Politics and Covenant in the Divine Davidic Kinship:
A Diachronic Approach to Covenant in the Book of Samuel

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This thesis is submitted to

the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Religious Studies

Hebrew Bible

Christ's College

21 February 2023

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Faculty of Divinity Degree Committee.

Abstract - Politics and Covenant in the Divine Davidic Kinship: A Diachronic Approach to Covenant in the Book of Samuel, by Sophia Ruth Carter Johnson

Since the Covenant Centrality movement of the late 20th century, Hebrew Bible scholarship has obsessed over categorising different covenants by their formal features, such as conditional and unconditional or unilateral and bilateral. However, these classifications assume that function follows form and thus carry an inherently static conception of covenant. A diachronic approach to the study of covenant in the Hebrew Bible that remains sensitive to the narrative at each editorial level offers a dynamic understanding of the concept as it changes not only over time but between different literary settings. This thesis critiques and advances studies of covenant by presenting a new model for interpreting "berith" both as a literary device and as a textual component, specifically a legal formulation with ongoing consequences, with a view to better interpret the biblical texts as changing historical documents. The book of Samuel, and particularly covenants with David, offer a prime case study, due to their complex composition and innerbiblical reception history. Redaction criticism of narratives describing covenants between David and Jonathan, Abner, and the elders of Israel demonstrates the development of the concept of covenant from a simple bond to an oath of political loyalty or allegiance. These various individual covenants build up to the vision of an undisputed Davidic dynasty cast in 2 Sam 7. Jonathan's pledge of loyalty in 1 Sam 20 takes away any future Saulide claim to the throne by submitting his descendants to David's. Abner's disavowal of Ish-bosheth and covenant rendering service to David in 2 Sam 3 facilitates the administrative transition from within the standing leadership, keeping David from charge of sedition. Finally, the covenant with the elders of Israel accompanying David's anointment at Hebron in 2 Sam 5 brings all the tribes together under the monarchy, thus linking the ideal united kingdom of Israel with the Davidic kingship. Together they form a legal schema that ungirds a Deuteronomistic ideal of Davidic kingship over a united Israel, grounded in the idealised history of the early Israelite monarchy but looking toward a future restoration. Similar to Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties, the Deuteronomistic writers emphasise the legitimacy and authority of the covenants, which lend explanation, censure, and hope for the future of the people of Israel. I argue that the Deuteronomistic editors adapted covenant to the form of loyalty oaths employed by their imperial neighbours to make claims on those they considered to fall under "United Israel" in anticipation of the re-establishment of Israel's royal dynasty following the exile. This thesis therefore aims to redirect scholarship on covenant by investigating the purpose and functions of legal forms within the covenant texts of Samuel, elucidating the political significance of these texts in their ancient Near Eastern landscape, and contextualising the stories of Samuel in the historiographical narratives of the early Israelite monarchy as they are presented in the wider Deuteronomistic History.

For Mom, Dad, and Mallory

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Acknowledgements

The research and preparation of this thesis were generously supported by grants from the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*) and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. I could not have written it without the support of a myriad of colleagues, friends, and family.

First, beginning in my high school scriptures class, thank you to Amanda Baumgartner for stirring in me an enthusiasm for holy texts and for their complicated history; to Joe Henderson for introducing me to the wonders, discomforts, and challenges of the Hebrew Bible and for patient mentorship throughout my undergraduate years; to Ed Curtis for imparting to me a love of Hebrew; to Daniel E. Kim for believing in me and setting me on the path to Cambridge; and to Charlie Trimm for modelling an empathetic teacher and respectful scholar and for supporting me every step of the way. Many thanks to all my teachers throughout the years—from Seattle to La Mirada to Jerusalem to Cambridge—I could not have come this far without you.

Second, I am deeply grateful for all who helped in some way with research, writing, and editing in preparation of this manuscript: Diana Paulding, Tyler Horton, Belinda Tan, Chandler Collins, Saul Olyan, Hindy Najman, Paul Michael Kurtz, Graham Davies, Marieke Dhont, Konrad Schmid, Andrew Tobolowsky, Benjamin J.M. Johnson, Marietta van der Tol, Jeremy Hutton, Lily Lerman, Dorota Molin, Hannah Black, Louise Wells, Savannah Pine, Jodie Coates, and Lieske Huits. Additional thanks to the Book of Samuel section of the 2020 Virtual Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, the Biblical Law section of the 2021 Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, and the anonymous reviewers of my *Journal of Biblical Literature* article, for helping me to hone the ideas presented herein.

Third, thank you to my Hebrew Bible colleagues in the Cambridge Faculty of Divinity, especially to Jim Aitken and Katharine Dell, to my *Doktorgeschwister*, Olga Fabrikant-Burke, Fiona Lau, Christie Gilfeather, Kathelijne Steens, and Jake Deans, and to the members of the *Alttestamentliches Doktorandenkolloquium* of the Theologische Fakultät at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, especially to Reinhard Müller, Reinhard Kratz, and Peter Portzig, for their insightful feedback, professional expertise, and continual support of the project.

Special thanks to my parents, Mark and Susie Johnson, to my sister, Mallory, and to my Grandma Jo and late Papa Glenn, all of whom financially and emotionally supported me throughout the PhD programme and helped me to be the scholar I am today; to Logan Williams for many years of camaraderie, encouragement, and academic writing expertise; and to Nick Posegay for just about everything else.

Last but greatest of all, thank you to my supervisor, Nathan MacDonald, for his many years of guidance, insight, support, and kindness. I could not have asked for a sharper mind or more gracious soul as my *Doktorvater*.

Introduction

If a person who knew nothing of the Hebrew Bible read only the scholarly literature on the so-called "Davidic covenant" in 2 Samuel 7, especially from the late 20th century, they would be quite surprised coming to the text itself to discover that the word "covenant" (Hebrew בְּרִית) is nowhere present—not in the Masoretic text or any ancient witness. There are of course texts elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible that interpret the divine promise as a covenant, such as 2 Sam 23.5, 2 Chr 7.17-18, 13.5, 21.7, Jer 33.17-26, and Pss 89, 132, to name but a few. Yet little work has been done to understand how this interpretation came about and indeed what it meant for the divine promise to be interpreted as such. How did the concept of בְּרִית come to be associated with Nathan's oracle, in which Yahweh recounts the history of his presence with the people of Israel, instructs David not to build him a temple, and instead promises that his descendants will remain on the throne forever? What did it mean historically, narratively, or theologically to these later interpreters that the promise functioned as a בְּרִית? And was this significantly different than the way it had previously been understood to function? If so, how did understanding change—of the promise, yes, but also of בְּרִית?

These questions have primarily been neglected because of the field's historically static, monolithic, and synchronic approach to the concept of covenant. Much of English-language, Anglo-American scholarship is still dominated by Frank Moore Cross' model proposed in "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel," which sees covenant as an early legal means of extending "fictive kinship."[1] In my MPhil thesis and subsequent articles, I demonstrated the issues of this model: not only is Cross' theory based on outdated Orientalist anthropological data, but his hyper-focus on kinship often obscures the narrative setting of covenant texts, the pre-established relations between its parties, and the diachronic development of such texts.[2] Continental European scholarship, especially German-language, largely follows a model more focused on social obligation and bondage. Such a model represents a return to Julius Wellhausen's view that covenant was a later invention through which ancient Israel reinterpreted their relationship with their God during the disruption of the exile. This Continental theory proves more dynamic in exegesis, but it is not without its own problems:

[1] Frank Moore Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel," in *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3-21.

[2] Sophia R.C. Johnson, "Obligation and Covenant in Ancient Israel: The Concept of Covenant in the Oath of David and Jonathan" (MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, 2019); ibid., "Kingship and Covenant: Reconsidering the Oath of David and Jonathan," *Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL)* 141, no. 4 (2022): 635-51; ibid., "Blood of the Covenant? The Orientalist Origins of the Anglo-American Conception of Covenant," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (under review).*

conceptually, the influence of antinomianism and related antisemitic undertones, and redactionally, the tendency to write off any text containing בְּרִית as late. Overall, Cross' "fictive kinship" model is more convenient for systematic interpretation and biblical theology, which is likely why it remains popular, especially among confessional scholars.

Where interpretation is not monolithic, scholars are instead obsessed with categorising and schematizing different "types" of covenants. In the swell of the late 20th-century Covenant Centrality movement, which found covenant in practically every corner of the Hebrew Bible (even where, like 2 Sam 7, בְּרִית was not present), a number of taxonomies and classifications were put forward in order to account for the variety of characteristics and circumstances they associated with the concept. I address these systems in more detail in the following section, but dichotomies such as "conditional" vs "unconditional," "lateral" vs "bilateral," will be familiar to anyone who has ventured into the secondary literature on covenant in the past 50 years. I believe such preoccupation with typology is in fact a reaction to the problems scholars' sense in the systematic interpretation of covenant. Understanding covenant as such a universal concept creates tension between its common-ness and thus frequent semantic appearance and maintaining a degree of similitude and coherence. But scholars have begun to recognise that the differences in form and narrative function between their examples across the Hebrew corpus are quite significant. Consequently, they try to group these differences to pass them off as methodical variations and preserve the appearance of an organised system.

However, these systems only marginally take into account both significant diachronic development and narrative creative license. As with most academic categories, even if scholars acknowledge that they are mainly heuristic devices, everything is far too neat to reflect centuries of changing cultures and opinions. To further complicate the matter, unlike the ancient Near Eastern legal literature that is used for comparative work, the vast majority of covenants in the Hebrew Bible are not extant texts in themselves but reported in the course of narrative prose or poetry. As such, they play a double role as literary devices, sometimes on the level of metaphor or plot catalyst, which makes the concept flexible in the hands of the author. Thus, covenant can sometimes become less of a concrete object and more of a symbol, muddling comparisons both between literary examples, as such a symbol may have different meanings in different texts, and with extant ancient Near Eastern legal forms that do not share a literary context. The simple difference between the third-person voice of biblical narrative and the first-person voice of much of the legal literature used for comparison

perfectly exemplifies the issue. And yet, that same dynamism does not mean that narrative examples of covenant need be ruled out from comparison entirely—only that we recognise the Hebrew literature as playing by its own rules. Where stiff formal categories and comparisons have failed, a more literary and diachronically-sensitive approach is needed to re-evaluate our understanding of covenant.

Furthermore, while much energy has gone into evaluating the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 as a covenant, no systematic study has been undertaken to understand בְּרִית in the book of Samuel, let alone its diachronic development. This is perhaps due to the fact that (aside from the promise) Samuel is not considered a covenant-heavy book; Deuteronomy or Hosea are more likely to spring to mind. But a quick survey of the word בְּרִית reveals that throughout the Hebrew Bible no other human individual is reported as party to so many covenants as David in Samuel. He is only narrowly outdone by Yahweh, depending on how you count the covenants. What is more, as one of the most heavily-edited books in the Hebrew Bible, Samuel presents a unique opportunity to understand the conception, function, and use of בְּרִית at different redactional stages. Even setting aside the ark of the covenant, which has its own complex history with בְּרִית, narratives reporting a covenant between David and other human parties range from simple passages to thoroughly edited, genre-mixing accounts.[3] In particular, the covenants between David and Jonathan, Abner, and the elders of Israel present themselves as excellent multifaceted and redaction-layered test cases. Since these narratives are featured in the chapters leading up to 2 Sam 7, a diachronic study of covenant in the book of Samuel presents a hitherto unappreciated opportunity for not only understanding how the divine promise came to be read as a covenant but also the complex composition and editorial history behind this interpretation.

The divine promise to David in 2 Sam 7 remains one of the most fraught passages in redaction criticism. From the grammatical shifts in number, person, and voice, the several repetitions throughout the passage, and the near contradictory themes put forward in different parts, it is clearly a composite text. A number of important issues and ideologies known from other places in the Hebrew Bible and its editorial activity can be found in this chapter, including the so-called "name theology," intolerant monolatry, the Deuteronomistic ideal of rest, and of course the idea of a perpetual Davidic line. As such, the passage's many connections to other texts within the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) prevent it from being

[3] On the history of the ark in Samuel and its complex relationship to the term בְּרִית, see Peter Portzig, *Die Lade Jahwes im Alten Testament und in den Texten vom Toten Meer* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 104-183.

dated independently; how one divides and dates the different redactions of 2 Sam 7 will be dependent on how one divides and dates similar redactions in Kings, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, and so on. It should come as no surprise, then, that despite numerous attempts over the years to explain how the different layers fit together, no diachronic solution has gained a majority following. To do justice to the complexity of the composition and redaction—not to mention reception—history of 2 Sam 7 would take a whole book in and of itself. However, exploring possible connections between the divine promise and other texts in Samuel reporting individual covenants with David provides key benchmarks in order to date relative redactional layers. A diachronic study of covenant in Samuel is by no means an end-all solution for the puzzling past of the 2 Sam 7, but it will lay the groundwork for a more robust reconstruction of the passage's textual and interpretive development over time.

A History of Covenant and a Way Forward

In trying to define "covenant" (בְּרִית), scholarship has traditionally been divided into two camps: covenant is either "obligation" or "relationship." Julius Wellhausen was the first to describe covenant along these lines, as a later Deuteronomic device used to formalise Israelite religion from its "natural," tribal roots.[4] Though his model for the historical development of Israel was abandoned, Wellhausen's views were later defended by Lothar Perlitt and Ernst Kutsch, who further argued that covenant was a form of legal obligation imposed or undertaken by a single party.[5] Their conception came to characterise the opinion of the German academy but was also championed within British circles by Ernest W. Nicholson.[6] Contemporary scholars such as Hermann Spieckermann continue to integrate the view into current theological scholarship.[7] On the other side, Sigmund Mowinckel was perhaps the first to depart from Wellhausen by describing covenant as the ritual creation of a relationship,

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[4] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian, 1957), esp. 417-18, 469; see also Ernest W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 3-7.

[5] Lothar Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testamentum* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1969); Ernst Kutsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz: Untersuchungen zum sogenannten Bund im Alten Testament* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973).

[6] Ernest W. Nicholson, "Israelite Religion in the Pre-Exilic Period: A Debate Renewed," in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane,* eds. J.D. Martin and P.R. Davies (JSOT 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 3-34; ibid., "Covenant in a Century since Wellhausen," *Oudtestamentische studiën/Old Testament Studies (OTS)* 24 (1985): 54-69.

[7] Reinhard Feldmeier and Herrman Spieckermann, *God of the Living: A Biblical Theology*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Waco: Baylor, 2011), esp. 447-68.

insisting on a cultic rather than simply ethical function.[8] Dennis J. McCarthy synthesized the relational aspect by applying it to the political and royal spheres, while Paul Kalluveettil expanded the theory to encompass all different types of relationships.[9] This view came to a head in the work of Frank Moore Cross; drawing upon the late 19th-early 20th century anthropological work of William Robertson Smith, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim, he asserted that covenant was a legal means by which to extend fictive kinship to another, which he argues undergirds all ancient Israelite social organisation.[10] His collaborator David Noel Freedman emphasised the involvement of both parties as a way of committing not only to the content of the covenant but to its proponent.[11] Thus, recent scholarship, epitomised in Scott Hahn's biblical theology of covenant, define the debate between covenant as "unilateral obligation" and "bilateral relationship."[12]

Yet, this dichotomy is not altogether fair. One cannot speak of obligation without speaking of relationship, even if the former is only a device or article of the latter. Hahn cannot help but use the word "relationship" in every description of an "obligationist" definition.[13] The contrast is mostly imposed by those from the "relational" camp who label their opponent's view "legalistic" and "reductionistic."[14] For these, often confessional, scholars, the characterisation of the covenant-maker is at stake; a legal interpretation risks painting the biblical heroes and, more poignantly, Yahweh as cold, imposing deal-cutters. Focus on the relationship—and for several of them, a pseudo-kinship relationship—makes for a much more appealing biblical narrative. But the two conceptions are not exclusive, and indeed the observations of both parties are needed to present an accurate picture of the varied spectrum of covenant texts within the Hebrew Bible. In fact, many scholars have developed

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[8] Sigmund Mowinckel, *Religion and Cult: The Old Testament and the Phenomenology of Religion* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), 18.

[9] Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); Paul Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant: A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982).

[10] Cross, "Kinship and Covenant." See also Johannes Behm and Gottfried Quell, "διαθήκη," *TDNT* 2:114.

[11] David Noel Freedman and David Miano, "The People of the New Covenant," in *The Concept of Covenant in the Second Temple Period,* eds. Stanley E. Porter and J.C.R. de Roo (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 7-26.

[12] Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 28.

[13] For example, his description of Perlitt and Kutsch view of a late, Deuteronomic concept of *berit* "in the relationship of Israel and Yahweh" (*Kinship by Covenant*, 2).

[14] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 2-3, 28.

taxonomies by which to stratify different types of covenants based on their interactions with both obligation and relationship.

Most covenant taxonomies are grounded in comparisons with other ancient Near Eastern legal literature. George Mendenhall first identified parallels with Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties, later followed by McCarthy with Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties, especially from seventh-century King Esarhaddon, both of which were claimed to be paradigmatic for biblical legal literature.[15] They each outline similar constituent elements, such as a preamble, stipulations, witnesses, and curses, which they both compare to the structure of covenants associated with law codes, like that at Sinai. On the other hand, Moshe Weinfeld draws from the language and form of various royal land grants to highlight a more relational, self-giving tone which he sees exemplified in the so-called Davidic covenant.[16]

As is already evident in these few examples, one of the major issues of comparative taxonomies is the lack of consensus on the kinds of ancient Near Eastern literature appropriate for comparison. In his recent survey of the three major works on ancient Near Eastern treaty traditions and biblical covenants—that is, Kenneth Kitchen and Paul Lawrence's *Treaty, Law, and Covenant in the Ancient Near East*, Amnon Altman's *Political Treaties of the Ancient Near East*, and Dominique Charpin's *«Tu es de mon sang». Les alliances dans le Proche-Orient Ancien*—William S. Morrow notes that none of them agree on the criteria for comparable parallels between ancient Near Eastern texts and covenants in the Hebrew Bible.[17] For example, Altman takes into account other legal forms besides treaties such as loyalty oaths and royal decrees, whereas Kitchen and Lawrence focus exclusively on inter-state treaties and law collections.[18] Morrow himself observes that these

[15] George E Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," *Biblical Archeologist (BA)* 17 (1954): 26-46; ibid., "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition." *BA* 17 (1954): 50-76.; McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 142.

[16] Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of Oriental and Asian Studies (JOAS)* 90 (1970): 184-203; ibid., "Covenant Terminology in the Ancient Near East and Its Influence on the West," *JAOS* 93 (1973): 190-99; ibid., "ברית, berit" *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis and David Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 253-790; ibid., "The Loyalty Oath in the Ancient Near East." *Ugarit-Forschungen* 8 (1976): 379– 414. See also D.C. Lane, "The Meaning and Use of *Berith* in the Old Testament," (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Bannockburn, Illinois, 2000), 172; Hal Harless, *How Firm a Foundation: The Dispensations in the Light of Divine Covenants* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 13.

[17] William S. Morrow, "Near Eastern Treaty Traditions and Biblical Covenants: Recent Surveys," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 82 (2021): 1-21, here 2; Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul J. N. Lawrence, *Treaty, Law, and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012); Amnon Altman, *Political Treaties of the Ancient Near East* [Hebrew] (Biblical Encyclopedia Library 34; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2018); Dominique Charpin, *«Tu es de mon sang». Les alliances dans le Proche-Orient Ancien* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres/College de France, 2019).

[18] Altman, *Political Treaties*, 120-27; Kitchen and Lawrence, *Treaty, Law, and Covenant*, 1:1082.

are rather arbitrary distinctions, as there are many overlaps in the forms of loyalty oaths, decrees, and inter-state treaties from the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian periods.[19] Similarly, Weinfeld's work on "grant covenants" has been heavily critiqued by Gary Knoppers for, among other reasons, arguing from language not unique to the land grant.[20] Even the Hittite treaty formulae, which scholars such as Altman consider the gold-standard for covenant comparison, are anything but uniform during the Middle Hittite period.[21] As such, the problem stretches further back from biblical studies to a classical obsession with categorising ancient texts according to our modern descriptive understanding.

Ultimately, if we are to use ancient Near Eastern texts to illuminate the use of covenant in the Hebrew Bible, biblical scholars need to allow for greater flexibility, not only (as Morrow argues) for the form of the treaty, but for the forms of legal literature more generally.[22] It is well-recorded that a number of different legal forms undergirded diplomacy and relations between ancient Near Eastern powers, exemplified foremostly by the different treaties, loyalty oaths, grants, and edicts referred to in the Mari correspondence.[23] Perhaps especially pertinent to comparison with biblical texts is evidence that different legal forms could stack or build upon each other, such as a royal decree which already assumes a relationship established by oath and/or treaty.[24]

Covenant taxonomies which take a more asynchronous approach to biblical texts categorise according to roles or responsibilities of the parties involved. Sometimes these covenant types are cast exclusively in view of Yahweh's role, as in Freedman's "human obligation" versus "divine commitment."[25] Others take into account human covenants and

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[19] Morrow, "Near Eastern Treaty Traditions," 20. Morrow cites the following as examples: "Edict of Mursili II of Hatti concerning the Frontiers of Ugarit" in Gary Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts* 2nd edn (SBLWAW 7: Atlanta: Scholars, 1999), §31A (historical preamble and curses); "Adad-nerari Adds the Land of Hindaru to the Territory of Raṣappa," SAA 12 85 (pre-amble and curses).

[20] Gary Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Land Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?," *JAOS* 116 (1996): 670-97.

[21] See e.g. Birgit Christiansen, *Schicksalbestimmende Kommunikation: Sprachliche, ge-sellschaftliche und religiöse Aspekte hethitischer Fluch-, Segens-, und Eidesformeln*, (SBOT 53; Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2012), 525.

[22] Morrow, "Near Eastern Treaty Traditions," 18-19.

[23] See Andrew R. Davis, "'Answer me properly!': Diplomatic Strategy and Subterfuge in the Treaty Texts from Mari," *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 50 (2013) 243-254.

[24] Altman, *Political Treaties*, 329. See, e.g., Altman's interpretation of the Vulture Stele (ibid., 167–68); "Edict of Mursili II of Hatti concerning the Frontiers of Ugarit" in Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, §31A (historical preamble and curses); "Adad-nerari Adds the Land of Hindaru to the Territory of Raṣappa," SAA 12 85 (preamble and curses).

[25] David Noel Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation," *Interpretation* 18 (1964): 419-31.

expect some measure of mutuality or "parity" between parties.[26] Though these descriptive categories often prove less problematic than comparative models, they run the risk of overgeneralising the role covenant plays in the course of the narrative. This is especially important when looking at innerbiblical allusions to covenant, as they may be understood differently by different authors and editors. A further complication is introduced by the fact that biblical covenants appear almost exclusively within the course of narratives, so that covenant must also be considered at the level of metaphor.[27]

Scott Hahn attempts to consolidate all the different types of taxonomies in a threefold covenant typology based on the distribution of obligations: the Kinship Covenant of mutual obligations ("parity"), the Treaty Covenant of imposed obligations ("human obligation," "suzerainty," "vassal," "obligatory," "law covenant"), and the Grant Covenant of bestowed benefices ("divine commitment," "patron," "promissory," "royal grant," "covenant of promise").[28] However, even Hahn himself admits that this comprehensive categorisation is riddled with contradictions and extensive exceptions. The label "kinship covenant" is redundant, as he argues that all three types are really kinship covenants, meant to extend the duties and rights of blood family to other individuals, though they may lack the characteristic mutuality.[29] This "parity" is often but not always between socio-political equals, although all the examples he gives—Abraham-Abimelech, Isaac-Abimelech, Jacob-Laban, and the Sinai Covenant—are arguably between inferior and superior.[30] The category title "treaty covenant" is misleading because ancient Near Eastern treaties encompass a range of power dynamics, including suzerain-vassal, father-son, or equals, and obligation could be construed in a number of ways befitting the parties. Even with Hahn's admission that his typology is only a "heuristic device," it is not clear that he communicates that "vital and dynamic" spectrum of covenant types but rather suppresses differences and similarities, the very thing he warns against.

The lack of clear consensus on categorisation and standard features shows that we are asking the wrong questions. The problem with these taxonomies is that they assume function always follows form, which is not true even of the ancient Near Eastern legal literature they

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[26] Mendenhall, "Covenant"; McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 142; Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 16, 41; Lane, "Meaning and Use of *Berith*," 172; Harless, *How Firm a Foundation*, 13.

[27] McCarthy, Treaty and Covenant, 297; Morrow, "Near Eastern Treaty Traditions," 22.

[28] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 29-31.

[29] Ibid., 28-29.

[30] Ibid., 29, 43-48.

use as comparison. For example, McCarthy notes that a historical section is a unique component of Hittite treaties; yet there are extant Hittite treaties without a history, as well as other forms of legal literature (court documents, royal annals, etc.) with a history.[31] Therefore he broadens his claim that the history is more generally "typically Hittite."[32] Despite this qualification, he argues for 1 Samuel 12 as a "vassal treaty" covenant, leaning heavily on vv. 8-12 as a historical section.[33] Instead of discussing possible Hittite influence or even the purpose of the history in legal literature more broadly, he fixes his argument on form analysis to establish the function of the whole text by analogy with a treaty. Picking apart features and components of covenants draws attention away from the content of the whole as it is presented to the reader.

Instead of trying to understand each covenant from its parts, I propose it first needs to be understood from its purpose in the text. In place of asking whether a covenant is conditional or unconditional, mutual or one-sided, let us ask who is undertaking obligations and why, who has authority and what is being sanctioned. For example, in the case of Gen 31.43-54, scholars such as Cross and Michael Guinan note the mutuality of the covenant between Jacob and Laban and the sacrificial meal shared with kinsmen.[34] These observations lead them to label it a "kinship covenant," reinforcing family ties, which seems absurd since the two are already bonded by (double) marriage and the language of the covenant itself is distrusting. Much more interesting are the covenant's declarations about the marriage and land rights of the two patriarchs representing people groups in the Levant. Following a slew of misadventure and trickery between Jacob and Laban, the Gen 31 account stands as the definitive close to the involvement of Nahor's family in the lives of the Hebrew patriarchs. The covenant, therefore, creates a dichotic paradigm of Israelite-Aramean relations; from this point forward in the narrative, they will no longer intermarry as Jacob has and will live as distinct groups in a codified truce. This purpose then sheds light on the individual features of the covenant. The erected stone heaps (vv. 45-46) act as physical boundary markers at Mizpah in the North. The "god(s) of Abraham and god(s) of Nahor" (v. 53) are invoked to judge between them, showing a religious or cultic divide between the groups. Rather than lend a "familial quality" to the covenant, the kinsmen that Hahn points out are involved in the

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[31] McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 144-145.

[32] Ibid., 145.

[33] Ibid., 218-22.

[34] Cross, *Kinship and Covenant*, 4; Michael D. Guinan, *Covenant in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1975), 9-10.

act of witnessing (vv. 46, 54) demonstrate that it is not only the individuals but the whole groups that are held to account.[35] First examining the text of Gen 31 and its larger context illuminates how the covenant delineates and distinguishes between the families of Jacob and Laban rather than bringing them together as a united kinship group.

Likewise, diachronic analysis of Gen 31.44-54 reveals how understanding of the covenant between Jacob and Laban developed over time. For example, the repetition of וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן between vv. 48 and 51, which likely acts as a *Wiederaufnahme* (resumptive repetition), suggests that the marriage ruling and the land boundary were separate stipulations added at different redactional layers. The ruling against intermarrying perhaps was added to clarify later commandments associated with the Mosaic covenant against marrying foreigners applied even to peoples to whom Israelite groups had traditional ties. In fact, although I do not have space here for detailed analysis, because of the confusion in vv. 45-48 between who called the place what name and whether there was just a heap or a heap and a memorial stone, it is entirely possible that the covenant had no explicit stipulations at one point in the text's development. It was simply a truce between Jacob and Laban, perhaps closer to the passing mention of a covenant between Abram and Mamre in Gen 14.13. Hence, not only does Gen 31 represent a delineation rather than union of kinship groups, but attention to the signs of editorial activity in the text outline a conceptual development of בְּרִית within the pericope from a simple conclusion of their business to detailed religious compact.

Just as a literarily sensitive and diachronic approach to the covenant between Jacob and Laban in Gen 31 provides both helpful correctives for previous interpretations and new insights into the conception of covenant and social dynamics of the text at each redactional stage, the same approach applied to the narratives of a covenant between David and other human parties will produce similar results. This holistic rather than piecemeal approach avoids the pitfalls of one-sizes-fits-all interpretive paradigms that obscure rather than elucidate individual narrative contexts and shoe-horning texts to fit artificial scholarly categories. It allows for more dynamic comparison with other ancient Near Eastern literature focused on similarities in function rather than form. Additionally, attention to redactional links between these texts and other texts such as 2 Sam 7 contextualises detail-oriented analyses of isolated pericopes within larger ideological movements. Common interests and concerns across related redactional layers of covenant texts in turn grounds the conceptual

[35] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 355n48.

development of בְּרִית in historical socio-political settings. Although I am not as confident as others that we can determine such settings so concretely and narrowly, giving a rough framework for the composition, compiling, and editing of the Hebrew Bible and the Deuteronomistic History more specifically can aid in this endeavour.

The Deuteronomistic History and "Deuteronomistic" Covenant

My methodology for discerning redactional layers follows the guidelines most common to composition-critical theory: "doublets, abrupt changes, differences of vocabulary and style, references to earlier accounts," with particular emphasis (as already seen in the previous section) on the repetition of words and phrases.[36] On a structural scale, I add Jeremy Hutton's criteria of "similarity to (and, conversely, divergence from) the *form* and *function* of" the larger textual unit aided by "study of cognate texts from Mesopotamia and Anatolia."[37] He poses useful questions by which to make such judgements, which I reword here: Whom or what was the passage intended to support or denounce? Has that intention been augmented or distracted by secondary accretions or by the passage's juxtaposition with another text? The larger unit may cover great swathes of text, as in most source-critical models, but should always be considered in terms of the immediate context of the passage.

Determination of the larger text unit depends largely on the source-critical model, in the case of this study, of the Deuteronomistic History, the corpus of Deuteronomy-Kings compiled by a so-called Deuteronomist or Deuteronomistic Historian. The idea of such a history was of course first introduced in 1943 by Martin Noth, who theorised that a single scribe living in the land of Palestine during the Babylonian captivity compiled various older sources such as royal annals and legends in order to write a coherent narrative of Israel's history.[38] Since then, the theory has taken on many different shapes, of which I will only outline a few of the most influential.[39]

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[36] Adolphe Lods, *Israel from Its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century,* trans. S. H. Hooke (London: Routledge, 1932), 11; cited by Edward L. Greenstein, "The Formation of the Biblical Narrative Corpus," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 15 (1990): 154, and Jeremy M. Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest: The Overwritten Texts of Personal Exile and Transformation in the Deuteronomistic History* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2009), 157.

[37] Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 157. Emphasis original to the quotation.

[38] Martin Noth*, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1957), 1–110.

[39] For a more extensive history of scholarship on the Deuteronomistic History, see Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 81-152.

Concerning the book of Samuel, one of the finer points of variation has been the extent and character of the Pre-Deuteronomistic (pre-Dtr) sources used in the creation of the DtrH. Even before Noth proposed the DtrH, basic units of old narrative sources divided between David coming into power and the troubles among his children, which later came to be known as the "History of David's Rise" (HDR) and the "Succession Narrative" (SN), had already been suggested by Leonhard Rost back in 1926.[40] Up until the turn of the millennia, and still in many circles today, these units were more or less taken for granted and energy went into determining their compositional and editorial relationship. Focusing on the multiple doublets throughout the HDR, Jeremy Hutton posited two independent sources for the HDR, which he labelled HDR_1 and HDR_2, the latter attached at an early stage to the SN.[41] However, the independence of these traditions has been called into question by both Reinhard G. Kratz and Marsha C. White, who have instead argued that the HDR was composed for the specific purpose of connecting older Saul and David traditions.[42] As I will argue further in the first chapter, I reconstruct a model of the HDR somewhere between Hutton and Kratz: functioning as a bridge between older traditions but with two different versions present, one modelled on the other, that were at one point merged, perhaps by a Deuteronomistic hand sorting out the basic layer of the DtrH.[43] This makes sense of a) the early and independent nature of the Saul and David traditions; b) the extent and symmetry of doublets in the HDR unit; and c) the shared history of the narratives prior to supplementary redactions.

Although the general shape of the DtrH as an edited corpus has become the consensus among critical Hebrew Bible scholars, almost no one would still claim a single author or redactor but instead speak of a Deuteronomistic school or schools. So even when I speak of a Deuteronomistic editor, I do not mean to speak of a single person at a single time but perhaps a small group of likeminded scribes, teachers and students, with similar values, concerns, and

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[40] Leonhard Rost, *Die Überlieferungen von der Thronnachfolge Davids* (BWANT 42; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926). While Rost did theorise about the general shape of HDR, it was only fleshed out 30 years later by Jakob H. Grønbaek in *Die Geschichte vom Aufstieg Davids (1. Sam. 15–2. Sam. 5): Tradition und Komposition* (ATDan 10; Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1971).

[41] Hutton, *Transjordanian*, esp. 239-88.

[42] Reinhard G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments:Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (UTB 2157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 182-6; Marsha C. White, "The History of Saul's Rise: Saulide State Propaganda in 1 Samuel 1–14," in *"A Wise and Discerning Mind": Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long*, eds. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley (BJSt 325; Providence: Brown University Press, 2000), 281-2. See also the more recent collection of essays from scholars across the globe on this challenge to the HDR in Hannes Bezzel and Reinhard G. Kratz, eds., *David in the Desert: Tradition and Redaction in the "History of David's Rise"* (BZW 514; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021).

[43] Despite their disagreements about the independence and dating of the HDR, Hutton himself recognizes a certain level of cogency between his model and Kratz (*Transjordanian*, 144-146).

aims. As for the history of how the DtrH came together, there are two main schools that modified Noth's hypothesis in the 1970s: the Harvard School, led by Frank Moore Cross, and the Göttingen School, led by Rudolf Smend. Cross suggested that there were two editions or versions of the DtrH: Dtr^1 produced during the reign of Josiah as propaganda against Samaria, and Dtr^2 produced during the Babylonian captivity to explain the fall of Jerusalem.[44] As with his model of covenant, Cross was followed by his students, most notably Richard D. Nelson and Gary N. Knoppers, and his model remains prominent in the Anglo-American field.[45] Rudolph Smend, on the other hand, concentrated on different redactional layers within the DtrH. Beside the base layer identified by Noth (sometimes identified as DtrG for *Geschichtswerk* or else simply DtrH), Smend identified a further Nomistic redaction (DtrN) concerned with adherence to the Mosaic law and preservation of Israelite identity.[46] Another Prophetic layer (DtrP), concerned with prophecy and the revelation of the divine will, was found by Smend's student Walter Dietrich.[47] This three-layer system continues to be influence in Continental European circles, mainly in Germany and specifically (as one might expect) in Göttingen. In a slightly different vein, John Van Seters posited the idea of much later post-Deuteronomistic (post-Dtr) redactors who introduced ideological contradictions into the DtrH, which was taken up by Steven L. McKenzie to identify post-Dtr texts throughout the book of Kings.[48]

While both American and European scholars have made efforts to find a mediating position combining the Harvard and Göttingen schools, scholarship still largely falls somewhere between these two camps.[49] Thomas Römer, for example, contended for three editions of the DtrH—Josianic, exilic, and postexilic—based on similarities between the editions and layers proposed between the Harvard and Göttingen schools and the struggle

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[44] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 274-89.

[45] Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981); Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies*, 2 vols. (HSM 52-3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993-4).

[46] Rudolf Smend, "Das Gesetz und die Völker. Ein Beitrag zur deuteronomistischen Redaktionsgeschichte," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie. Festschrift für Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburstag*, ed. Hans Walter Wolff (München: Kaiser, 1971), 494-509.

[47] Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).

[48] John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 209-353; Steven L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup 42; Leiden: Brill, 1991).

[49] E.g. Mark O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (OBO 92; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); Norbert Lohfink, "Kerygmata des Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks," in *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur,* vol. 2 (SBAB 12; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991), 125-42.

between those who had and had not been exiled from Palestine.[50] Yet he cannot reconcile differences like whether prophecy or temple is considered the older point of divine encounter and trims the oldest sources down to nearly non-existent.[51] Although in line with the Göttingen school, an important innovation was made by Kratz in his own model of the DtrH with an emphasis on the "backwards" direction of redactional activity. Whereas previous models had emphasised Deuteronomistic editing of the narrative texts in line with the Mosaic law in the book of Deuteronomy, Kratz recognised that editorial activity was concentrated in the narratively latter part of the DtrH and then steadily abated towards Deuteronomy. This led him to propose that Dtr editors worked from Kings backwards, so although the Dtr law was central to their concerns, the later events in the DtrH (which were themselves heavily redacted) were the primary historiographical points in view for the reconstruction of Israel/Judah's history. He thus built on Van Seters and McKenzie observation of the extensive editorial activity in Kings but maintained its consistency with redactional activity elsewhere in the DtrH, recognising a series of Dtr Supplements less systematised than the distinct layers of previous Göttingen scholars.

I find Kratz's model to be most convincing because it takes into account the multi-layered nature of redaction, especially the tension of minute changes coordinated across larger units of text, without confining later editors to a strict agenda. The backwards perspective on redaction is especially crucial for making sense of the texts under study, as we will see that some of the additions to the covenant narratives, especially insertions of divine quotations with no clear narrative referent, really only make sense when read with a view to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7, despite the fact that in the received text Nathan's oracle is only delivered after the events in question. Additionally, as mentioned before, Kratz's sensitivity to the older sources used in the creation of the DtrH and the possibility of an intermediary pre-Dtr stage make good sense of the composition of the David and Saul narratives especial in 1 Samuel. As such, I tentatively accept Kratz's model both as a starting point for making sense of the larger DtrH and because it fits the textual data analysed in this study.

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[50] Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); ibid., "The Current Discussion on the So-Called Deuteronomistic History: Literary Criticism and Theological Consequences," *Humanities: Christianity and Culture* 46 (2015): 42-66.

[51] For critiques of Römer, see: Patrick D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel* (JHNES; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977; repr., Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 10–17; Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 147-151.

But how, then, do we identify Deuteronomistic text—or even Dtr redactions or supplements? Usually this is defined by the ideological characteristics of Deuteronomy: Yahweh's election of the people of Israel and his requirement for them to follow his commandments in exchange for control of the land of Canaan.[52] But keeping in mind the backwards perspective of redaction, this also translates into the election of David and his house as a proxy for those who follow Yahweh's command and the united monarchy over Israel and Judah as the perfect simulation of Yahweh's theocracy. Successes and failures are attributed to Yahweh according to a person's (especially a king's) faithfulness, as we see throughout the book of Kings. In some places, the shape of redactions aligns with concentrated interests. In the case of our texts, two particular groups shine through: legal forms and concern for legitimacy, especially according to the Mosaic law, and oracles and providence or the divine guidance of history. I do not have enough space or textual data here to argue for full Nomistic and Prophetic redactions, nor do I believe these are likely as sustained throughout the DtrH as Göttingen School models would suggest.[53] But I will use these labels to highlight similarities in ideology and distinguish between redactional layers I identify as coordinated across the individual covenant narratives and the divine promise in 2 Sam 7.

Finally, although "Deuteronomistic covenant theology," which supposedly pictures בְּרִית similarly to the final form of Deuteronomy, is a popular way to identify Dtr texts, for the methodological reasons outlined in the previous section, I want to avoid the proverbial cart before the horse.[54] Though Dtr concerns will help me identify redactional layers in covenant

[52] See e.g. Thomas Römer and Albert de Pury, "Deuteronomistic Historiography (DH): History of Research and Debated Issues," in *Israel Constructs Its Identity: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research,* eds. A. de Pury, T. Römer, and J.-D. Macchi; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 24–141; trans. of "L'histriographie deutéronomiste (HD): Histoire de la recherche et enjeux du débat," in *Israël construit son histoire: L'historiographie deutéronomiste à la lumière des recherches récentes,* eds. A. de Pury, T. Römer, and J.-D. Macchi (MdB 34; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1996), 9–120; Gary N. Knoppers, "Introduction," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History,* eds. Knoppers and J. G. McConville (SBTS 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 1–18.

Jacque Vermeylen refers to this as "the 'classical' covenant theology," but I want to avoid assuming that a covenant is the only Dtr mode of conveying election and culpability unless proven at specific Dtr layers ("The Book of Samuel within the Deuteronomistic History," in *Is Samuel Among the Deuteronomists?: Current Views On the Place of Samuel In a Deuteronomistic History*, eds. Cynthia Edenburg, and Juha Pakkala [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013], 71).

[53] As will be seen in the conclusion, I also do not date them even in the same order as Dietrich and others.

[54] See e.g., Vermeylen, "Samuel in the Deuteronomistic History," 71; A. D. H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM, 1983), 93-5; Diana Edelman, "The Deuteronomistic Story of King Saul: Narrative Art or Editorial Product," in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies,* eds. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust (BETL 94; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 208-10; Otto Kaiser, "David und Jonathan. Tradition, Redaktion und Geschichte in I Sam 16–20: Ein Versuch," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses (ETL)* 66 (1990): 281–4, more recently Erik

texts, I will analyse the function and conception of covenant at that layer according to its narrative setting and context, not the other way around. The covenant at Horeb outlined in Deuteronomy is itself a complex and composite picture. As a law code in a narrative setting which is then reframed as a treaty, the (mixed) genre is quite different than most of the texts analysed in this study. But identifying the development of the conception of covenant at Deuteronomistic levels may lay the groundwork for research into the relationship between the covenant framework of Deuteronomy and covenant elsewhere in the DtrH. For now, the book of Samuel, as touched by the Deuteronomistic editors at different stages, remains the bounds for the study of so-called "Deuteronomistic" covenant.

Recent Scholarship

While there has been no systematic study of covenant in the book of Samuel, analyses of 2 Sam 7 and covenant accounts throughout Samuel have shaped the conceptual framework of the study of covenant in recent scholarship. The current project is in part indebted to the observations of Dennis J. McCarthy in his landmark article "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History."[55] In this article, he identifies several places throughout the book of Samuel where he sees the Deuteronomist "looking forward" to 2 Sam 7 in order to argue that it was composed as the climax of the Deuteronomistic History.[56] Several of the allusions he identifies became touchstones for what I interpret as expansions which allows me to read these passages in the new light of the divine promise. However, where McCarthy looks at these parallels on a macroscale, shaping the whole of the Deuteronomistic History, I re-examine them on a microscale to tell us a bit more about specific layers of the texts' compositional history. Besides the overarching theological message of the DtrH, I am interested in how the hand of the Deuteronomistic editor(s) changes the political message of the text over time, with an eye to the intermediary as well as the final result.

Aurelius, *Zukunft jenseits des Gerichts: Eine redationsgeschichtlichte Studie aum Enneatuch* (BZAW 319; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003), 91-6.

For recent works on the covenant in Deuteronomy, see Christoph Koch, *Vertrag, Treueid und Bund Studien zur Rezeption des Altorientalischen Vertragsrechts im Deuteronomium und zur Ausbildung der Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008); Cynthia Edenburg and Reinhard Müller, eds., "Treaty and Covenant. Deuteronomy in Light of the Neo-Assyrian and Aramaic adê-tradition," special issue of *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 8, no.1 (2019).

[55] Dennis J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History," *Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL)* 84, no. 2 (1965): 131-138.

[56] E.g. 1 Sam 20.15; 2 Sam 3.18; 2 Sam 5.2 (ibid., 133-4).

The most prominent study on the textual history of 2 Sam 7 is William M. Schniedewind's *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1-17*, a careful study of various composition and editorial stages of Nathan's oracle and its reception at different points across the history of the Jewish people and the early Christian church. [57] As the title suggests, Schniedewind focuses on the evolution of the text and its interpretation in response to social change and the fluctuating political setting of its writers and readers. In this way, his goals are very similar to my own in the current study, and I much admire his emphasis on the political dimension of the text and identifying social processes instead of specific historical dates. He explores the emergence of the united monarchy, the late Judean monarchy, the exile(s), and Persian Yehud all as settings for redaction of the divine promise to David, as well as the Alexandrian diaspora for extrabiblical reception. Understandably, he limits his study to "explicit citations and transformations of the Promise," including Pss 2, 78, 89, and various passages in Kings, Chronicles, and the later prophets.[58] However, in so doing, I think he loses valuable evidence for redaction criticism, as I look to demonstrate in my own analysis of covenant texts within the book of Samuel. As such, although I hope to replicate and build on some of his methodology, I inevitably disagree with him on the redactional make-up of the divine promise at several points.

Among the commentaries on 1 and 2 Samuel, P. Kyle McCarter is one of the only scholars to recognise the significance of the accounts of covenants between David and other individuals.[59] He does not recognise coordinated redactional relations between the texts and often only offers a passing comment on their relationship to 2 Sam 7, which seems surprising given his recognition of the individual importance of each of the texts in their own right. Yet his close attention to both narrative and ideological differences between distinct layers of the covenant texts has made these commentaries a valuable resource for sorting out diverse conceptions of covenant at each redactional stage.

To bridge the gap between the Anglo-American and Continental conceptions of covenant, it is especially important to me to be in dialogue with Continental scholarship not solely on this topic, leading to narrow evaluation, but holistically on the Samuel texts in

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[57] William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1-17* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[58] Schniedewind, *Society,* 4.

[59] P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, & Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980); ibid., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, & Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984).

question. The work of Timo Viejola and Walter Dietrich have been especially helpful in this regard, for establishing something of the historical Continental tradition of critical interpretation of Samuel; Viejola in particular has written extensively on covenant texts in relation to the DtrH.[60] While both authors very clearly exemplify the Continental model of understanding covenant as obligation, they often also lean into the modern application of *Bund* (common German translation of בְּרִית) to federal states to make the characters ciphers for international players in the ancient Levant, especially Israel and Judah. While I appreciate the attention to the political use of covenant, their interpretation represents an implicit conflation of how we see treaties used between kingdoms in the ancient Near Eastern literature, for example, in diplomatic correspondence, and how covenant is used in the narratives of Samuel. Not only does this ignore the difference in genre, but the nuances of individual vs group representation are lost. For example, in 1 Sam 20, Jonathan may not simply represent the fallen kingdom of Israel submitting through covenant to David as the rule of Judah (thus Veijola), nor even just the house of Saul, but also, in foil to his father, a positive reflection of David's place in Israel's court and personal appeal, an aetiology of how David's dynasty came to succeed Saul's not through military conquest but love.[61] Thus, some greater literary sensitivity is needed to recognise how covenant is functioning not only in the redactors' ideology but in the greater narrative horizon they create.

Perhaps my most important dialogue partner on covenant in Samuel and redaction criticism is Klaus-Peter Adam in his book *Saul und David in der judäischen Geschichtsschreibung*.[62] This work is one of the best representations of the "David and Saul" compositional model for the old sources underlying Samuel as suggested by Kratz and White, carefully analysing how texts attributed to the HDR navigate between the David and Saul traditions in order to create a coherent overarching narrative. Where other commentaries and even close studies often only focus on famous passages and offer a couple sentences on smaller discrete sections like 1 Sam 20.12-17, Adam is very detailed and thorough, which makes him the perfect interlocuter for discussion of redactions and of conceptual

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[60] Timo Veijola, *Die Ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der Deuteronomistischen Darstellung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1975); ibid., *David: Gesammelte Studien zu den Davidüberlieferungen des Alten Testaments* (Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran Julkaisuja; 52. Helsinki Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990). See also Walter Dietrich, *Von David zu den Deuteronomisten. Studien zu den Geschichtsüberlieferungen des Alten Testaments* (BWANT 156; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002); ibid., *Die Samuelbücher im Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk. Studien zu den Geschichtsüberlieferungen des Alten Testaments II* (BWANT 201; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2012).

[61] Veijola, *Ewige Dynastie*, 84-6.

[62] Klaus-Peter Adam, *Saul und David in der judäischen Geschichtsschreibung* (FAT I/51; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

development between layers in these purportedly obscure pericopes. However, he also exemplifies a tendency exhibited even by careful diachronic approaches to automatically assign בְּרִית to a late layer—even, in some cases, post-Dtr! So, Adam acts as both a model and a warning to the approach I undertake, and the reason that I have avoided classifying covenant conceptions according to how they are defined elsewhere in the DtrH.

On the Anglo-American side of the discussion, the work of Saul Olyan on social relationships in David has illuminated the social dynamics of covenant texts in Samuel. Curiously, although Olyan has written on covenant relationships, including in Samuel, he did not include any of the texts under study here—the covenant accounts of David and Jonathan, Abner, or the elders of Israel.[63] Instead, none of the texts he covers use the word בְּרִית, so he is forced to speculate on the nature of these supposedly implied covenants based on related terminology and settings.[64] The issues of this study, riding on the tail-end of the Covenant Centrality wave, are readily apparent and exemplify the tendency of Cross's students to collapse distinctions in applying the covenant paradigm to social relations. On the other hand, Olyan's more recent study on friendship in the Hebrew Bible provides an insightful systematic sociological analysis of the accounts of a covenant between David and Jonathan.[65] Although he does not emphasise the political nature of their relationship as much as I do, perhaps more than any other scholar who has written on their relationship, Olyan elucidates the apologetic value of David and Jonathan as faithful friends and allies and the political and social dynamics that they must navigate together in the midst of the chaos that King Saul creates. Hence although I fundamentally disagree with his approach to covenant in the1996 article, I benefit from Olyan's work as a perceptive interpreter of relationships and expert in more recent social science approaches to the Hebrew Bible.

Jonathan Rowe similarly opens the world of the text in his thorough study of David and Jonathan narratives through the theories of Mikhal Bakhtin.[66] He too assumes Cross' model of kinship as the basis not only of covenant but of all social relations in ancient Israel, and thus his central conundrum is how Jonathan's betrayal of his father could have been

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[63] Saul M. Olyan, "Honor, Shame, and Covenant Relations in Ancient Israel and Its environment," *JBL* 115, no. 2 (1996): 201-18.

[64] He does so by claiming covenants as the "primary basis for social organization in the West Asian cultural sphere" and that "one might argue for a covenant context based on the presence of love/hate terminology, curse/blessing, the rhetoric of brotherhood, friendship, goodness, or some combination of these" (ibid., 201-2, esp. n2).

[65] Saul M. Olyan, *Friendship in the Hebrew Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

[66] Jonathan Y. Rowe, *Sons or Lovers: an Interpretation of David and Jonathan's Friendship* (London: T & T Clark, 2012).

interpreted positively by ancient readers. This perhaps need not be a conundrum if the stories are understood in their political context. However, Rowe's analysis does highlight how family ties (also political ties) are used to both challenge and strengthen the bond created in David and Jonathan's covenant and therefore fills out the historiographical setting of the narrative and the ideological negotiations around the house of Saul versus the house of David dichotomy.

Finally, covering not only David and Jonathan but Abner as well, Cephas T.A. Tushima synthesises much of the recent scholarship questioning the moral character of David, both as a literary construction and as a historical figure, but with particular interest in his relationship to Saul's progeny.[67] His project—and that of the genre of David scholarship his book models—is drastically different than mine, as it undertakes more of an asynchronous, objective ethical assessment of the text rather than reading along with its authors and editors. While he claims to judge David according to the standards of justice set by Deuteronomy, he does not take into account the unique position David holds in the wider ideology of the DtrH. Despite a different approach and goal, his moral analyses in David's relationship with Jonathan, Mephibosheth, and Abner (and by extension Ish-bosheth) highlights the ambiguous narrative effects created by the redaction of their covenant passages. What is missing, then, is a thorough analysis of covenant itself and what a literarily sensitive diachronic approach can bring to the interpretation of this practice throughout the composition and redaction history of Samuel.

Overview of the Study

Comparing the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 with narratives reporting covenants between David and key figures Jonathan, Abner, and the elders of Israel shows a common concern for establishing the Davidic throne. These three individual covenants hit important tiers of the socio-political structure of the early Israelite monarchy as portrayed in Samuel. In their received forms, they follow a pattern found in other ancient Near Eastern political literature, particularly treaties and diplomatic correspondence, emphasising the role of both divine and

[67] Cephas T. A. Tushima, *The Fate of Saul's Progeny in the Reign of David* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012). Synthesising works like Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2001); Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); John Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

human sanction in transitions of power. These covenant narratives also show signs of redactional activity which connects them directly to 2 Sam 7 in the form of oaths or oracles building on their covenant relationship. Through redaction criticism of each individual covenant text and literary analysis of how בְּרִית is functioning at each level, as well as identifying redactional connections between the texts and 2 Sam 7, this study traces the conceptual development of covenant within the Deuteronomistic ideal of an eternal Davidic kingship over a united Israel.

Chapter 1 explores the portrayal of covenant at different levels of the textual history of Samuel through analyses of the accounts of a covenant between David and Jonathan. As the first of these texts (1 Sam 18.1-5) falls within the area of puzzling textual differences between the Masoretic and Septuagint manuscript traditions of 1 Sam 17-18, I begin by reconstructing the composition history of narratives featuring Jonathan and their place in the complex textual traditions of Samuel. The first chronological report of David and Jonathan making a covenant in 1 Sam 18.1-5 centres on Jonathan's love for David, parallel to the use of love in other ancient Near Eastern political texts, especially Hittite treaties. Redaction criticism reveals textual links between David and Jonathan's covenant in 1 Sam 18 and the oath that Jonathan swears in 1 Sam 20 in the midst of questions of succession. The majority of the chapter is focused on close analysis of the oath text in 1 Sam 20.12-17 and its close linguistic, thematic, and theological connections to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7. A third, seemingly obscure account of David and Jonathan making a covenant in the wilderness of Ziph is found in 1 Sam 23.15-18, placing each covenant account at the beginning, apex, and conclusion of their relationship as found in the received text. They also each correspond to a different level of textual development, which allows us to outline a general development of the concept of covenant from simple bond to enduring stipulated legal compact.

Chapter 2 examines the narrative of David and Abner making a covenant in 2 Sam 3, with attention to two of Abner's speeches in 2 Sam 3.8-10 and 3.17-18. As both of the speeches also include oracles, these texts are used to investigate the role of revelation and the divine will in the conceptual development of covenant. Both oracles seem to quote prophecies otherwise unknown in the narrative—except Nathan's in 2 Sam 7. However, bookending either side of the account of David and Abner's covenant, Abner's speeches take very different forms: the first, vv. 8-10, is an oath similar to Jonathan's in 1 Sam 20, and the second, vv. 17-18, is a message to the elders of Israel anticipating the next covenant text in 2 Sam 5. Similarly, their narrative functions look respectively backwards to 2 Sam 2, to explain

Abner's defection to David, and forwards, to Abner's death and David's anointing. So, while they exhibit similar ideological concerns and connections to the divine promise, comparison of these two additions may suggest two groups of Deuteronomistic redaction.

Chapter 3 investigates the covenant between David and the elders of Israel at his anointing and its redaction in 2 Sam 5.1-3 as the creation of the Deuteronomistic editors' ideal Davidic united kingdom. While only a short three verses, the expansion of this simple report of a covenant introduces a much wider vision of all the tribes of Israel unified under a Davidic leader as seen in 2 Sam 7, recalling a mythic past and sparking future hope. I also critique interpretations of Israel as a proto-democratic society, with the elders as "representatives" and a "royal covenant" as constitution, based on these verses. My interest is not in mining this brief pericope for a historical reconstruction of the dynamic between Israel and Judah or the institution of royal anointing, but rather what their historiographic depiction can tell us about the significance of this moment to the authors/editors. Overall, the emphasis on the tribes or elders of Israel at the initiation of united Israel's golden age involves not only the elites but all the people in the Deuteronomistic vision for a revived Israel.

After summarising the findings from the individual texts, the Conclusion outlines the conceptual development of covenant witnessed between the layers of the texts and suggests the socio-political historical shifts that might have inspired each shift. The redactional links between the covenant texts and 2 Sam 7 help draw a barebones reconstruction of the composition history of Nathan's oracle. Additionally, I speculate how the development of covenant in Samuel might help us understand—or may even have influenced—the later interpretation of 2 Sam 7 as a covenant. Recognising the limitations of this study, a few ways forward in research are recommended in the long journey to understanding the complex history of covenant, not only in Samuel, but the Deuteronomistic History and beyond.

Chapter 1 - The Oath of Jonathan: Covenant throughout the Textual History of Samuel

The covenant between David and Jonathan is the most well-cited biblical example of covenant between human parties, primarily for the amount of extant text describing their relationship and the nature of their agreement. There are at least three narratives which reference such a covenant at key points in the young men's relationship. The first appears at the forging of their friendship in 1 Sam 18.1-5 and is used to characterise the rest of their interactions. The second comes as David transitions from court life to a fugitive from Saul's wrath, as the two friends must navigate the uncertain political turmoil of 1 Sam 20. The third is included in their last interaction before Jonathan goes to his death in battle and David to his eventual enthroning in 1 Sam 23.15-18. These three covenant references at the beginning, climax, and close of their relationship create a thematic arc across the David-Jonathan narratives as they come down to us, suggesting that their positions within the wider text have been carefully chosen. This close editing is especially apparent with the oath that Jonathan swears in 1 Sam 20.12-17, which most scholars consider to be the stipulations of the covenant, situated at the apex of the narrative.

The oath is central for understanding the role of covenant in the editor's narrative logic and its importance in the rapport between David and Jonathan. Further still, as it is the most explicit tie between covenant and oath among our Davidic examples, analysis of the literary and redaction-critical relationship between the covenant references in 1 Sam 18.3 and 23.5 and the oath text in 1 Sam 20.12-17 will illuminate how the Deuteronomistic (Dtr) editor(s) view the connection between these legal forms. While this chapter will analyse the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17, it will also explore the other covenant references in the David-Jonathan narratives as the literary and text-critical landscape of the relationship, contextualised with ancient Near Eastern treaty formulations in order to demonstrate their political significance.

The Jonathan Tradition in the Book of Samuel

The first chronological reference to a covenant between David and Jonathan in the received text comes after the battle with Goliath in 1 Sam 18.1-5, a notoriously tricky section of the

HDR in terms of text criticism.[68] The prince is apparently struck by David's bold display, and his soul (נֶפֶשׁ) is knit to the soul of David, and he loved him "as himself (כְּנַפְשׁוֹ)" (v. 1). There is a brief note that Saul took David in and would not let him return to Bethlehem (v. 2). Jonathan makes a covenant (בְּרִית) with David "because he loved him as himself (בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אתו כְּנַפְשׁוֹ)" (v. 3).[69] Then he dresses the new hero in his own royal garments and accessories (v. 4), and David begins his illustrious career as a military commander (v. 5). However, Codex Vaticanus' (LXX^B) account of the battle, which is 45% shorter than the Masoretic Text (MT), does not include these verses.[70] The question of textual priority between LXX^B and the MT (or L=B^{19}) in 1 Sam 17-18 has been one of the fiercest debates in textual criticism. While a full discussion exceeds the scope of this study, a brief review of the different reconstructions will help establish further redactional considerations for 1 Sam 18.1-5.

Explanations for the divergence of the ancient textual traditions of 1 Sam 17-18 represented by the surviving manuscripts of LXX^B and MT fall largely into two camps. The first favours the MT as the older tradition, positing that the missing text from LXX^B 1 Sam 17-18 was lost or removed from the Hebrew *Vorlage* or proto-Old Greek (proto-OG) source used for translation.[71] What is left in the LXX^B is a simple, coherent storyline, which one

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[68] As noted in the introduction, when I refer to the HDR, I do not mean an independent narrative work or works, but rather a secondary literary construction meant to connect the Saul and David/Solomon sources prior to the DtrH, following Kratz (*Komposition*, 182-6) and White ("History of Saul's Rise," 281-2).

[69] For a survey of the different treaty (or "covenant") relationships proposed here between David and Jonathan, see Jerzy Wozniak, "Drei verschiedene literarische Bechreibungen des Bunde zwischen Jonathan und David," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 27 (1983): 213-18. Wozniak himself identifies a parity treaty in 18:1-4 (217).

[70] Emanuel Tov, "The Nature of the Differences between MT and the LXX in 1 Sam. 17–18," in *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism,* eds. Dominique Barthélemy, David W. Gooding, Johan Lust, Emanuel Tov; OBO 73; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 105; see also idem, "The Composition of 1 Samuel 16–18 in the Light of the Septuagint Version," in *Emperical Models for Biblical Criticism*, eds. Jeffrey H. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 97–130.

LXX^B is considered the best-preserved example (along with Nanvyb2) but is more widely representative of the Old Greek account. The most notable exceptions are LXX^L and LXX^A, but these are widely considered later manuscripts corrected toward the MT (for a helpful discussion of this, see Benjamin J.M. Johnson, *Reading David and Goliath in Hebrew and Greek: A Literary Approach* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 2n7). See manuscript data in J. Lust, "The Story of David and Goliath in Hebrew and in Greek," in *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism* (ed. Dominique Barthélemy et al.; OBO 73; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 87-92; Stephen Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel* (OBO 57; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 78.

[71] Thus Avraham Kuenen, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in die Bücher des ATs*, I/2 (Leipzig: Otto Schulz, 1890), 61; Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel: Ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau* (Giessen: Ricker, 1890), 212; J. Schmid, *Septuagintageschichtliche Studien zum 1. Samuelbuch* (unpublished dissertation, Breslau, 1941; quoted in Johnson, 118); and Dominique Barthélemy, "La qualité du Texte Massorétique de Samuel," in eds. E. Tov, *The Hebrew and Greek Text of Samuel, 1980 Proceeding of IOSCS, Vienna* (Jerusalem: Academon, 1980), 1–44, esp. 17–20 (so Tov, "Nature," p. 22); Dominique Barthélemy, "Trois niveaux d'analyse (à propos de David et Goliath)," in *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism* [ed. Dominique Barthélemy et al.; OBO 73; Fribourg, Switz./Göttingen: Éditions Universitaires/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986], 47–54; Arie van der Kooij, "The Story of David and Goliath: The Early History of Its Texts," *ETL* 68 (1992): 126-28; Dietrich, "Erzählungen," 180–84, 189; Erik Aurelius, "Wie David ursprünglich

may well assume to be streamlined in comparison to the MT. Especially important for our purposes, this view often recognises that the short vignette of David and Jonathan in 18.1-5, only present in the MT, is strongly connected to their other narratives throughout Samuel, and was therefore likely composed along with them.[72] However, we would expect the tedious editorial process required to cut out all the verses omitted from LXX^{B}—sometimes merely a sentence or a phrase—to leave more widowed elements, at the grammatical, syntactical, or narrative level.[73] The second group holds the LXX^{B} as the older textual tradition with the extra verses representing an expansion of the proto-MT after or separate from the proto-OG.[74] Here the coherent storyline originates as a complete narrative unit into which another story is merged near the end of the first millennium BCE.[75] Yet the narratives begun in 1 Sam 17-18 continue into the following chapters, and thus some narrative details present in later chapters of LXX^{B} do not make sense without the MT 1 Sam 17-18. For example, the reference in 1 Sam 20.8 to a διαθήκην between David and Jonathan is unanticipated without 1 Sam 18.3. What both camps fail to satisfactorily explain is the limitation of extensive editorial activity to these chapters when the texts of LXX^{B} and MT Samuel are otherwise surprisingly similar. Overall, to explain both the narrative and textual discrepancies, further discussion need not only address the mechanisms of transmission and translation but also the literary nature of the text before the divergence of the proto-OG and proto-MT.

While many studies have favoured the longer MT over the LXX^{B}, the complex text is best explained through closer literary and source criticism. Those that prefer the MT characterise the verses found only in Hebrew as "obviously contradictory," more likely edited

zu Saul kam (1 Sam 17)," in *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments: Beiträge zur biblischen Hermeneutik*, eds. Christoph Bultmann, Walter Dietrich, and Christoph Levin (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 44–68.

[72] Although this also excludes arguments for unintentional omission via *parablepsis*. See Lust, "Story of David and Jonathan," 8.

[73] As observed by McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 307; Lust, "Story," 9; Tov, "Nature," 38–40; and David W. Gooding, "An Approach to the Literary and Textual Problems in the David-Goliath Story: 1 Sam 16–18," *in The Story of David and Goliath,* 62–63.

[74] Thus Otto Thenius, *Die Bücher Samuels* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1842), 67; Julius Wellhausen, *Text der Bücher Samuels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871), 105; F. H. Woods, "The Light Shown by the Septuagint Version on the Books of Samuel" in *Studia Biblica: Essays in Biblical Archaeology and Criticism and Kindred Subjects* I (Oxford: OUP, 1885), 21–38; Carl Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Altes Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1912), 317; Henry Preserved Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1899); Hans Joachim Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis* (Berlin: Berlin Evangelische Verlagsanstalt); Norman C. Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 10–11; and McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 306–309.

[75] Usually between 5th-3rd centuries BCE, see e.g. Wellhausen, *Bücher Samuelis*, 104f.; McCarter, *1 Samue*l, 306–309; Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 117; Lust, "Story," 13–14; and most recently Simeon Chavel and Jessie DeGrado, "Text- and Source-Criticism of 1 Samuel 17–18: A Complete Account," *Vetus Testamentum (VT)* 70 (2020): 553–580.

out in the LXX for continuity than added to the MT at a late editorial stage.[76] These studies often begin with a bias for the MT and ignore the lack of editorial clues we would expect to find in the LXX, such as added transitions or filler words. Even some who prioritize the Old Greek consider the "MT-pluses" to be secondary features such as interpretive glosses, exegetical comments, or redactional hiccups.[77] Yet, as Graeme Auld points out, the language of these pluses fits seamlessly with the surrounding passage, and they display no linguistic features of Late Biblical Hebrew.[78] On the contrary, when set out on their own terms, both the LXX^{B} account and the "extra" Hebrew verses form coherent parallel narratives of David's battle with the Philistine and introduction into Saul's court.[79]

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[76] Dominic Rudman, "The Commissioning Stories of Saul and David as Theological Allegory," *VT* 50 (2000): 527. See Budde, *Bücher Richter und Samuel,* 121; Paul Dhorme, *Les Livres de Samuel* (Paris: Gabalda, 1910), 167–68; Grønbaek, *Die Geschichte vom Aufstieg Davids*, 80–91, esp. 84–88; Simon J. DeVries, "David's Victory over the Philistines as Saga and as Legend," *JBL* 92 (1973): 23–36, esp. 23–24 and n2; Heda Jason, "The Story of David and Goliath: A Folk Epic?" *Biblica* 60 (1979): 36–70; Barthélemy, "La qualité du Texte Massorétique de Samuel," in *The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Samuel,* ed. Emanuel Tov, 19–20; idem, "Trois niveaux," 47– 54; Gooding, "An Approach," in *The Story of David and Goliath,* ed. Dominique Barthélemy, 55–86; Pisano, *Additions or Omissions*, 78–86; Alexander Rofé, "The Battle of David and Goliath: Folklore, Theology, Eschatology," in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel,* eds. Jacob Neusner, Baruch A. Levine, and Ernest S. Frerichs (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 117–51; van der Kooij, "The Story of David and Goliath," 118–31; Halpern, *David's Secret Demons,* 7; Aurelius, "Wie David," 44–68. For earlier sources, see Hans Joachim Stoebe, "Die Goliathperikope 1 Sam. xvii 1–xviii 5 und die Textform der Septuaginta," *VT* 6 (1956): 397 n. 4.

[77] See, e.g., H. P. Smith, *the Books of Samuel*, 150–51; Wilhelm Caspari, *Die Samuelbücher* (KAT 7; Leipzig: Deichert, 1926), 199; Hans Joachim Stoebe, "David und Mikal: Überlegungen zur Jugendgeschichte Davids," in *Von Ugarit nach Qumran: Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen und altorientalischen Forschung,* eds. J. Hempel et al.; BZAW 77; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1958), 224–43, esp. 26; idem, "Goliathperikope," 397–413, esp. 404; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel* (WBC 10; Waco: Word Books, 1983), 174–75; Julio Trebolle Barrera, "The Story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17–18): Textual Variants and Literary Composition," *Bulletin of the International Organization of Septuagint and Cognate Studies (BIOSCS)* 23 (1990): 16–30, esp. 28–30; Steven L. McKenzie, *King David*, 71–73; A. Graeme Auld, "The Story of David and Goliath: A Test Case for Synchrony plus Diachrony," in *David und Saul im Widerstreit—Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches,* ed. Walter Dietrich (OBO 206; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 124– 125; Adam, *Saul und David*, 143–50. For extensive bibliography before 1970s, see Stoebe, "Goliathperikope," 398 n. 2.

[78] Auld, "Story of David and Goliath," 125. He specifically compares the Hebrew pluses in the MT to the pluses in LXX^{A} and LXX^{L} which are characteristically "alien intrusion[s]." The orthography in particular is consistent with Standard Biblical Hebrew, such as דוד instead of Late Biblical Hebrew דויד (Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 259). See Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (CahRB 20; Paris: Gabalda, 1982); Robert Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (HSM 12; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976); Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); idem, "Diachronic Analysis and the Features of Late Biblical Hebrew," *BBR* 4 (1994): 135–44.

[79] Note that "the Philistine" may not be explicitly named in this account, so unless referring to verses that do use the name "Goliath," I will refer to "the Philistine." See Stoebe, "Die Goliathperikope," 397-413; idem., *Das Erste Buch Samuelis*, 312-15; McCarter, *I Samuel*, 306-09; Lust, "Story," 11-14; idem, "David dans le Septante," in *Figures de David à travers la Bible: XVIIe Congrès de l'ACFEB (Lile, 1er Septembre 1997)*, eds. Louise Desrousseaux and Jacques Vermeylen (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), 246-52; Emanuel Tov, "The Composition of 1 Samuel 16-18," 118; idem., "The David and Goliath Saga: How a Biblical Editor Combined Two Versions," *Bible Review* 2, no. 4 (1986): 34-41; Trebolle, "David and Goliath," 26-30; Antony F. Campbell, "From Philistine to Throne (1 Samuel 16:14–18:16)," *Australian Biblical Review* 34 (1986): 35-41;

Both of the intertwined accounts of David's battle found in the MT text follow a similar pattern: David is sent to the battlefield, learns of the Philistine's challenge, stands up to fight, triumphs, and is rewarded by the king.[80] The key differences between the two parallel narratives and their surrounding vignettes are whether David is already known to the court and which child of Saul is introduced as his companion. In the LXX^{B} account, David receives an audience with the king and is outfitted in royal armour (vv. 33-38), which suggests he is already connected to Saul as his personal harpist and a fledgling warrior (cf. 16.14-23).[81] Michal soon falls for the now famous military hero (v. 20-22a) and David thwarts Saul's scheming by paying the deadly bride price of Philistine foreskins to win her hand (vv. 22-26a). In the second account, neither Saul nor Abner know who David is (v. 55) and he is first introduced with the Philistine's head in hand (vv. 56-57). Our scene commencing David and Jonathan's friendship and covenant follows (18.1-5). Compared side by side, these two accounts function as a doublet, particularly pertaining to David's newfound companion—and it is not the only doublet in 1 Samuel characterised by David's relation to one of Saul's children.

In the MT of Samuel, Michal and Jonathan are both simultaneously foils and counterparts to David. Both learn of Saul's plot to kill David and deceive their father in order to let David escape, thus showing loyalty to the future king over the current (Michal: 19.11–17; Jonathan: 20.1–21.1).[82] Just as with the David-Goliath narratives, the particulars are

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William Boyd Nelson, Jr., "1 Samuel 16-18 and 19:8-10: A Traditio-Historical Study," (PhD Diss.; Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, 1991), 24-42; Jacques Vermelyen*, La loi du plus fort: Histoire de la rédaction des récits davidiques de 1 Samuel à 1 Rois 2* (BETL 154. Leuven: University Press, 2000), 90-92; McKenzie, *King David*, 70-73; Tony W. Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 213; Auld, "Story of David and Goliath," 118-28; Ronald Hendel, "Plural Texts and Literary Criticism: For Instance, 1 Samuel 17," *Textus* 23 (2007): 99-101; Van Seters, *Biblical Saga* , 157-62; Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 245-256; Raymond F. Person, Jr., *The Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 74-78.

[80] As noted by Tov and Hutton, the only major difference is the account found only in Hebrew does not include a description of the battle, but it could very well be summed up in v. 50 or was omitted as an obvious discrepancy by the interpolating editor (Tov, "Nature," 41; Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 253). See also Campbell, "From Philistine to Throne," 36–37.

[81] Cf. Trebolle, "Story of David and Goliath," 28.

[82] Jonathan also mediates on behalf of David when Saul sets out to kill him in 19.1-7, but here there is no deception—Saul openly calls for Jonathan and his warriors to kill David (v. 1), Jonathan reasons Saul out of his rash decision (vv. 4-5), and the two are brought together in peaceful resolution (v. 7). Perhaps the only deceit is in Saul's oath to not put David to death in v. 6, but I take the phrase "Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan (וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׁאוּל בְּקוֹל יְהוֹנָתָן)" to mean that Jonathan had convinced him, at least for the moment. Thus, at least in the received text, an evil spirit comes upon Saul before his next attempt on David's life in vv. 9-10. The peaceful resolution also separates this account from the doublet, as both 19.11–17 and 20.1–21.1 transition David from settled in court to fugitive in the wilderness. The two narratives do share the "middle of the night" setting, specifically with reference to David being killed the next morning (19.2 & 11). Jonathan's surprise at David's claim that Saul is trying to kill him and his declaration of his father's confidence in him in 20.2 may strengthen the argument that 19.1-7 originates from the same tradition as the scene in ch. 20, as Saul first learns of

slightly different: Michal creates a David dummy in bed to trick the guards (19.13-16), Jonathan covers for his absence at a festival and shoots arrows to warn him off (20.24-29, 35-42); Michal lies about her betrayal (19.17), Jonathan is openly angry with his father (20.24-41). But the core function of these stories is the same: Saul's child chooses David over their own father out of love and personal loyalty. This theme is central to the David-Jonathan narratives and will be revisited later in the chapter.[83] Jonathan and Michal never appear together throughout the book of Samuel despite both being depicted as central to David's life. The two of them connect David to the house of Saul in different ways, one through marriage and the other through alliance. At the debut of David's military prowess, it seems telling that even in the expertly-edited MT either companion must trade off their appearances, never present in the same scene. Overall, the coherent parallel David-Goliath accounts in the LXX^B and MT, along with other doublets throughout 1 Sam 19-21. suggest two older traditions focused on either Saulide child.

Scholars looking to establish a *Grundschrift* (ground or base layer) of the HDR into which the other stories have been interpolated have proposed dual sources or redactional layers based upon the doublets featuring Jonathan or Michal. Otto Kaiser, for example, favours the narratives of Jonathan in 1 Sam 18.1-21.1* as older because of Jonathan's appearance in the story of Saul's battle at Michmash in 1 Sam 13 and argues that the parallel passages with Michal (along with others) are later insertions.[84] On the other hand, Ina Willi-Plein argues that the Michal passages are more tightly woven into a larger "History of David's House (*Davidshausgeschichte*)" and the Jonathan passages were added later along with the "Court Narrative (*Höfische Erzählwerk*)" to address issues of hereditary monarchy.[85] Since my interest is primarily in the Jonathan narratives, I do not find textual primacy

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Jonathan's care for David and chooses to conceal his scheme the second time around. Adam considers 19.1-7 to have grown out of 20, which is possible but does not explain Jonathan's insistence that he knows his father's mind (*Saul und David*, 130-134).

[83] See also Rowe, *Sons or Lovers.*

[84] Otto Kaiser, "David und Jonathan," 281–96. Kaiser's foundational "Jonathan" layer includes 16:14–23; 18:1abb, 5; 19:8; 18:6aa*b,7,8aa2 b,9; 19:9–10ab1 ; 20:1b–7,9–10,18–22,24–39; 21:1a* (ibid., 289). See also Kaiser, "Beobachtungen zur sogenannten Thronnachfolgeerzählung Davids," *ETL* 44 (1988): 9–10.

[85] Ina Willi-Plein, "I Sam 18–19 und die Davidshausgeschichte," in *David und Saul,* ed. Walter Dietrich, 138–71, esp. 166-68; idem, "Michal und die Anfänge des Königtums in Israel," in *Congress Volume, Cambridge, 1995* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 66; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 401–19; and idem, "Frauen um David: Beobachtungen zur Davidshausgeschichte," in *Meilenstein: Festgabe für Herbert Donner,* eds. S. Timm and M. Weippert (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 349–61. The History of David's House is the source equivalent to HDR for Willi-Plein but more expansive in its bounds, as is the Court History to the Succession Narrative. See also Walter Dietrich, "Das Ende der Thronfolgegeschichte," in *Die sogenannte Thronfolgegeschichte Davids: Neue Einsichten und Anfragen,* eds. Albert de Pury and Thomas Römer (OBO 176; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 38–69.

especially important in this case. However, one may speculate that their parallel nature indicates the possibility of some relationship between the Michal and Jonathan traditions prior to their introduction into a David story. Both traditions seem to function as bridges between the Saul and David sources. Willi-Plein notes that since Michal, daughter of Saul, is known as David's wife in other traditions (e.g., lists of royal wives and concubines), she may have seemed like a natural point to expand the historiography of David's kingship backward into his early court life.[86] Jonathan, on the other hand, ties some of the earliest Saul stories, like his routing of the Philistines in 14.1-14, to David's wilderness exile. However, Jonathan does not seem to be known in connection with David outside of these bridging texts. This may indicate that the Michal tradition is older, and that the Jonathan tradition was modelled on it, before they were brought together.

While the coherence of the parallel accounts in 1 Sam 17-21* suggests they were each separate compositions, their lack of clear beginning or end and their dependence on the older Saul and David sources suggests they were not themselves independent traditions.[87] It is possible that the Jonathan and Michal traditions were originally part of two different attempts at bringing together the Saul and David sources, one modelled on the other. Although I do not have room here to speculate about the exact texts that might be included in either, I roughly agree with Jeremy Hutton's division into HDR_1 (Michal tradition) and HDR_2 (Jonathan Tradition) within the bounds of 1 Sam 16-2 Sam 5; with each he follows the doublets to reconstruct a coherent narrative, from David's entry into Saul's court to his life as a fugitive in the wilderness.[88] Although they follow the same narrative pattern, each story bridges the sources and ultimately the royal houses in different ways: HDR_1 centres on David's involvement in Saul's retinue and his marriage to Michal, while HDR_2 focuses on David's military prowess, charisma, and resulting political alliance with Jonathan. Perhaps HDR_2 was written at a time when political marriage was less important and/or when David's Judahite

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[86] Willi-Plein, "Michal," 404-5.

[87] As noticed by Reinhard Kratz and John Bowden, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 170.

[88] In *the Transjordanian Palimpsest*, Hutton sets out the following perimeters: HDR_1 = 1 Sam 16.14-23; 17.1-11,32-40,42-48a,49,51-54; 18.6aβb*–8a*,9,12a,13–16,20–21a,22–26a,27–29a; 19.8-17*; 21.2–16*; 22.(6–8),9–23; 23.1–13*; 24.1–23*; 28.3–25*; 31.1–13; 2 Sam 2.4b + 21.12,13a*,14aα*; 5.(4– 5),6–10(13–16); 21.1–6*,8–11,13b,14* plus two "Narratives of Saul's Rise" (NSR_A + NSR_B = NSR_{AB}) which I would not include at this redactional level but rather argue are the older Saul sources (1–10.16* +11.1–11*,15* + 14.6–16*). HDR_2 = 1 Sam 17.12*(emended),13–14,16–18,20– 23a,24–30,41,48b,(50),55–58; 18.1–2,(3),4–5,8b,12b,17-18*,(29b-30); 19.1–7; 20.1–4,18–22, 24–39; 21.1; 23.14ab–15; 23.19–28*; 26.1–25*; 27.1–28.2*; 29.1– 30.31*; 2 Sam 1.1–27; (2.1–4a) (see p 265-6 for summary). The most prominent exception, as I will argue in a later section, is in the division of ch. 23. I would also like to point out that I do not date these layers/traditions the same as Hutton, as will be seen.

origins needed to be emphasised, for example, sometime after 722 BCE. But the existence of two different versions of this combined Saul-David story does not mean they were necessarily viewed as "competing"—at the very least not by the editor who brought them together.

At some point in the proto-MT tradition, the two HDRs were combined, either prior to or at the hand of the Deuteronomist. This composition/editorial technique appears to be a variation of what Molly Zahn refers to as textual "reuse," in which a new text is reworked by the addition of modified but recognisable material from another text or source.[89] Since both traditions serve the same base purpose of apology for David, it is easy to see how one might have been incorporated into the other, as suggested by Willi-Plein, or arranged as blocks in creation of the new text. In the case of 1 Sam 17-18, the conflation of details from the two texts likely functions to give a fuller account of the narrative (especially in ch. 17) and introduce both royal children as key players in the political transition from the house of Saul to the house of David as it unfolds in the rest of 1 Samuel; two members of Saul's house, two bonds, creates a stronger connection between David and the "original" dynasty.[90] This editorial approach also agrees with David Carr's observation of the scribal tendency to expansion rather than omission for the sake of preserving the most text possible.[91] The longer account of the David and Goliath battle found in the MT tradition thus likely reflects a composite HDR combining the Michal and Jonathan traditions, either as an independent tradition or at the *Grundschrift* of the Deuteronomistic History, rather than a local expansion after the divergence of the proto-OG.

Nevertheless, how do we explain the Jonathan material missing from chs. 17-18 in LXX^{B}, including the first reference to his covenant with David in 18.1-5, while the rest of the tradition is included in chs. 19, 20, and 23? A covenant between David and Jonathan is already known in the Old Greek in 20.8 and 23.18, and Jonathan is said to love David as

[89] Molly M. Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting in Second Temple Judaism: Scribal Composition and Transmission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 28-55, esp. 36-37.

[90] The only other possible introduction of Jonathan is the brief note at 19.1 that Jonathan delighted in David. It may simply be the narrator's reiteration of the love so clearly displayed in 18.1(3) or it may be a placeholder introduction remnant of a smaller composition unity before the Jonathan tradition or HDR_2 were incorporated into a larger text.

[91] David M. Carr, "Empirische Perspektiven auf das Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk," in *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur "Deuteronomismus"-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten* (ed. Markus Witte et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 1–17, esp. 6–8; see also Vermelyen, *La loi du plus fort*, 91.

himself in 20.17.[92] Although 18.1-5 could be an expansion of the Jonathan tradition, it seems odd that the other passages would assume a close relationship with David and Jonathan without them being sequentially introduced, as Michal is in 18.20-29. Therefore, LXX^B 1 Sam 17-18 is likely a limited witness to a larger textual tradition which diverges from the proto-MT before the Jonathan tradition had been incorporated. There are a couple explanations for its survival: 1) the interpolation/conflation process was interrupted, and the proto-OG tradition separated before the longer account in the proto-MT tradition was completed;[93] or 2) the *Vorlage* used by the Greek translator originally contained the longer MT account but was damaged or a section lost containing chs. 17-18, and only an earlier manuscript from before the combination of the HDR traditions was available to fill in the gap. Jeremy Hutton makes a convincing case for the latter option with a "scroll approach" attentive to the materiality of these scribal traditions.[94] He argues that a sheet or sheets from the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the OG, which originally contained a longer account akin to the proto-MT tradition, was damaged from active use, removed, and replaced with new sheets copying 1 Sam 17-18 from a manuscript containing only HDR_1.[95] While his theory is of course

[92] The translator also adds διαθήκην in 22.8 where בִּכְרֹת but no בְּרִית is present in the MT. Curiously, it is not added in the corresponding verse 22.16, which uses the same verb to describe Jonathan in the act of "cutting (a covenant)" with David. It is also added wherever the Ark of the Lord is mentioned in 1 Samuel, likely to correspond with earlier books.

[93] Frank Moore Cross suggests something similar with his "Theory of Local Texts," assigning the *Vorlagen* of the witnesses different provenances: the LXX text is Egyptian, the Qumran text is Palestinian, and the Proto-MT is Babylonian ("The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert," *Harvard Theological Review [HTR]* 57 [1964]: 297). I think it more likely that the traditions were in more contact with each other and thus more geographically clustered, say with the Proto-MT based in Jerusalem but in conversation with other communities like Qumran elsewhere in Palestine. The LXX being isolated in Egypt (Alexandria?), however, does make sense of its preservation of an earlier version. I do not think that, as Jürg Hutzli has argued, emendations to the shared text of the MT unrepresented in LXX^B need counter this theory, but in fact strength it that different editing was occurring simultaneously in parallel communities ("Mögliche Retuschen am Davidbild in der masoretischen Fassung der Samuelbücher," in *David und Saul im Widerstreit—Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* [ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: University Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005], 103–9). See also Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 264-5, David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) Cf. Barthélemy, "Trois niveaux," 49.

[94] Hutton originally suggested this transmission model in *Transjordanian Palimpsest*, although in the book he ultimately disfavours it (264). At the 2022 meeting of the International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament in Zürich, he presented further evidence to support what he has called the "corruption-replacement hypothesis" following the work of David Carr and Molly Zahn (Jeremy Hutton, "Split Identities and Fragmented Texts: Considerations on Text, Source, and Materiality in 1 Sam 17-18 MT and OG" [IOSOT, Universität Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, 9 August 2022]). Many thanks to Jeremy for providing me with the text, which hopefully will be published as an article soon. For the "scroll approach," see David M. Carr, "Rethinking the Materiality of Biblical Texts: From Source, Tradition and Redaction to a Scroll Approach," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (ZAW)* 132 (2020): 594–621.

[95] In *Transjordanian Palimpsest*, Hutton pictures the supplementary material to be "a *very* early text or oral tradition of Samuel" from the Michal source (emphasis his), but his assumptive dating is influenced by his predilection to date the HDR sources to the early monarchic period (*Transjordanian*, 264; also n132-133). However, as I will argue, HDR_1 could have survived even well after their combination in the proto-MT tradition. Similar manuscript supplementation seems to take place in LXX^B at 2 Sam 11.2-1 Kgs 2.11 (or 2 Sam

conjectural, his calculations of the size and length of hypothetical scroll sheets as well as the narrative breaks appropriate for the division of biblical books into multiple scrolls based on historical scroll data lends it plausibility.[96] In either case, the manuscript witnesses between the MT and the LXX^{B} appear distinct but complementary, revealing a fuller picture of textual transmission, rather than contradicting or disavowing the "sibling sources" included in either.

As evidenced by different versions of the text at Qumran and the recent work on Second-Temple era Jewish writing practices, it seems that scribes of the biblical texts were comfortable with, and perhaps even valued, pluriformity.[97] This is important not only to establish the coexistence of different versions of Samuel but also to (relatively) date the proposed traditions. Alongside the evidence of LXX^{B} and other OG manuscript traditions from the Hellenistic period and later, several Samuel manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially from Cave 4, exemplify a variety of different traditions. Beyond 1 Sam 17-18, 4QSam^{a} and 4QSam^{b} appear to follow the LXX^{B} or proto-OG while 4QSam^{c} appears closely related to the proto-MT tradition, suggesting that the Qumran community kept a range of versions together.[98] Zahn recognises in these scribal practices a dynamicity and fluidity of texts in a broad yet still deeply reverent tradition, one of many in Second Temple Judea.[99] In fact, reverence for the process of textual transmission appears to have fuelled the preservation of the different versions of Samuel in Qumran Cave 4; what an evolutionary model would otherwise label as "intermediate drafts" are held side-by-side as valued sources. Perhaps most important to this study, 4QSam^{a}, otherwise closely related to the textual tradition of LXX^{B},

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10.1-1 Kgs 2.11 according to James Donald Shenkel, *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings* [HSM 1; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968], 117–20), where a *Kaige* reading (alternative, later than OG) seems apparent. On the other hand, the sixth column of Origen's Hexapla, usually representing a *Kaige* reading, presents what we assume to be the OG, perhaps as an alternative to the manuscript reading of LXX^{B} (H. St. John Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins* [London: Oxford University Press, 1921], 16–28,114–15).

[96] Following the data on the dimensions of historical scrolls and sheets used around the time of Qumran's scribal activity (Emmanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 79) and Carr's method for estimating the length of Hebrew texts on such scrolls (Carr, "Rethinking the Materiality," 612), Hutton proposes that the text of the book of Samuel as it appears in the MT would take up roughly 10.2-11.1 meters, far too unwieldy for a working scroll, and thus would have to be broken up into several scrolls ("Split Identities and Fragmented Texts"). The MT version of 1 Sam 17-18 would take up about 60.7 cm, which could be the size of a sheet or sheets, or a neat number of columns that could be excised and replaced. The character difference between the MT's longer account and that preserved in LXX^{B} is only about 3% and thus to replace the former with the later would take up roughly the same amount of space and material. Please reference the forthcoming article for further particular data and calculations.

[97] See Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting*; Geoffrey Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew, Volume I* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2020), esp. 114.

[98] Frank Moore Cross, Donald W. Perry, Richard J. Saley, and Eugene C. Ulrich, eds., *1–2 Samuel* (vol. 12 of Qumran Cave 4; Discoveries of the Judean Desert 17; Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 25–27, 223–24, 252-54; Johnson, *Reading David and Goliath*, 3.

[99] Zahn, *Genres of Rewriting*, 214-222.

appears to bear fragmentary witness of a longer version akin to the MT tradition, in particular to the Jonathan tradition.[100] If fragment 17 containing 1 Sam 18.4-5 can reliably be dated c. 50-25 BCE, then we may have evidence for the Hebrew proto-OG tradition prior to the loss of 1 Sam 17-18 existing alongside the LXX[B] during this period.[101] However, there is a conspicuous absence of the reused text, at Qumran or otherwise, suggesting that by the late Hellenistic-early Roman era, HDR_1 survived only in its combined form. Determining the date of the conflation and subsequent redactions thus must be guided by more than just the manuscript data, although it is perhaps safe to set the *terminus ante quem* at the early Hellenistic period to allow for the HDR_1 to drop away but the proto-OG and proto-MT traditions to survive.[102]

The text criticism of 1 Sam 18.1-5 itself is complex as the sentence order appears jumbled, jumping between Jonathan's and Saul's interactions with David. The mere mention of a covenant has often led scholars to relegate v. 3(-4) to a much later Deuteronomistic supplement.[103] Kaiser argues that this covenant is part of the Deuteronomistic editor's agenda to legally legitimise Davidic rule in the North through legal connection to Jonathan.[104] While I agree with the observation of the central role Jonathan plays in the Deuteronomistic concern for a unified Israel, I do not think this necessitates any dating beyond the *terminus post quem* of c. 722 BCE. Nor should we rush to assign legal properties to the covenant that are not overt in the narrative: at face value, these verses only establish a relationship between the two men. However, it is clear from the mismatched sentences that there is some level of redaction. Saul taking David into his house (v. 2) appears amidst a group of three verses concerning Jonathan's devotion and gifts.[105] This verse connects more naturally with the

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[100] Cross et al., *1–2 Samuel*, 25–27, 223–24; Benjamin J.M. Johnson, "Reconsidering 4QSam[a] and the Textual Support for the Long and Short Versions of the David and Goliath Story," *VT* 62.4 (2012): 534-49.

[101] Dating according to Cross et al., *1-2 Samuel*, 5.

[102] Hippolytus of Rome references David's love of Jonathan in connection to his victory over Goliath (*De David et Goliat* 10.2-4), suggesting that these verses were already part of a widely circulated source by the second century CE. Lust posits that verses 18.1b,(3),4 must be original to the Old Greek but later omitted in witnesses like LXX[B] due to *parablepsis* (Lust, "Story of David and Goliath," 7-10). Hutton argues on the contrary that Hippolytus had some awareness of the Hebrew/MT tradition that included these verses and included them subconsciously (*Transjordanian*, 258-9). I find Hutton's view more likely, but further still, I would not be surprised to find another Greek translation following the Proto-MT tradition, perhaps unpreserved as it was for more "common use."

[103] E.g. Kaiser, "David und Jonathan," 288-89; Adam also takes the notice of David's success in v. 5 and attributes these motifs to a later Deuteronomistic Wisdom redaction ("weisheitlich-später-dtr Deuteschicht") focused on comparing David with the ideal king Hezekiah (*Saul und David,* 142).

[104] Kaiser, "David und Jonathan," 288-89.

[105] De Vries takes verse 2 to be the original ending of the "David Hero-Saga" around which the rest of the pericope (vv. 1, 3-5) was inserted by an Accession Historian to include Jonathan ("David's Victory," 30, 35-36). This seems unlikely since v. 2 is not included in LXX[B], and as already discussed above, there are no editorial signs of the Greek text or its *Vorlage* cutting out the material.

notice of Saul appointing David military commander and his subsequent success in v. 5. Yet removing the verse as an interpolation does not solve much as the repetition of "loved him as himself" between vv. 1 and 3 creates a disjuncture. The repetition could be a case of dittography if the verses originally stood together, but more likely functions as a *Wiederaufnahme* to signal an addition. Verse 4 could be included in the addition if not for its specific battlefield setting, with the mention of armour and weapons. What, then, can we make of this hodgepodge?

If we assume this passage to belong to a tradition focused on Jonathan, his introduction and bonding to David takes precedence in the narrative. The verses concerning Saul, on the other hand, play an important structural role, acting as a bridge from the David-Goliath vignette. Note that they explain David's assimilation into the house of Saul and involvement with Israelite military campaigns, which would have been needed in HDR_2. Verse 5 also establishes David's rapport with the people of Israel which is thematically carried on in the next episode of the women's praise for him and Saul's consequent jealousy. This connection may be an indication that the beginning of v. 6 has been expanded to smooth the integration of the Jonathan material. Besides their symbolic significance, which will be discussed below, Jonathan's clothing of David in royal garments and arming him with sword and bow may be sandwiched between vv. 2 and 5 to represent him being "dressed for the job," both appearing in court and being sent out to battle. Thus, either vv. 1,4 originally ended the story of David and Goliath in HDR_1 and vv. 2,5 were added to situate the story in the composite HDR text, or all four were composed together and our modern eyes are overly critical of the style of narration. The notice of a covenant in v. 3, however, is certainly secondary and, as I will argue, Deuteronomistic. It could have been inserted either at the conflation of HDR_1 and HDR_2 or in a later recension in order to connect the account more closely with the later Jonathan narratives, alongside or mirroring 20.17. While not straightforward, this complex composition history of 1 Sam 18.1-5 lends insight into the different redactional layers built up across the Jonathan tradition and the role of covenant in tying them to other texts in Samuel. With the addition of 18.3, the underlying narrative of David and Jonathan's close friendship is punctuated with future-oriented political purpose.

The Love of Jonathan: 1 Sam 18.1-5[106]

The theme of "love" for David occurs with mixed connotations of political loyalty and affection throughout the book of Samuel. Although some rush to point out the echoes of Deuteronomy in the love language of 1 Sam 18.1,3, it is too common in these narratives to be simply explained as "Deuteronomistic." Frank Moore Cross argues "the expression 'to love as himself' is a kinship term," but his work largely ignores the political context of both the biblical passage and the ancient Near Eastern background of the term "to love."[107] The use of אהב and its cognates in treaty contexts has been treated most significantly by William L. Moran and Hayim Tadmor in connection to the commands in Deuteronomy and Leviticus to "love Yahweh your God" and to "love your neighbour as yourself."[108] In other ancient Near Eastern treaties, particularly suzerain-vassal treaties, "love" can be demanded and fulfilled through unreserved obedience. The most common and concrete example cited is the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon, in which the king puts the vassal under oath "you will love Ashurbanipal, the crown-prince, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord as [you do] yourselves."[109] Klaus-Peter Adam goes so far as to directly project this model onto David and Jonathan; as representatives of Israel and Judah, their love "does not denote the relationship between individuals, but alliances [*Bündnisverhältnis*] between states."[110]

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[106] This section and the following sections of the chapter have been adapted from my MPhil thesis, "Obligation and Covenant in Ancient Israel," particularly from chapter 3 of the MPhil. Additionally, an abbreviated version of the argument in these sections has been published as an article in *JBL*: Johnson, "Kingship and Covenant." However, the text, examples, and conclusions have changed substantially from both previous iterations of the argument.

[107] Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 10n23. Since the phrase "to love as oneself" is unique to the David-Jonathan narrative, there is little textual evidence to support a kinship reading. Cf. Lev 19.18: וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ. The phrase likely should be understood in light of the only other appearance of כְּ+נֶפֶשׁ+pronominal suffix as a relational construction in Deut 13.6 (appears elsewhere only in Deut 23.24 to represent one's desire). The phrase does appear in this verse alongside a list of family members, but indicates a non-relative friend who shares the same level of intimacy (enough to tempt one to idolatry). This does not include the friend in the kinship group but seeks to cover those explicitly *not* in the kinship group. The related construction בְנַפְשׁוֹ in Gen 44.30-31 similarly refers to a highly *emotional* bond between Jacob and Benjamin and need not intone kinship. Note an interesting echo in 1 Sam 20.4, in which Jonathan asks what David's soul (נַפְשְׁךָ) desires in order to aid him in peril.

[108] William L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (*CBQ)* 25 (1963): 77-87; Hayim Tadmor, "Treaty and Oath in the Ancient Near East: A Historian's Approach," in *Humanizing America's Iconic Book*, eds. Gene M. Tucker and Douglas A. Knight (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 127-52. See also Bernard M. Levinson, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty as the Source for the Canon Formula in Deuteronomy 13:1," *JAOS* 130, no. 3 (2010): 337-347.

[109] D.J. Wiseman, "The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon," *Iraq* 20 (1958): 49-50 (col. 4, lines 266-68). Wiseman's translation.

[110] "[אהב (כ)נפשו 1Sam 18,3; 20,17] bezeichnet nicht das Verhältnis zwischen Individuen, sondern das Bündnisverhältnis zwischen Staaten" (Adam, *Saul und David*, 136n85).

While Adam goes too far to discount the function of love at the narrative level, John A. Thompson similarly notes how אהב is employed at key political points throughout the HDR, such as all of Israel "loving" David later in ch. 18 (vv. 16, 28).[111] This is much closer to the generalised use of love in "royal political" contexts to mean fealty, as it is used in 8th and 7th century diplomatic correspondence between Near Eastern kings in reference to their treaties. [112] Crucially, as opposed to the ordinances in Deuteronomy or the extrabiblical treaties, love is not commanded in Samuel. Neither is there an explicit pledge to "love" a superior in order to establish subordination.[113] It is only used to describe the *motivation* for the covenant between David and Jonathan, בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אתו, both in 1 Sam. 18.3 and 20.17. This does not mean that אהב carries no political connotation within David and Jonathan's relationship, only that the function of "love" in Samuel is not identical to its use in other contexts and requires further nuance.

Jonathan's love of David also parallels Michal's love when comparing the doublet in 1 Sam 18, which does not necessitate a homoerotic reading but does speak to personal affection.[114] In fact, the addition of 18.1 fits nicely as an introduction to ch. 18, which is structured around three episodes describing love or admiration of David—the love of the dancing women (vv. 6b-9), the love of all Israel (vv. 12-16), and the love of Michal (vv. 20-29a).[115] In the LXX, this structure is even more emphatic as vv. 28-29 speak of the love of all Israel again instead of Michal, which creates a chiasm with vv. 15-16.[116] Although it is not clear whether Michal's declaration of love in the MT reflects the underlying tradition or a correction by the HDR editor combining the sources, the phrase could have been changed to

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[111] John A. Thompson, "The Significance of the Verb *Love* in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel," *VT* 24 (1974): 334-38, esp. 337. See also Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Verb Love: 'aheb in the David-Jonathan Narratives: A Footnote," *VT* 25 (1975): 213–14; Gerhard Wallis, "'āhabh," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* 1 (1970): 106–27; Vermeylen, *Loi du plus fort*, 102.

[112] Peter J.J.S. Els, "אהב," *NIDOTTE* 1:277– 99 (295). See also Moshe Weinfeld, "The Loyalty Oath," 380– 81.

[113] Cf. Yael Ziegler, "'As Yahweh Lives and as Your Soul Lives': An Oath of Conscious Deference," *VT* 58 (2008): 117– 30. There are certainly other indications of status and subordination between David and Jonathan, just that a vassal "love" oath as in the Esarhaddon treaties is not one of them. "Love" is neither commanded nor sworn within the David-Jonathan narratives.

[114] Yaron Peleg, "Love at First Sight? David, Jonathan, and the Biblical Politics of Gender," *JSOT* 30 (2005): 171–89; cf. Marcus Zehnder, "Exegetische Beobachtungen zu den David-Jonathan Geschichten," *Bib* 79 (1998): 153–79. For a discussion of homoeroticism between David and Jonathan, see Saul Olyan, "'Surpassing The Love Of Women': Another Look at 2 Samuel 1:26 and the Relationship of David and Jonathan." In *Authorizing Marriage?: Canon, Tradition, and Critique in the Blessing of Same-Sex Unions*, edited by Mark D. Jordan, 7-16. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

[115] For an in-depth discussion of this structure in the LXX, see Johnson, *Reading David and Goliath*, 139-181. See also, Walter Brueggemann, "Narrative Coherence and Theological Intentionality in 1 Samuel 18," *CBQ* 55 (1993): 225-243, esp. 240.

[116] Johnson, *Reading David and Goliath*, 176, 181.

purposefully parallel Jonathan's love in v. 1 (and 3?), accentuating the personal love of these key political actors alongside the popular opinion of the people.[117] Affective love plays an important part in the apology for David as an individual; the king's son, and indeed all of Israel, endorse his character and qualities.[118] Beyond simple likability, ch. 18 demonstrates the value placed in David's public appearance (v. 16) and military success (vv. 6-9).[119] The latter is especially relevant, since in the presumed composite HDR text Jonathan's love for David appears to be inspired by the purported hero's great feat of defeating the giant Philistine. The two senses of אהב at the narrative level thus go hand-in-hand to promote David as the rising star of Israel's court, assigning him allies and early success as he begins both his military and political careers.

A similar double-use of love for personal affection and political loyalty is found in the Hittite Bronze Tablet, a 13th-century Anatolian metal tablet inscribed with a treaty between Tudḫaliya IV of Hatti and Kurunta of Tarḫuntašša.[120] Tudḫaliya, newly ascended to the Hittite throne, describes how both men were raised by his father Ḫattušili, who then set Kurunta over Tarḫuntašša after he seized the Hittite throne. Before Tudḫaliya was even designated prince regent, the two were brought together in "friendship (*a-aš-šu-u̯a-an-ni*)" and "were dear (*na-ak-ki-e-eš*) and beloved (*a-aš-ša-u-e-eš*) to each other."[121] They swore that each would remain loyal to the other, whatever their royal positions. And Kurunta *has* remained loyal, throughout the deposition of Tudḫaliya's brother and a revolt of vassal kingdoms at Ḫattušili's death. He has even been willing to die for Tudḫaliya. Now that Tudḫaliya has become king, he honours Kurunta for his integrity by offering him a larger province than the one he ruled under Ḫattušili.

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[117] Johnson favours reading "Michal" as original and the LXX translator changing to "all Israel" in order to create the chiasm with vv. 15-16, where the word order is also reversed to aid the mirroring effect (ibid.).

[118] For more on affective and political love together, specifically for David and Jonathan, see Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Loyalty and Love: The Language of Human Interconnections in the Hebrew Bible," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 22 (1983): 190–204; David Jobling, "Jonathan: A Structural Study in 1 Samuel," in *The Sense of Biblical Narrative I* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1986), 4-25; and more generally, see Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (»āhēb, »ahăbā) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52 (2002): 437–58; Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ* 65 (2003): 350–69; Ellen White, "Michal the Misinterpreted," *JSOT* 31 (2007): 451–64, esp. 452–54. For the apologetic purpose of David and Jonathan's relationship, see McKenzie, *King David,* 84-85; Olyan, *Friendship*, 150n43.

[119] To these, Baruch Halpern adds David's unorthodoxy as a man who shapes his own fate, getting at the attractiveness of a brash rebel willing to take risks as opposed to Saul's reluctance and caution (*David's Secret Demons*, 13).

[120] Ada Taggar-Cohen, "Political Loyalty in the Biblical Account of 1 Samuel xx-xxii in the Light of Hittite Texts" *Vetus Testamentum* 55 (2005): 251-68.

[121] *Bo* 86/299 §13.32-33, Taggar-Cohen's translation, 256; Compare CHD L-N: 365[a]. Taggar-Cohen notes that narrative as historical framing is not unique to the Hittite tradition but can also be found in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian treaty traditions as well (256).

Ada Taggar-Cohen recognises that the description of Tudḫaliya and Kurunta's relationship is strikingly similar to that of David and Jonathan in a number of ways, most notably in the balance between affectionate and political language used to describe their social dynamics. Their attitude towards each other, especially in their early history, is described in terms of love, endearment, esteem, and benefit, while their actions towards each other are described in terms of loyalty, obligations, and alliance.[122] The coexistence of affectionate and political language in an official document demonstrates that the two are not mutually exclusive, especially in a royal context. Taggar-Cohen argues that the background of Tudḫaliya's and Kurunta's "special friendship" acts as the historical framing for the current treaty which explains its benefit to the subordinate party.[123] Though 1 Sam 18.1-5 is not formulated as a preamble and the narrative at this level does not carry all the legal trappings of a treaty, the description of David and Jonathan's friendship functions much the same way; their affection for one another is reported as the pretext for their political loyalty which will in turn be explicitly defined as Saul's hostility grows. This affective language is more rhetorically powerful than a purely political reading as it generates pathos for both David and Jonathan and removes suspicion of coercion or foul play from their relationship.[124] Thus, the affectionate function of the "love" of David and Jonathan acts as a precedent condition that legitimises their political alliance later in the HDR narratives.

Some scholars have interpreted the statement that "Jonathan loved David" as one-sided, using it to paint a negative picture of David as manipulating Jonathan to extort political favour from him.[125] Similarly, some have noted that Jonathan's gifts of his tunic, armour, and weapons to David in 1 Sam 18.4 are not reciprocated as might be expected in a ritualized

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[122] Taggar-Cohen, "Political Loyalty," 257, esp. n20: "The Hittite words for the description of the friendship and love are derived from 1) *ašš- aššiya-* meaning 'dear, be good, favored love (equal to the Akkadian *râmu*)', see Puhvel, HED 1:189-206. 2) *nakki- nakkiyatar-* meaning 'important, high-ranking, honored, esteemed, dear', see CHD L-N: 364, 369."

[123] Taggar-Cohen, 266. This is what McCarthy would call the "historical narrative," which is not present in all treaties but is especially important to the Hittite texts as a preamble to the stipulations (*Treaty and Covenant*, 53-55).

[124] For David and Jonathan as friends and extensive treatment of the emotional aspect of their relationship, see Olyan, *Friendship*, 69-77. Though I think the relationship of David and Jonathan is more politically focused than Olyan's assessment, he recognizes the formal aspect of treaty-making between them.

[125] See David A. Bosworth, "Evaluating King David: Old Problems and Recent Scholarship," *CBQ* 68 (2006): 191-210; Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective*, trans. Kirsti Stejerna (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 54-55; Susan Ackerman, *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 165-89.

The *qere* reading in 1 Sam 18.1 seems to be correcting a simple case of dittography, repeating the ה in the word. But even if the *ketiv* preserves a true plural, perhaps referring to a wider group ("all loved him [David]") or even understood in a reciprocal voice ("they loved one another"), the focus of the sentence remains on Jonathan's נֶפֶשׁ—perhaps even to emphasise Jonathan over other parties ("[but] Jonathan [loved him] as his own soul"), the counterpart of 1 Sam 20.41 "…but David wept more."

exchange.[126] However, the narrative focus on David as the future king and the editorial perspective anticipating his enthronement explain the perceived imbalance. While David Jobling perhaps goes too far to say that the transfer of Jonathan's mantle and sword is "a virtual abdication," there is a sense of foreshadowing to see David arrayed in the personal effects of the prince.[127] The symbolic significance of these royal objects looms large in earlier episodes, such as the tearing of Saul's mantle in 1 Sam 15.27-28, and the description in 1 Sam 13.22 of Jonathan's sword as the only one in the kingdom besides Saul's.[128] Just as Tudḫaliya takes pains to mention Kurunta's specific oath of loyalty "even if [Tudḫaliya]'s father/ will not place [him] for kingship" to foreshadow his current position, the focus on Jonathan's love and gifts in 1 Sam 18.1-4 foreshadows David's ascension.[129] The direction of these expressions of affection—from Jonathan to David—is especially important, as Jonathan, like Kurunta, is in the position of power at the beginning of their relationship.

Susan Ackerman has shown that in biblical descriptions, love is usually expressed from a superior to an inferior.[130] Although the dynamic will eventually be reversed, Jonathan's superior political status as Saul's son lends credibility to David's natural appeal.[131] Jonathan favours David before David comes into political power of his own, so Jonathan's loyalty is to David as a person and not any group or administration he may represent. This arrangement is akin to Kurunta swearing to Tudḫaliya "concerning [his] person" as opposed to Ḫattušili's family generally.[132] Such a reading of Jonathan's loyalty makes no claims on the "purity" of his motivation but only on the way he is portrayed in the text leading up to his actions in 1 Sam 20. The same reading can explain the lack of explicit references to David's "love." Whether or not Jonathan's feelings are mutual is not the central question, although there are hints of David's affection later in his weeping and kissing of

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[126] Rowe, *Sons or Lovers,* 94, though Rowe sees the gifts reciprocated in "long-term commitment."

[127] Jobling, "Jonathan," 12. Cf. Moshe Weinfeld, "ברית, berit," *TDOT* 2:263; Wozniak, "Drei verschiedene literarische Bechreibungen," 215; McCarter, *I Samuel*, 215.

[128] Patricia K. Tull, "Jonathan's Gift of Friendship," *Interpretation* 58, no. 2 (2004): 154. See Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1976), 39; Julian Morgenstern, "David and Jonathan," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 78 (1959): 322. Olyan criticises associations of the mantle with kingship, as "it is worn by everyone from Job to Aaron to Samuel's ghost" (*Friendship*, 150n47), but the concentration of examples within the David narratives seems to confirm the association.

[129] *Bo* 86/299 §13.38-39. Taggar-Cohen's translation, 256.

[130] Susan Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political," 447. See also Ellen van Wolde, "Sentiments as Culturally Constructed Emotions: Anger and Love in the Hebrew Bible," *Biblical Interpretation* 16, no. 1 (2008): 1-18, which uses the case of both Jonathan and Michal's love for David to confirm the cultural hierarchy expressed with אהב.

[131] McCarter marks it as a sign of David's "irresistible charm" (*I Samuel*, 342).

[132] *Bo* 86/299 §13.38. Beckman's translation in *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 112.

Jonathan (1 Sam 20.41), and especially in his lament in 2 Sam 1.[133] David will show loyalty to Jonathan once he become king, but until then Jonathan's "love" underpins their relationship. Cross is right to say that Jonathan's "love" does not equate to the "'suzerainty' of David," but the inevitability of David's kingship is certainly on the narrative horizon.

But why would an editor choose Jonathan as the bridge character between the Saulide and Davidic dynasties? Why not emphasise the familial bond through marriage to Michal? Although scholars disagree whether or not the monarchy would have originally been understood as hereditary, political marriage was certainly a conventional way of claiming royal power.[134] Yet I would argue that precisely because it is conventional, a Deuteronomistic editor sought to subvert expectations by emphasising Jonathan. They do not wholly disregard the Michal connection, as reclaiming her from her second husband Paltiel will play a key role in David's consolidation of power over Judah in 1 Sam 3.[135] However, David's marriage to Michal also presents complications for an editor keen to discredit any Saulide claim to the throne, as reflected in the addition to the ark incident in 2 Sam 6 where she and any possible children from the union are discredited. Furthermore, even though she loves David and is loyal to him, she is still given to David in a patriarchal system of political power, used in her father's scheming to maintain the status of their house.[136] On the other hand, as Katharine Doob Sakenfeld argues, Jonathan's volition plays an important role in his friendship with David, particularly as Jonathan chooses David and binds himself to his new friend willingly.[137] While I do not wish to overexaggerate this aspect, I do think it is important to the law-minded Dtr editor that Jonathan initiates the bond, which will lead him to pledge his loyalty to David of his own accord. Their friendship disrupts not only Saul's plans but the expected manner of dynastic change through a violent coup. And while the prince befriending David certainly *could* be a calculated political move, the plain sense of the text is that

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[133] Ackerman notes the "mutual affection and devotion" in David and Jonathan's kissing and weeping in 1 Sam. 20:41 (*When Heroes Love*, 184-185). For a full treatment of David's lament in its emotional and affective aspects, see Olyan, "'Surpassing the Love Of Women'," 7-16.

[134] See the excellent article by Sarah C. Melville, "Royal Women and the Exercise of Power in the Ancient Near East," in *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, ed. D.C. Snell (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2020), 219-228.

[135] Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson, "The Political Import of David's Marriages," *JBL* 99 (1980): 507-18; John Kessler, "Sexuality and Politics: The Motif of the Displaced Husband in the Books of Samuel," *CBQ* 62 (2000): 409-23.

[136] Speaking of the patriarchal system, there is the obvious cultural point that as a woman Michal may not have been seen as an appropriate figurehead for the Saulide dynasty, that a male figure was needed in order to hold enough power and status to pass the baton. Note that there are no known female covenant partners in the Hebrew Bible, except perhaps for Israel personified as Yahweh's wife in Hosea.

[137] Sakenfeld, "Loyalty and Love," 220-26.

Jonathan is drawn to David. The note at 19.1 that Jonathan "greatly delighted in David (חָפֵץ בְּדָוִד מְאֹד)" furthers this reading. Both the disruptive and intuitive natures of Jonathan's relationship to David lend themselves to one of the Deuteronomist's main interests: the hand of God in human history.

Outbursts of emotion or passion play a uniquely regular role in defining moments of Israel's early monarchy throughout the book of Samuel. Hannah's anguished (yet silent) cry in the temple at Shiloh draws both Eli and God's attention (1 Sam 1). As I will discuss in the next chapter, Abner appears to shift the tide during the war for the Israelite throne in a moment of outrage (2 Sam 3). Perhaps even David's sudden lust for Bathsheba could be similarly categorised, as his heated compulsiveness shapes the future of his own offspring (2 Sam 11).[138] The subtle providential nature of these turns draws intto question whether these emotions are actually human whims or rather supernatural impressions. More specific to 1 Sam 18.1-5, does God in fact initiate Jonathan's love for David? The interpretation of divine intervention through influence on emotions is not unprecedented; within the Jonathan tradition, Saul's temper is already seen as a curse that threatens both David and Jonathan at different points. The king's fits are attributed to God via an evil spirit in 1 Sam 16.14-23, and his possessed raving leads to an attempt to pin David to the wall with a spear in 18.10-11. A parallel account of Saul's spear attack on Jonathan in 20.33 seems to explicitly recall this episode, especially as Jonathan interprets the attempt as his father's death wish for David.[139] This attack is completely irrational; Saul has just voiced his desire for Jonathan and his kingdom to be established in v. 31. The immediate narrative logic follows that, in the moment Saul is consumed by his anger burning against Jonathan (v. 30), he loses control of his

[138] Jeremy Schipper, "Did David Overinterpret Nathan's Parable in 2 Samuel 12:1– 6?" *JBL* 126 (2007): 383– 91; Stuart Lasine, "Melodrama as Parable: The Story of the Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb and the Unmasking of David's Topsy-Turvy Emotions," *Hebrew Annual Review* 8 (1984): 101– 24; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, trans. Dorothea Shefer-Vanson (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 58. For affect theory in the David-Bathsheba story, see Ken Stone, "Affect and Animality in 2 Samuel 12," in Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed, eds., *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2019), 13-36.

[139] Adam thinks the passages are explicitly and intentionally connected by "keywords (*Stichworte*)" but does not specify which words (*Saul und David*, 137). Note that this attempt is not merely a release of aggressive or frustrated energy, as in throwing something across the room in the midst of an argument; the verse is very clear that Saul intends to "strike him down (לְהַכֹּתוֹ)." Also interesting is Ellen van Wolde's observation that Jonathan's respondent anger and storming off constitute a reversal of hierarchical roles and Jonathan's rejection of Saul's authority ("Sentiments as Culturally Constructed Emotions," 16n28).

faculties. But the identification with the attack in ch. 18, as well as the associated infamy of Saul's "agitations," brings the influence of the evil spirit to the reader's mind.[140]

While Jonathan's love for David is not irrational like Saul's attempt on Jonathan's life, it is not necessarily driven by reason. His first encounter with David is introduced in terms of affect, or impressions that he experiences.[141] Whether or not the author of the original Jonathan story intended the description of the prince's soul being "knit" to David's (1 Sam 18.1) to invoke the image of a "knitter," the language does suggest a driving force. He can of course choose whether or not to act on his love; but as affect theory recognises, actions motivated by emotions often take on the appearance of compulsion.[142] Strong emotions lead to impulses that are sometimes extremely difficult—if impossible—to resist.[143] The thin line tread between human free will and divine determinism resonates with the omens in Deuteronomy 29 that Israel will inevitably forsake their covenant with Yahweh, although admittedly the defeatist tone is more reflective of lacking confidence in human nature. But it does set up for a delicate balance between divine and human agency; the thin places, where the two blur, are where the Deuteronomistic editor has the most freedom to draw out their theological thread. Jonathan is not possessed with a spirit, but rather with a sudden affection and attachment to David. If the Dtr editor understood Jonathan's impulse as "heavenly

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[140] In an interesting twist on the current argument, J.H. Price argues that the evil spirit motivates Saul's murderous intent towards David and therefore roundaboutly forces the physical transition of the throne through his foiled schemes, such as offering Michal as a bride and unsuccessful assassination at Ramah which leads to David and Jonathan's covenant (oath) ("The Conceptual Transfer of Human Agency to the Divine in the Second Temple Period: The Case of Saul's Suicide," *Shofar* 34, no. 1 [Fall, 2015]: 113, 124n42); his violence towards Jonathan, however, is reflective of his own "wilful," "self-destructive" actions (ibid., 112).

[141] Affect theorists define the relationship between "emotion," "affect," and "feeling" differently, but they generally share the same semantic domain. Most agree that emotion or feeling is a gut response to affect; however, they are tied so closely together that, especially in the literary world, it is nearly impossible to distinguish them. See Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed, "Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling," in *Reading with Feeling*, 1-12, esp. 2.

[142] Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 84. One of the leading voices in affect theory, Teresa Brennan, attributes this compulsion to hormonal messaging, like irresistible biological hardwiring, and the evolutionary "life or death drive" (*The Transmission of Affect* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015], 8-10, 35-43). Kathleen Stewart, on the other hand, asserts that emotional reactions are socially constructed, with a much keener interest in "public affects," including religion (*Ordinary Affects* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008], 1-7, 81-83, 108-109, 128-29). For an example in biblical scholarship, see Robert Paul Seesengood, "'Not Grudgingly, nor under Compulsion': Love, Labor, Service, and Slavery in Pauline Rhetoric," in Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed, eds., *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2019), 141-56.

[143] At the intersection of emotion and action, often described as "impulsive" or "rash," affect theorists often point to the psychological study of "urgency theory." For example, affects of fear lead to a "flight or fight" response. See Melissa A. Cyders and Gregory T. Smith, "Emotion-Based Dispositions to Rash Action," *Psychological Bulletin* 134, no. 6 (2008): 807-28; ibid., "Integrating Affect and Impulsivity: The Role of Positive and Negative Urgency in Substance Use Risk," *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 163, no. Suppl 1 (2016): S3-S12.

possession," then Jonathan's choice of David is at once his own will and God's. Since Dtr already knows God to have chosen David, the connection is easy to make.

Another approach to the seeming divine touch in David and Jonathan's relationship is to see the spirit of God at work in David. I have discussed above the Dtr editor's emphasis on David's admirable qualities as a personal apologetic throughout 1 Samuel; how he appears irresistible to everyone he meets: all Israel, Michal, and, according to one source, even Saul (1 Sam 16.21). The context of this last event in the *textus receptus*, David's anointing and subsequent spiritual activity, suggests that David's "charisma" can be interpreted both personally and theologically. The spirit of Yahweh which comes upon him may imbue him with the qualities of a king as part of his divine election, granting him charm and magnetism, as well as his military prowess. Albrecht Alt, among others, has demonstrated that Saul's martial success is obviously linked in the text with the presence of the divine spirit upon him.[144] Whether or not it represents a continuation of the charismatic leadership characteristic of the judges, רוּחַ־אֱלֹהִים is plainly the means of supernatural success over both the Philistines and the Ammonites in 1 Sam 10 and 11.[145]

By the time 1 Sam 16.1-13 was integrated into the composite HDR text, the spirit was associated with anointing and there was a transition of what Tryggve Mettinger names "the royal charisma" from David to Saul.[146] David's anointing becomes the clear point of his transformation into the chosen one who wins Israel's battles and hearts. The first half of ch. 16 seems later than the Jonathan tradition, as it is much more concerned with divine approval than human approval of David. However, this does not mean that the love of Jonathan in 18.1 was not interpreted by later editors as influenced by David's charisma, especially in parallel to his father's love for David in 16.21, as the lowly shepherd boy receives a court promotion

[144] Albrecht Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Vol 2* (München: C.H. Beck'sche, 1953), 1-65, 116-134; J. Alberto Soggin, "Zur Entwicklung des alttestamentlichen Königtums," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 15 (1959): 401-418; ibid., "Charisma und Institution im Königtum Sauls," *ZAW* 75 (1963): 54-65; ibid., *Das Konigtum in Israel: Ursprunge, Spannungen, Entwicklung* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1967), 44; Stoebe, *Das Erste Buch Samuelis*, 533, cf 108, 208.

[145] Those that argue against continuity with the judges: Hans Wildberger, "Samuel und die Entsehung des israelitischen Königtums," *ThZ* 13 (1957): 442-469; Walter Beyerlin, "Das Königscharisma bei Saul," *ZAW* 73 (1961): 186-201; Fritz Stolz, *Jahwes und Israels Kriege. Kriegstheorien und Kriegserfahrungen im Glauben des alten Israels* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 131; J. Maxwell Miller, "Saul's Rise to Power: Some Observations concerning 1 Sam 9:1-10:6, 10:26-11:15, and 13:2-14:46," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 157-174. See also Nathan MacDonald, "The Spirit of God: A Neglected Conceptualization of the Divine Presence in the Persian Period" in *Divine Presence and Absence in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism*, eds. Nathan MacDonald and I.J. de Hulster (Forschungen zum Alten Testament II/61; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 95–120.

[146] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 233-53. I will say more on anointing in ch. 3 as it is directly associated with covenant between David and the elders of Israel in 2 Sam 5.1-3.

in both narratives. Even though these texts likely originate from different sources, the spiritual explanation of Jonathan's love could have coexisted and mingled with the personal apology of David's natural appeal as it appears in the proto-MT tradition, though his God-given charisma seems later and eventually dominant.

Looking forward to 2 Samuel 7, the possible glimpse of supernatural intervention behind Jonathan's love is the first point in the covenant narratives where we could see the divine finger being pointed as God says, "I made you ruler over my people Israel" (2 Sam 7.8). As I argue, this is one of many places where the Deuteronomistic editor can interpret "I have been with you wherever you have gone" (v. 8) and pull the theological thread to argue that the deity has been at work behind the scenes throughout David's rise to power. It seems significant that it appears not only at the beginning of David's relationship with Jonathan, but also at the beginning of his political and military career. The transformation from shepherd boy to general to king reported in 2 Sam 7.8-9 has begun, and now the stage is set for the full conversion.

Questions of Loyalty: 1 Sam 20 as Context

The next reference to a covenant between David and Jonathan comes in 1 Samuel 20, the narrative in which Jonathan swears a loyalty oath to David. The oath is the central case study of Cross' model of covenant as an early legal means of extending fictive kinship. Although I argue against his model, Cross did recognise that the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17 is a unique example of legal construction at the intersection of different social spheres, namely, the royal-political and the interpersonal.[147] The emotional distress between the two men imbues the political turmoil with pathos—they weep and kiss each other as Jonathan reiterates the oath in 20.41. The reader is no longer just invested in David's cause for his own sake but also for the survival of his friendship with Jonathan. The appearance of an otherwise dry legal agreement is transformed as Jonathan pleads for his life from his dear friend. However, as my interpretation below will show, in recognising the emotional aspect of this narrative, we must not fall into the same pitfall as Cross and reduce the significance of the oath to a mere expression of affection or sentimental obligation stemming from it. The story is firmly set in the politically charged climate of the early Israelite succession, which, as we will see, allows

[147] Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 9.

for fruitful comparisons with other royal documents in the ancient Near East. The oath itself defines their relationship as political, setting out in no uncertain terms the danger of a dynastic change and the future of the Israelite monarchy. I will first examine the narrative context of the covenant reference and oath in 1 Sam 20 before turning to redaction criticism of the oath text, and how its interpretation reveals the purpose of the Dtr editor in shaping the David-Jonathan narratives to fit his larger project of the divine Davidic kingship.

The covenant is first mentioned in ch. 20 amidst David's questions of fealty. David has fled from Saul's assassination attempt in Ramah and meets with Jonathan in desperation, demanding to know what he has done to warrant death (v. 1). In the Hittite treaty discussed above, Tudḫaliya declares that Kurunta did not "sin" (*u̯aštul*) against his father, just as David asks Jonathan what his "sin" (חַטָּאתִי) or "iniquity" (עֲוֹנִי) has been against his father Saul in 1 Sam 20.1.[148] The question is obviously one of loyalty to the throne, to which Jonathan assures David he will not be punished for treason.[149] But then after relaying a plan to probe Saul's temperament towards him, David flips the question. In v. 8, he recalls his covenant with Jonathan reported in 18.3: "Therefore deal loyally (חֶסֶד) with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of Yahweh (בְּרִית יְהוָה) with you. But if there is iniquity (עָוֹן) in me, put me to death yourself; for why then should you bring me to your father?"[150] He once again speaks of his death as a consequence of "iniquity"—עון used in parallel with v. 1—this time not for treason against the throne but as a punishment for transgression of their covenant.[151]

David brings forward the covenant as the superlative obligation in the situation, legitimising Jonathan's claim on his life over Saul's. Rowe points out that Jonathan's covenant obligation to David does not necessarily conflict with obligation to his father at this point. [152] However, in asking these questions of fealty, David thrusts Jonathan into the looming conflict and calls the prince to choose a side in the imminent struggle for the throne. He appeals to his own loyalty to their covenant as merit for his cause, challenging Jonathan to hold himself to the same standard. In contrast, Rowe interprets David's provocative response as a recognition of "how difficult it will be for his friend to contravene the 'norms' of family

[148] Taggar-Cohen, "Political Loyalty," 257.
[149] For death as punishment of treason in both biblical and extrabiblical royal contexts, see ibid.
[150] The abrupt mention of covenant, hereto unmentioned for two chapters, is likely an addition in line with 1 Sam. 18:1-5, as noted by McCarter (*I Samuel*, 342). See below for a discussion of חֶסֶד.
[151] Taggar-Cohen, 259.
[152] Rowe, *Sons or Lovers*, 101.

loyalty" in their little scheme.[153] While family loyalty might play a part in Jonathan's conflict, the current situation also has political ramifications, not only for Saul but for himself as the presumed heir to the throne. If David lives to usurp the throne, Jonathan may be divested of political power and personal safety. Rowe's own analysis of Saul's response in vv. 30-34 demonstrates that the king himself understands the conflict of loyalty to be a conflict of succession:

> Upon hearing Jonathan's reply Saul expresses his displeasure by insulting his son for having chosen the "son of Jesse" and asserts that Jonathan will not establish his kingdom while the "son of Jesse" lives. Such language emphasises the conflict between discrete patrilineages. Saul presumes that the clash of loyalties ought to have been obvious to Jonathan, and insults him for having let David go, proceeding to spell out the implications in traditional categories of descent and inheritance. Only if David is not allowed to usurp his son, says Saul, will Jonathan or his kingdom be established, using a turn of phrase that perhaps hints at David's threat to Jonathan himself: "neither you nor your kingdom" (1 Sam 20.31).[154]

Jonathan's commitment is a statement of his own loyalty and trust in David's loyalty to keep him alive, further solidified in vv. 14-17. The reference to covenant thus extends the question of fealty to Saul in the immediate context to fealty to David in the impending political conflict, setting up the idea of succession in the following oath.

Swearing Succession: 1 Sam 20.12-17

The oath Jonathan swears in 1 Sam 20.12-17 functions as a self-contained unit inserted into the story of David's scheme to test Saul's intent. Most redaction critics agree that the *Wiederaufnahme* in v. 12 "And Jonathan said to David… (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן אֶל־דָּוִד)" indicates that their dialogue in this section is a later interpolation, especially as David has no response in between. Timo Veijola and Kyle McCarter were some of the first to suggest that the oath formed a Deuteronomistic redactional layer along with v. 8 and later vv. (23,)40-42, with their running theme of covenant theology and concern for the future of David and Jonathan's relationship beyond the immediate setting.[155] Adam takes this theory a step further and introduces a second Deuteronomistic editor, or at least a later editor using Deuteronomistic

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[153] Ibid., 92. McCarter similarly notes that "the spontaneous allegiance David commands is stronger than the filial loyalty of Saul's own children" (*I Samuel*, 344).

[154] Rowe, *Sons or Lovers*, 79.

[155] Veijola, *Die Ewige Dynastie*, 81-88; McCarter, *I Samuel*, 341-42. See also Olyan, *Friendship*, 151. For Veijola, this is part of the DtrG.

language, based on discrepancy in terminology.[156] But before being caught up in the different theories, let us turn to the text. 1 Sam 20.12-17 appears in the MT as follows:

(12) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹנָתָן אֶל־דָּוִד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־אֶחְקֹר אֶת־אָבִי כָּעֵת מָחָר הַשְּׁלִשִׁית וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב אֶל־דָּוִד
וְלֹא־אָז אֶשְׁלַח אֵלֶיךָ וְגָלִיתִי אֶת־אָזְנֶךָ׃
(13) כֹּה־יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִיהוֹנָתָן וְכֹה יֹסִיף כִּי־יֵיטִב אֶל־אָבִי אֶת־הָרָעָה עָלֶיךָ וְגָלִיתִי אֶת־אָזְנֶךָ וְשִׁלַּחְתִּיךָ וְהָלַכְתָּ
לְשָׁלוֹם וִיהִי יְהוָה עִמָּךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם־אָבִי׃
(14) וְלֹא אִם־עוֹדֶנִּי חָי וְלֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד יְהוָה וְלֹא אָמוּת׃
(15) וְלֹא־תַכְרִת אֶת־חַסְדְּךָ מֵעִם בֵּיתִי עַד־עוֹלָם וְלֹא בְּהַכְרִת יְהוָה אֶת־אֹיְבֵי דָוִד אִישׁ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה׃
(17) וַיּוֹסֶף יְהוֹנָתָן לְהַשְׁבִּיעַ אֶת־דָּוִד בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתוֹ כִּי־אַהֲבַת נַפְשׁוֹ אֲהֵבוֹ׃

(12) And Jonathan said to David, “Yahweh the God of Israel [be witness]—when I search my father [this] time tomorrow [or] the third day, and behold, good/favour [is] toward David, shall I not then send to you, and uncover your ear?

(13) “Thus may Yahweh do to Jonathan and thus may he add! If harm upon you pleases my father, then I will open your ear and send you away, so that you may go in peace. And may Yahweh be with you as He has been with my father.

(14) “And will I not still be alive? And will you not treat me with the loyalty of Yahweh, so that I do not die?

(15) “And you shall not cut off your loyalty to my house forever, not even when YHWH cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”

(16) So Jonathan made [an agreement or covenant] with the house of David, so YHWH may require [it] from the hands of David’s enemies.

(17) And Jonathan again vowed to David because of his love for him, because he loved him as himself.

There is a thematic shift at v. 13b that breaks the body of this oath into two parts: Jonathan’s undertaking of reconnaissance for David’s safety and the agreement between the houses of Jonathan and David concerning their political future. The divine name carried throughout the oath connects it to the בְּרִית יְהוָה in v. 8 and invokes the corresponding political context. Although the word בְּרִית does not appear in the Masoretic text, the presence of וַיִּכְרֹת in v. 16 as well as חֶסֶד and בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ, all of which are used in connection with the covenant in 1 Sam 18 or reference to it earlier in ch. 20, suggest the texts function together.[157] Verse 17

[156] Adam, *Saul und David*, 135, esp. n78.

[157] Cf 1 Sam 22.8 and 2 Sam 5.3. BHS text critical apparatus also notes that בְּרִית is missing from 1Sam 5.3 in some Hebrew manuscripts, suggesting that כרת maintains a sense of bondage whether or not specifically implying בְּרִית. For more on the text critical issues of 1 Sam 20.15-17, see McCarter, *I Samuel*, 334-337. He states that the reading in v. 16 of the Masoretic Text is “clearly inferior,” but gives no reason why. While the Septuagint reading makes sense of the missing word by translating “the name of Jonathan is cut off from the house of David (ἐξαρθῆναι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ιωναθαν ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου δαυιδ),” it supplements more words than it accounts for and redundantly repeats earlier phrases. It may be suggested that the difficulty in translating this line is a case of what Gary Rendsburg calls “confused language” or “confused speech” (*How the Bible is*

directly connects the oath to the covenant between David and Jonathan in 18.3, reporting that Jonathan made David swear a second time and repeating almost identically Jonathan's motivation "because he loved him as himself (כִּי־אַהֲבַת נַפְשׁוֹ אֲהֵבוֹ)." Jonathan's love grounds the oath in the context of their relationship and in the action of the narrative setting.

Though the Deuteronomistic nature of the oath is generally agreed upon, the exact dating of the redaction is still under debate. Veijola posits that the oath text grew out of the first reference to a covenant in 18.3 and was added as part of the DtrG.[158] Adam similarly claims the covenant language is interpolated by a later editor to clarify the exact nature of David and Jonathan's friendship and its political implications. However, he does not take this language to be uniquely Deuteronomistic, and instead credits it to a postexilic redactor replicating Deuteronomistic language.[159] I agree with Adam's assertion that the covenant language defines their relationship in legal terms beyond the expectations of the narrative; the editor is clearly anxious to ensure David and Jonathan's exchange does not imply coercion, and to make explicit the future ramifications. Yet Adam's delineation between Deuteronomistic and Deuteronomistic-sounding language is imprecise. For example, he lists mainly postexilic Psalms to show that חֶסֶד יְהוָה is a post-Dtr term. [160] But many of these Psalms are attributed to David—Ps 89 is explicitly linked to the Davidic covenant theme—so it is possible that the psalmist was mimicking the language from the narrative in 1 Sam 20 to evoke the same textual tradition or literary imagination. There is a chance 1 Sam 20.16-17 are later post-Dtr additions at the end of the oath to connect it to the earlier narrative in 1 Sam 18. That said, since the themes of the oath itself and the individual terms match the covenant themes of Deuteronomy, it is more intuitive to attribute the majority of the redaction to a Deuteronomistic layer.

Turning to the content of the oath, Jonathan's speech opens with an important legal clause naming Yahweh as his divine witness. Although no word for "witness" appears in the Masoretic text, the idea is explicit in the Peshitta's Syriac *nshd*, perhaps reflecting a *Vorlage* with עֵד, as well as indirectly in the LXX by οἶδεν, probably translatable as "By Yahweh, the

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Written [Peabody: Hendrickson, 2019], 128-154), that Jonathan fumbles over his words out of emotion or fear, but this seems unlikely since the rest of the oath is fairly straightforward. Interestingly, the Lucianic text substitutes Jonathan's name with Saul's. Although a minority reading, this seems to further an idea that I will argue later in the chapter—Jonathan is understood to be representative of all the house of Saul and the covenant thus applies to all Saulides, present and future.

[158] Veijola, *Dynastie*, 85.

[159] Adam, *Saul und David,* 135-7.

[160] Ibid., 135, esp. nn79-80. For חסד יהוה, Is 63.7; Pss 33.5,22, 89.2, 94.18, 103.17, 107.43, 117.2, 119.41,64,149; Lam 3.22.

God of Israel…"[161] Ancient Near Eastern treaties regularly include lengthy god lists that clearly show favour for divine jurisdiction over human, likely because between kingdoms there was no higher authority to whom recourse could be made.[162] For other agreements, appeal could be made to courts and then to the king, but not so for inter-state treaties where there existed no universal tribunal other than the gods. Hittite, Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian diplomatic texts regularly mention "oath gods," probably in reference to these god lists, who are responsible for punishing oath-breakers.[163] Treaties sometimes became known as the treaty of the deity by which it was sworn, as in the treaty between Ashurbanipal and Hazael of Qedar, which is referred to as "the great treaty of Aššur" in the inscriptions.[164] Such a superlative title likely represents the supernatural power of the god as the ultimate authority over the treaty. The violation of a treaty sworn in the name of the gods was a "sin" (*qullul/um*) against not only the contractual parties but the gods themselves; the Amorite king Yasmah-Adad of Mari declared in reference to treaties, "of my lineage there is none who has sinned against the god; all keep the oaths of the god."[165] The curses incurred by such a violation are said to be imposed by the gods themselves, whether the guilty parties die of natural causes or the wronged contractual partners kill them. Qedar experienced livestock infertility and the assassination of a seditious governor, both attributed to Aššur as punishment for breaking their treaties with Ashurbanipal sworn in the god's name.[166] Jonathan invokes Yahweh in a similar fashion, not only as witness but as retribution if he breaks his oath to David.

The curse or self-imprecation in Jonathan's oath appears in v. 16, translating the opaque phrase וּבִקֵּשׁ יְהוָה מִיַּד אֹיְבֵי דָוִד "may Yahweh require at the hands of David's enemies," implying something of either his own or David's safety. In each of these aspects, the role of the deity is juridical, acting at once as witness, judge, and executioner. In the case of either David's or Saul's house ruling Israel, a court may not be a safe place for members of the rival dynasty, as will be explored soon. But with Yahweh, there is a measure of objectivity in the case of this oath, with an expectation that he will hold both parties to their word. Note that as

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[161] This is the *lectio brevior* preferred by Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis*, 336.

[162] McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 66-67.

[163] Charlie Trimm, *Fighting for the King and the Gods: A Survey of Warfare in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 574.

[164] E.g. Arthur C. Piepkorn, *Historical Prism Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 80.

[165] Piepkorn, *Prism Inscriptions*., 89. The quote continues to demonstrate "sin" between parties: "previously Ila-kabkabfu and Yaggid-Linm invoked the mighty life of the god between them. Ila-kabkabu did not sin against Yaggid-Lim; on the contrary, it was Yaggid- Lim who sinned against Ila-kabkabfu."

[166] Ibid., 58.

opposed to extrabiblical treaties and some other biblical covenants (such as that between Jacob and Laban in Gen 31), Yahweh is the only deity named as guarantor to both human parties in vv. 12 and 16.[167] This perhaps represents the unique nature of the political situation as internal to Israel, just as the same unnamed god that brought Tudḫaliya and Kurunta together set both his father Ḫattušili and Tudḫaliya on the Hittite throne.[168] Yahweh acts as a common judge between David and Jonathan and therefore holds them to the same standard of loyalty to each other as other divine witnesses of extrabiblical treaties.

While the first part of the oath (vv. 12-13a) is oriented toward the immediate future of the next few days, the second (vv. 14-16) looks beyond to the distant future of David's reign. The occasional content related to Jonathan's test of Saul's temperament is curtailed in v. 13b by the prince stating (or wishing?) that Yahweh will be with David as he has been with his father. Jonathan clearly recognises a dynastic change is imminent.[169] Yahweh's election or support is associated with the Israelite kingship from its narrative beginning in the story of Saul's divine anointing by Samuel. The spirit of Yahweh (רוּחַ־יְהוָה) comes upon David at his own secret anointing and remains with him from that day forward, while it departs from Saul after he has been rejected as king (1 Sam 16.13-14). While it is possible that the earliest layers of 1 Sam 9, where a seer predicts Saul's fate, implied the same godly favour, a redaction inserting the anointing accounts in chs. 9 and 16 seems to be the source of emphasis on the Israelite king's divine election.[170] The author of the oath carrying forward this theme of divine election thus dates 1 Sam 20.12-17 later than the combined HDR and either contemporaneous with or later than such a redaction.[171] Verse 20.13b confirms part of the political reality Yahweh claims in 2 Sam 7.8-9: that David became king through divine

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[167] Although note that Gen 31 seems to purposefully obscure the implication of other deities at some level.

[168] *Bo* §13.32; §15.53; §16.57, qtd in Taggar-Cohen, "Political Loyalty," 256-7.

[169] McCarter is sympathetic to this reading (*I Samuel*, 342).

[170] Again, I will speak more about anointing in chapter 3.

[171] Mettinger connects the two texts as part of the same redactional layer, seeing David's status as divinely-appointed as secondary to the base narratives; specifically, his anointing by Samuel in 1 Sam 16 and designation as chosen by God is only a later explanation for Solomon not being either the first-born or anointed by the people, which he sees as the normative process as part of a constitutional Israel (Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 203-8).

While I agree with his assessment that David's divine status seems to be a later development, I do not think this specifically needs to be linked with Solomon. We must keep in mind the assumption in other ancient Near Eastern cultures that royalty is not only appointed by but representative of the gods, which may have been both a challenge and inspiration for Israelite/Judahite editors coming into closer contact with those cultures during the exilic period. I have written elsewhere about the misconceptions of constitutionalism and democracy in ancient Israel as an eisegesis of modern political structures influenced by Reformation thought (Sophia R.C. Johnson, "'We the People of Israel': Biblical Covenant and the Formation of the American Constitution," *JBR* 8, no. 2 [2021]: 247-268).

shepherding along the way. The same logic occurs in the contrast of David's successful heir, who will benefit from the inheritance of this divine shepherding, with the failure of Saul, whom God rejected (v. 15). Jonathan's reiteration of Yahweh's blessing, therefore, is not simply simple well-wishing or an identification of David with his own kinsman (as Cross would have it), but recognition of a major political shift within Israel.

Recognising the dangers of a dynastic change, Jonathan accordingly makes provisions to ensure the safety of his family. The tone of the oath changes dramatically in v. 14 as the prince pleads for his life, asking David to treat him with חֶסֶד יְהוָה if he survives the impending political turmoil. The request parallels David's in v. 8, where he asks to be treated with חֶסֶד according to the בְּרִית יְהוָה. As Rowe notes, the danger is paralleled as well: "the situation is reversed and *Jonathan*, not David, is 'but a step from death.'"[172] Thus, Jonathan is reiterating their exchange of loyalty, trusting that if he treats David with חֶסֶד that David will show חֶסֶד in return to keep him alive, according to the covenant of Yahweh. But once again, the interpretation of חֶסֶד itself in this context is notoriously difficult.[173]

Introducing his own interpretation of חֶסֶד, Rowe argues that, through Cross' model of kinship as the covenant matrix, "the political arena seeks to replicate kinship not only in the form of its agreements, but also in its emotions."[174] He posits that חֶסֶד is a committed affection to a person which the covenant seeks to formalise, following Katharine Doob Sakenfeld in translating the word "sure loyalty."[175] As discussed above, emotion does play an important role in the David-Jonathan narratives: as a personal apologetic for David and as a glimpse at divine involvement. However, neither of these motivations explain the function of חֶסֶד in David and Jonathan's discussion of their covenant or oath. חֶסֶד is instead a source of assurance, a standard of action which is consistently used by the two men in reference to their covenant or the oath stipulations. While the use of אהב in v. 17 seems to support Rowe's interpretation, as in 18.1,3 we must note Jonathan's love is used to explain the motivation for

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172 Rowe, *Sons or Lovers*, 99.

173 For classic studies of חֶסֶד, see Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978); Nelson Glueck, *Das Wort Ḥesed: Im Alttestamentlichen Sprachgebrauche als Menschliche und Göttliche Gemeinschaftgemässe Verhaltungsweise*, 2nd unveränderte Aufl. (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1961); Gordon R. Clark, *The Word* Hesed *in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993); D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, "חסד," *NIDOTTE* 2:211–18. A helpful survey of the different interpretative options is given in Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, "Loyalty and Love," 215-229, with focus on David and Jonathan in 220-224.

174 Rowe, *Sons or Lovers*, 98.

175 Ibid., 99-100. See Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), xv. Rowe cites Clark, *The Word* Hesed, 267; D. R. Davis, *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2000), 167; Baer, "חסד," 211-12; B. Britt, "Unexpected Attachments: A Literary Approach to the Term חסד in the Hebrew Bible," *JSOT* 27 (2003): 289–307.

the oath (or the re-swearing) which anchors it in the narrative. It is true that, as Baer puts it, "חסד is to a person" and thus must be understood relationally, but this says nothing of the nature of the relation to the person.[176] To understand the use of חֶסֶד in this passage, the legal genre of David and Jonathan's oath must be taken into account.

The technical legal terminology used in ancient Near Eastern treaties clarifies the interpretation of חֶסֶד in the similar context of a covenant. In v. 8, חֶסֶד appears in opposition to עָוֹן in reference to the covenant, reminiscent of the use of other Semitic cognates for "sin" in treaty contexts to describe breaking the stipulations.[177] For example, recalling the treaty of Kurunta and Tudḫaliya discussed above, Tudḫaliya praises Kurunta for never breaking a treaty or committing "sin" (*u̯aštul*) to Tudḫaliya's father, Ḫattušili, by betraying his allegiance. There too, "sin" has a relational aspect—even though the action is transgression of the agreement, it is described as "sin" against the contractual partners and the deities acting as guarantors. חֶסֶד can thus be understood as the opposite of "sin" in this context, perhaps better understood as *upholding* the obligations to the other parties set out in the. Hence, חֶסֶד might be translated "loyalty" to a person, but with the background of "loyalty according to the treaty/covenant."[178] This reading also makes sense of חֶסֶד יְהוָה: if breaking a treaty can be "sin" against the god who guarantees it, upholding the treaty honours the god.[179] In 1 Sam 20.15, Jonathan extends the request of חֶסֶד by including his house in the provisions of his personal safety.[180] David's later fulfilment of these provisions confirms the interpretation of חֶסֶד in covenant context. In 2 Sam 9, after David has finally secured the throne, he asks if any of Saul's house are left so that he "may treat them with חֶסֶד for the sake of Jonathan" (v. 1). He specifically fulfils the stipulations of the oath in 1 Sam 20.15 by bringing Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, under his protection.[181] Therefore, David fulfils his חֶסֶד to Jonathan—that is, חֶסֶד יְהוָה—in accordance with the oath by upholding the stipulations in loyalty to Jonathan's house.

[176] Baer, "חסד," 211.

[177] See discussion above.

[178] Cf. McCarter, *I Samuel* 341-42. I purposefully avoid the translation "covenant loyalty" so as not to bring in the complex tradition of interpreting חֶסֶד in covenant contexts. See Britt, "Unexpected Attachments."

[179] Kalluveettil claims the oath (and in his view, covenant) becomes divine when sworn in Yahweh's name, which seems superfluously absolutizing, but uses the example of Zedekiah's perfidy of loyalty sworn to the king of Babylon as "sin" in a similar way (*Declaration and Covenant*, 12).

[180] For the significance of בַּיִת, see discussion below.

[181] Cf. McCarter, *I Samuel*, 342. David asking after the house of Saul as opposed to Jonathan seems strange in light of the most recent struggle, but as Jonathan's son is presented to David over other "sons of Saul" referenced in 2 Sam 21, it is clear that the relation to Jonathan is emphasised. See below on חֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים.

Most critical scholars recognise an early relationship between the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17 and David's dealings with Mephibosheth in 2 Sam 9. It is the clearest result of their agreement reported in the book of Samuel. The unsettled question is whether the oath explains why David spared a Saulide, or whether sparing Mephibosheth was simply an example of David fulfilling his duties towards Jonathan. While the debate may seem like an endless loop, there are some clues in the texts for relative dating. Adams points out that none of the explicit covenant terminology, such as בְּרִית or כרת, appears in 2 Sam 9;[182] nor does it speak of guilt or love, which, as we have seen, are characteristic of the wider David-Jonathan narrative. This absence suggests that the narrative in 2 Sam 9 preceded the composition of the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17. Depending on whether Mephibosheth was originally named as Saul or Jonathan's son the narrative might have been an epilogue to the Jonathan tradition. Most likely David's show of continued loyalty to Jonathan even after his death was later edited to be such an epilogue.[183] The prominence of חֶסֶד throughout the account of David and Mephibosheth's interaction implies it is integral to the passage and not always part of a

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[182] Adam, *Saul und David*, 135n78.

[183] There are a number of text critical issues with this passage, including its relation to the list of Saulides David hands over to the Gileadites to be slaughtered in 2 Sam 21 (which seems to include Mephibosheth despite the harmonising addition in v. 17) and the identity of Mephibosheth as either Saul or Jonathan's son. I do not have the space to address these issues in-depth here, but I will make a few notes:

The determining question for the relationship of these texts is whether Mephibosheth (or Meribaal) was originally Saul's son or Jonathan. However, to me the answer to this question appears opaque. The name appearing in the list of Saulides given as bloodguilt to the Gibeonites appears to be strong evidence in favour of Saul; the harmonising addition in 2 Sam 21.7 (likely in the same or later redactional stratum as the oath in 1 Sam 20, because of its reference to the oath text) seems like an obvious cover-up. As for 2 Sam 9, it seems strange for David to ask for any descendant of the house of Saul if the author was aware that David had made an oath with the house of Jonathan in particular. It works out conveniently that the survivor just happens to be Jonathan's son, but without reference to the oath, this identification is not an integral element of the story. The narrator's introduction of Mephibosheth as "son of Jonathan son of Saul" seems redundant given what has already transpired in the narrative and the repetition may suggest that בֶּן־יְהוֹנָתָן was added secondarily. In 9.3, which makes no other reference to Jonathan, Ziba identifies "a son of Jonathan" with a construction not found anywhere else in the passage, including in the parallel verses-- בֵּן לִיהוֹנָתָן. This -ל construction to identify someone's son is rare—only used in four other verses and only used to identify a son's father in one of them (1 Sam 16.18). On the other hand, עוֹד is often used on its own to refer to simply "another" or "one remaining," including in reference to a son, as in Gen 38.5. Hence it is possible that Ziba originally referenced the one remaining member of the house of Saul—either in the presence context, as the former king's sons likely would have scattered following the death of Ish-bosheth, or following something like the massacre of their family in ch. 21. Hutton, for example, suggests that descendants through Merab may be living in the court of Barzillai, citing 1 Sam 18.19 (*Transjordanian*, 219). Mephibosheth is perhaps the only one known to Ziba because he cannot flee due to his handicap. He then became a convenient recipient for David to carry out his חֶסֶד "for Jonathan's sake" when the oath text is introduced and the editor decided that Jonathan's own son is most appropriate. See further Hutton, *Transjordanian*, 215-21; Veijola, "David und Meribaal," in *David: Gesammelte Studien zu den Davidüberlieferungen des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 58-83; John Bright, *A History of Israel (*4th ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 208; Leo G. Purdue, "'Is There Anyone Left of the House of Saul...?' Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative," *JSOT* 30 (1984): 72, 75; Otto Kaiser, "Beobachtungen zur sogenannten Thronnachfolgeerzählung Davids," 10-11; McCarter, *II Samuel*, 253-65; Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel* (KHC 8; Tübingen: Mohr, 1902), 244, 304–7; Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher*, 299, 381; George Auzou, *La danse devant l'arche: Étude du livre de Samuel* (ConBib 6; Paris: Éditions de l'orante, 1968), 363–69, esp. 364–65.

redaction. On the other hand, the motivation of David's חֶסֶד–explicitly described as "for the sake of Jonathan (בַּעֲבוּר יְהוֹנָתָן)"—assumes a significant relationship between David and Jonathan which is not essential to the story. It may, therefore, have been inserted in 2 Sam 9.1 and 7 later. Originally, the story would have been David simply taking stock of who was left of the house of Saul, presenting as gracious and merciful towards the one Saulide left behind. This scene would align with other narratives that depict David as perpetually respectful of and even loyal to Saul and his descendants. When Ziba is brought before him in 9.3, David specifies that he wishes to treat the last of the Saulides with "the loyalty of God (אֶעֱשֶׂה עִמּוֹ חֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים)" so that Ziba knows he does not wish to kill them and may safely divulge their location.

The rare construct חֶסֶד אֱלֹהִים appears elsewhere only in Ps 52.10, where it seems to refer more to loyalty/faithfulness according to the character of God (goodness, mercifulness, etc). In the context of dynastic change in 2 Samuel, such loyalty might translate to faithfulness or mercy according to Saul and his house as one previously anointed by God, which David lists as his reason for not killing Saul in 1 Sam 24.10 and 26.9. Adam uses this apparent difference in meaning to delineate between אֶעֱשֶׂה עִמּוֹ חֶסֶד as a Deuteronomistic term in 2 Sam 9 versus חֶסֶד יְהוָה as a post-Dtr supplement in 1 Sam 20.[184] But it seems more likely that there is a diachronic shift in the usage of the term within 2 Sam 9, from חֶסֶד as imitating God's character or on behalf of a divine status to showing loyalty for a particular relationship—even according to a specific oath. The later additions in 2 Sam 9.1,7 referencing Jonathan (אֶעֱשֶׂה עִמּוֹ חֶסֶד בַּעֲבוּר יְהוֹנָתָן) does not necessitate the oath in 1 Sam 20; it could just be drawing on the close David-Jonathan relationship, especially if it was attached to the Jonathan tradition. But because of the addition's emphasis on חֶסֶד and the prominence of this concept in the oath text, it seems just as likely to have been added by the Dtr author of the oath in 1 Sam 20 or by a later editor. With Mephibosheth, we see the long-term political ramifications of David and Jonathan's oath beginning to manifest. Jonathan's son takes the place he himself should have occupied at the table of King David, but Mephibosheth is still alive, which, as we will see, is its own instantiation of political loyalty.

Returning to the oath in 1 Sam 20, Jonathan's plea in v. 15 accompanies his insistence that Yahweh will cut off David's enemies (אֹיְבֵי דָוִד), envisioning David's future kingship when political adversaries are eliminated. Although there has been some debate among

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[184] Adam, *Saul und David*, 135-6.

scholars, the majority view is that dynastic change meant total annihilation of the previous ruling line.[185] The declaration of common friends and enemies is a standard expression in a type of ancient Near Eastern treaty which Kalluveettil labels "defensive-offensive pacts," the epitome of diplomatically defining "us versus them."[186] By naming David's enemies in opposition, Jonathan therefore ensures that he and his house are counted as David's allies. An ironic linguistic parallel appears in1 Sam 18.28-29, where Saul is said to become David's enemy (אֹיֵב) when he observes that Yahweh is with David. This moment becomes the turning point for Saul to seek David's life. Though Jonathan knows nothing of Saul's intention, the political connotation of counting Saul among David's enemies whom Yahweh will cut off sharpens the dynastic contrast, as well as foreshadowing his father's demise in striking connection to his own. Jonathan thus requests that David not cut off his חֶסֶד from his house (בֵּיתִי) forever (v. 15); the house of David is brought into the agreement in v. 16. The inclusion of their houses extends the oath stipulations beyond the two individuals to their descendants, just as Tudḫaliya extends his personal loyalty to Kurunta from himself to his sons and grandsons.[187] Jonathan also reiterates later in the addition v. 42 that they have sworn concerning their offspring. His oath is now as much a political agreement between two potential dynasties as it is an affirmation of friendship, which prefigures not only David's personal installation on the throne but the establishment of his line as the permanent ruling line of Israel.

There is also a noteworthy military element in the reference to David's enemies, not only because of his known battle prowess but also with Yahweh as a divine warrior on David's behalf. In David's combat debut in 1 Sam 17, he faces Goliath who taunts him for his size and "curses David by his gods (בֵּאלֹהָיו)" (v. 43). David responds with a lengthy speech that Yahweh fights for him, concluding with the claim that "Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי מַעַרְכוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל)" will give the Philistines into their hands (vv. 45-47). Later in 1 Sam 18, when Saul sets David as a commander against the Philistines,

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[185] Cf. Judg 9.5; 1 Kgs 2.25,46; 15.29; 16.11; 2 Kgs 10.6; 11.1. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 10n23; Rowe, *Sons or Lovers*, 99; Graham Davies, "The Friendship of Jonathan and David," *Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 71.

[186] Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant*, 99. For example, the Hittite king Hattušili III recalls his treaty with Kadašman-Enlil I of Babylon thus: "We are brothers: We should be the enemy of one who is an enemy to anyone of us, a friend to the one who is a friend of anyone of us" (qtd in Kalluveettil). Other examples include the treaty between Ammistamru of Ugarit and Shaushgamuwa of Amurru, recalled in Ras Shamra 17.116: 21'-23', and Išme-Dagan of Assyria and Yasmaḫ-Adad of Mari, published in J. Margaret Munn-Rankin, "Diplomacy in Western Asia in the Early Second Millennium B.C.," *Iraq* 18 (1956): 79. Munn-Rankin notes that the "fraternity" which Išme-Dagan calls for "must refer to the political relationship that would arise from the proposed alliance, not to the actual blood relationship of the two men."

[187] Veijola sees them acting as household proxies in this moment (*Ewige Dynastie*, 85).

the king asks that he "fight the battles of Yahweh," and David triumphs because Yahweh is with him (vv. 14, 17). Similar to the human execution of curses attributed to deities, the god as divine warrior is connected to the war campaign accounts of many ancient Near Eastern kings.[188] The god is said to bring victory or aid to the king in battle, whether by granting supernatural strength or a heavenly weapon or direct divine intervention, as in Ashurbanipal's claim in his royal annals that the gods Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Marduk, Nergal, and Ishtar wiped out his enemies before him in combat.[189] Thus, Jonathan's claim that Yahweh will wipe out ("cut off") David's enemies communicates not only his belief that David carries divine favour and protection, but also that Yahweh as the divine warrior of Israel identifies David's enemies with Israel's, effectively depicting David as the divinely-sanctioned king.

In contrast to this political model, Cross suggests that this oath combines David and Jonathan's kinship groups by imposing "mutual kinship obligations."[190] However, the emphasis on בַּיִת is as much on temporal extension as it is genealogical. The political loyalty of David and Jonathan stretches beyond their own lifetimes into the perpetual future—עַד־עוֹלָם.[191] The same phrase is used in connection to David's house and descendants in 2 Sam 7.16. In fact, much of the language of the oath, such as Yahweh being with David, Yahweh cutting off David's enemies, and חֶסֶד of Yahweh, is repeated in Yahweh's promise to King David in 2 Sam 7.8-16.[192] There is a play on בַּיִת as David desires to build Yahweh a "house" or temple, but Yahweh declares that instead he will make David a house by raising up his descendant (v. 11-12). Yahweh thus extends not only David's lineage but his kingship: "Your house (בֵּיתְךָ) and your kingdom shall endure before me forever (עַד־עוֹלָם); your throne shall be established forever (עַד־עוֹלָם)" (v. 16). David's house is permanently established as the royal house and political head of Israel, explicitly over Saul's house, as Yahweh promises never to withdraw his חֶסֶד from David as he did from Saul (v. 15).[193] But the process of institution begins with Jonathan, as representative of the future of Saul's house.

In 1 Sam 20, Jonathan functions as the pre-emptive human agent of the later-revealed divine will. The Deuteronomistic editor memorialises him as David's willing and loyal

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[188] See Trimm's chapter on divine warriors in *Fighting for the King*, 553-625.

[189] RINAP 4:15, 1, ii.30– 39; *COS* 4.39:175, qtd. in Trimm, *Fighting for the King*, 623.

[190] Cross, "Kinship and Covenant," 9.

[191] Veijola takes this use of עַד־עוֹלָם, extending from a single lifetime into forever, to be at work in 1 Sam 20.23,42 as well (*Ewisge Dynastie*, 83).

[192] Rowe notes the linguistic connection but instead interprets בַּיִת as a kinship term in 2 Sam 7 as well (*Sons or Lovers*, 126). The connection between cutting off David's enemies in 1 Sam 20.15 and 2 Sam 7.9 was made by McCarthy, "II Samuel 7," 133.

[193] Cf. 2 Sam 3:1.

subordinate in this divinely guaranteed agreement that legally binds himself and his descendants forever. Jonathan thus not only recognises but ensures that his line will never again compete with David's for the reign of Israel. Crucially, this stipulation prevents future generations from trying to reclaim the usurped throne while clearly delineating the ruling dynasty. Though it is only explicit in connection to 2 Sam 7, the oath in 1 Sam 7.12-17 is the first glimpse that David's individual kingship may have eternal significance. Jonathan's pledge of political loyalty therefore plays a key role in the development of the Davidic kingship, not only as it unfolds in 2 Samuel but as a part of the wider Deuteronomistic narrative and ideology.[194]

Covenant in the Wilderness: 1 Sam 23.15-18

Although the reference in 1 Sam 23.15-18 to David and Jonathan making another covenant in the wilderness of Ziph seems second-hand and obscure, Jonathan's accompanying speech makes clear that the concept of covenant within the David-Jonathan narratives was clearly associated with succession and political power throughout its textual history. The prince assuages David's fear of Saul by asserting that David himself will be king over Israel and Jonathan will be "next to" or "second to" him (לְמִשְׁנֶה) (v. 17). The two of them seal the deal with a covenant (בְּרִית) before Yahweh and then part (v. 18). The meaning of לְמִשְׁנֶה here is likely "second-in-command" or "right-hand man," reflected in several translations.[195] Asking for the position of highest power within David's court is a step up from asking for protection for Jonathan and his lineage, but the principal move to secure his place under the next monarch is the same. In many ways, the description of this covenant is an abbreviated iteration of the oath text in 1 Sam 20, with Jonathan pledging loyalty to David as future king and ensuring his subordinate position.[196] However, it does not have all the legal trappings or explicit extrapolations of the oath; there is no elaboration on the fact that they make a covenant, and no motivation or heralding stated as in 18.3 or 20.8,16. One might almost say

[194] While Veijola agrees that the oath text extends the horizon of the story, he finds the next part in Abigail's speech in 1 Sam 25.24ff (*Ewige Dynastie*, 84n25).

[195] Cf. "second-in-command" (NET, BSB, CSB, HCSB, ISV), "highest official" (CEV), "next in rank" (GNT). See Esth 10.3, where Mordecai is named מִשְׁנֶה to King Ahasueras, the word included in the list of royal officials in 2 Chr 28.7, and Gen 41.43, which refers to Pharoah's "second chariot" (בְּמִרְכֶּבֶת הַמִּשְׁנֶה). McCarter, *I Samuel*, 374.

[196] Veijola claims that the two covenants are virtually identical and must be related to one another (*Ewige Dynastie*, 88). While I agree that their content is similar and that one is based on the other, I will argue below that key differences in presentation and focus set the two apart.

that it is an off-hand mention, except that the phrase is intricately integrated into the syntax and narrative cadence of the scene. Instead, I posit that we read the textual presence of the covenant as understated, its significance assumed.

The covenant acts as the natural conclusion of David and Jonathan's exchange of loyalty and comfort—and of their relationship. David will never see Jonathan alive again after this scene. Jonathan does not show up again until he is slain in the battle at Mount Gilboa in 1 Sam 31. But before he goes, he paints a hopeful picture for a future in which their two houses could coexist, and their friendship could survive the bloodlust of his father. It is a future necessarily cast in political terms: David as king, Jonathan at the head of the court, Saul failed. Still, it is an idealisation meant to encourage David during his plight and show that Jonathan is with him until the end, even if he departs Horesh soon after. Jonathan's speech reeks of tragic irony since his prediction will almost come to pass, save for his own fate. Thus, while its placement amongst the episodes of David's endeavours in the wilderness may seem random, the scene functions here as the denouement of their relationship with the covenant as its last gesture. Upon integration into the HDR, the editor placed this hopeful story from the Jonathan tradition into the midst of the uncertainty of David's flight from Saul.[197] Narratively, there is one last spark of encouragement in their friendship before its tragic end. Thematically, the audience is also reminded that what Jonathan says is true: despite the threats David faces now, he will prevail in the end.

A covenant made in the wilderness does have a curious resonance with the covenant(s) made between Israel and Yahweh at the holy mountain(s).[198] The statement that they made a covenant "before Yahweh (לִפְנֵי יְהוָה)" (v. 18) may also imply that there was some sort of cultic site involved, though none are known at Horesh or anywhere in Ziph. The lack of cultic association with the location may imply the narrative was originally set elsewhere before being re-set in the wilderness. Horeb would be a tantalising reconstruction but makes no sense without clear association to the Mosaic tradition. Hebron is most likely given its long-standing association with David and might give us a glimpse into an alternate ending of

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[197] Veijola also notes that there is no explanation of how Jonathan learned David's location though Saul could not, how he got there without drawing his father's location, or how he got past David's guard when he is a "son of the enemy" (*Ewige Dynastie,* 88). This is perhaps reading too much into such a simple scene, but the brief, self-contained nature of the scene does suggest it was a secondary insertion, nestled amongst the wilderness episodes. However, I disagree with Veijola's assumption that insertion equals late and therefore Deuteronomistic or in the same layer as 1 Sam 20.12-17.

[198] Veijola argues the DtrG felt a second covenant was necessary in order to mirror the two covenants the Lord made with Israel at Horeb and in the land of Moab (Deut 28.69) (ibid., 89).

1 Samuel: David is already gathering the might of Judah at Hebron for his war on the house of Saul reported in 2 Sam 2-3 and Jonathan comes to make a peace offering which he will not see come to fruition. This reconstruction is almost identical to the situation of Abner in 2 Sam 3.[199] The editor (either of the HDR or even later) might have intentionally chosen the wilderness of Ziph as the setting for refiguring this story as a close relocation which would still bring to mind the covenant during Israel's wandering. This potential prehistory of the text is tenuous at best but does offer illuminating connections.

The simplicity of the account in 1 Sam 23.15-18 suggests that it is not a summary of 20.12-17, but rather that the oath in ch. 20 is an elaboration of the political themes found in this covenant vignette in ch. 23. There is no reason for a Deuteronomistic or later editor to insert yet another reference to a covenant between David and Jonathan when the oath in 1 Sam 20 so clearly spells out the stipulations concerning their future and the future of their offspring. Though the chronological appearance of the oath in ch. 20 before this scene in ch. 23 does not make sense in the received text, Saul's reference to a covenant between David and Jonathan at 1 Sam 22.8 may just as well refer to the covenant made in 23.18 as in other chapters, particularly with Jonathan framed as defecting for stating his father will not win and that he will be David's second-in-command. Furthermore, 23.15-18 shows no awareness of the other accounts of a covenant between David and Jonathan, unlike the correspondence between 18.3 and 20.17. Instead, the editor likely brought their own expanded references to such a covenant in line with the brief but early account of the covenant in ch. 23 through corresponding themes.[200]

Repeated references to treaties or oaths with essentially the same content is not unprecedented in ancient Near Eastern texts, as such legal obligations could be reinstated or reinforced over time, especially as diplomatic relations or circumstances changed. The

[199] Adam claims that 23.16-18 is part of an early strata of expansion within the wilderness episodes, as 1 Sam 22.8 assumes this episode (*Saul und David*, 127). My suggestion of the original wartime setting would make sense of the military undertones of Saul's complaint since he frames the agreement as treason.

[200] McCarter notes that the two texts are "reminiscent" or "share the same spirit" (374-75). Olyan thinks they "share the same ideology" without explaining what that ideology is (*Friendship*, 72). Kalluveettil denies that any of the covenant texts refer to the same covenant, asserting that the content and contexts of 1 Sam. 18 and 20 are radically different, and instead 20.11-17 is a "covenant enacting scene" and 23.18 a renewal of either of the prior covenants (*Declaration and Covenant*, 8n10). Similarly, Wozniak and Olyan view 23.18 as a vassal treaty in which Jonathan is subordinate, whereas the oath is a parity treaty between equals (Wozniak, "Drei verschiedene literarische Bechreibungen," 217; Olyan, *Friendship*, 72-74). Veijola, on the other hand, sees the oath and covenant in ch. 23 both as mutual covenants as opposed to the unilateral covenant in 18.3 (*Ewige Dynastie*, 89). I have expressed earlier how I do not think these are helpful designations. For further discussion, see Dennis J. McCarthy, "Berît and Covenant in the Deuteronomistic History," in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, VT Supp 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 68-73.

section from the Hittite Bronze Tablet previously discussed includes two descriptions of Tudḫaliya and Kurunta swearing oaths to each other, once when they become friends and once when Tudḫaliya is named prince regent, before the Hittite king even mentions the new treaty. The content of the oath is identical in both instances: "one shall be loyal to the other."[201] The treaty Tudḫaliya then offers is seen as the culmination of loyalty to these oaths when both parties come into full kingship. The oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17 builds on the covenant in 18.3, as reference to the בְּרִית יְהוָה precedes it in 20.8 and the use of וַיּוֹסֶף in v. 17 indicates they are vowing "again" or "in addition." The covenant in 1 Sam 23.18 was then interpreted as a reiteration of David and Jonathan's oath and its stipulations concerning the political future of their houses. Subsequent reference to David fulfilling his agreement with Jonathan in 2 Sam 9 and 21 by sparing Mephibosheth from among the descendants of Saul slaughtered by the Gibeonites specifically invokes an "oath of Yahweh (שְׁבֻעַת יְהוָה)" (2 Sam 21.7), alluding to 1 Sam 20 even though Jonathan himself does not live to take up the position promised in 1 Sam 23.17. The Deuteronomistic editor tailored each reference to covenant or oath to the specific needs of the narrative context, but they all have the same thrust: political loyalty pledged to an individual. As such, while these different covenant texts in the David-Jonathan narratives may seem disparate, they have been carefully cultivated to embody the same political obligation. Together they function as loyalty pacts at different points in their relationship in anticipation of David's eventual kingship.

Conclusion

1 Samuel's three references to a covenant between David and Jonathan show that a covenant was integral to the stories of their friendship from the early stages of the Jonathan tradition. However, this fact does not mean that the covenant was the centrepiece of their relationship, as the addition of the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17 shapes it to be. Each of the accounts emphasises the bond between the two men, a devotion which supersedes many societal norms and upsets (at least what Saul considers) the political status quo (cf. 20.30-31).[202] Such a bond was not culturally unprecedented; here works comparing David and Jonathan to certain other heroic pairs like Gilgamesh and Enkidu or Achilles and Patroclus identify the romanticised narrative

[201] Bo 86/299 §13.34, §14.47, Taggar-Cohen's translation, "Political Loyalty," 256-57.

[202] Veijola puts it thus: "The generous agreement between Jonathan and David could just as easily [simply] stand as an incontestable, beautiful proof of their mutual love" (my translation).

> „Die hochherzige Übereinkunft zwischen Jonatan und David konnte gerade so als unanfechtbarer, schöner Beweis ihrer gegenseitigen Liebe stehen bleiben" (*Ewige Dynastie*, 90).

appeal of brothers-in-arms.[203] Thus we may note that at the earliest textual layer of the David-Jonathan narratives, references to the covenant are almost incidental, foregrounding the more central notion of their love for one another despite their difficult political circumstances. It is the Deuteronomistic editor who, with the interpolation of oath formulae and the stress on the legal standards of their relationship, transforms their covenant from a mark of personal loyalty to a seal of lawful political abdication. The covenant account in ch. 23—likely the earliest of the three—does make the same connection to succession and political negotiation, but it does not show the same concern for the details of the transfer of power. The Dtr redactor draws their concerns out of the original royal context of the covenant, specifically laying out a contract and pointing the reader forward to 2 Sam 7.

The shift from personal bond to legal form gives insight into the conception of covenant for the narrative authors and the transformation it underwent by the time of the Deuteronomistic editors. Despite many references in the received text, the report of a covenant between David and Jonathan likely began as a singular account akin to that found in 1 Sam 23.15-18. As I have argued, it was placed in the HDR towards the end of the Jonathan source to act as the final symbol of David and Jonathan's friendship and loyalty before the latter's death. A Deuteronomistic editor inserted a reference to a covenant at 18.3, moving its initiation forward to the beginning of their relationship to thoroughly develop the legal motif throughout the David-Jonathan narratives. The description of Jonathan's love for David in 1 Sam 18.1 was a natural context for the redactor to insert this reference as it echoed the connection between love and covenant in Deuteronomy. This passage then laid the groundwork for the editorial development of the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17 as an expansion upon the initial covenant and a detailed addendum of its stipulations. It is likely that the Dtr editors shaped their additional covenant references to follow a legal pattern of re-swearings or reiterations of an oath or treaty, as attested in ancient Near Eastern treaties and diplomatic correspondence. The oath of ch. 20 correlates directly with the narrative of David's dealings with Mephibosheth in 2 Sam 9 and the divine promise in 2 Sam 7, showing that both were included in the book of Samuel at this stage. David's succession to the Israelite throne and the subordination of the Saulides becomes the central value of the covenant. Finally, some

[203] Ackerman, *When Heroes Love*; Davies, "Friendship of Jonathan and David"; Mark S. Smith, "Brothers in Arms," in *Poetic Heroes: Literary Commemorations of Warriors and Warrior Culture in the Early Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 51-64; among others.

later Dtr or post-Dtr additions (e.g., 1 Sam 20.17) solidified the place of the oath in the narrative and doubled down on the link between covenant and oath.

Though there may be other diachronic steps in between, the evolution of covenant from the early stages of the Jonathan tradition through the Deuteronomistic redaction(s) to the received post-Dtr text shows a conceptual dynamicity worthy of the complex manuscript history of the book of Samuel discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Likewise, the relationship between covenant and oath changes dramatically from being non-existent to the two being virtually identical.[204] As we have seen, the association with oath is late but becomes central to the Deuteronomistic legal scheme of covenant because of its specificity and political weightiness. The merging of covenant and oath represents a merging of narrative and legal genres. Covenant is transformed from an object signifying the relationship of historicised characters to a lawful compact which might be upheld in the editors' contemporary context. The cultural significance of the texts thus shifts as well, from reporting or explaining history to making a standing claim on a present society. This is not to say that narrative, especially historical narrative, can have no claim on its audience; in their own way, stories of the past define a people's identity, values, beliefs, group boundaries, cosmologies, and so much more. But that is a different kind of cultural capital than a legal-political claim. With the shift, it is as if the Deuteronomistic editors felt that stories alone were no longer enough. Their claims had to be legitimated through what they saw as a more concrete means. Perhaps they felt that narrative alone was too subjective; anyone could interpret it however they wished. Law, especially Deuteronomic law given by Yahweh himself, was certain, secure, and absolute. I will explore possible socio-historical and cultural influences on scribes and editors throughout the development of covenant at a later point, but I would observe that the shift from narrative to law betrays a society under threat, filled with uncertainty and searching for a source of security and affirmation, characteristic of the exile or later.

Going forward, several characteristics observed at different stages in this study will guide my examination of the development of covenant associated with the stories of Abner and the elders of Israel: 1) the narrative function of covenant; 2) the relative importance or

[204] Veijola claims that by the time 2 Sam 21.7 is inserted, oath and covenant are so closely related that they can both be represented by "swearing." He suggests 2 Kgs 11.4 may be another example (*Ewige Dynastie*, 85). Although he does not account for diachronic development, Kalluveettil also takes 1 Sam 20.12-17 to be proof that an oath is assumed whenever reference is made to a covenant in order to make it "effective" (*Covenant and Declaration*, 4).

centrality of covenant to the narrative; 3) the use of legal genres and formulae, especially oath forms; 4) and vocabulary and thematic keywords associated with covenant, specifically חֶסֶד, עַד־עוֹלָם, and בַּיִת. A text's relation to—that is, ignorance, echo, or quoting of—the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 remains the central concern of my investigation. The oath text's firm orientation to the so-called "Davidic covenant" allows for consistent theories of relative dating and redactional relationship with other covenant accounts outside of the David-Jonathan narratives. Once these relationships are accounted for, we can then return and see what they reveal about the textual history of the divine promise to David in 2 Sam 7.

Although the Deuteronomistic editor is responsible for multiplying the references to a covenant between David and Jonathan, carefully arranged as an arc throughout their friendship, the concept still emphasises the centrality of their loyalty and love. The earliest account in 1 Sam 23.15-18 presents the covenant as the culmination of their bond, envisioning an idealistic future of David's success without Jonathan's tragic end. Similarly, love is the underscored motivation for the first covenant reference in 1 Sam 18.3; not only as a personal apologetic for David but as an explanation for Jonathan to immediately devote himself to the point of a legal compact. Even with the oath inserted at 1 Sam 20.12-17, the specific political stipulations of favour and protection are painted as an outpouring of Jonathan's unerring loyalty to David. The episode closes with a reiteration of their swearing but in the midst of their mutual weeping and kissing (vv. 40-42). Nevertheless, by connecting the oath to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7, the Deuteronomistic editor grants David and Jonathan's relationship a greater purpose. Jonathan's personal loyalty to David becomes the foundation for the dynastic shift in Israel as he subordinates himself and his descendants to the house of David in perpetuity. His oath becomes not only a noncompete clause for all future Saulides but a sign of divine intervention in David's ascension by the very same divine guarantor, Yahweh. The covenant between David and Jonathan as stipulated in the oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17 grounds the Deuteronomistic ideal Israelite kingship in the story of their loyal friendship, offering hope for political unity to an otherwise tumultuous kingdom.

Chapter 2 - At the Word of Abner: Covenant and Oracle in Reflection of the Divine Will

The extensive literature debating how 2 Sam 7 came to be read as a covenant has ignored the fact that two covenants are made between David and key figures of Israelite society in the crucial transition period following Saul's death. Having already observed the ideological connection between 2 Sam 7 and the covenant between David and Jonathan, covenant accounts narratively closer to the divine promise in the received text are of particular interest for filling out the Deuteronomistic editor's picture of Yahweh's involvement in David's rise to the throne. The covenant David makes with the elders of Israel at his anointing in Hebron fits the themes of kingship, election, and loyalty discussed in the previous chapter. The more unexpected contribution is the covenant which precedes it, the covenant which itself promises the covenant with the elders—that between David and Abner.

Abner plays an obscure role in the narratives of Samuel. He appears at the side of Saul and is portrayed as a fierce commander but receives little attention of his own. The two exceptions are the detailed account of him slaying Joab's brother Asahel in battle at Gibeon (2 Sam 2.12-32) and the story of his changing sides in the on-going rivalry between Saul's heir Ish-bosheth and David (2 Sam 3).[205] The two are of course connected, as the former gives reason for his demise which concludes the latter. But where he has stood in the background, Abner is suddenly brought to the spotlight in the crucial transition period building to David's kingship over all Israel. This could be explained by the varied interests of different sources, for example the so-called History of David's Rise and Succession Narrative. More likely, however, is Abner's connection to the person of David, especially in 2 Sam 3, and the exceptional part he plays in bringing all Israel under David's reign. Though the context is military, Abner's power is ultimately not that of a commander but of a political influencer. As he ushers in the beginning of the Davidic dynasty, the story harkens back to 1 Sam 17.55-57 when Abner is the one to bring David before Saul with Goliath's head still in hand, the boy who would be king brought before the throne.

This chapter will explore two of Abner's speeches associated with the report of his covenant with David made in Hebron: his oath to transfer the kingdom from the house of

[205] I will use the name Ish-bosheth instead of Eshbaal for Saul's son as the name is presented in the MT of the text in question. For discussion of the name, see H. P. Smith, *Book of Samuel,* 269; Matitiahu Tsevat, "Ishbosheth and Congeners: The Names and Their Study," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975): 77-85; McCarter, *2 Samuel,* 85-87.

Saul to the house of David in 2 Sam 3.8-10 and his consultation with the elders of Israel in 3.17-18. Both of these contain divine quotations or oracles wherein Abner claims to report the will of Yahweh. As with Jonathan's oath, linguistic and thematic ties between these speeches and the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 lead the reader to see God's claim to have raised David to the throne at work through human actions, in particular, the covenant of Abner's new loyalty. But this time, Abner explicitly declares that he is doing the work of God; the complexity of his character and ambiguity of his motivations thus open up a number of questions about agency and ends versus means within the Deuteronomistic editor's vision of the establishment of the Davidic royal line.

Abner's Oath and an Unknown Oracle: 2 Sam 3.8-10

Much like with Jonathan, the account of a covenant between David and Abner is remarkable not so much in the reference to a בְּרִית itself as the language and themes that surround it. In particular, Abner swears an oath that bears uncanny resemblance to that of Jonathan in 1 Sam 20. In 2 Sam 2, Abner appears as a loyal servant to the house of Saul, making Ish-bosheth king in his father's place, taking him on a coronation tour through the northern cities, and indeed going to battle for him in the martial test at Gibeah. The Abner presented in ch. 3, especially vv. 6-11, takes on a very different character. Verse 6 reports that Abner was "making himself strong in the house of Saul." This begins the account of an apparently power-hungry Abner changing loyalties embedded in the war between the house of David and the house of Saul. In 2 Sam 3.7, Ish-bosheth accuses him of a very specific "strengthening," asking why Abner would go into his father's concubine.[206] Abner's oath is sworn in a fiery response:

(8) וַיִּחַר לְאַבְנֵר מְאֹד עַל־דִּבְרֵי אִישׁ־בֹּשֶׁת וַיֹּאמֶר הֲרֹאשׁ כֶּלֶב אָנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר לִיהוּדָה הַיּוֹם אֶעֱשֶׂה־חֶסֶד עִם־בֵּית שָׁאוּל אָבִיךָ אֶל־אֶחָיו וְאֶל־מֵרֵעֵהוּ וְלֹא הִמְצִיתִךָ בְּיַד־דָּוִד וַתִּפְקֹד עָלַי עֲוֹן הָאִשָּׁה הַיּוֹם׃
(9) כֹּה־יַעֲשֶׂה אֱלֹהִים לְאַבְנֵר וְכֹה יֹסִיף לוֹ כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְדָוִד כִּי־כֵן אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ׃
(10) לְהַעֲבִיר הַמַּמְלָכָה מִבֵּית שָׁאוּל וּלְהָקִים אֶת־כִּסֵּא דָוִד עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל־יְהוּדָה מִדָּן וְעַד־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע׃

> (8) Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a Judean dog's head?[207] Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his

[206] Robert P. Gordon notes that Ish-bosheth's suspicion of Abner as he gains power is not unlike that of his father against David (*I & II Samuel: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 217), representing the inherited court paranoia of a doomed house.

[207] לִיהוּדָה is translated in the Vulgate as "against Judah (*adversum Juda*)" and אֲשֶׁר לִיהוּדָה is entirely absent from the LXX and Old Latin versions. In the MT, the prefix לְ on a toponym indicates identity, thus לִיהוּדָה translated here as "Judean." Thank you to Mika Pajunen for this observation. There is disagreement about how

> brothers and to his allies, and have not delivered you into the hands of David; and yet you charge me with the iniquity of this woman today?[208]
>
> (9) "Thus, may God do so to Abner and more also! If thus Yahweh swore of David, then so I accomplish for him:[209]
>
> (10) "To transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba."

The thematic similarities between this passage and 1 Sam 20.12-17 are most evident in the linguistic resonances. After his scathing rejoinder, Abner asserts his loyalty (חֶסֶד) to the house of Saul, a loyalty which Jonathan himself asks of David in 1 Sam 20:15 (וְלֹא־תַכְרִת אֶת־חַסְדְּךָ מֵעִם בֵּיתִ). In both passages, this loyalty is specifically manifested in sparing the life of Saul's heir (1 Sam 20.14): Ish-bosheth is not delivered into the hands of David (בְּיַד־דָּוִד) and Jonathan is delivered from being counted among the doomed hands of David's enemies (מִיַּד אֹיְבֵי דָוִד, 1 Sam 20.15-6). Abner resents the indictment of guilt or iniquity (עֲוֺן), implied as an act of treason or disloyalty, the same charge (of עון) as Jonathan clears from David (1 Sam 20.8). The formula "May God do so to [me] and more also" is common enough in Samuel, but these passages are two of only four where it is taken as a pledge of action rather than a

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to understand the insult, whether as an association with the general lowliness of dogs (or "commander over dogs" as in Rashi and Kimchi cited in Ronald F. Youngblood, "1,2 Samuel," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol 3., ed. Frank Gaebelein [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 806), a comparison with an enemy (McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 106), or a gloss playing on the name Caleb (Smith, *2 Samuel*, 276). Most likely it is eliciting the image of a decapitated or dead dog in parallel to 1 Sam 24.14; 2 Sam 9.8. Overall, the sense seems to be Abner is claiming to be treated the lowest of the low—not only a dog, but a body part, and the enemy. The play on Caleb is certainly possible and only heightens the association with Judah, which will become ironic as Abner aligns himself with Judah's king.

[208] The definite article ("the woman") in the MT acts as a demonstrative ("this woman") in reference to Rizpah. See Tushima, *Fate,* 133. עַל + פקד (+suffix or proper noun) + עָוֺן is usually translated "punish (them) for iniquity/guilt/wrongdoing." See e.g., Isa 13.31; Jer 25.12; 36.31. I purposefully have left the translation a bit ambiguous to reflect the ambiguity of the Hebrew text: is Abner saying he is being blamed for Rizpah's own depravity, that whatever had transpired is her own fault, or simply for an alleged misdeed with her?

[209] LXX (except LXX^{O}) add ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ. The prepositions of this verse are particularly hard to translate, but my rendering of the received text is framed by the interpretation of two phrases: כִּי...כִּי as a conditional clause "if…then," and כַּאֲשֶׁר...כֵּן as a comparative clause. In his landmark study of oath formulae, Blane Conklin interprets this phrase as solely comparative: "just as the Lord swore to David, thus I will do for him"; also 1 Kgs 1.29-30 (*Oath Formulas in Biblical Hebrew* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011], 54). He interprets the initial כִּי only as introducing the oath content and the second as marking the apodosis but with no real translation value. According to his survey, most conditional phrases in oath formulations include the protasis marked by אם or לולא (see his chart on p55). However, most of the cases he cites are negative oath statements, swearing not to do something, or unreal conditional clauses, an impossible or contrary hypothetical, whereas Abner's oath is clearly positive and has the potential to be realized (see the association of the above particles with each of these clauses in Bill Arnold and John Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 173-4, 188-189). Conklin also notes places where the protasis in a conditional clause is unmarked, so even if he wanted to reserve the initial כִּי for the oath introduction, the second כִּי may still mark apodosis. Although I understand the smoothing instinct to translate Abner's vow as self-imprecatory—as in the NASB "if as the Lord has sworn to David, I do not accomplish this for him"—the absence of a negative particle in the latter half of the statement prevents me from reading it this way.

curse.[210] Though the language is less closely related, Abner's assertion of the divine will to transfer the kingdom from Saul's house to David echoes Jonathan's blessing that Yahweh be with David as he has been with Saul (1 Sam 20.13). Where they do not directly coincide, each of these oath elements mirror each other, drawing into question the relationship between the two texts.

Abner's oath in many ways reflects the same narrative, thematic, and ideological concerns as Jonathan's. Jonathan pledges his personal loyalty to David in exchange for his own safety, recognising that by divine favour the throne will pass over him to David. Abner switches his loyalty to David, abandoning the safety of Ish-bosheth, willing the supposed divine favour passed from the Saulide to David to be accomplished through him. Jonathan and Abner seem to share the same motivation of self-preservation, albeit perhaps with different levels of integrity.[211] Though the questionable characterisation of Abner stands out against Jonathan's stalwart devotion, they both meet the same end in death despite their dealings with David for safety—but very pointedly not at David's hands. Most importantly, however, both oaths facilitate the same goal: the domination of David's house over Saul's to secure the throne of Israel. Where Jonathan's oath acts as an ideological non-compete clause by subordinating his descendants to David's, Abner's oath tangibly undertakes the transition by initiating a shift in political favour. While the narrator has already informed the reader at the beginning of ch. 3 that the house of Saul is waning, the one member who had been growing strong within the house, even the public face of Ish-bosheth's fighting force, disavows the acting Saulide king. Immediately, there is a pivot in the narrative as Abner seeks a covenant with David and curries the favour of the elders of Israel on his behalf. Thus, where the covenant with Jonathan laid the foundation, the covenant with Abner marks the beginning of the end of the first Israelite dynasty.

Both linguistic and thematic resonances between the oath texts suggest a close connection between the accounts, whether they stood together in the same narrative tradition or were at the very least aware of each other. Underlying the two is a common vision of the united Davidic monarchy that looks forward to its fulfilment step by step throughout the

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[210] The others are 1 Sam 25:22 and 2 Sam 3:35. 1 Sam 20:13 is the only instance in Samuel where the divine name is employed in the formulary.

[211] The question looms large whether Abner defects out of vanity, his pride wounded by a paranoid new ruler, or whether he has been self-serving all along. This question is central to Keith Bodner's interpretation of the narrative (*David Observed: A King in the Eyes of His Court* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005], 38-66). See below for my discussion of Abner's moral ambiguity, but, in short, I do not find it as important to the Dtr editor as the question of Abner's role and relation to David.

course of 2 Samuel. This central vision is seen primarily in Abner's mysterious references to a divine oath to David in 2 Sam 3.9-10 that the kingdom would transfer from Saul to David. It may be that these verses themselves were an outgrowth of the vignette to resemble that shared vision more closely. Because there is no obvious referent to such a speech from God in the preceding narrative, commentators have struggled to explain the allusion. Bruce Birch represents the most common solution: although there is not a specific antecedent text, there is an implicit promise in David's anointing by Samuel and the many references to God's choice of king which represent "widespread recognition."[212] On the other hand, close attention to Abner's characterisation leads Robert Alter to discredit his speech as "diplomatic invention."[213] But neither a vague tradition-historical background nor a literary-critical dismissal can account for its retrospective accordance with the larger succession history. McCarter thus demarcates the oracle as secondary, noting how "verse 10 looks ahead to the subsequent Deuteronomistic passages in its allusion to an oracle about David, which has no discernible referent apart from II Samuel 7."[214] While I take McCarter's explanation to be the most responsible, I think he stops short to limit the Deuteronomistic connection to Abner's divine citation. Upon further examination, the framing of the wider passage takes a Deuteronomistic shape which corresponds with the divine promise in 2 Sam 7.

2 Samuel 3.1 frames the narrative from the beginning as a war of houses: "Now there was a long war between the house of Saul (בֵּית שָׁאוּל) and the house of David (בֵּית דָּוִד), and David grew continually stronger, but the house of Saul (בֵּית שָׁאוּל) grew continually weaker." This verse contextualises the long list of David's sons born to him at Hebron (vv. 2-5) as his "strength."[215] The phrase describing war between the houses is repeated in v. 6 as the temporal setting for Abner making himself strong in the house of Saul (בְּבֵית שָׁאוּל), as well as the subsequent oath, covenant, and defection. It is thus not surprising that Abner's method of strengthening himself also parallels David: attempting to father sons by Saul's concubine. Whether or not Ish-bosheth's accusation concerning Rizpah is true, the co-opting of royal women is widely recognised as a bid for political power, exemplified in the struggle among

[212] Bruce Birch, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," in *New Interpreter's Bible,* Vol. 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 1223.

[213] Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 & 2 Samuel* (New York: Norton, 1999), 211.

[214] McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 116.

[215] McCarter considers the list of David's sons a Deuteronomistic addition (ibid., 101-2), but such annalistic lists fit better as part of an older source used in the creation of the Deuteronomistic history.

David's own progeny (e.g., 1 Kgs 2.17-25).[216] David himself requests from Abner that Ish-bosheth return Michal, his Saulide wife, as a consolidation of power and a proof of the weakness of the Saulide ruler. Abner's protest insisting on his political loyalty betrays his own interpretation of the claim. Dynasty (or lack thereof) is the pressing concern and becomes the point of division when Abner swears to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul (מִבֵּית שָׁאוּל) in v. 10.

In striking complement, the victory of the house of David and its establishment in perpetuity through his offspring are the central theme of 2 Sam 7. In response to David's plan to make a house for Yahweh, Yahweh instead promises that he will make a house for David (v. 11). He will do this by raising up David's descendant and establishing his kingdom (v. 12) and the throne of his kingdom (v. 13).[217] The summation of Yahweh's promise is a close linguistic parallel to 2 Sam 3.10, as he takes essentially the same oath as Abner: "Your house (בֵּיתְךָ) and your kingdom (וּמַמְלַכְתְּךָ) shall endure forever before me; your throne (כִּסְאֲךָ) shall be established forever" (2 Sam 7.16). Here the human and divine are mirrored, more closely than even Abner recognises, as he comes to embody the deity's will. Abner's own חֶסֶד turns away from Ish-bosheth to David, as Yahweh's חֶסֶד turned away from Saul but will not turn away from David's heir (v. 15). "To whom is the land?" Abner asks David in 2 Sam 3.12, as if to gift him the place Yahweh promises for Israel. All Israel is brought to David from the words of Abner in their elders' ears; though he does not live to see the king anointed at Hebron, he may have had some merit to claim like Yahweh "I took you…to be ruler over my people Israel" (7.8). Whether honestly out of resignation to a muttered omen or ironically as a self-serving fool, Abner becomes the mortal counterpart to the divine in a pivotal moment of the early Israelite monarchy.

By closely corresponding 2 Sam 3 and 7, the Deuteronomistic editor paints Abner as the decisive instrument of the divine will; not only in Abner's conscious acknowledgment and undertaking of God's promise but in the overarching orchestration. The narrative framing of Saul's house already in decline, especially in parallel to the strengthening of both David and Abner, paints the outcome as inevitable. Ish-bosheth never would have lasted as king—Abner's defection was only the tipping point. And from that point, the division between the fighting houses is closed as Abner draws the elders of Israel to David, leading to his

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[216] Halpern and Levenson, "Political Import," 507-18; John Kessler, "Sexuality and Politics," 409-23, McKenzie, *King David*, 117.

[217] The same Hiphil verb is used in 2 Sam 7.12 for God to raise up (וַהֲקִימֹתִי) as for Abner to establish (וּלְהָקִים) the throne of David 2 Sam 3.10.

anointing at Hebron and the sealing of his kingship. What at first appears to be accomplished on a whim of wounded pride is claimed by God to be his own intervention later in the narrative. Yahweh details how he has set up David as ruler over Israel: "I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you" (2 Sam 7.8). The latter statement serves the double purpose of both clearing David of blood guilt—which becomes important in the case of Abner's own death later in ch. 3—and of crediting God with activities assigned to human strength or cunning. The promise explicitly mentions using men as his own means in the world, in this case as a rod of reproof (v. 14). The integration of this view of the deity's influence represents a subtle editorial harmonisation across the texts, much less explicit than Saul's plague of an evil spirit but still implicit with theological weight. Through the wording of Abner's oath, the Deuteronomistic editor hints at Yahweh's own hidden fingerprints. He shapes the succession history into a story of divine triumph, guiding the reader to his own conclusion: the united monarchy was not accomplished by human might alone but by divine guidance of human agents.

Another Oracle for "all Israel": 2 Sam 3.17-18

Later in ch. 3, Abner again quotes a divine oath when he consults with the elders of Israel in 2 Sam 3:17-18, with possible linguistic and thematic connections to 2 Sam 7 that may shed light on the composition history of the narrative and its relation to other covenant texts. After securing an alliance with David by returning Michal to him, Abner begins his grass roots campaign to raise support for his new king:

(17) וּדְבַר־אַבְנֵר הָיָה עִם־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר גַּם־תְּמוֹל גַּם־שִׁלְשֹׁם הֱיִיתֶם מְבַקְשִׁים אֶת־דָּוִד לְמֶלֶךְ עֲלֵיכֶם׃
(18) וְעַתָּה עֲשׂוּ כִּי יְהוָה אָמַר אֶל־דָּוִד לֵאמֹר בְּיַד דָּוִד עַבְדִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּמִיַּד כָּל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם׃

> (17) And the word of Abner came to the elders of Israel,[218] saying, "In times past you were seeking for David to be king over you.

[218] The way the MT has this phrase vocalised (וּדְבַר־אַבְנֵר הָיָה עִם־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) is a very strange construction which has led to various interpretations of Abner going to meet with, consulting, or sending a message to the elders. As far as I can tell, דָּבָר הָיָה עִם is not used anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible. 1 Sam 4.1 uses וַיְהִי דְבַר־שְׁמוּאֵל לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, which is the closest we get. Of course, וַיְהִי דְּבַר־יְהוָה is often used as the oracular messenger formula, but only with אֶל or לְ, not with עִם. However, the Piel verb form of דבר is frequently used with עִם, for example, throughout the account in 1 Kgs 1 of Bathsheba and Nathan plotting for David to appoint Solomon as King (1 Kgs 1.7,14,22). See also Gen 29.9; 31.24,29; Ex 19.9; 33.9; Num 11.17; Josh 24.27; 1 Sam 9.25; 2 Sam 13.22; 2 Chr 1.9. Thus, it seems likely that, somewhere along the way, these two modes of writing were either intentionally conflated or unintentionally confused. Perhaps the verb form was confused with noun form used in v. 8 (דְּבָרַי), with עִם appearing in the next verse as well. Overall, the purpose of the phrase seems to echo the oracular messenger formula, given the oracle in the next verse

> (18) “Now then, do it! For Yahweh spoke of David, saying, ‘By the hand of my servant David he[219] will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.’”

Just as in his previous speech in vv. 9-10, Abner quotes an oracle beginning with כִּי, lending credibility and (supposed) motivation for his actions. The symmetry between the speeches implies that they were modelled on each other, with this second one being modelled on the first. Abner’s address to the elders of Israel anticipates 2 Sam 5.3, when the elders of Israel make a covenant with David at Hebron and anoint him king. Indeed, the opening phrase of Abner’s message to the elders (גַּם־תְּמוֹל גַּם־שִׁלְשֹׁם) is almost identical to the opening phrase of the elder’s speech to David in 5.2, suggesting that these two speeches are connected on similar redactional layers.[220]

However, the oracle does not match the one he quoted to Ish-bosheth, nor is it as closely connected to Jonathan’s oath in 1 Sam 20. His citation of the divine voice includes phrases repeated throughout the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 such as “my servant David (דָּוִד עַבְדִּי),” “my people Israel (עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל),” and “all your/their enemies (כָּל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם)” and likewise emphasises the military peace that Yahweh has already and will continue to grant David. But the connection here is much looser, as Abner’s quote lacks the language of enemies being “cut off” present in Jonathan’s oath or even being given “rest” from enemies, which is an important Deuteronomistic theme. So too the strangely specific reference to the Philistines feels out of place; David’s next clash with the Philistines does not come until chs. 5 and 8. Though Abner’s plea concerns David’s candidacy for the throne of Israel, the quotation does not seem to concern the impending dynastic shift. Why would Abner not refer to the same divine promise he quoted to Ish-bosheth, to persuade the elders of the inevitability of David’s ascension?[221]

Unlike the oracle in Abner’s first speech, this oracle is a nearly verbatim quote from Yahweh found earlier in Samuel—but not aimed at David. The phrase הוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת־עַמִּי מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים is copied from 1 Sam 9.16, where Yahweh instructs Samuel to anoint Saul נָגִיד, a rare term for “ruler” or “leader” which appears in 2 Sam 5.2 and 7.8, which will be discussed in

[219] Most other ancient witnesses have this verb as a first person singular “I will deliver,” but the reason for the difficulty in the MT will be made clear shortly.

[220] See n258.

[221] Tushima claims Abner is quoting the same “Yahwistic promise” but does not account for the differences, only that “he adds the elders’ own longing for David to be their king” (*Saul’s Progeny*, 138).

the next chapter.[222] But notice Abner's comeuppance: while 1 Sam 9.16 only lists Saul's victory over the Philistines, Israel's archetypal enemies, 2 Sam 3.18 adds that David will also save Israel from *all* their enemies. Thus, in Abner's mouth, God says that David will do one better than Saul as a military leader. David is later acknowledged as having done so in 2 Sam 19.9, using the wording from Abner's oracle here. But with this quote, we do note a shift in concern from the succession of the house of David over the house of Saul to the individual divine election of David and his appeal as a king.

The difference in concern between Abner's first oracle in 2 Sam 3.10 and the second in 3.18 reflects the rhetorical setting—what Abner vows to accomplish versus how he wishes to portray David. As opposed to the replacement rhetoric of his first oath, mention of Saul or Ish-bosheth is entirely absent. Instead, he presents a positive case for David as the divinely provided answer to a practical problem. Abner capitalises on David's famous military prowess, particularly against the Philistines. But his negation acts as a vote of no-confidence in Ish-bosheth, expressing that he is just as incapable of defeating their enemies as his father Saul was. The jab also aims at Ish-bosheth's inability to take personal revenge from those who killed his father and brothers. The subtle disregard for Ish-bosheth's rule introduces a blatant shift in political agenda among the powerbrokers of Israel. The focus is no longer on the war between possible rulers David and Ish-bosheth but between "all Israel" and their common enemies—and there is only one fit to lead. As long-time commander of the army, Abner is uniquely well-positioned to pivot their martial campaign, trusted for his expertise in strategy. Therefore, his choice of words is playing to the strengths of his position as opposed to his theological commitment.

The passage also poses the legitimation of David's reign as the unifying factor for different groups associated with Israel. By diverting the elders' attention away from their warring divisions, Abner unites Israel in a shared campaign. Note the eclectic, nonstandard list of different groups over which Abner makes Ish-bosheth king in 2 Sam 2.9: "Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel"; in v. 10 he is said to rule Israel for two years, "but the house of Judah followed David."[223] It is unclear why this older

[222] Since 2 Sam 3.18 is quoting 1 Sam 9.16, it preserves the 3ms Hiphil הוֹשִׁיעַ despite the difficulty of this reading in the context of Abner's speech. The only additions to 2 Sam 3.18 are the *waw-consecutive* at the beginning of the phrase and the insertion of יִשְׂרָאֵל to specify עַמִּי.

[223] Reference to the Abhurites ("house of Asher" in the Targums) and the house of Judah emphasises the people groups rather than the regions associated with them. Cf. K.D. Schunk, *Benjamin: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Geschichte eines israelitischen Stammes* (BZAW 86; Berlin, 1963), 129.

material singles out each of these peoples—whether they are meant to fall collectively under the banner of "Israel" but merit special mention, or are only loosely linked under Ish-bosheth. Daniel Fleming considers each people separate but geographically clustered by the difference in preposition: Ephraim, Benjamin, and all Israel, marked with עַל, represent the central highlands, while Gilead, Jezreel, and the Ashurites, marked with אֶל, represent the eastern and northern reaches of the kingdom.[224] However, since Gilead and Jezreel are non-traditional tribes, more likely they are organised by their relation to Israel.[225] Ephraim and Benjamin are more central to the alliance under Ish-bosheth, while Gilead, Jezreel, and the Ashurites are loose outliers.[226] There may be some nuance in meaning, with עַל used in a sense of rank and direct control "over" Israel while אֶל is estimative as leader "to Gilead," but the emphasis remains the variation between them.[227]

On the other hand, by the time David makes a covenant with all the tribes of Israel and becomes king over Israel and Judah at the beginning of ch. 5, they are presented as a whole. Fleming notes that the "house of David" material never claims such a list of Israelite associations, and therefore it must be sourced from foreign material.[228] On the contrary, the Deuteronomist paints the Davidic reign as the pinnacle of Israel's sovereignty; Abner himself swears that David's kingdom shall stretch "from Dan to Beersheba" in v. 10, a rare phrase that almost exclusively refers to the expansive Davidic rule, such as the census of David's fighting force from the collected tribes (2 Sam 24.2; cf. 1 Chr 21.2).[229] The presentation of

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[224] Daniel Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2012), 153n23.

[225] Gilead is named a descendant of Manasseh with his own clan in Numbers 26.29; Gilead as place and people appears as the prominent backdrop of Jephthah's story in Judges 10-12, Jephthah himself being Gilead's illegitimate son (10.1). However, the "Shibboleth" incident of Judges 12 seems to prove Gilead's estrangement from the other traditional tribes, namely Ephraim. Jezreel is never named a clan or tribe but David's wife Ahinoam is called a Jezreelitess in 2 Sam 2.2; 3.2 (as well as 1 Sam 27.3; 30.5; 1 Chr 3.1).

[226]McKenzie notes that Benjamin and Ephraim are central to Saul's highland kingdom in 1 Sam 13-15 (*King David*, 115). Tushima argues they are important regions in the narrator's Israel, but this is hard to prove depending on when the text is dated (*Saul's Progeny*, 117). Further reason to take the Ashurites as distinct from the tribe of Ashur, as Fleming suggests (*Legacy of Israel*, 153n23), but not so far as "Geshurite" as in the Vulgate and Syriac. Cf. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 565n1; McCarter, *2 Samuel*, 87; A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (Chicago: World Boooks, 1989) 31; John Mauchline, *1 and 2 Samuel* (Greenwood, SC: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1977), 204; Nadav Na'aman, *Ancient Israel's History and Historiography: The First Temple Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 20-21.

[227] Arnold and Choi, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 98, 122.

[228] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*¸ 153n24.

[229] The phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" only appears seven times in the Hebrew Bible. Four times refer to David's reign, all in 2 Samuel (2 Sam 3.10; 17.11; 24.15), one refers to Solomon's (1 Kgs 4.25); the other two refer to the muster of all Israel in Mizpah in the time of the judges (Judg 20.1) and the recognition of Samuel as a prophet (1 Sam 3.20). The reverse phrase "from Beersheba to Dan" appears twice in Chronicles, once in the parallel account of David's census (1 Chr 21.2) and once in the description of Hezekiah's Passover (2 Chr 30.5).

the jumbled peoples under Ish-bosheth transitioning to pointed unity likely is meant by the later editors to highlight the accord affected by Abner. His political persuasion is a bloodless alternative to a prolonged civil war, but also adds a morally important degree of separation. Just as David is saved from blood guilt of innocent Israelites by a political buffer, he is also saved from self-boasting through being championed by a third party. David's personal appeal wins the elders but his image as a humble leader, too righteous to take the crown from Yahweh's anointed, is preserved. Here again Abner mirrors the divine: he collects all Israel together in preparation for their covenant with David and in so doing hands him a united kingdom, brought together not under force but by the word of Yahweh.[230]

Special attention is paid to "all the house of Benjamin" in v. 19; again, it is ambiguous whether גַּם is meant to inclusively specify Benjamin or exclusively add Benjamin to Israel. The former seems more likely as the repetition of Abner going to speak with David between vv. 19 and 20 suggests the verse is a later addition. But here Benjamin primarily stands in as a proxy for Saul's house and its continuation through Ish-bosheth. Saul is many times over identified as a Benjamite throughout the book of Samuel;[231] more pointedly, the Benjamites fight under Abner at Gibeon while Ish-bosheth remains at Mahanaim in 2 Sam 2. As with Jonathan's oath, here another possible Saulide claim to the throne is undermined—the house of Benjamin explicitly consents to do as Abner suggests and make a covenant with David, thereby submitting themselves to Davidic rule.

While the imagery and vocabulary of the oracle reflect the divine promise in 2 Sam 7, it is difficult to say if 2 Sam 3.17-19 belongs to the same Deuteronomistic redaction as vv. 8-10 and 1 Sam 20.12-17. The strong "us-them" dichotomy in Abner's second oracle relates to all Israel against her enemies, rather than the house of David and the house of Saul in Jonathan's oath. McCarter considers this quote as a Deuteronomistic addition precisely because of the parallels with the divine promise in ch. 7, although this both assumes a Deuteronomistic dating of certain parts of the promise and also does not take into account the parallel in 1 Sam 9.16.[232] While the oath texts are concerned for the legal transfer of the royal Israelite house, this oracle is more concerned with the individual divine election of David and his appeal to the people in their historical context. It may still be a Deuteronomistic editor concerned with the favour of Yahweh, but it seems to be a different redactor or group of

[230] McKenzie suggests something similar about David's leadership at Hebron, but with more of a view to Judah as a nation than Israel (*King David*, 115).

[231] E.g. 1 Sam 9.1

[232] McCarer, *II Samuel*, 116.

redactors than those responsible for the oath texts, again, with vv. 17-18 modelled on vv. 9-10. The addition still clearly serves the purpose of showing that it was Yahweh who secretly effected the transition during the days of the early Israelite monarchy, but it does so with recourse to prophecy instead of legal forms. Here Dietrich and Veijola's distinction between a Nomistic and a Prophetic school of Deuteronomistic redactors may be helpful, although I have less faith that it can be applied as systematically as they would like.[233] So while it may not stand on the same redactional layer as 1 Sam 20.12-17 and 2 Sam 3.8-10, Abner's speech and oracle in 3.17-18 thus still act as building blocks rather than an outliers in forming the Deuteronomistic tradition centred on 2 Sam 7.

Some scholars explain the uncertainty of the divine reference by suggesting that it is Abner's own theological fabrication. Robert Alter posits that the whole speech is a "diplomatic invention," simply rhetoric meant to persuade the elders of Israel.[234] A step further, Bodner acknowledges that this invention may align with later Deuteronomistic passages, but argues that such prophetic resonances are unintentional; in the immediate context, "Abner is guilty of divine exaggeration."[235] His argument dovetails with that of J. Cheryl Exum, who highlights several questions of Abner's motivation throughout the narrative in order to draw out the moral ambiguity of his character.[236] The really telling action is not even necessarily Ish-bosheth's accusation, but Abner's response to it. At best, with the oath in vv. 9-10 included, Abner defects out of vanity or insult. At worse, if these verse were not included in the original text of the vignette between Ish-bosheth and Abner, he makes a show of being loyal and being insulted that Ish-bosheth would even dream of accusing him—and then turns around to betray Ish-bosheth, just as the Saulide king had feared.[237] Bodner claims that the Deuteronomist portrays Abner as morally ambiguous to soften the blow of his

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[233] Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); Veijola, *Ewige Dynastie*; idem, *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (AASF B 198; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1977).

[234] Alter, *The David Story*, 211.

[235] Bodner, *David Observed*, 52.

[236] J. Cheryl Exum, *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of Almighty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 104. Some of these questions include: "Have the elders of Israel sought David as their king? If so, Abner has not only stood in God's way…he has also opposed the will of the people. Or is Abner manipulating the elders, using rhetorical ploy to identify their interests with his—and with God's!" These are legitimate questions that should trouble the modern reader, but do not appear to be the concern of the editor.

[237] That 2 Sam 2.9-10 are an outgrowth of the underlying Deuteronomistic text may be suggested by the implication in v. 11 that Ish-bosheth was expected to answer Abner's rhetorical question in v. 8 (but is unable). If so, it is likely a similarly Deuteronomistic editor connecting this text and 1 Sam 18.1-3/20.12-17 closer together because of the already underlying similarities, particularly the questions of loyalty and iniquity between the houses of David and Saul.

death at the end of the chapter and move guilt away from David, as well as sully his potential for kingship.[238]

Later editors have an opportunity at each stage of redaction to make clear their opinion of Abner, to set the record straight about the accusation, particularly with an omniscient explanation of Rizpah's significance already present.[239] Perhaps they speak later through Solomon at Joab's execution when he claims that Abner was "more righteous and better than [Joab]" (1 Kgs 2.32). Still, the primary concern here is not Abner's moral character but his political capacity to transfer control of the kingdom legitimately and effectively from Saul's house to David's. Every movement of Abner described in the beginning chapters of 2 Samuel pertains to king-making, campaigning militarily, politically, or rhetorically for his chosen ruler. If anything, the few raw interpersonal moments which glimpse at his inner character, such as his plea to Asahel in 2.20-22 and his outburst at Ish-bosheth in 3.8-10, reveal him to be simply human. Caught up in tumultuous circumstances or tossed about by emotions, Abner is a man of great power who is still at the mercy of an omnipotent deity, even unto his untimely death.[240] This undercurrent throughout the narrative makes inadvertent or coincidental prophecy seem unlikely. There is no reason, therefore, to discount Abner's divine quote in 2 Sam 3.18 as disingenuous, even if it is rhetorical. His speech fits perfectly at the intersection of the Deuteronomistic interest in his potency as Israel's political powerbroker and the mounting tradition of the divine Davidic kingship, laying crucial narrative and ideological groundwork for the crowning covenant at Hebron.

Abner's second speech, inserted in the midst of the narrative of a covenant between Abner and David, represents a second way in which Deuteronomistic editors align key covenant texts with the vision of 2 Sam 7. The first in 3.8-10 focussed on expanding the legal basis of the dynastic shift from the house of Saul to the house of David through oath, as with the oath of Jonathan in 1 Sam 20. While the second speech is modelled on the first, punctuated at the end with an oracle, it focuses on the divine election of David through explicit reference to the divine will. At the narrative level, the oracle in v. 18 is just as ambiguous as v. 10, though it speaks to David's apparent appeal to the elders, which will be

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[238] Bodner, *David Observed*, 52.

[239] Lucian's LXX and 4QSam[a] do include "and Abner took her," but its absence from the other versions suggests it is a correction or translator's gloss. Such a crucial detail surely would not have been left out of any version.

[240] The sentiment is reminiscent of Prov 21.1: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; he turns it wherever he wishes."

expanded in the related redaction 5.1-2. But by quoting Yahweh's election of Saul as the military defender of Israel and then adding that David will accomplish even more than the king before him, the Deuteronomistic editor uses prophecy to show the deity at work through these human actions and human bonds. Here Yahweh's story in 2 Sam 7.8-9—how he made David ruler over Israel and cut off his enemies—is realised. Whether Abner is acting in good faith or riding the ebb and flow of political power, on his lips the ideal Davidic kingdom is created and its vision prophetically cast forward into the editors' present longing for such a strong and unifying Davidic ruler.

What of the Covenant?

The mention of a covenant in the midst of the story of Abner's defection in ch. 3 feels almost off hand. This ought to temper the enthusiasm of scholars who wish to attach much theological import at the mere sight of the word בְּרִית. However, it is significant that a covenant is the means by which Abner's loyalty to David is secured and with it the tide of political power and public opinion. Amid a story fraught with turbulent emotions and changing devotions, the covenant grounds the transition of the throne affected by Abner. This becomes especially important to the Deuteronomistic editors building up the case for an eternal Davidic kingship in the context of opposing exilic and postexilic influences. But at the level of the narrative, the covenant begins as a personal agreement between David and Abner which sets up for the dramatic shift in Israel's political landscape and subsequent upheaval.

In his proposal to David in 2 Sam 3.12-13, Abner uses בְּרִית to establish an individual political arrangement between them which fits naturally in the narrative at the oldest layer of the text. He opens with a rhetorical question of "to whom does the land belong?" which Birch and Anderson suggest is a continuation of Abner's acknowledgment of the divine will for David to rule.[241] This may be a convenient connection later taken up with the Deuteronomistic oath addition, but there is no mention of the divine. As Abner is about to offer to bring all Israel over to David, the question more aptly addresses his own prowess and

[241] Note the literal text is לְמִי־אֶרֶץ, "To whom is (a) land?" While it may be suggested that the repetition of לֵאמֹר indicates an insertion, because לְמִי־אֶרֶץ is missing from most of the Greek traditions (replaced by οὗ ἦν παραχρῆμα), it is more likely this is the insertion rather than Abner's offer of a covenant. Cf. Birch, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," 1224; Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 57.

ability to sway Israel.[242] The covenant is then presented as the means to an end, almost in passing: it is to be David's offering in exchange for Abner's service. A covenant with all Israel in v. 21 is similarly presented as the natural next step to David's kingship. Though no explicit content is discussed, an agreement is assumed between the two parties which creates a political connection. In the case of both Abner and the elders, the other party willingly submits to David as in a vow of fealty, not unlike Jonathan's.[243] There is room in this agreement for further political negotiation, as seen by David's request for Michal in the next verse. The basic bond or pledge established is strong enough to convince both individuals to set aside their previous enmity and proceed in this new dealing.

The possessive suffix on בְּרִיתְךָ may indicate Abner is more concerned about David's loyalty to him than demonstrating his loyalty to David. Just as David is able to invoke his covenant with Jonathan in threatening times, Abner secures a covenant with David to guarantee his safety before appearing at Hebron.[244] But the covenant is not only essential for Abner; on a narrative level, it is incredibly important for preserving David's image. The covenant legitimises their questionable alliance, presenting Abner's favour as willing and uncoerced, which becomes especially crucial when he is killed by one of David's own military commanders. Part and parcel with his lament that asserts "[Abner's] hands were not bound,/[his] feet were not fettered" (v. 34), David is cleared of personal guilt because Abner has formally become his ally and not his prisoner.[245] His innocence from the bloodguilt of Saul's house, representing "Yahweh's anointed," is preserved, as it was with Saul and Jonathan and will be with Ish-bosheth. The covenant therefore establishes positive political relations between Abner and David, with an unspoken expectation of loyalty and cooperation, which grants Abner security and David amnesty.

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[242] Tushima interprets Abner's opening question as follows: "while David may have all the prospects of being a monarch over all of Israel, the kingdom for now is Abner's to give whomever he wills" (*Saul's Progeny*, 134-5). See also Bodner, *David Observed*, 50.

[243] Tushima calls Abner a vassal here (*Saul's Progeny,* 137), but I am wary of construing Abner as a defeated foe instead of the power political player he presents himself to be throughout the narrative.

[244] Though it is possible that the covenant between David and Abner is not realized until they meet in Hebron, there is some sense in which it is binding beforehand, as Abner looks to fulfill David's condition of returning Michal and the plans discussed at Hebron look forward instead of arrange their present relations. Tushima claims the covenant is substantiated only when they share the meal, "a covenantal feast" (*Saul's Progeny*, 138, 143), but instead I interpret the meal simply as a gesture of David's goodwill. For a refutation of the dubious "covenant meal" idea, see Nathan MacDonald, "Reconsidering the Covenant Meal," *Forthcoming*.

[245] Joab, on the other hand, is the perfect scapegoat—hungry for personal revenge of his brother Asahel (2.18-28) and unaware of the covenant with David (3.22). The personal alliance is between David and Abner, and though there may be some question of David's culpability in keeping Abner safe, there is no violation of trust. Joab and Abner have no such binding agreement. See McKenzie, *King David*, 120.

Already at this early layer, we can see covenant being used in response to political concerns. Beyond the narrative of David and Abner, beyond the house of David and the house of Saul, we can see covenant being used both here and in 2 Sam 5.3 as explanation for merging the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Thus, although the narrative portrays it as an agreement between individuals, the covenant acts as a sort of aetiology or historiographical whitewashing, an explanation for historical state of affairs between the two kingdoms. While the story of a covenant between David and Abner has broad implications for those living under either kingdom, the covenant itself makes no explicit claims on groups of people. It is only a plot point in this iteration of Israel and Judah's history. Similarly, notice that there is no theological or legal extrapolation of the covenant, which only comes with the subsequent expansions of the narrative.

With the addition of Abner's oath and references to the divine promise, the Deuteronomistic editors expand the political ramifications of the covenant by framing it in the context of Yahweh's will for "all Israel." The oath extends a perceived legal undergirding of the transition between ruling lines to originate from within the house of Saul. Not only is there a formal alliance between David and Abner, but he gives a notice of resignation and new manifesto to Ish-bosheth. Ultimately, the oath is not for the sake of Abner or Ish-bosheth; it is for a later audience looking back, to punctuate Abner's anger with a final and lasting decision. The shift of political power is thus grounded at each turn with these legal markers that legitimise and solidify the actions of the individuals as foundational to the wider movement.

Furthermore, they are supported by the word of Yahweh himself. Abner's oath explicitly names the deity as guarantor, which adds a sacred element of indissolubility to the mission he swears to accomplish. But both Abner's and the elders' offers of a covenant with David are portrayed as instigated by Abner's oracles, reminiscent of 2 Sam 7, one fulfilling his own personal commitment to accomplish David's ascension and the other for all Israel to gain the promised protection from their enemies. These insertions conveniently attribute the steps accomplished by the covenants to Yahweh, in line with the Deuteronomistic goal to paint the deity as the man behind the curtain. The additions also set the individual covenants within the larger scheme of the rising Davidic kingdom. Abner is no longer only a new recruit for David's cause; he is initiating a new dynasty to rule over all the land. Israel is not simply seeking a leader to protect them; they are submitting themselves to the ruler of a united and sovereign Israel, one that will expand its land and submit neighbouring kingdoms

to its rule under David's charge. Pairing Abner's oath and covenant in particular brings together the political and theological implications for his role in the narrative by casting both vision and actions in legal agreements. Through these agreements, his accomplishments extend beyond himself, beyond his death; his own covenant leads to the covenant with the elders of Israel. But both build further to the height of the promise referenced in their accompanying divine quotations of 2 Sam 7 and the continuing hope of their fruition in the future. The covenant anchors the transition to the house of David in the Deuteronomistic ideal of the united kingdom by appealing to both the legal bond of man and the divine jurisdiction of God for timeless authority.

Conclusion

The obscure vignette of Abner's betrayal of Ish-bosheth, defection to, and covenant with David in the midst of the war between the houses proves to be a crucial moment in the history of the early Israelite monarchy. These early chapters of 2 Samuel represent careful political manoeuvring between traditions in order to transition from the "first" king of Israel to the "true" king of Israel. Fleming describes that this balance "is necessary because David is to rule over all Israel, not simply over Judah, and Saul's claim as the first accepted king of Israel seems to have been undeniable and unavoidable. There was no way to establish David's legitimate rule of Israel without accounting for the transition from the house of Saul."[246] During Saul's lifetime, the transition is long and painstaking, the editors taking every opportunity to show David's deference before Yahweh's anointed. As soon as he is dead, however, the transition is accomplished in a definitive swoop that efficiently replaces the claim of Saul's line with David's.

One man and one covenant shift the tide after six years of war between the house of David and the house of Saul, passed over in less than a chapter. Abner's political influence takes the place of a Joshua-like conquest. The reservation of David's violence and military leadership for the Philistines and not against his fellow Israelites furthers the insider-outsider boundaries, but also maintains the carefully curated image of David's innocence. Not only blood innocence: David is also saved from charge of sedition. The kingdom is willingly

[246] Fleming, *Legacy of Israel*, 150. For more on establishing the legitimacy of David's rise in the power struggle following Saul's death, see also Schneidewind, *Society*, 29; Niels Peter Lemche, "David's Rise," *JSOT* 10 (1978): 2-25.

brought over to him by Abner, his persuasion of the elders playing on David's natural appeal and effectiveness as a leader in relief to Ish-bosheth's. All this under divine sanction, so that the transition is named an act of God and not forceful usurpation. In some ways, Abner is the perfect sacrificial lamb and figurehead for this transition.[247] His key role in Saul's court yet relative anonymity place him in the perfect position to take blame, give power, and then conveniently drop away. It is not insignificant that Abner's funeral is the first reference in the received canon to "King David" in 3.31.

However, the transition affected by Abner plays an even weightier role in the larger Deuteronomistic message about the establishment of the Davidic kingship for an exilic or postexilic audience. Though the story hinges on the political prowess of one man, Abner's paired oath and oracle emphasise that the transition is guided by Yahweh. The great Davidic throne is established not by military might or sheer human will but by the faithfulness of the divine will. The oath that Abner swears and the covenant that he makes with David are accomplished even after his own death because the vision of the united kingdom extends beyond his own role in the ruling party. All of these messages bring hope to an Israel recovering from exile, with provincial Persian power still looming over them.

Just as with Jonathan in 1 Sam 20.42, the context of the narrative in the house war and the sons born to David broaden the horizons of the kingdom Abner seeks to establish. The divine promise in ch. 7 fills out the image of an eternal throne that survives beyond David, in fact emphasising a descendant who comes after him. This future exaltation of the Davidic kingship embodies the hope of eventual restoration of postexilic Israel to its former glory. Abner's contribution represents a longed-for unity in the scattered peoples and protection from their neighbouring enemies, both of which he quotes God promising through David. The covenant is an assurance and firm step towards them both. Abner's nonviolent transition is an important pattern for the Deuteronomistic vision because a divine force is the only way a sovereign, united monarchy will be accomplished ever again out of the ruins of Israel and Judah found in Persian Yehud. The Davidic rule that Abner propagates therefore makes way not only for David's own anointing but for the expectation of a future leader and the kingdom Yahweh will restore to him.

[247] Interestingly, Tushima considers Ish-bosheth the sacrificial lamb in the transition narrative, but primarily for his passivity in contrast to Abner's proactivity (*The Fate of Saul's Progeny*, 114).

The linguistic and ideological connections between the covenant of Abner and the divine promise in 2 Sam 7, as well as the covenants of Jonathan and the elders of Israel, suggest that the Deuteronomistic editors, both Nomistic and Prophetic, intentionally link these narratives across the book of Samuel. While the use of individual human covenants may be native to the oldest layers of the texts, they are an understated element of the stories used to facilitate agreements and political relations. It is only with the Deuteronomistic additions of oath texts and oracles that the covenants stand out, emphasising an abiding legal bond and theological promise. Each addition shows Yahweh's hand in guiding David to the throne and simultaneously ensures that through the covenant the mortal approval of different individuals or groups becomes binding. All of these build to the deity's pledge in ch. 7, showing the work for his claim to have put David on the throne, as he promises that the united kingdom he established will endure forever under the reign of David's descendant(s). This covenant tradition within the book of Samuel may glimpse at the interpretive development by which the text of 2 Sam 7 is later interpreted as a covenant while not mentioning the word בְּרִית. The qualities carried throughout this tradition of dynastic longevity, royal merit, and heavenly approval became central to the Deuteronomistic ideal of Davidic kingship, and placed the divine promise centre stage in the Deuteronomistic history.[248] The promise to David gave hope to those in exile that the work those like Abner had done to establish a glorious united Israel would not be undone—that they could be assured the kingdom would be restored one day under a new David.

[248] See for example an analysis of the king's law in Deuteronomy 17.14-20 and its relation to 2 Sam 7 in Jan Rückl, *A Sure House: Studies on the Dynastic Promise to David in the Books of Samuel and Kings* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 295-318, esp. 313-318.

Chapter 3 - King David and the Elders of Israel: Covenant in the Ideal United Kingdom

The third and chronologically final example of an individual covenant with David is found in the account of the king's anointing at Hebron in 2 Sam 5.1-3. Ish-bosheth has been murdered, the house war for the throne of Israel is over, and David finally comes into his full power as he makes a covenant with and is anointed king by the elders of Israel. This short vignette concludes David's long journey from shepherd boy to king and signals the definitive shift from the Saulide dynasty to the Davidic, thus standing in key parallel to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7. 2 Samuel 5 is traditionally considered the end of the HDR, which is unsurprising considering the extensive redactional activity that can be seen just in the first paragraph.[249] This pericope is crucial to understanding the development of covenant in relation to kingship as it stands at the key moment of David's enthronement over the so-called united kingdom of Israel and Judah. It also gives valuable insights into the historiographic picture of social and political organisation found in the narratives of the united monarchy and how it may reflect the concerns of later editors.

After discussing the redaction criticism of the passage and critiques concerning the portrayal of Israel and Judah, I will look at the representation of the elders of Israel and their role in the anointing and sealing of the covenant. Their presence is particularly important in the Deuteronomistic purpose to implicate those considered "all Israel" in the covenant with the Davidic line. As opposed to the suggestion that the covenant acts as a constitution to limit the king's power, the parallels to Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties are clearest here, suggesting that the covenant should instead be understood as a loyalty oath which binds Israel to the Davidic line even after the destruction of the Jerusalem monarchy.

Redaction Criticism of 2 Sam 5.1-3

Following David's public display of mourning for Ish-bosheth, the tribes of Israel gather at Hebron and carry out what Abner claimed they had been considering for some time—"to make David king over [them]" (2 Sam 3.17). A number of linguistic and thematic differences between vv. 1-2 and v. 3 suggest that the report of a covenant with David has been expanded,

[249] Though debated, the end of the HDR is usually placed around v. 10. See, for example, Grønbaek, *Die Geschichte vom Aufstieg Davids*, 25–29; Peter Mommer, *Samuel: Geschichte und Überlieferung* (WMANT 65; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 176–80.

as in the other covenant texts with Abner and Jonathan. Perhaps more than any of the other individual covenant texts, the composition history of this pericope also gives us a glimpse at the different redactional steps taken towards our received text of Nathan's oracle in 2 Sam 7.

(1) וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־דָּוִד חֶבְרוֹנָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר הִנְנוּ עַצְמְךָ וּבְשָׂרְךָ אֲנָחְנוּ׃
(2) גַּם־אֶתְמוֹל גַּם־שִׁלְשׁוֹם בִּהְיוֹת שָׁאוּל מֶלֶךְ עָלֵינוּ אַתָּה הָיִיתָה (הָיִיתָ) מוֹצִיא (הַמּוֹצִיא) וְהַמֵּבִי (וְהַמֵּבִיא) אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְךָ אַתָּה תִרְעֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְנָגִיד עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃
(3) וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ חֶבְרוֹנָה וַיִּכְרֹת לָהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד בְּרִית בְּחֶבְרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ אֶת־דָּוִד לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

(1) And all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron, and they spoke, saying "Behold us—we are your bone and your flesh!"

(2) "Formerly, in times past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one leading Israel out and bringing them back.[250] And Yahweh said to you, 'You will shepherd my people, Israel, and you will become ruler over Israel."

(3) And all the elders of Israel came to the King in Hebron and the King, David, made a covenant with them in Hebron before Yahweh. And they anointed David as king over Israel.

The parallel account in 1 Chronicles 11.1-3 opens the pericope with "all Israel (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל)" instead of the tribes of Israel, but this is likely an omission for the sake of continuity with the previous chapter in which all Israel are said to flee their cities from the Philistines. It is also notable that Chronicles goes to great lengths to portray a united Israel, for example, not representing the house war between Judah and Israel as found in 2 Sam 2-4, even though this is certainly an old enough tradition to have been included in the Chronicler's sources. Thus, the use of "all Israel" in 1 Chr 11.1 may additionally be an intentional way to recast David's anointing as a singular, unified anointing, rather than the split anointing over Judah in 2 Sam 2.4a and then over the tribes of Israel in 3.3—in parallel to the single anointing of David by Samuel, which is referenced in the Chronicler's addition in 1 Chr 11.3, "according to the word of Yahweh by the hand of Samuel (כִּדְבַר יְהוָה בְּיַד־שְׁמוּאֵל)."

The tribes of Israel open their speech with a relational statement that they are "[David's] bone and flesh (עַצְמְךָ וּבְשָׂרְךָ)" (v. 1). This statement is a claim to kinship, as is made obvious in the parallel verse 19.12 where David calls the elders of Judah "my brothers, my bone and my flesh."[251] But the pairing of bone and flesh is also found in Adam's famous description of Eve in Gen 2.26: "this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh (עֶצֶם מֵעֲצָמַי

[250] The *qere-ketiv* difference in this verse is obviously an attempt to smooth the grammar and syntax, with no real difference in translation value.

[251] The phrase appears again in the next verse, 19.13, addressing David's nephew Amasa.

וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי)," which draws attention to the quality of similitude.[252] The tribes thus argue that David is "like in kind" to them, that he is one of them, and therefore a fit ruler. Abimelech makes the same argument in Judges 9.2 to claim leadership over Shechem and in the next verse we are told the lords of Shechem follow him because they say, "He is our brother." This claim has important implications for the relation of the tribes and the portrayal of a united monarchy over "all Israel." David is purportedly a Judahite from Bethlehem, hence his anointing in 2 Sam 2.4 and rule over the house of Judah seems only natural; the claim of "bone and flesh" would have made the most sense in this context.[253] But coming from the tribes of Israel, there is a conscious assertion of unity between Israel and Judah, which is striking in comparison to what is known from the archaeological record of the diverse people who lived in ancient Palestine.[254]

This verse is often used as a prooftext for Cross' theory that covenant created fictive kinship relations, a legal mechanism engendering a familial bond where there was not one previously.[255] However, I argue that the author of v. 1 did not intend to create a new kinship here, but rather invoke the mythological tribal family tree of Israel. The paradigm evidenced in the stories of the patriarchs, of the twelve tribes of Israel descending from the twelve sons of Jacob, ties together the disparate peoples who live in the land of Israel and Judah through a distant common ancestor. The difference in terms between "all the tribes of Israel (כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)" in v. 1 and "all the elders of Israel (כָּל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)" in v. 3 drives home the point. The redactor presents this familial identity in the speech of the tribes in order to emphasise their collective relation to David, so when he becomes king, he becomes king of all. Here the united monarchy is truly united. Further still, the submission of the elders (just a few people) becomes the submission of all the tribes through common blood, making a claim on the supposed distant descendants of these tribes in the author's contemporary context. Later insubordination or rebellion against the Davidic throne or its stand-in becomes a family

[252] עֶצֶם and בָּשָׂר are also found in Job 2.5, but the reference is to Job's corporeality, and thus vulnerability to physical suffering, as opposed to relation to other humans.

[253] As it is in David's address of the elders of Judah in 19.13.

[254] Adam calls this a distinctly Judean perspective, which already assumes Judah under "all Israel" (*David und Saul*, 37n32). On the archaeological record of diverse peoples in "Canaan," see Israel Finkelstein, "A Great Monarchy? Archaeological and Historical Perspectives," in *One God – One Cult– One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*, eds. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 3-28, and more recently, Joachim J. Krause, Omer Sergi, and Kristin Weingar, eds., *Saul, Benjamin, and the Emergence of Monarchy in Israel: Biblical and Archaeological Perspectives* (Ancient Israel and Its Literature 40; Atlanta: SBL, 2020).

[255] Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel," 7-11.

betrayal. Loyalty to the king of Israel is now loyalty to the collective of Israel according to the historiographical picture painted in this version of Samuel.

In v. 2, the tribes recount David's "coming out and coming in (מֹוצִיא וְהַמֵּבִי)," leading Israel in military exploits under Saul.[256] This phrase is an approximate quote of 1 Sam 18.16, which also recalls the people's love for David.[257] The parallel highlights David's personal appeal as motivation for the people to make him king. The author emphasises that they seek to anoint him not out of coercion but because they admire him and recognise him as an excellent military leader. The repetition of גַּם־אֶתְמֹול גַּם־שִׁלְשֹׁום from Abner's conference with the elders in 3.17 reinforces that they have been planning this for some time and are going ahead as Abner encouraged them to. It also explicitly casts David as a foil to Saul; whereas Saul would not even lead his own troops, David is a man of the people who personally risked his life to lead them to victory. Saul was a bad example of a king, but even while he was still only a commander, David proved himself and won the people's confidence.

The duplication of גַּם־אֶתְמֹול גַּם־שִׁלְשֹׁום from 3.17, but using the address of tribes instead of elders as in 5.1, outlines the pattern of dependence between these oracle text additions.[258] 3.17 must have come first, bringing forward the intent of the elders from 5.3 in connection with Abner so that he is pictured as putting the idea in their heads to anoint David king. 5.1-2 then follows at a similar redactional level, modelling itself on 3.17-18 with the use of an oracle but using the tribes to involve the whole people. Similar to what was argued in the previous chapter for 3.17-18, the focus on the divine will being revealed through prophecy and the personal election of David over Saul suggests that 5.1-2 was likely inserted by a Prophetic Deuteronomistic redactor rather than a Nomistic redactor focused on more legal forms like the oath additions to the other covenant texts.

Of particular interest for the Deuteronomistic vision is the oracle that the people quote of Yahweh declaring to David, "You will shepherd my people Israel (תִרְעֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל) and you will be ruler (נָגִיד) over Israel." Like Abner's divine quotes discussed in the previous chapter, this one has no direct antecedent in the received chronological narrative.[259] It does

[256] *Qere* reads הַמֹּוצִיא וְהַמֵּבִיא.

[257] Also 1 Sam 18.13.

[258] Note the slight variance in word form/orthography, where 2 Sam 3.17 reads גַּם־תְּמֹול גַּם־שִׁלְשֹׁם. But as the LXX witnesses with its identical translation in both verses as ἐχθὲς καὶ τρίτην, this variance seems negligible, especially as the formula only appears in this form with גַּם in the parallel to 2 Sam 5.2 in 1 Chr 11.2. Cf. Exod 4.10, 5.14, 1 Sam 20.27.

[259] Fleming connects it to Samuel anointing David in 1 Sam 16, which works on a thematic level, but there is no such declaration recorded in that text (*Israel in Judah's Bible*, 101).

not even match Abner's own quote to the elders of Israel in 3.18. However, the phrase רעה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל does appear in 2 Sam 7.7, the last of Yahweh's speech introducing the divine promise, alongside pastoral imagery and the unique term נָגִיד in the next verse, 7.8, which is the first line of the promise itself: "Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' And now, thus says Yahweh of hosts: 'I took you from the pasture (הַנָּוֶה), from following the sheep, to be ruler (נָגִיד) over my people Israel.'"[260] The image of shepherding Israel does not appear elsewhere in Samuel, so the unique phrasing of "shepherd my people Israel" ties these texts closely together. Here for the first time, connections between the redactions of the individual covenant texts and 2 Sam 7 push past the core of the divine promise in vv. 8-16 to include the introduction of the promise through the retelling of Israel's history in vv. 5-7.

The triangulation of linguistic and thematic relationships between 2 Sam 5.2, 7.7, and 7.8 helps reconstruct some of the shared redactional history of the texts. Because of the surprisingly rare nature of the image of David shepherding Israel, it is likely that the pastoral imagery in 7.8 inspired the shepherding Israel phraseology in 7.7, which was included as part of the expanded introduction of the divine promise recounting Israel's history in 7.5-7. 2 Samuel 5.2 was thus added later combining the vocabulary from 7.7-8, quoting from across this later version of Nathan's oracle, in its formation of the oracle on the tongues of the tribes of Israel. The redactions 5.1-2 and 7.5-7 share the same mythological vision of Israel's past, although Nathan's oracle ties it more specifically to the period of the judges when the ark of the covenant moved about in a tent.[261] Given the close connection between the texts, mention of the tribes in 2 Sam 5.1 may have even influenced the corruption of the oracle's textual tradition as found in 7.7, which reads that God asked the "tribes of Israel (שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)" to shepherd the people of Israel rather than the "judges of Israel (שֹׁפְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)," as it is preserved in 1 Chr 11.6. Since the difference is only one similar sounding letter, it might be difficult to say for certain if the straightforward scribal error was borrowed from 2 Sam 5.1, but overall

[260] The same shepherding language is found alongside the military imagery of "going out and coming in" in Moses' request for a successor in Num 27.17, which could have also inspired this description of David in 1 Sam 5.2 or vice versa. See Nathan MacDonald, "The Spirit of God," 104n34.

[261] Note that the likely older version of the promise preserved in 1 Chronicles 17 witnesses to an older layer of 2 Sam 7.6 (=1 Chr 17.5) which does not refer to the exodus tradition, and since no explicit reference is made in 2 Sam 5.1-2 we cannot assume the same picture of the tribes coming out of Egypt is in mind there either.

makes sense of the relative redactional relationship between chs. 5 and 7, with 5.1-2 being based on a late—but not the latest—layer of Nathan's oracle in Samuel.[262]

All of the occurrences of the word נָגִיד in Samuel and Kings appear in the very specific context of Yahweh appointing someone to be king over Israel.[263] It is specifically linked with Saul's anointing in 1 Sam 9.16 and 10.1. Other instances of the word have a much broader meaning, such as leader, commander, official, or overseer of the temple.[264] In Daniel, the word is used of the "princes," referring either to the Messiah or to his adversary.[265] From its use in Samuel, especially associated with early traditions of Saul and David, נָגִיד seems to originally have indicated a military role combining the concepts of divine election and deliverance, similar to that of the judges, as both Saul and David are appointed נָגִיד in battle contexts or in specific response to Israel's enemies, as in 1 Sam 9.16. Later uses of נָגִיד, especially in Kings, seem to follow this usage but filtered through the theological lens of 2 Sam 7.8. After all, Yahweh's account of electing David נָגִיד stands at the height of the establishment of the united monarchy, casting a paradigm for divine election of Israelite kings that looks forward to Solomon (1 Kgs 1.35), Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14.7), and other descendants, as well as the Judahite king Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20.5). Because 2 Sam 5.2 uses the language of 7.7, part of the later version of the oracle which speaks in direct response to the issue of David building a temple and thus is dependent on the later Solomon temple tradition,

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[262] See previous footnote.

[263] The only exception is 2 Kgs 20.5, but the term is still used by Yahweh to address Hezekiah in an oracle alongside specific reference to David, so the same theological significance of Hezekiah as elected by God, just as David was, still might be implied. In 1 Kgs 1.35, it is actually David who appoints Solomon over Israel and Judah, but he is quickly followed by Benaiah declaring Yahweh to be with Solomon as he was with David.

The derivation of נָגִיד is not clear. Alt takes it to be a sacred title (as opposed to the secular title מֶלֶךְ) derived from the Hiphal meaning of the verbal root נגד "to praise or announce a thing in front of someone," hence "the one announced by God," (*Kleine Schriften*, 23n2). See also Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 155-162. Richter, followed by Lipiński and Fischer, suggests the title derives from the Akkadian *nāgād* or *nāqidu/nōqēd*, "shepherd," which is tempting considering the association with pastoral imagery in 2 Sam 5.2 and 7.8 (Wolfgang Richter, "Die nagid-Formel. Ein Beitrag zur Erhellung des nagid-Problems," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 9 [1965]: 72n22; Edward Lipiński, "'Leadership': The Roots *DBR* and *NGD* in Aramaic," in *"Und Mose Schrieb dieses Lied auf": Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient: Festschrift für Oswald Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen*, eds. Oswald Loretz, Manfried Dietrich, Ingo Kottsieper, and Hanspeter Schaudig [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998], 509-514; Alexander Achilles Fischer, *Von Hebron nach Jerusalem. Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Erzählung von König David in II Sam 1-5* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004], 217-220). I follow Seybold and Adam in deriving from the prepositional root נגד "in view of, in front of," as Adam points out that the verbal root is used in this way in association to positions of appointed authority throughout 1 Samuel in corresponding redactional layers: 1 Sam 9.6,8,18; 10.15; 11.9; 14.1,33,43 (x2); 15.16; 17.31; 18.20,24,26; 19.2,3,7,11,18,21; 20.9; 22.21,22 (x2); 23.1,11,26; 24.2,19; 25.12,14,19,26; 27.11 (Klaus Seybold, *Das Davidische Königtum im Zeugnis der Propheten* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972], 30n35; Adam, *Saul und David*, 36n27).

[264] For example, Jer 20.1; Ezek 28.2; Job 29.10; 31.37; Pss 76.13; Prov 8.6; 28.16; Neh 11.11.

[265] Dan 9.25,26; 11.22. Note the "prince of the covenant" in the last verse, which may signal something of the term's development.

its use of נָגִיד likely follows this later Kings tradition, rather than either the early Samuel or extremely late Daniel tradition. Hence, although the quote is not exact, the tribes' oracle in 2 Sam 5.2 echoes Nathan's at 2 Sam 7.8.

In the *textus receptus*, the tribes are likely meant to have some knowledge of David's divine election to the throne, either akin to Birch's idea of "widespread recognition" discussed in the previous chapter, or perhaps more likely attributed to Abner's report in 3.18.[266] The people thus acknowledge David's divine favour and list it as further motivation for his anointing. They consciously align their favour with Yahweh's and carry out his will by making David king over them. Here we have once again a delicate dance between divine and human agency. Yahweh declares that David will be king, which influences the elders' decision to make him king, in a way rendering it a self-fulfilling prophecy. But in another light, when Yahweh then claims to have taken David from shepherding and made him נָגִיד over Israel, he can point to this event at Hebron and claim he swayed the tribes' hearts. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, 1 Chr 11.3 makes the connection explicit by saying David's enthronement is "in accordance with the word of Yahweh through Samuel." We have yet another example of the deity's involvement revealed in a seemingly human process of power transition. Although it is human hands that anoint David, his divine appointment, prefigured by his prophetic anointing by Samuel (1 Sam 16.1-13), looms in the background.

In 2 Sam 5.3, there is a repetition of Israel coming to Hebron; as mentioned above it is the elders not the tribes who meet with David, make a covenant, and then anoint him king over Israel. It is important to note that David is already referred to as king in the meeting and covenant before his anointing. This assumes David becoming king over Judah in 2 Sam 2.4a. David is also referred to in the preceding narratives, especially in ch. 3, both in direct speech of Abner (v. 21) and David's servants (v. 23) as well as in narration (starting in v. 24). At this oldest layer of the text, likely a pre-Dtr source, the pledge of loyalty by the elders of Israel functions as an annexation rather than a completely new status.[267] Whether or not the covenant being made "before Yahweh (לִפְנֵי יְהוָה)" implies being sworn before an altar, it suggests sacral legitimation or invoking Yahweh as witness to the covenant, as we saw in 1 Sam 20.12, and may also witness to Hebron as cultic site.

[266] See Bruce Birch, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," 1223.
[267] For the old nature of these layers, see Kratz, *Composition*, 180-182.

The repetition at the beginning of the verse plus the differentiated terms (שִׁבְטֵי versus זִקְנֵי) point to either v. 1 or v. 3 as a later insertion. Considering the redactional significance of the divine quotation and presence of נָגִיד, it seems most likely that vv. 1-2 were added later, and v. 1 was modelled on v. 3, with the people coming to David at Hebron as a *Wiederaufnahme*.[268] Further still, "all the tribes of Israel" are listed as the partner in Yahweh's covenant in Deut 29.21. The tribes feature throughout that covenant framework chapter, which suggests a similarly late Deuteronomistic hand might be at work in v. 1.[269] References to David as king naturally carry through from chs. 2-4. Although pithy, the short note that David had been anointed king over all Israel acts as a fitting conclusion to the description of his final rival's elimination. The following two verses historically ground the account of his enthronement. Summarizing David's reign between Judah and all Israel also aptly transitions the narrative setting from Hebron to the taking of Jerusalem.

With the addition of 2 Sam 5.1-2, the Deuteronomistic redactor both establishes that Yahweh's claim in 7.8-9 has been accomplished at David's anointing and paints a historiographical image of Israel that echoes the vision of an ideal united monarchy found in 7.12-16. 2 Samuel 5.1, modelled on v. 3, expands the covenant to include the whole people, not simply an elite few, who claim David to be the perfect ruler over the whole mythological tribal family of Israel. Verse 2, modelled on Abner's speech in 3.17-18, includes an oracle quoting from Nathan's prophecy at 7.7-8, which makes explicit David's divine election and the realisation of his promised kingship over Israel and Judah with this covenant. Naming David נָגִיד and recalling his service under Saul leans into the personal apologetic of David, legitimising his ascension and setting up for his military expansion of the kingdom. David is painted as the ideal monarch and commander, and under him the ideal united kingdom is set to flourish, emphasising the need for such a leader to instantiate this pictured unity in the editor's own tumultuous times.

Interpreting Israel and Judah

The creation of an ideal united monarchy in the moment of David's anointing in 2 Sam 5.1-3 is of course reliant on the assumption that the two kingdoms needed to be brought together in

[268] In addition, Adam notes that נָגִיד and גַּם־אֶתְמוֹל גַּם־שִׁלְשׁוֹם do not appear in any clearly pre-Dtr passages (*Saul und David*, 36n25, 37n32).

[269] McCarter agrees that vv. 1-2 are Deuteronomistic (McCarter, *II Samuel*, 7-8).

the first place. Not every scholar will agree with my reconstruction of the composition and redaction history of the texts at hand. But through an understanding of the historical progression of ancient Israel falling to the Assyrians and Judah taking over the administration of its land and inhabitants, alongside the role of tribal Israel imagery in rewriting this history, the necessity of an explanation for the unity of "all Israel" in later periods becomes clear.

For example, Adam interprets the relationship between 2 Sam 5.3(b),5 and 2 Sam 2-4 differently by dating "one-state Israel" layers earlier than "two-state Israel vs Judah" layers. His explanation is that v. 3 was expanded to include the fact that the elders anointed David king over Israel in the style of framework formulations found in the book of Kings.[270] This expansion is the catalyst for a wider explanation of why the elders had to come to Hebron to anoint David king when he was already ruling over Judah, which becomes the narratives of the house war in 2 Sam 2-4. Although he believes that 2 Sam 5.1-2 are not pre-Dtr, they acted as the original introduction to David's conquest. [271] The statement of David's reign over Israel in v. 4 is harmonised in the conquest narrative to specify his reign in Jerusalem (vv. 7,9,17[18-21]).

Firstly, the assumption of two states in 2 Sam 5.5 may or may not help the dating of the passage. Adam contrasts v. 5 with v. 1, presuming "all the tribes of Israel" refers to one state.[272] However, there is no way to tell if Judah is assumed, for example, because David already ruled over it. "All the tribes of Israel" is a fairly rare term throughout Samuel-Kings and mostly invoked at mythological moments, such as the divination of Israel's first king (1 Sam 10.20), Solomon's dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8.16), and the splitting of the kingdom (1 Kgs 11.32).[273] Fleming connects it back to the description of Dan in Gen 49.16 and claims it as an "old saying" which originally appeared in some shape alongside 2 Sam 5.3.[274] But in connection with the statement about "bone and flesh," which may itself be a mythic reuse from Genesis, it seems more likely that "the tribes of Israel" is used to imbue a newer addition with archaicism. The depiction of tribal organisation alongside familial terms is meant to recall the days before Israel had a king, when they grew out of a family of twelve

[270] Adam, *Saul und David*, 35. Note again that in 1 Chr 11.1, the text is simplified to "all Israel," which may better signify the one-state notion Adam argues for.

[271] Ibid., 36n25.

[272] Ibid., 35.

[273] Also 1 Sam 2.28; 2 Sam 15.10; 19.9; 20.14; 24.2; 1 Kgs 14.21; 2 Kgs 21.7. Elijah builds an altar of twelve stones for the twelve "tribes of the sons of Jacob" (1 Kgs 18:31), specifically connecting it back to the patriarchal mythos.

[274] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 101n32, 102n36.

brothers and came together in one covenant with Yahweh. Under David's kingship, they return to such idyllic unity. Fleming himself observes later reuse of tribal language in Chronicles during the late Persian or early Hellenistic era.[275] The projection of a tribal system onto the monarchic period seems to betray an ignorance of the dynamics of dominant polities, so a dating after the dissolution of both kingdoms is appropriate.

Furthermore, as noted earlier, the language of "bone and flesh" is also used in 2 Sam 19.12-13. This narrative chunk in ch. 19 mixes references to the tribes of Israel (v. 10) and the elders of Judah (v. 12). Although it is not a direct juxtaposition of Judah and Israel, David contrasts Judah's hesitancy with the consensus of Israel. Similarly, the use of kinship language emphasises his own Judahite identity, and he calls on Judah for a similarly specific loyalty as seen in 2 Sam 2. Thus 2 Sam 5.1's parallel text is at least aware of Judah and Israel as two distinct groups.

Secondly, if the preceding chapters are meant to explain a state of civil war between Israel and Judah, they do so rather poorly. As Fleming points out, the conflict recorded in 2 Sam 2-4 is labelled a house war between the Davidides and Saulides.[276] While I disagree with him that this means the house war cannot be a war between Judah and Israel, it rather assumes the division between David representing Judah and Ish-bosheth representing Israel instead of emphasising it explicitly. Instead, the focus is on gaining "all Israel," with particular concern for domination of the land, as witnessed by Abner's opening comment to David, "To whom is the land?" (2 Sam 3.12). At the battle in Gibeon in ch. 2, it is not Judahites and Israelites that fight but the servants of David and Ish-bosheth. In order to understand this as a fight between Judah and Israel, one needs to read the notices in 2.4a and 9 of David and Ish-bosheth being made king over each. Even in 2.9, as discussed in the previous chapter, there seems to be a coalition of obscure groups which has no purpose in the explanation of how Israel and Judah became one but is better understood as an older explanation of groups allied with the house of Saul. The biggest issue, of course, is David's anointing by the men of Judah in 2.4, which Adam and others such as Mahri Leonard-Fleckman have argued is secondary, copying 2 Sam 5.3.[277] However, because David's Judahite identity is emphasised throughout the textual traditions about him, this anointing feels far more natural than his anointing over Israel, and it is rather 5.3 that needs

[275] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 27.
[276] Ibid., 101.
[277] Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, "Judah Bookends: The Priority of Israel and Literary Revision in the David Narrative," *Vetus Testamentum* 65, no 3 (2015): 401-413.

explanation. Overall, following what we know of the historical trajectory of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, it seems far more likely that 2 Sam 2-5 seeks to explain how a Judahite house came to rule Israel than how or why Israel was separated off from Judah.

As stated above, 2 Samuel 5.5 is clearly written as a transition to the conquest of Jerusalem. Verses 4-5 have thus long been noted as later chronological statements akin to 1 Sam 4.18b and 7.2b.[278] Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala have recently demonstrated that these additions are quite late.[279] The clear smoothing of the text and connection to the account of David's anointing over Judah indicate that at least v. 5 was written at one of the latest stages of redaction—perhaps as the final forms of Samuel and Kings were coming into shape.

If a later redactor is working backwards from 2 Sam 5 through chs. 2-4, they miss key opportunities to emphasise a civil war between Judah and Israel or other groups, and instead assume these affiliations in the portrayal of a house war between Saul and Ish-bosheth. Beyond the Judahites anointing David—which itself is made to seem an obvious and natural step—Judah is not mentioned again, except as a passing insult in reference to loyalty to the house of Saul (3.8). Instead, at its oldest level, 2 Sam 2-5 takes for granted the juxtaposition of Judah and Israel and puts every effort into explaining how they became one under David. With the addition of 2 Sam 5.1-2, the account becomes mythologised as the return to a pre-monarchic natural order, idealising a harmonious state of family-like bonding in the true united kingdom.

Collective Israel and its Elders: Representatives or Representation?

The presence of the elders of Israel at the monumental moment of David's ascension to the throne of Israel marks the involvement of the wider peoples beyond the key political individuals named in the narrative so far. In 1 Chr 11.3, their anointing of David is what marks the transition from the Saulide to Davidide dynasty, without record of the previous house war. There are some similarities with the people's involvement at Saul's selection for the throne in 1 Sam 9.17-27, but the process of David's anointing is markedly not headed by a Samuel-type figure and there is no account of a detailed ritual. Despite the simplicity of the

[278] For example, Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development,* trans. Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association, 1961), 168.

[279] Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible: Toward a Refined Literary Criticism* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022), 271-75. Cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 7-8.

account in 2 Sam 5.1-3, much has been made of the elders acting as representatives and the supposed political power displayed by collective Israel. Such claims require further examination to reveal what modern assumptions are made of the political dynamics of ancient Israel; instead of representatives, we should ask what the elders represent to a later audience in the crowning account of Israel's legendary king.

Most scholars who interpret the people of Israel as a political force in their own right do so in opposition to the institution of the monarchy. The most extensive example is Fleming, who interprets the elders of Israel as representatives of collective Israel as a "body politic," not necessarily of the tribes or different regional groups.[280] Analysing the political power of such a body in 2 Sam 5.1-3 alongside texts like 2 Sam 19 and 1 Kgs 12.1, he concludes that in Israel "the institution of kingship is defined against a coherent population that must agree to be ruled."[281] Such power is meant to balance the monarchy and ensure that the people's needs are being met. Fleming sees this represented in the presence of prophets who were able to critique the king, who must have had some support and shelter from royal wrath.[282] Although the mechanics of this body politic are not clear, in Fleming's theorising they seem to centre on military assembly. Hence, 1 Chr 12 depicts fighters from every tribe joining David at Hebron to solidify that it was indeed the whole collective of "Israel" gathered "to turn the kingdom from Saul to him" (v. 23).[283] The question remains as to whether, if the power lies in military muster, it is a process of political election or an exertion of mob force, and whether the people are really in control.

Fleming compares David's enthronement with that of Omri in 1 Kgs 16.15-23, arguing that the similar military context and the explicit involvement of the people of Israel witness to a consistent depiction of this "body politic." In both narratives, he identifies Israel as a "decision-making body" distinct from the monarchy, whose particular power lies in the collective selection and rejection of kings.[284] For further evidence, Fleming draws parallels to an account from a Mari letter where a general, Kukkutanum, incites an assembly of conscripted commoners to revolt against their lord and attempt a coup.[285] He interprets this

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[280] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 25. See also Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 111-130, esp. 114-15.
[281] Ibid., 35.
[282] Ibid., 93-94n6.
[283] Ibid., 52.
[284] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 95.
[285] ARM XXVI 412:6–10, 16–22, translated by Fleming. See further on this text, Fleming, *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Early Collective Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 206-7.

incident as an example of the army's collective voice in determining its political leadership, that is, to depose or instate a king.[286] However, imagining such a body as an accepted political mechanism proves difficult when the coup is unsuccessful, and indeed is countered by another group's military might.

Fleming himself makes clear elsewhere that he does not understand this military muster to be a proto-democratic popular assembly, and yet assigns them regular decision-making power.[287] In 1 Kgs 16, if we are to follow Fleming and take the deposition of Zimri as integral to the original narrative unit, the army has made Omri king before they even attack Tirzah. If the military voice was definitive, why then would the people be divided between Omri and Timni in v. 21? This division itself seems to end with a skirmish, as Omri's people "prevail" and Timni is killed in v. 20. Fleming emphasises the text's specification that it was one part of Israel that prevailed over the other, instead of one leader over another: "those who vote are those who fight."[288] The association of military might with enfranchisement leads to a very utopian reading of the people's role in Israelite politics. While it is possible that 1 Kgs 16.20-21 pictures an orderly consensus being taken on the battlefield at Gibbethon, it more closely represents a battle of charisma between the two leaders to hold sway over a greater swath of fighters. Kukkutanum similarly stirs up the commoner soldiers to rebellion with his speech and directs them in their attack of the king's stronghold. Knowing what we do of the importance of warfare in holding power in the ancient Near East, the people of Israel are likely valued in the text for their numbers and ability to fight, not for their political opinion.

In the war between the houses of David and Saul, we similarly see military leaders portrayed as playing an important role in control of the land through the people. Abner is the clearest example; as commander of Israel's army under Saul, he rallies troops to Ish-bosheth in Transjordan to fight at Gibeon, but then seeks to give the land of Israel over to David by persuading the elders of Israel.[289] The elders' attention to Abner may indicate an inclination of special loyalty to military leaders, as the ones who lead them into life-threatening battles, similar to the army's loyalty to Kukkutanum. This is especially poignant in the tribes'

[286] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 97.

[287] Ibid., *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors*, 207. He lists in support ARM V 23:9–10, which describes Sutû tribes gathering for raids against Qatna and perhaps, as Fleming suggests, deciding whether to go to war (ibid., 303-4n79).

[288] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 96.

[289] The off-handed mention that Benjamin fought alongside "the servants of Ish-bosheth son of Saul" in 2 Sam 2.15,25,31 may indicate familial loyalty, as Saul's house is Benjaminite, or a particular indictment to Benjamin for choosing the wrong side in the initial civil war—or more likely, both.

comment in 2 Sam 5.2 that David leads them "in and out" on their military campaigns, creating an almost personal relationship, even while Saul was king. Abner's oracle in 3.18 also focuses on David's forecasted military success, which is good news for Israel—so long as they join David. In the *textus receptus*, David is spared from conquest of the land because Ish-bosheth is killed and Israel joins his muster to take Jerusalem. But who would dare stand against him when an oracle from Yahweh says he will crush his enemies? By the time all Israel is gathered to David at Hebron, we do not anticipate them casting votes as a collective body; we anticipate them swearing loyalty to David as a proven military leader and the winner of the house war.

A key difference between Fleming's interpretation of the political structure represented in 2 Sam 5.1-3 and my own is the concern for historical versus literary reconstruction. Fleming claims that "almost all the evidence for collective involvement by the populace belongs to the late monarchy, which raises the possibility that these biblical references reflect real political innovation accompanying the growth of Jerusalem as centre of Judah's emergent large-scale polity in the eighth and seventh centuries."[290] This claim is, of course, entirely dependent on his dating of the texts, but it also does not take into account the ever-changing nature of literary texts and their interpretation. While elements of these descriptions might reveal to us how the ancient authors perceived their world—for example, the assumption of older persons to be leaders of the people or the role of military might in establishing a new king—their very position within wider, heavily-edited corpuses suggests their mediation through later editors or redactors. On a larger scale, such pictures of the past become too composite and too far removed to offer clear historical reconstructions of the details of political transitions of power, and it seems almost more straightforward to reconstruct what these editors seek to cover up—for example, the death of competitors to the throne like Abner and Ish-bosheth. Perhaps if the depiction of the people of Israel having a say in the choice of their king seems too good to be true, it is more characteristic of an idyllic vision retrojected back onto a bygone era. This is not to say that ancient peoples could not be capable of proto-democratic organisation; simply that the archaeological and Ancient Near Eastern textual evidence we have from this era is insufficient to support such a reading.

My real interest in the people and the elders, therefore, is their narrative function and meaning for the authors of the various textual layers. Instead of a simple note that David was

[290] Fleming, *Israel in Judah's Bible*, 46.

made king of Israel, the people are explicitly brought in to give their reasons and bind themselves in a covenant to David at his anointing. Their presence in the story involves them in the establishment of the Davidic monarchy. Thus, an audience who considered themselves or whom the editor of the text considered "Israel" could identify or be identified with one of the actors in this key moment, however far removed from the portrayed narrative setting. By including the people of Israel as witnesses of David's anointing, the author implicates their descendants in the founding of the dynasty and, more importantly, the binding covenant of loyalty to the Davidic line. This is most evident in the depiction of the elders of Israel as the mechanism of David's royal anointing.

The assumption of many commentators is that from the earliest stage of composition, the elders are meant to act as representatives sent from each of the tribes of Israel. This is perhaps the case with the Deuteronomistic addition of v. 1, where the tribes are explicitly named. Indeed, all the tribes of Israel gathered in Hebron likely recalls the legendary muster of all Israel "from Dan to Beersheba," which Abner swears to accomplish for David in the addition at 3.10. But prior to this addition, there is no indication throughout 2 Sam 2-4 that the elders are meant to act as constituents representing specific groups, whether tribal, familial, or regional.[291] At the simplest level, they do clearly act as the voice of Israel in their decisions.

We know from other biblical texts that the זְקֵנִים adjudicated cases and made decisions at the town level; this is reflected in other ancient Near Eastern sources, where they are paired with the heads of important households.[292] Their involvement in legal matters also means they function as witnesses, as in the case of Boaz claiming the role of redeemer in front of the elders of Bethlehem (Ruth 4.1-12).[293] The account in Num 11.16-30 of the seventy elders chosen as judges to aid Moses in overseeing the people in the wilderness assumes this leadership to already be in place amongst the tribes and elevates those whom Moses judges to be "officers over them (שֹׁטְרָיו)" (v. 16), perhaps valuing their skills in battle or organisational

[291] Once again, the mention of Benjamin in v. 19 seems out of place but is likely an insertion to show that even Benjamin, Saul's own tribe, assented to David's reign.

[292] For example, ARM II 75:2–12. See Hanoch Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel: A Study of a Biblical Insitution* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 137-77; Leo Oppenheim, *Untersuchungen zum babylonischen Mietrecht* (Vienna: Selbstvertag des Orientalischen Institutes der Universität, 1936), 52-63; Horst Klengel, *Geschichte Syriens im 2. Jahrtausend v.u.Z., Teil 1: Nordsyrien* (Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 59-65; Moshé Anbar, *Les tribus amurrites de Mari* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 150–4.

[293] Fleming cites a similar role for the elders called to hear a complaint letter read to a Mari governor and then vouch that the message has indeed been delivered to him in ARM XXVII 67:13–22 (*Democracy's Ancient Ancestors*, 191).

capabilities. However, Timothy M. Willis has shown that this new institution of more "national" elders, along with similar tendencies in the elder-laws of Deuteronomy, is a much later expansion, so the same system is not necessarily in view in 2 Sam 3-5.[294] There is some evidence from Mari of the elder structure at higher levels, for example, heading groups of peoples in decisions concerning alliances with kings or larger centres of power—although it is unclear if the term is used generically to describe any form of leadership including collections of local kings.[295] But it is also possible that the local system of elders might have been projected onto the larger body "Israel" by the author if they were unfamiliar with the real local governance system under a regional monarchy. The presence of the elders thus acts as an organic stand-in for the people at large, reaching closer to home than a named governor or official.

However, when examining the relationship between the elders and the people, we must distinguish between representative power and leadership. Many commentators when they use the language of "representatives" assume a modern model of people who are chosen to convey the collective thoughts and interests of the group; as such, they act more as a mouthpiece expressing the opinions held by the people at large. However, the parallel with local leaders such as petty kings suggests that the style of leadership evoked for the ancient audience was likely very different. These leaders may have had the best interests of their people in mind, but they alone made decisions which the group would follow. Their power was not granted but assumed as they held social and economic status within the community. Here the ancient Near Eastern association between old age and wisdom is also crucial, as the elders (literally "old ones") were trusted to make wise decisions based on the experience of their years. It is perhaps more helpful to think of elders as a council of chiefs or lords rather than representatives, though of course these terms carry their own conceptual baggage.

Yet this form of leadership does not necessarily distance a later audience from the elders' decisions. On the one hand, the wisdom of the elders commends their anointing of David again along the lines of personal apologetic. The elders recognise him as a good

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[294] Timothy M. Willis, *The Elders of the City: A Study of the Elders-laws in Deuteronomy* (SBL Monographs 55; Atlanta: SBL, 2001), 308-12.

[295] For example, ARM IV 29:22 (Qaṭṭarâ); XIII 148:3; A.2417:3–4 (Talḫayûm); XIV 104+:11; XXVI 391:7 (Razamâ); XIV 114:8–9 (Kurgiš); XXVI 411:73 (Samaz?); FM II 122 (Iluna-aḫi); FM II 125:3; A.2567:16 (Urgiš). For similar terminology with tribal Ḫana, see M.6874:17. Fleming argues that "elders" is fluid, and lists several examples of the term being used inclusively in reference to other ranks like kings and members of the royal retinue, such as ARM VII 311, A.2226, and ARM XXI 388 (*Democracy's Ancient Ancestors*, 190-200).

leader, which endorses the king (and by extension his line) to those historically removed from the situation. On the other hand, the ancestral authority of the elders may have some purchase on later generations. I have discussed elsewhere the concept that the decisions of individuals could bind their descendants, most clearly in the case of Jonathan and his offspring.[296] Especially with the addition of 2 Sam 5.1 which explicitly names "all the tribes of Israel" to include all the groups the Deuteronomistic editor wants to place under Davidic rule, the entirety of Israel is implicated in the decision of the elders. The redactor wants to make clear that no one identified as "Israel" may escape the claim of this passage—that David was anointed their rightful king.

Royal Anointing and "Royal Covenant"

In the text of 2 Sam 5.1-3, the covenant David makes with the elders of Israel is closely associated with his anointing by them as king over Israel. Mettinger, in fact, connects the two so closely together that it leads him to make the bold claim that wherever we encounter regnal anointing by the people, we should assume a "royal covenant," even if it is not made explicit in the text.[297] While Mettinger goes too far to inextricably link anointing and covenant, exploring the literary purpose and function of each, especially in the context of enthronement, could shed light on the expectations and socio-political dynamics assumed in the account at hand. I will explore the many discussions related to the normativity, religiosity, and mutuality of the rite of royal anointing, looking primarily at its function in the text rather than trying to recreate historical practice. As opposed to some proto-democratic readings of the relationship created between David and the elders of Israel, I will posit that in parallel to the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon (VTE), the anointing formalises the setting of David's enthronement and therefore suggests the covenant to be read as a loyalty oath sworn to establish his new dynasty.

As with the political structure of collective Israel and its elders, much interpretive energy has gone towards uncovering the normativity of royal anointing in ancient Israelite praxis. Until recently, the long-standing scholarly consensus was that royal anointing was common practice at the coronation of a new Israelite (or Judean) king. Mettinger goes so far as to date the ritual, arguing that anointing was standard procedure in Judah until the exile

[296] See pp 56-62.
[297] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 150.

and in Israel between the reigns of Jeroboam I and Jehu.[298] However, the number of occurrences reported in the Deuteronomistic History is limited—only nine kings are said to have been anointed.[299] The question then arises as to whether the sparsity of evidence represents the irregularity of the rite, or whether the rite was so regular in the investiture of a king that it is assumed in other texts.

For example, there is no extant account of Absalom's anointing, but the tribes of Israel claim to have anointed him as their leader in 2 Sam 19. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor qualify the disparity by arguing that the biblical authors only felt the need to report a king's anointing when "a dynasty is founded or the succession contested" in order to legitimise their rule.[300] David T. Lamb takes issue with their criteria because there are other examples of "founder kings" (Jeroboam I, Baasha, Omri, Menahem) and "contested successions" (Abijam, Jehoram of Israel, Ahaziah of Judah, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah) that do not have recorded anointings.[301] However, Lamb's conclusion, that those rulers who are anointed in the text hold special significance to the Deuteronomists, does not need to exclude the emphasis on legitimacy.[302] On the contrary, I believe it answers Lamb's issue by explaining the privilege granted to Saul, David, and Jehu over the other questionable kings; there was particular vested interest in solidifying their claim to the throne, which is substantiated in other ways in the text, whether narratively, theologically, or historically. The lack of uniformity may also be due to diachronic difference; the ritual may have been of greater importance to later editors or have only been known to them at a very late date, perhaps introduced through exilic cultural contact. But while the evidence is too scarce to make judgements on the regularity of the ritual in practice, the association with kings important to the Deuteronomistic royal ideology makes clear the legitimising role royal anointing plays in the texts of the DtrH.

The location of David's anointing at Hebron as a cultic site, along with prophetic and divine involvement in other royal anointings, has led some to suggest charismatic

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[298] Ibid., 193-7.

[299] See Lamb's excellent table of all occurrences of משח in the Deuteronomistic History: David T. Lamb, *Righteous Jehu and his Evil Heirs: The Deuteronomist's Negative Perspective on Dynastic Succession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 49.

[300] Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1988), 106. See also Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 185-7; Joseph Naveh, "Epigraphic Miscellanea," *Israel Exploration Journal*, 52 (2002): 240-53.

[301] Lamb, *Righteous*, 51.

[302] Ibid., 52.

associations, but most texts are ambiguous.[303] Only David is said to receive the Spirit of Yahweh in direct connection with his anointing by Samuel (1 Sam 16.13). The Spirit rushes upon Saul in the events following his anointing, which Samuel predicts (1 Sam 10.6), but it is unclear if his spiritual manifestation is linked to the anointing or to the prophetic frenzy he joins at Gibeah (1 Sam 10.10). Lamb associates some spiritual manifestation with Jehu's anointing, as the term שׁגע, which has prophetic connotations elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, is used of both Jehu and the young prophet who anoints him in the course of the narrative.[304] While it is possible to read charismatic activity in the Jehu account, the connection to David's anointing at Hebron is very tenuous. The mixed parties and contexts of royal anointing draw the assumed religious nature of the rite into question, for which we may find some guidance in the scant ancient Near Eastern data.

Despite the numerous examples of royal anointing in the biblical texts, there is no clear evidence for the tradition in wider ancient Near East literature. Ernst Kutsch lists three Hittite texts that mention anointing in association with King Tuthalija IV:[305] the first is very fragmentary but could be his anointing upon accession;[306] the second is his anointing to the priesthood;[307] and the third is the anointing of another as a caricature king to be the substitute target of a bad omen.[308] While Ze'ev Weisman and Lamb are right to discount these instances as definitive evidence for a royal anointing, the commonality between the different examples suggests that at least one of the purposes of anointing was initiation to a new role.[309] This is supported by the report of Pharaoh Thutmose III anointing his ally Taku king over Nuḫašše;[310] Mettinger sets the example aside as primarily a rite of vassalage, but the principle of appointment remains.[311] Though there are no examples of anointing to priesthood akin to the Hittite example in the Deuteronomistic History, Elisha is anointed by Elijah to pass the prophetic baton (1 Kgs 19.16).

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[303] Cf. Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 207.

[304] Lamb, *Righteous Jehu*, 135-6.

[305] Ernst Kutsch, *Salbung als Rechtsakt im Alten Testament und im Alten Orient* (BZAW 87; Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1963), 20-36.

[306] KUB 24.5 + KUB 9.18.

[307] KUB 36.119.

[308] KUB 36.90.

[309] Weisman argues that only the third example involving the substitute king shows a Hittite royal anointing ritual ("Anointing as a Motif in the Making of the Charismatic King," *Bib* 57 [1976]: 384) while Lamb argues even this instance cannot be included as it is does not evidence a "normal coronation" (*Righteous Jehu,* 48).

[310] EA 51.

[311] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 209.

Outside of the royal setting, other forms of ritual anointing recorded in the ancient Near East also take place at points of transition. For example, the practice of ceremonially anointing a bride before her wedding day is attested in the Middle Assyrian Laws and Egyptian correspondence.[312] Similarly, the liberation of a slave from bondage in Ugarit was marked by the owner anointing her body with oil.[313] However, the mechanism in the Ugaritic ritual is different; instead of taking on responsibilities or bonds, the slave is freed of them. The anointing is said to make her "pure as the sun," which Ernst Kutsch has demonstrated is a phrase used elsewhere as a way of declaring someone free of debts or claims against them, such as the king granting tax forgiveness to a farmer.[314] Mettinger uses the association with manumission to reverse engineer anointing as an extension of dependence or claim at the initiation of a contractual relation, particularly as a rite of vassalage akin to Pharaoh anointing his vassal.[315] But without a clear example to substantiate his theory, I find the analogy of relations tenuous and thus, in this example, unhelpful for comparison to royal anointing. And yet, marking the change of status seems consistent with the other examples of anointing, which may give insight into the biblical representation of royal anointing if we assume that the authors and editors came into contact with cultures that practiced such rituals, or were at least informed of them.

Opinions about the function of royal anointing generally diverge over the central dynamic or relationship assumed in the rite: between the king and the divine, the people, or both.[316] Heinrich Weinel's 1898 article is the first important work to suggest that the purpose of anointing is to purify or confer holiness upon the king so that he may act as Yahweh's representative.[317] This position was popular among later scholars but most notably picked up by Martin Noth.[318] Although he also emphasises the sacral nature of the ritual, Roland

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[312] MAL § 42-43; EA 11.16-18, 29.22-23; see also discussion of EA 31.11-16 in Liane Rost, "Die ausserhalb von Boğazköy gefundenen hethitischen Briefe," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 4 (1956): 334; KUB III 63.15, 24+59.5-7, XXXVI 53.4. Examples taken from Mettinger, 217-8.

[313] RS 8208. See Kutsch, *Salbung als Rechtsakt*, 16-17. Complete text and translation by François Thureau-Dangin, "Trois contrats de Ras-Shamra," Syria 18 (1937): 253.

[314] Kutsch, *Salbung*, 16-18.

[315] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 221-2.

[316] For extensive discussions of anointing, see Mettinger, 185-232, Daniel Lys, "De l'onction à l'intronisation royale," *Études théologiques et religieuses* 29, no 3 (1954): 1-54; Klaas R. Veenhof, "Review of E. Kutsch, *Salbung als Rechtsakt* (1963)," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 23 (1966): 308-13; John A. Emerton, "Review of E. Kutsch, Salbung als Rechtsakt (1963)," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967): 122-28; E. Lipiński, *La poème royal du Psaume LXXXIX 1-5.20-38* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1967), 45-52; Franz Hesse, *mšḥ und mašîᵃḥ im Alten Testament*, Theologische Wissenschaft vol 9, fascicles 8/9 (1972), 485-500.

[317] Heinrich Weinel, "*mšḥ* und seine Derivate," *ZAW* 18 (1898): 54.

[318] Martin Noth, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament,* Vol 2 (Munich: Kaiser, 1960) 319-22. Others included C.R. North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship," *ZAW* 50 (1932): 13-17 and E. Cothenet,

deVaux argues the king's anointing represented his vassalage to Yahweh. The "Davidic covenant" is therefore framed as a political treaty, with the keywords נָגִיד and עֶבֶד.[319] Mettinger attributes this interpretation to "the interest taken by Old Testament scholars during the fifties and early sixties in the whole complex of treaty and covenant."[320]

The secular interpretation was pioneered by Ernst Kutsch, whose comprehensive study of anointing in all aspects of ancient Near Eastern life stressed the difference between the purifying and the strengthening qualities of the oil used. He draws mainly from the anointing of officials and vassals in Egypt (described above) to show that anointing at a king's enthronement granted him authority, power, and even glory.[321] Within Israel, it represented the people's approval and authorization of the new ruler, as he interprets 2 Sam 5.1-3.[322] Kutsch does qualify that some anointings carried out by a prophet symbolized Yahweh as sovereign crowning a vassal as in the Egyptian texts, and thus agrees with deVaux in this regard, though he insists that the analogy is of strictly secular origin.[323]

The middle road was paved by Ludwig Schmidt arguing that the anointing reflects the involvement of both gods and mortals. Looking at David's dual anointings by the people (either Judah or Israel) and by Samuel, he concludes that the purpose of anointing cannot be consecration of the king or else the repetition of the rite would be pointless.[324] Instead, he submits that at the earliest stage of the text the people's approval of the king was equated to Yahweh's approval.[325] The addition of Samuel's anointing of David represents a later division of approval and laid the groundwork for postexilic anointing of priests as sanctification for the service of God.[326]

As with covenant, a systematic, monolithic interpretation of anointing may obscure more than it enlightens in any one text, especially if we are considering the literary force of the rite as opposed to a known practice. I thus want to focus the broad spectrum of the discussion on the particulars of David's anointing in 2 Sam 5.1-3. However, some individual

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"Onction. I. L'onction dans l'Ancien Orient. 2 En Égypte," *Dictionnaire de la Bible (Supplément)* 6 (1960): 701-32.

[319] Roland deVaux, "Le roi d'Israël, vassal de Yahvé," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, Vol 1, ed. Eugène Tisserant (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964) 119-133, here 129.

[320] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 187.

[321] Kutsch, *Salbung,* 37-70.

[322] Ibid., 52.

[323] Ibid., 57.

[324] Ludwig Schmidt, *Menschlicher Erfolg und Jahwes Initiative. Studien zu Tradition, Interpretation und Historie in Überlieferungen von Gideon, Saul und David* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen, 1970), 179.

[325] Ibid., 182.

[326] Ibid., 186.

insights from the scholars above do prove useful in making sense of the particular example of biblical representation alongside the ancient Near Eastern data. Schimidt's view is most appealing because it aligns with similar observations from previous covenant texts: the correspondence between the human and divine will and the diachronic development from secular to sacral meaning. These categories are of course artificial, as the religious imbued all ancient Near Eastern life, but will help identify the main spheres of power in which anointing is thought to operate.

In the extrabiblical sources, royal anointing is clearly primarily viewed as a political rite akin to coronation, ceremonially initiating the king to his office with the support and witness of the leaders of the people. I am hesitant to speak of the "approval" of the people in a democratic sense, as discussed earlier in the chapter, but the known role of the elders as legal witness marks them as important mentions in the text. This is the simple picture of anointing we have in the earliest layer in 2 Sam 5.3, which is likely meant to legitimise David's investiture with the trappings of a powerful ancient Near Eastern emperor. It is possible that we do not find evidence of royal anointing in ancient Near Eastern literature as we do in the Hebrew Bible because the authors were not closely familiar with the ritual of anointing even in other cultures but had heard about it in association with events like coronations and thus projected their own conception onto monarchic Israel.

The addition of vv. 1-2, which links the anointing to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7, as well as to the connected later account of David's anointing by Samuel in the name of Yahweh in 1 Sam 16, shifts the ritual to the sacral realm. Now the people's anointing of David is only a confirmation of what God has ordained. There is a shift in authority from purely political institution, which the deity might be assumed to approve or bless, to divine commission. Such a shift is reflected in other biblical examples of royal anointing; in the case of Jehu, the anointing no longer has to be public or require the witness of officials like the elders but need only report the word of God (2 Kgs 9.11-13). This is similar to Mettinger's theory of sacralisation, although he attributes a level of sacralisation to the manifestation of Yahweh's spirit when there is no clear evidence for either in the text of 2 Sam 5.1-3, even if read in light of 1 Sam 16. He cites Yahweh's command to Samuel "you shall anoint for me (לִי) him whom I name to you" (1 Sam 16.3), taking לִי in the sense of "set aside for my purposes" like unto a sacrifice.[327] But the Hebrew can just as easily be read "on my behalf" or "in my stead." If the

[327] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 207.

manifestation of the spirit was assumed in 2 Sam 5.3, we would expect it to be displayed in the subsequent battle for Jerusalem, as the royal charisma is most often associated with military pursuits, like Jehu's "spirited" victory in battle following his prophetic anointing.[328] The sacral view of David's anointing in 2 Sam 5.3 is thus only secondary, in connection with his election by Yahweh and initiation as king of Israel in fulfilment of this election.

The association of royal anointing establishes the context of David's covenant with the elders of Israel as a ritual of his formal recognition as king. The obligation set by the covenant, therefore, is defined by David's new royal status and his new relationship to the people of Israel. The question then becomes what the nature of the relationship is between the new king and his people as depicted in these few verses. Mettinger interprets the obligations undertaken in 2 Sam 5.3 as mutual because of the close connection between the covenant and anointing: the people anoint David and he in turn makes a covenant with them.[329] Exploring the significance of the oil used in anointing, he looks to imprecatory phrases in VTE such as the following: "Just as [this] oil enters your flesh, so may they [scil. the gods] make this oath enter your flesh, the flesh of your brothers, your sons and daughters" (lines 622-625).[330] He compares this image of the oil/oath soaking into the flesh with the description of the wicked man in Ps 109.8: "He clothed himself with cursing as his coat; may it soak into his body like water (וַתָּבֹא כַמַּיִם בְּקִרְבּוֹ), like oil into his bones (וְכַשֶּׁמֶן בְּעַצְמוֹתָיו)!"[331] Hence, the "oil of curse" represents the treaty curses taking effect in the case of transgression of the stipulations.[332] Just like Esarhaddon's vassals, the king smeared with oil supposedly becomes a "vassal" to his people, devoting himself to their service and protection under Yahweh or else suffer at the divine hand. Thus, in Mettinger's reconstruction, there is "marked reciprocity" between the covenant as David's royal promise and the people's anointing as an exchange of obligation towards one another—once again painting a picture that seems too good to be true.[333]

The idea of reciprocity between the king and the people is a mark of the proto-democratic interpretation of the social organisation of Israel which was common during

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[328] See my discussion in the previous chapter.

[329] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 228.

[330] Ibid., 223. For text see Wiseman, *VTE*, 77. Mettinger's translation as presented above is by Erica Reiner taken from James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Vol. 3* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 540.

[331] Mettinger, 223.

[332] Ibid.

[333] Ibid., 228.

Mettinger's time.[334] Though more recent scholars like Fleming are careful to pointedly distance themselves from modern ideas, even in his theory of Israel as a "body politic," contemporary political paradigms are evident in the biblical scholarship of the 20th century.[335] It largely began with Martin Noth's introduction of the amphictyony theory, which imagined the tribes of Israel in equal partnership with each other. The Mosaic covenant then was pictured as a constitution guiding the governance of the tribes and uniting them under Yahweh.[336] The constitutional pattern was subsequently extended to other covenants in the Hebrew Bible. In particular, the king laws in Deuteronomy were seen as limiting the power of the monarchy, just as the US constitution limits the power of the federal government.[337] It is unsurprising then that Mettinger goes so far as to claim the "constitutional significance" of the royal covenant in securing "marked reciprocity" between David and the elders of Israel.[338]

While I do agree that there is some connection to the treaty tradition, Mettinger reads far too much into the symbolism of the oil. Royal anointing may certainly be understood as a "contractual rite" in the context of covenant, but we can only accept one side of Mettinger's image of obligation: anointing as the people's homage, "understood in its technical sense of 'formal public acknowledgement of allegiance.'"[339] Casting David as a vassal puts the people in an analogous position of formal authority, that of a suzerain or overlord, which implies there is some institutional way for them to hold him accountable. Such interpretation anachronistically reads egalitarianism or democracy into the depictions of the early Israelite monarchy and grants the people even symbolic power they are not depicted to possess. Whatever obligation David has to the people, it is not that of a self-sacrificial martyr king, but rather that of an emperor who must maintain control of the military body in order to keep the peace. Instead, the implicit pledge of loyalty in the people's anointing becomes explicit with the addition of the covenant. It does not balance the relationship between David and the people but doubles down on the people's subjugation to him.

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[334] For more on 20th century democratic readings of ancient Israel and in particular on the interpretation of covenant as constitution in reception history up until the present see my article, Johnson, "'We the People of Israel,'" 247-268.

[335] Although Fleming explicitly distances his theories from modern ideas, I still think he is implicitly influenced by them, as seen in the discussion earlier in the chapter.

[336] See, for example, Cross, *Canaanite,* 272; George E. Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law"; ibid., "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition."

[337] Baruch Halpern, *The Constitution of the Monarchy of Israel* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

[338] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 114-115.

[339] Ibid., 208.

However, looking to parallels with VTE does prove useful in trying to understand the obligation imposed by the covenant in the context of a new king. At the gathering of his vassals, Esarhaddon proclaims his son Ashurbanipal king in his place, and in so doing exacts loyalty oaths from the vassals to remain allegiant to his son as they have been to him. As seen previously in the Hittite treaty used in comparison with the covenant between David and Jonathan, the vassals' loyalty extends to their descendants: they swear to serve Ashurbanipal "as long as we, our sons (and) our grandsons are alive" which ends with the invocation for the gods to "hold us, our seed and our seed's seed accountable (for this vow)."[340] Thus, the vassal treaty is sealed in the presence of witnesses and is binding on the vassals and their offspring.[341] Interestingly, other vassal treaties with Esarhaddon, particularly that with Ba'al of Tyre, mentions the governance of elders (*LU.par-šá-mu-te*).[342] However, the text is fragmentary and it is hard to tell what role they played in the treaty, besides perhaps witnessing the reading of royal letters alongside the royal deputy.

Though the content of the covenant in 2 Sam 5.3 is not extant, the similar setting of the formal accession of a new king suggests that the author had a similar loyalty oath in mind. The addition at v. 2 of the recognition of David's previous relationship to the people is reminiscent of Esarhaddon's description of his own relation to the vassals that would be passed on, and the quoted oracle similarly acknowledges the new king's divine appointment.[343] Originally, the note of the covenant in v. 3 was likely meant to be a simple acknowledgement of sworn allegiance, as the author at that stage does not make much fuss about the contents or reasoning of the elders. The later expansion with vv. 1-2 may have partially meant to make the covenant report more elaborate, as exemplified in the Neo-Assyrian tradition, where the sealing of a vassal treaty especially in the case of succession was an event of great importance.[344] As such, the elders play a dual role as vassals and as legal witnesses in securing the legitimacy of the agreement between the two parties. I will not go so far as Mettinger to make assumptions about elements that should be read into the text, like curses or blessings. But the parallel setting and emphasis with VTE suggests that the covenant in 2 Sam 5.1-3 should be read as a loyalty oath which the elders of Israel swear to

[340] Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), 50, lines 507, 512.
[341] K. 2694, ii, 7-8.
[342] SAA 02 005 iii 7: http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/saa02/corpus.
[343] Rm. I, i, 18-22; VTE ll. 13-24.
[344] Rm. I, i, 18-10.

David, securing his place as king over the peoples represented, for which their descendants may be held accountable.[345]

Conclusion

Standing at the apex of the united monarchy over Israel, David's anointing marks the official establishment not only of his own kingship but that of his line. The covenant between him and the elders of Israel concludes the narrative of the war between the Davidide and Saulide houses in 2 Sam 2-4 and the tale of David's long journey to the throne. The addition of 2 Sam 5.1-2 connects the short vignette to the other inserted oracle in 3.17-18 and Saul's anointing in 1 Sam 9.16, which transforms the account of a simple mortal anointing to the confirmation of David's appointment by Yahweh. The divine intervention is further elaborated in the additions' association with 2 Sam 7, through the pastoral imagery of David and the use of the rare word נָגִיד. Now including "the tribes of Israel," an idealistically united group is presented to David at Hebron under the leadership of the elders to make him king. The sociological picture of collective Israel and the elders is meant to emphasise this unity and the wisdom of the decision in choosing David, not the people's autonomy or power in selecting their own king. The ritual of royal anointing, of which little is known from biblical or ancient Near Eastern sources, acts as a formal marker of David's transition to the throne and, alongside the covenant, firmly establishes his legitimacy. The covenant itself, in parallel succession setting to VTE, acts as a loyalty oath by which the elders and hence all of Israel are bound in service to David.

The connection to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 heightens the significance of this moment from the establishment of David's throne to the establishment of his dynasty. The impact, then, of all Israel swearing loyalty to David is also expanded from the immediate elders present at that moment to their descendants. Considering the Deuteronomistic editors' preoccupation with the Davidic kingship, the redaction of 2 Sam 5.1-3 seeks to make claim on their later "Israelite" audience. Even though the monarchy of Israel might be destroyed in Persian Yehud, Yahweh himself brought David to be anointed king by the elders, and so the

[345] When speaking of "parallels" with VTE, I do not mean to suggest textual influence but rather that VTE best exemplifies a feature of the broader ANE treaty tradition I wish to emphasise. For further on the relation between treaty texts in the Bible, VTE, and the ANE treaty tradition, see Carly Crouch, *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

Davidic monarchy—or a similarly-divine leadership—may be established once again. When it does, that covenant which their ancestors made with David will come into effect and all of Israel will be called to bow at the feet of the Davidic leader.

Conclusion

In the previous chapters, the narratives describing a covenant between David and other human individuals have served as test cases for a literarily sensitive diachronic approach to the conceptual development of בְּרִית or covenant in the book of Samuel. Redaction criticism of these texts revealed coordinated redactional layers between them and between the divine promise to David in 2 Sam 7. These three together act as a trifecta of human sanction for David's accession, hitting important tiers of the socio-political structure of the early Israelite monarchy; 2 Sam 7 completes the picture with the divine seal of approval. The string of covenants thus acts together not only as an apologetic for David himself but for the Davidic kingship as the mark of fulfilment for a glorified Israel—of peace, security, and prosperity in the land.

The multiple accounts of a covenant between David and Jonathan at different textual layers demonstrate that covenant cannot be written off to a single layer, late or early. The status of the Jonathan tradition as a pre-Dtr version of the HDR written to connect the older Saul and David traditions, and the essential nature of the covenant to that layer disproves its supposed dependence on the Dtr traditions. Instead, at this oldest layer, likely exemplified by 2 Sam 23.15-18, the covenant acts as a simple bond which represents the deep commitment of their unconventional friendship as they navigate the political turmoil of the early Israelite kingship. As the Jonathan tradition is integrated into the *Grundschrift* of the DtrH, we see in in 1 Sam 18.1-5 that Jonathan's love for David is emphasised as the motivation for their covenant, both as a personal apologetic to David and as explanation for Jonathan's disloyalty to his father. With the insertion of Jonathan's oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17, the covenant between David and Jonathan (recalled in 20.8) is explicitly connected to the divine promise in 2 Sam 7. In the midst of questions of succession and sedition, Jonathan recognises that David will be the next king of Israel and swears an oath which subordinates not only himself but his descendants to David in order to ensure their safety. Connection to the divine promise pushes the narrative horizon of the oath beyond either party's descendants to the establishment of an eternal Davidic dynasty. Thus, with the addition of the oath, the covenant between David and Jonathan is transformed into a meticulously stipulated loyalty treaty between the house of David and the house of Saul, akin to vassal treaties known from elsewhere in the ancient Near East.

The narrative of a covenant between David and Abner in 2 Sam 3 represents a key turning point not only in the transition of the Israelite throne from a Saulide Ish-bosheth to David but also in the style and concern of redactions relating to 2 Sam 7. Preceding the pre-Dtr narrative, a Dtr apologetic vignette between Abner and Ish-bosheth explains Abner's ambiguous motivations for defecting from the house of Saul. Abner swears an oath that he will himself accomplish the transfer of "all Israel" from the house of Saul to David, which extends a perceived legal legitimation of the transfer already present with the covenant. Abner's oath also contains a vague divine quotation which connects it to 2 Sam 7, introducing the idea that it is Yahweh himself at work through these human actions to achieve David's promised kingship. A similar speech is inserted after the covenant narrative, modelled on the first but with a different apologetic purpose and concentration on prophecy. Abner sends word to the elders of Israel, anticipating the covenant in 2 Sam 3.5, and quotes an oracle of Saul's divine election in 1 Sam 9 in order to present David as Israel's ultimate military saviour. Here the word of God becomes the explicit motivation of the elders' eventual choice to anoint David king over Israel, so that Abner'—and by redactional connection Nathan's oracle—become self-fulfilling prophecy. Although these two additions share a similar Deuteronomistic vision of the ideal Davidic kingship centred on 2 Sam 7, the difference in form and focus suggest they represent two distinct but related redactional schools, which I tentatively label Nomistic and Prophetic redactions.

Finally, in 2 Sam 5.1-3 the simple report of the elders of Israel making a covenant with David and anointing him king at Hebron is expanded to illustrate a divinely united Israel under Davidic leadership. The inclusion of the tribes of Israel in the covenant and use of kinship language invokes the mythological history of blood-related Israel, all of whom are implicated in the covenant pledging loyalty to David. The tribes also quote from Nathan's oracle using the rare title of נָגִיד to paint David as the divine unifier and the establishment of Davidic united Israel as the height of Yahweh's promise in 2 Sam 7. These verses do not represent proto-democratic election of a leader, constituent representation through the elders, or a "royal covenant" as constitution, as some scholars would like to claim. Rather, the presence of the elders represents them as an important point of local political contact as portrayed in the historiographic recreation of monarchic Israel. The expansion of this covenant, including the tribes' oracle, makes a claim on all those included in the redactor's conception of "Israel" that they owe allegiance to the Davidic banner and belong together as Yahweh intended.

The outline of development illustrated by these studies is a progression from covenant as simple bond or agreement at a pre-Dtr level to a Deuteronomistic elaboration of covenant for the purpose of making claims on the editors' contemporary context. At one level, we see covenant emphasised as an important legal form, paired with an oath to form a legal schema legitimating the transfer of the Israelite throne from the house of David to the house of Saul. This addresses concerns of other possible rulers over Israel and clears the way for a Davidic monarchy to be restored to all of its glory. At another layer, covenant is theologised as a point of secret divine revelation, paired with prophecy to become an anchor of divine activity in a seemingly human history. Covenant becomes proof that anything can be accomplished through the power of Yahweh, especially that which he has ordained, like the election of all Israel to stand as a united peoples under Davidic kingship. Despite all appearances of political destitution, these covenants still hold sway and will yet be brought forward for reckoning. These two Deuteronomistic iterations of covenant do not have to stand in contradiction to one another, as witnessed by the presence of 2 Sam 3.8-10 and 17-18 in the same narrative. But they do represent a progression which can be seen in their corresponding redactional connections intertwined in the composition history of the divine promise in 2 Sam 7.

Redactional Connections and the Composition of 2 Sam 7

In the preceding studies of individual covenant texts, a number of linguistic and thematic connections to 2 Sam 7.8-16 have been identified which create a textual link between the divine promise to David and his agreements with other key characters in the book of Samuel. These redactional connections help set parameters for the textual composition of the promise relative to the redactional layer of the covenant text expansions. Because the textual links only appear at a secondary level in the covenant texts, it is impossible to say anything about the promise before their insertion; for example, the redactional connections will not help determine whether or not the promise was originally composed as part of the Deuteronomistic History, as suggested by McCarthy, or was part of an earlier (perhaps oral) tradition incorporated into the book of Samuel, as suggested by Schniedewind.[346] But in analysing key vocabulary shared between the allusions and the promise, and its relation to historical developments within Deuteronomistic thought, different stages of redaction come

[346] McCarthy, "II Samuel 7," 131-138; Schniedewind, *Society*, 17-50.

to light that point to later insertions within the promise. The version of the promise found in 1 Chronicles 17.7-14 becomes an important point of comparison in reconstructing the contents of 2 Sam 7 at the time of the covenant expansions and subsequent updates to ensure the text remained relevant to its audience throughout the later history of Israel.

To aid in the discussion, Table 1 outlines the rough periods and redactional layers across the development of the book of Samuel/the Deuteronomistic history, the covenant narratives, and the divine promise to David in 2 Sam 7. Subsequent tables will demonstrate textual connections or differences at the level of phraseology.

Table 1. Reconstruction of Composition and Redaction History of Samuel

Period	**Deuteronomistic History/Samuel Layer**	**Covenant Texts + Additions**	**2 Samuel 7**
Late Monarchy?	David and Saul Traditions (Oral background?)		vv. 12-16
~722 BCE	Jonathan Tradition	1 Sam 18.1,4 1 Sam 20* 1 Sam 23.15-18*	
	Combined HDR	1 Sam 18.2,5	vv. 8-9
Early Exile	$DtrH^G$	1 Sam 3.(6-)8,(11)	vv. 11c, 13a
Late Exile/Persian	Dtr^N	1 Sam 18.3 1 Sam 20.8,12-16(17?) 2 Sam 3.9-10	vv. 5-7, 10-11
	Dtr^P	2 Sam 3.17-18 2 Sam 5.1-2	
Post-Exile	Post-Dtr	(1 Sam 20.17?)	Exodus Revision of v. 6 Name Theology in v. 13

The straightforward linguistic connections are centred in two different areas of Nathan's oracle: verses 7-9 and verses 11-16. While there is some crossover, the vocabulary of 2 Sam 3.17-18 and 5.1-2 matches 7.7-9, and 1 Sam 20.12-16 and 2 Sam 3.9-10 matches 7.11-16. The split between these two groupings follows a divide in interest between the establishment of the house of David as the royal dynasty of Israel and the individual divine election of David, perhaps reflecting the concerns of different periods in Judah's history. These groups are also roughly divided by form between oaths and oracles, which, as explored in chapter 2, suggests that two different schools of Deuteronomistic redactors, Nomistic and

Prophetic, are responsible for each group. 2 Sam 3.9-10 stands in between, but if our relative dating of 3.9-10 and 3.17-18 is sustained, where verses 17-18 are modelled on 9-10, this may indicate a transition point between the two groups.

As the oath texts are concerned with the Davidic dynasty, it is unsurprising that their redactional connections are concentrated in the later part of the divine promise which deals with David's descendants and the future of the Israelite throne in 2 Sam 7.12-16, particularly through words and phrases like בַּיִת, מַמְלַכְתּוֹ, כִּסֵּא, and עַד־עוֹלָם. Some of these linguistic connections seem generally Deuteronomistic, that is, simply borrowing language from Deuteronomy, such as the word חֶסֶד or the Mosaic title "my servant" (לְעַבְדִּי). But the most potent connections are those with similar vocabulary to Deuteronomy but whole lines or phrases found in 2 Sam 7. The best example of this is Jonathan's reference to Yahweh "cutting off" David's enemies in 1 Sam 20.15. While the verb כרת is used in Deut 12.29 and 19.1 to describe God "cutting off" the nations in Canaan before Israel dispossess them of their land, it is nowhere used with אֹיְבִים.[347] There may be some parallel implied, with David acting as a Joshua figure to lead a united Israel in retaking the land that had been promised to them from its current inhabitants. Yet the most direct allusion is to 2 Sam 7.9, where God describes the process of having raised David from a shepherd to a king, and states that he "cut off all his enemies" (וָאַכְרִתָה אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ). Since David is addressed in both cases, specifically in the context of succession, the allusion in 1 Sam 20.15 is undoubtably to 2 Sam 7.9, rather than general Deuteronomistic themes.

Table 2. Yahweh "cut off all his enemies"

1 Sam 20.15	2 Sam 7.9
וְלֹא־תַכְרִת אֶת־חַסְדְּךָ מֵעִם בֵּיתִי עַד־עוֹלָם וְלֹא בְּהַכְרִת יְהוָה אֶת־אֹיְבֵי דָוִד אִישׁ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה׃	וָאֶהְיֶה עִמְּךָ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר הָלַכְתָּ וָאַכְרִתָה אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ מִפָּנֶיךָ וְעָשִׂתִי לְךָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל כְּשֵׁם הַגְּדֹלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ׃

What makes Jonathan's choice of words even more interesting is that he does not use the common Deuteronomistic phrase of "give rest from your enemies" which is seen in 2 Sam 7.11 (וַהֲנִיחֹתִי לְךָ מִכָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ).[348] Notice that although the wording is not identical, this statement is a repetition of the divine elimination of David's enemies in v. 9. The repeated

[347] Also, Josh 23.4, in reference to this promise in Deuteronomy.

[348] God giving rest from enemies using the Hiphil of נוּחַ is found in Deut 12.10, 25.19; Josh 21.44; 23.1. Deut 12.10 is an especially important reference as it used alongside reference to "the place which Yahweh will choose," also used in 2 Sam 7.10. Similarly, God gives rest to the Israelites and gives them the land in Deut 3.20; Josh 1.13,15, 22.4.

statement bookends a series of promises made not to David as an individual but to the collective people of Israel. The shift in address from second person singular to third person plural and back again feels like an interruption. Certainly, in the ancient Near Eastern context we may expect that the fate of the people was bound up with that of the king.[349] But we would equally anticipate that such benefits would be expressed *through* the king as divine representative, as they are by Abner: "*By the hand of my servant David*, I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hands of all their enemies" (2 Sam 3.18). This is seen, for example, in the prologue of the Codex of Hammurabi where Hammurabi is designated by the gods "for the enhancement of the well-being of the people" as the one "to make justice prevail in the land, to abolish the wicked one and the evil, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak…"[350] As such, the repetition in 2 Sam 7.10 likely acts as a *Wiederaufnahme* marking the later insertion of promises to Israel in vv. 10-11b.

The oracle-covenant texts give us a glimpse into the development of the historical introduction to the promise, which connects David's request to build a temple to the broader Deuteronomistic history of Israel in 2 Sam 7.5-7. The oracle in Abner's message to the elders in 3.17-18 uses the title "my servant David (לְעַבְדִּי לְדָוִד)" found in 7.5,8 and the term "my people Israel (עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל)" found in 7.7,8, both of which have been shown to be associated with the history of the divine promise's reception.[351] As demonstrated in the last chapter, the addition of 2 Sam 5.1-2 is dependent on 7.7-8. The tribes' oracle speaks of David becoming "נָגִיד over Israel (לְנָגִיד עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל)," which we have seen is a rare term that features prominently in reiterations of the promise of Davidic kingship and in 7.8. But most importantly, it quotes from 7.7 where Yahweh says he appointed the tribes to "shepherd my people Israel (לִרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל)." As previously argued, this shepherding imagery is unique in the Deuteronomistic History and likely grew out of the pastoral description of David's background in v. 8. Together, the reference to נָגִיד and the shepherding image indicate that both vv. 7 and 8 were included in the text of Nathan's oracle by the time 2 Sam 5.1-2 were added, and that the historical introduction grew out of the older promise text. Additionally, the allusion to David as shepherd indicates that this part of the oracle was likely

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[349] Thus McCarthy, "II Samuel 7," 132-3. He refers to these verses as an "insertion," but it is unclear whether he uses the term to refer to the original author's stylistic choices, or he thinks they were added by the Deuteronomist as he composed the DtrH, as part of his effort to centre the divine promise at its climax.

[350] Martha Tobi Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 76-77.

[351] Cf. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7," 132, esp. n6.

composed after the Jonathan tradition, rather than only the Michal tradition which paints David's background as a warrior and a harpist.

Table 3. "Shepherd my people Israel" and *nagid*

2 Sam 7.8	2 Sam 7.7	2 Sam 5.2
וְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמַר לְעַבְדִּי לְדָוִד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲנִי לְקַחְתִּיךָ מִן־ הַנָּוֶה מֵאַחַר הַצֹּאן לִהְיוֹת נָגִיד עַל־ עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲדָבָר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶת־אַחַד שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לִרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בְנִיתֶם לִי בֵּית אֲרָזִים׃	גַּם־אֶתְמוֹל גַּם־שִׁלְשׁוֹם בִּהְיוֹת שָׁאוּל מֶלֶךְ עָלֵינוּ אַתָּה הָיִיתָה מוֹצִיא וְהַמֵּבִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְךָ אַתָּה תִרְעֶה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְנָגִיד עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

The relative dating and thematic connection of 2 Sam 7.5-7 and 7.10-11 suggest that they were inserted at the same or similar redactional layers. In the parallel text of the promise in Chronicles, 1 Chr 17.6 reads the "judges of Israel (שֹׁפְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)" rather than the "tribes of Israel (שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)" in 2 Sam 7.7. The reading of "judges" makes more sense in the context of the verse—how are the "tribes" of Israel meant to shepherd the people of Israel? If we take Chronicles to be the older witness, 2 Sam 7.10-11 match 7.5-7 both in their address of Israel as a wider people and in their reference to the judges. Similarly, both vv. 5-7 and 10-11b find some parallel in Samuel's speech to the people in 1 Sam 12, specifically his recitation of Israel's history from their wilderness wandering to his present time. He retells the stories of the judges, and in 12.8 says that Yahweh settled them "in this place" (בַּמָּקוֹם) of Canaan, as in 2 Sam 7.10.[352] Thus it is likely that 2 Sam 7.5-7 and 10-11b form a redactional layer inserted after the oath additions but before the oracle additions to the individual covenant texts.

Table 4. Who is "shepherding my people Israel"?

2 Sam 7.7	1 Chr 17.6
בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲדָבָר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶת־אַחַד שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לִרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בְנִיתֶם לִי בֵּית אֲרָזִים׃	בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲדָבָר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶת־ אַחַד שֹׁפְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לִרְעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי לֵאמֹר לָמָּה לֹא־בְנִיתֶם לִי בֵּית אֲרָזִים׃

It is also possible that the use of the term tribes in 2 Sam 5.1 may have influenced the corruption of the text at 7.7. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the difference between the Chronicles and Samuel text is one letter with a similar phoneme, so easily identified as a

[352] The connection to Samuel's speech in 1 Sam 12 may also help us understand the redaction of 2 Sam 7.5-7,10-11 as apparent in the older version of v. 6 in 1 Chr 17.15, as the wider exodus narrative of being brought out of Egypt is superficially added in 1 Sam 12.8 as well, where the rest of the historical pre-amble focuses on the history of Israel recounted in the Deuteronomistic History, mainly the judges.

scribal error, especially if the scribe was copying from or was familiar with an oral tradition of the text. But the word שִׁבְטֵי may have already been put in their head if reading/being read to in the received narrative chronological order, especially with the allusion between 5.2 and 7.7. One might argue that if the oracle-covenant texts were composed after the inclusion of 7.10-11, why does Abner's oracle in 2 Sam 3.18 not use the same "rest from enemies"—or for that matter "cutting off enemies" from 7.9? But remember that it is quoting 1 Sam 9.16, identifying David as the better Saul rather than capitalising on the Deuteronomistic theme of rest.[353]

Table 5. "He will save my people from the hands of the Philistines"

1 Sam 9.16	2 Sam 3.18
כָּעֵ֣ת ׀ מָחָ֗ר אֶשְׁלַ֣ח אֵלֶ֘יךָ֮ אִ֚ישׁ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ בִּנְיָמִ֔ן וּמְשַׁחְתּ֤וֹ לְנָגִיד֙ עַל־עַמִּ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל וְהוֹשִׁ֥יעַ אֶת־עַמִּ֖י מִיַּ֣ד פְּלִשְׁתִּ֑ים כִּ֤י רָאִ֙יתִי֙ אֶת־עַמִּ֔י כִּ֛י בָּ֥אָה צַעֲקָת֖וֹ אֵלָֽי׃	וְעַתָּ֖ה עֲשׂ֑וּ כִּ֣י יְהוָ֗ה אָמַ֤ר אֶל־דָּוִד֙ לֵאמֹ֔ר בְּיַ֣ד ׀ דָּוִ֣ד עַבְדִּ֗י הוֹשִׁ֜יעַ אֶת־עַמִּ֤י יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ מִיַּ֣ד פְּלִשְׁתִּ֔ים וּמִיַּ֖ד כָּל־אֹיְבֵיהֶֽם׃

The thematic shift between these proposed redactional layers makes sense of historical political and theological progression. At the oldest layer, as in the oath expansions, there is still hope in the eternal Davidic line. The focus remains on David and his house because the editor looks forward to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy. But this was never to be. At some point, then, to make such an eternal promise relevant to a kingless people, a later editor expanded the oracle's vision of future bliss to include collective Israel. Notice the pointed anti-hegemonic critique in 2 Sam 7.10, as God promises that "malicious people will not oppress [Israel] anymore." Even if narratively this refers to Israel's enemies of old, a yearning for autonomy from imperial regimes frames the promise for an exilic or postexilic audience. Thus, with the insertion of vv. 5-7,10-11b, the promise to David can still bear a message of hope long after his line and the monarchy have become irrelevant.

Reconstructing this redactional layer is especially natural if we take Reinhard Kratz's view on the "backwards" redaction of the DtrH. He dates the composition of the book of Judges later due to its heavily Deuteronomistic framework and reliance on the rest of the Samuel-Kings.[354] The reference in 2 Sam 7.5-7,10-11 to the time when judges were appointed over Israel would then be correspondingly late. Similarly, the relation to Samuel's speech in 1 Sam 12, through the history of the judges and the language of "the place" where

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[353] As discussed in chapter 2.

[354] Kratz, *Composition,* 157-8, 186-210.

God settles his people, which we find throughout Deuteronomy, connects the promise to Samuel's condemnation of Israel's request for a king. Kratz argues that both the extensive reference to material in the final form of the Pentateuch and Judges and the anti-monarchial tone of the speech place it at one of the latest levels of redaction.[355] Yet careful distinction should be made here, as the reference to the exodus in 2 Sam 7.6 is not found in the parallel older witness of 1 Chr 17.5, and the similar reference in 1 Sam 12.8 seems equally secondary as the bulk of the following verses detail the stories of the judges. So, while we may assign these verses to a late redactional layer with the rest of the DtrH in view, we may not say the latest as they do not necessarily depend on the traditions of the Pentateuch.[356]

Table 6. Pentateuch references in the Promise?

2 Sam 7.6	1 Chr 17.5
כִּי לֹא יָשַׁבְתִּי בְּבַיִת לְמִיּוֹם הַעֲלֹתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וָאֶהְיֶה מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּאֹהֶל וּבְמִשְׁכָּן׃	כִּי לֹא יָשַׁבְתִּי בְּבַיִת מִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵיתִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וָאֶהְיֶה מֵאֹהֶל אֶל־אֹהֶל וּמִמִּשְׁכָּן׃

The anti-monarchic tone of this redaction likely dates it to the late exilic or early postexilic period, as blatant rejection of the monarchy only makes sense at the historical point when it became clear that the Israelite/Judean monarchy would not be restored. Additionally, Samuel's reasoning that a human kingship is a rejection of theocracy, mimicking "the other nations," paints the monarchy as tantamount to idolatry, suggesting the foremost place of the First Commandment and the Dtr law more broadly.[357] This intolerant monolatry has been shown to be late reaction to the loss of religious hegemony during the exile.[358] As discussed above, 2 Sam 7.10-11a does not picture Yahweh's blessings mediated through a king but instead gives a positive image of direct relationship between the deity and his people, similar to the theocracy of Exodus-Joshua. Hence, references to the time of the judges, the appearance of theocracy over monarchy, and its connection to Samuel's speech in 1 Sam 12 all suggest that 2 Sam 7,5-7,10-11b of the divine promise are a relatively late redaction, inserted during the late exilic or early postexilic period.

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[355] Kratz, Composition, 172.

[356] See Konrad Schmid, "Do the Pentateuchal Sources Extend into the Former Prophets?," in Jan C. Gertz, Bernard M. Levinson, Dalit Rom-Shiloni, and Konrad Schmid eds., *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Europe, Israel, and North America* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 779-782.

[357] Kratz, 172.

[358] E.g. Juha Pakkala, *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

By dating this redaction of the divine promise, we can propose a relative date for the related oath and oracle expansions of the covenant texts. 1 Samuel 20.12-17 and 2 Sam 3.9-10, inserted before the identified promise redaction, were likely added during the exile to double-down on legitimacy of the house of David over the house of Saul as the royal line of Israel, anticipating the eventual restoration of the monarchy. 2 Samuel 3.17-18, added either alongside or after the promise redaction, were composed post-exile (but before Chronicles) with concern for the unity of all Israel under a Davidic leader (abstracted from a king) in the chaos of rebuilding as a backwater client state of the Achaemenid empire. The shift in focus from the monarchy to the people of Israel represents a natural ideological step in between.

Overall, the grouping of references suggests that 2 Sam 7.8-9,12-16 existed together at an older layer of the divine promise, the same layer of redaction as the oath expansions of 1 Sam 20.12-16 and 2 Sam 3.9-10—whether they were already incorporated into the book of Samuel or were added alongside the redaction. Nathan's oracle was later expanded to include an introduction in 2 Sam 7.5-7,10-11, concerning the people of Israel, their history, and their future. The oracle expansions of 2 Sam 3.17-18 and 5.1-2 were included afterwards and may have influenced the later corruption of the text at 7.7.

While this outline can provide us with a rough sense of the relative development of layers, there are some questions that the redactional connections to the individual covenant texts alone cannot help us answer. For example, just as God granting rest in 2 Sam 7.11b acts as a *Wiederaufnahme*, so too might God once again "declaring" to David in v. 11c, repeating the beginning of the promise in v. 8 with slightly different wording. As there is no exclusive vocabulary in v. 11c quoted in the redactions—בַּיִת is used in the following verses—this may suggest that vv. 8-9 are themselves an expansion of vv. 12-16, a sort of personal pre-history of Yahweh's presence with David, just as vv. 5-7 tell a pre-history of Yahweh's presence with Israel throughout their history. If true, an even older core of the divine promise is identified which may have been composed outside of its current textual setting. They at least exist together by the time Jonathan's oath is inserted in 1 Sam 20 as it references Yahweh cutting off David's enemies in 2 Sam 7.9. On the other hand, because of the play on בַּיִת as both physical building and genealogical family, v. 11c could also have been inserted when the promise was adapted to the question of David building a temple.

The connection of Nathan's oracle to the building of the temple obviously comes to a head in 2 Sam 7.13a, where Yahweh predicts that the temple will be built by David's heir.

Since the rest of 7.8-16 seems unconnected to the context of building a temple, 13a has long been suggested as an addition, with God's promise to "establish the throne of his kingdom [forever]" repeated from the end of v. 12 acting as a *Wiederaufnahme*.[359] 1 Chronicles 17.12 witnesses to an older version of this verse where God simply states that David's heir will build a house "for me" (לִי), without the veneer of the famous name theology. Unlike the Deuteronomistic concept of giving rest, which Schniedewind argues that the Chronicler has removed to avoid the "glaring contradiction" between the divine promise and the Deuteronomistic idea of rest associated with the temple in Kings, the name theology was likely not removed but simply not originally present in the older version of the text, as it is replete throughout Chronicles and not found in Samuel.[360] As a result, it is possible that 2 Sam 7.11c and (an older version of) 13a were added at the same redactional level, which would have to be present before the Prophetic redactors add the oracle additions to the covenant texts as vv. 5-7 concern the travel of the ark in a tent. However, since the Nomistic oath additions do not readily indicate whether vv. 11c or 13a were present or whether the temple was in view at their point of redaction, we have reached the limits of our relative framework for the composition history of 2 Sam 7.

The Divine Promise as Covenant?

One of my aims in undertaking close study of the covenants between David and other human parties was to uncover whether their textual history could tell us anything about how the divine promise in 2 Sam 7.8-16 came to be considered a covenant. In light of the close connections we have seen between these texts, we might expect the promise to be presented as a sort of culminating covenant. And yet, there is famously no such indication in 2 Sam 7. Why would the Deuteronomistic editors, who show such keen interest in covenants—indeed, who use covenants as key anchors in the narrative transition of power from the house of Saul to the house of David—not take the opportunity to explicitly identify the divine promise as a covenant? The linguistic parallels between 2 Sam 7 and the redactions of the three covenant accounts is clear, and from them we know that the Nomistic Deuteronomistic editors in particular had no qualms about inserting legal labels or even explicit references to בְּרִית. The question becomes whether the editors meant there to be an implicit connotation but refused to

[359] See Nelson, *Double Redaction*, 106-8.
[360] Schniedewind, *Society*, 38.

outrightly label the promise as a covenant, or if, in fact, they did not consider the promise to be a covenant at all. As with many exegetical issues, the answer may be somewhere in between.

Unlike the other examples of covenant and oath studied in previous chapters, there is no implicit signposting for the divine promise to be considered a legal form. For example, the inserted oaths are not labelled as such, but they are made clear by legal formulae or by associated verbs like שׁבע. We find no such formulations in the divine promise or in the surrounding texts. In David's subsequent prayer, he says that God has spoken about the future (7.19), and then asks God to confirm or establish (הקם) what he has said (v. 25). Interestingly, this verb is used in association with God's covenant(s) with Noah and the patriarchs in Genesis.[361] The Hiphil of קוּם is used twice in reference to the covenant with the patriarchs, in the sense of fulfil, but is never used of the covenant that God makes with the Israelites at Horeb.[362] Within Samuel, it is used of Yahweh's word to Hannah concerning her son Samuel—"let Yahweh establish his word" (1 Sam 1.23)—and of David's kingdom in prophetic or future senses (1 Sam 24.20; 2 Sam 3.10). Given its distribution and meaning in the Deuteronomistic History, it is most likely that in 2 Sam 7.25 David is asking that the promise be fulfilled in the future, as in Solomon's reiteration of the promise in 1 Kgs 8.26, as opposed to being an allusion to the establishment of a covenant as in Genesis. Although many translations render the latter half of 2 Sam 7.28 as "you have promised this good thing to your servant," the verb is simply וַתְּדַבֵּר and indicates nothing specific of "promise." Whether or not vv. 8-16 may be on a different redactional layer(s) than their surrounding texts, there are no signs within the promise or inserted into the surrounding text that indicate the passage as a covenant, oath, or any legal form.

The only exception may be the so-called adoption formula in 2 Sam 7.14: "I will be like a father to him, and he will be like a son to me (אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה־לּוֹ לְאָב וְהוּא יִהְיֶה־לִּי לְבֵן)." Moshe Weinfeld sees this formula as the central component of a land grant, establishing a line of inheritance so that the land (or dynasty) could be handed down from one to the other.[363] The divine promise is thus supposedly formulated as a "covenant-by-grant." However, the

[361] Gen 6.18; 9.9; 9.11,17; 17.7,19,21. In Gen 26.3 it is used of the "oath" (הַשְּׁבֻעָה) which God swore to Abraham, implying the covenant. See also Ex 6.4 and Lev 26.9.

[362] Deut 8.18; in 9.5 it is used "to confirm the word (הַדָּבָר) which he swore to your fathers," but the implication is the covenant or the promise of Canaan.

[363] Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JOAS* 90 (1970): 191; ibid., "Addenda to *JOAS* 90 (1970), p 184ff," *JOAS* 92 (1972): 469.

presence of such statements does not necessarily equal a legal adoption. We have already seen that the familial language, especially father-son language, is used in correspondence between unrelated suzerains and vassals with no implication that there is a substantiated relationship, legal or otherwise. The clearest example of this is in a Mari letter from the court of Carchemish, in which the representative of Zimri-Lim reports the death of his vassal king Aplaḫanda. Aplaḫanda's son, Iatar-Ami, ascends the throne and declares:

> My father Aplaḫanda is not dead, he lives;
> Zimri-Lim is my father (*IZi-im-ri-li-im-ma a-bi*).[364]

The Mari representative follows the report with his own remark: "Iatar-Ami is your devoted son (*IIa-tar--A-mi mārū-ka ša ki-na-tim*)."[365] Iatar-Ami is not declaring himself to be Zimri-Lim's legal son or heir (as we see in some adoption formulae), but the continuity of Mari-Carchemish relations. Iatar-Ami takes upon himself vassalage to Mari so that his father's relationship with Zimri-Lim "lives on" in him. Distinguishing Zimri-Lim as the superior party highlights the vassal king's obedience, which is reiterated by the representative in his description of Iatar-Ami as a "devoted son."[366] Although the statement is from the perspective of the "son" and therefore not an exact parallel to 2 Sam 7.14, the function of the kinship language is the same: defining the nature of the relationship going forward.

This comparison might cause us to wonder whether the presence of father-son language implies the promise is pictured as a suzerain-vassal treaty. But there are no other indicators or characteristics of a vassal treaty, such as an outline for the vassal's allegiance.[367] Unlike the Mosaic covenant or even Jonathan's oath, there are no commands or stipulations. Instead, taken with the rest of 2 Sam 7.14, the language is quite descriptive. God will rebuke the "son" with the rod, as parents are to do to their children in Proverbs, but his favour will not leave David's heir. [368] As Gary Knoppers reminds us in his excellent article refuting Moshe

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[364] Georges Dossin, "Aplaḫanda, roi de Carkémis," *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 35 (1938): 120. Cf. Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant*, 98.

[365] Ibid.

[366] It is not certain that the father-son language guarantees an official vassal-suzerain relationship, as Munn-Rankin demonstrates that study of such cases is inconclusive, but I agree with her that a vassal-suzerain relationship between Carchemish and Mari under Aplahanda/Iatar-Ami and Zimri-Lim is likely, considering the nature of the diplomacy between them, as she argues in "Diplomacy in Western Asia," 80-84. Cf. Dossin's own argument that the terms are simply used for polite deference and do not necessarily indicate political subordination, "Aplaḫanda," 124.

[367] Weinfeld finds parallels with descriptions of David's loyalty ("Covenant by Grant," 186) and in Ps 132 (187-88), but as Knoppers has pointed out, these are not included in the promise itself and show signs of later reinterpretation ("ANE Royal Grants," 679-80).

[368] Prov 13.24, 22.15, 23.13-14, 29.15. Note that this verse is not present in the Chronicles version of the promise, but likely added much later to account for the downfall of the monarchy. However, it does seem a natural elaboration of the father-son relationship as I outline here, and not a legal adoption formula.

Weinfeld's interpretation, in our search for legal formulae, we must not also neglect allusions to other genres such as legends and general mythology.[369] We know that in Canaanite kingship ideology, "the king enjoys a degree of kinship with the gods," as exemplified by the epithets "the son of El" and "the offspring of the Kind One" attributed to King Kirta in the Ugaritic Kirta legend.[370] So too we see glimpses of this in the Hebrew Bible as in Ps 2.7: "[Yahweh] said to me, 'You are my son; today I have fathered you.'"[371] J. J. M. Roberts uses parallels from Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Egypt to argue convincingly that this verse ought to be understood in a mythic sense akin to the familial terms used to describe Israel in Deut 32.18.[372] Similarly, the father-son metaphor in the divine promise emphasises the link between divine favour and royal privilege, perhaps at one point uniquely associated with the Davidic line if we take the "shoot of Jesse" in Isaiah 11.1 to be a similar allusion. The language of kinship between Yahweh and David's heir is meant to illustrate the favour and benefit of the relationship and not to act as judicial clause.

A simple explanation for the lack of legal formations surrounding the divine promise would be to say that perhaps the Deuteronomistic editors assumed covenant or legal forms to only be applicable for humans. But the very "Deuteronomistic" nature of our assumed editor would reject this claim, as we see Deuteronomy develop a covenant framework which casts the law as an agreement between Israel and Yahweh. However, bearing in mind the applicability of legal formulations on the editors' intended audience may direct our understanding of their work. For comparison, let us look to the interpretation of the promise in the narratives of Solomon. It is not at all clear to me that there are any explicit references to the divine promise as a covenant in the narratives of the Deuteronomistic History.[373] The two most suggestive examples are 1 Kgs 8.23 and 1 Kgs 11.11. Yet in both cases the "covenant" may refer to the Mosaic covenant as pictured in Deuteronomy. This seems to be

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[369] Knoppers, "ANE Royal Grants," 685.

[370] Ibid., 682, 684.

[371] Thilo Rudnig recognises the parallel with this Psalms verse, but argues that 2 Sam 7.14 recasts this relationship in terms of covenant theology (Thilo Alexander Rudnig, "König ohne Tempel. 2 Samuel 7 in Tradition und Redaktion," *VT* 61 [2011]: 440). His reasoning for this is not altogether clear, but seems to presuppose the interpretation of the divine promise as a covenant.

[372] J. J. M. Roberts, "Whose Child Is This?: Reflections on the Speaking Voice in Isaiah 9:5," *Harvard Theological Review* 90 (1997): 118-29.

[373] I am leaving aside for the moment the reference in David's prayer (2 Sam 23.5) as the lyric form of the prayer, its position in the appendix, and the multitude of references to other texts, especially in the Pentateuch, such as to "the God of Jacob" suggest that it is a later insertion. Ernst Axel Knauf argues that this prayer is a (P)riestly composition, as it casts David as a prophet ("Samuel among the Prophets: 'Prophetical Redactions' in Samuel," in *Is Samuel Among the Deuteronomists?: Current Views On the Place of Samuel In a Deuteronomistic History*, eds. Cynthia Edenburg, and Juha Pakkala [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013], 152-154).

the clearest explanation in 1 Kgs 8, where Solomon is praying for the dedication of the temple, following a description of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh and specifically the tablets of the covenant made at Horeb. 1 Kings 8.23 itself—"keeping covenant and loyalty for your servants who walk before you with all their heart"—is a parallel of Deut 7.9. I do not agree with Schniedewind that the next verse describing the divine promise to David is a dependent clause, as the phrase can be understood perfectly on its own;[374] on the other hand, the repetition of שׁמר and עבד do suggest parallelism. 1 Kings 11 is more ambiguous, but in parallel to "[Yahweh's] statutes (וְחֻקֹּתַי), which [he] commanded (צִוִּיתִי)," the Mosaic covenant seems likely, especially in light of 8.23.

However, these verses do undoubtedly associate the divine promise with the Mosaic covenant, specifically with the "commandments, ordinances, and testimonies" of the law, as seen in David's instruction to Solomon in 1 Kgs 2.1-4. This association introduces the culpability of Solomon, that is, because he did not follow the Mosaic law the Davidic line ostensibly lost its throne. Note the careful division of actionability in Solomon's description of the divine promise between 1 Kgs 8.24-25: it is Yahweh who speaks and fulfils his word to David (v. 24), but it is David's sons who must follow the way of the Mosaic covenant (v. 25). The covenant is what pragmatically binds the human Davidic line; indeed, Solomon's quotation of Yahweh referring to the sons of David in the third person pushes the horizon past himself to future "sons" or descendants of David as well. The association of the Mosaic covenant with the divine promise to David does not alter the promise itself, which is God's domain, but correlates the legally binding responsibility of following the Mosaic law with the Davidic line of kings.

The correlation of the individual covenants with David has a similar effect on reading the divine promise. 2 Samuel 7.8-16 is not framed as an "unconditional covenant" in order to establish hope for the restoration of the Davidic kingship.[375] Instead, the hope of the future Davidic line is left intact precisely *because* it is not pictured as a covenant but a divine oracle which cannot fail. God is at work even when mortals may not be able to recognise it. We have already seen this through the literary connections of the individual covenants which culminate in God's claim to have put David on the throne. However, *because* the promise is still valid, those covenants which made up the basis of the promise are still binding on the

[374] Schniedewind, *Society,* 110. אֲשֶׁר can appear at the beginning of sentences without being dependent.

[375] Cf. Hayyim J. Angel, "The Eternal Davidic Covenant in II Samuel Chapter 7 and Its Later Manifestation in the Bible," *The Jewish Bible Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (2016): 83-90.

mortal parties which they represent: the house of Saul is still subordinated to the house of David, all the tribes of Israel are still subject to the Davidic leader. The legal forms are not necessary to bind God but unreliable humans, as demonstrated by the breaking of the Mosaic covenant both by Solomon and by the people, which results in the splitting of the kingdom and the exile. The Deuteronomistic editors thus make clear the responsibilities bound to the people when the Davidic kingdom is eventually restored. The association of covenant with the divine promise does not act as guarantee for the future but as a reminder of obligations from the past.

On the other hand, the insertion of oracles into the individual covenant texts that either echo or quote from Nathan's in 2 Sam 7.5-16 may have influenced the confluence of oracle and covenant in later interpretation. With the later Prophetic redaction, oracle becomes a key motivator present in two out of three of the covenant narratives—Abner and the elders of Israel—indeed, the two texts closest to 2 Sam 7 in the chronological narrative of the received text of Samuel. Although it is likely not included by Prophetic Dtr redactor, 3.9-10 blurs the line between oracle and oath, between statement of the divine will and swearing to accomplish this will. Similarly, 5.1-2 closely ties oracle and covenant, quoting Yahweh's words as motivation for swearing loyalty to David. Here also historical context is given to the agreement, that David had previously already played the part of commander due to a king, which I explored in the first chapter as a familiar element of ancient Near Eastern treaties. As outlined in the previous section, the tribes of Israel quote from a portion of the oracle that itself forms a historical preamble to promise. Reading the oracles in these covenant texts together with Nathan's oracle, as the Deuteronomistic redactors intended, may have conflated the function of divine speech in each so that Yahweh's historical setup, especially the expansion of 7.5-7,8-9, is understood to anticipate an oath or similar legal form—even, perhaps, a covenant.

Equally, the inclusion of oracles in covenant texts may indicate that the conception of the divine role in covenants was already expanding. It is a large conceptual leap from the simple form of covenant we witnessed at the oldest layer of the texts in Samuel, a simple bond between two individuals, to the image of a detailed treaty stipulated in law codes between a deity and a people as pictured in the received text of Deuteronomy. Even in Jonathan's oath in 1 Sam 20.12-17, Yahweh acts as guarantor, and by extension witness, judge, and executioner. But these are still secondary roles, only called upon on the occasion that either party fails to uphold their agreement. As I have argued, with the insertion of the

oracles into the narratives of David's covenants with Abner and the elders of Israel, the redactor attributes a more active role to Yahweh. The divine words function as motivation but also instigation for the covenants, indicating that Yahweh is behind the seemingly human transactions that bring David to the throne over all Israel. This is still not the same as Yahweh being explicitly framed as party to the covenant in the framework of Deuteronomy, but the theological development of the conception of covenant in Samuel may have already pointed later readers towards Yahweh playing a similar role in his promise to David of an eternal kingship.

In summary, despite the close redactional connections the Deuteronomistic editors drew between the individual covenant texts throughout the book of Samuel and Nathan's oracle in 2 Sam 7, there is no explicit evidence that they intended for the divine promise to be read as a covenant, even by the Nomistic redactors. Instead, as seen through its pairing with the Mosaic law in Kings, the promise is held up as an example of divine faithfulness where humans often fall short in keeping their agreements. Thus, the eternal, unbreakable nature of Yahweh's word ensured that the human bonds created through historical covenants would have enduring significance despite the fickleness of human nature and changing circumstances. However, the Prophetic redactors' insertion of oracles into the covenant texts may have either influenced the later interpretation of the promise as a covenant or witnessed to an already expanding conception of the divine role in covenant. By the time that 2 Sam 7 is read in parallel with the covenant-shaped text of Deuteronomy, it is no wonder that the association of the Mosaic law and the divine promise would lead to their parallel readings as covenants of Yahweh.

Further Research

This thesis represents one approach to the questions surrounding the composition history of 2 Sam 7, how it came to be considered a covenant, and the larger conceptual history of בְּרִית in the Hebrew Bible, namely through redaction criticism of connected covenant texts across Samuel. But this of course has necessarily limited the scope and methodology of the project, leaving much work to be done from other perspectives. The results of the project themselves recommend further research to better understand the implications of the diachronic development of the conception of covenant in the book of Samuel within the broader context

of the Deuteronomistic History, the Historical Books/Former Prophets, the Hebrew Bible, and beyond.

First, as demonstrated in this chapter, while the redactional links between the individual covenant texts can provide some relative outline for the composition history of 2 Sam 7, this data needs to be contextualised with other textual links in order to more concretely understand the relative dating, textual dependence, and related growth of the redactional layers. As suggested by the links already identified, parallels with the oracle of Saul's anointing in 1 Sam 9, Samuel's speech on the establishment of the monarchy 1 Sam 12, and David's return to the throne from exile in 2 Sam 19 could prove especially fruitful for understanding the development of the divine promise of an eternal kingship in light of fluctuating opinion on the monarchy. Furthermore, while some textual connections to Deuteronomy have been highlighted, the combination of Deuteronomy and local redaction with Samuel may grant insight into how 2 Sam 7 developed in the context of the Deuteronomistic History but with particular attention to David in this grander narrative.

Second, and on a related note, further research is needed on the process of 2 Sam 7 coming to be read as a covenant to build on the preliminary findings of this project. If we can establish that even at some Deuteronomistic level the divine promise was not intended to be read as a covenant, even if some suggestion can be made that the oracles may have influenced or indicated a move towards Yahweh as divine covenant partner, the point of transition has not been identified. The most suggestive project would be further analysis on the reception of the promise paired with the Mosaic law, and comparison with the process of Deuteronomy being framed as a covenant. The key point will be in identifying the leap to Yahweh as party to instead of protector of the covenant, perhaps in parallel to the Covenant with Aššur (SAA 09 003). Determining the relative dating and textual dependence of the texts that interpret 2 Sam 7 as a covenant, such as 2 Sam 2.5; 2 Chr 7.17-18, 13.5, 21.7; Jer 33.17-26; and Pss 89, 132, in connection with the redactional data of this project, will also be essential.

Third, similar studies on the diachronic development of covenant in other books would help to build up a comprehensive history of the concept's development across the Hebrew Bible. This is not to say that we should expect the concept's development to follow the same pattern I have identified in Samuel—indeed, especially within the Chronistic history, we should expect it to look quite different. But both similarities and differences across the corpus

could also help identify a variety of contextual influences on the term's use, varying historically, ideologically, and geographically. Some work in this direction has already been started by Hermann Spieckermann in the "*Bund und Verheißung* (Covenant and Promise)" section of his co-authored book *Der Gott der Lebendigen. Eine biblische Gotteslehre*, which briefly sketches the development of covenant in different parts of the Hebrew Bible. But these rough sketches need to be tested and filled out by text-oriented, detailed research, so as not to repeat the sins of our forebearers in assuming that בְּרִית functions the same way in any text at any layer.

While we may not have all the answers for the student of the Hebrew Bible wondering how the divine promise in 2 Sam 7 came to be interpreted as a covenant, we now have some idea of the related history of בְּרִית as it is used elsewhere in the book of Samuel. We do not find a stagnant form of extending fictive kinship nor simply a late insertion trying to copy Deuteronomy. Instead, we find a rich conceptual journey through changing political concerns and socio-historical circumstance, from simple bond to legal schema to divine revelation. While I hope this study will offer a corrective to those who even decades after the height of the Covenant Centrality movement look for covenant in every corner of the Hebrew Bible, it is remarkable that a concept which once was only mentioned in passing in David's story comes to define his enduring legacy, providing hope to a scattered people for their divine restoration.

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