two major functions: to serve as the basis for levying and collecting taxes, and to serve as a register of those men subject to military duty (or corvée)'[206] and adds that 'there is no reason to associate the various census lists of the Bible with taxation,' which leaves us with 'only the military aspects.'[207] Mendenhall argued on the basis of Noth's conclusion that the tribe was the 'largest socio-political unit in ancient Israel'[208] that any levying of troops would have had to have been 'on a "tribal"

[203] Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1968), 19-20.

[204] Noth affirms this and has said that 'according to the reference to military service in v. 3, repeated, along with the reference to twenty years old, in stereotyped form from v. 20 onwards, it would appear to be a census of those who are capable of bearing arms. In fact, already in the ancient East such censuses must have been undertaken in the interests of the orderly presentation of military forces (cf. also 1 Sam. 11.8 and the role of the military commander and his officers in II Sam. 24.2ff.)' Ibid, 20.

[205] Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Doubleday, 1993), 129. Levine adds that the census 'also prepared the way for a delineation of the levitical assignments and for the provisions for maintaining the Tabernacle, both when stationary within the Israelite encampment and when on the march.' Ibid. We will see that there is a military reason for the location of the Tabernacle within the Israelite encampment as well.

[206] George E. Mendenhall, 'The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,' *JBL* 77, no.1 (1958), 52-66, here 53-54.

[207] Ibid, 54.

[208] Ibid.

basis,'[209] which is what appears to have been described in Numbers 1 given that twelve men who are said to be the heads of their ancestral houses (Numbers 1:4-16) are described as having been assigned the task of assisting with the enrollment (Numbers 1:20-42). The question, then, is what kind of social organisation is pre-monarchic Israel according to the Hebrew Bible and is it one that could make the tribes an effective fighting force?[210]

4.1.2. The Social Structure of Pre-Monarchic Israel

Leach, an anthropologist, has used the metaphor 'unscrambling omelets' in order to represent the complicated task of discerning texts in the bible which could be considered earlier than others; and he has used the metaphor 'collecting butterflies' to describe the process of using cross-cultural correlations with respect to social

[209] Ibid.

[210] Rogerson has pointed out that the idea that pre-monarchic Israel was a segementary society, that is, one without central leadership over the tribes, has been a popular view among biblical scholars. See J. W. Rogerson, 'Was Early Israel a Segmentary Society?,' *JSOT* 11, no. 36 (1986): 17-26, here 17-18. This article can also be found as a chapter in David J. Chalcraft, ed., *Social-Scientific Old Testament Criticism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Cf. Paula McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (London: SPCK, 1999), 78-81. Contrary to this view Mendenhall maintained that the census lists in Numbers 1 and 26 were from the pre-monarchic period and indicated the presence of military organisation with central leadership. Mendenhall, 'The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,' 54-55. Fiensy undermined the use of Evans-Pritchard's anthropological work by biblical scholars to support the theory that pre-monarchic Israel was a segmentary society in D. Fiensy, 'Using the Nuer Culture of Africa in Understanding the Old Testament: An Evaluation,' *JSOT* 38 (1987): 73-83. Fiensy did this on the basis of anthropological research which had called into question Evans-Pritchard's conclusions about the Nuer, the people upon whom Evans-Pritchard's understanding of segementary societies was based. See P.J. Greuel, 'The Leopard-Skin Chief: An Examination of Political Power Among the Nuer,' *American Anthropologist* 73, no. 5 (1971): 1115-1120; T.O. Beidelman, 'Nuer Priests and Prophets: Charisma, Authority, and Power among the Nuer,' in *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E.E. Evans-Pritchard*, ed. T.O. Beidelman, (London: Tavistock, 1971), 375- 415, here 387; P. Howell, *A Manual of Nuer Law* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954); P. Coriat, 'Gwek the Witch-Doctor and the Pyramid of Dengkur,' *Sudan Notes and Records* 22, no. 2 (1939): 221-237; B.A. Lewis, 'Nuer Spokesmen: A Note on the Institution of the Ruic,' *Sudan Notes and Records* 32 (1951): 77-84. Before Fiensy, however, the same conclusions, *contra* Evans-Pritchard, had not been expressed in Hebrew Biblical studies where Evans-Pritchard's ideas had been accepted. Furthermore, ways that pre-monarchic Israel is described in the Hebrew Bible differing from segmentary societies has been amptly noted. See, for example, the work of Martin and Rogerson who illustrate that segmentary societies lack rules of primogeniture, as well as parental authority and legal power, whereas the Hebrew Bible describes pre-monarchic Israel possessing both. J.D. Martin, 'Israel as a Tribal Society,' in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives,* ed. R.E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 95-117, here 102-103; Rogerson, 'Was Early Israel a Segmentary Society?,' 23.

organisation and structure in order to try and reconstruct the social structure and organisation of ancient Israel.[211] Both metaphors seem fitting to anyone trying to appreciate the variety of theories and scholarly opinions with respect to the 'Deuteronomistic History'. Nonetheless, this is the task before us, and while it may be impossible to prove that one model is true with respect to the social organisation and structure of pre-monarchic Israel, we will see that some ideas regarding this issue are more plausible than others.

The archaeological evidence indicates that 'Israelites' were definitely in Canaan as a monarchy as early as 835 BCE, and present in some way in the area during Pharaoh Merneptah's reign three centuries earlier than that.[212] Furthermore, new evidence suggests that 'Israel' was possibly present as early as the middle of the second millennium BCE[213] and that they were engaged in warfare. Therefore, at the very least, a group called 'Israel' was there and fighting wars of defense.[214] The degree to which the traditions (whether oral or written) circulated is the degree to

[211] Edmund Leach, 'Anthropological Approaches to the Study of the Bible during the Twentieth Century,' in *Structuralist Interpretations of Biblical Myth,* eds. Edmund Leach and D. Alan Aycock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 7-32. Cf. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 1.

[212] The first date is a reference to the well-known Mesha stele and the Merneptah stela places Israel in the region towards the end of the thirteenth century BCE.

[213] This much earlier date is attributed to the discussion around the Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687. See Peter van der Veen, Christoffer Theis and Manfred Görg, 'Israel in Canaan (Long) Before Pharaoh Mernenptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687,' *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2, no. 4 (2010): 15-25. Akin to the Merneptah stela, the pedestal relief also appears to list Israel in a name ring along with Ashkelon and Canaan.

[214] Finkelstein, Silberman, McNutt, and Na'aman are not convinced that much, if anything, can be said about the "Israel" of the thirteenth century because of its mention on the Merneptah Stele. Israel Finkelstein and Niel Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 57; McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 44; Nadav Na'aman, 'Saul, Benjamin and the Emergence of Biblical Israel (Part 1),' *ZAW* 121, no. 2 (2009), 211-224, here 211. Other scholars, however, argue that evidence such as the Merneptah Stele tells us that Israel was not a city-state but most likely an agricultural, sedentary, socioethnic group in the hill country of thirteenth century BCE Palestine. See G.W. Ahlström and D. Edelman, 'Merneptah's Israel,' *JNES* 44, no. 1 (1985): 59-61; Michael G. Hasel, '*Israel* in the Merneptah Stela,' *BASOR* 296 (1994), 45-61; William Dever, 'Ceramics, Ethnicity and the Origins of Israel,' *BA* 58, no. 4 (1995), 200-213, here, 208-209; Aloo Osotsi Mojola, 'The 'Tribes' of Israel? A Bible Translator's Dilemma,' *JSOT* 81 (1998): 15-29; Zecharia Kallai, 'The Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel,' *VT* 47, no. 1 (1997): 53-90.

which they would have helped the Israelites maintain the social structure and ideology necessary to be effective militarily.

McNutt reminds us that 'anthropologists have noted a tendency for tribal structure to remain intact even after a tribal territory has been incorporated into a state system,'[215] which means that the 'biblical construct may reflect to some extent the Iron Age I situation.'[216] There are, specifically, three terms which appear in the Hebrew Bible as references to social structure, although it not always clear what each term means in its given context.[217] These terms are: בית אב (*bêt'āb*), literally 'house of the father' but loosely translated as 'family,' משפחה (*mišpāḥāh*), often translated as 'clan,' and שבט (*šēbeṭ*), or 'tribe.'[218] We will also address the term אלף,*'eleph*, which could be numerical, indicating a thousand, or a 'kinship group, and/or fighting group.'[219]

The first, בית אב, refers to the immediate nuclear and extended families up to and inclusive of three or four generations.[220] משפחה is much more ambiguous and its usage appears to overlap with בית אב, nonetheless, it can safely be asserted that it is a wider-level kinship group, inclusive of the בית אב, rather than a non-kinship based 'protective association,' which was the view put forward by Gottwald.[221] Citing Bendor, McNutt tells us that the בית אב

> appealed to and accepted judgment from the *mišpāḥāh* in conflict situations that could not be resolved within the *bêt'āb* itself; the *bêt'āb* requested assistance from the *mišpāḥāh* in times of crisis and participated in periodic land distribution; it appealed to the *mišpāḥāh* for assistance in relation to blood feuds and marriages; and it participated in communal rituals.[222]

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[215] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 87.
[216] Ibid, 88.
[217] Ibid.
[218] S. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel: The Intitution of the Family (Beit'ab) from the Settlement to the End of the Monarchy* (Jerusalem: Simor, 2000), 45.
[219] Ibid, 94.
[220] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 88. For a thorough and in-depth treatment בית אב see Parts I and II of Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 45-204.
[221] See Bendor's discussion of this in Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel*, 82-86. Cf. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 92.
[222] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* 91. Cf. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel,* 118, 141-164.

Furthermore, the משפחה 'is typically understood to have been composed of a number of extended families ("father's houses") that resided together in a village or a small town.'[223]

For our purposes, we are particularly interested in the level of social organisation which is considered the tribal level, the שבט, as well as the אלף, as it is this level which Mendenhall and Gottwald maintained must have possessed a degree of social organisation, internally, to make Israel capable of organizing for warfare. Given what has been argued by McNutt and Bendor, it is arguable that the שבט and אלף would have been entirely dependent upon the kinship ties implicit to it via the משפחה and the בית אב for its success as a larger social unit capable of mobilizing for warfare. This brings our discussion back to Gottwald and Mendenhall.

In a later work, Mendenhall, described the enormous exceptions he took to Gottwald's association with him, particularly with respect to what Gottwald supposedly determined about Israel in the Late Bronze and Iron I period.[224] Controversy and intense disagreement, however, helps to delineate issues and clarify them, and for that reason Mendenhall's writing in this essay[225] represents the clearest statement regarding what he believes can actually be said about Israel in the premonarchic period. Furthermore, what Mendenhall does say in the essay is consistent with the best of current archaeology as well. It describes a people who would have need of military propaganda so far as they possessed the degree of social organisation necessary, and held a unique ideological framework, to warrant their being designated a unique peoples worthy of mention on the Merneptah stela. What

[223] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* 91.
[224] George E. Mendenhall, 'Ancient Israel's Hyphenated History,' in *Palestine in Transition: The Emergence of Ancient Israel*, eds. David Noel Freedman and David Frank Graf (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983), 91-103, here 91-92. Cf. Martin, 'Israel as a Tribal Society,' 107-108.
[225] Mendenhall, 'Ancient Israel's Hyphenated History'.

Mendenhall (and for that matter Gottwald, and more currently, McNutt,[226] Dever,[227] Finkelstein and Silberman),[228] *does* say about Israel in the premonarchic period is that the people who would become known as 'Israel' were indigenous inhabitants of Canaan, and that the population growth and increase in the number of villages in Iron I was due to the collapse of Late Bronze Canaanite city-states[229] rather than the *cause* of their collapse as described in the Bible's conquest accounts of Canaan.[230]

Brett sums up the consensus with respect to the archaeology when he states that

> there are at least two areas of substantial agreement amongst the leading archaeologists: first, there was an Israelite state in the ninth century, and there is significant continuity between this state and the Iron I settlements. Secondly, the population of the Iron I hill county was primarily indigenous.[231]

Therefore, in the final analysis, we can assert that there was an 'Israel' in Iron I. In addition, however, based upon the consistency of material culture (pottery and religious artifacts), as well as 'Israel's' mention on the Merneptah stele, Dever has argued that the 'Israel' of Iron I is that of the Late Bronze.[232] Taken together, therefore, we know that Israel was fighting wars of defense, and doing so without the support structures of its city-state contemporaries and more powerful nations such as Egypt; and that, therefore, the description of 'savior stories' given in the book of

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[226] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* 57, 63. Cited also in Mark Brett, 'Israel's Indigenous Origins: Cultural Hybridity and the Formation of Israelite Ethnicity,' *BibInt* 11, no. 3 (2003), 400-412, here 401.

[227] William Dever, *What did the Biblical Writers Know, and When did they Know it?: What Archaeology can tell us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 41, 99. Cited also in Brett, 'Israel's Indigenous Origins,' 401.

[228] Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 118. Cited also in Brett, 'Israel's Indigenous Origins,' 401.

[229] Mendenhall, 'Ancient Israel's Hyphenated History,' 98. Curiously, Brett's otherwise helpful article on Israel's origins makes no mention of Mendenhall, nor Gottwald's contributions. See Brett, 'Israel's Indigenous Origins,' 400-412.

[230] Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 118.

[231] Brett, 'Israel's Indigenous Origins,' 402.

[232] Dever uses the term 'Proto-Israel' for the 'Israel' of the thirteenth and twelfth century BCE, but believes that in time, as more evidence is uncovered, we will be able to abandon the term in favor of 'early Israel.' Along with the Merneptah stela, he defends his identification of 'Proto-Israel' with 'Israel' 'on the demonstrable *continuity of material culture*'. Dever, 'Ceramics, Ethnicity and the Question of Israel's Origins,' 210. Cf. Brett, 'Israel's Indigenous Origins,' 401.

Judges and their differences (even their oral quality) from the 'conquest accounts' of Israel's Ancient Near Eastern contemporaries, is consistent with the archaeological evidence regarding Israel in the Late Bronze and Iron I inasmuch as they are about a people that are falling under the rule of local kings within an area in which they already inhabit. That they *had* texts, or at least oral propaganda, around which the otherwise disparate villages could identify and without which Israel could not represent a united front against outside threats, can hardly be denied so far as it is virtually impossible to imagine an 'Israel' of a scale worthy of mention on the Merneptah stele that did not also have stories around which they identified as a people. That said, while it may not be possible to prove – barring an extraordinary archaeological find – that 'Israel' had written versions of 'savior stories' which circulated in the pre-monarchic era, it is at least necessary to investigate whether or not it is plausible, and/or whether or not it is plausible that there are oral sources which predate the accounts given in the book of Judges.

Notably, two of biblical scholars' most commonly considered earliest texts (Exodus 15 and Judges 5) are war narratives. Overwhelming, scholars are inclined to date the Song of the Sea early.[233] Similarly, whilst debated, the Song of Deborah

[233] These scholars include Frank M. Cross and David N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1997); Brian Russell, *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1-21* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007); David A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature for the Seminar on Form Criticism, 1972); Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1997); Shawn Flynn, *YHWH is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Durham describes, but is unconvinced by Bender's attempt to date the text around 450 BCE (Adolf Bender, 'Das Lied Exodus 15,' *ZAW* 23 [1903], 1-48, here 46-48) as well as Haupt's attempt to date the text to around 350 BCE (Paul Haupt, 'Moses' Song of Triumph,' *AJSL* 20 [1904], 149-172, here 150-158). Though he accepts that Strauss (Hans Strauss, 'Das Meerlied des Mose—ein 'Siegeslied' Israels?' *ZAW* 97 [1985]: 103-109) has shown that the Song 'may have an application to a postexilic context'. Durham, *Exodus*, 203. Durham appears to accept Cross's dating and that the song has an oral source datable to the end of the twelfth and early eleventh century, which served as a precursor to its first becoming a written work in the tenth century BCE. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 121-125. Cross argues that Exodus 15 is 'consistently archaic' and 'conforms throughout to the prosodic patterns and canons of the Late Bronze Age'

appears to be premonarchic as well.[234] Both emphasize YHWH's status as leader and even sole wager of war and, in doing so, both express his kingship as well. Inasmuch as they express YHWH's kingship and authority over nature and war, they contribute to the cult. Insofar as they reflect and contribute to the cult they were essential to the ideologisation, which at some point in time, was central to Israel's capacity for war. These are not merely homogenizing texts, but texts, oral in their sources, which homogenized otherwise disparate groups into one group with a common identity and heritage capable of mobilizing for warfare. Is it appropriate, however, to link these texts with the 'Israel' of the Merneptah stele, or are they from a later historical strata?

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concluding that 'all the evidence points to a premonarchic date for the Song of the Sea, in the late twelfth or early eleventh century B.C. Ibid, 121,124. Those who argue for a later dating do so by arguing that the evidence used to date the texts early are examples of 'archaizing'. Donald Watson Goodwin, *Text-Restoration Methods in Contemporary U.S.A. Biblical Scholarship* (Naples, Italy: Instituto Orientale Di Napoli, 1969), 48; Martin Leon Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Ex 15:1-21* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991), 34-36. However, these arguments have been criticized on the basis of a large clustering of archaic elements, the consistent usage of archaisms (rather than a mixture of archaic forms and later ones), and an absence of later conventions, which allow us confidently to date the text early. Russell, *The Song of the Sea*, 59-73. Cf. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry*; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic,* 121-44.

[234] J. A. Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1981), 80. For an extensive list of scholars who maintain the Song of Deborah is datable to the eleventh or twelfth century BCE see Serge Frolov, 'How Old is the Song of Deborah?' *JSOT* 36, no. 2 (2011): 163-84, here 164, n. 2; W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' *BASOR* 62 (1936): 26-31, here, 26. Block maintains, on the basis of archaisms and Judah's absence from the song's tribal list, that the Song of Deborah is premonarchic and attributable to Deborah herself. D.I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, New American Commentary 6 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 215. Lindars similarly thinks the Song is early monarchic on account of the ten tribes list. Barnabas Lindars, *Judges 1-5: A New Translation and Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 213-215. Some maintain the Song is much later, Waltisberg, for example, dates the Song as late as the third century on account of Aramaisms. M.Z. Waltisberg, 'Zum Alter der Sprache des Deboraliedes Ri 5', *ZAH* 12 (1999): 218-32. Diebner believes the Song is datable to the period of the Hasmonean kingdom due to similarities to Greek mythology. B. Diebner, 'Wann sang Deborah ihr Lied? Überlegungen zu zwei der ältesten Texte des TNK (Ri 4 und 5)', *ACEBT* 14 (1995): 106-30. Frolov thinks the song as datable to 700-450 BCE because it is integral to the 'Deuternomistic oeuvre' and other sociohistorical considerations. Frolov, 'How Old is the Song of Deborah,'183. Frolov also draws a connection between Judges 5:19 and 1 Kings 4:12 in that Tanaach and Megiddo were populated in Iron I, existed in Iron II, and are mentioned in texts which could not possibly predate the monarchy (i.e, 1 Kings 4:12; 9:15; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29-30). Ibid; Cf. H.M. Niemann, 'Taanach und Umegiddo: Überlegungen zur Strukturell-istorischen Situation zwischen Saul und Salomo,' *VT* 52, no. 1 (2002): 93-102. Frolov addresses, then dismisses the usual perceived archaisms in the song: the use of זה as a relative/determinative pronoun; the second person singular suffix תי; the emphatic *lamed* extended by –מה; abnormal duals; and the song's following Ugaritic poetic practices so far as the preterite is sometimes expressed by prefixed conjugations. Frolov, 'How Old is the Song of Deborah?'166-170. However, he does not address the unlikelihood of all of these appearing together in a text—a song no less—which is Deuteronomistic. The confluence of these devices is consistant with what we would expect if a song was spread orally, and then later made part of a Deuteronomistic text. Therefore, it is still reasonable, or at least arguable, that the Song of Deborah, like the Song of the Sea, is pre-monarchic in origin and contributed considerably to the formation of Israel's identity, ideology and, therefore, social organisation.

So given that we can still safely maintain that these texts are 'pre-monarchic' in origin we can ask, what was the purpose of these songs? Why this particular way of commemorating events and what did it offer for the people who recited the songs? In order to understand the role of particular narratives, some understanding of the role of narrative for a given group is necessary. Whatever else, and for whatever purpose the Song of the Sea and the Song of Deborah may have been composed and later redacted, at the very least we can assert that the songs possess ideology; that they play a role in the dynamic ideologisation of a people so far as they were sung (likely at both micro and macro levels of its social organisation); and that they may even be partly responsible, if not entirely responsible, apart from the events they are purporting to describe, for the formation of a self-identifying people, namely, 'premonarchic' Israel. Indeed, the Song of the Sea is still recited during morning service in synagogue and read on the seventh day of Passover.[235] According to László and Ehmann, historical narratives, though the same can arguably said for all narratives, possess three perspectives.[236] The first of these is the ingroup which is 'represented by ingroup members taking part in the events;' the second is the outgroup, 'represented by outgroup members;' and the third is that of the narrator.[237] Keeping in mind the distinction between narrator and writer/composer along with the fact that we are discussing narrative, Moses is the narrator in the Song of the Sea, whilst the Israelites are the ingroup, and the Egyptian army is the outgroup. László and Ehmann tell us that the 'narrator's perspective prevails in most historical accounts'[238] and indeed the same is true in Exodus 15. Insofar as the narrator's

[235] Schniedwind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 52-53.
[236] László and Ehmann, 'Narrative Social Psychology and the Narrative Categorical Content Analysis (NarrCat) in the Study of Social Representations of History,' *Papers on Social Representations* 22 (2013): 3.1-3.16, here 3.6.
[237] Ibid, 6.
[238] Ibid.

perspective prevails it 'strengthens the categorical empathy of the group members who are exposed to these narratives in as much as the group is affected in the story.'[239] Conversely, in something like the Victory Hymn on the Merneptah Stele, Merneptah is the narrator, the people "Israel" is one of many groups which constitute a larger out-group, and the Egyptians of Merneptah's time who may hear, read, or sing the hymn are the in-group. Notably, the gods are members of the respective in-groups in both cases. In Exodus 15, there is a hyper evaluation of the in-group, not surprisingly given that it is describing the saving of the Israelites from an Egyptian army. There is also a devaluation of the out-group, which describes the Egyptian army being swallowed up by the sea as well as dread overcoming all those who have heard the story. As such, the Song of the Sea appears to be part of a narrative discourse that 'carries and expresses the social psychological processes of the construction of national identity.'[240] Scholars have long maintained that the Song of the Sea may have been performed ritually, and that 'it is the primary source for the central event in Israel's history, the Exodus-Conquest.' [241] According to Cross, it was likely 'associated with the cultus of the old spring New Year's festival,'[242] which means it was proactively rehearsed and thus identity forming for both the original escapees from Egypt[243] and anyone who would later identify with the survivors through a belief in what YHWH had done for them, and their participation in the singing of the Song. The fact that Israel's oldest texts are warfare accounts is no small thing to consider. For it means that Israel's identity as a homogeneous group was forged in war, which is of considerable consequence given Malešević' assertion that violent conflict is the

[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid, 11.
[241] Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 123.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Or at least the survivors of that ancient battle, as the Song itself does not describe an escape from Egypt.

real precursor of 'centrifugal ideologisation' and the 'cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion.'[244]

4.1.3. Social Stratification in the Book of the Covenant

Let us next consider the social stratification displayed in the Book of the Covenant, Exodus 20:22-23:33. Mendenhall, whilst recognizing the military goal at the centre of the 'Book of the Covenant's' *raison d'être*,[245] has said that 'it is the ideological, covenant substratum that constituted whatever basis there was for supra-kin and supra-local unities. Those larger unities existed only insofar as they had specific goals or functions to meet'.[246] Marshall adds that the Book of the Covenant 'represents the dimorphic elements of pastoral and extensive agrarian economy with social stratification based on wealth and gender.'[247] He also tells us that the social stratification illustrated by the Book of the Covenant exists

> in the form of three social classes: free, non-slave, and debt slaves. These classes are delineated by relatively more or less amounts of wealth ... In contrast with the often emphasized point that they protect the oppressed, it is apparent that these laws protect the free as well. This is true regarding life, bodily injury and economic loss. In effect, this reinforces the existing economic stratification and its accompanying social stratification.[248]

Whether the social stratification is based upon wealth and gender or otherwise, such social stratification on display in the Book of the Covenant would be necessary if such a supra-kin group as the Israelites were warding off attacks within the context of the

[244] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 6. Chapter Three, Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of this thesis. Social stratifcation (which implies a bureaucracy of coercion) is similarly on display in the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20:22-23:33). See the following section, 4.1.3.

[245] Mendenhall has said that 'peasant societies beyond the immediate kin or village group tend to be nonexistent until a specific problem or goal appears. This is precisely what is most characteristic of the narratives we have of the period of the judges. To be sure, most of the specific goals have to do with the warding off of foreign attacks'. G.E. Mendenhall, 'Social Organization in Early Israel,' in *Magnalia Dei, the Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, ed. Frank Moor Cross et al. (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1976), 132-151, here 144. Indeed, the emergence of supra-kin groups in response to specific goals or threats does appear to be supported by Malešević's theory concerning the emergence of complex social organisation.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Jay W. Marshall, *Israel and the Book of the Covenant: An Anthropological Approach to Biblical Law* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 130.

[248] Ibid, 139-140.

book of Judges or conducting warfare in accordance with active conquest. Indeed, Hanson agrees that the casuistic laws of the Book of the Covenant are hierarchical and oppressive. He contrasts the casuistic, which he maintains are similar to the hierarchical and oppressive laws (that is, reinforces social levels and organisation) of Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbours with the apodictic. The apodictic laws, Hanson argues are egalitarian and liberating.[249] For our purposes, it is the fact that scholars recognize the societal levels and social organisation present in the text which interests us, as it is such social hierarchies that are essential to Israel's capacity for large-scale organised violence. Knight has argued, however, that the Book of the Covenant is not consistent with the archaeological evidence concerning 'Israel' at the time, that is, the sedentary agriculturalists which appear in the highlands of Canaan in the Late Bronze and Iron I period. He has stated that

> internal indications point toward an urban provenance for Exodus 21-23. The institution of slavery, the presence of both wealth and poverty, houses large enough to be burglarized while the residents sleep, a judge who can be bribed, a leader who should no more be reviled than should God, a formalized cult to which sacrifices are expected to be brought – all such phenomena are scarcely imaginable in villages averaging 50-150 inhabitants, most of them agriculturalists or pastoralists barely surviving in a subsistence economy.[250]

This may indeed be the case, however, there is no mention of centralisation, government or cultic, in the entire Book of the Covenant, which seems absurd given it is a collection of legal codes. So while the laws are consistent with an Israelite populace that was already settled in Canaan, one would be reaching in claiming a late

[249] Hanson tells us that 'the case laws are typical of the ordinances found in the great cultures of Mesopotamia ... Reflected is a sharply stratified order, with, for example, more generous treatment being accorded males than females (21:1-11), and less sever punishments being prescribed for a person injuring a slave than for a person injuring a free citizen (21:12-14, 18-19)'. Paul Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 42-52. Indeed the same is clearly visible in the law codex of Hammurabi as well as Middle Assyrian Laws. Cf. Paul Hanson, 'The Theological Significance of Contradiction Within the Book of the Covenant,' in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, eds. George Coats and Burke Long (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 110-31.

[250] Douglas A. Knight, 'Village Law and the Book of the Covenant,' in *A Wise and Discerning Mind: Essays in Honour of Burke O. Long*, eds. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000), 163-179, here 178.

(Monarchic or even later) date for these texts.[251] Nonetheless, a covenant substratum as described by Mendenhall would remain central to their social organisation if they were to be effective militarily. For it would not be sufficient to be bound by an ideology of YHWH worship without law, replete with penalties for non-compliance, that is, what Malešević calls a 'cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion'.[252] In the Book of the Covenant both are on ample display. The social organisation is reinforced via the legal codes which govern daily life (Exodus 21:1-22:17), while the ideologisation is upheld by laws which appear to be for the purpose of 'persuading, exhorting, and teaching a community about its values and actions as a direct and personal word from God (20:22-26; 22:18-23:19)'.[253] It is common knowledge that Israel's legal codes in the Book of the Covenant share much in common with those of other ancient Near Eastern cultures, particularly the casuistic laws of Hammurabi and much later Middle Assyrian Law codes. Those laws which reinforce social hierarchies and organisation (e.g., Exodus 21:21 regarding slave ownership and the treatment of slaves) resemble the laws of Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbours. It is laws such as these, which 'exemplify an alien system of values borrowed from the general, ancient Near Eastern culture outside Israel.'[254] There are, however, other laws which some argue to be distinctly Israelite, and which appear to reflect Israel's own cultural memory of slavery in Egypt. These laws, mostly apodictic (e.g., Exodus 22:9), exhibit 'compassion for resident aliens', though the view that they are distinctly Israelite has

[251] Olson agrees that the Book of the Covenant's legal prescriptions are consistent with a 'settled agricultural life in the land of Canaan'. However, he adds that they must predate 'the rise of kingship and the Jerusalem Temple, since no mention is made in them of a centralized government or cult'. Dennis T. Olson, 'The Jagged Cliffs of Mount Sinai: A Theological Reading of the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:22-23:19), *Int* 50, no. 3 (1996): 251-63, here 251-2.

[252] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 7. This was discussed in detail in Chapter Three, Section 3.2.1.

[253] Olson, The Jagged Cliffs of Mount Sinai,' 252-3.

[254] Ibid, 253; Albrecht Alt, 'The Origins of Israelite Law,' in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, trans. R.A. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 79-132.

been contested.[255] For our purposes, Knight admits that even though 'Israel' in the Late Bronze and Iron I periods is made up of highland villages, nevertheless, 'some vestiges of customs and values conceivable in such villages can perhaps be detected'[256] in the Book of the Covenant. Here, Knight includes

> some theft controls, two marriage or sexuality customs, liability specifications, instructions on treatment of work animals, sanctions against violence, guidelines for religious veneration using simple materials and the fruits of rural production, and concern for the vulnerable, both slaves and poor.[257]

Thus, while the Book of the Covenant is most likely from a period after Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan, it, nevertheless, conveys issues of concern that do not contradict the realities of peoples maintaining a village-level existence, prior to the monarchy and cultic centralisation.

Related to the law and certainly central to the perfusion of such was the establishment of a formal priesthood (Exodus 28-29; Numbers 3). Durham explains that

> the essential point of the priestly vestments is the central point of all the instructions concerning the media of worship: Yahweh is present, Israel must respond to that Presence, be guided in that response, and be reminded constantly in worship as in life of the reality of the Presence and the need for response.[258]

We have, therefore, a visible representation of Israel's central ideology and a manifestation of one way that ideology is promulgated. However, it is what Durham says next which gets to the central issue with respect to Israel's ideologisation. He tells us that 'the vestments are double symbols: they signify priestly authority, and

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[255] Olson, 'The Jagged Cliffs of Mount Sinai,' 253; Hanson, 'The Theological Significance of Contradiction Within the Book of the Covenant,' 110-31; Alt, 'The Origins of Israelite Law,' 79-132. However, not all scholars hold this view. Mendenhall cites a Hittite example of an apodictic law in a treaty of the Hittite king Muršili in order to argue that apodictic laws are not distinctly Israelite. He says that 'the Hittite covenants are precisely a mixture of case law and apodictic law very similar to the mixture found in the so-called "Covenant Code" of Exodus 21-23'. George Mendenhall, 'Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law,' *BA* 17, no. 2 (1954): 25-46, here, 30; E. Gerstenberger, 'Covenant and Commandments,' *JBL* 84 (1965): 38-51; M. Weinfeld, 'The Origin of Apodictic Law (An Overlooked Source),' *VT* 23, no. 1 (1973): 63-75, here, 64-65.

[256] Knight, 'Village Law and the Book of the Covenant,' 178.

[257] Ibid. It must be admitted, however, that Knight maintains that Exodus 21-23, 'from its first appearance onward as a literary document, was a product of the city.' Ibid.

[258] Durham, *Exodus*, 389.

they signify the priestly confession of the source of that authority'.[259] As such, Israel's priests are physical representations of Israel's prevailing ideology central to their effectiveness in combat, given that their success depends entirely on YHWH's approval. This, it must be said, is similar to, for example, Hammurabi's codex, which portrays Hammurabi receiving the laws from his god Šamaš.

Within his understanding of early Israel as a 'league of tribes,' Gottwald has asserted that the 'propagation of cultic and moral categorical law in the centralized cult and projection of a jural matrix for religious sanctioning of institutional behavior enforced through case law' was the function of the Levitical priesthood.[260] The priesthood, therefore, is portrayed as having played an indispensible role in the ideologisation of Israel, as well as its bureaucracy of coercion. This function extended explicitly to military matters as well. The fundamentally required Levitical priesthood are described carrying their functions as propagators and sustainors of Israel's ideology and social organisation (both of which we have seen are indispensible to the emergence of organised violence) straight into war, inasmuch as they were the 'summoners to war and bearers of the sacred ark in battle'[261] (e.g., Deuteronomy 10:8; Joshua 6:6-13; and 1 Samuel 4).

Israel's pre-monarchic social organisation is purported to be described in the book of Numbers. Every male over twenty years of age is said to have been enrolled as in an army (Numbers 1:19-43) along kinship lines; that is, under the authorities of officers who were the heads of their clans and ancestral houses (Numbers 1:2-4). [262]

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[259] Ibid.

[260] Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 BCE* (London: SCM, 1980), 338.

[261] Ibid, 339.

[262] This is notable for two reasons. The first is that state structures and lines of authority work best when established along preexisting lines of authority, especially kinship lines. Numbers 1 describes the Israelite males being enrolled under the heads of their ancestral houses (Numbers 1:4). The second reason is that many social theorists maintain that states, at their root, are military. Treitschke, for example, thought that 'without war there would be no State at all'. H. von Treitschke, *Selections from*

With the exception, that is, of the Levites. They were designated priests with the purpose of looking after everything relevant to the tabernacle (Numbers 1:48-54). The order of encampment is described in Numbers 2 wherein each respective regiment was under the ensigns of their ancestral houses (Numbers 2:2). Notably, the Levites took the center place with the tent of meeting (Numbers 2:17), and every other ancestral house was given a place respective to it (Numbers 2:2-16; 18-34). This, of course, illustrates in concrete terms, the centrality of YHWH worship to the social organisation of Israel.[263] The illustration, however, runs even deeper than it appears on a surface reading. Douglas noted that the symmetrical literary structure of chapter 2 reflects the symmetrical arrangement of the camp which it describes.[264] Numbers 2:1-34 lists the twelve tribes organised into military divisions and their order of encampment is reflected in the way that the writer(s)/redactor(s) of Numbers have laid out Numbers 2:1-34. That is, the first division (those to encamp to the east of the tabernacle) is described as that of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun and they are to be first in Israel's order of march whenever they move; this is also the first division that is listed (Numbers 2:3-9). The second division (those to encamp to the south of the tabernacle) is that of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad and they are to be second in Israel's order of march whenever they move; this is also the second division that is listed (Numbers 2:10-16). Then, because the tent of meeting and the Levites are to be in the

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Treitschke's Lectures on Politics (London: Gowans & Gray, 1914), 21. This, arguably, could be the beginning of a transition (as per Weber) from personal relationships governing social praxis and the replacement with bureaucratic authority, notably, again, along kinship lines. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1152.

[263] George tells us that Israel's 'social organization and classification, expressed via the census, is inseparable from spatial organization, expressed in Israel's encampment and marching order. Furthermore, that socio-spatial identity is referenced to the tabernacle and dependent upon it, as a physical manifestation of it'. Mark K. George, 'Socio-Spatial Logic and the Structure of the Book of Numbers,' in *Constructions of Space IV: Further Developments in Examining Ancient Israel's Social Space*, ed. Mark K. George (Bloomsbury: London, 2013), 23-43, here 24.

[264] Mary Douglas, *In the Wilderness: The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 21, 39 and esp. 147; G. Ogden expresses agreement with Douglas' assessment, 'The Design of Numbers', *BT* 47, no.4 (1996): 420-428, here 424-426.

center of the encampments (and to occupy the centre in Israel's order of march) they are the next described (Numbers 2:17). Predictably, by this stage, the western division is described next, which tells us that the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin are to be encamped to the west of the tabernacle and that they are to follow the Levites in Israel's order of march (Numbers 2:18-34). Finally, the northern division is described. To the north of the tabernacle the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali are assigned, and they are to be last in the order of march (Numbers 2:25-31). One cannot help but recall the common practice of ancient Near Eastern kings declaring themselves 'lords of the universe' by explaining that they are 'king over the four quarters (of the earth)', *šar kibrat irbittim*.[265] Thus, YHWH's own encampment, symbolized by the tent of meeting in the centre, connotes that YHWH is king of Israel and, perhaps by extension, the whole world (or will be, once Israel has completed its campaign?). It is important to note here, that the temples of ancient Near Eastern city-states' primary deity were placed in the centre. So, in this respect, Israel's encampment represents a similar organisation as their non-nomadic counterparts. Condren tells us that the 'geographical organization of the war camp, reinforced by the text's literary organization, anticipates the focus of Numbers 1-10 as a whole on organizing the camp for the campaign'.[266] Again, it must be stressed that the narrative conveys the centrality of social organisation irrespective of the text's historicity.

We have noted, then, the creation of appointed officers and judges to oversee sections of Israel; the establishment of a rule of law and the Book of the Covenant; the establishment of a formal priesthood; the construction of the ark and the tent of

[265] 'Of the earth' is commonly placed in parentheses in translations as it is a recognized epithet which implies 'the whole world'. See, for example, the third line of the first column of the Prism of Sennacherib, available in Daniel D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, ed. James H. Breasted (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 23; and the Prism Inscription of Tiglath Pileser I in L.W. King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, ed. E.A. Wallis Budge, Vol. 1 (London: Harris and Sons, 1902), 27.

[266] Janson C. Condren, 'Is the Account of the Organization of the Camp Devoid of Organization? A Proposal for the Literary Structure of Numbers 1.1-10.10,' *JSOT* 37, no. 4 (2013): 423-52, here 451.

meeting; and the centrality of such respective to Israel's social organisation embodied in its orders of march and encampment. Here, all the conditions of large-scale social organisation have been formerly implemented prior to Israel's military campaigning west of the Jordan.[267] It cannot be said that this is an accurate description of what happened historically, and indeed there is good reason to believe these texts are written/redacted by much later 'Priestly' writers/redactors than the stories being narrated. That said, if it is mythos, it is mythos which would reinforce said social organisation amongst a contemporary audience to the benefit of Israel militarily.

4.2. The Hebrew Bible and Centrifugal Ideologisation

Centrifugal Ideologisation binds a social organisation together; permeates from centralised political and cultural figures towards wider populations; assumes the active involvement and approval of human agents; and, gives moral justification to any organised violence that a homogeneous group (however defined) carries out. Similar to the cumulative bureaucracy of coercion, centrifugal ideologisation is also described being present in the biblical narrative prior to Israel's crossing the Jordan (so far as the narrative is concerned). Its presence and promulgation are visible on two levels; the micro/familial level, and the macro/tribal level. The micro/familial promulgation is visible in Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 6-9, which insists that the Law is to be recited in Israel's households, painted to the door posts, and taught to Israel's children. Necessary for Israel's social organisation, as well as the spread of Israel's

[267] What has been described are, in effect, all of the basic elements of ancient Near Eastern statehood. Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 93, n. 4; A. Ferrill, *The Origins of War: From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985), 24-31; M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power I: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 41; J. Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, 124-5.

underscoring ideologisation, was Israel's law code which demanded obedience and was, therefore, taught to Israelites at a young age.

The most obvious example of macro-level ideologisation is the recitation of another war narrative, that is, the Passover—the Israelites' flight from Egypt (Numbers 9:1-5; Joshua 5:10). Another example is the regular recitation of the Law to the entire assembly of Israel (Deuteronomy 31:9-13). Here, we can see that, according to the biblical narrative, Israel's ideologisation is indeed centrifugal so far as it radiates outwards from the judges, prophets and priests at the macro level; and from within individual families at the micro level.

Both social organisation and ideologisation cannot, however, underscore the emergence of organised violence, unless they have time to take hold among a given group. This brings us to the story of the twelve spies described in the book of Numbers. One spy from each tribe is sent together to reconnoitre the land. It must be stated that these are not a random selection of spies, but rather, YHWH required of Moses that they each be a 'leader' (נשיא, Numbers 13:2), a ruler from among their tribes.[268] They returned and were terrified of the giant people they had seen, as well as the fortified cities (Numbers 13:32-33), which means the newly established leadership, even though it was established along kinship lines, did not have sufficient trust in YHWH. This place of trust in YHWH means, in practical terms, that there is a portrayed lack of trust in the leadership deemed to have been mandated by YHWH. Due to their failure to trust YHWH (and by proxy, their leadership), and their giving a report which caused fear among their people, the Israelites were then condemned to

[268] Ronald B. Allen, *Numbers*. The Expositor's Bible Commentary Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 804; J.A. Beck, 'Geography and the Narrative Shape of Numbers 13,' *BSac* 157 (2000): 271-80, here 272. Their being singled out by name and tribe through Numbers 13:4-15 also conveys 'a sense of importance and dignity'. Allen, *Numbers*, 805; Beck, 'Geography and the Narrative Shape of Numbers 13,' 272-3.

wander the desert for forty years.[269] This time, however, according to the biblical narrative, their new social organisation and process of ideologisation were firmly in place (Numbers 14:34-35), which is to say that the reader can expect the next generation to be thoroughly entrenched within Israel's new social organisation and fortifying ideology – it is the next generation, with Joshua and Caleb, which will enter the land (Numbers 14:38). That is, Israel had (according to the narrative) an additional forty years for the twelve tribes to become homogeneous around a central YHWH cult and within a social hierarchy that now emphasized the law along with the leadership of judges and priests.

Having all of the most rudimentary of elements of statehood firmly in place, Israel was finally in a position to cross the Jordan and embark on their military campaign into Canaan. The narrative concerning the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan purposefully alludes to an earlier war narrative, wherein YHWH is the sole combatant: the Exodus. We are told that the waters of the Jordan stopped flowing once the priests stepped in the water with the Ark of the Covenant allowing Israel to cross (Joshua 3:14-17). Whilst not intentionally speaking of ideologisation, Beckham has stated that 'it is an incident in the history of Israel's settlement in the land that repeats for the present generation the lesson that the wilderness generation have been

[269] Boorer rightly recognizes that the Israelites' rejection of Joshua's statement that YHWH is with them (Numbers 14:9) constitutes a rejection of 'their constitution as a nation portrayed in the Sinai material (Exodus 24-Numbers 10) as gathered around the sanctuary as the means of God's presence in their midst in camping/marching order, ready to engage in cultic warfare'. Suzanne Boorer, 'The Place of Numbers 13-14 and Number 20:2-12 in the Priestly Narrative,' *JBL* 13, no. 1 (2012): 45-63, here 59. Indeed, which is to say that despite the establishment of the rudiments of statehood, they had not taken hold deeply enough to be sufficiently coercive so far as Israel's bureaucracy was concerned. However, according to the biblical narrative, it seems that a whole new generation (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) would possess the appropriate depth of trust conveyed by being reared in the new mobile, yet established state, replete with laws, a priesthood and official cult. Of course, the parallels throughout this narrative to the Exodus and even the flood are too obvious to require stating here. For more on that see Boorer, 'The Place of Numbers 13-14 and Numbers 20:2-12 in the Priestly Narrative,' 45-63.

taught at the exodus'.[270] Whether the 'incident' is 'in the history of Israel's settlement' or a part of its cultural memory, the effect is the same: a reinforcement of Israel's exodus narrative which emboldens Israel with a reminder of YHWH's role as warrior and protector of his chosen people. YHWH's presence is visually on display via the Ark of the Covenant, and Joshua is declared YHWH's representative (Joshua 3:7-8). After the Jordan crossing, Joshua, according to the narrative, is described choosing one man from each of Israel's tribes to take stones from the middle of the Jordan, and then lay them in their respective places of encampment (Joshua 4:2) to serve as a 'memorial' (lit. 'to memorial', לזכרון) of their crossing. One must keep in mind, of course, that the writer/redactors are expecting the reader to appreciate that the stones will be arranged in the same fashion as the order of encampment in Numbers 2, thus reinforcing, again, the centrality of YHWH by way of the priests and the Ark, which reinforces YHWH's laws and the expectation that Israel will follow them (bureaucracy of coercion), as well as Israel's order of march. The text also describes Joshua setting another twelve stones in the Jordan itself in order to mark the place where the priests had walked with the Ark of the Covenant (Joshua 4:9). Both incidents are uses of etiology in order to provide references for, and thereby reinforce Israelite ideology by way of their reference to events in Israel's cultural memory.

4.3. Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish the presence within the Hebrew Bible of the categories which were outlined in chapter three regarding the sociology of warfare; and to illustrate that they were necessarily in place before Israel, according to the narrative, began their military campaign in Canaan. Ancient authors, without

[270] Brian Peckham, 'The Composition of Joshua 3-4,' *CBQ* 46, no. 3 (1984): 413-31, here 423; Morris Jastrow, Jr., 'Joshua 3:16,' *JBL* 36, no. ½ (1917): 53-62.

any recourse to current sociological literature, would nonetheless, be perfectly cognizant of the fact that a disorganized collection of tribes without recourse to a justifying ideology could never acquire the land which they needed, especially if they were required to take it from stronger city-states with larger-scale support structures. Therefore, however much redaction may have taken place, and however long these texts were in development, it is, nonetheless, extraordinary that they are a perfect illustration of the development of statehood, in response to external military threats. Cultural memory often possesses elements of historicity and mythology. In this way, Israelite historiography reveals the development of a homogenous group from twelve relatively autonomous tribes in response to a harsh and violent ancient Near Eastern context. It is important to appreciate the sociological elements therein because it leads inevitably to the conclusion that these texts have their germination (at least), in a military context. This would make any claims that the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges are strictly post-exilic nonsensical, given that Israel had already been defeated militarily and would gain nothing from inventing such an emboldening narrative so late, other than a weak claim to a land that they never held with any strength.

We will now move into some comparison and contrast of Hebrew Biblical warfare accounts within the books of Joshua and Judges, with other ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts. We will see that there Israel's warfare narratives share the same normative elements as those of their ancient Near Eastern neighbours. Each section will illustrate the way that these normative elements of warfare accounts contribute to and, therefore, reinforce the development and promulgation of their respective peoples' ideology and social organisation to the benefit of their intended audiences, militarily.

5. The Divine Mandate and the Kingship of YHWH

This chapter considers, arguably, the most obvious of themes, that is, the divine mandate to wage warfare, which serves to justify, morally, the violence to be carried out. Here, Assyrian, Hittite and Egyptian examples are discussed before an examination of the same theme within the books of Joshua and Judges. This discussion leads inevitably to a consideration of kingship in the ancient Near East and the distinctness of the kingship of YHWH as a theme in the books of Joshua and Judges. It becomes apparent that YHWH's kingship is an essential component of Israel's distinct manifestation of the sociological factors under consideration. YHWH's kingship is a theme that runs throughout Joshua and Judges, but its relationship to Israel's military efficacy (that is, with respect to the narrative's audience) appears to have gone overlooked in the scholarship concerning these texts. It must be restated here that this thesis considers the role of the narrative rather than any purported history in the text. That is, this thesis is not attempting to prove that Israel, as described in Joshua and Judges, actually possessed the sociological factors in question, or that the warfare described was actually carried out. Rather, the concern of this thesis is to reveal the presence of these sociological underpinnings within the text. It argues that to the extent that these factors are reflected in the text they are reinforced amongst the text's intended audience to the benefit of Israel militarily. Whether they are a reflection of the presence of these factors within an historical pre-monarchic Israel requires delving into issues of dating and the delineation of sources in Joshua and Judges, which, due to the immensity of the task and the disagreements among scholars, must be left for a separate project. Although, it should be stated that this thesis will certainly have repercussions in this area. This chapter will illustrate that the divine mandate to wage warfare justifies the warfare carried out for the text's

intended audience, so far as the command comes from the lawgiver himself. Furthermore, the divine mandate reinforces the authority of YHWH's representatives and the chain of command, which depends upon it, to the benefit of Israel militarily. As such, it is a central ideological feature of these texts.

5.1. The Divine Mandate in the Ancient Near East

Throughout the Hebrew Bible there are numerous elements which occur repeatedly in war narrative that exhibit precisely what Malešević refers to as 'proto-ideology',[271] that is, that exhibit both centrifugal ideologisation and the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion. A divine mandate to carry out warfare was an essential feature of ancient Near Eastern war narrative as it provided ideological justification for something which does not come naturally to human beings, that is, warfare which involves the capacity to kill.[272] It should come as no surprise, then, that it is equally ubiquitous throughout Hebrew Biblical war narrative, and waging war without such sanction does not bode well for Israel. The presence of this first characteristic is foundational to all the others, therefore, it is expedient to discuss it first.

The divine mandate to carry out warfare reinforced the status of ancient Near Eastern kings as the administrators of the divine will. In Israel's narrative, prior to Israel's first king (that is, first king sanctioned by YHWH), the kingly status of YHWH is highlighted by the Hebrew Bible's warfare accounts. YHWH appears to play the narratological role performed by both gods and kings in the conquest accounts of Israel's geographical neighbours in the ancient Near East. That is, he is not only portrayed mandating and assisting in war, but progressively moves from the

[271] Recall that according to Malešević, 'traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquests and coercive forms of governance.' Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 9.

[272] This was discussed in detail in Chapter Three, Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

sole wager of war (e.g. the Exodus) to the role of mandator and giver of divine assistance under the kings. In between, throughout the books of Joshua and Judges, YHWH is portrayed as mandating war, and assisting in war, though in progressively lesser degrees. That is, the book of Joshua's accounts of YHWH's felling the walls of Jericho, and of causing the sun to stand still in the sky, do not have equivalent corollaries in the book of Judges. Whilst one can only speculate, one can also appreciate that the Historian would have good reason to compile texts in such a way that they exhibit Israel's well-being without a human king while trying to understand the fall of Judah, and Israel's exile, in theological terms. Nonetheless, considering the texts from the perspective of what might have reinforced Israel's social hierarchy and ideology, two categories which are indispensible to the emergence of organised violence and warfare, does much to help us discern texts which might have emerged from an earlier historical strata. This is because the Historian, whilst the Israelites are in exile, would have had no reason to create or compile texts that would contribute to the military success of an already militarily defeated Israel. Such texts may, therefore, help delineate sources from earlier historical strata when, like their ancient Near Eastern neighbours, Israel would have had a greater need for militarily propagandistic texts.

Within potentially pre-exilic texts the social hierarchical role of the king and his legitimately appointed authorities, including legitimate priesthoods, would have been reinforced by the presence of the divine mandate in war narrative. Such authority would be reinforced because these aspects of ancient Near Eastern social hierarchy were believed to be bestowed by the gods. The earliest monument of war from the ancient Near East that Bahrani says we 'have identified with certainty' is the Early

Dynastic Stele of Eannatum.[273] This stele, also referred to as the Stele of the Vultures, was erected to commemorate the victory of the Sumerian King of Lagash, Eannatum, over a border dispute with Umma. The stele portrays Eannatum receiving the divine mandate to wage war via a dream omen which he received from Ningirsu, the patron god of his city-state.[274] This indicated that the victory won by Eannatum was understood to be in accordance with the will of Ningirsu, and that the battle had been 'sanctioned by the gods.'[275]

5.1.1. Assyrian

Many examples of the divine mandate occur throughout Assyrian texts. For example, Tiglath Pileser I declared that Aššur and the other gods 'gave command that I should extend the boundary of their land'.[276] Bahrani believes that this 'served to justify the battle as a defensible, just war.'[277] From a much later period, in the Summary Text[278]

[273] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 184. Carved c. 2460 BCE.

[274] Ibid. According to Bahrani 'the dream omen that was given told him that "the sun-god will shine at your right," Lagash would defeat Umma, and "myriad corpses will reach the base of heaven."' Ibid, 151.

[275] Douglas R. Fraye, *Pre-Sargonic Period (2700-2350 BC)*, Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 130-31. Cf. Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 151.

[276] Col. 1. 48. iš-ru-ku-ni mi-ṣir mâti(ti)-šu-nu. E.A. Wallis Budge and L.W. King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria: The Cuneiform Texts with Translations, Transliterations, etc., from the Original Documents in the British Museum* (British Museum Trustees: London, 1902), 34; Rykle Borger, 'Textkritisches zur Prisma-Inschrift Tiglatpileser's I,' *AfO* 25 (1974/77): 161-65.

[277] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 184. Similarly, the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) were recorded over a millennium later. Written in the first-person, these annals describe Tiglath-Pileser I saying, 'With the exalted strength of Aššur, my lord, against the land Haria and the army of the extensive land of Paphe in high mountains, where no king had ever gone, Aššur, the lord, commanded me to march.' This is taken from the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I, Episode 7 (III. 35-65), cited in Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 87. The following is also recorded in the Annals: 'with the onslaught of my fierce weapons by means of which Aššur, the lord, gave me strength and authority I took with thirty of my chariots escorting my aggressive personal carriers, my warriors trained for successful combat.' Taken from the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I Episode 4 (III. 63-84). Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 86. The first five years of Tiglath-Pileser I's reign is described in a prism inscription in which it is recorded that 'Assur and the great gods, who have made my kingdom great, and who have bestowed might and power as a (*lit.,* my) gift, commanded that I should extend the boundary of their land, and they entrusted to my hand their mighty weapons, the storm of battle.' Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia: Volume I Historical Records of Assyria from the Earliest Times to Sargon* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968 [1926]), 73. The Annals of Ashur-Dan II (king of Assyria from 935 – 912 BCE) bears witness to the presence of divine mandate in a similar way: '[By] the command of Aššur, [my lord], I marched [to the land of

of Aššur-nasir-pal II (king of Assyria from 883 – 859 BCE), we read the following: 'When Aššur, the lord who called me by name (and) made my kingship great, entrusted his merciless weapon in my lordly arms, I felled with the sword in the midst of battle the wide-spread troops of the Lullume'.[279]

Specific strategic battle plans are sometimes included in descriptions of divine sanction for war.[280] The following depicts the Neo-Assyrian king Esarhaddon (681 – 669 BCE) seeking strategic advice:

> Should Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, send Ša-Nabu-šu, chief eunuch, and the army at this disposal to take the road and go to capture the city of Amul? If they go and set up camp before the city Amul, will they, be it by means of war, or by force, or through tunnels and breaches, or by means of ramps, or by means of battering rams, or through friendliness or peaceful negotiations, or through insurrection and rebellion, or through any other ruse of capturing a city, capture the city, Amul? Conquer that city. Will it be delivered to them.[281]

The oftentimes complex battle strategies, which were literally brought to the statue of a god, have been discussed by Bahrani. She tells us that

> at times in the Neo-Assyrian queries to Šamaš, an entire complicated battle strategy was drawn out on a papyrus and placed before the god (in front of his cult statue in the temple). The questioner then asked 'Should this particular strategy, on this document, be followed?'

Ka]dmuhu.' Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 92. Later, in the same inscriptions, we read 'By the command of Ašš[ur, my lord,] I marched [to the land of Kirr]iuru'. Ibid, 93. A less direct example is given by Sennacherib, king of Assyria from 705/704 – 681 BCE: 'In my second campaign: Aššur, my lord, encouraged me, and I indeed marched against the land of the Kassites.' Annals of Sennacherib, Second Campgaign (1. 65-80a) from Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 111. This exact wording emerges again in Sennacherib's Seventh Campaign, 'Aššur, my lord, encouraged me, and I (indeed) marched against the land of Elam.'Ibid, 114.

[278] 'Summary Texts' are described by Younger this way: 'This type of inscription is usually much shorter than any edition of the royal annals, especially as it was often inscribed upon a surface with limited space, such as a commemorative stela or a slab. For this reason, Summary or Display Texts do not witness the iterative scheme, but do manifest many of the other rhetorical devices used in the Assyrian military accounts'. Ibid, 120.

[279] e-nu-ma Aššur bēlu(EN) na-bu-u_2 šumi(MU)-ya mu-šar-bu-u_2 šar$_4$-ti-a ^{GIŠ}kakka(TUKUL)-šu$_2$ la pa-da-a a-na i-da-at bēlu-(EN)-ti-a lu-u_2 it-muḫ ummānāti(ERÍN.ḪI.A^{MEŠ}) ^{mât}Lu-ul-lu-me-e rapšate(DA-GAL)^{MEŠ} ina qé-reb tam-ḫa-ri ina ^{GIŠ}kakkē(TUKUL^{MEŠ}) lu u$_2$-šam-qit. Transliteration my own and updated from Youger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 120-21. Cf. Albert Kirk Grayson, *ARI. Part 2: From Tiglath-pileser I to Ashur-nasir-apli II.* Records of the Ancient Near East, Vol. II (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), 165. Wilhelmine de Filippi, *The Royal Inscriptions of Aššur-Nasir-Apli II (883-859 BC): A Study of the Chronology of the Calah Inscriptions Together with an Edition of Two of These Texts* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1977), 123-169.

[280] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 185.

[281] Ibid. Here is another example of Esarhaddon seeking battle advice: 'Šamaš, great lord, give me a positive answer to what I am asking you. Should Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, strive and plan? Should he take the road with his army and camp and go to the district of Egypt, as he wishes? Should he wage war against Taharqa, King of Kush, and troops which he has? If he goes, will he engage in battle with Taharqa, King of Kush, and his army? In waging this war, will the weapons of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, and his army prevail over the weapons of Taharqa and his troops?' Ibid.

> The strategy was not written out in detail, like the other queries, but put before the god in the form of a drawing or diagram. The god, in the guise of his cult statue, observed the document and gave his response (whether positive or negative) through the entrails of the sacrificial animal, which was offered at the same time as the submission of the document for divine consent.[282]

It is neither strange, nor exceptional in the ancient Near East, that such complicated battle strategies would be brought to a god's statue for approval in light of the role of the gods in determining the outcome of battles.

5.1.2. Hittite and Egyptian

The divine mandate is a feature of war narrative that is ubiquitous throughout the Ancient Near East. Consider, the Ten Year Annals of Muršili II (king of the Hittite empire from 1321 – 1295 BCE):

> After having sat myself on the throne of my father, I have ruled already 10 years. These enemy countries I conquered in 10 years by my (own) hand. The enemy countries which the royal princes and the generals have conquered, are not (preserved) herein. But what the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady, assigns to me, that I will carry out, and I will accomplish.[283]

In the next chapter, we discuss another common feature of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative, which implicitly indicates the presence of the divine mandate, that is, divine assistance in battle. We will return to the Hittites in more detail at that time.[284] First, however, let us examine an example of the divine mandate from Egypt.

According to Younger,

> at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, as the Egyptian ideological foundations of kingship were reformulated, divine authority took precedence over the monarchy. In order to legitimate his rule, the king alludes to his "election" by a god. In order to justify his actions the monarch claims to be acting according to the "commands" of the god.[285]

Given the Assyrian, Hittite and even Egyptian examples of this, our understanding that this belief was widespread throughout the ancient Near East is unavoidable. An

[282] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 188.
[283] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 144.
[284] See Chapter Six, Section 6.1.
[285] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 302.

Egyptian illustration of this can be seen in the Great Sphinx Stele at Giza regarding Amenhotep II (c. 1426 – 1400 BCE):

> He Himself <Amun-Re> caused him <Amenhotep> to appear as King upon the throne of the living, He assigned to him the Black Land (Kmt) as his retinue, the Red Land as his serfs; He bestowed on him a heritage forever, a kingship for all time. He gave to him the throne of Geb, the mighty rulership of Atum, the Two Lords portions, the Two Ladies' shares, their years of life and of dominion.[286]

Thus, indicative of widespread ideologisation concerning the king's divine authority to carry out warfare, we have numerous examples of the presence of divine mandate from the ancient Near East.

The peoples' acceptance of the king's authority is also reflected in the presence of the divine mandate. Annals and victory stelae like those we have examined were placed within the palaces of kings, administrative centres, and they sometimes also served as boundary markers. This choice of placement encouraged centrifugal ideologisation from both the macro-level (i.e. administrative centres of the ruling authorities) as well as the micro-level (i.e. areas concerning the general populace of a territory). They served as a reminder of the king's exalted status and the authority given to him by a god, or goddess, of his command over issues concerning life and death. An example of such a public monument is the previously mentioned Stele of Eannatum of Lagash, which was a monument 'carved and erected after the settlement of a border dispute around 2460 BC.'[287] Eannatum's defeated enemies are depicted 'as corpses piled high in mounds or trapped in a net by the god.'[288] Such a stele sent a visceral message to the people of the defeated area and would have aided in deterring any further rebellion. This stele, and others like it, would have also ensured that the defeated populace knew to whom they owed their allegiance. Furthermore, such monuments reminded the king's people of the divine authority

[286] Ibid, 176.
[287] Bahrani, *Rituals of War,* 147.
[288] Ibid.

under which they carried out the violence perpetrated upon others via the king's command.

5.2. The Divine Mandate and the Conquest of Canaan

The divine mandate is not explicitly stated in every account of war in the Hebrew Bible; for example, Amalek's attack on the Israelites, which is described in Exodus 17:8-16. Here, the Israelites fight back and win what is essentially a battle of defense. Though in Numbers 21 we are told about Israel's making a very strange vow to YHWH. After the king of Arad fought Israel the text describes him taking some of the Israelites as prisoners. In response, the Israelites promised YHWH that if he helped them they would utterly destroy the Canaanites in a way that suggests the Canaanites being sacrificed to YHWH, that is, through the use of the term *ḥerem*, חרם. The phrase in Numbers 21:2 reads 'Then Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will indeed give this people into our hands, then we will utterly destroy their towns"'. However, this translation does not fully convey the writer's meaning that the destruction will be a type of offering to YHWH, otherwise, what gain is there for YHWH in helping? The use והחרמתי ('And I will utterly destroy') here refers to the ban, which Niditch has argued, can be understood as the result of YHWH's justice, or as sacrifice to YHWH.[289] If the reader is still in doubt, the writer goes so far as to tell the reader that the new name for the place, after the Canaanites were defeated, became

[289] With respect to this particular instance in Numbers 21 Niditch draws a comparison to the Moabite Stone. She says the following, 'One of the closest, simplest biblical parallels to the ... Mesha Inscription is offered by Num 21:2-3. Israel confronts the Canaanite enemy, the king of Arad and his forces who have already taken some Israelites captive. Israel makes a vow, the real thrust of which is obscured by the NRSV. Compare the NRSV and then our translation. "Then Israel made a vow to the Lord and said, 'If you will indeed give this people into our hands, then we will destroy their towns." Why should such a vow of wanton destruction please the deity? Rather Israel promises something for something, a deal that the deity presumably cannot resist – not wanton, meaningless destruction but an offering for his use and devotion: 'If you will indeed give this people into my hands then I will devote their cities to destruction.' Israel is promising a sacrifice to God, the cities and their content. So the Moabite king had promised his Israelite enemies to his deity. Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 32.

חרמה. The NABRE captures the sense of the text when it states, 'Israel then made this vow to the LORD: "If you deliver this people into my hand, I will put their cities under the ban."' YHWH accepted Israel's offer and then the text reads, 'The LORD paid attention to Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they put them and their cities under the ban. Hence that place was named Hormah' (Numbers 21:3).[290] YHWH's sanction of the violence perpetuated against the Canaanites is clearly present though not expressly stated. The implicit sanction of YHWH with respect to warfare is also visible just eleven verses later. In Numbers 21:14 there is a reference to a now lost book called the 'Book of the Wars of YHWH'.[291] The fact that it was understood that there were 'wars of YHWH' at all implies that YHWH, like other ancient Near Eastern gods, sanctioned warfare and at times—according to the narratives—explicitly commanded it.

As with Amalek, another defensive battle is fought with King Sihon. After asking to pass peacefully through the land of the Amorites the Israelites were denied and subsequently attacked by Sihon. The Israelites defended themselves, defeated Sihon's army, then took the towns of the Amorites (Numbers 21:21-26).[292] Next, however, King Og attacked Israel. This time, YHWH spoke explicitly to Moses saying 'Do not be afraid of him; for I have given him into your hand, with all his

[290] Noth attests to this as well. He says, 'The name Hormah is explained by means of the term 'put under the ban' (RSV 'utterly destroy'; Hebrew root *ḥrm*); at one time Israel carried out the 'ban' in the region of Hormah with regard to the 'cities' that were there and their inhabitants, i.e. by killing and destroying they handed everything over to Yahweh as the real victor and owner of the booty of war.' Noth, *Numbers*, 154. Similarly, Baruch Levine concludes the same: 'The tide of battle is said to have turned in Israel's favor after the people solemnly pledged to proscribe the Canaanite towns as *ḥērem*.' Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 79. The LXX uses ἀνεθεμάτισεν, after which the town is named Ἀνάθεμα.

[291] Noth tells us that, 'there follows here the quotation from the "Book of the Wars of Yahweh". In this "Book", which is mentioned only here, we can perhaps see, according to the title it is given, a collection of probably poetic pieces on the "Yahweh Wars" of Israel's early period.' Noth, *Numbers*, 159-160.

[292] Noth also notes the absence of divine command here when he says, 'on this occasion the refusal of permission to pass through leads to war and to the capture of Amorite territory; and this is precisely the point of this narrative ... Nothing is said of any divine command such as was later introduced by the Deuteronomist in this context in Deut. 2.30f. (cf. also 2.4-6.9).' Ibid, 163.

people, and all his land. You shall do to him as you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon' (Numbers 21:34). After this, the text tells us that the Israelites killed Og, 'his sons, and all of his people, until there was no survivor left; and they took possession of his land' (Numbers 21:35). Thus, here we see an explicit sanction to commit violence, even though the battle with Og was also a defensive battle. That said, the Deuteronomy versions of the defeat of these two kings includes YHWH's saying to Moses that he had given Sihon into the hands of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 2:31-33).[293]

Brueggemann has noted that in this instance there is an interesting parallel with an earlier war narrative wherein YHWH is portrayed as doing Israel's fighting for them, that is, the Exodus. One verse earlier (Deuteronomy 2:30) the writer tells us that Sihon's heart and spirit had been made resolute and obstinate, intentionally recalling the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus 9:12.[294] This reference to the Exodus does two things, first, it clarifies the role of YHWH as the one who will fight for Israel. Secondly, so far as YHWH does fight for Israel, it implies that war against Sihon is a 'war of YHWH', that is, sanctioned by YHWH.

The same addition of explicit command is also added to the Deuteronomy version of the narrative concerning the defeat of King Og (Deuteronomy 3:2-3). Brueggemann notes that in this instance 'there is no initial negotiation.'[295] This holds true for the Numbers version as well, but rather, the narrative leaps immediately to battle. This is likely due to the fact that in both Numbers and Deuteronomy Og is portrayed as the aggressor and implies that, as far as the narrative is concerned, this battle is one of defense.

[293] Brueggemann also describes YHWH's authorization of force in this instance when he states, 'YHWH's role in the matter is to authorize and assure, and to guarantee the outcome in hidden ways.' Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 40.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Ibid, 42.

However, what of outright attack or conquest? If the Israelites are to actually attack another group, rather than merely exert a right to self-defense, do we then see a more explicit sanction of violence on the part of YHWH? Deuteronomy 7:1-2, a description of YHWH's desire for the Hebrews to take the land of Canaan, and again, devote, or 'utterly destroy' (תחרים החרם) the nations of Canaan, certainly portrays YHWH as one who supports violent warfare, that is, when he has commanded it. Furthermore, while not explicitly referring to attacks against specific groups, Deuteronomy 20 also says that YHWH sanctions armed aggression outside of the realm of defense. For example, Deuteronomy 20:10-13 is clearly not referring to a war of defense, nor is Deuteronomy 20:19. Here, the purpose of besieging a town is in order 'to take it' (לתפשה) and, as such, it is clear that YHWH sanctions more than just defensive wars. In Numbers 31 YHWH is seen commanding Moses to wage war against the Midianites due to a scandal concerning a Midianite woman detailed in Numbers 25.[296] It is important to draw attention to the overt sanction of battle by YHWH described in Numbers 31:1-3. The text tells us that it can be sinful *not* to wage war when it is YHWH's will as is the case with several Israelites who ask Moses to stay behind and make a home for themselves without crossing the Jordan (Numbers 32:20-23).[297]

Later, when the Israelites were beside the Jordon, YHWH is described speaking explicitly again of waging war (Numbers 33:51-56). Here, we see not only the command to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan, but with a condition attached,

[296] Levine describes the reason for war with the Midianites: 'This military campaign was undertaken to avenge Israel for the insidious actions of the Midianite women in the Baal Peor incident. (Numbers 25).' Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 445. Similarly, Noth emphasizes the divine mandate when he says the narrative is 'about a successful campaign, undertaken as the result of divine command, to annihilate the Midianites (vv. 1-12).' Noth, *Numbers*, 228.

[297] Levine states that the 'negative alternative, projecting failure to fulfill commitments, echoes Numbers 32:20, the positive alternative. If these tribes do not do their part they will have offended YHWH, expressed by the Hebrew verb *hata'*. Such offense would bring punishment, Hebrew *ḥaṭṭā't.*' Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 493.

that is, YHWH tells them the consequences of not doing so, which makes YHWH's command more forceful. Levine tells us that this 'section concludes with a stern admonition: failure to drive out all the former inhabitants will produce conflict ... The result will be that the defeat God had planned to bring upon these peoples will be brought upon the Israelites themselves.'[298] This is to say that if Israel does not drive out the inhabitants, then Israel themselves will become YHWH's enemy. This brief examination of warfare accounts in Numbers and Deuteronomy is necessary as it contributes to our understanding of Joshua and Judges so far as issues of *Herem*, negotiation, a failure to drive out the Canaanites, all figure prominently in the books which follow.

5.2.1. The Divine Mandate in Joshua and Judges

The book of Joshua begins with YHWH's divine mandate to wage war (Joshua 1:2-5).[299] It is also clear that Joshua and Israel's success depends upon their obedience to the law, and that the law should be consistently promulgated.[300] The appearance of 'the Commander of the army of YHWH' in a vision to Joshua in 5:13-15 admits to the divine sanction of war, as do the explicit instructions given to Joshua by YHWH in Joshua 6:2-5. In chapter 8 Joshua is commanded directly by YHWH to besiege Ai (Joshua 8:1-2,18). Therefore, it must be said that there is certainly nothing that YHWH finds unethical about warfare *per se*. It is, of course, not appropriate within certain circumstances, however, in and of itself, it is perfectly allowable, and at times

[298] Levine, *Numbers 21-36*, 524-25.

[299] The opening verses of Joshua 1 are discussed in more detail in Chapter Six, Section 6.2, of this thesis as there are a number of themes present which together reinforce Israel's social organisation and prevailing ideology which are central to Israel's success in combat.

[300] The centrality of obedience will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

desirable. YHWH is even described as being concerned with Israel's being effectual at waging war, and not forgetting how to wage war after the conquest of Canaan.

Judges 3 tells us that for the writer of Judges the reason that all of the Canaanites were not driven out of Canaan was for Israel's benefit, that is, some of the inhabitants remained 'to test all those in Israel who had no experience of any war in Canaan (it was only that successive generations of Israelites might know war, to teach those who had no experience of it before)' (Judges 3:1-2). The testing that is being referred to here is particularly interesting and is directly related to the absolute authority of YHWH.

The writer of Judges explains that the testing of Israel was so that YHWH could know 'whether Israel would obey the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their ancestors by Moses' (Judges 3:4). These commandments include, of course, the ban and other rules of war laid out in Deuteronomy 20. This is not an empty 'spiritual' piety divorced from the actual circumstances of Israel, but is essential to Israel's survival in a harsh ancient Near Eastern context. That is, the obedience of Israel is required in such a way that even killing – a very unnatural thing to do for all human beings (barring the socio/psychopath) – must (in war) also be carried out to its final measure according to the חרם.[301] Whether or not, historically speaking, such destruction was actually carried out by the Israelites, is a question for which we may never know the answer, but the description of such is highly unlikely to be the invention of an exilic author. In another context, however, such explicit commands to kill could, one can imagine, be essential to a peoples' success in combat. Therefore, this raises the question: when were the rules of warfare laid out in Deuteronomy 20 written?

[301] Obedience as a theme throughout Joshua and Judges will be discussed in Chapter Six, Sections 6.2 and 6.3.

The text resists the categorization of exilic authorship for the moment one tries to assign such one is immediately forced to ask the question why? That is, why would an exilic author feel it necessary to compose rules of warfare and then couch them within an earlier stage of Israel's narrative (viz. the conquest of Canaan)? An exilic author taking earlier war narratives and placing them within a wider narrative framework in an attempt to compose an Israelite history in light of the fall of Judah is understandable, but not the specific rubrics for war laid out in Deuteronomy 20, which at best would appear to be an addition of unnecessary details. One may surmise that the text is earlier than the exile, when the Israelites did require rules for war. Dating the texts contemporaneously with the Neo-Assyrian period has been commonplace among biblical scholars.[302] However, whilst considering Deuteronomy 20:19-29, Wright has found it expedient to couch the verses within a wider framework of ancient Near Eastern seigecraft. His doing so is in contrast to the commonly held view that Deuteronomy 20:19-20 was composed as anti-Assyrian rhetoric in response to the wanton destruction visible in specifically Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs and royal inscriptions.[303] Wright does this because Deuteronomy 20:19-20 possesses parallels consistent with the Amarna Letters which date to the fourteenth century BCE.[304]

[302] This view has been put forward or supported by August Dillmann, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua* (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 1886); George Adam Smith, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918); Walther Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1933); Gottfried Seitz, *Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studen zum Deuteronomium* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971); Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Deuteronomy' in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown et al. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968); Mark W. Hamilton, 'The Past as Destiny: Historical Visions in Sam'al and Judah under Assyrian Hegemony', *Harvard Theological Review* 91 (1998): 215-50, here 237. Cited also in Jacob L. Wright, 'Warfare and Wanton Destruction: A Reexamination of Deuteronomy 20: 19- 20 in Relation to Ancient Siegecraft,' *JBL* 127, no. 3 (2008): 423-458, here 426 nn. 12-13.

[303] Ibid, 426-427. It is interesting, however, that it could be argued that verses 19-20 of Deut. 20 are anti-Assyrian polemic when the three verses prior describe the ban (Deut. 20:16-18), which would seem to contradict such a polite reading. Wright also questions this view when he states, 'It would be difficult to imagine how the regulations concerning exemptions from military service (vv. 5-8) or directions for pre-battle negotiations and rules of engagement (vv. 9-18) also represent protests against Neo-Assyrian military practices. Why, then, should the final paragraph (vv. 19-20) be any different?' Ibid, 449-450.

[304] Ibid, 428.

Wright's analysis is appropriate inasmuch as Deuteronomy 20:19-20 does have its parallels in earlier material, which means that it is impossible to date Deuteronomy 20:19-20 on this basis alone. Furthermore, as Wright points out in his article, there are other aspects of Deuteronomy 20 that are visible outside of the Neo-Assyrians as well. Wright draws a parallel, for example, between an eighth century BCE Nubian ruler named Piye, who offered an alternative to destruction to a town he was taking and Deuteronomy 20's command to the Israelites to initially offer towns peace.[305] Thus, it is prudent for us to allow the issue of Deuteronomy 20's dating to remain open. We can, it seems, presume that with respect to its source, it predates the exile. But whether it predates it by ten years, or by eight hundred years, will have to remain an open question. However, even if Deuteronomy (and Deuteronomy 20) found its final written form later than Judges, certainly by the time of the exile the belief that Judah ultimately fell due to its failure to live according to the ordinances laid out by YHWH was commonly held.[306]

As if making a case for this belief, the book of Judges, in stark contrast to Israel's idyllic leader Joshua, starts to describe Israel's disobedience right away (Judges 2), which leads to nations remaining in the land of Canaan (Judges 3) and to

[305] Ibid, 431-432.

[306] That the fall of Judah was ultimately understood to be due to covenant unfaithfulness makes Niditch's comments with respect to the opening verses of Judges 3 appear problematic. She states that there are 'Two points of view that are at play in these opening verses. The first we recognize from Judges 1, in which the experience of war is seen in human terms, and success or failure is not dependent upon covenant faithfulness'. Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 55. Her disagreement here hinges upon her distinguishing numerous ideologies of war in the Hebrew Bible that include a 'bardic ideology,' which she believes is 'evidenced in the epic traditions of Judges.' Ibid. That there is such a thing as bardic-style epic in Judges can hardly be denied, but human ability in war is not at odds with covenantal faithfulness, but a part of it, as YHWH has commanded war. Therefore, the fact that warfare 'is a learned skill, a matter of training' (Ibid.) is not to say that success or failure is merely left to human ability in the eyes of the author of Judges 3. Even under Joshua the Israelites are portrayed as having to fight and unfaithfulness to the covenant led to defeat (Joshua 7). Indeed, Niditch herself recognizes the importance of covenantal faithfulness in the opening verses as she continues by saying that 'Judges 3:3-6 reflects the sort of covenantally oriented author found in ch. 2 and echoes the message of 2:22-23. The remaining nations test Israel's faithfulness, serving both as a temptation to join in the worship of alien gods and as Yhwh's means of punishing his sinful people.' Ibid, 56. We will see the specifically military role that covenantal obedience plays in the following chapter, which treats obedience/disobedience as an independent theme throughout Joshua and Judges.

YHWH's anger towards Israel (Judges 3:7-8). The counterpoint, therefore, of Joshua in the Deuteronomistic History is 2 Chronicles 36 and 2 Kings 25 which describe the fall of Judah's final king, Zedekiah. Citing Perlitt, Soggin tells us that the

> 'authors of the Dtr history were moved not by a passion for history writing, but by the necessity of explaining the fall of the two kingdoms in theological terms.' They therefore provided the people in exile with a series of ancient texts and authentic pieces of information with appropriate comments and links, so that Israel would understand that the exile was the tangible sign of divine judgment on its sin.[307]

The Deuteronomistic History is emphasizing an essential theme that is central to Israel's fall according to Proto-Isaiah and Hosea, and lies at the heart of Israel's descent. That is, the increasing dependence upon human politics and kingship at the expense of YHWH's kingship and leadership.[308] Specifically, Israel's willful submission to suzerain treaties in order to protect herself from her stronger ancient Near Eastern neighbours appears to be the issue. Long before the fall of Judah, however, Israel's disobedience described in the book of Judges leads to their being placed under the oppression of the Midianites; that is, until the call of Gideon.

5.2.2. The Gideon Cycle

When YHWH commissions Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites, YHWH once again directly demands and sanctions violence (Judges 6:14-16).[309] Despite believing himself to be too weak for the task, Gideon is assured by YHWH (Judges 6:16), however, before battle actually takes place, an interesting exchange is described wherein the author appears to be emphasizing YHWH's authority over battle, his leadership, and his kingship. This incident highlights the role of YHWH as

[307] Soggin, *Judges*, 42-43. This view is consistent with that of Williamson who has stated: 'Historians necessarily work from sources, but those sources may not have been created primarily to serve historical purposes.' H.G.M. Williamson, 'The History of Israel - Or: Twos into One Won't Go,' *ExpTim* 119, no. 1 (2007): 22-26, here 23.

[308] These themes are visible in Isaiah 30-31 and Hosea 8.

[309] See also Judges 7:9 and 7:15.

king and, therefore, as the commander of Israel's army commensurate with the role of other ancient Near Eastern peoples' kings. It occurs in Judges 7 and involves YHWH's desire to dismiss many of the troops that had been brought together by Gideon (now Jerubbaal) to fight the Midianites. YHWH explains to Gideon that because Israel possessed too many soldiers, after Israel defeated the Midianites, they would presume their success was by their own power. The text describes YHWH saying: 'Israel would only take credit away from me, saying, "My own hand has delivered me"' (Judges 7:2). Therefore, in order to emphasize his own authority over the outcome of the battle, and his role as Israel's king by illustrating the power of his kingship as the commander of an army, he tells Gideon to dismiss the soldiers that are afraid and who drink from the water in a particular way (Judges 7:3-7). Ultimately, the army is reduced from 32,000 soldiers to 300 (Judges 7:6). Then the text describes YHWH's command to go to war and goes on to describe the Israelites' defeat of the Midianites as well the capture and killing of the Midianite captains, Oreb and Zeeb (Judges 7:9-25). The author of the narrative sought to display YHWH's kingship by illustrating his capacity to lead and wage war for his people.[310] However, anticipating that the reader of the text may not be convinced, the writer goes on to describe the

[310] Niditch captures well the display of YHWH's divine prowess with respect to war in this instance, but does not appear to infer a reference to YHWH's kingship. She states,

> Events surrounding the honing down of Gideon's fighting force portray the battle as belonging to divinely controlled holy war. Gideon's close connection with this patron deity has already been made clear, for God sends him a messenger and miraculous signs and communicates directly with the hero. Now the deity commands that Gideon take fewer men to battle, for the victory is about the power of the divine warrior himself. This passage echoes aspects of various miracle accounts in which God subdues enemies (e.g., Exod 17:8-13; Josh 6:20; 10:12-13; 1 Sam 7:9-11; 2 Kings 7:5-7; 19:35-37; 2 Chron 20:1-30). The deity demands the sort of reduction in forces pictured by Deuteronomy 20 ... God is now pictured satisfied that no one will confuse miraculous victory with mere human prowess. The deity conducts every aspect of the battle and even directs Gideon to receive an additional sign of his success, a kind of confidence-building oracle.

Niditch, *Judges*, 97. But, of course, this is a display of YHWH's kingship, that is, his capacity to lead in war and to bring success to his people in war.

Israelites' asking Gideon to rule over them.[311] Webb observes a connection between the preceding battle and YHWH's kingship as well. He states that

> it is clear from this verse [22] that to those in the Israelite heartland west of the Jordan he has returned as a conquering hero. He has shown himself to be a strong and effective leader. The slayer of kings has *ipso facto* achieved a kingly status in the eyes of his followers, who now attribute their escape from the Midianite yoke directly to him, and make this the basis of their offer that he and his family should rule Israel in perpetuity.[312]

As such, the writer of the Gideon cycle describes YHWH as wanting the Israelites to understand that *he* wins their battles, that *he* is their leader and king. However, the Israelites are depicted leaning upon what they can see with their own eyes. Claassens describes the situation well when she says that the battle 'has distracted attention from God's main goal, in that the focus has shifted solely onto Gideon.'[313] So whilst they realize that they themselves did not win the battle with merely 300 men, they praise Gideon instead of YHWH for their success.[314] Webb agrees and says that the Israelites 'fail to give Yahweh credit for the deliverance.'[315] Then predictably, they ask Gideon and his line to be their king over them, to which Gideon 'gives the theologically correct response'[316] and replies, 'I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you' (Judges 8:22-23). This highlights an understanding that the Israelites held in common with their ancient Near Eastern counterparts: the king leads and wages wars.[317] Citing the common

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[311] Judges 8:22 describes the following: 'Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also; for you have delivered us out of the hand of Midian."' Webb tells us 'it is Yahweh who saves Israel. Gideon and his fellow Israelites participate only as his weak but divinely enabled instruments ... The danger was that the Israelites would misinterpret the victory as their own achievement and fail to honor the true Savior.' Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2012), 263. This, of course, is precisely what the text describes.

[312] Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 262.

[313] L. J. Claassens, 'The Character of God in Judges 6-8: The Gideon Narrative as Theological and Moral Resource,' *HBT* 23, no. 1 (2001): 51-71, here 64.

[314] Claassens tells us that, 'Israel does not remember who God is. Immediately after Gideon's slaying of the kings, Israel turns to Gideon and offers him dynastic rule. The reason the people give is that *Gideon* has them saved them (8:22). They miss the point'. Ibid.

[315] Barry G. Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 152. See also Claassens, 'The Character of God in Judges 6-8,' 64.

[316] Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 152.

[317] Niditch recognizes that this 'passage is important for exploring attitudes to kingship in Judges. In no uncertain terms, the hero rejects dynastic monarchy, for Yhwh is king (8:23)'. Niditch, *Judges: A*

occurrence of the word 'to save' (ישע) throughout the Gideon narrative, Gerbrandt has argued that the narrative reinforces the message that 'Yahweh is Israel's ruler in that he delivers Israel form the hands of her enemies. This is emphasized in the Gideon narratives as a whole, and 8:22-23 contributes to this message.'[318]

While he is speaking of the Hittites, the following comments from Bryce could also be said of other ancient Near Eastern peoples. Bryce says 'the head of the [military] command structure was the king himself ... But each new successor to the throne was expected to demonstrate his fitness to rule by his prowess on the field of battle.'[319] Similarly, Deijl tells us that

> The king was seen as a viceroy of the gods in all of the Ancient Near East. He looks after god's affairs on earth. The metaphor of the king as a shepherd is widespread and makes clear how the role of the king is seen: it is his task to graze the sheep and protect them from outside dangers on behalf of the owner who is distant.[320]

Distinctly, however, YHWH's kingship and the writer's desire to show YHWH's capacity to lead, emphasizes precisely that unlike other ancient Near Eastern gods, YHWH is not distant. The author(s) of the narrative wants to portray the kingship of YHWH via YHWH's leadership and success in war.

If such a pre-monarchical period has any kind of historical foundation then a king other than YHWH, like an army with more than one Commander in Chief, would undermine Israel's entire social hierarchy, potentially threatening the social hierarchical roles of the judges, prophets, and priests, and with it the centrifugal ideologisation and bureaucracy of coercion which necessarily underscores the emergence of organised violence. And the authority of the priesthood appears to be a

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Commentary, 105. However, she does not connect these verses to the preceding battle in which YHWH is described going out of his way to portray his capacity to lead Israel in war, which appears to be a central role of the king in the ancient Near Eastern *Weltbild*.

[318] Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 128-29.

[319] Trevor R. Bryce, 'The Hittites at War,' in *Studies on War in the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays on Military History*, eds. Jordi Vidal and Miraval (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 67-85, here 72. [Square brackets mine]

[320] Aarnoud van der Deijl, *Protest Or Propaganda: War in the Old Testament Book of Kings and in Contemporaneous Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 665.

particular concern of the Historian.[321] Furthermore, the ideological role of YHWH's kingship, and thus his immanence as the Israelite's god and, therefore, leader in war, would also be undermined. However, this raises an important and unavoidable question. Did Israel actually exist as a pure theocracy? That is, does Israel's history include a historical pre-monarchical period, or is it a theological device of a later writer? Unfortunately, this question cannot, it seems, be answered in any kind of conclusive way, however, the Historian's sources do appear to point us toward memories of at least some of those who would comprise Israel's amphictyony.[322] That said, while we cannot be sure that a historical pre-monarchical period existed for Israel *per se* we can, nonetheless, appreciate that it was important for the Historian to tell Israel's story leading to the fall of Judah in a way which included such a period.[323]

Predictably, the Historian describes one person in particular as perceiving the need of a king and who figured he was suitable for the task—Abimelech (אבימלך), 'my father is king'.[324] Abimelech (a son of Gideon) is described as having hired some

[321] McConville has argued that 'while Dtr's theology of priesthood is not fully or explicitly worked out in Judges, an ideal view of its role as an institution may be said be present in the background, hinted at by its 'shadowside' in priestly corruption.' J.G. McConville, 'Priesthood in Joshua to Kings,' *VT* 49, no. 1 (1999): 73-87, here 79. It certainly appears to be the case that the writer of Judges (17-21 in particular) is interested in portraying what the priesthood is supposed to look like via tales of the priesthood acting contrary to the ideal. However, we must not forget that the writer is also describing a priesthood gone awry because 'in those days there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes'. Therefore, any priestly concerns in the text are probably coming from an underlying concern for the monarchy and from the understanding that, somehow, its authority is bound up in the institution of kingship. McConville appears to agree as he also says that 'the question follows whether Dtr entertains any hope for the future of the priesthood. This seems inseparable from the question of the future of the monarchy, which looks bleak'. Ibid, 86.

[322] Williamson has addressed the issue of the historicity of the pre-monarchical period saying that he is not 'persuaded that every narrative item in the books from Exodus through to 1 Samuel is entirely the invention *ex nihilo* of much later times ... there are too many coincidences of names and circumstantial detail which fit the earlier period but which would have been unknown to later generations for such conclusion to be in the least bit plausible'. Williamson, 'The History of Israel - Or: Twos into One Won't Go,' 26.

[323] Gerbrandt has argued that 'even if the historical Gideon was never offered kingship, and these verses are a literary creation, they would still be significant since they would be the first discussion of the issue for the historian.' Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, 123. n. 59.

[324] Niditch tells us that 'Gideon has refused kingship, whereas his son, ironically named 'My Father Is King,' will ambitiously pursue it'. Niditch, *Judges*, 106. See also, Soggin, *Judges*, 167, and; Robert G. Boling, *Judges* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 163. Both offer a more in-depth discussion of Abimelech's name and are both cited in Niditch. Niditch, *Judges*, 115. Niditch explains that 'Abimelech's name has an ironic connotation ... and implies descent for the ruler from a divine king of

men, killed his brothers (except for the youngest Jotham), and made a king by the lords of Shechem, all without express sanction from YHWH. While Abimelech is described having some success in battle, despite the lack of YHWH's explicit mandate to wage war (Judges 9:1-6) he is eventually struck by a millstone which had been thrown by a woman, after which he asked his armour bearer to kill him (Judges 9:53-54). His death is said to have been YHWH's repayment for the crime he committed against his father and seventy brothers (Judges 9:56). Thus, Abimelech's rule appears to serve as a cautionary tale to anyone who might presume to be to king, and to wage war, without YHWH's express approval. Abimelech's forcibly taking power rather than being appointed to the role of king by YHWH is why the book of Judges appears to present two voices with respect to kingship. Judges 9, therefore, precludes any understanding that maintains the Historian believes kingship is desirable in every case. In light of Judges 9, and 17-21, it is untenable to maintain that view.

5.3. Kingship vs. Judges in the Book of Judges

Jans tells us that the final five chapters of Judges describes the '*chaotischen Zustände*' which emerge without a king and that these chaotic conditions give the text a pro-monarchical stance inasmuch as they make the case that only a king, as opposed to the institution of Judges, can keep order in Israel.[325] However, it is equally untenable to maintain that the Historian thinks that having any king is preferable to YHWH's

kings or proper inheritance of a previous human king's mantle. In this case, Abimelech is neither. He does not serve with diving blessing, and his father chose not to be king, believing God to be the only true king. Abimelech does not inherit power but seizes it'. Ibid.

[325] Jans says that, 'In 17,6; 18,1; 19,1; 21,25 führt ein Redaktor die in diesen Kapiteln beschriebenen chaotischen Zustände auf das Fehlen eines Königs zurück und gibt sich damit als Befürworter einer Monarchie zu erkennen: Ein könig (und nur ein König) kann Israel vor dem Chaos bewahren. Aus dieser Sicht gewinnt die Frage des Königstums in Ri 17-21 eine zentrale Stellung, die im Endtext durch die Plazierung der genannten Verse an herausragenden Stellen dieser Kapitel deutlich akzentuiert ist.' Edgar Jans, *Abimelech und Sein Königtum: Diachrone und Synchrone Untersuchungen Zu Ri 9* (St. Ottilien: EOS-Verlag, 2001), 472. That these verses give chapters 17-21 a promonarchical voice remains the case whether their inclusion is a late addition or not.

kingship. Abimelech is certainly made a king though not in accordance with YHWH's will but, rather, his own.[326] Furthermore, he murdered his brothers as part of his plot to become king (Judges 9:2-6). While one might expect Abimelech's rule to display kingly features of maintaining peace, order and stability (an expectation of kingship which is implicit in the war, chaos and instability visible through a king's absence throughout chapters 17 – 21), instead Jans tells us that Abimelech's rule exhibits the '*genaue Gegenteil*'.[327] It is certainly the case that Judges – and particularly Judges 9 – is addressing the issue of kingship amongst the Israelites,[328] however, the book of Judges is neither pro, nor antimonarchical, in any simplistic sense, that is to say that both positions imply requisite caveats.

Judges is antimonarchical so far as it expresses an initial preference for YHWH's kingship and the role of the Judges, however, it also portrays the kingship of YHWH enforced by the Judges as untenable throughout 17–21 and, therefore, the book simultaneously expresses a pro-monarchical voice. As such, in Jan's eyes, the monarchy represents a '*Kompromißlösung*' wherein the rise and fall of Abimelech

[326] Gerbrandt has argued that 'the contrast between Gideon/Jerubbaal and Abimelech cannot be missed. Although Gideon is described as refusing the offered kingship, both are clearly seen by the Deuteronomist as leaders of Israel ... Abimelech came to his position of leadership as the result of his own initiative, through the use of intrigue, force, and bloodshed, Gideon came to his position after being called by Yahweh. This fits well with the law of kingship which allowed Israel to make king 'him whom the Lord your God will choose.' Immediately one can conclude that Gideon's rule was legitimate, and Abimelech's not.' Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, 133. It is plain, therefore, that it is an issue of paramount importance, ideologically, whether or not YHWH actually sanctions a king.

[327] Jans states, 'Interessanterweise ist in Ri Abimelech der einzige israelitische König, wenngleich er nie ausdrücklich als solcher bezeichnet wird (vgl. aber 9,22!). So könnte man erwarten, daß er als einziger Vertreter seiner „Gattung" im Sinne des positiven Königsbildes von 17,6; 18,1; 19,1; 21,25 als ein Garant für Sicherheit und Ordnung gewürdigt wird. Abimelech ist jedoch unübersehbar das genaue Gegenteil davon: er stürzt sein Reich sehr schnell ins Chaos und in eine umfassende Katastrophe.' Jans, *Abimelech und Sein Königtum: Diachrone und Synchrone Untersuchungen Zu Ri 9*, 472. Of course, despite his being described as ruling Israel for three years and having been made a king it was, nonetheless, without YHWH's sanction. Therefore, his 'kingship' is arguably not a true kingship at all and the reader ought not to expect to see the kind of order one would anticipate under a divinely sanctioned monarch in accordance with Deuteronomy 17:14-15. This is, arguably, the Historian's point.

[328] Jans tells us, 'Das Leitungsamt ist in der Gestalt des Königtums zweifellos ein Thema in Ri 9.' Ibid, 472.

serves as a '*warnendes Beispiel'*.[329] After the death of Abimelech the narrative tells us that rule under Judges became normative again for the next fifty years (Judges 10). The next time, however, that the Israelites fall into worshipping other gods they did not seek out a king, rather, YHWH is described placing the Israelites under the oppression of the Philistines and the Ammonites. From under this oppression the Israelites repent and return to worshipping YHWH who acts on their behalf through Jephthah delivering the Israelites from under the Ammonites (Judges 11).

The issue of kingship in the book of Judges warrants further discussion as accounts of warfare and conquest throughout the Ancient Near East are composed from the first person perspective of the king. The accounts of warfare in the Hebrew Bible, however, are plainly not written in a way that could be said to be similar to (for example) the Annals of Sennacherib even though there are features that are invariably held in common. One might go so far as to say, based upon the available evidence, that war stories are *king stories* in the ancient Near East inasmuch as they are written by kings (or composed as such), or at least for kings. Therefore, narratologically, and whilst debated, possibly historically (that is, if there were such a pre-monarchical theocracy), YHWH appears to meet a need. That is, if there were a time wherein the Israelites lacked a king 'like other nations' YHWH filled the role.

Later, the book of Judges presents us with an anomaly inasmuch as there is the ubiquitous theme that 'there was no king in Israel' and 'everyone did what was just in their own eyes.'[330] Doing evil in the sight of YHWH, that is, failing to follow his laws

[329] Jans connects Judges 9 to the later theme throughout Judges 17-21 that 'there was no king in Israel and everyone did was right in their own eyes' when he says that, 'Die Monarchie sei deshalb in den Augen des Editors eine Kompromißlösung: einerseits bleibe Abimelech als warnendes Beispiel stehen, andererseits sei das Königtum nicht nur Antwort auf die Forderungen des Volkes, sondern auch eine Chance in eine bessere Zukunft, in der nicht jeder tut, was in seinen Augen recht ist.' Ibid, 475.

[330] Gerbrandt argues for Deuteronomistic authorship/redaction of Judges 17-21 by citing Deuteronomy 12:8. Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, 137. Römer maintains that the refrain is 'due to post-Deuteronomistic redactors who wanted to conclude the

and, therefore, his justice, consistently leads to the Israelites' falling under the yoke of other kings. Gideon had explained that he was not to rule over them, when the Israelites turned to idol worship Abimelech exalted himself to kingship. After Abimelech died the theocracy of the Judges is said to have taken over again, until Israel again fell into idol worship. The Historian then tells us that Israel fell under the oppression of the Ammonites and the Philistines at which point they repented, then asked for YHWH's help. YHWH delivered them via Jephthah and the judges tradition is said to have continued again for almost fifty years. After the death of Abdon, however, the Historian tells us that the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH, and that YHWH gave them into the hand of the Philistines forty years (Judges 13:1), a time period which recalls the punishment of the Israelites to wander the desert for an additional forty years for failing to have confidence in YHWH's ability to lead them into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:11, 34-35), which amounted to the failure to believe in YHWH's capacity to wage war on their behalf.

This theme, of Israel doing evil in the sight of YHWH, emerges early in the book of Judges in Judges 2:11, after the death of Joshua, when a whole other generation 'who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel' emerged (Judges 2:10). This turning to idol worship upon forgetting YHWH's precisely kingly role as their deliverer and protector would make sense, for as long as they remember YHWH's actions on their behalf there would be little to no temptation to turn away from his leadership and to cast off his yoke. However upon forgetting, the Historian describes them turning to what they can see and touch, idols, which are typical of their Ancient Near Eastern counterparts (Judges 2:11-12). The question then becomes: what was the Historian's purpose for introducing these episodes with

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period of Judges in Judg..21.25'. Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 141. n.73.

descriptions of Israel's apostasy[331] and what is the relationship between these stories and YHWH's kingship?

When the Israelites follow YHWH's laws they accept him as their king, as well as their god, as these are simply embedded in the law and consistent with the ancient Near Eastern understanding of the king being the administrator of justice in a given locale – in this case, the Promised Land. YHWH's role as king is portrayed with his handing of his laws to a prophet rather than a king. This giving of his laws to a prophet runs contrary to at least one Ancient Near Eastern description of a god giving his laws to a king, an earthly viceroy (viz. Šamaš to Hammurabi). That YHWH's laws are described being given to Moses illustrates that the writers are conveying that YHWH is to be regarded as king over Israel, Israel's wager of wars, and Israel's administrator of justice through the law and the prophets. When the Israelites are oppressed YHWH is portrayed raising up Judges (Judges 2:16) as the Israelites are depicted as clearly needing help implementing and maintaining the statutes given to them and which were maintained, temporarily, by Moses and Joshua. Judges 2, indeed an overture of the rest of the book inasmuch as it describes the cycle of disobedience and syncretism of the Israelites,[332] includes a passage which describes YHWH's reasons for abandoning them (Judges 2:18-21). In abandoning YHWH worship in favor of the worship of other gods, the Israelites do not merely commit an

[331] Noth tell us that, 'in his treatment of the 'judges' period, Dtr. was particularly concerned to portray the people's repeated apostasy. The divine help apparent in the victories remains in evidence only until those who witnessed it have died (in the 40-year periods of 'rest' /14/). Then the apostasy sets in again and it is worse each time; Dtr. probably means by wyspw [Noth is referring to ויספו], which introduces most of the section (Judg. 3:12; 4:1; 10:6; 13:1), "(their evildoing) became worse still", since he has stated in the introduction that each successive generation "behaved worse than their fathers" (2:19)'. Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, Dept. of Biblical Studies, 1981), 44. Römer maintains that the entire period of the Judges is an 'invention of the Deuteronomistic school'. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 136. He adds that the stories are 'presented as a repeated cycle of apostasy and return to Yahweh' and that the period 'foreshadows the story of the monarchy'. Ibid, 137-138.

[332] Webb refers to the whole of Judges 1.1-3.6 as an 'overture'. See Chapter 3 of Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading*.

act of impiety, but they abandon the laws that have been given to them by YHWH and, therefore, abandon YHWH's justice, including the social structure and ideology codified for Israel's own well-being. Furthermore, inasmuch as the king is the administrator of justice and wager of wars on behalf a people in the Ancient Near East, the Israelites have also refused the kingship of YHWH and, therefore, YHWH is depicted refusing to serve them as a king by administering justice and waging war on their behalf (Judges 2:20-21). That the refusal of YHWH worship and his laws is tantamount to the rejection of YHWH's kingship is visible in the cycle of oppression and deliverance that follows, for each time the people do evil in the sight of YHWH they fall under the rule of another king.[333] Indeed, the very existence in the Deuteronomistic History of a period ruled by Judges bears witness to the conviction that the institution of human kingship was thought to represent a falling away from what the Historian would have considered an earlier and more pristine plan for Israel. Otherwise, why would there be a pre-monarchical period described at all? For in other ancient Near Eastern writings the god is still considered king, despite the presence of a human king acting as their viceroy.[334] The fact that having human kings while concurrently viewing one's god as king was typical throughout the Ancient Near East reveals that the presence of a pre-monarchical period in the Deuteronomistic History reflects a disappointment in human kingship and the conviction that somehow, in some way, it was not perceived to be as ideal as YHWH's kingship alone.

[333] Römer also admits the relationship between the law and kingship when he states that 'the history of the monarchy will be evaluated according to the Deuteronomistic law, especially according to the ideology of cultic centralization and the exclusive veneration of Yahweh'. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 140. However, he does not connect YHWH's administration of justice and refusal to wage war on their behalf (Judges 2:20-21), both functions of kingship, with the worship of idols; except inasmuch as YHWH is described as having turned on Israel for their apostasy and that the 'military problems that some tribes encounter with their neighbours are transformed into Yahweh's punishments'. Ibid, 137.

[334] While referring to the Ancient Near East as a whole de Deijl has said that 'the divine king is the *destinateur*, he who factually holds power. But just like the king in fairy tales, he governs from a distance. The earthly king, in his role of viceroy, is the executive of his divine planes'. van der Deijl, *Protest Or Propaganda*, 666.

The cycle of idol worship and the subsequent falling under the rule of a foreign king is present in Judges 3:7 after which YHWH raised up a judge (Othniel), who led Israel in the worship of YHWH, which by fiat was to possess YHWH again as king, and like a king, YHWH 'went out to war' (ויצא מלחמהל, Judges 3:10) and delivered Israel. Webb sees it as 'poetic justice' that 'those who choose to "serve" *('bd)* foreign gods (v. 7) are made to serve *('bd)* a foreign tyrant (v. 8)',[335] but it appears to be more than that. It is the natural consequence of refusing to follow YHWH as their king, which when they did was made manifest in their following his laws and being subject to his justice under his judges. Webb says that

> the tyrant is called *melek̲* (king). Cushan-rishathaim, like Othniel, is the embodiment of an institution, and the clash between them is a clash between judgeship and kingship. Both institutions are instrumental here in Yahweh's rule over Israel: kingship in punishment, and judgeship in deliverance.[336]

However, his placing the two institutions in conflict with each other leads Webb to miss the narrative's central point: YHWH is the true king over Israel. When the Israelites reject his yoke, they reject him as king and are, therefore, subjected to another's instead.

While the book of Judges does exhibit promonarchical material, especially 17-21, it is also clear that a king, if there is to be one, must be appointed by YHWH, which is illustrated by the cautionary tale of Abimelech in chapter 9. Looking to the kingships of Hezekiah and Josiah in 2 Kings one can observe that even under the Davidic kingship the perceived role of the king of Israel (at least according to the Historian) was to uphold the covenant among the people Israel and that to the extent that Israel did live up to its covenantal obligations YHWH fought Israel's battles.[337]

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[335] Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 159.

[336] Ibid, 160.

[337] Once again, as was discussed in the previous section, the role of the king is presented by the Historian in a way which is consistent with the view reflected in Proto-Isaiah and Hosea (visible in Isaiah 30-31 and Hosea 8), which is the belief that the increasing dependence upon human politics and kingship lies at the heart of Israel's descent. In contrast to a 'prophetic' interpretation of Isaiah 32:1,

That is to say, acted as their King 'like other nations' to the extent that the king in other nations fought and won wars, protected their peoples, and administrated justice.[338] As such, if there were a historical, pre-monarchical period, the belief in YHWH's kingship would have been central to Israel's social organisation and ideologisation and, therefore, their success in combat. If there were not a historical pre-monarchical period then the belief in YHWH's kingship, the kingship of the Israelites' god who was not confined to the land (Ezekiel 1), would presumably provide some theological comfort to the defeated and exiled Israelites, as well as maintain the ideology and some measure of social organisation (at least in memory) until such a time when there would again be a king (YHWH or otherwise) to save Israel.

Therefore, if the Israelites depended upon the military leadership of prophets/judges and priests in a particular historical circumstance, then the belief in YHWH's leadership as a king and his immanence as such would have been essential to their capacity to wage even defensive war. If YHWH was not believed to be present in any real sense then the Israelites would need more than judges and priests to lead them, indeed, they would need a king 'like other nations'—a human king. To believe he is king just *is* to believe that he can actually lead and win their battles through Israel's judges and prophets. Furthermore, it raises the social efficacy of the divine mandate inasmuch as their belief was that YHWH does not merely give his mandate through a human king, but rather YHWH *is* their king which further

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Barton has argued that 'it is entirely possible that the prophecy is not predictive at all, but is a kind of wisdom saying, pointing out that it is by righteousness that a king—any king—does or should reign.' John Barton, 'The Messiah in Old Testament Theology,' in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 365-379, here 374.

[338] Garfinkle notes that 'the king was charged with building and maintaining the city and its surroundings, with protecting the city and its residents, and with the administration of justice.' Steven J. Garfinkle, 'Ancient Near Eastern City-States,' in *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, eds. Peter F. Bang and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94-118, here 110. Cf. Chapter Three, Section Three of this thesis.

reinforces the authoritative role of judges, prophets, and priests in Israel's social hierarchy (the bureaucratisation of coercion) and the spreading of Israel's ideology (centrifugal ideologisation), which are both fundamental to the emergence and effectiveness of organised violence. In this sense, the kingship of YHWH, if there were a pre-monarchical period, was a belief peculiar to a people who lacked a king in an ancient Near Eastern context wherein stronger nations had them. Even if the tales lack historical foundation, within the narrative, the kingship of YHWH is akin to the other measures that Israel is described putting into place in order to make itself capable militarily despite lacking attributes of their more-powerful ancient Near Eastern counterparts including: the order of encampment in Numbers 1 *sans* the walls and temples of their neighbors' city-states; the Ark of the Covenant instead of the central city statues; and, the Tent of Meeting instead of the temples, all of which were essential to the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion and centrifugal ideologisation of their ancient Near Eastern neighbors. They are described in such a way that they appear to present an attempt to emulate the social structures and ideologies which allowed their city-state contemporaries to flourish militarily. Given that kingship appears to have risen in prominence concurrently with the city-state in the Ancient Near East[339] the Israelites' claim that YHWH is their king takes on a heightened level of meaning. The empowering ideology exclaims: 'Our enemies have mere human kings to lead them in war, flesh and blood, but our king is our god,

[339] Baines has argued effectively against the view that the emergence of kingship was specific to the development of the city-state in Ancient Egypt. John Baines, 'Origins of Egyptian Kinship,' in *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, eds. D. O'Conner and D.P. Silverman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 95-156. Cf. J. Baines, 'Ancient Egyptian Kingship: Official Forms, Rhetoric, Context,' in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 16- 53, here 16. However, what is not debatable is that city-states invariably, including those of Ancient Egypt, had kings. Garfinkle has stated that 'outside of its monumental architecture, the most visible symbol of the ancient Near Eastern city-state was its king ... The king was the divinely chosen leader of the city ... The association of the king with divine sanction shows that the origins of state power were associated with the growth of the power of cult centers. The coercive power of the monarch therefore proceeded directly from his association with the gods'. Steven J. Garfinkle, 'Ancient Near Eastern City-States,' 108.

YHWH.' In this light, the question then is not whether Israel always had a king but, rather, whether Israel always had a king 'like other nations' and whether anything other than a king 'like other nations' could protect Israel and maintain justice in the land.[340]

5.3.1. Eglon and Ehud

The familiar cycle of doing evil and then falling under another king's rule is continues in Judges 3:12. The Israelites are described as having served King Eglon for eighteen years before being delivered by Ehud (Judges 3:14-30). This particular episode portrays Eglon as an able king during the period that he conquered Jericho (the City of Palms) and ruled over Israel for eighteen years (Judges 3:12-14). However, once the Israelites call out to their true king again, YHWH, and follow Ehud as their Judge, Eglon is portrayed as incompetent in comparison. He is described as so obese that Ehud's sword is swallowed entirely when he drives it into his belly (Judges 3:17, 21-22).[341] Ultimately, ten thousand Moabite soldiers are killed under Ehud's leadership on behalf of YHWH (Judges 3:29) after he gives YHWH's divine mandate for war in verse 28. The moral of the story is clear: throwing off YHWH's covenant and, therefore, rejecting him as king, will never give Israel the justice and protection they

[340] This is not to say that this thesis is arguing against the mainstream view that 'like other nations' means a king inasmuch as other nations *have* kings. Rather, it is describing another potential understanding of the phrase inasmuch as, unlike the Israelites, they have human kings. The two views do not need to be held in opposition, rather, holding both views concurrently, offers a deeper appreciation of the phrase.

[341] Stone has argued against the predominant view that Eglon is portrayed as a fat and incompetent king by considering 1) the use of the phrase 'very fat' (בריא מאד) in Judges 3 and the rest of the Hebrew Bible, 2) the word-play associated with Eglon's name, and 3) consideration of Ehud's blade and how a reader is to understand its being swallowed by Ehud's belly. Lawson G. Stone, 'Eglon's Belly and Ehud's Blade: A Reconsideration,' *JBL* 128, no. 4 (2009): 649-663. However, despite Stone's separate consideration of each issue the predominant view appears to persist among scholars. It is the convergence of the three issues, and the fact that the biblical writer is not making the case for Eglon's being fat upon, for example, merely the use of the phrase בריא מאד, which by itself, and without the description of Ehud's blade and the word-play associated with Eglon's name, could arguably allow one to dismiss the mainstream view that Eglon is being portrayed as fat and incompetent.

seek, only YHWH's rule can. The degree to which Eglon's kingship is emphasized further illustrates the incompetence of kings 'like other nations' in comparison to YHWH. Webb tells us that 'we are repeatedly reminded that he is a king. Four times we are given his full title *'eglôn melek̲ mô'āb̲* (Eglon, king of Moab, vv. 12, 14, 15, 17)'.[342] However, Webb believes that 'inasmuch as our attention is specifically drawn to his office, the satirical portrayal of the man Eglon also involves an implicit critique of kingship as an institution.'[343] This is plainly true, however, it is not kingship *per se* that is being critiqued but, rather, kingship 'like other nations', and more specifically, Israel's obstinate failure to appreciate YHWH as their king. Indeed, if there is a contrast it is not so much between Judges and Kings as institutions, as almost the entire Deuteronomistic History reads as polemic against human kingship even within Israel itself.[344] Rather, the contrast that is being emphasized is that which lies between YHWH's kingship and that of others. Even during the Israelite monarchy this contrast between YHWH's kingship, idyllically portrayed in Exodus and Joshua, and human kingship, which ultimately fails for the final time in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles with the fall of Judah, remains consistent.

So once again, the kingship of YHWH is emphasized which is what Israel's social hierarchy (the bureaucratisation of coercion) depends upon so far as it reinforces the authority of the Judges, prophets and priests. Furthermore, it is through Israel's social organisation that Israel's ideology (centrifugal ideologisation) permeates. Israel's effective use of organised violence depends upon both. To reiterate, in a pre-monarchical period, the kingship of YHWH, was a belief which was central for a people who lacked a king in a harsh ancient Near Eastern context wherein stronger nations had them.

[342] Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 165.
[343] Ibid, 167.
[344] Barring, perhaps, Nathan's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:16.

5.3.2. Jabin, 'King of Canaan', Deborah and Samson

Judges 4 begins with the familiar formula again: 'The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH' after which they were delivered into the hands of King Jabin for twenty years (Judges 4:1-3). Notably, Jabin 'who reigned in Hazor' possesses the title 'King of Canaan' (מלך־כנען) (Judges 4:3) which Niditch maintains 'provides legendary stature to the defeated enemy in this tale.'[345] According to Soggin, Jabin's title serves as literary device because 'Canaan was never a single political entity, but was composed of various city-states.'[346] The writer, it appears, sought to emphasize the strength of Jabin with his title, and with descriptions of his chariots (Judges 4:2-3). His title, 'King of Canaan,' is repeated three more times in verses 23 and 24 as Israel's victory via YHWH is described. Again, this title for Jabin stands in stark contrast to YHWH, who the reader knows is the true מלך־כנען and the one whose authority the land of Canaan had been promised and given into the hands of the Israelites. However, it appears that the strength of the title and, therefore, the force of the narrative may be due to some historical veracity. Citing biblical and extra-biblical ancient Near Eastern sources Malamat gave one good reason to maintain that Hazor, where Jabin reigned, was in fact 'the head of all those kingdoms' (Joshua 11:10).[347] Malamat says that these words in Joshua 11:10

> were not spoken, or at least not intended primarily, as a description of Hazor on the eve of the Israelites conquest. Rather do they testify to the former greatness of this city founded in the Middle Bronze Age. Moreover the title "king of Canaan" (Judg 4 2, 24), attributed to Jabin uniquely in the Bible, is apparently a reminiscence of earlier times, when the king of Hazor was in fact *the* king of Canaan. The pre-eminence accorded to Hazor during the Israelite conquest is probably the last vestige of the greatness of the once-mighty kingdom.[348]

[345] Niditch, *Judges*, 64.

[346] Ibid, 64. See also Soggin, who has stated that 'the title "king of Canaan" never existed, cf. also vv. 23f.: the region never enjoyed any political unity, apart from a brief period in the empire of David and Solomon; however, David and Solomon were never given this title'. Soggin, *Judges*, 62.

[347] A. Malamat, 'Hazor "the Head of all those Kingdoms,"' *JBL* 79, no. 1 (1960): 12-19, here 12.

[348] Ibid, 19.

Thus, the conflict between YHWH and Jabin is portrayed as a battle between two contesting 'kings of Canaan.' Soggin says that Jabin

> appears as the immediate superior to Sisera, and is clearly distinguished from him because he does absolutely nothing. Mention of him therefore seems useless for narrative purposes; at most it adds one extra fact, that there was another superior authority above the commander of the coalition; however, this is an authority who is conspicuous by his absence.[349]

However, this absence reinforces the writer's point, that a human king ('like other nations') is ineffectual in contrast to YHWH, even a 'king of Canaan', and it illustrates that kingship is precisely what the tale is about. For, otherwise, as Soggin has said, it is a pointless fact that there is a 'King of Canaan' described in the tale who then contributes nothing in the way of described action. Surely, however, someone attributed with the title 'King of Canaan' in a narrative has a literary role to play in the book of Judges. Especially given, as was stated earlier, that war narratives are *king narratives* in the Ancient Near East. In this instance, it may be argued that his role in the narrative is to serve as a contrast with YHWH and YHWH's capacity to rule and protect the Israelites as their king. This literary role, and any likely historical veracity, appears to persist in earlier source material with respect to Jabin as it seems that the Historian may have inadvertently used the same source twice. For, as Noth has pointed out, the Historian had already described Joshua's killing a Jabin, King of Hazor, in Joshua 11:1,10.[350]

[349] Soggin, *Judges*, 70.

[350] Regarding the double use of the defeat of Jabin, King of Hazor, Noth said that the 'Dtr. took it over without noticing that the old account of the occupation which he himself had previously adapted had noted that this Jabin had been killed in the time of Joshua (Jos. 11:10) and, since the city of Hazor had been destroyed at that time (Jos. 11:11b,13b), Dtr. could not have assumed that there was a later king of the same name who ruled the same city without contradicting himself. Such inconsistencies are nothing out of the ordinary in historical works which have absorbed various old sources.' Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 45. In contrast, Webb appears to take a rather conservative line with respect to both the historicity of Judges and with the accuracy of its narratives when, contrary to the predominant view, he argues that while 'Joshua had defeated another "Jabin" at Hazor almost one hundred years earlier (Josh. 11:1-11) ... Verses 23-24 [of Judges 4] probably refer to the final destruction of a resurgent Hazor in the thirteenth century, as attested (on at least one reading of the data) by the archaeological remains there.' Webb, *The Book of Judges,*180.

Jabin's abilities as a king are further contrasted with YHWH's via Jabin's skilled military commander Sisera and the nine hundred iron chariots at his disposal, which proved to be no match for YHWH.[351] Deborah, the prophet and judge, with YHWH's divine mandate, ordered Barak to fight Sisera, commander of Jabin's army, and King Jabin was defeated (Judges 4:4-24). The writer polemically conveys YHWH's strength, again in comparison to Jabin and his commander Sisera, through Deborah.[352] Deborah 'is female and therefore not expected to lead in a military context' and this 'only enhances the impression of the judge as one raised by God'.[353] Furthermore, that Deborah *is* a judge also enhances the impression of YHWH as king and that *he* is the one leading in this explicitly military context through Deborah and Barak. Niditch tells us that Deborah's 'oracle emphasizes a favorite theme of Judges and the larger Hebrew Bible concerning the victory of the unlikely hero. Sisera will be undone by a woman.'[354] Or, more accurately, by YHWH himself.[355] In any case, neither the issues surrounding the title 'king of Canaan,' nor the competing offices of kingship and judges, do anything to detract from the role of YHWH in these narratives as Israel's military commander—king—in war. Furthermore, YHWH's

[351] Webb tells us that 'Sisera's *nine hundred chariots* were an impressive force. Iron chariots were the latest military hardware, and gave the enemy virtually unassailable superiority on the low, flat land of the coastal plain and the broad Jezreel Valley. They have already been given as the reason why Judah and Dan were unable to dislodge the Canaanites from the plains in the southwest (1:19, 34-35). Here they are given as the reason why Jabin and Sisera were able to oppress Israel for twenty years. The position of the Israelites seemed hopeless, which is why they *cried out to Yahweh*. It was a cry of desperation.' Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 181. Here, as throughout Joshua, the power of a human king is emphasized for it displays the strength of YHWH by way of comparison via their defeat.

[352] Wright has argued that the retelling of the tale in Judges 4 within the Song of Deborah in chapter 5 'emphasizes the role of the deity in granting victory to non-professional militia over a formidable fighting force with professional chariot divisions (vv. 4,4a.5a.6-89b-10.12-15a.16). The insertion of Deborah's prophecy and the Jael material (vv. 9a.11.15b.17-22) amplifies this point, diminishing the role played by the male warrior Barak and ascribing the most valorous deed to a woman ... The elevation of the deity along with the diminution of the male warrior constitutes one of the central themes in the book of Judges (esp. of chaps. 6-16).' Jacob L. Wright, 'Deborah's War Memorial: The Composition of Judges 4-5 and the Politics of War Commemoration,' *ZAW* 123, no. 4 (2011): 516-534, here 527. I would only add the diminution of human kings 'like other nations.'

[353] Niditch, *Judges*, 65.

[354] Ibid, 65.

[355] Boling states that 'consultation with Yahweh before battle (however obscure the mechanics) was the judge's responsibility.' Boling, *Judges*, 99. Therefore, says Boling, 'the point of the narrative is that neither Deborah nor Baraq subdued Sisera on that day – but God did!' Ibid, 100.

roles as military leader and, simultaneously, the bestower of the divine mandate, remains consistent throughout the book of Judges.

In Judges 13:1 we hear that 'the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH'. Here begins the Samson cycle, and while there is no mention of a king we are told that in response to the evil of Israel YHWH delivers the Israelites 'into the hand of the Philistines forty years' (Judges 13:1). Samson's single-handed battle with the Philistines does not fit the definition of war, which is in keeping with this thesis, that is, large-scale organised violence. Nonetheless, it is thorough to consider this episode in Judges. The Samson tale is unique among the cycle of apostasy and reconciliation tales in Judges as there is no explicit king mentioned, and thus no overt description of regicide *per se* and Samson is described in detail as a type of folk hero. Furthermore, we expect to hear the people of Israel cry out as they have in the other stories before finally being sent a deliverer throughout the earlier tales. However, they do not, probably because the writer is trying to convey that the Philistines' power over Israel is so entrenched that Israel cannot even summon enough hope to cry out to YHWH for help.[356] While there is no explicit divine command to wage war against the Philistines Samson is described as responding to the same 'spirit of YHWH', רוח יהוה, (Judges 14:6; 14:19; 15:14) that animated Othniel (Judges 3:6), Gideon (Judges 6:34) and Jephthah (Judges 11:29). The 'spirit of YHWH' carries the same implication of divine mandate with the kings who will follow, starting with Saul.

[356] Webb again appears to be expressing confidence in the historicity of the tale when he tells us that 'according to the recurring pattern of the major episodes of this central section of the book, what is expected at this point is a cry to Yahweh for help. But this time no such cry is heard. By the time Samson is born the Philistine dominance over Israel is so complete, and the morale of Israel so low, that even the hope that Yahweh might save them has been extinguished. There is no strength even to cry out'. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 350. See also, Soggin, who states, 'There is no trace of the themes of the penitence of the people, their cry of anguish and the hearing of it'. Soggin, *Judges*, 233. This thesis does not consider purported historicity to be as important as the theme that particular narratives are portraying, which in Judges, appears to be the effects of apostasy and religious syncretism *vis-à-vis* Israel's capacity to wage warfare, even in defense.

Samson ultimately defeats the Israelites and judges Israel for twenty years (Judges 15:20; 16:31).

5.3.3. Judges 17-21: A Pro-monarchical Voice?

We are now entering into a discussion concerning the last four chapters of Judges, which have been the subject of considerable debate. The view that has dominated biblical studies since Buber, and which was upheld by Noth and Weinfeld, is that Judges 17-21 'was not part of Dtr.'s work but was added later'.[357] However, 'more recent studies have tended to show that they are firmly integrated into the storyline and message of the book, and they are now widely regarded as Dtr'.[358] Nonetheless, some discussion of the issue is warranted in light of the association of kingship with war narrative and its relationship to the divine mandate to carry out warfare. It has been argued that 17-21 were later additions to the Deuteronomist's work on the basis that they

> do not fit the Deuteronomist's schema for the time of the judges. They do not fit into his chronological framework, they do not contain a major judge or personality, and they do not contain the Deuteronomist's cycle of sin, punishment, and deliverance.[359]

Also, it is claimed, that 'Judges 17-21 do not agree with the Deuteronomist's ideology. Whereas the Deuteronomist is seen as being critical of kingship, Judges 17-21 are pro-kingship.'[360] However, as Gerbrandt has pointed out, 1 Samuel 1-6 also fails to fit the schema of the Historian, though 'they are clearly part of the history.'[361] The apparent inconsistencies between Judges 17-21 and its earlier chapters are easily reconciled once one recalls that we are dealing with an author/redactor who is

[357] Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*,121. n. 29. See also, McConville, 'Priesthood in Joshua to Kings,' 78.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, 136.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ibid.

working with source material.[362] Furthermore, Deuteronomy 12:8 hints at the same formula which occurs throughout Judges: 'In those days there was no king in Israel, and everyone did was right in their own eyes.'[363]

In Judges 17:6 we again read 'In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes.' Notably, there is neither king (that is, neither YHWH is king, nor is there a king 'like other nations') nor judge (which would imply YHWH's kingship) over Israel.[364] The Israelites, therefore, are doing as they wish rather than living under the laws of a king. Again, to reiterate an earlier point, to follow the laws of YHWH just *is* to accept his kingship, therefore, there being no king and all the people doing what was right in their own eyes are linked conceptually. As such, the latter part of the phrase is not presented as mere additional information but is subordinate to the earlier clause. Before it appears in Judges 17:6 the phrase is preceded by several verses which illustrate precisely the strange and confused nature of one Micah's (a name, which according to Boling, means 'Yahweh-the-Incomparable')[365] and his mother's relationship when the covenant is not followed. Everything that they do is forbidden such that the author appears to want to emphasize the disobedience into which Israel has fallen via Micah and his mother's example.

In 17:2 Micah is a thief who has stolen from his mother and his mother is described as having uttered a curse. When Micah returns the silver to his mother she both consecrates the silver to YHWH, then proceeds to have an idol made from it

[362] Ibid, 136-137.

[363] Gerbrandt argues for Deuteronomistic authorship/redaction of Judges 17-21 by citing Deuteronomy 12:8 via reference to Timo Veijola's 1977 work *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia), 1977. Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, 137.

[364] In reference to Judges 18:1 where it is said, again, that 'there was no king is Israel', Boling tells us that was also 'no judge in office (the word *dan* means judgment) and not yet a monarchical government'. Boling, *Judges*, 259.

[365] Ibid, 258.

according to 17:4. As though making an idol was not enough of a transgression she is described as giving only two hundred pieces of silver to the silversmith for its construction, therefore, she keeps nine hundred pieces of silver which had been set apart for YHWH for herself. Her keeping that which belongs to YHWH leads one to immediately think of the sin of Achan in Joshua 7. Micah also constructs an ephod and teraphim and then makes one of his own sons a priest but, of course, only a Levite can be a priest. Webb tells us that because the text tells us that *everyone* did what was just in their own eyes we can, as readers, presume that 'Micah and his mother were typical rather than exceptional.'[366] The transgressions continue throughout Judges 17 and 18, but one can see the strange life of Israelites when not following their laws—when YHWH is not their king—from these few verses alone.

The full phrase appears again at the end of Judges (Judges 21:25), presumably, to emphasize the theme of kingship (and the lack thereof) that is central to the book. Webb points out that the Samson episode links this latter section of the book with the earlier, as a judge who did what was right in his own eyes precedes this latter section. Webb states:

> The body of the book ended with the story of Samson, who "saw" a woman in Timnah and demanded to have her because, as he put it, she is "right in my eyes" (*yāšᵉrâ bᵉ'ênāy*, 14:3). So the last judge was a man who did what was right in his own eyes, and from there we move on to the epilogue, in which *everyone [does] what [is] right in their [own] eyes (hayyāšār bᵉ'ênāy*). The repetition of this key expression helps bind these two parts of the book together.[367]

As chapter 17 continues we read how it appears when YHWH is not king, there is no judge, nor a foreign king ruling over Israel. There is a visible lack of adherence to what is just according to YHWH. There being no king in Israel leads Judges 17-21 to serve as a contrast to the earlier chapters. Therefore, when war takes place in this latter section of the book it is worldly and without the usual divine mandate that

[366] Webb, *The Book of Judges*, 426.
[367] Ibid.

characterizes the warfare carried out in chapters 3-16.[368] Concerning the Danites' occupation of the town of Laish, Niditch tells us that

> Judges 17-18 is a classic foundation myth, dealing with the conquest of land the establishment of a tribal holding for Dan. Whereas tales of the judges in chs. 3-16 offer a defensive posture in their justification for war – Israel is oppressed and seeks relief – this tale is characterized by an aggressive, conqueror's demeanor that might be called hegemonist. Israelites, desirous of land, defeat an admittedly innocent group and take their land simply because they want it and are able to do so ... Such are the ways of power. No covenantal ideology frames the acts of violence, justifying who wins and who loses or why, and the role of the deity, arbiter of war, while always implicit might be seen as muted. It is in this context that we read, "In those days there was no king . . . ."[369]

The lack of adherence to YHWH's covenant is expressed in a myriad of ways throughout chapters 17 and 18, however, the necessity of divine mandate to wage war persisted in the minds of the Israelites as it did for all ancient Near Eastern peoples. For before embarking to take the town of Laish the Danites are described as having sent spies (Judges 18:2), as had been done earlier by Moses before crossing the Jordan (and Joshua before taking Jericho), and seeking YHWH's sanction for war (Judges 18:5).

Buber characterized the latter portion of the book of Judges (17–21) as monarchical, and the earlier chapters (1–6) as antimonarchical.[370] However, as we have seen, it is not kingship *per se* which is antagonized by the earlier chapters, rather, it is human kingship. Israel inevitably finds herself under the authority of another king when she ceases to be obedient, and throws off the kingship of YHWH. By no longer living under his yoke he ceases to be their king (i.e., he ceases to be their defender in war, and administrator of justice, through his prophets and judges). Buber states that the book of Judges produced

[368] With the obvious exception of Abimelech's wars.

[369] Niditch, *Judges*, 180.

[370] Buber states, 'In chapters 17-21 a monarchical book appears at the side of the antimonarchical Book of Judges, or rather, in opposition to it, a book which in its entire appearance, just like the other one, can be comprehended only as a political declaration.' Martin Buber, *Kingship of God* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), 77.

> two opposing biases: a naive-theocratic which narrates piously, and a reflective-monarchical which wishes to refute a representation of history which it fancies to be illusory with samples of a more dependable kind.[371]

However, this interpretation presumes that the writers'/redactors' intention was, via 'naïve' pious writing, to display the theocracy of the Judges and, therefore, the kingship of YHWH, as 'illusory' and not 'dependable.' This presumption appears perfectly appropriate for Buber, but it would not be found in any era of ancient Israel. Rather, the piety in which the earlier chapters are written is clearly meant to emphasize the preference of YHWH's kingship and, therefore, the institution of the judges, rather than to denigrate it.

The rest of the book of Judges seeks to illustrate a kingless and, therefore, lawless Israel. However, in a theocracy, a lawless Israel just *is* a kingless one, that is, as far as YHWH is concerned and, therefore, Israel has no one to lead them in war nor give them victory over their enemies. This kingless Israel stands in stark contrast to the kingship of YHWH described in the Pentateuch (via Exodus 15:1-18; Numbers 22; Deuteronomy 33:5) and Psalm 29, which according to Flynn 'form a corpus of early YHWH kingship texts.'[372] As 'early' kingship texts they describe a warrior deity in a localized context rather than a universal creator deity which emerges in later texts such as Psalms 93, 95 – 99.[373] For example, Exodus 15 displays a keen interest 'for the kingship of YHWH, but one that is rooted in the warrior tradition that expresses a limited kingship.'[374] Flynn tells us that

> YHWH's kingship in Exod 15:1-18 is closely related to that of Baal. In this kingship there is a concern for battle with the forces of chaos, where military victory earns kingship. Past scholarship has consistently demonstrated the similarity of YHWH's kingship to Baal's in the early poetry of the Hebrew Bible. In this context, YHWH is a warrior king battling another king to demonstrate his authority and rule. Any deliverance that comes to the people as a result of YHWH's kingship is because of YHWH the warrior.[375]

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[371] Ibid, 80.
[372] Flynn, *YHWH is King*, 46.
[373] Ibid, 54-56.
[374] Ibid, 56.
[375] Ibid.

This is precisely what we see at work throughout the war narratives within the book of Judges, that is, battles between kings: YHWH and other 'kings of Canaan.' It is within the context of battles between kings in order to display authority and rule over a localized area that Jabin's title as 'king of Canaan' possesses the most literary weight. That is, the theme of the story is not a perceived conflict between two institutions (Judges vs. monarchy), but rather its theme is YHWH's kingship over Canaan.

The familiar phrase, 'in those days there was no king in Israel,' emerges again at the start of chapter 18 before describing the Danites' taking of the town of Laish. This taking of Laish is different than the wars described throughout chapters 3 to 16. Niditch tells us that in the earlier tales in Judges 'Israel is oppressed and seeks relief' and there is a 'defensive posture in their justification for war.'[376] Whereas the tale of the Danites taking of Laish in chapter 18 'is characterized by an aggressive, conqueror's demeanor that might be called hegemonist.'[377] The story tells us that the

> Israelites, desirous of land, defeat an admittedly innocent group and take their land simply because they want it and they are able to do so ... No covenantal ideology frames the acts of violence, justifying who wins and who loses or why, and the role of the deity, arbiter of war, while always implicit might be seen as muted. It is in this context that we read, 'In those days there was no king . . .[378]

The deity's role is not muted in this instance, but is not present at all. As such, we can see the correlation between YHWH's not being king of Israel, and non-adherence to the covenant by the Israelites – a theme which has been present throughout the entire book of Judges. The priest from whom the Danites seek counsel is plainly illegitimate, though admittedly probably less so than Micah's son had been in 17. Nonetheless, this priest is a 'priest' for hire, a wanderer, who has abandoned his role

[376] Niditch, *Judges*, 180.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid.

(Judges 17:9-12). The lack of covenantal adherence continues throughout the last chapters of Judges.

In chapter 19 we read the horrific story of the Levite's concubine, the failure of the Israelites to live up to laws concerning hospitality, sexual violence, and eventually civil war. Everywhere there is violence, however, the violence against the tribe of Benjamin is sanctioned once again by YHWH. The Levite's story, which in itself is full of lies and misrepresentations by the Levite, appears to have awakened the Israelites to the depth of depravity that is possible when the rules and laws laid out for Israel are not adhered to and, by extension, they do not follow their king. Finally, we hear of the Israelites turning to YHWH in Judges 20. Three times they petition YHWH (Judges 20:18, 23, 27-28) and in the first two instances when the Israelites go to battle against the Benjaminites their losses are great but they, nonetheless, remain faithful to YHWH, offer sacrifices, weep, and fast. Finally, in the third instance YHWH and the Israelites defeat Benjamin (Judges 20:35). However, their abandonment of the covenant after their victory is immediate. The Israelites are described as having sworn an oath to not give any of their daughters as wives to the remaining Benjaminites (Judges 21:1), but then circumvent the oath by allowing the Benjaminites to take wives by force (Judges 21:25-24). This transgression, abandonment of YHWH's covenant and, therefore, his kingship, leads the writer to conclude the book of Judges: 'In those days there was no king in Israel; all the people did what was right in their own eyes' (Judges 21:25).

Given that the final chapters of Judges (17-21) are generally cited to support the idea that having a king was desirable for Israel,[379] and the connection between the two clauses, two important questions are raised: what benefit to Israel would having a

[379] Jans, *Abimelech und Sein Königtum*; Buber, *Kingship of God*.

king 'like other nations' have? And, is there a further distinction to be made within the concept of kingship itself which may clarify the seemingly disparate opinions of kingship in the book of Judges? A hint to the answer to the first question is offered in the book of 1 Samuel. Given that the Ark of the Covenant is the representation of YHWH's presence amongst the Israelites (analogous to the statues of other ancient Near Eastern peoples) its absence would lead the Israelites to fear that their leader and commander in combat had abandoned them. This belief is an attribute shared by their ancient Near Eastern counterparts.[380] Amram attributed the Israelite's defeat at the hand of the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4 to a 'lack of effective military organization'[381] and adds that such defeats 'paved the way'[382] for human kingship. The defeat of a city-state and the subsequent taking or destruction of the statue indicated abandonment by the god, usually due to sin, for it would be theologically inappropriate to see one's god as weaker or defeated.[383] Since, as far as the narrative is concerned, YHWH is Israel's king, his perceived abandonment led Israel to fear future abandonment on account of sin – specifically the sins of Samuel's sons who were in line to inherit his office as Judge. The text tells us that Samuel's sons 'did not follow in his [Samuel's] ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice' (1 Samuel 8:3). Inasmuch as Samuel's sons were sinful the Israelites desired a human king instead of a Judge, because judgeship was an institution that had proven potentially unreliable throughout the earlier chapters of Judges. Amram, however, argues that 'the existence of two corrupt judges in the extreme south of Judah could never have been the leading motive for the election of a

[380] See Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.2 for more on this.
[381] David Werner Amram, 'The Zekenim, Or Council of Elders,' *JBL* 19, no. 1 (1900): 34-52, here 41.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid.

king over all Israel by a great assembly of the tribes.'[384] Adding that verse 5 gives the more specific reason saying, '"Give us a king to rule us like other nations," a strong man to rid us of our foes and to establish order in the land.'[385] We need not speculate indefinitely as to why they wanted a human king because the text is even more explicit in 1 Samuel 8:20. After Samuel outlines the problems inherent in the institution of human kingship the Israelites refuse to listen and still desire it. The text tells us that that they exclaimed to Samuel, 'No! But we are determined to have a king over us, so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.' Thus, we can see that there is a specifically *military* reason for their desire for a human king inasmuch as leading and commanding in war is just what kings in the ancient Near East do.[386] Rabbi Nehorai in the tannaitic midrash connected Israel's demand for a king to idolatry when he said, 'They sought a king to lead them to idolatry, for it says: ". . . that we also may be like all the other nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."'[387] One might rightly object citing Deuteronomy 17 insofar as it allows for human kingship, however, Blidstein tell us that

> R. Nehorai's attitude is straightforward as regards biblical origins and ideology alike. Deuteronomy 17 does not command that a monarch be crowned but rather implies (as traditional plain sense interpreters and modern translators indicate alike) that the people are free to establish a monarchy if they so choose; for the major burden of Deuteronomy 17 is actually, according to R. Nehorai, prophetic, disapproving prediction. This is made explicit when God describes the popular demand for first king at the time of Samuel as a rejection of Himself – a betrayal of Israel's vocation. R. Nehorai then simply describes this rejection of the divine kingship in its most concrete form – idolatry, claiming that what moved the populace was not merely the desire for political and governmental restructuring but rather the urge to have done with the ideological base of Israelite society – the worship of God alone.[388]

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[384] Ibid, 42. n.10.

[385] Ibid.

[386] George reminds us of this military importance when he says, 'In Sam. 8:5, the people request a king "like other nations," and the narrative answer to what it means to have a king "like the nations" is Saul ... To be a king "like the nations" is to be known in terms of one's name, lineage, tribe, city, physical characteristics, military ability, and relationship to the divine.' Mark K. George, 'Constructing Identity in 1 Samuel 17,' *BibInt* 7, no. 4 (1999): 389-412, here 400.

[387] Gerald J. Blidstein, 'The Monarchic Imperative in Rabbinic Perspective,' *AJS Review* 7/8 (1982/1983): 15-39, here 16.

[388] Ibid, 16.

Blidstein adds to this that R. Nehorai

> is intent on claiming that human kingship is the political correlative of religious degeneration. This claim – whatever its antecedents in Second Commonwealth literature and ideology – clearly constitutes the biblical tradition that proclaims God alone as Israel's king, and sets the ideological tone for subsequent rabbinic derogation of monarchy.[389]

The idea that God alone is Israel's king certainly appears to be central to the narrative inasmuch as the words of YHWH himself echo the idea in his exchange with Samuel. YHWH says in the text, 'they have rejected me from being king over them' (1 Samuel 8:7). The idea that Israel's turning to human kingship is a religiously degenerate step in Israel's history has a proponent in Hosea, whose disdain for the monarchy is well attested within his description of Israel's apostasy in Hosea 8.[390] Nevertheless, we can see the way in which having a human king would be desirable from a military perspective for, amongst other things, 'it was the business of the king to wage war.'[391] For a human king is a king that the Israelites can see and touch and know to be real. Furthermore, the right one, with the right qualities, could protect Israel and make Israel strong 'like other nations.' Finally, given that the historian is writing/compiling these texts during/after the exile, one can appreciate the strength one might gain from understanding that YHWH is the true king and thus the fact that Judah was defeated, Jerusalem destroyed, and Zedekiah was killed does nothing to undermine Israel's cause, presuming – as Ezekiel recommends – that Israel can purify herself of her sin and thus be restored by YHWH himself. We must now turn to the second question, that is, is there a further distinction within kingship itself that might clarify the seemingly disparate conceptions of kingship in the book of Judges?

When we turn to Hosea's description of the apostasies of Israel in Hosea 8 we see that the reference to kingship refers, specifically, to human kingship that has not

[389] Ibid, 17.
[390] Specifically, kingship is mentioned in Hosea 8:4.
[391] Amram, 'The Zekenim, Or Council of Elders,' 43.

been endorsed or appointed by YHWH. Hosea describes YHWH saying, 'They made kings, but not through me; they set up princes but without my knowledge' (Hosea 8:4). In light of YHWH's explicit intention to appoint Israel's kings, Abimelech's failure to rule is perfectly understandable and the book of Judges as a whole is not anti-monarchical for, as others have pointed out,[392] chapters 17-21 of Judges gives a positive impression of kingship via a description of Israel without a king wherein 'everyone did was right in their own eyes'. Gray maintained that in Hosea 'God as King and savior of his people is contrasted with the ineffectiveness of the kings of the nation.'[393] He argued that this implied a 'particularist conception of the Kingship of God' which illustrated 'the North Israelite tradition that the kings, like their predecessors the judges, were raised to office *ad hoc*, as "saviours" in particular crises'[394] thus emphasizing the particularly military role of the king. Sweeney thinks that the human kingship that Hosea stands against in Hosea 8 is specifically the agreements with other nations that Israel entered into in order to protect itself against the Assyrians, which by default, meant that a foreign king – at least as far as military issues were concerned – reigned over Israel.[395] Given the historical circumstances surrounding Hosea, Sweeney's argument certainly seems to be a plausible one. In any case, these discussions are underscored by a more important understanding, which manifests uniquely in Israelite literature, that is, the king is the wager of war, and the administrator of justice. Even under an Israelite king, the ultimate kingship of YHWH, could be undermined by a king breaking the mandates outlined for a king in Deuteronomy 17, or by Israel extending kingship without divine approval (e.g.

[392] Jans, *Abimelech und Sein Königtum*; Buber, *Kingship of God.*

[393] John Gray, 'The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms,' *VT* 11, no. 1 (1961): 1-29, here 15.

[394] Ibid, 15.

[395] Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, eds. David W. Cotter and Chris A. Franke (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 87.

Abimelech). Such undermining of YHWH's kingship not only offends YHWH and brings about his punishment, but also undermines the social hierarchy and organisation of Israel, the role of the judge, or legitimate king, and with it, the role of the prophets and priests, and everything that depends upon them. As the king is the head of the military hierarchy in the ancient Near East, such undermining of Israel's unique kingship ideology within YHWH worship, and the correlative undermining of the priests and other elites, would concurrently cause the military effectiveness of Israel to be undermined, particularly in a historical pre-monarchical period, if such a period existed. But one might rightly ask, 'If the historian is writing during the exile, what purpose would compiling a history that emphasizes the kingship of YHWH with an eye toward military effectiveness possibly possess?' To which one could only answer that the Historian, via the Deuteronomistic History inasmuch as it consists of earlier sources, gives us a glimpse into an earlier Israel wherein the social organisation and ideology of Israel played a much more imminent role with respect to Israel's military successes and failures.

5.4. Conclusions

The war stories in the books of Joshua and Judges with respect to the conquest of Canaan are a type of 'Annals of King YHWH'. Clearly, however, they do not read as forcefully, nor as simply, as contemporaneous annalistic texts. The Israelite narratives are plainly distinct, nonetheless, they describe how 'King YHWH' with his army, cast fear into the hearts of the inhabitants of the land he was taking, how he drove them out and set his own judges, and then kings, over his people in order to shepherd and protect them. Inasmuch as the texts do this they reflect the presence of the belief in YHWH's role as king, at least in narrative memory. Furthermore, as we have seen,

they reflect the presence of the divine mandate commensurate with the presence of the divine mandate in extra-biblical conquest accounts of Israel's temporal and geographical neighbours within the Ancient Near East. The divine mandate in these narratives reflects the presence of an enabling ideology, which we will see, as we progress, was foundational to other aspects of Israel's ideology and, therefore, social organisation, inasmuch as the belief in divine command exhibits and reinforces the social role of prophets, judges, and priests—and eventually kings. Because killing, even in war, comes so unnaturally to human beings, we can appreciate the necessity of the divine command to wage war, the belief that a given war was just, and the requirement of an explicit duty to fight and to kill. Without such an explicit mandate to wage war one's strike would be unsure and one's capacity to do what it takes to win in warfare would be compromised.

Finally, if such a pre-monarchical period actually existed in Israel's history, the Israelite king, like their god, was untouchable in the way that the kings and gods of their enemies were. Indeed the bodily display and disfigurement of defeated kings, and physical representations of gods, was commonplace throughout the Ancient Near East. Such was essential to defeating the ideology which was central to the social organisation of ones' enemies. However, as YHWH is the king of the Israelites, and because he forbids graven images, his 'body' cannot be made subject to the same disfigurement and defeat. The Israelite king is, literally, untouchable. Militarily speaking, YHWH's forbidding Israel's making him manifest as a statue, like Dagon for example, is a potentially emboldening ideology and piece of cultural praxis. We will see the benefit of the Ark of the Covenant instead of the typical temple statues of Israel's Ancient Near Eastern neighbours. Such statues were also easily disfigured

and/or removed thus effectively undermining the ideology of ones' enemies. The Israelite's god is, similarly, in this respect, untouchable.

This chapter has described, arguably, the most obvious of themes, that is, the divine mandate to wage warfare, which serves to morally justify the violence to be carried out. Here, Assyrian, Hittite and Egyptian examples were discussed before an examination of the same theme within the books of Joshua and Judges. This discussion led inevitably to a consideration of kingship in the ancient Near East and the uniqueness of the kingship of YHWH as a theme in the books of Joshua and Judges. It becomes apparent that YHWH's kingship is an essential component of Israel's unique manifestation of the sociological factors under consideration. YHWH's kingship is a theme that runs throughout Joshua and Judges, but its relationship to Israel's military efficacy (that is to the narrative's audience) appears to have gone overlooked in the scholarship concerning these texts. To clarify, this thesis considers the role of the narrative rather than any purported history in the text. That is, this thesis is not attempting to prove that Israel, as described in Joshua and Judges, actually possessed the sociological factors in question, or that the warfare described was actually carried out. Rather, the concern of this thesis is to reveal the presence of these sociological underpinnings within the text. It argues that to the extent that these factors are reflected in the text they are reinforced amongst the text's intended audience to the benefit of Israel militarily. Whether they are a reflection of the presence of these factors within an historical pre-monarchic Israel requires delving into issues of dating and the delineation of sources in Joshua and Judges, which, due to the immensity of the task and the disagreements among scholars, must be left for a separate project. Although, it should be stated that this thesis will certainly have repercussions in this area.

6. Divine Assistance in Battle and Obedience

Divine assistance, or YHWH's sole waging of war on behalf of Israel is a motif which we have seen in Exodus 15.[396] It persists throughout the book of Joshua, and indeed throughout the Hebrew Bible. As we have already discussed,[397] the book of Judges reveals a people portrayed as increasingly striving for independence, while at the same time, maintaining YHWH as their king, and thus the wager of war and administrator of justice. So far as the narratives portray YHWH assisting in battle, they arguably serve to embolden the Israelites in times of war. The Israelites were not alone in describing the role of the divine in combat. As we will see, this is a common motif throughout the ancient Near East, and reinforces the same ideology for Israel as it does for their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. In doing so, these texts strengthen the authority of kings, a role thought to have been bestowed by the gods. They also consolidate the authority of the social hierarchy necessary if organised violence is to emerge, as well as the authority of the political/religious leaders central to the ideology and social organisation to which ancient Near Eastern peoples were committed.[398]

Recall that two interdependent sociological underpinnings are required if large-scale organised violence (that is, warfare) is to emerge. The first, is the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion, which Malešević defined as:

> cumulative because it is an ongoing historical process that involves the constant increase of organisational capability for destruction; it is bureaucratic since it entails ever-expanding bureaucratic rationalisation in the Weberian sense, which originated in the military sphere; and it is coercive since it involves not only the control and employment of violence and the waging of wars but it is also able to internally pacify social order by establishing the monopolistic threat on the use of violence.[399]

[396] See Chapter Four, Section 4.1.2.
[397] See Chapter Five, Section 5.3.
[398] See Chapter Three, Section 3.3.
[399] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 7-8.

Here, by Weberian, Malešević is referring to Weber's analysis that points out that while traditional authority may be inherited, bureaucratic organisation, in contrast, works through a system of laws.[400] This entails a processual movement from nepotistic relationships amongst a particular group, which are gradually replaced with less personal rules and regulations for the governance of daily life.[401] For our purposes, the term 'social organisation' is sufficient to express this, as long as the reader recalls its processual nature and its dependence upon its corresponding ideology. Collins adds that 'this organization is what enables individuals to overcome the pervasive fear that keeps most of them from fighting; if it were not socially well organized, wide-participation fighting would not be possible.'[402] It is important to add, however, that the momentum within a group from authority expressed through loose kinship ties, towards a bureaucracy of coercion, can easily move in the opposite direction, at the expense of a group's capacity for warfare, if the laws are not adequately enforced.

The second necessity is centrifugal ideologisation. Again, along with potential objections, this was discussed in chapters three, section two, and chapter four, section two. However, it is essential to recall that centrifugal ideologisation is defined as that which allows for the social organisation of a given group and the warfare that it carries out to be seen as just.[403] This is to say that the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion 'goes hand in hand with the legitimizing ideology.'[404] Here, by ideology, we do not mean a closed and rigid system of ideas but rather:

> a relatively universal and complex social process through which human actors articulate their actions and beliefs. It is a form of 'thought-action' that infuses, but does not necessarily

[400] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 5.
[401] Ibid.
[402] Randall Collins, *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11. The relationship between fear and social organisation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven, Sections 7-7.2.1.
[403] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 8.
[404] Ibid.

> determine, everyday social practice. Since much of the ideological content projects transcendent grand vistas of the particular (imagined) social order, it surpasses experience and as such evades testability. Most ideological discourses invoke superior knowledge claims, advanced ethical norms and collective interests, and often rely on popular effects with a view of justifying actual or potential social action.[405]

Here, Malešević is explaining that the ideology we are concerned with does not determine human behaviour, but requires the tacit approval of human actors. That is, while it is the social organisation that coerces human beings into being effective warriors fighting as a unified force, it is the ideology which upholds it. That is, it is a group's ideology which underscores both the social organisation necessary and the justification for the social organisation itself as well as the warfare that it may carry out.[406] Malešević has noted that 'traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquests and coercive forms of governance.'[407] Clearly, this is a particularly apropos point given the context with which this thesis is concerned.[408]

Obedience in war is necessary for the establishment and maintenance of military cohesion. Israel is no exception, particularly in a pre-monarchic environment wherein the factors which contribute to obedience, and with it, military cohesion, must be enforced from within:

> The founders of military sociology, Edgar Shils and Morris Janowitz, interviewed German prisoners of war to determine why some Wehrmacht soldiers fought against insurmountable odds and why other units and individuals surrendered or ran away. They concluded that the following factors contributed to cohesive groups—those that stood and fought: small-group ties, physical proximity to other groups, devotion to Hitler, fear of retribution against one's

[405] Ibid, 9.

[406] Both the 'cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion' (social organisation) and 'cumulative ideologisation' (ideology), along with potential objections, were discussed in detail in Chapter Three, Sections 3.2.1-3.2.2.

[407] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 9.

[408] As was stressed in the first chapter of this thesis, the ontological reality, or not, of YHWH or God, and what is historically factual or not with respect to the books of Joshua and Judges are not the concern of this thesis. For the social processes required among the human actors would persist either way, as would the necessary ideology which underscores and justifies such social processes. This thesis is concerned with illustrating that both (the social organisation and ideology necessary for the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare) are reflected in Israel's texts, likely to the benefit of Israel militarily.

> family, belief in National Socialism, paternal protectiveness of senior NCOs and junior officers, and disbelief in enemy propaganda.[409]

Obviously, this preceding quote is in relation to German soldiers during WWII. However, the factors which contribute to military cohesion for any group remain the same. Small-group ties are implicit in the military organization and lines of authority described in the book of Numbers, particularly the census lists of chapters 1 and 26.[410] Similarly, the order of encampment includes physical proximity to other tribal groups, especially as they are ordered along kinship lines (Numbers 2), meaning that the members of the smaller military units are already bound together.

Devotion to YHWH and his appointed Judges is also present throughout the books of Joshua and Judges, as well as fear of retribution against one's family in cases of disobedience. The fate of Achan and his family is a perfect example of this. The Israelites, as described throughout Joshua and Judges, believe in Yahwism and its concurrent social organisation and legal codes. However, in the absence of this belief, the problems associated with the syncretism and failures to obey are clearly described. Disbelief in enemy propaganda is also on display in the books of Joshua and Judges in so far as Israel believes that their enemies' gods are idols, that they are evil, and that their gods are incapable of fighting for them in the way that YHWH fights for Israel. Israel possesses thus an effective counter-narrative.[411] Furthermore, given Israel's non-state status in these texts, if there is any historical value to them at all—in the sense of their purporting to tell us historical facts—we should expect that those texts which describe military conquest will illustrate extreme measures being put in place. Extreme measures are meant to ensure there is group cohesion, as well as

[409] N. Kinzer Stewart, 'Military Cohesion,' in *War*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 144-49, here 146.

[410] In the enlistment of Israel's youth under officers who were the natural leaders of the various ancestral houses we see the emergence of coercive bureaucracy upon pre-existing authority lines. This was discussed in detail in Chapter Four, specifically Sections 4.1.1-4.1.3.

[411] See the following chapter on fear, specifically section 7.2, for more on effective counter-narrative.

commitment and strict obedience to both their ideology and the chain of command which depends upon it for its success in combat. When considering the commitment of combatants in non-state entities, Haer and Banholzer argued that:

> understanding commitment and its influence on the behaviour of combatants is especially important when talking about non-state armed groups. In contrast to a regular military, which is embedded in a state, irregular armed groups have to be founded and sustained under extremely difficult circumstances. Most notably...these organisations cannot rely on the regulation of the state, but must regulate themselves. This of course poses an additional challenge, as no exogenous force keeps the group united but cohesion must be created endogenously.[412]

This is important to keep in mind as the ban and the punishment for disobedience illustrated by the cautionary tale of Achan is primarily about obedience and the maintenance of the ideology which upholds it: the absolute authority and kingship of YHWH. This is consistent with the self-regulation required of non-state groups that must create and maintain their group cohesion endogenously. As Malešević notes:

> since bureaucratic domination rests on the inculcation and control of discipline and remains dependent on disciplined action, it requires and demands obedience... This implies not only clearly defined hierarchies, the division of labour and meritocratic social mobility, but also the regular and regulated execution of commands, strict compliance with the rules of the respective organisation and loyalty to the organisation. Moreover, all of these organisational demands are underpinned by the legal codes that stipulate penalties for noncompliance.[413]

It is precisely such a penalty for non-compliance that we observe with the cautionary tale of Achan in Joshua 7,[414] but this is also visible in the Canaanites which continue to be a problem for Israel inasmuch as they have not been driven out of the land on account of Israel's disobedience, according to the author(s)/redactor(s) of the book of Judges.

We will see that in the warfare accounts of Joshua and Judges, the promise of assistance in battle is dependent upon obedience to YHWH. This is only reasonable

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[412] Roos Haer and Lilli Banhozer, 'The Creation of Committed Combatants,' *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 25-48, here 26.

[413] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 6. Collins has similarly said that 'the preeminent military virtue is discipline: maintaining order according to the hierarchy of command ... Military structure is a coercive chain of command; orders are backed up the threat of punishment, and desertion, especially in combat, in an offence punishable by death. Thus fear of the enemy is offset by fear of *one's own officers*. Collins, 'Violent Conflict and Social Organization,' 70.

[414] Achan will be discussed shortly.

given YHWH's role in the narratives as both god and king of Israel. First, we will consider descriptions of divine assistance in combat in Hittite and Assyrian texts in order to illustrate that the belief in divine assistance in combat was commonplace throughout the ancient Near East. Before delving into the Hebrew texts, however, we will briefly consider examples of obedience being extended to the Egyptian king via the Amarna letters. Doing so will leave us in a better position to appreciate the relationship between divine assistance in battle, and the obedience of Israel, in the Hebrew texts given the kingship of YHWH.

6.1. Ancient Near East

Divine assistance in battle is clearly expressed in numerous Hittite narratives, including those datable to the Late Bronze. For example, Muršili II's Ten Year Annals[415] gives a description of the king praying to Arinna:

> 'Oh, sungoddess of Arinna, my lady – stand beside me, and defeat the aforementioned neighboring enemy countries before me'. And the sungoddess of Arinna heard my word, and she stood beside me. And when I had sat down on the throne of my father, I conquered these enemy countries in ten years; and defeated them.[416]

Muršili's scribe becomes even more overt in his description as the annals continue, describing the gods who fought with Muršili by name:

> The sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezulla, (and) all the gods ran before me. And I conquered Piyama-KAL, the son of Uhhaziti, together with his troops and charioteers … Then I, my sun went after the inhabitants to Mt. Arinnanda, and I fought (them) at Mt. Arinnanda. The sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezulla (and) all the gods ran before me.[417]

This phrase, or one very similar to it, appears at least twelve times throughout the Ten Year Annals.[418] Similarly, the Deeds of Suppiluliuma (king c. 1344-1322 BCE),

[415] Muršili reigned c. 1321-1295 BCE.
[416] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 144.
[417] Episode 9 of The Ten Year Annals of Muršili II. Ibid, 151.
[418] For example, Episode 11, 'And I, my sun, fought against him; and the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the might stormgod, my lord; Mezzulla; and all the gods ran before me. And I conquered Tapalazunauli … together with his troops and charioteers;' Episode 14, Ibid, 152. 'And the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezzulla; (and) all the gods ran before me. And I

Muršili II's father, include similar attestations to divine assistance in battle: 'the gods stood by him: the sungoddess of Arinna, the storm god of Hatti, the storm god of the Army, and Ištar of the Battlefield, (so that) the en[emy] died in multitudes'.[419]

Countless examples occur in the Assyrian texts as well, probably due to their sheer availability. In the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I we read,

> I made bronze lighting bolts (and) I inscribed on them (a description of) the conquest of the lands which by Aššur, my lord, I had conquered, (and) a warning) not to occupy that city and not to rebuild its wall.[420]

Aššur-nasir-pal II's inscriptions describe him saying, 'With the trust/reliance (on) Aššur my lord, I departed from Tušhan'[421] and

> By the exalted strength of Aššur my lord (and) with a very wild battle I fought with them. For two days, before sunrise, I thundered against them like Adad-of-the-storm-flood, (and) I caused flames to rain down upon them.[422]

Similarly, Aššur-nasir-pal II's Standard Inscription narrates him saying

> When Aššur, the lord who called my name (and) made my kingship great, put his merciless weapon into my lordly hand, I felled with the sword in the midst of battle the extensive troops of the Lullume. With the help of Šamaš and Adad, my divine helpers, I thundered like Adad the destroyer, against the armies of the lands of Nairi, Habhi, the Shubare, and Nirib.[423]

The inscriptions of Shalmaneser I were created around 1280 BCE.[424] Within a wider narrative concerning the rebuilding of the temple of Eharsagkurkurra, there exists a

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conquered Puranda.' Ibid, 153. Episode 19, 'Then I, my sun, went to the land of Arawanna. And I attacked the land of Arawanna. And the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezzulla; (and) all the gods ran before me. And I conquered all of the land of Arawanna.' Ibid, 153. Similarly, Episodes 26, 7, 18, and 20. Ibid, 151-157.

[419] Fragment 10. Ibid, 161. Similarly, Fragments 14, 15 and 50. Ibid, 161-162.

[420] {biriq(NIM.GÍR) siparri(UD.KA.BAR) e-pu-uš {ki-ši-ti KUR.KUR^{MEŠ} ša i-na ^{d}A-šur bēli(EN)-ya ak-šu-du URU šu-a-tu {a-na la ṣa-ba-ti u^{3} dūra-šu la-a ra-ṣa-pi i-na muḫ-ḫi al-tu-ur. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 81. While the point here is the assistance of Aššur, notably, Joshua similarly warns against the rebuilding of Jericho (Joshua 6:25).

[421] ina tukulti(^{GIŠ}TUKUL-ti) Aššur bēli(EN)-ya ištu(TA) ^{URU}Tu-uš-ḫa-an a-tú-muš. Translation mine. Transliteration from Younger, 97.

[422] ina idāti(DA^{MEŠ}) ṣīrāti(MAḪ^{MEŠ}) ša Aššur bēli(EN)-ya ina gi-biš ummānāti(ERÍN.ḪI.A^{MEŠ})-ya tāgāzi(MÈ-ia) šit-mu-ri it-ti-šu-nu am-da-ḫiṣ ina 2 u$_4$-me la-am ^{d}Šamaš na-pa-ḫi kīma(GIN$_7$) ^{d}Adad šá riḫṣi (GIR.BAL) eli(UGU)-šu-nu áš-gu-um nab-lu eli(UGU)-šu-nu ú-šá-za-nin. Translation is mine and the transliteration is from Younger, *Ancient Conqust Accounts*, 98.

[423] e-nu-ma Aššur bēlu(EN) na-bu-ú šumi(MU)-ya mu-šar-bu-ú šar$_4$-ti-a ^{GIŠ}kakka(TUKUL)-šú la pa-da-a a-na i-da-at bēlu(EN)-ti-a lu-ú it-muḫ ummānāti(ERIN.ḪI.A^{MEŠ}) ^{māt}Lu-ul-lu-me-e rapšate(DAGAL)^{MEŠ} ina qé-reb tam-ḫa-ri ina ^{GIŠ}kakkē(TUKUL^{MEŠ}) lu ú-šam-qit ina re-ṣu-te šá ^{d}Ša-maš u ^{d}Adad(IŠKUR) ilāni(DINGIR^{MEŠ}) tik-li-a ummānāt(ERÍN.ḪI.A^{MEŠ}) mātāti(KUR.KUR) Na-i-ri ^{māt}Ḫab-ḫi ^{māt}Šu-ba-re-e u ^{māt}Ni-rib kīma(GIM) ^{d}Adad(IŠKUR) ra-ḫi-ṣi eli(UGU)-šú-nu áš-gu-um. Translation is mine and the transliteration is taken from Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 120.

[424] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol. 1, 38.

warfare account. Shalmaneser I is described saying: 'the lord Assur chose me for legitimate worshipper, and, for ruling of the black-headed people, gave me scepter, sword, and staff, he presented me the diadem of legitimate rulership.' [425] Shalmaneser's divinely given authority is asserted in this text and it is his divine authority which allowed Shalmaneser to wage war with 'the land of Uruadrie' who 'rebelled.'[426] Esarhaddon's Prism describes Esarhaddon saying, 'By the might of Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Nabû, Marduk, Ishtar of Nineveh, Ishtar of Arbela, I conquered all arrogant foes.' [427] The prism of Esarhaddon possesses another example and describes Esarhaddon accepting divine authority as well as the promise of assistance:

> To carry on the royal rule of my father's house I clapped my hands; to Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Bêl, Nabû, and Nergal, Ishtar of Neneveh, Ishtar of Arbela, I raised my hands, and they received my prayer with favour: with their true 'yea' they sent a helpful oracle thus: 'Go, stay not: We will march at thy side and destroy thine enemies.'[428]

The narrative device used to convey that the gods determined the outcome of combat was divine assistance in battle. Like the divine mandate it also provided an ideological justification for battles that lay in the future for those who came into contact with the narratives, and who fought on behalf of a given king described narrating the events. Also, like the divine mandate, such narratives reinforced the view that the violence carried out by the king, and *de facto*, his armies, was just. Furthermore, they reinforced the ruling status of the king (šarru[m] [LUGAL], i.e. 'great/big man') and those whom he has appointed to rule or command given areas/groups. Similarly, considering the king's divine mandate and the gods' willingness to assist in battle, the ruling stature of the temple elites, such as priests or prophets, are also reinforced by the narrative. In short, the entire command and social structure of a given people is buttressed amongst the peoples for whom the narratives were intended. These

[425] Ibid, 39.
[426] Ibid.
[427] R. Campbell Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal: Found at Nineveh, 1927-8* (London: British Museum, 1931), 22.
[428] Ibid, 11.

narratives were perpetuated because ancient Near Eastern peoples understood the power of the past in determining the future. So much so, that they often exaggerated their deeds and downplayed the strength of their enemies, thereby emboldening their armies and thus helping to determine the winner of future battles. This is not to say that otherwise areligious leaders used theological ideas to reinforce their agendas, but that the narratives are representative of widely held, indeed virtually *a priori* suppositions about the roles of gods and kings. It is precisely the narratives which:

> bridge the gap between daily social interaction and large-scale social structures: language organized temporally to report a moral reflects and sustains institutional and cultural arrangements at the same time as it accomplishes social action. In other words, stories people tell about themselves and their lives both constitute and interpret those lives; the stories describe the world as it is lived and understood by the storyteller.[429]

It is evident, therefore, that such narratives reinforced the very social structures through which these suppositions permeated. This, in turn, explains the placement of narratives such as those we have examined from the ancient Near East in both the bas-reliefs of palaces, temples and administrative centres, as well as stelae. The daily encounter of the contemporaries to such narratives amongst the conduits of large-scale social organisation reinforces the ideological justifications for war, as well as the institutional structures necessary for organised violence, inasmuch as it is a type of social action to take place.

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[429] Patricia Ewick and Susan Silbey, 'Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative,' *Law & Society Review* 29, no. 2 (1995): 197-226, here 198. For more on the role of narrative in the construction and promulgation of group identity and social structure see B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); J. Bruner, *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); P. L. Hammack, 'Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity,' *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 12, no. 3 (2008): 222–247; A. P. Kerby, *Narrative and the Self* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991); R. Neeman, 'Invented Ethnicity as Collective and Personal Text: An Association of Rumanian Israelis,' *Anthropological Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (1994): 135–149; D. Schiffrin, 'Narrative as Self-Portrait: Sociolinguistic Constructions of Identity,' *Language in Society* 25, no. 2 (1996): 167–203; D. Smith, *Storytelling Scotland: A Nation in Narrative* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2001); A. Thorne, and V. Nam, 'The Life Story as a Community Project,' *Human Development* 50 (2007): 119–123; E. Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History,* Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and H.V. White, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

6.2. Divine Assistance and Obedience in Joshua

The book of Joshua is replete with examples of divine assistance (1:1-11; 6:2; 8:1-3, 18-22; 10:30, 32, 42), and opens with a promise of divine assistance with respect to the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1:1-10), though of course, it is conditional upon the Israelites' following the Law as well its continuous promulgation (Joshua1:7-8).[430] Obedience is a theme which persists throughout Joshua, but reaches its climax in the final chapters of the book of Judges through the expression of its antithesis. Notably, without being narratives *per se*, the Amarna Letters consistently bear witness to overt descriptions of obedience to the Egyptian king by the heads of the various city-states. They do so by expressing their desire to obey after making their verbal prostrations to the Egyptian king. Phrases such as 'The king, [the lo]rd, has given orders [t]o me, and I heed the [or]ders of the king, [my] lord'[431] are commonplace. *EA* 154 describes Abi-Milku saying 'I have heard what the king wrote to his servant, *"Let* my *forces*: [ia-k]u-⟨un⟩(*be prepar⟨ed⟩*) *again*[*st*] *Yawa*." What the king ordered, that I have carried out with the greatest joy.'[432] While obedience to a god is essentially normative throughout the ancient Near East, it is, nonetheless, notable that such overt descriptions of obedience to a king also persist. Although one would expect this to be surprising, this is rather notable because the persistent topic of obedience throughout the books of Joshua and Judges further expresses the theme of YHWH's kingship and his capacity to lead in war.

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[430] 'This book of the Torah (ספר התורה הזה) shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful (Joshua 1:8).' Joachin J. Krause, 'The Book of the Torah in Joshua 1 and 23 and in the Deuteronomistic History,' *ZAW* 127, no. 3 (2015): 412-28, here, 413-14; Sarah Lebhar Hall, *Conquering Character: The Characterization of Joshua in Joshua 1-11,* Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 512 (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 14-15.

[431] *EA* 64, translation from William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 135. See also *EA* 63, 65, 154, 201-206 (which refer specifically to a desire to obey the king's marching orders), 211-213, 218, 231 and 232.

[432] Ibid, 155.

Directly linked to the social and, therefore, military group cohesion of Israel, the verb 'to command' (צוה) occurs 29 times in the book of Joshua and is surpassed by its frequency only in the book of Exodus (49 times). Consider, for example, the clear instructions given by Joshua, first to the officers of the people, and then to the Reubenites, Gadites and Manasseh in Joshua 1:10-15. Notice also their response to Joshua:

> All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! Whoever rebels against your orders and disobeys your words, whatever you command, shall be put to death (Joshua 1:16-18).

Israel, at this stage, is being described as a military force. Although within the description of Israel throughout the books of Joshua and Judges many do not fight (i.e., are not warriors), the military nature of Israel's social organisation and the centrality of Yahwism to its military success can hardly be denied. Therefore, even if these texts bear no resemblance to historical facts, they nonetheless convey Israel as a military unit with a clear command structure.

Clear commands have been shown to be essential to social cohesion within military environments.[433] King tells us that:

> In the military, the first stage of any operation involves the giving of orders. Troops must know what they are being asked to do. Orders are not only necessarily the first stage of any operation, but they are also critical to the eventual success of any military endeavour. It is vital that commanders give clear and precise instructions to their subordinates.[434]

This may seem obvious, except that a failure to give absolutely clear orders can have disastrous consequences. As an example, King reminds us of 'Earl Lucan's infamously unclear instructions to the Light Brigade during the Crimea War'.[435]

[433] Anthony King, 'The Word of Command: Communication and Cohesion in the Military,' *Armed Forces and Society* 42, no. 4 (2006): 493-512.
[434] Ibid, 497.
[435] Ibid, 497-8.

Notably, the book of Joshua illustrates a perfect command-execution format as has been noted by Hawk,[436] and which will be discussed shortly.

Rowlett has described the way in which the opening verses of the book of Joshua serve 'to establish the lines of authority in a hierarchical pattern.'[437] YHWH is at the top, followed by Joshua, then the officers/superintendents, and then the people. This is consistent with the census list description given in Numbers 1 as we have already discussed.[438] In these opening verses, the necessity of obedience to the law is clearly insisted upon by YHWH, the very top of Israel's otherwise very human command structure. Mumby explains that 'narratives not only evolve as a product of certain power structures, but also function ideologically to produce, maintain, and reproduce those power structures,'[439] which is why we expect to find the retelling of earlier tales within biblical narrative in the first place, and those who specialize in source criticism oftentimes presume this from the outset. It is clear that whoever wrote the sources for the conquest account of Canaan, an interest in the hierarchical power structure, including that which was implicit in the law, was a paramount concern. Furthermore, as we have seen, large-scale social organisation is necessary for any effective emergence of organised violence, even to wage defensive war, but especially for conquest.[440] So is the ideology which strengthens the social structure and justifies the use of force. Both are plainly reflected in Joshua 1:1-10. They are on display so far as they describe: 1) the source of authority (YHWH); 2) the role of YHWH's appointed leadership (in this case Joshua); 3) the centrality of the law and obedience to the law to Israel's success in combat; and 4) the necessity of the laws

[436] Especially with respect to Joshua 6. See L. Daniel Hawk, *Joshua*, Berit Olam (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 88-105.
[437] Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence,* 121.
[438] See Chapter Four, specifically Section 4.1.
[439] Dennis K. Mumby, 'The Political Function of Narrative in Organizations,' *Communication Monographs* 54, no. 2 (1987): 113-27, here 113.
[440] See Chapter Three, Section 3.2.

continuous promulgation to Israel's success in combat. We also see these themes[441] glorified in the response of the Israelites in verse 16, so far as they promise to follow Joshua's commands and to put to death anyone who might disobey them.

The debate concerning whether or not Joshua 1:1-9 constitutes an 'installation genre' need not concern us since the role of judges, and later kings, as well as the officers, is both civil *and* military.[442] Therefore, arguing that Joshua is described as being installed into a civil leadership role, as though it were antithetical to a military leadership role, merely misses the connection between social organisation and warfare so far as it presumes that the civil function of a judge would somehow stand in contrast to his/her military function. This, of course, would be an absurd position to take given the role of other ancient Near Eastern kings and the divine mandate which we have already discussed. With respect to Canaan, at this stage of the biblical narrative, its king is YHWH, whose will is being carried out by his representative, Joshua. This remains the case irrespective of the historical strata in which the texts have their germination, precisely because the role of king as the leader and wager of war, as well as the administrator of justice, is omnipresent throughout the ancient Near East and throughout all periods.

The dispute over whether or not this constitutes an 'installation genre' also seemingly presumes that the events are historical. Yet, even if they were, this would nonetheless be impossible to corroborate. In fact, existing archaeological evidence appears to contradict a conquest of Canaan—at least one on the scale described in the

[441] Such as obedience to the Law; the role of the judge as the king's [YHWH's] representative; the social organisation/hierarchy; and the implicit ideology of the divine command, and; the promise of assistance.

[442] Rowlett presents a section in her work entitled 'Installation Genre or War Oracle,' however, this is a false dilemma from the outset as there is no reason to presume that the civil leader of Israel is not also its military leader in the same way as they are one and the same for their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. Nonetheless, for a description of the debate see Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 122. Cf. Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, Word Biblical Commentary 7 (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 5-6.

books of Joshua and Judges.[443] On the other hand, if the debate does not presume any historical facticity, then whilst it might be arguable that the 'installation genre' is present in these opening verses, and reflecting for example the concerns of a priestly writer, it still would not detract from the presumed military leadership. This is because the military function of a civil leader in charge of leading an entire people was every bit the norm in the exilic/post-exilic period throughout the ancient Near East, as it was centuries earlier.[444]

Joshua 6:2 describes YHWH telling Joshua that he has given Jericho, its king, and its soldiers, over to him. This narrative is told in the third person by an observer which stands in contrast to ancient Near Eastern war annals that portray the king describing his actions in the first person. This difference is not minor as it emphasizes

[443] Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 72-96. This, of course, is a contentious and debated topic, which in the past has been inseparable from issues around dating. Noth, for example, considered parts of the books of Joshua, Judges and Samuel to be quite early and, therefore, historically reliable sources. Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1957), 1–110. Conversely, Van Seters has argued that a later writer (the 'Deuteronomistic Historian') would not have had historical texts to draw from, and instead collected popular traditions and other source material to form the basis of his work. J. Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Currently, the debate has become more removed from discussions around the development of Israel's historiography, and towards the availability, or lack of, extra-biblical archaeological evidence supporting the biblical account of the conquest of Canaan. Earlier scholars have cited the gap between the time period described and the perceived time of writing as the reason for the discrepancies in the archaeological record. However, given the wider availability of archaeological evidence today, and the extent of excavation in Israel, current scholars cite the lack of archaeological evidence for a conquest on the scale described in the books of Joshua and Judges as evidence that the biblical account bears little historical credibility. Currently, various theories of settlement by varying degrees of autochthonous groups are preferred. Nadav Na'aman, 'The "Conquest of Canaan" in the Book of Joshua and in History,' in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, eds. Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1994), 218-81; Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?*; Lemche admits the same, but is reticent about attempts to define what may actually be said regarding such an "Israel" and its relationship to "Israel" as described in the Hebrew Bible. N. Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Lousiville: Westminster John Knox, 1998). He is similarly reticent regarding the term "Canaanite". N. Lemche, *The Canaanites and their Land* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991). Thompson also admits an "Israel" may been present in Iron I but that the "Israel" described in the Hebrew Bible, a people with a common past and a common future orientation vis-à-vis a future religious goal, is more of a Persian period theologumenon. T.L. Thompson, *Early History of the Iraelite People: From the Written & Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 1992). The view purporting various degrees of autochthonous settlement runs counter to various attempts to explain the silence of the archaeological record vis-à-vis a 'conqest of Canaan', especially with respect to specific sites. See, for example, W. F. Albright, 'The Kyle Memorial Excavation at Bethel,' *BASOR* 56 (1934): 1-15; J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (London: SCM, 1960), 130-31; K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1966), 63-65; G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (London: Duckworth, 1962), 60; and Yigael Yadin, 'Is the Biblical Account of the Israelite Conquest of Canaan Historically Reliable?' *BAR* 8, no. 2 (1982): 16-23.

[444] This is clear from all our neo-Assyrian (ca. 911-608 BCE), Babylonian (ca. 606-536 BCE) and Persian (ca. 538-323 BCE) sources.

the role of YHWH in the narrative, rather than that of a human viceroy and, in so far as it does, it highlights the role of YHWH as king while diminishing the status of the human counterpart carrying out YHWH's will, in this case a judge, Joshua. Whilst, as we have seen, Esarhaddon had to formally petition his gods regarding how to proceed in battle,[445] YHWH, unpetitioned, gives express instruction regarding the way in which the Israelites are to place Jericho under siege (Joshua 6:3-5). Compared to the supplications of Esarhaddon, the promise of supernatural assistance, and the clarity of instruction, both in such overt tones, read almost polemically against other ancient Near Eastern war narratives: without supplication from Joshua, YHWH tells him what he needs to do in straightforward language. Ancient Near Eastern gods are typically described being petitioned for advice regarding how to proceed in war with their responses read through omens 'written in the body of [a] sacrificial animal.'[446] This contrast with other ancient Near Eastern accounts bears witness to a uniquely Israelite ideology: YHWH is able to give clear instruction because he is both the god *and* the king of Israel. Therefore, there is no requirement for a human king to try and discern YHWH's will with respect to battle plans, the way that, for example, Neo-Assyrian kings had to with Šamaš.[447] Furthermore, given the limitations of human kingship outlined in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, YHWH's kingship is not undermined by the institution of the monarchy so there is no need to expect that an Israelite king, later in the biblical narrative, will be required to petition YHWH and to read omens like, for example, Esarhaddon.[448]

[445] See Chapter Five, Section 5.1.1.

[446] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 186.

[447] This was discussed in detail in the previous chapter, especially 5.1.1.

[448] See, for example, King David's inquiring of YHWH how to proceed in battle with the Philistines, along with YHWH's clear answers (2 Samuel 5:19-25; 1 Chronicles 14:10-16). YHWH's answers are straightforward and do not require the reading of special omens. An exception to this is the strange behaviour of Gideon in Judges 6:36-40, who after hearing the straightforward language from YHWH (and a messenger of YHWH), nonetheless, required the 'sign of the fleece'. This, however,

While the most obvious description of YHWH's assistance in the Jericho narrative is his felling of Jericho's wall, it seemed expedient to address the issue separately from this more general discussion.[449] Because kings describing their destruction of city walls are commonplace throughout the ancient Near East, it is appropriate to devote a separate space to the issue given that YHWH is king of Israel throughout the conquest accounts of Canaan. In Joshua 8:1-3 and 8:18-22 YHWH is described telling Joshua and Israel that he will give a city over to them. Again, YHWH offers instructions without a petition, and the men of Ai are illustrated being powerless to run from the Israelites who ultimately left none of them alive. While YHWH is not described giving Joshua the details of the plan, the narrative nonetheless conveys as much when Joshua passes his orders down to the officers saying 'as according to the word of YHWH you shall do' (Joshua 8:8).[450] Hawk tells us that:

> the plans also affirm Joshua's position as victorious conqueror, reestablishing the unity of God, leader, and people. The narration of the battle follows the instructions given by YHWH and expanded upon by Joshua, repeating the command-execution pattern that signified Israel's obedience at the Jordan and at Jericho. YHWH gives the instructions, Joshua relays them to the people and "all the people" (vv. 3,4) carry them out just as Joshua has stipulated.[451]

The importance of obedience to YHWH and, therefore, the chain of command starting with his representative, Joshua, is emphasized for the audience of the story, and further reinforces the ideology (cumulative ideologisation) and social organisation (cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion) which the story reflects for the military benefit of Israel.

The opposite of a promise of divine assistance is also visible in the book of Joshua, particularly Joshua 7, wherein the sin of Achan is described. This opposing

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appears to speak to Gideon's lack of faith upon what he witnessed with his own eyes, rather than reflect a requirement of Yahwism.

[449] See Chapter Nine, Section 9.2.

[450] כדבר יהוה תעשו

[451] Hawk, *Joshua*, 125.

description is as important to war narrative's capacity to reinforce the social organisation and ideology necessary for large-scale organized violence as its positive counterpart. This is because the removal of divine assistance is described as being due to Israel's disobedience to YHWH and his law. The law, plainly, is replete with Israel's ideology of YHWH's kingship and the legal codes required for the conservation of Israel's social hierarchy. Butler is right to assert that the divine anger portrayed in the text 'represents the divine reaction to the human breach of trust and threatens the very existence of the nation.'[452] Yet he misses the fact that when YHWH's law, and the covenant promise to follow it, is transgressed, the entire social organisation as well as the ideological foundations of Israel's capacity to wage war are undermined.[453] Therefore, it is not merely that YHWH threatens the existence of the nation due to the breach of trust in a theological sense, which may or may not be true. Such a threat is necessary for Israel's military efficacy. In this light, the seemingly extreme punishment doled out upon Achan – including his family – becomes understandable, even if it remains unpalatable. If even a small amount of disobedience were to be allowed in the narrative, the text would fail to enforce the importance of the law and the social hierarchy that it maintains amongst the narrative's intended audience. Furthermore, if both the social organisation and

[452] Butler, *Joshua*, 83.

[453] That said, Butler does say that chapters 7 and 8 of Joshua 'show the reverse sides of warfare led by Yahweh. Warfare carried in thoughtless self-confidence leads to disaster. Warfare carried out in obedience to each of God's commands leads to victory and possession of the land.' Ibid, 87. This, of course, expresses the cautionary moral character of Joshua 7-8 and an understanding that the narrative's audience requires obedience in order to be successful militarily; so far as belief in the authority of YHWH underscores the authority of YHWH's representatives (Joshua, or later, a king, and his officers) and is essential to the command structure/social hierarchy and ideology, including divine justification for war, necessary to wage effective warfare in the ancient Near East. This is why, as Soggin points out, the text portrays that 'the obedience of faith is the only thing which can give victory to Israel, while disobedience leads to disaster.' Soggin, *Joshua,*103. Hall also notes the juxtaposition of the two battles at Ai saying that they illustrate 'the interdependence between obedience and military success...The first battle follows a violation of the covenant and thus ends in defeat (7:10-13); the second is prefaced by obedience (7:14-26) and is thus characterized by Yahweh's favour and involvement (8:1,18), which ensures success.' Hall, *Conquering Character*, 14-15.

ideology are undermined, so would Israel's capacity to wage war given that large-scale organised violence is inconceivable without the constant reinforcement of both.

However, if the social organisation and ideology of Israel are undermined, so is its military cohesion. Military cohesion has always been essential to success in combat irrespective of the time and place. On the military cohesion of American soldiers in WWII, for example, Steward has said that 'one person who failed the group meant the group might not survive and individual men would never see Iowa or Indiana again'.[454] A surface, and somewhat anachronistic reading may lead to the conclusion that, contrary to Joshua, Achan and the Israelites, the concern of American WWII soldiers was immediate obedience of specifically military commands, whereas the obedience required of Israel is specifically religious. While this appears true, this interpretation would be failing to appreciate the role of Yahwistic ideology/theology in the maintenance of Israel's chain of command. The real anachronism lies in presuming that religious obedience is separable from political and military obedience for Israel specifically, or for ancient Near Eastern peoples more generally. Hall, for example, distinguishes between Joshua's 'military and spiritual leadership'.[455] She notes the vocabulary of chapter 1 which highlights his military roles[456] and draws a comparison to his being 'required to devote attention to the law of Moses (vv. 7-8)'.[457] Hall notes that Joshua's role has, therefore, 'a dual nature', and while she deftly describes the 'halting, stop-and-go pace, as the campaign accounts are interspersed with covenant observance'[458] she, nonetheless, does not notice that the author's intent

[454] Stewart, 'Military Cohesion,' 147.
[455] Hall, *Conquering Character*, 14.
[456] For example, he prepares Israel to dispossess (ירש) the Canaanites (Joshua 1:11,15); he orders that provisions be prepared (צידה) (Joshua 1:11); and recruits warriors (גבורי החיל) to march in battle formation (חמשים). Hall, *Conquering Character*, 14; Butler, *Joshua*, 17; Robert G. Boling and G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua*, The Anchor Bible 6 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 126.
[457] Hall, *Conquering Character*, 14.
[458] She highlights, for example, Joshua's overseeing 'circumcision (5:2-9), the Passover (5:10-11), the death penalty (7:1-26), [and] reading of the law (8:30-35)'. Hall, *Conquering Charater*, 14.

is to show that they are one and the same. That is, we may distinguish between military and religious leadership, and we may distinguish between military and religious practice. This does not mean, however, that the two were separate concerns in the ancient Near East, and, in fact, it appears that it is the writer of Joshua's intent to convey that they are not. Joshua is the idyllic leader and Israel is successful in warfare precisely because Joshua exercises idyllic leadership. The belief in the authority of one's god, which is central to the belief in the authority of one's god's representatives, concurrent laws and chain of command, is not something extraneous to the success of ancient Near Eastern peoples in combat, rather, it is essential. In this case, the writer's commitment to enforcing them includes his description of the pile of stones which covered Achan, his family, and all that he had possessed. The writer claims the pile of stones was still there at the time of his writing (lit. 'until this day'),[459] as a visual monument to remind Israel of the consequences of disobedience. Whether the pile of stones to which he was referring had anything to do with a historical Achan is irrelevant. The writer is telling his audience that there is a pile of stones that exists at the time of his writing, daring his audience to seek it out and see it for themselves, thereby insisting upon the truth about which he speaks and the consequences of undermining Israel's commitment to YHWH's law and the social organisation it enforces, and implicitly, Israel's capacity for war. He also insists that this is the reason for the name of the Valley of Achor (עמק עכור).

Boling and Wright argued that the 'story of Ha-Ai is truly etiological (fascinated by the meaning of a name), but it is not merely etiological (designed to explain the name)'.[460] Although it is not an etiological narrative, it gives an etiological

[459] עד היום הזה

[460] Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 229. It seems rather to exaggerate etiology to say, as Nelson does, 'that etiology, and not historical memory, first generated the story.' Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 111. It is, of course, fair to say that it

description for a greater military purpose. Similarly, Judges 2:5 gives another example of etiology being used to generate a wider appreciation of the importance of obedience amongst the audience of the text. The Israelites become 'weepers' because of their failure to obey and the text describes that as the reason for the choice of the place's name, Bochim, by which the author grounds the text in historical reality. The aim is to give it authority, regardless of whether or not it historically happened.

It is impossible to over emphasize the importance of such a narrative to the success of a nation in combat so far as it displays the consequences of disobedience. As a failure to follow orders and a break down of any command structure in time of war is catastrophic, the text's display of such harsh punishment for Achan's presuming to keep a few items, which had been dedicated to YHWH, for himself, is perfectly consistent with a writer who is concerned with the maintenance of both. This is not to say that a more complex discussion regarding the ban (חרם) cannot be had with respect to this instance. For instance, discussions concerning that which touches anything dedicated to YHWH having to also be dedicated to YHWH.[461] However, such discussions only serve to reinforce the ideology with respect to YHWH's

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was not necessarily historical memory which first generated the story, but quite another matter to say that etiology did, even if it does fulfill an etiological function. Given the nature of the narrative, the consequences for Achan and his family, and the cautionary nature of the tale which the story represents, it seems more appropriate to assign a moral purpose behind the story's origin. If it does possess historical foundation, then the same moral purpose could be said to be behind its conservation and promulgation. In this understanding, then, the etiology within the narrative serves the story's greater moral purpose inasmuch as the place names referred to reinforce the apparent reality of the tale, and the consequences for disobedience described therein, to the narrative's audience.

[461] See, for example, Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*, 80-84. At least this is the case according the MT of Joshua 6:18 which says to avoid things which have been devoted lest one also become devoted themselves, and wherein the radicals חרם are used in both instances. The LXX, on the other hand, gives us ἐνθυμηθέντες implying to 'set one's mind upon' or 'consider' a thing, in this case, that which has been devoted to YHWH, which many mainstream translations such as the NRSV render simply as 'covet'. Thus the LXX, rather than conveying that contact renders one also devoted, instead implies that one will become accursed so far as exposure to that which has been devoted to YHWH is an occasion of sin inasmuch as one will be tempted to take that which is YHWH's and, thus, earn for oneself the punishment of death.

kingship as well as the social hierarchy which it enforces, rather than detract from them.[462] Boling points out that in chapter seven of Joshua:

> memories of (1) a contaminating *ḥērem*-violation at Jericho and (2) Achan's theft of *šālāl*, "booty" (the latter given a Jericho setting), have been combined by a historian in such a way as to protect Joshua from any charge of poor military judgement in the debacle of the first battle for The Ruin.[463]

However, this perspective entails two errors. First, it presumes that there is a factual historical core—a story about a military defeat—that was passed down without any justification for the military loss inherent to it, something which is absolutely unheard of throughout the entire ancient Near East, especially given the polemical nature of conquest accounts. Secondly, in asserting that a later historian included the tale of Achan's failure with respect to the ban in order to rationalize a military defeat under Joshua's leadership, Boling fails to appreciate the role that a text describing defeat on account of legal disobedience (so far as disobedience undermines Israel's social organisation and ideology) plays amongst a people under constant military threat. Joshua 7 is a cautionary tale.[464] The texts that describe the ban (חרם), therefore, play a significant role, as narratives, in reinforcing those factors necessary for Israel's military success.[465]

Such a narrative would be as important to any possible military success under Josiah—an arguably more likely scenario—as it would have been to the success of a military force under David if the texts were indeed so early. Admittedly, it seems less suited to the exilic and post-exilic periods so far as Israel would have been militarily

[462] Again, the ban (חרם) will be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.1.

[463] Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 230. This diachronic argument is also made by Nelson, *Joshua*, 98-99; Butler, *Joshua*, 80-83; and Soggin, *Joshua*, 103-104. Niditch also maintains that the Achan incident is a later rationalization of an earlier military defeat at Ai. Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 60.

[464] Nelson asserts a similar understanding saying that 'just as defeat at Ai was interpreted in terms of Achan's disobedience and Yahweh's anger, so victory at Ai serves as a paradigm of the relationship between obedience and success.' Nelson, *Joshua*, 113. Therefore, describing failure in light of disobedience, is every bit as important—perhaps more so—as describing success due to obedience, if one is seeking to see that which makes a nation capable militarily (particularly its social organisation and ideology) upheld.

[465] See Chapter Seven, Sections 7.2 and 7.2.1 for more on this.

defeated and would likely possess no need for texts which so overtly serve to reinforce Israel's capacity for war. However, earlier texts from periods in Israel's history which had need of them would have been considered positively invaluable to an author seeking to make a case for the maintenance of Israel's social and cultural homogeneity through obedience to the law; particularly to an exilic audience, and especially those of the Babylonian diaspora. Principally, if said audience were maintaining hope for a messianic military reconquest of their homeland and particularly in an era wherein 'we always lived there/here' was not seen as having any semblance of justification to a claim on territory. In the ancient Near East territory was perceived to have been given by gods through human conquest and to the extent that a people possessed a given territory it was by the will of that people's principle god. Therefore, without a conquest account in Israel's narrative history, any claim that a given land was their own would not have been appreciated, neither by Israel, nor anyone else.[466]

The debate concerning corporate responsibility/punishment versus individual responsibility/punishment within Joshua 7 seems immediately misguided and appears as a false dilemma to anyone acquainted with military training. All militaries, and all military officers throughout all periods, that is, with respect to the large-scale organised violence which we call 'war,' have treated their units as one entity. Doing so serves two functions, first, it holds the unit of individuals (whatever its size) responsible for each other by encouraging the members to police each other's actions. For turning a blind eye to the actions of one of the members is to bring punishment upon oneself. This creates unit cohesiveness so far as it brings the individual members of the unit together and leads them to functioning as one effective force, rather than a

[466] Alluding to this, Nelson has said, for example, that 'every conquest story in Joshua is a territorial claim and an assertion of national identity'. Nelson, *Joshua*, 113.

divided ineffective one. Central to the building of such unit cohesiveness is attention to detail. A failure to pay attention to small transgressions in discipline inevitably leads to bigger transgressions. Furthermore, a unit which holds its members accountable to disciplinary rules from within also forms bonds of camaraderie which are indispensible in combat. Therefore, ensuring that YHWH's status as king and god, a status which required that which was devoted to him to be his alone, was seen to be of primary importance given that the gods decided the outcome of battles. Divine assistance in battle was considered a prerequisite for victory thoughout the entire ancient Near East and the Hebrew biblical texts do not present themselves as exceptional to this theme. Secondly, but implicit within the first reason just given, such corporate responsibility and retribution reinforces the Law and its ideology which underscores the social hierarchy/organisation, i.e. command structure, necessary for the group's smooth functioning in times of war.

Consistent with this corporate responsibility and its relation to Israel's ideology and social organisation which are necessary for Israel's military success, Rowlett has said that

> the strong overcoding of the lines of authority in the text makes the power assertion inherent within it perfectly clear: individuals belong to households, which belong to families; the families are subordinate to the patriarchal heads of the tribes, who, in turn, are to find their identity primarily as components of the entity 'Israel', whose god is Yahweh. The deity's chosen representative on earth, to whom Yahweh gives commands and to whom the people are answerable, is Joshua. Everyone has a particular place in the centralized system, and everyone ('all Israel') belongs firmly under Joshua's control. Achan, the individual who has tried to step out from under the lines of authority, is therefore subject to punishment not only by Joshua but by 'all Israel', the cohesive yet stratified entity.[467]

Indeed, the tale reinforces the necessity of the hierarchy irrespective of what that social hierarchy may have looked like historically, that is, irrespective of the social hierarchy that was in place amongst the narrative's audience. For whether the text is monarchical, or from a later period, it still emphasizes the corporate nature of Israel

[467] Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 177.

and the obedience due to YHWH's representative (whether Judge, or King) and his officers, as well as the corporate punishment due when strict obedience is not adhered to. This makes Berman's assessment problematic inasmuch as he argues that

> the *sine qua non* of biblical law is the responsibility of the individual. We find no law stating that the infraction of an individual should result in the punishment of an entire collective. This, it should be mentioned, is consistent with what we find in the great law codes of the ancient Near East, such as the law code of Lipit Ishtar or of Eshnunna from the nineteenth century BCE, or in the Laws of Hammurabi from the eighteenth century BCE. None of these collections allows for the punishment of an entire polity due to the infraction of an individual.[468]

Indeed, Berman is correct in this statement, however, this only serves to remind us of the importance in recalling the kind of narrative that we are reading, that is, war narrative. War always serves to disrupt the legal codes which govern daily living inasmuch as war is a liminal state which, prior to its emergence, depends upon the structures (legal and ideological) which govern the daily praxis and ideology of a given people, but which requires particular departures once war becomes manifest (e.g. most obviously, the commands to plunder and to kill).[469] When, in contrast to the general rules against killing and stealing, they are instead demanded, they must be demanded *forcefully*, so that there is no doubt that such actions are just among those expected to carry them out. For where there is doubt there is hesitation and where there is hesitation there is military loss. Furthermore, the forceful demands which run counter to the legal demands of daily living must be seen to come from the same lawgiver (that is, the gods, or god) who has given the laws to a particular people in the first place. Otherwise, the demand to kill will lack the authority required to be effective. Achan's taking of booty for himself, however, is not an enactment of this contrast, for the booty was YHWH's, and the taking was to have been done for his, that is, YHWH's, benefit – the king's – not Achan's. Similarly, killing the perceived

[468] Joshua Berman, 'The Making of the Sin of Achan (Joshua 7),' *BibInt* 22 (2014): 115-31, here 116.

[469] See Chapter Three, Section 3.2.

enemy is also not done for one's individual benefit in warfare, but is done for, and under the authority of, one's king and god, whom for our purposes are one and the same: YHWH.

In contrast, Berman argues that Joshua 7 is effectively conveying that Israel lost the first battle with Ai due to a general 'attitudinal climate they produced as a collective that enabled Achan to commit his crime.'[470] However, it is difficult to prove the existence of an 'attitudinal climate' amongst a given people at a particular time in the past, and if there were such an attitudinal climate with respect to Israel in the narrative itself, as opposed to historically, it ought to be obvious within the text and not require the amount of exegesis that Berman has given it. That said, despite this, his conclusion is remarkably on point. Berman states that for

> the author of Joshua 7, members of the Israelite polity had a responsibility to internalize the lessons of the conquest of Jericho and to hold the Lord in awe and fear. They were meant to view the devoted things as YHWH's realm entirely and were to recoil at that thought that anyone would fail to understand that. It was a collective punishment for all to ensure that this correct spirit and understanding would pervade the entire community.[471]

Berman appears, however, to be presuming that the author's intended audience of Joshua 7 are a people who needed to internalize the lessons of Joshua 6, which seems to indicate that the Israelite polity that he has in mind are those who were going to attack Ai, ironically, the very people referred to in Joshua 7. Putting that aside, however, Berman's appreciation of the fact that the audience, at whatever juncture, were meant to understand that the devoted things were YHWH's, is certainly correct. As is his idea that the punishment of the many would lead to that understanding throughout the 'entire community'.[472] War annals always describe the booty from conquest being taken by the king—that is, so far as the narratives are narrated in the first person—any description of one other than YHWH benefiting from the spoils of

[470] Ibid, 131.
[471] Ibid.
[472] Ibid.

war would undermine YHWH's role as king and wager of war in the narrative and thus the ideology and social organisation that it implied to the narrative's intended audience.

YHWH's divine assistance in battle is removed in Joshua 7 on account of the sin of one person amongst the collective. This narrative, therefore, conveys an important message to its audience. That is, complete obedience to YHWH and his representatives are non-negotiable if there is to be victory in combat. YHWH's assistance is removed if even perceptibly small transgressions are committed which could undermine YHWH's kingship—a particularly military role throughout the Ancient Near East and one upon which the authority of Israel's judge, and later human kings, depend. Therefore, Israel's entire social organisation and ideology both depend upon tales describing complete obedience and, therefore, divine assistance and success in battle (e.g. Joshua 5:14-6:27), as well as its antithesis in Joshua 7, that is, a failure to obey, and the removal of divine assistance. The antithesis has the further benefit of extending the moral imperative to its audience that the Israelites are to police each other, to root out and expose sin (disobedience), or else risk being defeated in war, or otherwise punished for the sins of their fellow Israelites. This constant self-examination contributes to group identity, strengthens the social structure through which the narrative pervades, and the ideology which upholds it. This self-examination by the collective leads to a further strengthening of the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion and the centrifugal ideologisation necessary for Israel to be effective militarily.[473] It ought to come as no surprise, therefore, that a

[473] Such collective self-examination is typical in current military units as well. Entire platoons and even companies are 'punished' for the failures of individual soldiers in the unit. This leads to deeper unit cohesion in that it encourages soldiers to police each other, and hold each other to higher standards, as the failure of one leads to the 'punishment' of all. Such 'punishment' or more accurately 'disciplinary measures' oftentimes manifest as physical trials such as push ups, extra running or night marches; or in more severe cases, entire groups being confined to barracks and/or having things such as

turn from corporate responsibility/retribution towards individual responsibility/retribution finally takes place in Ezekiel 18, that is, during the exile, specifically *after* Israel's final military defeat. Finally, punishment, such as the one imposed upon Achan and his family,

> has a deterring effect, leading individuals to adapt their behaviour in order to avoid penalties. In comparison to, for example training, punishment does not necessarily have to be imposed directly on an individual combatant in order to have an effect. A combatant who witnesses others being punished will adapt his or her behaviour to avoid punishment in future times.[474]

Indeed, one need only imagine the opposite, that is, a military force wherein obedience is not of primary importance and the commitment on the part of the individual soldiers is only in half measure. Such an 'army', if it could even be called such, would be no match for even a smaller, but more committed, disciplined and obedient enemy.[475]

With the Achan incident rather horrifically rectified, YHWH's assistance is restored and YHWH is said to have given Ai into the hands of Joshua and the Israelites throughout a dramatic telling of strategy and ambush resultant in Israel's success in Joshua 8. The text then goes on to describe a covenantal renewal ceremony which again stresses the authority of YHWH, the law, via the presence of the ark of the covenant, the Levitical priests, and that of the elders, the officers/superintendents, and their judges. The centrality of the ark is given a place of prominence in the text emphasizing the importance of the law. The description of Joshua reading every word in front of the entire assembly, including women, little ones and sojourners,

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weekend passes revoked. One misses the point if they say only Achan and his family are ultimately punished. This is because the ideology here maintains that Israel lost their battle because of the sin of one member of the collective.

[474] Haer and Banhozer, 'The Creation of Committed Combatants,' 30.

[475] Collins cites numerous examples of smaller disciplined forces overcoming larger less organised 'armies'. He describes, for example, the regular defeats of the Romans over German and Celtic armies and the colonial defeats over larger Indian and Chinese armies. Collins, 'Violent Conflict and Social Organisation,' 75.

emphasizes the wholeness of Israel; the importance of the law; and Israel's social hierarchy and ideology to Israel's successes militarily.

The divine assistance described in Joshua 10 is particularly interventionist, with the promise of assistance given in verse 8, followed by panic from YHWH overcoming the enemy in verse 10, then, in verse 11, YHWH is described throwing stones from heaven and killing more of them than the Israelites had killed. The divine intervention appears consistent with that described in at least one other ancient Near Eastern account, namely, a Hittite account narrated by King Muršili II (ca. 1321-1295 BCE) in his Ten Year Annals, wherein he describes a meteor (^{giš}*kal-mi-ša-an*)[476] being thrown by his god and striking his enemy's land (Arzawa), and its king (Uhhaziti) falling ill thus becoming unable to fight.[477] With the determinative for wood (giš) this implies an ember, or burning thing, which could mean that Rowlett, having accepted Younger's translation as 'meteor,' which is certainly its meaning in this context, might have taken the parallel too far. Rowlett draws a parallel between this Hittite example and Joshua 10:11-14 stating that 'divine intervention in battle takes the form of a god helping the imperial enterprise by interfering with the phenomena of nature, specifically the heavenly bodies.'[478] However, even though the Hebrew describes 'great stones from the heavens'[479] being thrown by YHWH, Muršili II's annals do not describe the same destruction as YHWH's against the Amorites, but rather Muršili II's enemy Uhhaziti falls ill. This apparently indicates that Uhhaziti's falling ill took place after a celestial event observed by Muršili II and his army, as he makes the point that it was seen by 'my army.'[480] This, of course, is distinctly different from the description of the Amorites' destruction under 'great stones' (גדלות

[476] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 149.
[477] Ibid, 149-150. Cf. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 92.
[478] Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 92.
[479] אבנים גדלות מן השמים
[480] KARAŠ.ḪI.A-YA. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 149.

אבנים) thrown by YHWH. Whereas the Hittite example interprets a celestial event, in Joshua 10:11, YHWH is overtly destroying the Amorites with the narrator even emphasizing that more Amorites died by YHWH's action than the swords of the Israelites. Weinfeld cites an example from Sargon's third campaign which is not much better than Rowlett's. We read ^{d}*Adad gaš-ru mâr* ^{d}*A-nim qar-du ri-gim-šu*$_2$ *rabî-tu eli-šu*$_2$*-nu id-di-ma i-na ur-pat ri-iḫ-ṣi u*$_3$ NA$_4$ *šame-e u*$_2$*-qat-ti re-e-ḫa.* This translates to: 'Adad, the strong, the valiant son of Anu, gave his great voice above them; by a cloud causing storm-flood and hailstones he brought the remaining to an end.'[481] Whilst Weinfeld translates NA$_4$ *šame-e* as '*stones of the heavens*'[482] the CAD gives NA$_4$ (*abnum*, here in construct, *aban*, 'stone of') plus *šamê* ('heavens') as an epithet for 'hail' or 'hailstone.'[483] Therefore, neither Rowlett's nor Weinfeld's examples are particularly appropriate comparisons to Joshua 10:11, nonetheless, what they share in common with Joshua 10:11 is the emphasis upon divine assistance in order to, once again, stress the approval of a god and the authority of a god's representative, along with the social organisation which depends upon it.

Joshua's status as YHWH's representative, and YHWH's approval of Israel's obedience under his leadership is further reinforced via the inclusion of the story of the sun at the end of chapter 10. YHWH reciprocates Joshua's and Israel's obedience by causing the sun to stand still in response to Joshua's command. The episode of the sun, according to the text, is meant to convey YHWH's divine assistance in battle so far as the reason that YHWH is said to have listened to Joshua is because 'YHWH

[481] Translation is mine and the transliteration has been updated from the one provided by Francois Thureau-Dangin, *Une Relation de la Huitième Champagne de Sargon*, Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre 3 (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1912), 24, line 147.

[482] See Moshe Weinfeld, 'Divine Intervention in War,' in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures,* eds. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 121-47, here 141.

[483] See the CAD Vol 1 (A Part 1), 54-61, s.v. *abnu*.

fought for Israel' (Joshua 10:14).[484] Weinfeld rightly adds that the purpose of YHWH's causing the sun to stand still in the narrative is 'to lengthen, as it were, the day and thus enable the fighting nation to take vengeance on their foes,' that is, to allow Israel to 'be able to complete their victory while it is still day.'[485] While considering Joshua 10 amongst other ancient Near Accounts of divine intervention Nelson has said that

> in these propagandistic documents one finds enemy coalitions, astronomical phenomena, emphasis on victory in a single day, the incomparability of the triumph, successful pursuit, the escape and hiding of enemies, and especially divine intervention. These similarities reflect analogous literary aims. Both Joshua and these campaign reports seek to increase wonder of the accomplishments they report and to promote a certain religious and political ideology. For Israel the ideology being advanced was not the power of the king as in the texts from Assyria or Egypt, but their own national identity as the people of a powerful God and as the legitimate masters of Canaan. These conquest accounts insist that "Yahweh fought for Israel," in accordance with divine war ideology (23:3, 10; Exod. 14:14, 25b; Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4). The vanquished kings and cities are representative of all hostile forces that might undermine Israel's national identity and claim to the land.[486]

Indeed, there is an ideology of national identity being put forward, one that justifies ownership of the land of Canaan, but also an ideology exemplifying the kingship of YHWH, and the authoritative role of YHWH's representatives and thus, a reinforcement of the social structure that the narrative permeates through. The writer has even given his readers a citation to reinforce his claims, that is, the book of Jashar wherein it is said that the event had been previously recorded (Joshua 10:13).

To this point we have been discussing YHWH's assistance, or lack of, with respect to the southern kings of Canaan. However, Joshua 11 exhibits YHWH's divine assistance in a particularly spectacular way via the destruction of the entire northern alliance of Canaanite kings who intend to push back against Joshua and the Israelites after their success in the south described in chapter 10. Nonetheless, the Canaanite kings, under their commander, King Jabin of Hazor, fail in their effort as

[484] כי יהוה נלחם לישראל Also, Joshua 10:42, 'YHWH, God of Israel, fought for Israel'. כי יהוה אלהי ישראל נלחם לישראל

[485] Weinfeld, 'Divine Intervention in War,' 146.

[486] Nelson, *Joshua*, 139.

YHWH's promise to fight (Joshua 11:6) is fulfilled (Joshua 11:8). Thus, just as we have Israel's claim to the land justified by their success in their southern campaign, in chapter eleven we see Israel's success against a northern coalition under Jabin. Whilst there is no overt sign of a miraculous intervention by YHWH in this chapter, we are nonetheless told that YHWH was behind their victory in verse 8. After the preceding narratives emphasizing the obedience of Israel, and its antithesis in Achan, YHWH's divine assistance in battle is presumed to be present to the extent that Israel is obedient to YHWH; that is, YHWH delivers them *through* their obedience and the author even goes so far as to describe YHWH's hardening the hearts of Israel's northern enemies so that they would be put under the ban by Israel (Joshua 11:20) suggesting that Joshua and the Israelites, so far as they are obedient, are YHWH's weapon of choice. Butler has argued that the hardening of their hearts made Israelite obedience 'easier' so far as YHWH 'caused the inhabitants of the land to resist any temptation to plead for peace.'[487] This means that Israel's requirement to put everyone under the ban could be carried out with less reservation as it would not require Israel to differentiate between those who wanted peace and those who did not. Therefore, Butler's concluding that 'the motif serves to force Israel to obey, rather than to be merciful'[488] appears correct. The ban is fundamentally about obedience.[489] Note, for instance, Samuel's reaction to Saul in 1 Samuel 15, wherein it is described that Saul spared King Agag of the Amalekites, as well as the better livestock, for the purpose of making a sacrifice to YHWH. Saul thought that he had been obedient to YHWH so far as he carried out the military mission that had been set before him, but Samuel

[487] Butler, *Joshua*, 130.
[488] Ibid.
[489] Niditch describes two ideologies with respect to the ban, the ban as God's justice and the ban as sacrifice. Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 28-77. Both will be discussed in chapter 7 (specifically 7.2.1), wherein it will become clear that obedience is the primary concern of the authors concerning the חרם texts.

makes it clear that it is not sacrifices that delight YHWH, but obedience (1 Samuel 15:22-23).[490] Before killing Agag, Samuel explains that Saul was no longer to rule over Israel. Thus, the description of YHWH's assistance being implicit in Israel's obedience in Joshua 11 is not a small development in the narrative. For, to the extent that there are always descriptions of the miraculous in Israel's warfare accounts, the intended audience (which included those required to enter into combat) may grow fearful in battle if there was no obvious sign of YHWH's assistance when they did. Thus the narrative displays the priority of obedience to Israel's success in combat over the expectation of divine help; a hope that would be helpful and encouraging to an army to the extent that it is hope, but would be detrimental to an army's success to the extent that it is expected and does not come. Obedience is, of course, essential to military success. Malešević has written:

> War is nothing like a tussle between two chimpanzees or rats, regardless of how violent this tussle may be. Instead, it is a co-ordinated large-scale process that involves violent confrontation between two social organisations. It is no accident that war and civilisation have emerged on the historical stage simultaneously, for successful military means (if not necessarily the ends) entails the use of reason and rationality. Victorious armies are not built from innately aggressive and overly emotional individuals, be they male or female. Instead, an efficient military machine requires stringent discipline, controlled behaviour and unquestioned obedience to authority.[491]

Indeed, it is this 'unquestioned obedience to authority' which is at the heart of the ban and, therefore, Joshua chapters 7 and 11. It is obedience which is reinforced via the cautionary tale of Achan in chapter 7, and it is YHWH's divine assistance through Israel's obedience, wherein the ban is fully carried out, which is described in chapter 11.

Given that chapter 11 describes Israel succeeding through their obedience to YHWH against a great army 'in number like the sand on the seashore, with very many

[490] Yoo relates Samuel's words in verse 22, especially 'to hear/obey' (*shema*), back to Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Yoon Jong Yoo, 'The Shema (Deut 6:4-5) in the Story of Samuel (1 Samuel 1-15),' *ExpTim* 123, no. 3 (2011): 119-21, here, 119.

[491] Malešević, *The Sociology of War*, 283.

horses and chariots' (Joshua 11:4)[492] it adds to the force of the narrative in its displaying what can be achieved when Israel is obedient. Hawk describes the 'command-execution format' in chapter 11

> that signifies Israel's and Joshua's obedience throughout the book. YHWH commands Joshua to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots (v. 6) and the narrator reports that he did so (v. 9). The narrator's comment that "Joshua did to them as the LORD commanded him" (v. 9) answers YHWH's exhortation at the beginning (v. 6), linking divine initiative with human response in a more implicit fashion.[493]

Therefore, the narrative continues to emphasize the importance of Israel's obedience if they are to be successful in combat via a narrative that appears to also serve an etiological function with respect to Israel's place in the land and their nationalist claims upon it. Most importantly, however, as has already been discussed, obedience here is not to be understood as merely a theological response to one's god but, rather, any army's military success depends upon it. Haer and Banhozer have said that

> Battle is a harrowing business ... In this intense setting, it is the responsibility of the military commander to ensure that soldiers under his command perform well and follow his orders, no matter how life threatening or difficult to fulfill they might be. An intact and well-working command and execution structure is then also an essential component for victory.[494]

Again, it is impossible to imagine an effective military otherwise, and yet while Hawk outlines the 'command-execution format' so well, particularly with respect to Joshua 6,[495] he does not tie this obedience to military success *per se* (nor does any other scholar of Joshua), even though the text is clearly emphasizing the importance of obedience within a wider conquest account. This emphasis on the importance of obedience remains even when the orders do not appear reasonable or sensible, such as, for example, the circling of Jericho in Joshua 6. For Hawk, however, rather than stressing the importance of obedience irrespective of any potential metaphysical help, Israel 'entered the land through the power of YHWH'.[496] The summary of Joshua's

[492] כחול אשר על שפת הים לרב וסוס ורכב רב מאד
[493] Hawk, *Joshua*, 170.
[494] Haer and Banhozer, 'The Creation of Committed Combatants,' 25.
[495] See especially, Hawk, *Joshua*, 88-89.
[496] Hawk, *Joshua*, 90.

conquests in chapter 11 and the king list of those he defeated in Joshua 12 is a testament to Joshua's obedience and the obedience of Israel to Joshua. Joshua 23-24 exhorts Israel to obey all of the statutes laid out for Israel by YHWH in order to ensure YHWH's blessings and assistance in battle. Furthermore, these chapters give a warning of what will happen if Israel does not. It is notable that Joshua addresses all of Israel including elders, chiefs, judges and officers (Joshua 23:2), that is, the writer emphasizes the presence of Israel's chain of command along kinship lines. He is then described telling of YHWH's actions on behalf of Israel in accordance with YHWH's promises to Israel (Joshua 23:3-10).[497] Thus, irrespective of the time in which it was written, we find an emphasis upon the necessity of obedience to the rules and regulations laid out for Israel. As well the necessity of obedience to Israel's chain of command, in order to ensure Israel's continued successes in combat. Joshua is then described telling the Israelites what the consequences will be if they turn away from YHWH and intermarry with Canaanites (Joshua 23:11-12). That is, YHWH will cease driving out the Canaanites before Israel, and they will no longer live in the land that YHWH has given them (Joshua 23:13). This has typically led scholars to conclude that this is an issue of piety and reward.[498] However, given everything we have explored thus far, we are now in a position to appreciate the link between Israel's worship of YHWH, his role as king, and the dependence of the authority of his judges and officers (i.e. the social organisation) upon this specifically Israelite ideology for Israel's success in warfare. Israel's success is not dependent upon YHWH *per se*,[499]

[497] Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 522.

[498] For example, Butler, in reference to verse 6, has said that the task of driving out the Canaanite nations is not 'stated in military terms. Rather it is in terms of obedience to God's will.' Butler, *Joshua*, 255. Here, Butler sets piety and obedience against each other, not appreciating that they are one and the same so far as Israelite ideology is central to its social organisation and, therefore, success in battle.

[499] This is just to say that we are not discussing the ontological reality, or lack of reality, with respect to YHWH here (which may or may not be the case and is up to the reader to decide), rather, we are discussing the necessity of the ideology of YHWH's kingship and obedience to his laws for Israel's success in war against the Canaanite nations.

but rather, it is dependent upon the perfusion and adherence to Israel's ideology and obedience to the covenantal laws which belief in YHWH implies. This is precisely why we see a recommitment by Israel to YHWH in Joshua 24. Joshua is described summoning the chain of command inherent within Israel (Joshua 24:1) and then recounting to all the people everything that YHWH had done for them (Joshua 24:2-13) after which he implored Israel to put away other gods and serve YHWH alone (Joshua 24:14-15). They, of course, agree and then Joshua is described making a covenant with the people, along with statutes and ordinances at Shechem (Joshua 24:25) before writing them in a 'book of the law of God' and erecting a stone in the sanctuary of YHWH (Joshua 24:26). This stone possesses elements common to stelae so far as Joshua declares that it is a witness against Israel if they go back on their word (Joshua 24:27), which is to say that it possesses the characteristics of a stele with a curse formula, even if nothing was engraved in the stone.[500] All of this has happened in Joshua before in Joshua 8 on Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, wherein it is similarly described that Joshua 'wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses' (Joshua 8:32), all of the law was read to Israel, wherein Israel's chain of command is similarly listed (elders, officers, judges [Judges 8:33]), as well as blessings and curses (Joshua 8:34-5). Hawk highlights the necessity of ideological assent when he describes the importance of Israel's choosing, described in Joshua 24:15-8, when he says that the 'act of choosing is vital for the life of the nation.'[501] Indeed it is, as without commitment on behalf of Israel's leaders and people Israel would not stand a

[500] It should be noted that Deuteronomy 16:21-22 forbids the erecting of stone pillars, which leads one to wonder if this is a part of the book of Joshua (along with Joshua 8) which may considerably predate the Deuteronomist. Soggin maintains that Joshua 24:25-7 possesses 'a tradition which in essence is an ancient one.' Soggin, *Joshua*, 240. Similarly, Butler maintains that 'an ancient practice underlies 26b... Josh 24 attests to a period when stones were used with cultic significance by Israel.' Butler, *Joshua*, 277. Boling and Wright, on the other hand, consider the Joshua text to be historical and the Deuteronomist an early writer as they assert that this stone in particular must have been '"depaganized" by having the covenant stipulations inscribed on it, probably in a fresh coat of plaster.' Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 540.

[501] Hawk, *Joshua*, 266-7. Cf. Nelson, *Joshua*, 270.

chance in combat. Furthermore, assenting does not, in and of itself, guarantee that a people will continue to assent. For the reader knows that things take a turn for the worse in the book of Judges.

6.3 Divine Assistance in Battle: Judges and Obedience

Obedience could arguably be said to be the theme of paramount importance for the narrator of the book of Judges. Judges displays continued lack of obedience, particularly with respect to the ban, right from the outset. In fact, the reason that the Israelites are described having to struggle against indigenous Canaanites at all, that is, after the conquest, is because of the Israelites' disobedience.[502] Judges 1:22 describes YHWH's presence with the house of Joseph, but they released a man and his family without killing them. A seemingly small transgression given that the man had helped the Israelites find their way into the city. They had even promised him that they would treat him well if he would help them. However, their letting him go was a failure to be obedient to the ban. Similarly, Judges 1:27-28 describes the failure of the tribe of Manasseh to drive out the Canaanites. Instead the Israelites are described using the Canaanites for slave labour. The trend continues throughout the remainder of chapter

[502] Hoppe has stated that if 'Israel would have obeyed the Lord's commands, her victories over Canaan would been complete. Since obedience was not forthcoming, the Canaanites will be a continuing problem for the tribes (2:1-5). The survival of the indigenous population of Canaan then is an act of divine judgment upon an unfaithful Israel (2:20-21)'. Leslie Hoppe, O.F.M., *Joshua, Judges with an Excursus on Charismatic Leadership in Israel* (Michael Glazier: Wilmington, 1982), 105. While it is an act of divine judgment as far as the narrative is concerned, nonetheless, a less than perfectly obedient Israel could not be effective militarily, especially against stronger Canaanite armies. One might argue that the author/s of Judges are not talking about military disobedience, but it must be remembered that YHWH's kingship, ideologically, is central to the social organisation which is dependent upon it, not least the authority of particular military leaders, i.e. the judges. Indeed, Hoppe admits this: 'The evil which Israel did in serving these gods was not simply a religious offense; it had important socio-political consequences. The strength and unity of the tribes were cemented by their common service of Yahweh. Once loyalty to Yahweh became compromised, the tribes could not function with any cohesiveness. The tribes became easy prey for those who opposed their novel social system in which all power and authority were ascribed to Yahweh, a non-human lord.' This, of course, is to admit that without the centrality of YHWH worship to Israel's justifying ideology, the social organisation of Israel would be commensurately undermined, which in turn would undermine Israel's military efficacy. Ibid, 114.

1 (Judges 1:29, 30, 31-32, 33, 34-35). Judges 2:1-4 describes the way in which the Israelites failed to drive out all of the inhabitants of Canaan and made covenants with them instead. As a result, YHWH is described removing his divine assistance and telling the Israelites that he will not drive out the Canaanites, that they will become adversaries, and that the Canaanite gods will become a snare for them (Judges 2:3). Again, we see the relationship between obedience and YHWH's assistance. Irrespective of whether or not there may be an ontologically metaphysical intervention in war, success in combat between two organised social groups depends upon obedience to a chain of command. We observed after examining the sin of Achan that YHWH's weapon of choice is illustrated to be an obedient Israel, that it was *through* Israel's obedience that YHWH was most present and most capable of fulfilling his promises. Here, we see the consequence, again, of not being obedient, that is, YHWH's assistance is removed. YHWH is described to be literally *against* Israel due to their Baal worship (Judges 2:15). Finally, the judges are said to have been raised up by YHWH in order to lead Israel in obedience, which would lead to military successes, but was followed by Israel's relapse into disobedience each time a judge died (Judges 2:16-23). This pattern is described occurring over and over, which is exactly what one would expect from a non-state group such as pre-monarchic Israel. Furthermore, given Israel's non-state status in these texts, if there is any historical value to them at all, that is, in the sense of their purporting to tell us historical facts, we should expect that those texts which describe military conquest will illustrate extreme measures being put in place in order to ensure there is group cohesion, commitment and strict obedience to both their ideology, and the chain of

command which depends upon it, for its success in combat.[503] Haer and Banholzer, when considering the commitment of combatants in non-state entities have said that

> understanding commitment and its influence on the behaviour of combatants is especially important when talking about non-state armed groups. In contrast to a regular military, which is embedded in a state, irregular armed groups have to be founded and sustained under extremely difficult circumstances. Most notably...these organisations cannot rely on the regulation of the state, but must regulate themselves. This of course poses an additional challenge, as no exogenous force keeps the group united but cohesion must be created endogenously.[504]

This is important to keep in mind as the ban (for instance) and the punishment for disobedience (illustrated by the cautionary tale of Achan) is primarily about obedience and the maintenance of the ideology which upholds it, that is, the absolute authority and kingship of YHWH, which it is to say that it is consistent with the self-regulation required of non-state groups that must create and maintain their group cohesion endogenously. Malešević has said that

> since bureaucratic domination rests on the inculcation and control of discipline and remains dependent on disciplined action, it requires and demands obedience... This implies not only clearly defined hierarchies, the division of labour and meritocratic social mobility, but also the regular and regulated execution of commands, strict compliance with the rules of the respective organisation and loyalty to the organisation. Moreover, all of these organisational demands are underpinned by the legal codes that stipulate penalties for noncomplicance.[505]

It is precisely such a penalty for non-compliance that we observe with the cautionary tale of Achan in Joshua 7, but it is also visible in the Canaanites which continue to be a problem for Israel inasmuch as they have not been driven out of the land on account of Israel's disobedience, according to the author(s)/redactor(s).

The savior cycles in Judges continue exhibiting divine assistance in battle, though not always with an explicit divine intervention. Rather, YHWH's divine assistance is implied via the רוח יהוה, which in the savior stories, first comes upon Othniel (Judges 3:10).[506] This describes for the text's audience that the judge is

[503] See Chapter Three, Sections 3.2-3.2.2 for more on the relationship between social organistion and ideology.

[504] Haer and Banholzer, 'The Creation of Committed Combatants,' 26.

[505] Malešević, *The Sociology of Warfare and Violence*, 6.

[506] Similarly, Jephthah, in Judges 11:29. This 'spirit of YHWH', according to Matthews, tells us that 'the selection of the judge is tied to a divine act, thereby adding authority to the judge's subsequent

selected by YHWH, which extends divine authority to the actions and decisions of the judge, who must bring group cohesion to otherwise disparate tribes in order to turn people who are largely agriculturalists into effective combatants against potentially stronger and sometimes even professional military forces.[507] These agriculturalists, according to the archaeological record, were similar to their neighbours in Canaan in that they worshipped many gods, namely 'the Baals and the Astartes (or Asherah).'[508] This was largely because 'their lives and fortunes depended upon the fertility of their crops, herds, and families'[509] and so devotion to just one god to the exclusion of others would have felt like a risk. However, ideological agreement with respect to the source of a judge's authority to lead the tribes would have been essential if such periodic uprisings and/or periods of defense actually occurred. If instead, one group of people preferred devotion to another god than that of the judge's then there would be no real commitment on the part of the potential combatants to put their lives in the judge's hands. Malešević reminds us that 'traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquest and coercive forms of governance'.[510] That said, it is doubtful that such an exercise of theology was done purposefully in a cynical manner, rather, for whatever reason (perhaps a natural occurrence interpreted theologically, such as that described in Exodus 15 or, arguably, an actual divine intervention) it was genuinely thought to represent what was best for the tribes by the judge. For if it was believed that a particular god had given Israel success in combat in the past, or at least had protected Israel before, it is only reasonable that it would be the same god that Israel would cry

actions as the mobilizer of tribal forces to conduct a war of liberation in the name of Yahweh'. Victor H. Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 56. This, of course, is similar to the selection of other ancient Near Eastern kings by their gods, e.g. Anu and Bel's calling of Hammurabi who described himself as fearing Marduk, the patron god of Babylon.

[507] Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament*, 167.

[508] Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, 50.

[509] Ibid.

[510] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 9.

out to in the future, when under a particularly military threat. Boling has said with respect to Othniel that it is 'important to note that success in warfare is here regarded as the consequence of election by Yahweh.'[511] Similarly, while divine assistance in combat is not explicitly visible under Ehud in the way of a miraculous intervention, Ehud, is also described as a deliverer raised up by YHWH and it is said YHWH gave the Moabites into his hand (Judges 315; 3:28-30). Whilst the text does not explicitly describe Shamgar's election, presumably his success in delivering Israel from Philistines is also indicative of divine favour and assistance (Judges 3:31).

In the story of Debrorah and Barak, YHWH's instructions are given (and presumably have been received by Deborah) without being petitioned, again displaying his role as king in the narrative (Judges 4:6-7). Deborah is both a prophet and a judge, and like Moses, summons a military leader, Barak, in the way that is reminiscent of Moses' summoning Joshua.[512] Judges 4:6-9 describes a conversation between Deborah and Barak that displays Barak's reticence to lead militarily without Deborah's presence. Matthews thinks that this 'exchange between Barak and Deborah suggests the warrior's concern that no tribe would rally to his call without the presence of a divine representative.'[513] While this is likely true, as far as the narrative is concerned, if we put historicity aside, we can appreciate that the exchange also denotes the importance of divine authority to its readers, and probably also describes a likely historical reality, that is, that the tribes were not likely to follow anyone into combat that they did not already believe possessed the רוח יהוה, or was at least operating under the authority of one who did. That is, one needs the assurance that their leader has been chosen by their god. As we have already seen, the divine mandate is important, but so is confidence in the one who delivers it. For example,

[511] Boling, *Judges*, 83.
[512] And the way in which Samuel will summon Saul. Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, 65.
[513] Ibid.

Esarhaddon, amongst other things, is described as chosen.[514] So it should come as no surprise that Barak would be reticent to summon any tribes for war unless he had Deborah with him. That way the people knew he was doing it under the authority of the one chosen by YHWH to lead Israel. YHWH is described going out before the Israelites in battle and causing fear to overcome Sisera and his army before Barak, and ultimately Sisera's entire army is said to have been destroyed (Judges 4:14-16). Similarly, even though Jael is described killing Sisera, the victory is attributed to 'God' (Judges 4:23).[515] As we will see in the Song of Deborah, while the activities of the human participants are described in the narrative of Judges 4 (viz. Jael, Barak and Deborah) that, nonetheless, the victory is God's.[516]

Judges 5, the Song of Deborah, is even more explicit in its descriptions of YHWH's assistance. The phrase ביום ההוא[517] in used in the first verse of Judges 5, which creates the impression of a vivid first hand account of the events being purported directly after the events transpired. Similarly, Exodus 15 creates the same impression in verse 1, though without ביום ההוא, rather, by simply stating אז ישיר־משה ובני ישראל את־השירה הזאת.[518] Still, they are similar in that both seek to create the impression of an immediate account. Doing so strengthens the force of the ideas that the songs express, particularly in their performativity and amongst the performers/hearers of the songs. Notably, as Webb points out, the Song of Deborah 'assumes the reader's familiarity with the events which have just been narrated;'[519]

[514] Pl. 3, Col ii, line 18 of the Prism of Esarhaddon, describes Esarhaddon referring to himself as: *ḫi-šiḫ-ti* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *le-'-um it-pe-šu₂*. This translates to 'required/desired of the great gods, the competent, expert.' The transliteration and translation are my own, and from the plate illustrations of the cuneiform text given by Thompson in *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal*, 40. To be 'required' and/or 'desired' denotes 'chosen' which is the way that Thompson chose to translate it. Ibid, 13.

[515] That is to say that אלהים is used in this instance, rather than יהוה.

[516] Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, 74.

[517] 'On that day'.

[518] 'Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song'.

[519] Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 139.

that is, the song itself bears witness to an underlying narrative, which would have been known and understood by the performers and listeners. It does this so far as it refers to events in the preceding narrative 'obliquely.'[520] The song is both a hymn (5:3-5; 31) and a ballad (5:6-30), which describes the heroic deeds of Deborah, Barak and Sisera. However, despite its description of the actions of the human participants 'its chief burden is the "victorious deeds" of Yahweh himself, who went forth as Israel's champion and overwhelmed the enemy by unleashing the powers of heaven against them'.[521] This is consistent with first person annals of ancient Near Eastern kings who always take credit for the victories of their armies, and so by extending credit to YHWH the writers of the songs, particularly Judges 5, convey the kingship of YHWH in that he is attributed with having achieved the military victory, whilst simultaneously describing the actions of obedient human participants. This stresses the ideology of YHWH's kingship, his capacity to lead in war through his chosen and obedient judges which in turn exercise YHWH's authority over Israel's obedient combatants, who have entrusted themselves into the hands of the one they believe has been selected by YHWH to lead them. There is, therefore, a direct relationship between the theology (centrifugal ideologisation) and the strength of the military chain of command (cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion) that it upholds.[522] Commensurate with the latter is the obedience required and, therefore, the extent of the robust endogenous enforcement of Israel's theology and chain of command because, as we have seen, Israel is not a state, and so requires a potentially stricter theology and social structure than its contemporaries, in lieu of any exogenous enforcement akin to its city-state neighbours, in order to be successful militarily.

[520] Ibid. For example, 'Deborah is cryptically referred to as 'a mother in Israel' (cf. 4.4-6), [and] Sisera first appears, without explanation, in 5.20 (cf. 4.2-3)'. Ibid.

[521] Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 144.

[522] Both centrifulgal ideologisation and the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion are discussed in detail in Chapter Three, Sections 3.2.1-3.2.2.

Gideon's call was already discussed,[523] however, as well as YHWH's fighting and winning victory for Israel, the text also displays Gideon's obedience and conveys the importance of trusting YHWH even when outnumbered which, if Israel was fighting wars of defense, especially without the support structures of its city-state contemporaries, would have been essential to success in combat. First, whilst we have already discussed in the previous section the way in which YHWH's orders to Gideon to diminish the size of his army from 32,000 to a mere 300 emphasized YHWH's kingship and YHWH's capacity to lead in war, it also displays another theme important to Israel's success in combat, which by now should by obvious: obedience. Notably, the text displays the power of being obedient to YHWH, which for the combatants would be synonymous with obedience to their judge, the one who possessed the רוח יהוה.[524] It does this by describing Gideon's obedience to YHWH even in the face of seemingly unwise orders for an outnumbered military, that is, by the reduction of forces. Such a text, oral or otherwise, could be called to mind by future priests wishing to give courage to an outnumbered Israelite military and to express the importance of their obedience so that they would have certain victory over their enemies insofar as YHWH would assist them, and work through them, as their king, to bring victory to Israel. It is further expressed via YHWH's choosing to work through Gideon who was of Manesseh's weakest clan, and who was the lowest rank in his family (Judges 6:15). Immediately, Gideon is described carrying out YHWH's orders perfectly (Judges 6:18-27), most importantly however, is that the centrality and exclusivity of YHWH worship must be restored if Gideon is have any success,[525] and so Gideon is first told to remove the sacred pole and his father's altar to Baal, to

[523] See Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2.
[524] Gideon's receiving of the 'spirit of the LORD' is described in Judges 6:34.
[525] Webb has noted here that 'Gideon must convert them to pure Yahwism or perish.' Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 149.

replace it with an altar to YHWH and to make a sacrifice using the wood of the sacred pole as fuel which, of course, Gideon carries out even knowing that his people would want to kill him for the act. His father, Joash, defends his son's actions, however, and Gideon is afforded the name Jerubbaal, or 'let Baal contend against him' (Judges 6:32). As if on cue, Gideon's obedience appears to be linked to his receiving the רוח יהוה, which he is described receiving after his display of obedience to YHWH. After which he sounds the trumpet and four tribes respond to Gideon's call to follow him, along with the Abiezrites (Judges 6:35).

With Gideon in possession of the רוח יהוה, which is just to say that it is not necessary for the writer to describe every order coming directly from YHWH,[526] Gideon commands the few remaining Israelite soldiers to carry out a seemingly bizarre order, and one which is not explicitly militaristic. That is, he gives each soldier a trumpet and a jar with a torch in it. He then explains that they are to do what he does, which, it turns out, is to blow their trumpets, smash the jars, and cry out 'A sword for YHWH and for Gideon!'[527] In turn, the Midianites fled (Judges 7:15-23). Matthews rightly observes the 'unorthodox military strategy' which calls to mind the unorthodox strategy against Jericho in Joshua 6.[528] Notably, 'Gideon's battle cry allows him to share billing with Yahweh, exhorting the soldiers to fight for their God

[526] Comparing Gideon to Joshua, and Joshua's plan against Jericho, Webb has said that 'Gideon does not receive the strategy ready-made from a heavenly visitor; it is apparently his own idea.' Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 149. However, Webb has failed to appreciate that Gideon, like Othniel in chapter 3, has received the רוח יהוה and so, presumably, in a way which is illustrated by YHWH's and Gideon's names both being used together in Israel's battle cry (Judges 7:20), Gideon's idea is one and the same as YHWH's. Whilst Joshua had received a spirit of wisdom (רוח חכמה) because of Moses' laying his hands upon him (Deuteronomy 34:9) he is never explicitly described as having received the רוח יהוה. It would not do to say that Deborah is also not explicitly described as having received the רוח יהוה and similarly arrives at her own plans because Deborah is not a judge *per se* but, rather, is akin to Moses and is a primarily a *prophet* who judges (Judges 4:4). For a description of the parallels between Deborah and Moses see: Bruce Herzberg, 'Deborah and Moses' in *JSOT* 38, no. 1 (2013): 15-23.

[527] חרב ליהוה וגדעון

[528] Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, 92.

and their general',[529] which, whilst reasonable given that Gideon is in possession of the רוח יהוה, is also possibly describing an Israel which is forgetting that YHWH is king and in charge of the outcome of battle. Classens has interpreted YHWH's absence to mean 'the focus is departing from God alone' but also admits that text attributes victory to YHWH.[530] God is leaving the narrative in steps,[531] however, it is also plausible that descriptions of YHWH's mandate and intervention are less necessary as it displays that Israel is coming to believe that Gideon is in possession of the רוח יהוה. This belief is due to his successes in combat, which will eventually lead to his being asked to rule over Israel.[532] Soggin has noted the parallel of the victory described here with that of 2 Chronicles 20 in which Jehoshaphat leads Israel in an act of praise to YHWH,[533] instead of an obvious military action, to which YHWH responds by setting an ambush (2 Chronicles 20:22)[534] for Israel's enemies in which they turn against each other in their confusion until every enemy soldier was dead (2 Chronicles 20:20-24). Here, in Judges 7 (as is the case in 2 Chronicles 20) 'the reader will immediately notice that at first sight everything happens with virtually no human contribution, at least of a military kind'.[535] Two things here, first, whilst the actions of the Israelites in the Gideon account are not explicitly militaristic, they nonetheless are from a psychological point of view. That is, one can imagine the clamor and the appearance of being suddenly surrounded causing panic amongst the Midianites. Burney,[536] and Boling,[537] have both referred to Edward W. Lane's *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians* in order to make the case say that the use

[529] Ibid, 93.
[530] L. Juliana M. Claassens, 'The Character of God in Judges 6-8,' 61.
[531] Claassens makes the case that God is absent in Judges 8. Claasens, 'The Character of God in Judges 6-8,' 62-64.
[532] Judges 8:22. See Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2 for more on this.
[533] Soggin, *Judges*, 145.
[534] ובעת החלו ברנה ותהלה נתן יהוה מארבים בני על עמון מואב והר שעיר הבאים ליהודה וינגפו
[535] Soggin, *Judges*, 144-145.
[536] C.F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (New York: Ktav, 1970), 216.
[537] Boling, *Judges*, 147.

of torches in jars was a 'tactic used by Cairo police as recently as the mid-nineteenth century.'[538] Lane describes police patrolling at night being accompanied by a torchbearer who carried a torch that was 'sometimes concealed in a small pot or jar.'[539] This allowed police to sneak up on transgressors of the law, though he admits that sometimes they would 'often smell it in time to escape meeting the bearer'.[540] It is reasonable that the tale of Gideon and the Mideonites does convey a tactic that would have allowed the Israelites to sneak up on the enemy camp, surround them, and then frighten the enemy with the appearance of greater numbers than they actually had via the appearance of hundreds of torches and a deafening battle cry. That said, this does not *negate* the attribution of the victory being given to YHWH in the text, and the description of YHWH's confusing the enemies of Israel and causing them to turn on each other. Therefore, as far as the narrative is concerned, this serves as example of YHWH's divine assistance in battle despite the use of an oblique military tactic on the part of Gideon.

It should come as no surprise then, that even though the text explicitly describes the two captains of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, being captured and killed by the Ephraimites (Judges 7:24-25) that, nonetheless, it also is attributed to YHWH (Judges 8:3). So, even when divine intervention is not described via miraculous interventions, the victory is still said to be YHWH's, which is appropriate as long as a judge possesses the רוח יהוה. Chapter 8 of Judges illustrates YHWH's will being aligned with Gideon's without overt descriptions of divine intervention in a particularly harrowing way. When Gideon is denied hospitality by the people of Succoth he threatens that he will return after he has captured the Midianite kings to

[538] Ibid.
[539] Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians: The Definitive 1860 Edition* (New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 90.
[540] Ibid.

destroy them (Judges 8:4-7). He then makes the same promise to the people of Penuel (Judges 8:8-9). Nowhere are these threats given express approval by YHWH, nonetheless, after Gideon defeats the Midianite army, and captures their kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, Gideon keeps his promise (Judges 8:13-17). Whilst Gideon had said that YHWH would give Midianite kings into his hands (Judges 8:7) nowhere is it indicated that the attacks upon Succoth and Penuel were also in accordance with YHWH's will. Boling has also noted this, stating that 'there is no participation by Yahweh, nor reference to him, except in Gideon's own usage (vss. 7 and 19)'.[541] However, once again, it is unnecessary for the writer to include overt divine intervention, or divine mandate, because the judge is operating with the רוח יהוה. In fact, as we discussed in the previous section, as tautological as it may seem, success in combat, was *ipso facto* proof that a people's god was with their king (in this case, judge), and every new king needed to prove his capacity to lead in war.[542] Having done so leads to Gideon's being asked to be king over Israel.[543] The account of Gideon defeating Zebah and Zalmunna, then Succoth and Penuel, all with a famished and exhausted army of lesser numbers, would serve as a motivating account to any tired and hungry military force that was fighting under the authority of YHWH's representative(s). This would be true for a force contemporaneous with the Gideon account, and it would be true for a later, monarchic or otherwise, audience as well. In fact, Webb has alluded to 'Exodus motifs' here, citing that Gideon and his army are 'in the "wilderness" (8.16) and are "faint" (8.4-5; cf. Deut. 25.18)'[544] when they ask the people of Succoth for hospitality. Clearly such Exodus motifs would serve to motivate an Israel needing to believe that YHWH was with them under whatever

[541] Boling, *Judges*, 158.
[542] See Chapter Five. Cf. Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 92-93; Boling, *Judges*, 155. n, 6.
[543] See Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2 for more on this.
[544] Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 153.

harsh circumstances they may have been. Webb adds that 'the self-assertive and vindictive Gideon of this movement contrasts nicely with the meek Moses of the exodus tradition.'[545] Setting aside that Moses is not depicted as particularly meek, nonetheless, it is worth pointing out, again, that Gideon is a judge with the רוח יהוה. On the other hand, Moses was a prophet, therefore, the writer of the Gideon accounts can portray Gideon with more self-determination, but Gideon's victories will, nonetheless, still be attributed to YHWH. In addition, Soggin has stated that the refusal by the people of Succoth and Penuel to give hospitality to Gideon and his army meant that they thought the effort 'might be doomed to failure.'[546] If this is what the text is portraying, however, then the text is effectively stating that the people of Succoth and Penuel did not believe that YHWH was with Gideon, and that he did not possess the רוח יהוה. In this light, Gideon's actions against them after his victory over Zebah and Zalmunna come to be understood as the actions against those who were effectively denying YHWH's kingship. Again, it is akin to insubordination in the modern context inasmuch as they refused to act in accordance with the will of YHWH's representative. Like the ban, and the sin of Achan, the people of Succoth and Penuel could not go unpunished in the narrative without undermining YHWH's kingship and Gideon's role as his representative and rightful leader over Israel. So, once again we have a cautionary tale emphasizing the place of the judge at the top of the social organisation and the maintenance of the strict ideology of YHWH's kingship for the purposes of military efficacy, both of which underscore a seemingly unrelated issue: the punishment of Succoth and Penuel.

[545] Ibid.
[546] Soggin, *Judges*, 149.

The transition from Gideon to Abimelech has already been discussed,[547] but it is worth noting here again that at no point in Abimelech's reign is YHWH's approval stated, or divine intervention in war given. Nor is Abimelech described as having received the רוח יהוה. In fact, a רוח רעה is placed between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, which was said to have been sent by אלהים so that the treachery by which Abimelech became a 'king' in the first place would be punished (Judges 9:23-24). This is a particularly notable instance of divine intervention, albeit not *in* war, but to *cause* war. However, in this case, its purpose is to undermine and punish Israel's leader, who is not YHWH's rightful representative, and who claimed kingship for himself. Much has been made about the text's not explicitly stating that Abimelech is מלך over Israel, but rather is only described as מלך over Shechem.[548] However, we are told that Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years in verse 22, and that, whilst not a judge, he acted as commander-in-chief over Israel, which is just what ancient Near Eastern kings do.[549] Thus, again, the story of Abimelech is a cautionary tale and one which by its negative representation of what happens when one claims leadership, and presumes to lead Israel in war, further reinforces the theme of YHWH's kingship and the role of his appointed representatives, which are the judges in the pre-monarchic period. Despite some effectiveness by Abimelech as a war leader, he is nonetheless a failed king. The reason given for his failure is, ultimately, divine intervention *against* him. יהוה is not used once throughout the entire Abimelech cycle, however, אלהים is

[547] See Chapter Five, Section Two.

[548] Boling, *Judges*, 183. Soggin thinks that because Shechem is, specifically, the place that Abimelech is said to be king, that he was 'never a "ruler over Israel,"' despite the text's saying so in verse 22. Soggin, *Judges*, 180. However, he also rightly mentions that Shechem, the largest city-state in the area, may have been used by Abimelech to leverage kingship more generally, as it was normative for city-states to have kings, but not for Israel. Ibid, 183. Webb says that the text tells us that it is Abimelech's treachery which is the issue. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, 159. However, Abimelech's treachery in the narrative is for the purpose of becoming king.

[549] See Chapter Five, Section 5.3.

used four times.[550] The first (Judges 9:7) is an attempt by Abimelech to connect his grasp at kingship to אלהים, however, each other time that אלהים is used it is in the context of describing אלהים working against Abimelech, rather than for him. In verse 23 we read of אלהים sending the רוח רעה, and in verses 56-57 we read of his justification for doing so: to repay Abimelech for his treachery against his father and brothers, and to exact retribution for כל רעה אנשי שכם, which would include making Abimelech king in the first place.

Gaal rightly asks 'why should we serve him' in verse 28 and it is echoed by Zebul in verse 38 who is fighting for Abimelech. Gaal is routed, but more importantly, Gaal's question was legitimate, and the lack of YHWH's approval is at the heart of Gaal's question, which means that the text illustrates the breakdown in social organisation when YHWH's kingship is not expressed through a divinely appointed representative, and that it then needs to be brought back into line with force. After all, the text does not describe Abimelech having any sort of divine approval to lead, nor even a kinship claim to the role, which would still include a divine mandate implicit within it. Gideon had plainly refused kingship, and so Abimelech's name ('my father is king') appears almost satirical in its implication that Abimelech has a right to kingship.

A similar tale of internal rebellion exists on the prism of Esarhaddon. Esarhaddon, after discussing the 'retaining/securing' of his '(right of) succession'[551] goes on to describe his brothers' rebellion against him. Esarhaddon says that 'which was against the gods and men, (that which) was bad they did, and they plotted evil'.[552]

[550] Webb has noted that this is after the Israelites turn from YHWH to Baal-berith in Judges 8:34-35. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Readin*, 158.

[551] na-ṣar ri-du-ti-ia. The translations and transliterations are mine and from the plate illustrations provided in Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and of Ashurbanipal*, 38. Pl. 1, Col. i, line 18.

[552] mimma ša eli DINGIR.MEŠ u_3 a-me-lu-ti la ṭâb e-pu-šu-ma ik-pu-du li-mut-tu. Ibid, 39. Pl. 2, lines 41-42.

This is just to say that denial of Esarhaddon's rightful kingship was akin to denial of the gods which had made him such. Esarhaddon goes on to describe the way that the gods did not help his brothers in their attempts 'to do/exercise kingship.'[553] With the help of Esarhaddon's gods their rebellion is ultimately brought to an end and order is restored when, referring to Esarhaddon, his brothers finally admit, 'this is our king.'[554] As was the case with Abimelech (who had all of his brothers killed as part of his effort to secure kingship for himself) divine assistance, which requires the divine mandate, is missing from the imposter kings in their respective narratives. In both cases, due to the question of legitimacy, violence ensues; the social hierarchy is compromised and violently must be brought back under control.

Divine intervention continues under the Israelite judge Jephthah. The Jephthah cycle is typical so far as the Israelites had fallen into the worship of other gods and were then oppressed by the Ammonites. Again, the Israelites repent and eventually they find themselves in Gilead to fight the Ammonites, but they are without a commander (Judges 10:6-18). Jephthah's tale is almost the antithesis of Abimelech's. Abimelech had killed his brothers in order to attain an unjust kingship over Shechem and to rule over Israel. By contrast, Jephthah is cast out by his brothers because he is the son of a prostitute and his brothers did not want him to inherit anything of their father's. However, while fighting the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead decide that they want Jephthah to lead them. Jephthah tells them that if YHWH gives him victory over the Ammonites then he 'will become their head' (Judges 11:9);[555] Jephthah does not presume kingship. In fact, Jephthah's statement could be translated as a question: 'shall I be your head?' Furthermore, even to rule over Israel, Jephthah presumes from

[553] a-na e-piš LUGAL(šarru)-u-ti. Ibid, 39. Pl. 2, line 44.
[554] an-nu-u LUGAL(šarra)-a-ni. Ibid, 39. Pl. 2, line 77.
[555] Jephthah speaks emphatically saying, 'I, even I will become your head' (אנכי אהיה לכם לראש).

the outset that YHWH's approval must be clear.[556] If the Abimelech story is a cautionary tale, then Jephthah's is an example of proper leadership, with YHWH as king. Jephthah attempts to explain the Israelites' position, regarding the land which they possess, to the Ammonites, but they do not listen (Judges 11:15-28).[557] Then, like Othniel and Gideon, Jephthah is described receiving the רוח יהוה after which, he tells YHWH, that if YHWH gives him victory over the Ammonites, that he will sacrifice to him whomever comes out of his house to greet him upon his return (Judges 11:29-31). The reader understands, from having seen this cycle before, that such an offer by Jephthah is not necessary, nonetheless, he makes the promise. YHWH is then described giving Jephthah victory over the Ammonites (Judges 11:32) and in order to keep his promise, Jephthah eventually sacrifices his only child, his virgin daughter (Judges 11:32-33). The narrative of defeat over the Ammonites is consistent with the earlier narratives, such as Othniel's and Gideon's, that is, with the exception of the sacrifice of his daughter, which is new, and requires further examination.

It is unprecedented in the narrative account thus far, but also inconsistent with Deuteronomistic ideology, which is significant if one accepts a Deuteronomistic redaction. Jephthah and his daughter are certainly portrayed acting in strict accordance with Numbers 30:2, however, the vow that is being kept is not typically

[556] Matthews notes this as well stating that Jephthah 'will only acquire the title of clan chief if God provides him with victory. In this way [Jephthah] adds, as in ancient Near Eastern treaty language, the inclusion of the deity as witness to these terms. Any victory he gains will then be seen as divine affirmation of his position of leadership'. Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, 119. Indeed, as we have already seen, the divine mandate to rule is persistent throughout the ancient Near East.

[557] Notably, highlighting the relationship between gods, rulers and land, he attempts to deescalate the potential forthcoming violence by asking the Ammonites why Israel should not possess what YHWH had given Israel, in the way that the Ammonites possess what Chemosh had given the Ammonites. Niditch discusses this as well, saying, 'Divine promises to each side are thus reflected in recognized borders as they now stand. Belief in the god's capacity to bestow rights to land becomes not an encouragement for conquest, but a means of justifying and upholding the current territorial status quo.' Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 126. The divine authority to possess a given territory of land is, of course, at the heart of both conquest and the right of ownership after the fact.

Israelite despite an obvious parallel in Genesis 22:1ff, wherein Isaac is not sacrificed in the end. The dominant voice with respect to human sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible is clearly against it.[558] So what is happening in this text and is it related to an underscoring ideology with respect to warfare?

Notably, the vow is made in order to secure victory for Israel, or at least that is Jephthah's intent in the narrative.[559] However, the reader knows from the earlier cycles that such a promise is not necessary, that YHWH requires obedience over sacrifice in order to secure success in combat for Israel. Römer has concluded that the story of Jephthah's vow and ultimate sacrifice of his daughter (Judges 11:30-32, 34-40) was a later insertion to an earlier war account (Judges 11:29, 33; 12:1-6),[560] which, without the vow story, does read like the earlier cycles concerning those who had received the רוח יהוה.

Given, therefore, a potentially exilic date[561] for the vow-story an emphasis on obedience would seem misplaced given that the contemporary audience of the narrative had already been defeated militarily. If the text is seeking to describe a Canaanite influence on Jephthah and, therefore, Israel, as well as the problems associated with such an influence, then one would expect Jephthah to lose his battle. However, as Boling has pointed out, Jephthah does not vow to sacrifice his daughter *per se* but, rather, according to verse 31, says that he will sacrifice 'anything coming out of the doors of my house'.[562] Indeed, the text does say 'the one coming out of my

[558] See Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10, and Micah 6:7.

[559] It should be noted that the importance of keeping vows is a common theme throughout the ancient Near East, particularly amongst the Assyrians, Babylonians, Sumerians and the Hittites. See T. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 73-136.

[560] Thomas C. Römer, 'Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?' *JSOT* 77 (1998): 27-38, here 29.

[561] See Römer, 'Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?' 27-38.

[562] Boling, *Judges*, 209. Niditch appears to overlook this and thinks that the story of Jephthah's daughter displays a war ideology which expresses the 'vowing of human beings to God'. Niditch, *War*

house': היוצא אשר יצא מדלתי ביתי. The participle here, היוצא, does not distinguish animal from human, and it is the *qal* masculine singular active participle, rather than feminine, allowing it be generic in meaning (i.e., 'the one coming out'). Indeed, Jephthah's daughter appears to know the Law even better than her father and literally quotes Numbers 30:2 when she expresses that he do exactly what he promised YHWH. Numbers 30:2 says, היצא־ככל מפיו יעשה and Jephthah's daughter in Judges 11:36 says, עשה לי כאשר יצא מפיך. The former says, 'as all which comes forth from his mouth he shall do', and Jephthah's daughter says to her father, 'do to me as which came forth from your mouth'. Rather than expressing an approval of child sacrifice, the text instead emphasizes the irrevocability of a vow once made.[563] Insofar as the importance of keeping a vow is emphasized, even when it appears to run counter to the normal expectations of YHWH (here, an extreme example of child sacrifice is used to make the point), we once again encounter the theme of obedience to the Law, in this case, Number 30:2.

Jephthah cannot break his vow and his daughter is also portrayed as recognizing this fact. This means that even if Römer is correct, and it is an insertion into an earlier war account, it is still emphasizing the same theme of obedience that is present throughout the entire book of Judges. That is to say that if it is an insertion, then one can see why it was inserted, that is, to further highlight the theme of obedience to the entirety of the Law, and its relationship to YHWH's assistance in battle (in accordance with Leviticus 26:7-8, and its antithesis 26:27-33). On account of Numbers 30:2 and Deuteronomy 23:21-23 the strict keeping of a vow just *is* one of the statutes that is being referred to in Leviticus 26, upon which obedience is a

in the Hebrew Bible, 126. She makes the case that it is 'pragmatic' inasmuch as such an ideology insists that 'one does whatever is necessary to win the war'. Ibid. However, as Boling observes, Jephthah does not vow to make a specifically human sacrifice, but rather, leaves it open-ended. And, as such, the emphasis appears to be on the irrevocability of a vow to YHWH.

[563] Boling, *Judges*, 209.

prerequisite for YHWH's rewards, including success in combat. Therefore, given the Priestly association with Leviticus and Numbers, it likely could be an insertion into an earlier account, but one which reinforces the point of the book of Judges: obedience to YHWH and his law, so far as he is king, is a necessary prerequisite for his rewards, including success in battle. As such, like the rest of the book of Judges, the story of Jephthah's daughter *also* expresses the importance of obedience to YHWH in order to be successful in combat. In fact, one can hardly imagine a writer/redactor of Judges not including an extreme example of a vow being kept to illustrate the righteousness of a judge in at least one of the Judge cycles. In such a light, the ambiguity of Jephthah's vow, insofar as he offers to sacrifice 'whatever comes out of my house' (Judges 11:31) becomes a device in the hands of the author. This is because the theme of obedience to the Law could not possibly be emphasized up front if Jephthah had overtly offered to make a human sacrifice, which was plainly against the statutes put forward for Israel. Therefore, by making the vow ambiguously and not knowing that it would be his daughter who would come out to greet him, the writer/redactor is able to use this severe example in order to emphasize the extreme ends to which the statutes of YHWH are obeyed by a judge with the רוח יהוה.

So, whilst the text sets two statutes of YHWH against each other, that is, the necessity of keeping a vow to YHWH once made, and the prohibition against child sacrifice, we nonetheless observe in the story of Jepthah's daughter the extent to which Jephthah (and his daughter) will go in order to obey. After all, YHWH does accept human sacrifices in some instances (Leviticus 27:28-29)[564] and while Leviticus is expressly against child sacrifice, it is expressly against child sacrifice to Molech in particular (Leviticus 18:21). While Deuteronomy 18:10 specifies that the Israelites are

[564] For more on this see Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 29-30.

not to make a son or daughter pass through fire, it does not specify whether or not the prohibition is only against sacrifice to foreign gods and whether, therefore, it might be acceptable to YHWH. Also, presumably, Jephthah, having made his vow ambiguously with a participle (היוצא) has left it up to YHWH to choose the offering, as the participle leaves it open-ended. The open-ended nature of his vow allows the writer to display Jephthah as exemplar of obedience with respect to that which is required to ensure YHWH's assistance in battle for its contemporary audience. Insofar as it does, the story of Jephthah's daughter no longer appears exceptional within the Judges cycle but, rather, given its emphasis upon the degree to which Jephthah will obey YHWH's statutes, one can hardly imagine the book of Judges without such a tale. The story of Jephthah's daughter is, again, about the keeping of the Law, which in turn emphasizes the kingship of YHWH and his appointed authorities. Success in combat requires obedience to all of the statutes of YHWH, which is necessary if the social organisation of Israel is to be maintained and reinforced along with its implicit lines of authority, i.e. the 'chain of command'. As well as the ideology which underscores the social organisation and upholds it—the kingship of YHWH. This is especially the case for a group like Israel, which lacks both a professional military and the support structures of a city-state, and which must reinforce both, therefore, endogenously. So, once again, we observe that a failure to discuss the connection between ideology (admittedly, theology in this case) and social organisation, including their interdependence, and the necessity of both towards the emergence of large-scale organised violence, every previous commentator on these texts has failed to see the role that such texts play *qua* war narrative. As such, scholars have consistently treated the story of Jephthah's daughter as exceptional within the Joshua/Judges cycle rather than normative, which, once one understands the

connection between YHWH's favour and assistance in battle with obedience to the king's (YHWH's) statutes, any appearance of the text's exceptionality disappears.[565]

We will see in the next section that there is an analogous tale in Joshua 9 wherein, again, the obligation of Israel to keep an oath once made, is set against another of YHWH statutes, in this case, the ban. The next instance where YHWH's divine assistance is described to aid Israel in warfare is in Judges 20:35,[566] which is an instance that was already addressed in the previous section on the Divine Mandate.

6.4 Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated the ubiquitous nature of the theme of divine assistance in warfare throughout the ancient Near East—a theme which, we have seen, has been discussed in other scholarship. What has not been elucidated, however, is the relationship between assistance in battle, or even the sole waging of warfare by a god, and obedience as a requirement if such assistance is to be available. When obedience has been noted it has been seen as an act of piety divorced from military expediency.

[565] This includes the debate between Römer and Janzen. Römer maintains that the story of Jephthah's daughter is a Hellenistic insertion on the basis that child-sacrifice runs counter to Deuteronomistic ideology and that it resembles the Greek legend of Iphigenia. Römer, 'Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?,' 27-38. Janzen, on the other hand, disagrees arguing instead that the story of Jephthah's daughter is consistent with the theme of moral decline which is on display throughout the book of Judges. David Janzen, 'Why the Deuteronomist Told about the Sacrifice of Jepthah's Daughter,' *JSOT* 29, no.3 (2005): 339-357. Both points of view miss the fact that, as a judge, Jephthah's obedience is central to YHWH's assistance in battle and that the text is an extreme example of obedience, rather than 'moral' decline. Again, these texts are not about ethics or morality (nor a 'moral' decline) *per se* but, rather, they are about the *obedience* to YHWH's laws which are necessary to secure YHWH's divine assistance in combat. Asking questions concerning what is ethical (i.e. moral), or not, is to treat the texts anachronistically and to ask questions of the text that they were not written to answer. Finally, there is no need to look to Greek mythology in order to understand why such a text was inserted, that is, if it was actually a later insertion at all. For if it was an insertion then it is a perfectly understandable one in light of the author's intention to express the importance of obedience to the statutes of YHWH with respect to Israel's success in battle.

[566] Of course, Samson is described being rushed upon by the רוח יהוה, however, in keeping with the definition of war that we are working with Samson's one-man fight against the Philistines does not qualify as warfare *per se* as we would not be talking about large-scale organised violence on the part of Israel. That said, of course Samson's obedience to YHWH's statutes throughout the cycle is necessary for YHWH's assistance.

We examined the relationship between divine assistance, obedience and the 'spirit of YHWH' throughout Joshua, and the Judge cycles of Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech and Jephthah. In doing so this chapter revealed the way that obedience to a king (in this case YHWH) in the books of Joshua and Judges was particularly necessary if there was to be divine assistance in battle. It further argued that obedience, even to laws which are not immediately seen as military, was not merely spiritual piety, but was essential to the entire hierarchy of authority as well as the ideology which upheld it (e.g., Achan). It is via the theme of divine assistance in battle that the writers/redactors of Joshua and Judges expressed the necessity of obedience. Such obedience, it has been argued, was essential to Israel's hierarchy of authority and the ideology that underscored it; and, therefore, to Israel's capacity to wage war.

7. Fear and the Ban

Fear is a common theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts and the Hebrew Bible's accounts of warfare are no exception. The fear, which is on display in the narratives of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts, both emboldens those who constitute the group from which the narratives come (whether Hittite, Assyrian or Egyptian) but also casts fear into the hearts of any potential enemies. That is, those who are exposed to the bas-reliefs, inscriptions and stelae which convey messages meant to control a defeated populace, or terrify a group which may come under attack. The same is on display in Hebrew narrative described in Joshua and Judges. Similar to the two preceding themes, this theme also reinforces both the social organisation, including the hierarchy of authority, and the ideology (largely by way of the texts which describe the ban) necessary to uphold the social structure necessary to be successful militarily. This chapter illustrates the necessity that violence is 'performative' if it is to have the desired terrifying effect. Included within such performative violence is the way in which a defeated populace is treated and put on bold arrogant display in order to terrify potential enemies. Of particular ideological consequence is the treatment of defeated ancient Near Eastern kings, something which YHWH is conspicuously immune from. Such fear is not merely meant to terrorize potential enemies and embolden soldiers within a given in-group. Rather, it is also a means of reminding those exposed to such warfare accounts of the hierarchy in which they play a committed role, and the ideology (e.g. the divinely imbued authority of a king or judge), which sustains the social structure essential to Israel's military survival.

The ban persists as an issue throughout biblical war narrative in Joshua and Judges such that it is pertinent to consider it concurrently with the theme of fear

which is also a wide concerning motif in ancient Near Eastern war narrative. Fear is present throughout the description of the conquest of Canaan in the book of Joshua, as well as throughout the book of Judges.

7.1. Fear in Ancient Near Eastern Warfare Accounts

Descriptions of fear are a common motif in Ancient Near Eastern war narrative. For example, commemorating the first five years of the rule of Tiglath-Pileser I, the prism inscription tells us that

> (the people) of Urratinash, a stronghold of theirs which lies on Mount Panari, - terror and fear of the splendor of Assur, my lord, overwhelmed them, and, to save their lives, they carried off their gods, and fled like birds to the tops of the lofty mountains.[567]

In the 'earliest annals text of Shalmaneser,'[568] the Monolith Inscription, Shalmaneser is depicted saying, 'the awe-inspiring fear of Assur, my lord, overcame them. They came down (and) seized my feet'.[569] Fear is driven into the hearts of the king's enemies in these accounts due to the size of the king's army and his capacity to wage successful warfare, a reflection of the king's divine authority. The king's divine authority may be the result of divine pedigree, or come from divine command.

The Merneptah stele refers to Merneptah, the king of Egypt (c. 1200 BCE) as the 'Son of Re,' and 'one who fortifies the hearts of hundreds of thousands' and 'who puts eternal fear in the heart(s) of the Meshwesh.'[570] It is said that 'he caused the Libyans who entered Egypt to retreat, great in their hearts is the fear of Egypt. Their front troops abandoned their rear(guard), their legs were not (able to) make a stand, except to run away'.[571]

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[567] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol. 1, 75-76.
[568] Specifically, Shalmaneser III. Ibid, 211.
[569] Ibid, 213.
[570] Pitkänen, *Joshua*, 49.
[571] Ibid.

According to Sennacherib, the kings of Babylon and Elam were so overwhelmed with fear that 'they let their dung go into their chariots'[572] at the Battle of Halule (691 BCE). Esarhaddon (King of Assyria 681 – 669 BCE) is described in the Prism that bears his name saying:

> The fear of the great gods, my lords, overwhelmed them and they saw the fierce front of my array, and became as though possessed. Ishtar, the lady of war and battle, who loveth my priesthood, took her stand at my side and shattered their bows, broke up their well-knit battle array and amid themselves they spake thus: 'This is our king.' By her supreme command they returned to my side, coming after me. Weak as young lambs they besought my lordship. The people of Assyria who had sworn agreements by the name of the great gods before me came into my presence and kissed my feet, while, as for those scoundrels who were making rebellion and revolt, they heard of the march of my expedition and deserted the troops who were helping them, and fled to an unknown land.[573]

This Prism describes fear overcoming the enemies of Esarhaddon as well as divine assistance in battle. Furthermore, in this instance, the enemies are traitors who turned back to Esarhaddon out of fear. Here, fear, which is itself a reflection of the ideologisation of the king's divine authority, is described reinforcing the social organisation which had become fractured by the rebellion of Esarhaddon's brothers.

Tiglath Pileser I tells us that his military might is terrifying to anyone that might stand against him:

> Now the remainder of their troops, which had taken fright at my fierce weapons and had been cowed by my strong and belligerent attack, in order to save their lives took to secure heights in rough mountainous terrain.[574]

Similarly, Tiglath Pileser frequently describes the terror his god Aššur causing fear in their enemies:

> Terror and fear of the splendour of Ašur by lord overwhelmed them, and to save their lives they carried off their gods, and to the tops of the lofty mountains they fled like birds'.[575]

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[572] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol 2, 158.

[573] This example also makes it clear that the fear of the gods is a type of divine assistance in battle. Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal*, 12.

[574] u_3 si-te-et um-ma-na-te-šu-nu ša i-na pa-an TUKUL.MEŠ(^{GIŠ}kakkē)-ia iz-zu-te ip-la-hu-ma ti-ib ME_3(tāḫāzi)-ia dan-na e-du-ru a-na šu-zu-ub nap-ša-te-šu-nu. Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 49. Translation is A.K. Grayson's, *ARI,* Part 2, 3ff.

[575] pu-ul-ḫu a-di-ru me-lam DINGIR(ilu).A-šur bêli-ia lu iš-ḫu-up-šu-nu-ti a-na šu-zu-ub nap-ša-a-te-šu-nu DINGIR.MEŠ(ilâni)-šu-nu iš-šu-u_2 a-na gi-šal-lat šadî(i) ša-ḳu-u_2-ti ki-ma iṣṣuri ip-par-šu. Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 42.

Disobeying Tiglath Pileser is tantamount to disobeying Aššur, and the consequence is death. Exaggerated numbers of defeated enemies, hyperbole, graphic descriptions of the treatment of enemies, and a minimization of casualties sustained by the king's army are common throughout Ancient Near Eastern annalistic texts. This is meant, of course, to terrify the king's enemies and keep the king's subjects in a state of subjugation. According to Younger this represents an 'ideology of terror,' which 'enhanced the maintenance of control.'[576] Tied as it was to the king's divine authority, this ideology of terror was so important that competing ideologies represented a threat, which needed to be undercut. Younger tells us that 'the process [of de-culturation of one's enemies was] accomplished by the breaking down of the foreign ideologically active centers (temples, palaces).'[577] Such de-culturation reinforced the fear of the new ruler and, therefore, limited their capacity to revolt. This de-culturation in on display in Sargon's 'Letter to the God' which says, 'The house (temple) of Haldi, his god, I set on fire like brush; and I destroyed his shrine (sanctuary).'[578] Symbols of divine authority and centres of worship were essential to the maintenance of the ideology which underscored the social hierarchy to which Ancient Near Eastern peoples were committed. Therefore, it was essential that conquering forces undermined them, in order to ensure the subjugation of the conquered by destroying the morale of anyone tempted to revolt.

[576] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 66.

[577] Ibid. [Brackets mine]

[578] E_2(bît) DINGIR.Ḫal-di-a DINGIR(ili)-šu$_2$ ab-re-eš a-qu-ud-ma u$_2$-šal-pi-ta sa-a-gi-šu$_2$. Transliteration updated Thureau-Dangin, *Une Relation de la Huitième Champagne de Sargon*, Textes Cunéiformes du Louvre 3 (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1912), 44. Line 279. Translation from Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 116.

7.2. Fear in Joshua and Judges

Biblical war narrative in Joshua and Judges is replete with descriptions of fear overcoming YHWH's (Israel's king) enemies as well. With respect to the conquest of Canaan, the first mention of fear of YHWH comes from the mouth of a Canaanite, that is, Rahab. Joshua 2:8 describes Rahab explaining to the Israelite spies that the people of Jericho were afraid as they had heard that YHWH had given the land to the Israelites and had dried up the Red Sea so that they could cross. Also, the people of Jericho had heard about what had been done to Kings Sihon and Og. This all led to Rahab's confessing that YHWH is God of heaven and earth (Joshua 2:11), which meant that in the narrative we observe descriptions of war having their intended effect. Rahab's Canaanite theology had been replaced by belief in YHWH's kingship, that is, Israelite theology. So far as it had been replaced it seems consistent that the text describes Rahab asking for protection for herself and her family on behalf of helping the Israelite spies (Joshua 2:12-14). Furthermore, the text is consistent in that Rahab and her family escape the ensuing turmoil unharmed (Joshua 6:22-23). So while the Rahab account does not necessarily describe an army being overwhelmed by fearsome radiance of YHWH and his army, it does describe the kind of effect that warfare accounts are meant to have. That is, having heard the stories of YHWH and Israel's army, Rahab fearing for her life and that of her family, willingly helps Israel. Normally, this is not enough to spare the lives of people who are supposed to be put under the ban so scholars have asserted that Rahab's confession of faith makes her, somehow, Israelite.

We have already referred to an instance where the ban was not applied to a man who had helped Israel (Judges 1:22-26), but this is offered by the writer as an example of Israel's failure to be obedient and as part of the explanation for Canaanites

remaining in the land after the conquest. Rahab's story, however, is unique in that she and her family are spared and there is no obvious consequence for Israel. One must conclude, therefore, that Rahab's confession of faith in YHWH sets her, and by extension her family, apart for unique treatment by Israel.[579] For letting Rahab live is not described as a failure to keep faith with respect to the ban, which it ought to have been except that we are given the extra detail concerning her confession of faith in YHWH.[580] Achan's transgression, however, warranted his being put under the ban,

[579] Niditch agrees and attributes Rahab's being spared to her 'kindness and conversion.' Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 59. Nelson also notes 'confessional language' of Joshua 2:9. Nelson, *Joshua*, 31. Cf. Soggin, *Joshua*, 41; Bernard P. Robinson, 'Rahab of Canaan—and Israel,' *SJOT* 23, no. 2 (2009): 257-73, here 268; Frank M. Cross, 'A Response to Zakovitch's "Successful Failure of Israelite Intelligence,"' in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore,* ed. Susan Niditch (Atlanta, Scholar's Press, 1990), 99-104, here 100. Campbell refers to Rahab's confession as her 'covenant' and that in making her confession 'she and her family became members of the covenant community forever.' K.M. Campbell, 'Rahab's Covenant: A Short Note on Joshua 2:9-21,' *VT* 22, no.2 (1972): 243-44, here 244. Butler sees a confession by Rahab as well, but maintains that it was inserted 'into the mouth of Rahab' by 'the Deuteronomist'. Butler, *Joshua*, 31. Assis goes so far as to call Rahab's statement in Joshua 2:9-11 an expression of 'Rahab's deep belief in God...[and] the awe-inspiring quality of the monotheistic conception'. Elie Assis, 'The Choice to Serve God and Assist his People: Rahab and Yael,' *Bib* 85, no.1 (2004): 82-90, here 87. However, 'YHWH' is used in this instance rather than 'Elohim,' and there is no reason to believe that the writer is conveying a specifically monotheistic expression as it could be henotheistic and, of course, ancient Near Eastern peoples believed their own god was the most powerful; that is, until they did not, a situation expressed by the writer of Joshua 2. While not explicitly calling Rahab's expression of faith in YHWH a conversion, nonetheless, Rowlett clearly observes the rhetorical effect of the Rahab incident, which is in keeping with this thesis. She says, YHWH's

> mighty military deeds are given as the reason that Rahab chooses to pledge her fidelity to Yahweh. The deity's worth as a political associate extends also to human representatives ... the hierarchical authority structure represented by the deity Yahweh and his human delegates is rhetorically reinforced: the men under Yahweh's military command receive homage precisely because of their ability utterly to destroy opponents (Sihon and Og) in battle.

Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 172. As such, Rowlett calls to mind the way in which this narrative reflects and, therefore, reinforces the social organisation (including the 'hierarchical authority structure') required for the perpetration of large-scale organised violence amongst its contemporary audience.

[580] While considering Rahab's exemption from the ban Butler has said that 'not every foreigner stood under the curse! Long ago Rahab had seen the deeds of God and confessed him as her God. Her reward lasts to this day. Was it not still possible for Israel to do mighty deeds in the power of her God which would win the nations to her God? Rahab stood beside Joshua as examples of the blessing of God upon an obedient person, no matter what the racial origin. Over against them stood the warning of a curse to whomever would dare disobey.' Butler, *Joshua,* 72. Whether one accepts this explanation or not, it is interesting that obedience to YHWH makes someone, somehow, 'Israelite' enough to spare them from falling under the ban. In any case, Joshua and the Israelites no longer considered Rahab a Canaanite, or both herself and her family would have been killed. Notably, in the nineteenth century, biblical scholar Susana Rowson argued precisely this point, that Rahab had become a Yahwist:

along with his family, despite their being Israelite (Joshua 7). The Israelite spies return to Joshua and report that all of the inhabitants of the land they are going to take are terrified of them (Joshua 2:24).

Joshua 9 similarly describes a conflict of YHWH's statutes. Again, the ban is at the heart of the conflict, along with a vow that cannot be broken. The Gibeonites lie and tell the Israelites that they are from a far country, which, unlike those in the land that YHWH had given the Israelites, would makes the Gibeonites exempt from the ban if they willingly accept terms of peace and surrender (compare Deuteronomy 20:10-15 to 20:16-18). Joshua and the Israelites are described as having made a treaty with the Gibeonites, guaranteeing their lives, and swearing an oath to them, under the presumption that they are, in fact, from a far away country (Joshua 9:8-15). After just three days, however, the Israelites are said to have discovered that they had been lied to, and that the Gibeonites are, in fact, their neighbours. The Israelites are said to have then marched to the four cities in which the Gibeonites were dwelling: Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim but, of course, the Israelites cannot attack them on account of the oath that Israel had sworn with them by YHWH. The Israelites are described letting them live according to their oath and enslaving them instead (Joshua 9:16-21). Most importantly, however, is that when Joshua asked the Gibeonites why they had deceived Israel their response was that, like Rahab, they had

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> Here Rahab acknowledges that the maker and ruler of the universe had a right to dispose of all kingdoms at his good pleasure; as [Rahab] believed in the power, so she had faith in the goodness of this Almighty Ruler; and was willing to give herself, and all belonging to her into his hand, nothing doubting, that he would deliver her from the sword in the day of peril; considering also the two spies as servants of the Most High, she conceived it a duty to protect and deliver them, that her good works might be a proof of her faith. Susana Haswell Rowson, 'Susana Haswell Rowson: Is Lying Always Wrong?' in *Women of War, Women of Woe: Joshua and Judges Through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters*, eds. Marion Ann Taylor and Christiana de Groot (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2016), 25-30, here 29.

One may concede that Rowson was right to posit Rahab's change in position from that of one adhering to Canaanite religion towards one convinced of the power of YHWH, however, one would be right to question the obviously Christian orientation of Rowson's description. Especially given this text in Joshua 2 may very well of had its origin in a strictly polytheistic, or henotheistic environment.

heard about that which YHWH had done for Israel and that they feared for their lives (Joshua 9:9-11; 9:2-27). Therefore, like Rahab, we have an instance of war narrative serving its function of terrifying Israel's enemy and, in this case, preventing war, even whilst placing Israel in conflict with itself over competing statutes of YHWH. Clearly, however, the keeping of an oath once made is more important to YHWH, according to the narrative, than fulfilling the ban. For Joshua is an idyllic judge who has already faithfully carried out the ban numerous times, and allowing the inhabitants of the four cities to live, does not, according to the narrative, lead to repercussions for Israel. Nor are the Canaanite inhabitants of these particular four cities included in the opening chapters of Judges as examples of Israel's failure to drive out all of the Canaanites. Accounts of warfare with respect to YHWH are described, therefore, causing fear in both the residents of Jericho and the Gibeonites.

Cultivating fear in one's subjects and in one's enemies is standard amongst ancient Near Eastern kings. Given that YHWH's kingship in particular is a uniquely Israelite theological idea, it should come as no surprise to see fear of YHWH and his army, the Israelites, being described in Hebrew warfare accounts. Younger cites a Hittite warfare account which similarly describes the surrender of a people on account of fear. In the Hittite account, the residents of Azzi are said to have witnessed the destruction wrought by a Hittite king (Muršili) on other cities and in response, they beg the Hittite king to take them into servitude rather than kill them, which he does. Younger translates the Hittite as follows:

> When the people of the city of Azzi saw that fighting (their) strong cities I subjugated them: --the people of Azzi, who have strong cities, rocky mountains, (and) high difficult terrain— they were afraid! And the elders of the land came before me, and they bowed themselves down at (my) feet. And they spoke: 'Our lord! Do not destroy us! Lord, take us into servitude, and we will begin to provide to your lordship troops and charioteers. The Hittite fugitives which (are) with us, we will provide these.' Then I, my sun, did not destroy them. I took them into servitude; and I made them slaves. [581]

[581] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 203. Cf. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 93-94.

There is a Middle Assyrian account which displays a similar motif. In the Middle Assyrian account Tiglath-Pileser I describes soldiers who had seized land which, according to Tiglath-Pileser I, were subject to Aššur, his god, something which appears to mean that they may justifiably be taken (or retaken for that matter) in his campaign to expand the borders of his land. He narrates that upon hearing of his coming to take the land, they were overwhelmed with fear and willingly subjected themselves to him.[582] Thus, similar to the Joshua 9 account regarding the Gibeonites, we hear of a group that had witnessed the success of an invading army, cowed to fear, and sought subjugation to preserve their lives. This constitutes war narrative functioning in the way in which it is meant to insofar as it emboldens the in-group and causes fear in the out-group, irrespective of the way in which the account is heard or witnessed; that is, whether it is oral or through the construction of stelae and bas-reliefs. Most importantly, however, is the fact that Israel could not break its oath with the Gibeonites, which means that this constitutes a parallel to the story of Jephthah's daughter. Like Judges 11, Joshua 9 also sets two statutes of YHWH against each other, the ban versus the keeping of an oath once made. Israel should kill them, but cannot, and so enslaves them instead. This is further evidence, therefore, that Jephthah acted appropriately in keeping the statute regarding the oath over the statute against human sacrifice and there is no reason, therefore, to treat the story as an exception to

[582] The text reads: mi-ṣir mât-ti-šu a-na ru-pu-[ši] iq-ba-a 4000 ^{KUR}Kas-ka-a-ia^{MEŠ} ^{KUR}U$_2$-ru-ma-a-ia^{MEŠ} ṣabê^{MEŠ} ^{KUR}Ḫa-at-te-e la-a ma-gi-ri ša i-na da-na-ni-[šu]-nu alâni^{MEŠ} ša ^{KUR}Šu-bar-te da-gil pa-an ^{DINGIR}A-šur bêli-ia iṣ-ba-tu [a-li-ki a-na ^{KUR}Šu-bar-te lu iš-mu-u$_2$ me-lam qar-du-ti-ia u$_2$-si-ḫi-ip-šu-nu-ti ME$_3$(tāḫāza) e-du-ru šêpê^{MEŠ}-ia iṣ-ba-tu]. This translates to: 'He (Ašur) commanded me (Tiglath-Pileser I) to expand the borders of his land. 4000 (people of) Kasku (and) Urumu, non-compliant troops of the land of Ḫatti, who by their strength took the cities of the land of Šubartu, which belonged to Aššur my lord – they heard of my coming to the land of Šubartu. The fearsome radiance of my valor overwhelmed them, fearing battle they seized my feet.' Cylinder Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I, ca. 1100 BCE. Col. II, 99-Col. III, 2. Translation is mine and I have updated the transliteration from the cuneiform in E.A. Wallis Budge, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria: The Cuneiform Texts with Translations, Transliterations from the Original Documents* (Kegan Paul: London, 2009 [1902]), 48-49.

the norm. More importantly, however, is the fact that whether there is any historical foundation to these texts or not, we see the keeping of oaths stressed as the statute of primary importance throughout, which is particularly *apropos* given the importance of the keeping of promises once made to the general social order of any society, particularly one that is self (i.e. endogenously) regulated.

Joshua 10 begins with the same illustration of war narrative doing exactly what it is supposed to do, causing fear in its hearers. In this case, it is King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem, who having heard how Ai and Jericho were destroyed, their kings killed, and how the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel and had effectively joined them, became frightened.[583] Adoni-zedek was especially frightened given the purported size of Gibeon, described as being larger than Ai, and its being full of warriors (Joshua 10:1-2). Unlike the Gibeonites, however, Adoni-zedek seeks to create a coalition against Israel, which given the accounts that he is described hearing, was certainly militarily expedient. King Adoni-zedek was in Jerusalem, and clearly did not have the luxury of convincing Israel that he was from a 'far away' place and entering into a treaty which would preserve the lives of himself and his people. Especially now that Israel had its eyes opened to the potential of such a ruse through their experience with the Gibeonites. Given his perception of Israel's military strength, and certain death if he could not defend himself against Israel, a coalition is the only sensible action that Adoni-zedek could take. So Adoni-zedek forms a coalition of five kings and their respective armies to march upon Gibeon. The Gibeonites appeal to Joshua for help and the Israelites march from Gilgal to Gibeon in order to fight the coalition. YHWH, significantly, tells Joshua not to fear the enemy and promised Joshua that none of the members of the five king coalition would

[583] Hawk has rightly pointed out that for Adoni-zedek the 'defection of Gibeon, only a few miles to the north, has transformed a buffer into a threat'. Hawk, *Joshua*, 150. Cf. Soggin, *Joshua*, 121.

survive. YHWH is then described 'discomfiting' the enemy forces (the root is המם). The verb is often translated as 'threw into a panic' (e.g. Exodus 14:24; Judges 4:15 of the NRSV and NABRE), but can also simply mean 'confuse' or even 'trouble.' Certainly in the context of warfare translating it as 'panic' seems reasonable,[584] particularly given that it is used along with 'dread,' or 'terror' (אימה) in some instances (e.g. Exodus 23:27), but since the Hebrew does not necessarily express fear *per se* it seems inappropriate to insist upon 'panic' as the particular meaning intended by the writer, even whilst admitting that it is the most likely. It is at least conceivable that the text is conveying YHWH causing the enemy to be disoriented and, therefore, more easily defeated, without their necessarily being in a panicked or terrified state. In any case, the text goes on to describe YHWH's divine assistance in the battle, which was discussed in the previous chapter.[585]

In Joshua 10:25[586] Joshua is described telling the Israelites to not be afraid (אל תיראו). Insofar as YHWH fights for Israel, the text conveys that it is the enemies of Israel who need to be afraid, not Israel. In Joshua's telling Israel not to be afraid he is portrayed imitating Moses who did the same when Israel was threatened by Egypt (Exodus 14:13-14) and again in Deuteronomy 7:18 wherein Moses cites what YHWH did for Israel against Egypt, which displays the rhetorical affect of earlier war

[584] Several scholars accept 'panic' as the intended meaning. These include Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*, 154-155; Butler, *Joshua*, 115; Nelson, *Joshua*, 141; Soggin accepts 'threw them into a panic' but admits the LXX reads 'troubled them'. Soggin, *Joshua*, 119. Strangely, however, Soggin does not translate the Hebrew this way when the same root (המם) is encountered in Judges 4:15 wherein Soggin simply says that Sisera, his chariots and his army, were 'routed', even whilst admitting that the root means 'confound'. Soggin, *Judges*, 62, 66. Lindars translates it as 'threw into confusion' but adds that it is meant 'to denote divine action which causes panic to an enemy'. Lindars, *Judges 1-5*, 194.

[585] For more on divine assistance in battle see Chapter Six, Sections 6.2-6.3.

[586] Joshua 10:25 is, admittedly, unique insofar as the admonishing against fear comes after the battle rather than before. That said, it could also be that Joshua is being described telling the Israelites that they need not fear holding the five kings' necks under their feet, killing them, and making a bodily display of them as Joshua is described doing in the following verses. For, as Rowlett has pointed out, 'the oracle of v. 25 is followed by the execution of the enemy kings, a military-related activity, and it functions, like other 'fear not' oracles, as an assurance that Yahweh is on the Israelites' side in battle.' Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 136.

narrative being called upon to embolden Israel. Moses had been imitating YHWH himself who had expressed the same to Moses in Numbers 21:34.[587] Furthermore, telling Israel not to be afraid is in keeping with the rules of warfare laid out in Deuteronomy 20 wherein it is described that before battle the priest is to speak to Israel's soldiers in order to tell them not to be afraid because YHWH is going with them to fight for them and to give them victory over their enemies (Deuteronomy 20:2-3). In a sense, these texts represent a counterpoint to the fear that is created in the enemies of Israel by YHWH as part of his divine assistance. Strangely, in Deuteronomy 20, wherein the rules of warfare are described, the admonishment against fear is presented as though it were referring to a particular incident with the use of אל to form the negative instead of לא (Deuteronomy 20:3). However, earlier in Deuteronomy, in chapter 7, which discusses the obedience necessary to secure YHWH's assistance and blessings, לא, indicating a permanent prohibition, is used (Deuteronomy 7:18).[588] This is notable as it illustrates that Israel is effectively being ordered to recall what YHWH did for them against Egypt (an earlier warfare account, preserved in the Song of Moses in Exodus 15) and to *not* be afraid of their enemies as they dispossess their enemies from the land which had been promised to them. Therefore, in Deuteronomy 7:18 we see a direct relationship between fear and obedience.[589] It is presented as a statute to be obeyed if YHWH is to follow through with his part which is to give Israel's enemies over to them.

Joshua 10:28-42 describes the successes of Joshua and the application of the ban is emphasized consistently throughout. This brief section is very annalistic and

[587] YHWH will also tell Joshua not to be afraid (אל תירא) in Joshua 11:6.

[588] The LXX similarly uses an absolute negative saying, 'οὐ φοβηθήσῃ αὐτούς' ('You shall not fear them'). Compare, for example, to Deuteronomy 20:3 (μὴ φοβεῖσθε) which, instead, uses a qualified negation. Cf. Numbers 21:34; Joshua 10:25, and 11:6.

[589] Cf. Genesis 22:12. While Abraham does not ultimately sacrifice Isaac it is because the angel of YHWH observes that Abraham fears (ירא) Elohim.

reads the same way that annals do insofar as they list the military successes of kings in rapid fashion with repetitive language. Younger notes the persistent use of hyperbolic syntagms[590] throughout and, therefore, its similarity to other ancient Near Eastern descriptions of war. Examples of such syntagms occurring throughout this section include: 'they completely destroyed it and everyone in it';[591] 'he left no survivors';[592] and 'not sparing anything that breathed'.[593] Younger uses the hyperbolic nature of similar ancient Near Eastern examples to illustrate the figurative nature of these Hebrew syntagms. He includes The Gebal Barkal Stela of Thutmose III which states, 'the great army of Mitanni, it is overthrown in the twinkling of an eye. It has perished completely, as though they had never existed.'[594] Also the Mesha Inscription which says:

> Israel has utterly perished forever. And I fought against the town and I took it. I killed all the inhabitants of the town as an offering of propitiation to Kemoš and Moab ... Then Kemoš said to me, 'Go, seize Nebo from Israel.' So I went by night; and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon; and I took it; and I killed everyone in it, seven thousand men and women, both natives and aliens, and female slaves; because I had dedicated it to 'Aštar-Kemoš.'[595]

Similarly, from Sennacherib, 'The soldiers of Hirimme, dangerous enemies, I cut down the with the sword; and not one escaped.'[596] Muršili II is described saying, 'I made Mt. Asharpaya empty (of humanity) ... I made the mountains of Tarikarium empty (of humanity).'[597] Based upon the obvious hyperbole, which we observe in these accounts, Younger concludes that the similar Hebrew syntagms used throughout the description of Joshua's southern campaign are to be taken as such as well.[598] As such, like the ancient Near Eastern examples, Joshua 10:28-42 similarly exaggerates

[590] Younger, *Ancient Conqest Accounts*, 226-28. Similarly, Nelson describes the six victories here as 'stereotyped and purely formulaic'. Nelson, *Joshua*, 146.
[591] ויחרם אותם ואת כל הנפש אשר בה. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 227.
[592] שריד השאיר לא בה. Ibid.
[593] לא השאיר שריד ואת כל הנשמה. Ibid.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ibid, 227-28.
[596] Ibid, 228.
[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid.

the victories of Joshua with the purpose of both casting fear into the hearts of any of Israel's enemies who may hear the tales, but also encourages Israelite fighters for future battles.

The ban texts similarly instil fear in the hearts of Israel's enemies.[599] For example, as we have already discussed,[600] Rahab is described aiding the Israelite spies in response to said fear:

> I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The LORD your God is indeed God in heaven above and earth below. Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the LORD that you will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death (Joshua 2:9-13).

The victories over Kings Sihon and Og is described in Deuteronomy 2 and 3 in a way which perfectly adheres with Deuteronomy 20, which describes Israel's rules of warfare. Deuteronomy 2:26-29 describes the Israelites first offering King Sihon the opportunity for peace in accordance with Deuteronomy 20:10. When Sihon turned it down, the Israelites obeyed Deuteronomy 20:16-18. Deuteronomy 2:34 describes the destruction, similarly, Deuteronomy 3:4-6 describes the same for Og. Rahab's understanding that all are killed according to Israelite war methods, along with the desire to protect her family, leads to her cooperation with the Israelite spies. Her exclaiming that 'the LORD your God is indeed God in heaven above and earth below' may point to her becoming a Yahwist of sorts, which may explain why she and her

[599] The ban's role in instilling fear in the enemy is described by Dyer: 'the ruthless extermination of the entire population, even down to babies and animals, of the city of Jericho after the Israelites captured it was presumably an act of calculated frightfulness meant to ease the conquest of the 'promised land' by terrifying the rest of the original inhabitants into submission or flight'. Gwynne Dyer, *War* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2005), 105. This, of course, presumes historical facticity of the events, however, even if we grant that the destruction of Jericho has no historical basis, such a text still has the capacity to create fear in Israel's enemies and embolden Israelite fighters.

[600] See pages 192-195 and notes 578-579 of this chapter.

family were spared.[601] So far as we want to understand Rahab's being spared given that she is not Israelite, Mann may be of some help here. He is worth quoting at length:

> We cannot define nations ethnically or racially. Nations do not derive form the same 'blood' or 'ethnic stock'; their genealogical histories are myths; they have no 'natural' existence or rights to their own states; warfare, no matter how ferocious, is not conducted between gene groups. The closest real approximation to the nationalist myth is when societies differ by physical phenotype, but their conflict still needs further explanation (and this type of warfare has not dominated Western history... Indeed, before the nineteenth century, there were very few 'nations'. Community identities were far more often provided by locality, class and religion, than by ethnicity or state membership.[602]

Mann is at fault here for reducing ethnicity to biology, however, his point that war is not fought – merely – by differing ethnic groups, however defined, stands. Rather, they are fought by nations, however small or large, and however developed or underdeveloped they may be. This may help to explain Rahab and her family's being spared as her confession of faith, and her fear of YHWH, makes her a member of Israel, rather than Canaan, by way of religion.

Rahab is described as living in the wall of Jericho (ובחומה היא יושבת)[603] and this poetically illustrates her opaque identity.[604] If allowed to live, non-Yahwists could theoretically lead to syncretism among Israel and an undermining of Israelite religion. As such, the ban reinforces the ideology of the Israelites, that is, that YHWH alone is to be given allegiance as it is YHWH who is giving them the land. The connection

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[601] Ibid.

[602] Michael Mann, 'War and Social Theory: Into Battle with Classes, Nations and States,' in *The Sociology of War and Peace*, eds. Colin Creighton and Martin Shaw (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 54-72, here 58.

[603] 'And in the wall itself she dwelled' (Joshua 2:15).

[604] Rahab's opaque identity is described by Hawk:

> Rahab belongs neither in the city of Jericho nor in the camp of the Israelites. She has collaborated with the invaders against her own people and has praised Israel's God yet remains one of the 'peoples of the land.' Waiting in the wall-boundary that separates Israelite from Canaanite, her paradoxical identity both reinforces and blurs the distinction between the peoples.

Hawk, *Joshua,* 102. Indeed, in any case, without getting into issues of ethnicity and what qualifies a person as Israelite Rahab's confession of faith is plainly used by scholars to explain the survival of her family. See previous notes 578-579.

between YHWH's gift of the land and the ban is made explicit in Deuteronomy 20:16-18.

The Israelites are given a harsh lesson concerning the repercussions of religious syncretism by carrying out the ban. For in doing what the ban demands they come to appreciate that the consequence of failing to follow YHWH exclusively is death.[605] The exclusive following of YHWH is, of course, central to the divine mandate to wage war, which in turn means that it is an essential aspect of the ideology and the group cohesion dependent upon it. This, of course, is not limited to Israel's chain of command and overall social organisation but is essential to them, and both would be necessary for a military conquest of Canaan, if such a conquest occurred. Extra attention must be extended to the ban in its Ancient Near Eastern context for, as we will see, it bolsters the theme of YHWH's kingship, which is fundamental to Israel's social organisation and ideology—which are prerequisites of a successful military campaign.

In the book of Judges the first obvious mention of fear being inflicted upon Israel's enemies by YHWH is in the prologue to the Song of Deborah in Judges 4. Judges 4:15 uses the same phrase, often translated as 'threw into a panic,' that was discussed in the previous section. Again, the root (המם) is similarly used in Exodus 14:24; 23:27; and Joshua 10:25. Judges 7:20-22 describes confusion and fear overcoming the Midianites though not with the same verb. Rather, it describes the Midianites shouting and running at the sound of the Israelites' battle cry under Gideon, and then turning their swords upon each other before fleeing. In any case,

[605] Billing describes the ban's applying equally to Israel if it falls into religious syncretism when she states that 'the *ḥerem* injunctions correspond to the extremity of Israel's situation as a people that has fallen under YHWH's wrath, and therefore bear a message for Israel itself: the extremity and totality with which the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan are to be eradicated is the same degree of force with which YHWH strikes Israel because it failed to serve Him alone'. Rachel M. Billing, *"Israel Served the Lord": The Book of Joshua as Paradoxical Portrait of Faithful Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2013), 76.

without using the same verb which had been used before, the narrative nonetheless conveys that the Midianite army had been overcome by fear, and that having been awoken by the Israelite battle cry, smashing of jars, and the sound of trumpets, they then turned on each other in their confusion before eventually running away. The Midianites' incapacity to discern their enemy is echoed in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 in which the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites (the 'inhabitants of Mount Seir') similarly turn on each other (2 Chronicles 20:23). The take away from the narrative of Israel's victory over the Midianites in Judges 7 is that Gideon and Israel were not even required to fight, which reminds one of YHWH's victory over Egypt in Exodus 14-15.[606] Like the Exodus account, this narrative serves to embolden its contemporary audience against any potential enemies by reminding Israel of YHWH's divine assistance in battle in response to Israel's obedience to, and worship of, YHWH. This, of course, includes all of the statutes that had been laid out for Israel to follow, which further reinforced both the ideology and social hierarchy necessary for Israel's survival. Also, this reinforcement remains irrespective of the extent to which Israel's law had been developed. That is, given that the Pentateuch was not complete at the stage in Israel's history that that the book of Judges is purporting to describe, it remains the case that Israel's ideology and social hierarchy would nonetheless be reinforced by such a warfare account.

Descriptions of fear overcoming one's enemies, as we have already seen, are commonplace in the Ancient Near East amongst Israel's powerful city-state contemporaries. If there is any historicity to be attributed to the books of Joshua and Judges then Israel had good reasons to be fearful of the Canaanites. The descriptions of fear, on account of YHWH's intervention, overcoming the enemies of Israel can,

[606] Recall, however, that the Israelites will mistakenly attribute their victory to Gideon and ask him to be king over them, the proper purview of YHWH. This issue was discussed in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2.

therefore, be considered counter-narrative. Counter-narrative strategy involves effectively dissembling the war narratives of one's enemies. Casebeer and Russell give us a number of 'generic principles' that a 'counter-narrative strategy' must possess in order to be effective. They include, 'competing myth creation, foundational myth deconstruction, creation of alternative exemplars, metaphor shifts, identity gerrymandering, and structural disruption.'[607] All of these are present in Israel's warfare counter-narratives, which do not merely seek to undermine the ideology of Israel's enemies, but rather, seek to tell a 'better story.'[608] Therefore, if Assyria is saying that its human king (leader in battle) has the assistance of its gods, is destroying all of their enemies and casting fear into the hearts of its enemies, then a Hebrew counter-narrative should insist that Israel's king (leader in combat) is divine, that its God is so powerful he does not even require human assistance unless it is his desire to use it, and that the gods of Israel's enemies are weak and/or non-existent. Such a counter-narrative is not optional, rather, it is essential. One need only imagine an army fighting under the pretense of its enemy's narrative in order to understand why. Defeat would be inevitable for an army that believed its enemy had a more powerful leader in combat, real and more powerful gods assisting them, and if they believed that fear overwhelmed every army that their enemy encountered. Therefore, counter-narratives are essential to success in combat. Hebrew counter-narratives insist upon the power of YHWH as a warrior and leader in combat, that his spirit is with his chosen representatives, they undermine the power and/or reality of Israel's enemies' 'gods', and emphasize YHWH's capacity to overwhelm Israel's enemies with fear, panic and confusion. For such counter-narratives to be effective, however, they need to be resilient.

[607] William D. Casebeer and James A. Russell, 'Storytelling and Terrorism: Towards a Comprehensive 'Counter-Narrative Strategy,'' *Strategic Insights* 4, no. 3. (2005): 1-17, here 9.
[608] Casebeer and Russell, 'Storytelling and Terrorism,' 10.

Casebeer and Russell tell us the stories need to 'make sense come what may.'[609] Indeed, this element is profoundly present in Hebrew biblical accounts of warfare. Examples include the Canaanites' presence after the conquest being explained by Israel's failure to carry out the ban in every instance, and in order so that Israel will always be prepared for war. Also, a military defeat in Joshua 6 was attributed to the sin of Achan described in chapter 7. Whenever Israel loses it is because it was disobedient. Furthermore, if Israel loses despite everyone's thinking that it had been obedient, then there is a *hidden* disobedience which has occurred, or is occurring, and which must be exposed and corrected, which we have seen in the story of Achan. This makes Hebrew warfare accounts extremely resilient as effective counter-narratives to the war narratives of their more powerful ancient Near Eastern neighbours. It needs to be said, however, that the development of counter-narrative is not dependent upon its conscious development; that is, counter-narratives develop out of necessity and those developing and perpetuating counter-narrative are not necessarily participating in an activity that is purposefully subversive. Nonetheless, the survival of such people and any potential military success depend upon its development, promulgation, and acceptance amongst its intended audience.

7.2.1. The Ban (חרם)

The command to kill every living being in a given area in accordance with Deuteronomy 20:17-18 is referred to as the ban (חרם) and we have already referred to its role in instilling fear in the enemies of Israel. Before anything else is said, it ought to be noted that the ban is not unique to Israel. The Moabite (or Mesha) stone

[609] Casebeer and Russell, 'Storytelling and Terrorism,' 13. Casebeer and Russell's paper aims to bring counter-narrative strategy to bear upon terrorism, but the same the same can be said for counter-narrative strategy generally *vis-à-vis* warfare. This was, perhaps, most pervasively displayed in the twentieth century's propaganda wars surrounding World War II.

describes a ninth century BCE Moabite king, Mesha, killing the inhabitants of two cities and sacrificing to Chemosh, his god.[610] Many accounts of warfare in the ancient Near East describe destruction which extends well beyond that of merely the warriors. Consider the boasting of Ašurnasirpal II:

> I threw down their corpses on the mountain. I massacred 172 of their troops; (and) I poured out many troops on the mountain ledges … I hung their heads on the mountain trees. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls.[611]

Notably, Ašurnasirpal II specifically mentions 'their boys' and 'their adolescent girls.'[612] This, of course, raises the question: who lived? The description of the youth being killed implies the destruction of everyone, especially since Ašurnasirpal describes the taking of 'booty, possessions, herds and flocks,'[613] but does not mention taking any human beings alive. He has this to say about the city Hudun and the thirty cities in the same area: 'I massacred them. I carried off their booty, herds, and flocks. I razed, destroyed and burned their cities. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls.'[614] There are numerous accounts like these, here is one more: 'I impaled 700 troops on stakes before their gate. I razed (and) destroyed the city. I turned the city into ruin hills. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls.'[615] Crouch maintains,

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[610] This is the Moabite stone's description of the sacrifice: 'Now the men of Gad had always dwelt in the land of Ataroth, and the king of Israel had built Ataroth for them; but I fought against the town and took it and slew all the people of the town as satiation (intoxication) for Chemosh and Moab.' William F. Albright, 'Palestinian Inscriptions,' in *ANET*, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 320-322. Chemosh's divine mandate is also described: '"Go, take Nebo from Israel!" So I went by night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all, seven thousand men, boys, women, girls and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for (the god) Ashtar-Chemosh.' Ibid.

[611] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 95.

[612] LU_2.ba-tul.MEŠ-šu-nu MUNUS.ba-tu-la-ti-šu-nu. Transliteration updated from Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 95.

[613] Ibid.

[614] dîkta-šu-nu a-duk šal-la-su-nu alpē(GU_4.MEŠ)-šu-nu immeru(UDU)ṣ-ni-$šu_2$-nu $aš_2$-ru-up LU_2.ba-tul.MEŠ-$šu_2$-nu MI_2.ba-tu-la-ti-$šu_2$-nu ana maqlūte(GIBÍL-te) ašrup(GIBÍL). Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 314. Translation is Younger's, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 96.

[615] 700 ME ṣābē(ERÍN.MEŠ) in pu-up abulli(KÁ.GAL)-$šu_2$-nu a-na GIŠ.zi-ki-pi u_2-za-qip URU a-púl a-qur ana tīli(DU_6) u kar-me utēr(GUR-er) LU_2.ba-tul.MEŠ-$šu_2$-nu MI_2.ba-tu-la-ti-$šu_2$-nu ana maqlūte(GIBÍL-te) ašrup(GIBÍL). Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 336. Translation Younger's, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 98.

whether or not it was carried out, that accounts of total destruction occur frequently in the Ancient Near East:

> That Assyria has no *ḥērem* is accurate insofar as Akkadian has no equivalent root in its vocabulary … the complete destruction of the enemy is frequently reported and, regardless of whether or not total destruction was actually achieved (or even attempted), makes clear the ideological importance of the eradication of the enemy.[616]

Israel then has a word for total destruction, which is lacking in Akkadian.[617] The total destruction of one's enemies persists in warfare accounts because allowing any of one's enemies to live would mean that the cycle of violence would continue in the future. Also, professional soldiers were a small part of ancient Near Eastern armies, which were largely made up of corvée labour, that is, fighting age men who were called up when war was required, which means that distinctions between combatants and non-combatants were blurred.[618] Strangely, the ban, if or when it was carried out, had a limiting factor that one rarely considers. To allow a number of one's enemies to live in this ancient Near Eastern context is to live awaiting retaliation. An exception to this may be when a military victor's empire is of sufficient size to allow for the exile and assimilation of a defeated populace, which ultimately leads to the replacement of their gods for the gods, ideology, and social organization of the victor. Human beings generally abhor violence, and so it appears that a divine mandate and an express command to kill, without having to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, might give the invading side a distinct advantage. The enemy are dehumanized[619] and the invading party does not need to hesitate once they find

[616] Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East,* 182.

[617] Crouch asserts, 'What we are lacking elsewhere, therefore, is not so much the phenomenon of total destruction, but the articulation of the phenomenon as an imperative.' Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East,* 182. McConville similarly holds the view that the ban 'was a phenomenon widely known in the ancient world.' J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5, ed. David Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 321.

[618] Terence Wise, *Ancient Armies of the Middle East* (Elms Court: Osprey Publishing, 1981), 33.

[619] Dehumanization and demonization will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

themselves in enemy territory. Furthermore, their killing everyone would have an extraordinary demoralizing effect on the conquered.

It appears that the חרם texts are best understood as counterpoints to the prohibition against killing in Deuteronomy 5:17 and Exodus 20:13. Deuteronomy 5:17 and Exodus 20:13 say 'You shall not kill' (לא תרצח). The לא tells us this is a permanent prohibition, not one that is negotiable or justifiable in specific circumstances. If it were allowable under certain condition then אל would have preceded the prohibition.[620] Given that the command against killing is so absolute, the lawgiver, YHWH, must be portrayed in the narrative giving an express command in contradiction of it. A human voice would lack the authority to give justification to such violence.

The same can be said for Deuteronomy 5:19, 'and you shall not steal' (תגנב ולא). It is similarly countermanded in Deuteronomy 20:14 for the purpose of taking of booty.[621] Malešević points out that

> all bureaucratisation is deeply rooted in coercive control. Since bureaucratic domination rests on the inculcation and control of discipline and remains dependent on disciplined action, it requires and demands obedience … Moreover, all of these organisational demands are underpinned by the legal codes that stipulate penalties for non-compliance.[622]

Within a homogenous group the laws against killing and stealing in Deuteronomy and Exodus 'internally pacify social order.'[623] As such, any order to act contrary to them must be given emphatically by the lawgiver himself, YHWH. In Deuteronomy 20:16-7, YHWH is portrayed doing exactly that. Joshua 7, which will be discussed shortly, describes the consequences of failing to carry out the ban which runs counter to Israel's normative prohibitions. Again, this highlights the necessity of reading these

[620] Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A.E. Cowley (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2006 [1909]), 478-483.

[621] Booty is described being taken by the Israelites throughout the Hebrew Bible. See, for example, Numbers 31:9-32; Joshua 6:24, 8:27, 11:14; Judges 8:24-5; 1 Chronicles 20:2, 26:7; 2 Chronicles 14:13, 20:24-5, 28:8.

[622] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 6.

[623] Ibid, 7.

texts through the lens of the liminality of warfare itself, for it is plain that in wartime normative prohibitions are overturned and even required. This is the reason that attempting to understand the texts from a point of view which seeks to reconcile wartime's violence with the praxis and ethics of everyday life always fails.

Non-Israelite conquest accounts are given in the first person, that is, from the king's perspective. For example, Tiglath Pileser I is described as saying, 'The corpses of their men-at-arms I laid out on the mountain ledges like grain heaps. I conquered their cities. I carried away their gods. I carried off their booty, possessions and property.'[624] The accounts in his annals are numerous and repetitive: 'I cut off their heads like sheep. I made their blood flow into the hollows and plains of the mountains. (Thus) I conquered that city. I took their gods; (and) I carried off their booty, possessions (and) property.[625] Similarly, he says, 'I conquered the land of Kadmuhu in its entirety. Their booty, property, (and) possessions I brought out.'[626] Tiglath-Pileser's annals are filled with these and the same is true of other Assyrian kings.

Consider those of Aššur-nasir-pall II: 'I brought back booty, possessions, herds and flocks. I burned their cities. I hung their heads on the mountain trees. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls.'[627] And, "I conquered the city of Hudun and

[624] šal-ma-at muq-tab-li-šu-nu i-na gi-sal-lat šadi(KUR)-i ki-ma ser-ma-še lu-me-ṣi alâni(URU.MEŠ)-šu-nu ak-šud ilāni(DINGIR.MEŠ)-šu-nu aš$_2$-ša-a šal-la-su-nu bu-ša-šu-nu nam-kur-šu-nu u$_2$-še-ṣa-a. Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 56-57. Translation Younger's, 80.

[625] qaqqadē(SAG.DU.MEŠ)-šu-nu ki-ma zi-ir-qi u$_2$-ni-ki-is damē(UŠ$_2$.MEŠ)-šu-nu ḫur-ri u$_3$ ba-ma-a-te ša$_2$ šadi(KUR)-i lu-šar-di ala(URU) šu-a-tu ak-šud ilāni(DINGIR.MEŠ)-šu-nu aš$_2$-ša-a šal-la-s-nu buša-šu-nu nam-kur-šu-nu u$_2$-še-ṣa-a. Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 78-79. Translation Younger's, *Ancient Conquset Accounts*, 81.

[626] MĀT.Kad-mu-ḫu a-na si-ḫir-ti-ša lu-u$_2$ ak-šud šal-la-su-nu bu-ša-šu-nu nam-kur-šu-nu u$_2$-še-ṣa-a. Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 38. Translation Younger's, *Ancient Conqust Accounts*, 83.

[627] šal-la-su-nu bušá.MEŠ-šu$_2$-nu alpē(GU$_4$.MEŠ)-šu$_2$-nu immeru(UDU)-ṣi-ni-šu$_2$-nu utira(GUR-ra) alâ(URU.MEŠ)-ni ina išâti(IZI.MEŠ) ašrup(GIBÍL-up) qaqqadē(SAG.DU.MEŠ)-šu$_2$-nu ina ^{GIŠ}gu-up-ni ša$_2$ šade(KUR)-e e-'e-il LU$_2$.ba-tul.MEŠ-šu$_2$-nu MI$_2$.ba-tu-la-ti-šu$_2$-nu a-na maqlute(GIBÍL-te) ašrup(GIBÍL). Transliteration updated from King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assryia*, 308. Translation Younger's, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 95.

30 cities in its environs. I massacred them. I carried off their booty, herds and flocks.'[628] Sennacherib is particularly explicit about his rights to the booty he takes, including the very people he conquered: 'The people, together with the gods dwelling there, I counted as spoil.'[629]

Hittite examples are commonplace as well. Hattušili I's annals says the following: 'I destroyed these countries. I took (their) goods away from them; and I filled my house up to the brim with their goods.'[630] Muršili II similarly says, 'I took out from them the inhabitants (as captives), cattle (and) sheep.' [631] King Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, was acting perfectly in accordance with the behaviour of other ancient Near Eastern kings when, in 2 Chronicles 36:18, he took everything from 'the house of God.' Throughout all of these annalistic examples it is clear that it is to the king that the spoils of conquest belong. For this reason Israelite conquest accounts go to great lengths in order to illustrate the fact that the Israelite king, YHWH, is the one to whom the booty, including the lives of his enemies, belong. While Niditch describes two ideologies behind the ban: sacrifice and justice,[632] it appears that there may be just one: YHWH is king. YHWH's kingship, at the stage of Israel's narrative history described in Joshua and Judges, is essential to both Israel's ideology and social organization, including its chain of command, if there is going to be the successful implementation of organized violence against the oftentimes more powerful inhabitants of Canaan.

[628] Ibid, 96.
[629] Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia: Volume 2 From Sargon to the End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 138.
[630] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 138.
[631] Ibid, 146.
[632] Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 28-55, 56-77.

As we have already seen,[633] when Achan is described keeping booty for himself, which was to be devoted to YHWH, his punishment is not merely his own death, but that of his entire family (Joshua 7:24-6). The authority of YHWH is absolute and essential to the divine mandate and, therefore, the justification of violence. The heuristic key to comprehending these texts is warfare's propensity to countermand normative taboos.[634]

It is worth contrasting Joshua 6 and 7 with 2 Chronicles 36. Adherence to YHWH and his law characterizes life under Joshua (for the most part) and military success is described following. In the latter instance, Judah's defeat under Zedekiah to the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, is due to Judah's failure to follow YHWH and his law. 2 Chronicles 36:17 describes young men, young women and youths falling under the sword, YHWH is said to have given 'them all into his hand.' The ban's message could not be clearer: the land, which YHWH had promised to the Israelites, was for YHWH's followers and none else.[635] This is to say that the ban functions within the wider YHWH ideology so far as it is directly related to YHWH's kingship

[633] See Chapter Six, Section 6.2.

[634] On this point, Bahrani reminds us that, 'to kill in war is appropriate and sanctioned. It is not a punishable act. It is a transgression that forms an exception to the normal order of things and to the law.' Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 212.

[635] As if to highlight the contrast between the fall of Jerusalem and Joshua's perfect obedience to YHWH during the taking of Jericho in Joshua 6, the author of 2 Kings 25 describes Nebuchadnezzar's army pursuing King Zedekiah to 'the plains of Jericho' (2 Kings 25:6). The writer gives this location as the place that Zedekiah was captured and then forced to watch the murder of his sons before finally having his eyes removed and being taken to Babylon. In her examination of Joshua 8 Monroe concludes the same about the ban's message regarding who rightfully lives in the land. She states that

> the similar social and political circumstances underlying the Moabite and Sabaean *ḥrm* texts, and the structural and thematic parallels these texts share with Joshua viii, suggest the possibility that the Ai *ḥērem* tradition has its origins in a phase of Israel's history when it too was in the nascent stages of state formation; that is, in the Iron IIA period. A setting for the *ḥērem* against Ai during the Israelite conquest and settlement (whether these events were real or imagined) would have served to legitimate territorieal claims of the emergent Israelite state.

L.A.S. Monroe, 'Israelite, Moabite and Sabaean War-ḥērem Traditions and the Forging of National Identity: Reconsidering the Sabaean Text RES 3945 in Light of Biblical and Moabite Evidence,' *VT* 57, no. 3 (2007): 318-41, here 340. Indeed, it does appear that linking ban texts with 'late', 'Priestly' or 'Deuteronomistic' concerns does seem strange in light of earlier extra-biblical parallels.

over the land that he has a promised the Israelites. The relationship of gods who reside in the central temples of their respective city state, and the land that their followers claim belongs to them, is remarkably intimate and commonplace in the ancient Near East. So much so that having a god, but no land, is virtually unthinkable. Furthermore, devotion to that god was absolute. Even if other gods were worshipped, ultimately there was one god to rule them all. This was true whether we are discussing Ašurbanipal's devotion to Aššur, who was believed to be the god over Assyria, or a pre-monarchic figure like Joshua's devotion to YHWH, who was believed to be the god over the land being given the Israelites. The ban, therefore, like so much else in the pre-monarchic literature, is about YHWH's kingship and his ownership of the land that Israelite religion claims he is giving. If YHWH was not so willing to put his own people under the ban, a theme conveyed by the writer of 2 Chronicles 36, then we might believe that the ban was about something else. Therefore, even though it is true that within the ban there appears to be two types, as Niditch has pointed out, nonetheless, these two types (the ban as YHWH's justice, and the ban as sacrifice) are further sublimated by a greater and more important theme within which they function: the kingship of YHWH and his ultimate authority over the land he is giving. Note the punishments of Judah in 2 Chronicles 36, Zedekiah in 2 Kings 25, and Achan in Joshua 7. Their punishments are precisely that of the punishment for apostasy described in Deuteronomy 13:6-18.[636]

[636] Hawk noted the relationship between Achan's punishment and the punishment for apostasy described in Deuteronomy 13:6-18 saying, 'the story of Achan's transgression alludes at many points to the Deuteronomic laws concerning apostasy (Deut 13:6-18), thus hinting that the story is a paradigm for issues of greater communal import than the theft of dedicated plunder.' Hawk, *Joshua,* xviii. Indeed it is about something greater. It is about YHWH's kingship and ultimate authority over the land of Israel.

7.2.2. Physical Representations of the Presence of Divine Agency

The portability of YHWH's physical representation, the Ark of Covenant, theoretically gave Israel a distinct military advantage. In accord with the laws against creating graven images (Deuteronomy 5:8; Exodus 20:4) the Ark was specifically not a statue and thus not confined to a temple at the center of a large city-state. Which meant that the Israelite army could take the representation of YHWH's divine presence with them into battle. The physical representations (not so much symbols but the actual god in the form of a statue, more on this shortly) of one's god's divine presence were considered so important that once a city-state was defeated, the conquerors would carry off and/or destroy the statues within the temples at the hearts of specific city-states. Examples of this will follow.

Narratives describing the removal of one's enemies' gods persist throughout the Ancient Near East. Assyrian examples abound. Tiglath Pileser I is described saying, 'I conquered their cities. I carried away their gods.'[637] Similarly, 'I conquered that city. I took their gods; (and) I carried off their booty, possessions (and) property.'[638] The Annals of Ashur-Dan II give a particularly interesting example so far as it reminds one of the Ark of the Covenant being stolen from Israel and placed with Dagon, the Philistine god. The similarity of the story in Ashur-Dan II's annals with Hebrew biblical narrative exists in that it describes the god of a people who had been conquered being taken as booty for another god. Ashur-Dan II says, 'I took (them) to my city Aššur. I gave their gods as gifts to Aššur, my lord.'[639] There are also numerous Hittite examples.

The Annals of Hattušili I describe Hattušili saying, 'Thereafter I went to Zalpa; and destroyed it. Its gods I took away; and (its) 3 "madnanu"-chariots I gave to

[637] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 80.
[638] Ibid, 81.
[639] Ibid, 93.

the sungoddess of Arinna. I gave one silver bull (and) one "fist" of silver to the temple of the stormgod; but those [gods] who remained, I gave to the temple of Mezzulla.'[640] Similar to Ashur-Dan II's giving gods to Aššur, Hattušili does the same: 'I destroyed Zippassana. I took its gods away from it; and I gave them to the sungoddess of Arinna.'[641] The removal of one's gods ensured that the defeated peoples appreciated that their god(s), and themselves, had been conquered—and now owed allegiance to the god(s) of their conquerors. Bahrani states that sometimes 'wars were fought specifically for images, to acquire royal monuments and the cult statue of a god, or to recover a divine statue that had been carried off by an enemy in an earlier battle.'[642] Continuing, she says:

> The power of cult images of the god and depictions of the god and depictions of the king on statues, stelae and ancient public monuments was such that the removal of any of these was believed to have serious consequences for the state. Each of these works of art was linked to the land in its own way: the god was connected to the city, the king to the land and, in time, the empire, the standing monument to the inherited historical, ancestral space of time and memory.[643]

As such, these cult images both reflected and reinforced the social organisation and the ideology of ancient Near Eastern peoples. Bahrani informs us that:

> Deities were associated with particular cities as patron gods, and each city was the place in which that deity's house, his or her main temple, was located and where the cult statue lived. Representations of each deity existed in various forms and media, but the cult statue was more than an image. It was the manifestation of the god in the realm of human beings. The cult statue was made according to specific elaborate ceremonies, using particular materials that were treated by priests. The statue was then put through a mouth-opening ceremony, in which the image was brought to life. After that, the statue was no longer an image; it was the phenomenon of the deity proper on earth. The texts no longer use the word *ṣalmu* (image) to refer to the sculpture after the mouth-opening ceremony: it is referred to simply and directly as the god, by his or her specific name.[644]

As such, a group's ideology, which was central to their social organisation and, therefore, their capacity to wage war, was undermined when the statues were taken, destroyed or mutilated.

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[640] Ibid, 138.
[641] Ibid, 139.
[642] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 160.
[643] Ibid, 163.
[644] Ibid, 165.

For the Israelites it is the Ark of the Covenant (along with the Tabernacle and all that goes with it, including the bread of the Presence), which is representative of YHWH's presence with them. Similar to the statues of ancient Near Eastern gods, the Ark also required specific materials and elaborate instruction for its construction (Exodus 25:10-22). One can imagine the fear which could be summoned by, for example, marching the Ark around a city like Jericho, given the intellectual assent given by ancient Near Eastern peoples towards such physical representations of the divine.[645] As such, the Israelites' actions at Jericho could be understood as an ancient Near Eastern example of psychological warfare.

The Israelites, on account of their nomadic conditions described in Joshua and Judges, travelled with the Ark of the Covenant and are described taking the Ark into combat. Bahrani has speculated that the Assyrians may have also taken the statues of their gods into battle, saying,

> The gods traveled in chariots. When the cult statues were transported by land, it was in special vehicles, and some references to the gods' accompanying the troops at war may mean that the cult statue was taken into battle.[646]

However, this idea has not been substantiated. Bahrani cited Black and Green's *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* to support her speculation, which said that 'perhaps on occasion, when documentary accounts describe a god as overseeing or actually involved in a battle, the statue of the god was conveyed to the battlefield.'[647] There is, however, no direct evidence which supports this. The Ark of the Covenant, therefore, appears to represent something entirely unique, which might explain the Philistines' reaction upon seeing the Ark: 'Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before' (1 Samuel 4:7-8). The physical representation of YHWH's presence was portable, did not require special chariots for transport, but merely the

[645] Consider, for example, the reaction of the Philistines once they see the Ark in 1 Samuel 4:5-9.
[646] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 197.
[647] Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London: The British Museum Press, 2004), 52.

priests to carry it (Deuteronomy 10:8).[648] Is there a relationship between the Ark and YHWH's kingship?

The text describes that when the Ark was placed alongside the statue of Dagon the Philistines found Dagon face down the next day before the Ark. Dagon was then put back in place and then found the following morning beheaded and with both hands cut off as well (1 Samuel 5:2-4). Three chapters later the Israelites are described begging Samuel for a king like other nations (1 Samuel 8). If an event such as the capture of the Ark by the Philistines actually happened, it certainly would have left the Israelites feeling abandoned given what we know about representations of divine presence throughout the ancient Near East. Even though the Ark was returned, the Israelites would be reluctant to risk such abandonment again. They would want the stability that an earthly king like other nations could provide. Which is why despite Samuel's efforts to restore Israel's faith (1 Samuel 7:3-17) they, nonetheless, asked Samuel to appoint a king over them 'like other nations' (1 Samuel 8:5-7). The ideologisation of Israel is on full display, as well as its social organisation, while Samuel – Judge, Prophet and Priest – represents Israel's king, YHWH. However, the story tells us that YHWH capitulates to Israel's desire and tells Samuel that it is not Samuel who Israel has rejected but, rather, they have rejected YHWH as king over them. The same king who delivered Israel from Egypt, used the waters of the Red Sea to destroy Egypt's army, destroyed the wall of Jericho and rained down giant stones on the Amorites. The writer wants to illustrate that Israel's wanting a king 'like other nations' out of fear of being abandoned by YHWH is a false fear. To illustrate this,

[648] Schatz concluded that the description of the Ark presented in Exodus 25 describes an object which would have weighed 183 pounds—admittedly, a very precise conclusion. That said, it is not too ridiculous to add the weights of the described elements and arrive at a conclusion that would be somewhere in that range. He adds, 'each of the four men carrying the Ark would bear a weight of about 21 kilograms (46 pounds), which can easily be tolerated on the shoulders for extensive periods of time.' Elihu A. Schatz, 'The Weight of the Ark of the Covenant,' *JBQ* 35, no. 2 (2007): 115-118.

the writer describes YHWH fighting Dagon while in possession of the Philistines in order to show that YHWH never abandons Israel, even when it appears that he does.[649]

7.3. Performative Violence and the Bodily Display of Defeated Kings

Throughout the Ancient Near East, texts that describe the torture, disfigurement, and display of conquered kings and leaders of war are commonplace. Monuments, temples, and walls of defeated cities, which depict conflicting ideologies (or theologies for that matter), were necessarily destroyed or removed by conquerors. Kings, thought to be either divine, or divinely appointed, had to be similarly undermined in a public fashion in order to send a strong message to a conquered people that their conquerors were in charge, and that the change in circumstances was due either to 1) the abandonment of their god, 2) their god not being real in the first place, or 3) being weaker than the god of their conquerors. In order to send such a message the king's body would sometimes be exposed to the same bold disfigurement

[649] Indeed, Stirrup, arrives at the same conclusion via a literary critical analysis of the Ark Narrative. First, Stirrup speaks to the way in which the Ark, and the statue of Dagon, truly represent the gods' presence. He says,

> as well as a repository for the covenant documents, the Ark was always a symbol of Yahweh's presence amongst his people ... Indeed, we are *meant* to understand that what happens to the Ark happens to Yahweh. Similarly, when Dagon is mentioned in chapter 5 what actually happens, happens to his image. Yet we are meant to understand that what happens *really* happens to Dagon, the god. Image and Ark are brought together but the confrontation which takes place is between Dagon and Yahweh.

A. Stirrup, '"Why Has Yahweh Defeated Us Today Before the Philistines?" The Question of the Ark Narrative,' *TynBul* 51, no. 1 (2000): 81-100, here 92. Indeed, which is to say that the reader understands that YHWH never abandoned the Israelites even though it appeared to them as though he did.

and destruction as that which was imposed upon the walls, stelae, temples and public monuments.[650]

Here is Aššur-Dan II (king of Assyria 934/5-912 BCE) describing his treatment of King Kadmuhu:

> [By] the command of Aššur, [my lord], I marched [to the land of Ka]dmuhu. The city of Sara [… I destroyed], ravaged, (and) burnt. I captured Kundabhale, [the king of the land of Kadmuhu] inside his palace. [….] bronze, tin, precious stones of the mountains, [….], his valuable booty [I brought] to [my] city [Aššur]. [On the throne I set …-s]illa, a man loyal to me. Kundabhale, king of the land of Kadmuhu, [I carried off] [(and) in the city] Arbail I flayed (him and) and I draped his skin [over the wall of the city …]nash.[651]

According to Aššur-Dan II King Kadmuhu was skinned alive for daring to stand against the king of Assyria and had his skin draped over the wall of a neighbouring city. Such a bold display of bodily disfigurement sends a clear message to the conquered, that the god and the god's representative of that particular area, in this case Kundabhale and King Kadmuhu, had been defeated by Aššur and Aššur's representative, Aššur-Dan II. Notably, Aššur-Dan II destroyed Sara, where he had captured the king, so he is described taking the king to a different city (Arbail) to make the gruesome display, presumably because the people of Arbail needed to be particularly reminded of who was in charge.

When taking back Mannea, Sargon II had this to say:

> To Assur, my lord, that the Mannean land might be avenged and that it might be restored to Assyria's rule, I raised my hand (in prayer), and in Mount Uaush, the mountain where they had cast out the body of Azâ,[652] I flayed Bagdattu, and showed him to the Manneans.[653]

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[650] Such displays reinforced what Younger describes as the 'ideology of terror' and includes the 'breaking down of foreign ideologically active centers (temples, palaces).' Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 66.

[651] [i-na] qi-bit Aš-šur [bēli(EN)-ya a-na ^{KUR}Ka]d-u-ḫi lu allik(GIN-ik) ^{ERI}ša-ra-[... ... ap-pu-ul a]q-qur i-na išāti(IZI^{MEŠ}) aš$_2$-ru-up Ku-un-da-ab-ḫa-li-e [ŠAR$_4$ ^{ERI}Kad-mu-ḫi i-n]a qabal(MUR$_2$) ekalli (E$_2$.GAL)-šu qa-a-ti lu ik-šu-su [... sip]arru(ZABAR^{MEŠ}) anāku(AN.NA^{MEŠ}) abān(ZA$_2$) ERI-e šu-qu-[ru] [...]^{MEŠ}-šu šalla-su kabit(DUGUD)-ta a-na ER[I-ya] [Aš-šur ub-la ...–sil-la amēla da-gil pa-ni ša ra-ma-n[i-ya] [i-na ^{GIŠ}kussî (GU.ZA) be-lu-ti-šu u$_2$-še-šib Ku-un-da-ab-ḫa-li-e ŠAR$_4$ ^{KUR}Kad-mu-ḫi [a-na māt Aš-šur ub-la i-na ^{ERI}Ar]ba-ili(DINGIR) lu –a-ku-[uṣ] mašak(KUŠ)-šu [dūra ša ^{ERI}...]-na-aš$_2$ u$_2$-ḫa-al-lip. Transliteration updated from Ernst F. Weidner, 'Die Annalen Des Königs Aššurdân II. Von Assyrien.' *AfO* 3. Archiv für Orientforschung (AfO)/Institut für Orientalistik (1926): 151-161, here 156 and the illustrated plates provided on 154. Translation is Younger's, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 92.

[652] Azâ was Sargon II's son.

[653] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol 2, 5.

Thus, what we see here is not merely terror, which it certainly is, but a reminder of the god to whom the land belongs: Aššur. Ashurbanipal described his treatment of King Teumman in the following way:

> I, Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, displayed publicly the head of Teumman, king of Elam, in front of the gate inside the city, where from of old it had been said by the oracle: 'The head of thy foes thou shalt cut off.'[654]

This particular quote comes from the Til-Tuba battle relief, which describes Ashurbanipal's victory over the Elamites through both images and text. Whilst this relief is propagandistic through its gruesome display of Teumman's severed head, notably, it is also representing the fulfillment of a prophecy. So whilst such an image conveys terror to those who witness it, itself invaluable enough towards Ashurbanipal's goal of maintaining order, it also displays that the outcome had been according to the will of his gods, particularly Aššur, through the fulfillment of an oracle. Meaning that the divine mandate, divine assistance, and fear are all playing a role in this relief simultaneously. Because these themes coalesce in the severed head of the king, Bahrani maintains that the head of the king is this relief's essential feature.[655] Compare the treatment of King Teumman to that of Saul by the Philistines described in 1 Samuel 31:8-10. Saul is similarly beheaded and placed on public display in a Philistine attempt to communicate their own god's (particularly Astarte's) authority and ownership over the land.

7.3.1. Bodily Display of Defeated Kings in Joshua

Joshua 8:2 describes YHWH telling Joshua to do to Ai and its king what he had done to Jericho and its king. However, the text does not actually tell us what was done to the king of Jericho. That said, given that the text does tell us what was done to the

[654] Ibid, 396. Cited also in Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 41.
[655] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 41.

king of Ai (Joshua 8:29), we can presume that the writer intends for the audience to understand that the same treatment had been afforded to the king of Jericho. The king of Ai was brought to Joshua alive and then all of the inhabitants of Ai are described being put under the ban (Joshua 8:23-27). As is the case when someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death the king of Ai is hung on a tree and is then removed and buried before sunset (Joshua 8:29, which is in accordance with Deuteronomy 21:22-23).[656] The king's body was buried under a heap of stones at the entrance of the city, which according to the writer was still there at the time of his writing (Joshua 8:29). Therefore, both the king of Ai and the king of Jericho are described receiving the treatment of common criminals and becoming the foundation of monuments meant to serve as warnings to anyone who might stand up against Israel in combat. While Israel, unlike its ancient Near Eastern contemporaries, did not leave us with bas-reliefs akin to that of the Assyrians we, nonetheless, observe that stories such as these, and the aetiology given for certain piles of stones, were meant to serve the same function as reliefs such as Ashurbanipal's Til-Tuba battle relief described above. It is important to note the strict obedience to YHWH's command here as well. Joshua 8:26-29 perfectly fulfills the orders of YHWH in verses 1-2 and 18 of the same chapter.[657]

The treatment of the five kings in Joshua 10:22-7 sends the same message. Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem, Hoham of Hebron, Piram of Jarmuth, Japhia of Lachish, and Debir of Eglon had joined forces against Joshua and the Israelites. Ultimately, however, with YHWH's assistance, their enemies were defeated and the kings fled to Makkedah. Joshua commanded the chiefs of the warriors who were with him to put their feet on the kings' necks. He then killed each of them, and hung them on five

[656] Soggin, *Joshua*, 105; Butler, *Joshua*, 87; Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, 242.
[657] Nelson, *Joshua*, 113.

trees until evening. They were then removed (in accordance with Deuteronomy 21:22-3) and buried in the cave in which they had been hiding. The execution of the kings is described as a public execution, as Joshua 10:24 tells us that Joshua 'summoned all of the Israelites.' Rowlett points out that 'the hierarchical system is reinforced once again by having the military chiefs take part physically in the ritual by placing their feet on the necks of the defeated rulers.'[658] Indeed, there is an enactment of Israel's chain of command being described in the text, which then reinforces the social organisation of Israel so far as the execution is performed in front of all the Israelites. Rowlett continues by reminding us that 'the enemy kings embodied their peoples' national identities just as Joshua served as the embodiment of the nation Israel.'[659] Therefore, it is understandable, albeit unpleasant, that the five kings are killed in the narrative then put on such bold display, just as we have seen in the extra-biblical ancient Near Eastern examples. This is especially the case when we appreciate that 'Yahweh's place at the top of the hierarchy is reinforced by the assurance of future military victories in Yahweh's name'[660]—a promise extended to Israel via Joshua in verse 25. The Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurti I has been described doing the same thing. His annals describe him saying the following: 'I captured Kaštiliaš, king of the Kassites (alive). I trod with my feet upon his lordly neck as though it were a footstool.'[661] Joshua's summoning all of Israel in order to witness the chiefs' participation in the slaughter of the five kings is an example of violence which could be called 'performative.' Schröder and Schmidt tell us that

> violence without an audience will still leave people dead, but is socially meaningless. Violent acts are efficient because of their staging of power and legitimacy, probably even more so than due to their actual physical results. In other words, war as a long-term process only now and then culminates in real acts of violence, and both parties include lots of individuals who are not confronted with real violence at all, but violence as performance extends its efficacy

[658] Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence*, 170.
[659] Ibid, 170.
[660] Ibid.
[661] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 317. n. 86.

> over space and time and gets its message across clearly to the large majority of people who are not physically affected by it.[662]

Of course, the same can be said of texts and bas-reliefs which describe and display such performances, which is oftentimes their very purpose—to communicate a social message about the elites' ideology (largely already adhered to by a populace) and the social hierarchy (organisation) in which one plays their part.

7.3.2. The Bodily Display of Defeated Kings in Judges

Similarly, Judges 1:1-7 tells us that after the defeat Adoni-bezek, Judah and Simeon pursued him, then once they captured him they cut of his thumbs and big toes. This action was, apparently, in response to Adoni-bezek's similarly disfiguring seventy kings whom he had defeated in the same way.[663] Lindars tells us that the 'obvious purpose of such mutilation is disablement, but the ancient parallels suggest savage and vindictive humiliation.'[664] Indeed, however it may not necessarily be 'vindictive,' as it is at least possible that such dismemberment could be carried out with regret by a ruler who, nonetheless, does so in order to send a message for the maintenance of order. That said, such practices were certainly committed vindictively in the ancient Near East, perhaps more often than not. The text, however, does not indicate the spirit in which Judah and Simeon carried out the violence against Adoni-bezek.

Similar instances of the mutilation and bodily display of defeated kings occur in 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel 15:33 describes Samuel's killing and hewing the defeated king

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[662] Ingo W. Schröder and Bettina E. Schmidt, 'Introduction,' in *The Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*, eds. Ingo W. Schröder and Bettina E. Schmidt (London: Routledge, 2001), 1-24, here 5-6. Riches makes the same point in telling us that 'a particular act of violence will, at the same time, transform the social environment in a practical sense and strikingly dramatize important social ideas'. David Riches, *The Anthropology of Violence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 11.

[663] Given that 'Jacob had seventy descendents (Exod 15) and that King Ahab is also said to have had "seventy sons" (2 Kings 10:1),' Matthews maintains that here the meaning is simply 'many'. Victor H. Matthews, *Judges and Ruth*, 99.

[664] Lindars, *Judges 1-5*, 18.

Agag into pieces – something Saul had failed to do himself. 1 Samuel 31:9 describes the Philistines cutting off Saul's head, stripping him of his armour, then attaching his body to the wall of Beth-shan, and placing his armour in the temple of Astarte.[665] Finally, 2 Kings 25:7 describes king Zedekiah having his eyes put out.

Notably, YHWH is Israel's king and is literally untouchable the way that other ancient Near Eastern kings are. YHWH cannot have his fingers/toes cut off, nor his head, nor can his body be fastened to the wall of a city, or his skin draped over a wall, or hung from a tree. Ideologically speaking, YHWH's untouchability affords the Israelites a military advantage so far as he cannot be similarly mutilated nor put on bold, arrogant display in order dissuade his followers or reflect the power of another king. YHWH's power as king flows from the fact that he is a god with earthly representatives. Those representatives (not kings at this stage of Israel's narrative) can be similarly mutilated and humiliated, but such an action would not serve to undermine the authority of YHWH, nor his kingship, as far as Israel is concerned. Rather, it would merely indicate YHWH's disapproval. Like all good counter-narrative, this one is flexible and can survive multiple outcomes thus protecting a central tenet of Israel's ideology which underscores Israel's capacity to wage war. It is not, however, merely the kings of Israel's enemies whose bodies can be mutilated and otherwise made an example of, but also their gods.

Israel's god is also their king at this stage of Israel's historical narrative. The gods of Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbours, however, are not their kings as such, but they are also dwelling in matter. In fact, the biblical writers seemed to want to

[665] Cf. 1 Chronicles 10:9.

illustrate this point with a description of the Philistines' capturing the Ark of the Covenant – Israel's physical symbol of YHWH's presence.[666]

7.4. Conclusions

Descriptions of fear are ubiquitous throughout the ancient Near East and Hebrew accounts of warfare include this persistent theme as well. The fear described in these accounts emboldens the in-group from which the texts come (whether Hittite, Assyrian or Egyptian) and conveys fear to any potential enemies—those who come into contact with the bas-reliefs, stelae and inscriptions. The messages conveyed help to control a defeated populace and cast fear into the hearts of any potential enemies. We have seen that this theme functions the same way in the Hebrew warfare accounts within the books of Joshua and Judges. Like the two themes previously discussed, fear also reinforces both the social organisation, including the hierarchy of authority, and the ideology necessary to maintain the social structure required for military success. We have seen that for violence to be effective towards such political ends it must be 'performative' to have the desired effect. Such performative violence includes the way that defeated populaces and their leaders are put on bold arrogant display with the aim of terrifying potential enemies. Such treatment of defeated ancient Near Eastern kings is of particular ideological consequence so far as the entire social hierarchy depends upon their being seen as the earthly representatives of their respective gods. We have seen that YHWH being immune to such treatment provides a military advantage for the Israelites. The fear described within, and conveyed by ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts terrorized potential enemies and emboldened

[666] The Ark cannot be compared with the statues which occupied the temples at the heart of ancient Near Eastern city-states as there is no indication that YHWH himself inhabits the Ark the way that ancient Near Eastern statues of gods are said to be literally possessed by their respective gods.

soldiers within the in-group from the texts came. These warfare accounts also served to remind those exposed to them of the hierarchy in which they play a committed role, and the ideology (e.g. the divinely imbued authority of a king or judge), which sustains the social structure essential to Israel's military survival.

8. Demonization of the Enemy

This chapter is particularly dependent upon a clear understanding of the contents of chapter three. One should already be aware of the difficulty and, therefore, the necessity of the sociological elements necessary in order to turn human beings into organised groups of disciplined killers. An essential component if an ideology is going to lead to, or encourage, violence is the belief that one's enemies are evil. The divine mandate, described in detail in chapter five, is the underscoring ideological component necessary if a social organisation is to believe their cause is just. Its antithesis means precisely that the enemy's is unjust. However, if this is to be true, then it necessarily follows that the enemy is evil. Furthermore, contrary to the opinion of many, it is demonstrable (again, this is discussed in detail in chapter three) that human beings are inefficient and unmotivated killers, that is, without a potent legitimizing ideology and an efficient bureaucracy of coercion human beings do not kill in a fashion which could be called warfare (i.e., in large-scale organised way). This illustrates that demonization of the enemy is an essential aspect of such potent legitimizing ideologies. This chapter will convey its presence throughout the ancient Near East and within the books of Joshua and Judges. It ought to be noted, again, that this thesis is discussing narrative and no attempt is made to either prove the existence of an actual invasion of Canaan, nor to discern whether the Canaanites could actually be described as morally inferior to Israel or not. That is, it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that the Israelites were no different, morally, from their ancient Near Eastern counterparts; rather, it seeks to illustrate the way that the same narrative theme is present.

Deuteronomy 9:4-5, 12:29, and in 20:17-18 describes the wickedness of those living in the land of Canaan. It is typical throughout the ancient Near East, indeed as it

is today, to see enemies demonized in literature describing warfare. Kestnbaum tells us that '"the enemy" may be defined as the persons against whom the state deems it may legitimately use organized coercion.'[667] Schmitt once defined the enemy in Hegelian terms setting up a friend/enemy antithesis and defining "the enemy" as something that 'exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity.'[668] Here, Schmitt is emphasizing a definition which is central to this thesis, that is, we are discussing large-scale organised violence and working with a definition of 'warfare' in keeping with Clausewitz's 'policy by other means' which was discussed in Chapter Three. That is, for our purposes, 'the enemy' is public, not a private or personal enemy with whom an individual or family may have a feud. It 'is *hostis*, not *inimicus* in the broader sense; πολέμιος, not ἐχθρός.'[669] This is a distinction emphasized by Plato (*Republic*, Book 5.470) who distinguished between a public enemy (πολέμιος) and a private one (ἐχθρός). For Plato, the latter may sow discord (upheavel or rebellion) but the real enemy is public and, therefore, a true 'other'.[670] This distinction has been at the heart of total war since the ancient Near East, and was exaggerated by thinking of those such as Schmitt. It *is* true that the distinction exists and is even, it seems, necessary between belligerents who are determined to carry out total war. However, when it is accepted as a truism for the waging of effective warfare *jus in bello* tends to be disgarded. Therefore, so far

[667] Meyer Kestnbaum, 'The Sociology of War and the Military,' *The Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 235-254, here 242.

[668] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political: Expanded Edition*, trans. George Schwab (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2007 [1932]), 28.

[669] Ibid.

[670] For Plato this was mainly understood as between Hellenes and Barbarians. Internally, he would call fellow Hellenes with whom there was armed conflict mere factions, but with non-Hellenes they were wars. He says that Greeks and Barbarians are 'enemies by nature.' Plato, *Republic*, Bk. 5.470. Plato is undeniably inclined to see enmity along both nationalist and racial lines, which is interesting given Schmitt's inclination to cite him in this regard, and his (Schmitt's) associations with Nazism. See Tracy B. Strong's forward in Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, ix-xxxi (particularly xxiv-xxxi) for more on this. We may, however, take 'public enemy' to mean that group against which the state deems it legitimate to use organised coercion in keeping with Kestnbaum, 'The Sociology of War and the Military,' 242.

as it is an affront against humanism (inasmuch as it distinguishes between friend and enemy in a formal way), it can, according to Bartov, 'only result in providing an intellectual validation for the dehumanization of others, a warrant for genocide'.[671] Indeed, this is preciesly what happens. While Bartov describes the result of this kind of thinking well with respect to the Holocaust, Dower noted a similar trend amongst the Japanese during WW2 with respect to their representation of their European and American enemies. Such thinking had deep roots in Japan. Dower tells us that

> Since ancient times, consciousness of purity and pollution combined with other attitutes within Japanese society to shape in-group behavior toward outsiders or strangers. Professor Yamaguchi Masao has gone so far as to argue that in the eyes of Japanese villagers until the mid-nineteenth century, there really existed "only two major categories of people: the insider and the outsider."[672]

Furthermore,

> the formulaic expressions and graphic visual images which the Japanese relied on to distinguish themselves from others were, on the surface, quite different. Their leaders and ideologues constantly affirmed their unique "purity" as a race and culture, and turned the war itself—and eventually mass death—into an act of individual and collective purification. Americans and Europeans existed in the wartime Japanese imagination as vivid monsters, devils, and demons; and one had only to point to the bombing of Japanese cities (or the lynching of blacks in America) to demonstrate the aptness of this metaphor.[673]

There are countless other examples of this throughout all of human history, including many from the ancient Near East which we will soon examine. But if one has any doubt they need only look at the rhetoric leveled against Bosnian Muslims by Bosnian Serb leadership under Slobodan Milošević, or the similarly dehumanizing descriptions levied between both sides building up to, and during, the atrocities in Rwanda. Kiernan is worth quoting at length concerning the demonization and dehumanization which has underscored the most atrocious examples of genocide in the twentieth century:

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[671] Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 147.

[672] John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 450

[673] Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 28.

> The Khmer Rouge considered its captive urban populations "subhuman" (*anoupracheachun*), the same term the Nazis had used for conquered Slavic *Untermenschen*. Democratic Kampuchea referred to its enemies as "microbes," "pests buried within," and traitors "boring in." The Germans had talked of "vermin" and "lice." Pol Pot considered his revolution the only "clean " one in history, just as the Nazis "cleaned" occupied areas of Jews. Both regimes were obsessed with the concept of racial "purity." Pol Pot called himself the "Original Khmer," but his preoccupations had precedents. And they prefigured biological depictions by Bosnian Serbs of the "malignant disease" of Islam threatening to "infect" Europe, and by the Hutu Power regime in Rwanda, which described Tutsi as "cockroaches" (*inyenzi*), requiring a "big clean-up."[674]

Kestnbaum tells us that when belligerents saw each other in a dehumanized way

> not only were the rules of conduct in war reserved for ordinary persons set aside, but also what might otherwise be understood as brutality or even atrocity was transformed into routine action deemed both necessary and justifiable.[675]

Indeed, such dehumanisation appears to be a requirement if mass destruction (i.e., total war, which includes the purposeful targeting of non-combatants as well) of an enemy is to be carried out. The twentieth century has (quite unfortunately) provided us with an expanded, exceptionally large, and grossly disproportionate level of this phenomenon with, among others, World War II.[676] We will see that it is not anachronistic to look at WW2 with respect to the phenomenon of demonizing the enemy because this is precisely a universal necessity of total war. That is, if total war—war which includes the killing of civilians—is to be carried out by one collectivity against another. Given our earlier discussion of the way in which ancient Near Eastern peoples are routinely described waging total war a discussion of the issue is entirely apropos. Especially given the *ḥerem* texts of the Hebrew Bible,

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[674] Ben Kiernan, 'Twentieth-Century Genocides: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor,' in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, eds. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29-51, here 33.

[675] Kestnbaum, 'The Sociology of War and the Military,' 243.

[676] This has not stopped Smith, however, from claiming that the relationship between warfare and demonization of the enemy is merely 'a commonplace of folk wisdom and political cynicism'. Smith, *Why War?*, 208. Smith mischaracterizes those who maintain that demonization of the enemy underscores large-scale organised violence by saying that its proponents claim it is a 'cardboard prop that can be simply wheeled onto stage when required'. Smith, *Why War?*, 208. However, clearly that is not what they actually maintain. Rather, they maintain precisely what Smith does, that is, that 'long before military conflict takes place or becomes inevitable, storytelling activities and dialogical genre wars are taking place'. Smith, *Why War?*, 208-09. Indeed, that said, when genocide is taking place one can see that the 'storytelling activities and dialogical genre wars' have culminated in demonizing a perceived enemy, and that is the point.

however, before we get to that let us examine some extant ancient Near Eastern examples of dehumanisation.

Notably, reasons given for the inclusion of civilians as targets throughout many modern conflicts has been 1) guerilla warfare, that is, irregular forces which included armed civilians,[677] and 2) the recognition of civilian contributions to various war efforts. The latter, of course, is visible in everything from the role of civilians working in factories to build various armaments, to their general role in the economic function of an enemy state which was central to their military efficacy. Such things lead to a 'blurring of distinctions between combatants and non-combatants.'[678] In the ancient Near East such lines are even more difficult to draw. This is because, while it is true that city-states often had a small 'royal bodyguard' which constituted professional armies,[679] it was also presumed that any male of fighting age could be added to the army's force by coercion if necesary. Indeed, they may not even have to be coerced if their homes, lives and livelihoods are genuinely threatened. Most city-state armies, and even that of larger territorial kingdoms, were gathered from the civilians during times of crisis. That is, it was normative for city-states to have a military which was 'based on the same principles of corvée labor service that the kings used for their public works projects.'[680] This is all just to say that civilians could be seen as enemy combatants in this historical context, so far as that in times of war, arguably, there were no such thing as 'civilians', that is, beyond women and childen, and sometimes women fought as well. Chapters 1 and 26 of Numbers, which we have already discussed,[681] describe every male of twenty years and older literally being

[677] Kestnbaum, 'The Sociology of War and the Military,' 244.
[678] Ibid.
[679] For the Assyrians, this was group of probably around 1000 men. Wise, *Ancient Armies of the Middle East*, 33.
[680] Garfinkle, 'Ancient Near Eastern City-States,' 115.
[681] See Chapter Four, Section 4.1.1.

enrolled into Israel's army. Israel is described as seeing itself, and treating itself, as an army. Furthermore, they would have needed everyone capable of fighting to be ready to fight, even just to wage effective defensive warfare, irrespective of whether there was an actual conquest of Canaan or not.

We have a great deal of Assyrian evidence which describes kings demonizing their enemies which helps legitimize the warfare which they wage against them. The immorality of the kings' enemies is described as running counter to the justice and morality of the kings of Assyria.[682] Assyrian kings are described with familiar sounding hyperbolic epithets such as 'light of all humankind,'[683] 'light of the world'[684] and 'friend of justice.'[685] Oded tells us that the Assyrian king, whoever he may be, is 'the defender of the weak, rectifier of the wrongs, persecuting injustice wherever it occurs. In a word, equity and law uphold his throne.'[686]

Conversely, the enemy of an Assyrian king, 'is always described in derogatory terms, as a complete evildoer, a wicked devil, a sinner who breaks the laws of morality and tramples right and justice underfoot.'[687] There are a number of epithets which are commonplace and 'generic to all enemies of Assyria.'[688] They include: 'Trained in murder';[689] 'culprit', 'sinner';[690]; 'criminal, 'sinner';[691] 'malefactor';[692] 'wrongdoer and criminal', 'murderer';[693] 'wicked';[694] 'evildoer';[695] 'an evil

[682] Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1992), 30-31.
[683] *nūr kiššat nišē*. Ibid, 30.
[684] *nūr kibrāti*, Oded translates it slightly differently, that is, as 'lover of uprightness.' Ibid.
[685] *rā'im mēšari*, Ibid, 31.
[686] Ibid.
[687] Ibid.
[688] Ibid, 34.
[689] *šaggalta lamdu*, Ibid.
[690] *bēl arni*, Ibid.
[691] *bēl hīṭi*, Ibid,
[692] *lā ṭābtānu*, Ibid,
[693] *ēpiš anni u gillati*, Ibid,
[694] *qardammu*, Ibid.
[695] *ēpiš lemutti*, Ibid.

demon';[696] 'robbers, thieves and murderers (blood stained)';[697] 'not good', 'bad', 'villain';[698] 'accursed by the gods' and many, many others.[699] Oded has asserted that the Akkadian 'terms *lemnu*, *bēl lemutti* have a double meaning: enemy and wicked.'[700] He then adds that, 'this duality conveys the idea that wickedness is inherent in the enemy.'[701] However, these are two distinct terms. It is true that *bēl lumutti* (which literally translates to 'lord/master of wickedness') is sometimes used to denote the enemy, however, this does not mean that we should conflate the two meanings. Though, of course, it goes without saying that anyone we might call 'lord of wickedness' would be our enemy. Just as when George W. Bush said that certain countries were a part of an 'axis of evil.' It is also true that *lemnu(m)* translates as 'enemy' and that one is an enemy because, presumably, they are seen as wicked. However, we should not presume, as Oded and Crouch appear to have done, that *lemnu* and *bēl lemutti* are synonymous in Akkadian.

In his annals, Sennacherib says the following:

> In my second campaign Assur, my lord, encouraged me, and against the land of the Kassites and the land of the Iasubigallai, wicked enemies, who from of old had not been submissive to the kings, my fathers, I marched.'[702]

Because the enemies' deserving to be defeated is inherent in their enmity—that is, their enmity and wickedness are one and the same—we do not need to see an overt description of their wickedness in every warfare account. That said, Esarhaddon describes the wickedness of his own brothers who have turned against him, this way:

> The (way) of the gods they abandoned and to their own violent deeds trusted, plotting evil, evil tongue, lying slander, against the will of the gods, they set afoot against me and (with) unholy disloyalty behind my back they planned rebellion with each other.[703]

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[696] *gallû*, Ibid.
[697] *habbatu*, *sarrāqu*, *āmir dame*, Ibid.
[698] *lā damqam*, Ibid.
[699] *nizirtu ilāni*, Ibid, 34-5.
[700] Ibid, 36. Crouch accepts Oded's assertion. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East*, 51.
[701] Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, 36. Crouch discusses this as well. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East*, 51.
[702] Luckenbill, *ARAB*, Vol 2, 135.
[703] Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal,* 10.

Esarhaddon also refers to Šamaš-ibni as 'a lout, an outlaw, who does not fear the command of the lord of lords.'[704] Urtaku, the king of Elam, is described by Ašurbanipal as one who 'with his lips speaks greetings, but within his heart plots murder.'[705] Related to the demonization of the enemy is another motif relevant to Israel in particular so far as their king is their god. That is, the very socially embedded understanding that it is the role of the king to mete out justice.

We can observe the king as the harbinger of justice inscribed on the Gebel Barkal Stela of Egypt's Thutmose III (c. 1479-1425 BCE). He is described as, 'the good god, who conquers with his arm, who smites the southerners, who beheads the northerners. Who scatters the heads of those of bad character.'[706] The Babylonian king Hammurabi was said to have been, 'called by the gods to establish justice in the land.'[707] Tiglath-pileser I was referred to as the one 'who ruled over the four quarters of the world in righteousness.'[708] Oded reminds us that

> one of the fundamental functions of kingship was to uphold justice. This is a longstanding and basic idea among the monarchies of the Ancient Near East. Correcting injustice furnishes the justification for the institution of monarchy. The kings in the Ancient Near East were formally and conceptually under the obligation to establish justice in their lands.[709]

Indeed, ancient Near Eastern kings both protected their people from external threats, and maintained internal order.[710] Furthermore, war is the means by which they achieved both.[711] The Assyrian Royal Inscriptions convey 'that waging war was the

[704] *ishappu, habbilu, lā pālihu zikri bēl bēlē*. Oded, 35.
[705] Ibid.
[706] *nṯr nfr iṯ m ḫpš.f ḥw-rsyw ḥsk mḥtyw ssḥ tpw nbdw-ḳd*. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 178.
[707] Oded, *War, Peace and Empire*, 36.
[708] Ibid, 37.
[709] Ibid, 36.
[710] Ibid, 37.
[711] Ibid.

rule rather than the exception.'[712] War was both the king's vocation and his combat against his sinful enemies was 'the manifestation of his fitness for kingship.'[713]

Deuteronomy 9:4-5 illustrates precisely the kind of justification for the conquest of Canaan which we would expect given what we know about the way that ancient Near Eastern peoples demonized their enemies. That is, YHWH is not giving Israel the land because of the Israelites' righteousness; rather, he is taking the land from the Canaanites because of their wickedness. As such, YHWH is fulfilling his role as king in his land—land which the text describes him giving to Israel—by administering justice there. In order to keep Israel from falling on the wrong side of YHWH's justice, YHWH is described insisting that Israel put everyone in the land under the ban so that they will not fall under the Canaanites' influence, turn to false idols, and become similarly wicked in YHWH's eyes (Deuteronomy 20:17-8). Following Canaanite gods would inevitably lead to Israel following Canaanite kings. This is the way to understand 'the ban as God's justice' as discussed by Niditch. That is, in the light of justice as administered by ancient Near Eastern kings we can now appreciate that both justice, and the king's reception of booty (Niditch's 'ban as sacrifice') are not two separate ideologies, but rather reflective of one singular ideology which is unique to Israel; that is, YHWH is king. The demonization of the enemies of Israel works concurrently with the administration of YHWH's justice, but also meets a deep human psychological requirement with respect to violence.

Killing, as we have noted, does not come naturally or easily to human beings. Both bureaucratic coercion and potent legitimising ideologies are required if human beings are to be violent on a large organised (i.e., warfare) scale. Therefore, we recognize that demonization of the enemy is essential if violence is to be carried out

[712] Ibid, 38

[713] Ibid. Cf. Deuteronomy 12:29 which describes the fact that the Canaanites were so wicked in the eyes of YHWH that they burned their children as sacrifices to their gods.

against them. In fact, one need only consider the way that violence is enacted against groups of people who have been demonized/dehumanized–even without bureaucratic coercion–to see that this is true. Malešević, therefore, has stated that, 'justifications of bloodshed are often couched in words that depict the "enemy" not as an honourable or worthy adversary but as a subhuman, monstrous creature hell-bent on destroying the social order.'[714] In the ancient Near East, and in the Hebrew Bible, therefore, the enemy is wicked, evil, child-sacrificing and idol worshipping. Pitkänen has similarly said that

> if one compares the ideology of Joshua with modern genocide studies, seeing the Canaanites as a threat and the appeal to their sinfulness can be seen as part of a standard strategy of demonization and dehumanization of the opposition in comparable situations in order to rationalize acts of violence.[715]

Indeed, this level of demonization is demonstrably necessary for large-scale organized violence (i.e., warfare) against a common enemy to occur. It ought to be noted, however, that not all violence is legitimized by 'demonization', that is, it is not the intention of this thesis to suggest that violence is never legitimate, or that an enemy cannot, in fact, actually *be* evil or commit evil acts. Nor that an enemy cannot rightly be described as such and then violently stopped.

This chapter has illustrated that an essential component of an ideology, if it is going to lead to, or encourage, violence is the belief that one's enemies are evil. As we have discussed, the divine mandate, described in detail in chapter five, was the underscoring ideological component necessary if an ancient Near Eastern social organisation was to believe their cause was just. Its antithesis means precisely that the enemy was unjust. However, if this was to be true, then it necessarily follows that the enemy was evil. Furthermore, contrary to the opinion of many, it is demonstrable (again, this is discussed in detail in chapter three) that human beings are inefficient

[714] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 271.
[715] Pitkänen, *Joshua*, 79.

and unmotivated killers, that is, without a potent legitimizing ideology and an efficient bureaucracy of coercion human beings do not kill in a fashion which could be called warfare (i.e., in large-scale organised way). This chapter has illustrated that demonization of the enemy was an essential aspect of such potent legitimizing ideologies, and described its presence throughout the ancient Near East and how it underscores the violence described in the books of Joshua and Judges. It ought to be noted, again, that this thesis is discussing narrative and no attempt has been made to either prove the existence of an actual invasion of Canaan, nor to discern whether the Canaanites could actually be described as morally inferior to Israel or not. That is, it is not the intention of this thesis to argue that the Israelites were no different, morally, from their ancient Near Eastern counterparts; rather, it has illustrated that the same narrative theme is present.

9. The Destruction, Burning and Cursing of Conquered Cities

Cities were the places in which a group's ideology and social organisation were most on display, and where a group's ideology was most proliferated—from the central temples of the city-states throughout a group's entire social organisation. Along with their obvious outward military structures and defenses, they were the space wherein a populace's ideology—the same ideology essential to their capacity to fight—was most manifest. Therefore, urbicide is a central component of the defeat of a given enemy. Included within such defeats are descriptions of city walls and structures, including their burning. The burning of defeated cities was essential as it melted the bricks that possessed inscriptions and reliefs conveying the ideology of a defeated people. Central to such defeat was the destruction of temples along with the destruction and removal of the statues of the gods of given city-states.

This chapter illustrates the omnipresence of this theme throughout ancient Near East warfare accounts, including the cursing of destroyed cities meant to keep defeated people from rebuilding them. It then describes the presence of the same theme throughout the books of Joshua and Judges. It is essential to the argument of this thesis as it is urbicide which particularly betrays the concern with the destruction of, not just a given populace, but their respective ideology upon which their hierarchy of authority and social structure depend. That is, it most aptly illustrates the way that the factors which underscore a group's capacity for organised violence are deliberately attacked and undermined throughout the ancient Near East.

9.1. The Burning and Cursing of Conquered Cities in the Ancient Near East

Almost every single description of ancient Near Eastern warfare in royal annals includes a description of the total destruction of a city by burning, as well as cursing. Wright refers to this wholesale destruction as 'urbicide.'[716] We will see that such destruction targets a city's buildings and walls because they carry a competing ideology to that of the conquerors. One, which if allowed to co-exist, would undermine the ideology of the new rulers. In this respect, it is not so different than the reasons given by the biblical texts for *ḥerem*. Indeed, it should be noted that Shaw believes urbicide is a part of the larger problem of genocide.[717] Wright maintains that the destruction of cities should be viewed

> in the framework of the destruction of memory: the urban landscape is often home to a people's most cherished cultural memories, and in seeking to wipe out a people, aggressors targeted these urban *Gedächtnisträger* (bearers of memory): monuments, display inscriptions, images, and repositories of texts, especially, archives and libraries.[718]

In principle Wright is correct, so long as we do not limit 'memory' to things which have actually happened. That is, it is the *ideology* of a conquered people which is problematic for the conquerors so far as it is around such ideology that an enemy may rise up again. Therefore, whilst some of what is destroyed is certainly cultural memory, the goal is to erase much more than that and includes descriptions of the mythological history of a people and the divine appointments/mandates of their defeated rulers.

Before we turn to the texts in Joshua and Judges, let us look at examples from the wider ancient Near East. Tiglath-pileser I said the following of the cities Sarauš

[716] Jacob L. Wright, 'Urbicide: The Ritualized Killing of Cities in the Ancient Near East,' in *Ritual Violence in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Saul M. Olyan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 147-67.
[717] Martin Shaw, *Genocide and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Wright cites Shaw as well adding that 'urbicide in the ancient Near East is also closely linked to genocide.' Wright, 'Urbicide,' 148.
[718] Ibid.

and Ammauš, 'I burned with fire, hacked down, and demolished their cities.'[719] His defeat of the city Hunusu includes the mention of a warning:

> I burned the city. The three great walls which were constructed with baked bricks and the entire city I razed (and) destroyed. I turned (it) into a ruin hill and a heap. I strewed 'ṣipu'-stones over it. I made bronze lightning bolts (and) I inscribed on them (a description of) the conquest of the lands which by Aššur, my lord, I had conquered, (and) a warning not to occupy that city and not to rebuild its wall.[720]

Ashur-Dan II did not fail to mention the cities inhabitants saying, 'I burned their cities (and) their citizens.'[721] Shalmaneser III says,

> I went to the mountains of Haurani. Cities without number I destroyed, devastated, I burned with fire. I carried off their spoils. I went to the mountains of Ba'li-ra'si at the side of the sea and (lies) opposite Tyre. I erected a stela of my majesty there.[722]

Similarly, on the Aššur Annal Fragment, he is depicted saying,

> I went to the mountains of the land of Hauran. Cities without number I destroyed, razed (and) burned with fire. I plundered their booty without number. I went up to the mountains of the land of Ba'lira'si which is on the seashore. I erected there a stela of my majesty.[723]

Here he is on the Kurba'il Statue:

> I marched as far as the mountains of Hauran. I destroyed, devastated, (and) burned with fire countless cities. I carried away their booty without number. I marched to the mountains of Ba'li-rasi which is over against the sea; I erected a stela of my sovereignty there.[724]

We have no shortage of similar examples from within the Hittite corpus too.

Muršili II says the following in his Ten Year Annals, 'I completely burned down Halila (and) Dudduska';[725] "I completely [burned] down the city';[726] 'And the

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[719] URU^{MEŠ}-ni-šu-nu i-na išāti(IZI^{MEŠ}) áš-ru-up ap-púl aq-qur. Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 80. Translation mine.

[720] URU i-na išāti(IZI^{MEŠ}) aš-ru-up 3 durāni^{MEŠ}-šu-nu GAL^{MEŠ} ša i-na a-gur-ri ra-áš-bu u_3 si-ḫir-ti URU-šu ap-púl aq-qur a-na tīli(DU$_6$) u_3 kar-mi u_2-tir u_3 NA$_4^{MEŠ}$ ṣi-pa i-na muḫ-ḫi-šu az-ru {biriq(NIM.GÍR) siparri(UD.KAR.BAR) e-pu-uš {ki-ši-ti KUR.KUR^{MEŠ} ša i-na A-šur bēli(EN)-ya ak-šu-du URU šu-a-tu {a-na la ṣa-ba-ti u_3 dūra-šu la-a ra-ṣa-pi i-na muḫ-ḫi-šu al-tu-ur. Transliteration updated from Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 81.

[721] Ibid, 90.

[722] a-di KUR-e ^{KUR}Ḫa-u_2-ra-ni al-lik URU^{MEŠ}-ni a-na la ma-ni ap-púl aq-qur ina išāti(IZI^{MEŠ}) áš-ru-up šal-la-su-nu áš-lu-la a-na KUR-e ^{KUR}Ba-a'-li-ra-'a-si ša pūt(SAG) tam-di ša pu-ut māt sur-ri al-lik ṣa-lam ŠAR$_4$-ti-ya ina lìb-bi u_2-te-ziz. Transliteration updated from Ibid, 106.

[723] a-di KUR-e ^{māt}Ḫa-u_2-ra-ni a-lik URU^{MEŠ}-ni a-na la ma-ni a-púl a-qur ina išāti(IZI^{MEŠ}) ašrup (GIBÍL-up) šal-la-su-nu a-na la ma-ni áš-lu-la a-di KUR-e ^{māt}Ba-a'-li-ra-'a-si ša$_2$ pūt(SAG) tam-di$_4$ a-lik ṣa-lam ŠAR$_4$-ti-ya ina lìb-bi az-qup. Transliteration updated from Ibid, 107.

[724] a-di KUR-e ^{māt}Ḫa-u_2-ra-ni a-lik URU^{MEŠ}-ni a-na la ma-ni ap-púl a-qur ina išāti(IZI^{MEŠ}) ašrup (GIBÌL-up) šal-la-su-nu a-na la ma-ni áš-lu-la adi(EN) KUR-e ^{KUR}Ba-a'-li-ra-si ša$_2$ pūt(SAG) tam-di a-lik ṣa-lam ŠAR$_4$-ti-ya ina lìb-bi az-qup. Transliteration updated from Ibid, 109.

[725] Ibid, 146

[726] Ibid, 147.

enemy of Pishuru I defeated behind Palhuissa';[727] and, 'I completely burned down the land of Ziharriya.'[728]

Is there any evidence, however, of cities being destroyed with fire in the Hebrew Bible? Every reader will think immediately of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19 illustrates YHWH's kingship so far as he too destroys cities with fire and is the administrator of justice in his land. Sodom and Gomorrah are described being destroyed on account of the sinfulness of their inhabitants. Abraham famously debates with YHWH, however, in Genesis 18:32 it becomes clear that there are not even ten righteous people to be found. Therefore, everyone except for Lot and his daughters is described being destroyed in Genesis 19:24-5.

Cities are the centres within which a group's social organisation and ideology are most manifest and proliferated. Indeed, they had been for millennia before Iron I. As early as the Late Uruk period (3500-3000 BCE) cities like Uruk had a population of 40-50,000 people.[729] Furthermore, they

> were ruled by a hierarchy of priests and kings...though they were always dependent on town councils for making major decisions. They organized a central hierarchical government overseeing a stratified society.[730]

The stratification of society described here by Hamblin owes itself to the division of labour commensurate with the development of city-states. That is, as more people moved into cities fewer people engaged in agriculture and instead turned towards 'non-food-producing occupations such as priests, scribes, craftsmen and merchants.'[731] Most importantly, however, for our purposes, many became soldiers. Hamblin tells us that 'the development of economic specialization gave rise to military specialists, who would develop into military professionals, elites, and

[727] Ibid, 156.
[728] Ibid, 157.
[729] William Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36.
[730] Ibid, 37.
[731] Ibid.

ultimately martial aristocracies.'[732] Malešević has also noted the link between these early city-states and the development of the levels of social stratification required for the kind of bureaucratic coercion required for large-scale organised violence. He tells us that

> the availability of storable food provided further impetus towards establishing long-term settlements – city states – which became densely populated and hence provided a large-scale labour force and contributed further to economic, political, religious and military specialisation and the development of social stratification. Although the overwhelming majority of the population were peasants, regular access to stored food created a situation whereby some peasants could also act as soldiers when the need arose.[733]

Malešević is telling us that even in cases where there were professional militaries as in ancient Near Eastern city-states, peasants could also constitute a reserve force if necessary given that city-states were capable of storing food. Recall that when discussing those people living in the hill country of Israel in Iron I, that is, groups like the one called 'Israel' on the Merneptah Stela, we determined that it was precisely their grain reserves which constituted their defense (in lieu of the walls and support structures associated with city-states), and its destruction meant that they could not raise an army without forgoing their farming. To destroy their grain—their seed—was to leave the survivors military incapacitated, not to mention, starving.

The destruction of temples and the removal of symbols of divine agency is extraordinarily important. Malešević tell us that 'traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquests and coercive forms of governance.'[734] Furthermore, 'what was also important for the long-term success of this process [of growing social organisation] was a degree of societal solidarity enhanced by shared religious tradition.'[735] This, however, is not to say that ancient Near Eastern kings merely used religion in order to

[732] Ibid.
[733] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 94.
[734] Ibid, 9.
[735] Ibid, 94.

control people. Such a view would suggest that they themselves were not religious. Rather, ancient Near Eastern kings were fellow participants in shared religious views and practices, which placed them squarely at the top of social hierarchies mandated by their gods. Hamblin states that 'the centralization of power in the hands of allied royal and priestly classes was associated with the emergence of a divinely mandated martial ideology.'[736] We have discussed divine mandate at length, so there is no need to review it here, suffice to say that the ideology which underscores the divine mandate was proliferated throughout the social structure of a city-state and that the proliferation occurred both orally, but also via the city-state's support structures in the way of texts and bas-reliefs on temples, palace/city walls, and stelae. We have also already discussed the habit of ancient Near Eastern kings erecting stelae which bear witness to their authority and their divine mandate. The burning of cities, therefore, effectively undermines the authority of previous rulers and their gods. It reconfigures the space such that new stelae could be erected. Indeed, we have examples of ancient Near Eastern kings boasting of doing exactly this.

Consider, for example, Sennacherib's boasting: 'I had a stele made, and the might of my conquering hand which I established upon them, I caused to be inscribed thereon. In the midst of the city I set it up.'[737] Here is another, which includes a curse formula: 'a memorial stele I caused to be made, and I had them inscribe (thereon) the might and power of Assur, my lord ... Whoever destroys the writing of my name, may Assur and the great gods look up him [in anger] and destroy him.'[738]

In addition to the erection of new stelae when cities were rebuilt they included new reliefs built into walls of baked brick, and new temples as well. We have

[736] Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC*, 37.
[737] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol 2, 118.
[738] Ibid, 140.

descriptions of new stelae being erected in defeated areas. Adad-nirâri, ruler of Assyria (ca. 1300 BCE) erected a stele which said the following:

> Whoever blots out my name and writes his own name (in its place), or breaks my memorial stele, or consigns it to destruction, or throws it into the river, or covers it with earth, or burns it with fire, or casts it into the water, or takes into a dark chamber (*or*, pest house) where it cannot be seen, and sets it up therein, or if anyone because of these curses sends a hostile foe or an evil enemy, or an evil tongue (i.e., a slanderer), or any other man, and has him seize it, or if he plans and carries out any other plot against it, may Assur, the mighty god, who dwells in Eharsagkurkurra, Anu, Enlil, Ea, and Ishtar, the great gods, the Igigu of heaven, the Anunaku of earth, all of them, look upon him in great anger, and curse him with an evil curse. His name, his seed, his kith and kin, may they destroy from the land. The destruction of his land, the ruin of his people and his boundary, may they decree by their fateful command. May Adad overwhelm him with an evil downpour, may flood and storm, confusion and tumult, tempest, want and famine, drought and hunger, continue in his land; may he (Adad) come upon his land like a flood and turn it to tells and ruins (*v. adds*, may Ishtar, the queen, bring about the overthrow of his land; may he not be able to stand before his enemy). May Adad destroy his land with destructive lightning (*v. adds*, and cast famine upon his land).[739]

Here are some others. From Shalmaneser I: 'the one who blots out my inscription and my name, may Assur, the lord, overthrow his kingdom, destroy his name and his seed from this land; may a hostile king take away his throne, and give his land to whom he pleases.'[740] Tiglath-pileser I declared that:

> Whosoever shall break my memorial tablets and my prism, or shall deface them, or shall cast them into the water, or shall burn them in the fire, or shall cover them with earth, or shall throw them like – into a pesthouse, where they cannot be seen, or shall blot out my name which is written (thereon) and shall inscribe his own name (in place thereof), or shall devise any other evil scheme, to do violence unto my memorial tablets: - may Anu and Adad, the great gods, my lords, look upon him in anger, may they curse him with an evil curse; may they overthrow his kingdom; may they uproot the foundations of his royal throne; may they destroy his lordly seed; may they scatter his weapons; may they bring defeat upon his hosts and set him in bonds before his foes. May Adad destroy his land with (his) destructive thunderbolt, and hurl hunger, famine, want, and bloodshed upon his land; may he command that he shall not live one day (longer), and may he destroy his name and his seed from the land.[741]

The fact that the cursing described in these examples is so severe illustrates that such threats had to be stated forcefully. This further betrays the fact that the destruction of stelae and bas-reliefs, which promulgated the ideology of a king and his gods, was commonplace. This has been Pitkänen's conclusion as well, he says, 'putting curses

[739] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol 1, 28.
[740] Ibid, 44.
[741] Ibid, 90-91.

on things one did not wish to be disturbed or altered was normal in the Ancient Near East.'[742] Bahrani says that

> a distinctive military tactic in Near Eastern Antiquity was the assault and abduction of monuments of war. To the extent that war aims for the annihilation or defeat of the enemy and the control of land, military acts that rely upon the efficacy of public monuments, buildings, and other works of art, were – and remain in contemporary warfare – an integral aspect of military strategy.[743]

Given the importance of destroying the ideology (which reinforced the social organisation of a given peoples and vice versa) a city's structures were necessarily burnt and destroyed (burning melts the bricks and the ideology thereon). If an enemy were truly 'evil' then their defeat required that everything 'wicked' (their monuments, walls, buildings, temples, and stelae which communicated the messages at the root of their 'depravity') must be thoroughly destroyed as well. It is in a sense, therefore, an extension of the ban, one which was seemingly embraced by every group throughout the ancient Near East.

> The identities of the ancient city-states were continually constructed and marked through monuments, images, public rituals, and architectural structures. War was fought at the level of monuments as much as land and natural and economic resources. War was a means of unsettling and reordering space, monuments, and populations and reconfiguring them into new formations.[744]

Here, Bahrani is telling us that war was fought (and indeed still is) on the ideological level as well as the physical. Wright agrees stating that

> urbicide in most of our sources consists of punitive aggression against the political and cultural centers of people. The cultural aspect is particularly prominent. The aggressors target symbolic architecture: walls, palaces, temples, large houses.'[745]

Of course 'the cultural aspect is particularly prominent' because it is where we find the ideology of a defeated peoples. We have no good reason to believe that our ancient Near Eastern counterparts separated them any more than we do today. We may allow buildings to co-exist in a defeated area, however, our ideologies are not as prominently (sometimes they are of course) displayed in the same way. This is, of

[742] Pitkänen, *Joshua,*160.
[743] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 159.
[744] Ibid, 160.
[745] Wright, 'Urbicide,' 148.

course, because of books and other means of communication. That does not mean, however, that competing ideologies are not similarly stamped out today – oft times deservedly so (e.g. Nazism). 2 Chronicles 36:19 describes all of this happening with the destruction of Judah, even making specific mention of the Temple, the wall of Jerusalem, and all of its palaces being burned with fire. Joshua 6's description of the destruction of Jericho includes an oath formula from Joshua upon anyone who would attempt to rebuild it (Joshua 6:24-7). 1 Kings 16:34 even describes the fulfillment of the curse befalling Hiel of Bethel for doing just that. Joshua's curse bears an uncanny resemblance to Tiglath-Pileser I's concerning Sarauš and Ammauš which was cited above.

Notably, the ideology of Israel (at this stage of Israel's narrative) is largely, if not entirely oral. This means that, like the ark, it is portable, not dependent on the existence of cities, walls, temples and the like. This stands in stark contrast to the monuments, stelae, and bas-reliefs of their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. While it is not as immediately obvious as say, better armaments, defensive structures etc., once we understand warfare in the ancient Near East, we recognize that such things give Israel a slight military edge which makes up for what they lack compared to their enemies. When they do have the military advantages which are shared by their ancient Near Eastern neighbours, such as, for example, a monarchy and defensive walls, we find the exilic prophets describing the way in which they represent a falling away from Israel's success under Joshua. Ezekiel, for example, tells us that there were images of other gods displayed the walls of the Temple (Ezekiel 8:10), and that YHWH's glory had left Jerusalem (Ezekiel 10). Israel's continued failure to adhere to the law, which was central to both Israel's ideology and social organisation (both of which, as we have seen, are central to the waging of effective warfare) – is given as

the very reason for Jerusalem's destruction (Ezekiel 33:17-21). Furthermore, Ezekiel held YHWH worship and adherence to his law to be the centre of his prescription for Israel's restoration (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

We are now in a position to appreciate that Ezekiel's prescription for Israel's restoration is not mere 'spiritual' piety, whatever that would be, but rather, is central to Israel's military success, if such is to ever be had again. Israel *must* maintain – as it had prior to the monarchy – all that it had established during the exodus so that, once again, it could take the land promised to them. Furthermore, it must maintain it to the same extent that they destroyed it in their enemies via the ban and the destruction of the cities they conquered. They must recognize that their ideology and social organisation was as essential to their restoration and previous military successes as their corollaries had been for their enemies, which is why they so forcefully destroyed them. In this context, one can appreciate the way in which belief in, or knowledge of, Israel's time in the desert during the exodus, as well as the conquest of Canaan, and the description of Israel's falling from grace, beginning in the book of Judges, would have edified the Israelites during the Babylonian exile. This is because the narrative tells the reader that their historiography, celebration of the Passover, appointment of judges and elders in a social hierarchy, formal priesthood, and law, were all established without a central Temple and centres of administration in the past. Such would have provided comfort to Israel during their exile, and was at the centre of their hope for restoration.

9.2. Descriptions of the Destruction of City Walls

The destruction and breaches of walls are described frequently throughout the ancient Near East. The clearest Israelite example of this is the destruction of the wall of

Jericho in Joshua 6. However, there are other Israelite examples, for example, Deuteronomy 3:4-6; Isaiah 25:12; Jeremiah 51:58; and 2 Chronicles 26:6. Notably, we will see that the destruction of Jericho's wall by YHWH illustrates an important aspect of Israelite ideology which is essential to their success in battle during the pre-monarchic period, that is, his kingship over Israel. First, however, it will be worthwhile to examine other ancient Near Eastern examples.

Tiglath-Pileser I said this of the city Hunusu, 'the three great walls which were constructed with baked bricks and the entire city I razed (and) destroyed. I turned (it) into a ruin hill and a heap.'[746] Assur-nâsir-pal is described saying

> The city was exceeding strong and was surrounded by three walls. The men trusted in their mighty walls and in their hosts, and did not come down, and did not embrace my feet. With battle and slaughter I stormed the city and captured it … At that time the cities of the land of Nirbi and their strong walls I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire.[747]

Aššur-nasir-pal II has this to say about the destruction of the city Pitura

> The city was very difficult. It was surrounded by two walls; its citadel was like a mountain summit … With the might and power of my combat troops I flew against them like the Storm Bird. I conquered the city.[748]

Sargon II's 'Letter to the God (Aššur),' reads

> Bubuzi, the fortress of Hundur, that was surrounded by two walls, erected … along the moat of the … of the tower, Ayyalê, Sinišpalâ, Siniunak, Arna, Sarnî, seven strong cities, together with thirty towns of their neighborhood, which lie at the foot of Mt. Ubianda, uncultivated mountains, I destroyed in their entirety; and I leveled to the ground.[749]

Sargon, with extraordinary hyperbole describes victories this way over and over again. Like all other ancient Near Eastern kings, however, he never attributes the destruction of such fortifications to a god, rather, he consistently attributes the destruction to his own power. This remains the case even in instances wherein the destruction of multiple cities is described at once. For example, he says, 'I approached

[746] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 81.
[747] Luckenbill, *ARAB,* Vol 1, 147.
[748] Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 98.
[749] Ibid, 115.

the land of Ayadu'[750] adding that there were thirty cities which 'were lined up on the shore of the "gallu" sea,'[751] and 'strong fortresses, erected among them, which rise above Mt. Arsidu and Mt. Mahunnia like stars.'[752] Continuing, he boasts: 'Their strong walls, together with 87 towns of their neighborhood I destroyed; I leveled to the ground.'[753] The multitude of cities described means that this is not dissimilar to the boasting of Moses in Deuteronomy 3:4-6:

> At that time we captured all his towns; there was no citadel that we did not take from them—sixty towns, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these were fortress towns with high walls, double gates, and bars, besides a great many villages. And we utterly destroyed them, as we had done to King Sihon of Heshbon, in each city utterly destroying men, women, and children.

Sargon's defeat of Zirkirtu says the following, 'I destroyed their walls, I set fire to the houses inside them, I destroyed them like a flood, I battered them into heaps of ruins.'[754] Esarhaddon similarly boasts: 'Those (places) whereof the wall was difficult, I broke their stones as though they were a potter's vessel.'[755] The walled city of Sidon, ruled by King Abdi-milkutti, was defeated the following way according to Esarhaddon: 'Like a storm I swept; its wall and its dwelling I tore out and cast into the sea, and made ruins of the place of its site.'[756] In describing the lack of consequence posed by walls and fortification ancient Near Eastern kings convey to those who read their stelae, tablets, or bas-reliefs that they are not safe from their power. Furthermore, the subtext is that any king with enough strength to destroy the fortifications of a city must surely be sanctioned and assisted by divine power. During the monarchic period the Hebrew Bible similarly attributes the destruction of a city wall to a king. 2 Chronicles 26:6 describes how King Uzziah, 'went out and made war against the

[750] Ibid, 117.
[751] Ibid.
[752] Ibid.
[753] Ibid.
[754] Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East,* 56
[755] Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal,* 23.
[756] Ibid, 16.

Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod.'[757] Deuteronomy 3:4-6, which describes the defeat of Og of Bashan's kingdom, similarly describes destruction of fortress towns with high walls.

Despite the enormous attention which has been given to the destruction of Jericho's wall only two verses actually mention it. They are Joshua 6:5 which describes YHWH's instructions to Joshua, and Joshua 6:20 which describes the execution of YHWH's orders. Joshua 6:5 says: ונפלה חומת העיר תחתיה, 'and the wall of the city shall fall flat.' Literally, 'flat' reads as 'under it' and the waw consecutive renders it imperfect, emphasizing that it will not be battered down, but will fall on its own, that is, YHWH will bring it down. Joshua 6:20 describes the victorious execution YHWH's order: ותפל החומה תחתיה, 'and the wall fell flat.' Again, 'flat' literally reads as 'under it' and it is rendered perfect by the presence of the waw consecutive. The phrase describes the fulfillment YHWH's promise that the wall would fall without human assistance.

This description of the fall of Jericho constitutes an example of kingship hyperbole being applied to YHWH. After examining the way that the root נפל is used in other circumstance, Dafna argued that Joshua 6 portrays a surrender, which is then later viewed as miraculous:

> It is clear to this author (as it was to the early commentators), that this episode – the surrender – and the story of the fall of the city was interpreted by the nation as a 'great miracle' (see Num. 26:10). Insofar as one can refer to the "miracle" of the collapse of the wall as it is related in Joshua 6, one cannot negate the possibility that it is actually a description of the surrender of the city.[758]

However, whenever the verb נפל denotes surrender it is always referring to people, indeed, this is the case for both of Dafna's own examples. He refers to Psalm 45:6 and

[757] 2 Chronicles 26:6. Cited also in Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East,* 88.

[758] Avraham Lorberbaum Dafna, 'Did the Wall of Jericho Collapse or Did the City Surrender?' *JBQ* 38, no. 1 (2010): 36-40, here 40.

18:39-40, which are both referencing kings.[759] In any case, Dafna is attempting to get to a historical reality which may, or may not, lie behind the text, and which is not of particular importance towards the way that the *text* reflects and reinforces Israelite ideology. Nonetheless, there is something interesting which lies within the text which appears to indicate that it possesses an ideological function rather than (or along with) a historical one.

Joshua 2:15 states that Rahab dwelled within the wall, ובחומה היא יושבת, 'and in the wall itself she dwelled.' Pitkänen believes this indicates

> that the house was by the town wall, or even part of the town wall. That the Israelites could be let down by rope through the window would be in line with the house being part of the wall. In other words, it may be that the town was delimited by houses in a casemate-type structure, rather than a wall proper, as in the Middle Bronze Age.[760]

However, after the wall falls, which is described in Joshua 6:20, Joshua tells the Israelites to collect Rahab and her family from her house (Joshua 6:22-4). Robinson thinks that this may derive from the splicing together of...two traditions.'[761] However, there is another possibility which does not require inferring different traditions being spliced together.

Citing Galtung and Ruge,[762] Malešević informs us that when war is recounted in the form of 'white' propaganda it usually includes

> a Manichaean dualist portrayal of actors and events (i.e. reducing the complexities of the conflict to only two mutually antagonistic parties), decontextualisation of violence (the emphasis on the spectacular, dramatic and irrational actions with no attempt to explain the sources of the conflict), a focus on individual acts of brutality or heroism while avoiding the structural causes, and presenting the cycles of violence as inevitable and unstoppable.[763]

This stands in stark contrast to 'black' propaganda, wherein lies are told deliberately.[764] The point of all propaganda, white or black, is, of course, to legitimise

[759] Dafna, 'Did the Wall of Jericho Collapse or Did the City Surrender?' 39.
[760] Pitkänen, *Joshua,* 124.
[761] Robinson, 'Rahab of Canaan – and Israel,' 260.
[762] J. Galtung and M.H. Ruge, 'The Structure of Foreign News. The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers,' *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1965): 64-91.
[763] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 209.
[764] Ibid, 207-8.

one's own side and delegitimise the enemy's.[765] This is to say that propaganda serves a counter-narrative function and could be said to be warfare on the level of narrative. This legitimisation further serves to legitimize the actions, that is, the violence required to overcome the enemy.[766] Ancient Near Eastern accounts of warfare describe the actions of gods and/or kings because it was assumed that gods were behind the outcomes of battle.[767] Similarly, it was assumed that the gods were responsible for kings along with the size and effectiveness of their armies. As such, battles are commemorated in ways which are consistent with what we characterize as 'white' propaganda. Israelite ideology around the kingship of YHWH is reinforced by the text's 'emphasis on the spectacular.'[768] We should not, however, presume that such texts intend to mislead. On the contrary, Bahrani tells us

> it is difficult to sustain the equation of ideology with falsehood. In many images, the event depicted is factually true but nonetheless ideological, rendering the dichotomy of ideology and representation untenable. Examples of narrative images from Antiquity that have been taken as ideological are the Assyrian reliefs and the narrative militaristic events on Trajan's Column, but it is certain that these narratives are based on actual historical events.[769]

Hebrew war narrative should probably be regarded in the same way. That is, one can hold concurrently that a battle between Israel and Jericho occurred, and that the narrative is ideological. Having said this, one should be cautious not to reduce the text to the merely propagandistic. Similarly we should avoid the view which maintains that the text intends to mislead readers about the historical events which may underscore it. Rather, Hebrew biblical accounts of warfare resemble that which Malešević has said about propaganda: 'most propaganda serves as a cognitive, moral and legitimising map utilised by those who already subscribe to the values espoused

[765] Ibid, 209.
[766] Ibid.
[767] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 183.
[768] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 209.
[769] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 67.

by the propaganda.'[770] That is, rather than deceive, the text tells a story of conquest in a way which reinforces beliefs which are already maintained by the Israelites, particularly concerning their god, king, and the land. There are two things being conveyed by the text simultaneously. That is, the text tells that a battle took place, something the reader is meant to take historically, yet at the same time, there is an ideological message being conveyed as well. Bahrani explains that in such accounts of warfare, 'there is usually the historical event of a war, real and documentable according to contemporary notions of history, and there is the ideological message of justification, glory, and victory.'[771] Butler conveys the same regarding Joshua 6 saying

> the form of the narrative would not be etiological saga but popular war narrative, ridiculing the enemy, while encouraging the local populace by reporting how easy victory had been won with God's help.[772]

Malešević reminds us that 'the principal target of war propaganda is the domestic audience and occasionally an audience of already sympathetic external organisations and states.'[773] The domestic audience of the books of Joshua and Judges is, obviously, the Israelites. Therefore, descriptions of the miraculous, such as that described in Joshua 6, reinforce the ideology to which they already subscribe, that is, that YHWH is both their god and king, and fights for Israel as ancient Near Eastern kings and gods do. Also, as we have seen, it is *kings* who win battles according to ancient Near Eastern annals and so the same has to be shown for YHWH.

The text, therefore, reinforces Israelite ideology with a description of YHWH's felling the wall. This further buttresses the divine mandate given to Israel to carry out war, and emphasizes YHWH's kingship. Furthermore, Israel's social

[770] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 202.
[771] Bahrani, *Rituals of War*, 59.
[772] Butler, *Joshua*, 68.
[773] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 206.

organisation is reinforced by the narrative so far as the text conveys the success given to YHWH's representatives: the prophets, priests and officers.

Given that it was the stories of YHWH and his successes in combat that inspired Rahab to assist the Israelites (or fearfully coerced her into it), it can really be said that YHWH brought the walls down, that is, made them inconsequential. Yadin tells us that there were five ways in which ancient Near Eastern peoples overcame the defensive fortifications of their enemies. Namely: 'penetration by force from above the fortifications, penetration through the barrier, penetration from below, siege, penetration by ruse.'[774] Yadin tell us that

> penetration by ruse had as its aim the conquest of a city without the dangers of the first three methods and without the delay of the fourth. Men of a hostile army would seek to infiltrate into the city by cunning, using some trick to gain the confidence of the defenders. Once inside, they would overpower the guards and open the city gates to the waiting attackers.[775]

There are three reasons for conjecturing—though admittedly it cannot be proven—that a penetration by ruse might have occurred at Jericho, if such a battle did indeed take place.[776] First, the text tells us that Rahab assisted Israel's spies and left a crimson cord hanging from her window so they would know precisely where to re-enter again (Joshua 2:21). Clearly, circling the city seven times would have given Israelite soldiers ample opportunities to do precisely that. Particularly after the city was lured into complacency by Israel's re-exhibiting the strange behaviour of circling the city without striking for an entire week beforehand. Whilst we do not have particular attestation of this being done purposely in the ancient Near East we do

[774] Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Discovery* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London, 1963), 16.

[775] Yadin, *The Art of Warfare*, 18.

[776] Which also cannot be proven conclusively given discrepancies in the archaeological record with respect to dating and what is visible at the Tell es-Sultan during the Late Bronze and Iron Age I—the purported time of Joshua and Judges. See Pekka Pitkänen, 'Ethnicity, Assimilation and the Israelite Settlement,' *TynBul* 55, no. 2 (2004): 161-182, here, 162; W. G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 7-21, 26-35, 44-45; K. Kenyon, 'Jericho' in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Cart, 1993), 679-80; and, Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed,* 72-96.

know that such a tactic has been used in military history. The first century Roman senator and general, Frontinus, speaks of this in his *Strategemata* and gives us an example:

> When Domitius Calvinus was besieging Lueria, a town of the Ligurians, protected not only by its location and siege-works, but also by the superiority of its defenders, he instituted the practice of marching frequently around the walls with all his forces, and then marching back to camp. When the townspeople had been induced by this routine to believe that the Roman commander did this for the purpose of drill, and consequently took no precautions against his efforts, he transformed this practice of parading into a sudden attack, and gaining possession of the walls, forced the inhabitants to surrender.[777]

It would only require a small and unexpected force to take out the entrance's guards during the distraction of the horn blasts, which could also be taken as a signal to those who had infiltrated Jericho to strike. Secondly, the text tells us, as we have already discussed, that the wall – or at least part of it – was still standing after the wall was said to have fallen flat. Many have noticed this discrepancy, which again, is not a discrepancy when we consider the third reason, namely, that this is 'white' as opposed to 'black' propaganda.[778]

The text exhibits two non-contradictory but nonetheless important themes in tension. On the one hand it expresses the help that Rahab extended to Israel, while stopping short of giving every specific detail; on the other hand it attributes the victory to YHWH, which is only appropriate given that Rahab's fear of YHWH motivates both her 'confession of faith' and her desire to help the Israelites for the sake of both herself and her family. Robinson tells us that

> the narrative of the mission of the spies and of Rahab's intervention sits oddly with the story of the settlement of the land as a divinely directed conquest; "it sticks out", says Boling, "like a sore thumb." What room is there in the supernatural tale told in chapters 1 and 6 of Joshua for the covert human action of chapter 2? … It has been plausibly suggested that Josh 2 derives from a tradition about the fall of Jericho which attributed it to a betrayal from within

[777] "*Domitius Calvinus, cum obsideret Lueriam, oppidum Ligurum, non tantum situ et operibus, verum etiam propugnatorum praestantia tutum, circumire muros frequenter omnibus copiis instituit easdemque reducere in castra. Qua consuetudine inductis ita oppidanis, ut crederent exercitationis id gratia facere Ronianum, et ob hoc nihil ab eo conatu caventibus, morem ilium obambulandi in subitum direxit impetum, occupatisque moenibus expressit, ut se ipsos dederent oppidani*." Frontinus, *The Strategems and The Aqueducts of Rome*, ed. Mary B. McElwain, trans. Charles E. Bennett (William Henemann: London, 1925), 208-9.

[778] Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence*, 209.

> by Rahab, rather than to the miraculous intervention narrated in chapter 6. Just as an inhabitant by Bethel shows spies the way in that city (Judg 1,22-26), so in this tradition Rahab will have used her scarlet cord to guide the Israelites into Jericho, perhaps by marking a weak point in the wall.[779]

There are many supporters of this view, including de Vaux; Möhlenbrink; Noth; Gray; and Weippert.[780] It should also be noted that Joshua is described using penetration by ruse in Joshua 8, that is, Ai. Which is to say that given there is a precedent for thinking that Joshua was inclined to use penetration by ruse, there is no reason to presume that a penetration by ruse did not take place at Jericho. Joshua 8:1-9 describes Joshua giving his orders concerning the way they would lure the fighting men out of Ai in order to take the city. Then Joshua 8:10-23 describes its successful implementation.

9.3. Conclusions

We have seen that cities were the places from where a group's ideology was most proliferated. Their messages were conveyed from the central temples of the city-states and throughout a group's entire social organisation. City-states possessed obvious military structures and defenses but they were also the space wherein a group's ideology was most manifest. Therefore, urbicide was essential to the defeat of a given enemy. Included within such defeats were descriptions of the destruction of city walls and structures, including their burning. The burning of defeated cities was essential as it melted the bricks that possessed inscriptions and reliefs conveying the ideology of a defeated people. Central to such defeat was the destruction of temples along with the destruction and removal of the statues of the gods of given city-states.

[779] Robinson, 'Rahab of Canaan – and Israel,' 259.
[780] Roland de Vaux, *Histoire Ancienne d'Israel*, Études Bibliques (Paris: Gabalda, 1971), 550 n 12. Cited also in Robinson, 'Rahab of Canaan,' 259. n 11.

This chapter has illustrated the omnipresence of this theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including the cursing of destroyed cities meant to keep defeated people from rebuilding them. It then described the presence of the same theme throughout the books of Joshua and Judges. It is essential to the argument of this thesis as it is urbicide which particularly conveys the concern with the destruction of, not just a given populace, but their respective ideology upon which their hierarchy of authority and social structure depend. That is, it most aptly illustrates the way that the factors which underscore a group's capacity for organised violence are deliberately attacked and undermined throughout the ancient Near East.

10. Conclusion

The sociological underpinnings of warfare help us to fully appreciate the normative elements of ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts. The sociology of warfare aids our understanding of why war narrative was essential to ancient Near Eastern military projects and why they are distinct. Warfare is a liminal state rather than the norm, the typical rules, which govern daily praxis, are often overturned; activities, which are taboo, become demanded. Because the typical conventions of a culture or society are overturned during times of war, the heuristic key to understanding war narrative can only *be* war.

Previous approaches to understand these texts have been dominated by attempts to understand the texts ethically, that is, to reconcile stories, such as those in Joshua and Judges, with mainstream Christian and Jewish values. While some scholars have made efforts to contextualize Hebrew Biblical warfare accounts within those of the ancient Near East, they have not incorporated sociological insights concerning the emergence of organized violence.

This thesis gave substantial attention to the sociology of warfare, as it is warfare itself which often forms the context from which these narratives appear. This included considerable discussion of how the term 'war' is defined, as it is central to the disagreements among historians, sociologists, and sociobiologists. We discussed current sociological insights into those factors required if human beings are to act effectively as an organised fighting unit capable of killing (that is, despite moral apprehension) and defeating an opposing force. It was shown that other approaches, including attempts to understand the texts from an ethical view, usually anachronistically, leave numerous outlying elements which then need to be

'explained' after the fact. This thesis, however, demonstrated that ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including those in Joshua and Judges, reinforced those sociological underpinnings and, therefore, contributed to the military efficacy of their respective audiences. The third chapter included an examination of the way that the development of the sociological foundations of organised violence was on display within ancient Near Eastern sources. This was meant to offset anticipated arguments that suggest applying current sociological insights to ancient Near Eastern evidence is anachronistic. Furthermore, it illustrated the processual nature of the sociological factors in question.

Chapter four described the incorporation of elements of statehood within Israel, which are required, according to the sociology of warfare, if large-scale organised violence is to emerge. This chapter outlined the development of the sociological underpinnings (again, not 'forces' or 'causes') of organised violence within the narrative arc of the Hebrew Bible. This thesis showed that the texts from Exodus to Deuteronomy reveal the same processual development of the sociological underpinnings among the Israelites as that of their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. This led us to an appreciation of the way that the narrative reflects reality *vis-à-vis* the sociology of warfare, which is important because it helps us to understand the value of narrative in glorifying and maintaining the required social underpinnings if a group is to be effective militarily.

Chapter five, concerning the divine mandate and the kingship of YHWH, considered the most central theme which served to justify, morally, the violence carried out. Here Assyrian, Hittite, and Egyptian examples were discussed before an examination of the same theme within the books of Joshua and Judges. This discussion led inevitably to a consideration of kingship in the ancient Near East and

the distinctness of the kingship of YHWH as a theme in the books of Joshua and Judges. It became apparent that YHWH's kingship was an essential component of Israel's manifestation of the sociological factors under consideration. Although YHWH's kingship is a theme that runs throughout Joshua and Judges its relationship to Israel's military efficacy (that is to the narrative's audience) appeared to have gone overlooked in the scholarship concerning these texts. It is important to reiterate that this thesis considered the role of the narrative rather than any purported history in the text. That is, this thesis was not attempting to prove that Israel, as described in Joshua and Judges, actually possessed the sociological factors in question, or that the warfare described was actually carried out. Rather, the concern of this thesis was to reveal the presence of these sociological underpinnings within the text. It argued that to the extent that these factors are reflected in the text they were reinforced amongst the text's intended audience to the benefit of Israel militarily. Whether they are a reflection of the presence of these factors within an historical pre-monarchic Israel requires delving into issues of dating and the delineation of sources in Joshua and Judges, which, due to the immensity of the task and the disagreements among scholars, was admitted must be left for a separate project. Although, it should be stated that this thesis will likely have repercussions in this area given that it maintains that the texts are most consistent with what one would expect to emerge from a military milieu given the clear presence and reinforcement of the sociological factors described.

The sixth chapter discussed both divine assistance in battle and its relationship to obedience. It illustrated the ubiquitous nature of this theme throughout the ancient Near East, which has been discussed in other scholarship. What had not been elucidated, however, is the relationship between assistance in battle, or even the sole

waging of warfare by a god, and obedience as a requirement if such assistance was to be available. This chapter revealed the way in which obedience to a king (in this case YHWH) in the books of Joshua and Judges was particularly necessary if there was to be divine assistance in battle. It further argued that obedience, even to laws which were not immediately seen as military, was not mere spiritual piety, but was essential to the entire hierarchy of authority as well as the ideology which upheld it. It was via the theme of divine assistance in battle that the writers/redactors of Joshua and Judges expressed the necessity of obedience. Such obedience, it was argued, was essential to Israel's hierarchy of authority and the ideology that underscored it; and, therefore, to Israel's capacity to wage war.

Fear is a common theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts and the Hebrew Bible's accounts of warfare are no exception. Therefore, fear, was the focus of the seventh chapter of this thesis. The fear, which is on display in the narratives of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts, both emboldened those who constitute the group from which the narratives came (whether Hittite, Assyrian or Egyptian) but also impacted potential enemies. That is, those who were exposed to the bas-reliefs, inscriptions, and stelae which conveyed messages meant to control a defeated populace, or terrify a group which might come under attack. The same is on display in Hebrew narrative described in Joshua and Judges. Similar to the two preceding themes, this theme also reinforced both the social organisation, including the hierarchy of authority, and the ideology (largely by way of the texts which describe the ban) necessary to uphold the social structure required to be successful militarily. This chapter illustrated the necessity of 'performative' violence if it was to have the desired terrifying effect. Included within such performative violence was the way that a defeated populace was treated and put on bold and arrogant display in

order to terrify potential enemies. Of particular ideological consequence was the treatment of defeated ancient Near Eastern kings, something YHWH was conspicuously immune from. Such fear was not merely meant to terrorize potential enemies and embolden soldiers within the in-group. Rather, it was also a means of reminding those exposed to such warfare accounts of the hierarchy in which they played a committed role, and the ideology (e.g. the divinely imbued authority of a king or judge), which sustained the social structure essential to Israel's military survival.

Chapter eight concerned demonization of enemies and was particularly dependent upon a clear understanding of the contents of chapter three. One needed already to be aware of the difficulty and, therefore, the necessity of the sociological elements necessary in order to turn human beings into organised groups of disciplined killers. An essential component of an ideology that would lead to, or encourage, violence is the belief that one's enemies are evil. The divine mandate, described in detail in chapter five, was the underscoring ideological component necessary if a social organisation was to believe their cause was just. Its antithesis meant precisely that the enemy's cause was unjust. However, if this was to be true, then it necessarily followed that the enemy was evil. Furthermore, contrary to the opinion of many, it was demonstrable (again, this was discussed in detail in chapter three) that human beings are inefficient and unmotivated killers; that is, without a potent legitimizing ideology and an efficient bureaucracy of coercion human beings do not kill in a fashion which could be called warfare (i.e., in large-scale organised way). This chapter illustrated that demonization of the enemy was an essential aspect of such potent legitimizing ideologies, and described its presence throughout the ancient Near East and within the books of Joshua and Judges. It ought to be noted, again, that this

thesis discussed narrative and no attempt was made to either prove the existence of an actual invasion of Canaan, nor to discern whether the Canaanites could actually be described as morally inferior to Israel or not. That is, it was not the intention of this thesis to argue that the Israelites were no different, morally, from their ancient Near Eastern counterparts; rather, it illustrated the way that the same narrative theme is present.

The destruction, burning and cursing of conquered cities was discussed in chapter nine. Cities were the places in which a group's ideology and social organisation were most prominently displayed, and where a group's ideology was most proliferated—from the central temples of the city-states throughout a group's entire social organisation. Along with their obvious outward military structures and defenses, they were the space wherein a populace's ideology—the same ideology essential to their capacity to fight—was most manifest. Therefore, urbicide is a central component of the defeat of a given enemy. Included within such defeats are descriptions of city walls and structures, including their burning. The burning of defeated cities was essential as it melted the bricks that possessed inscriptions and reliefs conveying the ideology of a defeated people. Central to such defeat was the destruction of temples along with the destruction and removal of the statues of the gods of given city-states. This chapter illustrated the ubiquity of this theme throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, including the cursing of destroyed cities meant to keep defeated people from rebuilding them. It then described the presence of the same theme throughout the books of Joshua and Judges. It was essential to the argument of this thesis as it was urbicide, which particularly betrayed the concern with the destruction of, not just a given populace, but their respective ideology upon which their hierarchy of authority and social structure depended. That

is, it most aptly illustrated the way that the factors which underscore a group's capacity for organised violence were deliberately attacked and undermined as a matter of course throughout the ancient Near East.

The research and writing of this thesis led to a considerable number of insights which have briefly been described by other scholars, but which were never elucidated fully without sociological theory concerning warfare. These insights include the way that divine assistance as a narrative theme reinforced obedience; the relationship between belief in YHWH's kingship, Israel's social hierarchy, and Israel's military efficacy; the connection between urbicide and ideological destruction; the distinct nature of the Ark of the Covenant relative to the statues of Israel's ancient Near Eastern counterparts towards the protection of Israel's ideology, and the stirring of fear in their enemies; the way that the destruction of Jericho's wall exhibited YHWH's kingship; and the role of, specifically, performative violence in the maintenance of Israel's ideology and social organisation to the benefit of Israel's military effectiveness.

Descriptions of warfare persist throughout the Hebrew Bible as well in the extra-biblical texts from the ancient Near East. This thesis sought to discern what was common among ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts, and what was distinctive about the accounts of warfare in the books of Joshua and Judges. While others had examined the Hebrew texts concerning conquest and warfare the purpose of such scholarship was often to gain an ethical understanding of the texts by answering the question: How could God (whether as a literary figure in the text, or as an actual being) command or allow the violence described in the Hebrew Bible? This thesis argued, however, that the texts ought first to be understood for what they are, that is war narrative, and within their wider purpose *qua* war narrative. While others had

sought to understand biblical accounts of warfare in their ancient Near Eastern context, such studies lacked the benefit of current sociological theory concerning the emergence of warfare. This thesis brought sociological insights into the emergence of large-scale organised violence, that is, warfare, to bear on the ancient Near Eastern texts and the books of Joshua and Judges. In doing so, this thesis illustrated that there are persistent themes that run throughout ancient Near Eastern warfare accounts. These themes are equally present in the books of Joshua and Judges and they appear to reflect and contribute to the social, ideological, and military forces necessary for the achievement of ancient Israelite military goals. This thesis has exposed new territories for potential exploration. These include an examination of the way that the prophets may contribute to, and/or detract from the themes discussed in specific circumstances in order to encourage, or discourage, Israel from engaging in warfare; and the presence of the themes described in this thesis in the Book of Psalms.

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