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Memories of the Ark: Texts, Objects, and the Construction of the Biblical Past

By

Daniel Shalom Fisher

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requirements for the degree of

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Near Eastern Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Summer 2018

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## Abstract

## Memories of the Ark: Texts, Objects, and the Construction of the Biblical Past

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Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Ronald Hendel, Chair

This dissertation constructs a cultural biography of the Ark of the Covenant, exploring through it the close, but often complicated, relationships that have existed between objects and collective memory in Biblical and ancient Jewish societies. The project considers the different ways in which Biblical writers and interpreters have remembered the Ark as a “real thing,” forming it, mobilizing it, and making meaning with it—largely in its absence after its likely loss in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. From Exodus to Chronicles and in works of biblical interpretation through the Mishnah, this project explores how these writers reimagine the Ark to craft visions for their people’s future through their people’s past.

The project is structured around five interrelated case studies from the Ark’s mnemohistory, considering different dimensions of cultural memory’s entanglement in material culture. Each case study draws upon and enriches text-, source-, and redaction-critical approaches, investigating the growth and reshaping of biblical writings as creative memory work. Chapter 1 discusses the dynamics of texts, cultural memory and material culture in biblical literature with particular focus on Jer 3, where a textual expansion to an early prophetic oracle calls on Israel to forget the Ark. Chapters 2 and 3 consider the contrasting narratives of the Ark’s construction in Deuteronomy (10:1–5, 8–9; 31:25–27) and Priestly writings (Exod 16:34–36; 25; 37; Lev 16; Num 7:89; 17:21–28). The two different contexts that these documents provide for the Ark empower it as a real thing to metonymically represent two different versions of the past, enabling its use as a symbol by Priestly writings and Deuteronomy in the realization of their contrasting visions of Israel’s present and future. Chapter 4 focuses on the literary growth and revision of biblical writings as memory work, analyzing three editions of the Ark’s installation in the Temple: 1 Kgs 8, 3 Kgdms 8, and 2 Chr 5. Chapters 5 and 6 explore considerations of the Ark’s loss in the Ark Narrative (AN; 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1) and ancient Jewish and Rabbinic writings. Chapter 5 focuses on AN, which tells the story of the Ark’s (temporary) loss in battle to the Philistines. While the Ark’s triumphant return to Israel in AN implies that the Ark was not truly lost, the text makes the Ark’s loss *thinkable*. Chapter 6 explores reactions to the Ark’s loss in ancient Jewish and early Rabbinic writings. The Hebrew Bible is curiously silent on the Ark’s

fate. Midrashic ancient Jewish and Rabbinic interpretation fill this lacuna by positing the Ark's survival and imminent return in the End Times. This apocalyptic deferral of the Temple's ultimate restoration capitalizes upon the Ark's presumed reality and absence. As memories of the Ark shift towards the apocalyptic future, "old things" like the Ark continue to occupy central roles in the self-fashioning of biblical societies. This dissertation explores the ways and forms that the lost Ark lives on in biblical societies: its lives, its afterlives, and the broad relationships between cultural memories and material culture that underlie all aspects of religious life.

*For Dana*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

## Books of the Bible

1 Chr	1 Chronicles
1 Kgdms	1 Kingdoms
1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
2 Kgs	2 Kings
2 Macc	2 Maccabees
3 Kgdms	3 Kingdoms
Deut	Deuteronomy
Exod	Exodus
Ez	Ezra
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Is	Isaiah
Joel	Joel
Josh	Joshua
Jud	Judges
Lam	Lamentations
Lev	Leviticus
Mic	Micah
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Ps/Pss	Psalms
Rev	Revelation

## Ancient Jewish and Rabbinic Literature

2 Bar	2 Baruch
4 Bar	4 Baruch
4 Ez	4 Ezra
Ant.	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i>
<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud
<i>B.M.M.</i>	<i>Baraita d'Meleket Ha-Mishkan</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
<i>Liv. Pro</i>	<i>Lives of the Prophets</i>
<i>m.</i>	Mishnah
<i>Mid.</i>	<i>Middot</i>
<i>S. 'Olam Rab.</i>	<i>Seder 'Olam Rabbah</i>

<i>t.</i>	Tosefta
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	<i>Praeparatio evangelica</i>
<i>y.</i>	Jerusalem Talmud
<i>Yoma</i>	<i>Yoma</i>
<i>Šeqal.</i>	<i>Šeqalim</i>
<i>Soṭah</i>	<i>Soṭah</i>

#### Other Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible Commentaries
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Friedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
AFO Beiheft	Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASORMS	American Schools of Oriental Research Monograph Series
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInterp</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006.
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CDA</i>	<i>Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> . Edited by Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000.
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FAT2	Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 2 Reihe
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentaries
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IMAGES</i>	<i>Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture</i>

<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
Joüon	Joüon, Paul. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991.
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JPST/BC	JPS Torah / Bible Commentary
<i>JS</i>	<i>Jewish Studies</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
L&S	<i>A Latin Dictionary</i> . Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short. New York: Harper Brothers, 1879
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies (JSOT Supplement Series)
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
OBC	Oxford Bible Commentary
OTG	Old Testament Guides
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseuepigrapha</i> . Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985.
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
<i>RCT</i>	<i>Revista Catalana de Teologia</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLTCS	Society of Biblical Literature Text-Critical Studies
SC	Septuagint & Cognate Studies
<i>Shnaton</i>	<i>Shnaton: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
SJSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WAWSupp	Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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## 1. REMEMBERING WITH THE ARK

Num 10:35 When the Ark set out, Moses would say:

“Arise O YHWH and your enemies are scattered;  
and your foes retreat from before you.”

36 And when it came to rest, he would say:

“Return O YHWH to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.”<sup>1</sup>

Deut 10:3 So I [Moses] made an ark of acacia wood, and I cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand... 5 Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, as YHWH commanded me.

Exod 37:1 Bezalel made the Ark of acacia wood: two and a half cubits, its length; a cubit and a half, its width; and a cubit and a half, its height. 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and he made a molding of gold for it around. 3 He cast for it four rings of gold for its four feet, two rings on the first side and two rings on the second side.

The Ark (אָרוֹן) appears in biblical and ancient Jewish writings within story, law, and song, represented throughout as a singular ritual object: a chest, distinguished by its antiquity and its connection with the divine presence.<sup>2</sup> Biblical writers assume that their audiences are familiar with the Ark. They present the chest without introduction and almost always in the definite state, either with the definite article or, more often, bound to definite nouns.<sup>3</sup> This familiarity is illusory, however; representations of the Ark differ substantially across the Hebrew Bible. Early writings emphasize the Ark's connection with YHWH's real, physical presence, proceeding

<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own, except where indicated below.

<sup>2</sup> The term אָרוֹן designates chests in biblical writings, including the subject of the present study and the following: a sarcophagus (Gen 50:26) and a collection box (2 Kgs 12:10, 11; 2 Chr 24:8, 10, 11). In contemporary English, “ark” (from the Latin *arca*, “a place for keeping any thing, a chest, box” [L&S, 152–153]) refers both to the subject of the present study and to the vessel constructed by Noah in Gen 7–9 (תִּבְיָה). This tradition has roots in LXX and the Vulgate, which both use a single term to refer to the two objects (LXX, αὐτοστός; Vulgate, *arca*).

<sup>3</sup> In order of frequency: the Ark of God (אָרוֹן אֱלֹהִים) / the Ark of YHWH (אָרוֹן יְהוָה), the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH (אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה), the Ark of the Covenant (אָרוֹן הַבְּרִית), the Ark of the Testimony (אָרוֹן הָעֵדוּת; sometimes elliptically, “the Testimony” [הָעֵדוּת]), the Ark of the Covenant of God (אָרוֹן בְּרִית הָאֱלֹהִים), the Ark of Your Might (אָרוֹן עֲזָתְךָ), and the Holy Ark (אָרוֹן־קֹדֶשׁ); “ark” only occurs in the indefinite state in the two accounts of its commissioning, before it would be reasonable to use the definite article. While these names vary the representation of the Ark, they do all refer to and draw on the same object from the biblical past.



before the people on their way through the wilderness, and, when necessary, into battle.<sup>4</sup> Where the Ark went, YHWH went—as Num 10:35–36 summarizes memorably. Other biblical writings represent the Ark as YHWH’s footstool, above which the god sits enthroned—a concept that may be implied in these earlier representations.<sup>5</sup> These conceptions of the Ark persist through later biblical writings, though they are challenged in the two accounts of the Ark’s origins: Deut 10:1–5 and Exod 25:10–22 and 37:1–9. Both accounts situate the Ark’s construction in the legendary wilderness period, but offer dramatically different visions of its origins, physical characteristics, and most importantly, its symbolic and ritual values. Deuteronomy avoids connecting the Ark with YHWH’s presence. The account in Deuteronomy credits the construction of the Ark to Moses, representing it primarily as a chest for the Tablets of the Covenant that YHWH gives to Moses at Horeb. The Ark’s significance comes from its contents, the Tablets—connecting the Ark fundamentally with the version of the law Deuteronomy attributes to Moses. In contrast, the Priestly account in Exodus represents the Ark as a focal point for Israel’s ritual life, elaborately gilded by the enigmatic Israelite master artisan Bezalel at God’s command through Moses. The Ark is commissioned as a part of the tent sanctuary, along with its cherub-topped lid and a range of other items of ritual furniture. Together with the rest of the Tabernacle, the Ark serves as the earthly locus for the cloudy, fiery, and critically, non-anthropomorphic, presence of Israel’s god. Together, these items lend antiquity, authority, and reality to the Priestly vision of religious life, around which they either lived or wished to live. Though the two accounts are not entirely dissimilar, they are not reconcilable. Most importantly, they emphasize different features of the Ark. The chests these two texts envision differ fundamentally both physically and symbolically, built at different times, in different places, by different craftsmen. They represent two visions for the Ark, and through the Ark, the people Israel.

This dissertation constructs a cultural biography of the Ark.<sup>6</sup> From Exodus to Chronicles and in works of biblical interpretation through the Mishnah, I investigate through the Ark the close, but often complicated, relationships that have existed between material culture and cultural memory in biblical and ancient Jewish societies.<sup>7</sup> The project considers the different ways that

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Num 10:35–36; Josh 3–4; 6–7; 1 Sam 4–6; 7:2–4; 2 Sam 6; 1 Kgs 8:1–13. Each of these texts is the product of extensive redactional development, shifting the ways these texts refer to and represent the Ark—a dynamic I explore below.

<sup>5</sup> For example, 1 Sam 4–6 (especially the epithet “enthroned on cherubs” [1 Sam 4:4; 6:2; cf. 2 Kgs 19:15; Is 37:16; Ps 80:2; 1 Chr 13:6] and the equivalence drawn between Eli’s chair and the Ark [1 Sam 4:18]); Pss 99:5; 132:7; Lam 2:1; 1 Chr 28:2.

<sup>6</sup> On the “cultural biography” of things, see below and Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–63; and Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91. Both outline a method I build upon below for tracing the shifting values of objects.

<sup>7</sup> On the place of objects in texts, see below and Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). On texts (including the Bible) as things, see Peter Stallybrass, “Books and Scrolls; Navigating the Bible,”

the writers of the Hebrew Bible and its early interpreters have remembered the Ark as a “real thing,” making meaning with it both before and after its likely loss in the 6th century BCE. Whether or not the Ark existed, biblical writers and interpreters appear to have believed that it was at one point a real, physical chest.<sup>8</sup> Through their texts, they contest the Ark’s history, form, and significance—attributing to it features that are both plausibly historical and imaginary. I argue that these texts form and mobilize the Ark in different ways as a *lieu de mémoire*, serving as powerful, presumed “real” focal points for the writers’ competing social and religious programs.<sup>9</sup> The Ark’s absence is key to this process, both before and after its disappearance. Where the Ark is described as being in public, texts emphasize its dangerousness—underscoring the necessity that it be kept apart.<sup>10</sup> The Ark is always somewhere else. What does the Ark bring to these constructions of the past, despite, and, at times, because of its absence? The Ark allows for the exploration of the place of material culture in collective memory, both when present and when absent—demonstrating the power of real things and the profound, complex implications of their loss. Biblical writers and interpreters contend with the earliest memories of the Ark, either directly or indirectly; variously embracing, contesting, and reimagining the Ark—but always remembering with the Ark.

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in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, eds. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 42–77.

<sup>8</sup> On the complicated relationship between the real and the imaginary in Hellenistic and ancient Jewish cultures, see Steven Weitzman, “Absent but Accounted for: A New Approach to the Copper Scroll.” *HTR* 108.3 (2015): 423–47. While the article is primarily addressed to the status of the treasure listed in the Copper Scroll, Weitzman also considers the presumed reality of the Ark: “Hellenistic-Roman period . . . sources do not make an ontological distinction between the lost ark supposedly hidden under the Temple and other cultic vessels present in the Temple in more visible and verifiable ways” (446). Whether or not the Ark existed historically, ancient Jewish writings (and I would argue, the Hebrew Bible) regard it as having been as real as everything in the Temple. Doing so enables the Ark to function alongside these other real things, though it is typically absent: either in the Temple’s innermost chamber or lost to history. For additional examples and analysis of presumed real things functioning in this way, see Ra’anan S. Boustan and Marie Thérèse Champagne, “Walking in the Shadows of the Past: The Jewish Experience of Rome in the Twelfth Century,” *Medieval Encounters* 17.4 (2011): 464–94.

<sup>9</sup> On *lieux de mémoire*, see below and Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (1989): 18–19.

<sup>10</sup> In every phase of the Ark’s biography, biblical writings report that the Ark was kept away from the people. Levites are appointed to carry the Ark (Deut 10:8–9; 1 Chr 15:15; 16:4; the Kohathites in Num 3:27–32; 4:5–15). The Ark is stored in isolation, as well: first in the Tent of Meeting (Exod 25 and 40), then Shiloh (Josh 18), until it was captured and taken to Philistia (1 Sam 4–6). After its return, the Ark was kept at the house of Abinadab and Eleazar in Kirjath-jearim for twenty years (1 Sam 7:2), before David (following a three-month isolation in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite [2 Sam 6:1–11; 1 Chr 8:1–13]) moved it to Zion (2 Sam 6–7; 1 Chr 15), where it was ultimately installed in the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kgs 6–8). Though Psalms 78, 96, 105, and 132 imply that the Ark was involved in processions, this exception merely proves the rule; for it to be taken out, it must have been kept away. Accounts of the Ark’s involvement in battle always took place in the legendary past, another distant, unreachable place.

In this introductory chapter, I investigate what it means to remember with the Ark. Following an outline of the contours of existing scholarship on the Ark, I ground my discussion in a case study: Jeremiah's appeal to Israel to forget the Ark (Jer 3:14–20). Engaging this text lays the foundation for this dissertation in two ways. First, I show that the text offers a window into the relationship between cultural memory and material culture. Second, I show that the internal redactional development of texts like this must also be analyzed as memory work. The Ark appears in an expansion to the original poetic oracle, reframing the Ark and asserting something new by reworking something old.

## I. History of Scholarship

To date, scholarship on the Ark has largely proceeded along two separate tracks. The first track consists of histories of interpretation of biblical writings about the Ark in ancient Jewish literature.<sup>11</sup> These reception-focused studies point to the enduring appeal of the Ark even after its loss, when it existed only as a memory in biblical cultures. Though these ancient biblical interpreters represent the Ark as a singular object from the Israelite past, these studies illustrate the differences that exist across the interpretations. The second track consists of historical and literary studies of the Ark's roles in different biblical sources.<sup>12</sup> This group of historical studies seeks to trace the evolution of the Ark using the biblical text as evidence of religious phenomena in ancient Israel.

This dissertation connects these two approaches, studying the Ark in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Jewish biblical interpretation. In many ways, the reception history of the Ark begins with the Hebrew Bible, as texts from different periods *represent*—and I would argue *remember*—the Ark's roles in and through the revision and creation of biblical literature. These

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<sup>11</sup> On the representation of the Ark in Josephus, see Christopher T. Begg, "The Ark in Philistia according to Josephus *Ant* 6,1–6," *ETL* 72.4 (1996): 385–397; idem, "The Loss of the Ark according to Josephus," *Liber Annuus* 46 (1996): 167–186; idem, "David's Transfer of the Ark according to Josephus," *BBR* 7 (1997): 11–36; idem, "The Return of the Ark according to Josephus," *BBR* 8 (1998): 15–37; idem, "Solomon's Installation of the Ark in the Temple according to Josephus," *RCT* 30.2 (2005): 251–265.

On the approaches to the Ark's fate in early rabbinic literature, see Chaim Milikowsky, "Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant? The True History (of the Ancient Traditions)," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Michael Segal et al., STDJ 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 208–229.

On the approaches to the Ark's fate in ancient Jewish and Christian literature and modern scholarship, see John Day, "Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?" In *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, LHB/OTS 422 (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 250–70.

<sup>12</sup> One possible exception to the overall independence of these two tracks concerns work on the Ark in Chronicles, which often approaches reception history through the comparative analysis of the Ark in Samuel–Kings and Chronicles. See, for example, Christopher T. Begg, "The Ark in Chronicles," in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, ed. M. Patrick Graham, LHB/OTS 371 (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 133–145.

strata can be seen through redaction- and text-critical analyses, revealing the earliest phases of the Ark's reception history. Further, Kugel<sup>13</sup> shows that biblical interpretation is often sparked by the perception of “imperfections” that developed over the extended period of the composition of biblical literature. By marshalling diverse critical approaches to investigate the composition and reception of diverse biblical writings about the Ark together, this dissertation illuminates their fundamental interconnectedness and the role of objects present and absent in the formation of memory across the biblical traditions.

### I.1 Select Historical and Literary Approaches to the Ark

Historical and literary approaches to the Ark have illuminated the differences and possible trajectories of the Ark's roles in biblical Israel. Haran<sup>14</sup> identifies two major approaches to the question of the Ark's historic functions: that the Ark was originally either a fetish chest or a divine throne. Ultimately, Haran concludes that the Ark served both functions. It is a chest, as the term אָרוֹן suggests.<sup>15</sup> It holds the Tablets of the Covenant in D and the *'ēduṭ* in P.<sup>16</sup> That the Ark may have at an early stage served only that function has long been suspected, recently by Römer.<sup>17</sup> Haran suggests that the Ark served as a part of YHWH's throne, the footstool.<sup>18</sup> The Ark stood beneath cherubs in the First Temple (1 Kgs 6:23; 8:6) and in the Tabernacle (Exod 25:10–22). One epithet for YHWH is “seated [upon] cherubs” (יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים).<sup>19</sup> There is considerable iconographic evidence for the inclusion of cherubs in throne design.<sup>20</sup> Haran suggests that the Ark could be a fetish chest and throne component simultaneously.<sup>21</sup> In this

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<sup>13</sup> James Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Menachem Haran, “The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Symbolic Significance in Biblical Ritual,” *IEJ* 9.1 (1958): 30–38; 9.2 (1958): 89–94.

<sup>15</sup> H.-J. Zobel, “אָרוֹן, 'arōn,” *TDOT*, 363–374.

<sup>16</sup> Haran conceives of the two as the same object. In Chapter 3, I discuss why this may not be the case.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Römer, *The Invention of God* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 91–92. This tradition has its roots in earlier German scholarship including Wilhelm Lotz, *Die Bundslade* (Erlangen and Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1901), who identified this as the earliest phase in the Ark's history.

<sup>18</sup> cf. 1 Chr 28:2, Pss 99:5, 132:7; Lam 2:1.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Is 37:16; Ps 80:2; 99:1; 1 Chr 13:6. William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2B (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 517, notes however that the absence of a preposition “permits alternative readings.” William R. Arnold, *Ephod and Ark: A Study in the Records and Religion of the Ancient Hebrews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 37–39, suggests “dwelling among cherubs.” On this possible reading, see the recent expanded treatment of Raanan Eichler, “The Meaning of יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים,” *ZAW* 126.3 (2014): 358–371.

<sup>20</sup> Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), 21–22.

<sup>21</sup> Menachem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1978), 252.

connection, Haran describes an ancient Near Eastern convention to deposit books, documents, oaths, and covenants before gods.<sup>22</sup> YHWH's divine presence on the Ark was very real. Sommer<sup>23</sup> shows that ancient Near Eastern groups including Israel conceived of the divine body as fluid and multiple. Images embodied gods. In the negative space above the Ark/footstool, YHWH was figured, present, and as real as anything else.

Mettinger<sup>24</sup> expands upon possible trajectories of the Ark's evolution in the context of three "theologies" or conceptions of the divine presence expressed in biblical writings: the Zion-Sabaoth theology of the Jerusalem cult tradition; the name theology; and the kabod theology. In the Zion-Sabaoth theology of the Jerusalem cult, Mettinger argues that the Ark served as the footstool of the divinely enthroned YHWH: "His throne seat was composed of the conjoined inner wings of the cherubim, which met on the horizontal plane [in the Temple (1 Kgs 6:23)], and the Ark served as his footstool."<sup>25</sup> Likely in the wake of the destruction of the Temple, Mettinger suggests that two competing theologies emerged: The name theology (D) and the kabod theology (P). Both respond to the catastrophe of the Temple's loss by "dethroning" YHWH. Sommer<sup>26</sup> builds on this observation, showing how both D and P contest the inherited conceptions of the divine body—reimagining the possibilities of YHWH's presence in relation to the Ark.

Drawing on the work of Eichrodt,<sup>27</sup> von Rad,<sup>28</sup> and Weinfeld,<sup>29</sup> Mettinger suggests that a "name theology" emerges in D, DtrH, and certain additions to Jeremiah. The theology's core is expressed in Deuteronomy's centralization formula: the Temple is the "place [YHWH] will choose as a dwelling for his Name" (Deut 16:16).<sup>30</sup> There is an apparent displacement of YHWH

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<sup>22</sup> Haran, "The Ark and the Cherubim," 89.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*; idem, "YHWH Sabaoth: The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5–7 December, 1979*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 109–38.

<sup>25</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 23; see Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 252.

<sup>26</sup> Sommer, *Bodies of God*, 58–79.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J.A. Baker, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961–1967[1933]), 1:206–10.

<sup>28</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, trans. David Stalker (London: SCM Press, 1953), 37–44.

<sup>29</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 191–209.

<sup>30</sup> The formula "the place in which YHWH your God will choose to cause his name to dwell" is found in Deut 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2; quoted in Ezra 6:12; Neh 1:9; Jer 7:12; and referenced with the shorter *לְשֵׁם יְהוָה* (Deut 12:21; 14:24; 1 Kgs 9:3; 11:36; 2 Chr 6:20) and *לְהַיְתוֹת שְׁמִי שָׁמָּה* (1 Kgs 8:16; 2 Chr 6:5–6; 7:16) throughout D and the DtrH. Interpretations of this expression vary, though most hold it to be a part of a broader theological system—the "name theology." Either way, it represents a distancing from traditional conceptions of the divine presence. On this, see chapter 2; see also Sandra L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and*

in these texts: Instead of YHWH occupying the Temple, YHWH dwells in heaven.<sup>31</sup> Only YHWH's "name" (שֵׁם) is connected with the Temple. Weinfeld describes this as a "turning-point in Israelite religion."<sup>32</sup> The Zion-Sabaoth theology conceives of YHWH in anthropomorphic terms, enabling the deity to among other things sit on a cherub-throne and rest, using the Ark as a footstool.<sup>33</sup> In the name theology, YHWH dwells in heaven. "Explicit formulations relocate God to heaven," Mettinger explains. "However, presence of his Name at the cultic site is the *conditio sine qua non* for Israel to invoke her God in prayer."<sup>34</sup> Weinfeld<sup>35</sup> describes the Ark's function in Deuteronomy as "educational": "it houses the tablets upon which the words of God are engraved, and at its side the book of the Torah is laid, from which one reads to the people so that they may learn to fear the Lord (Deut 31:36; cf. vv. 12 and 13)," in this way, the Ark fits into Weinfeld's broader argument about Deuteronomy's "secularizing" approach.

Mettinger suggests that the kabod theology develops in P and Ezekiel.<sup>36</sup> There emerges in these writings a different reconceptualization of the divine presence. YHWH is present as kabod (כְּבוֹד), which is conventionally translated elsewhere (and below) as "Glory": YHWH's numinous presence. In P, YHWH is present above the Ark but is not enthroned. In fact, the wings of the cherub on the Ark in P would have made a very poor seat.<sup>37</sup> Seow<sup>38</sup> independently reaches a very similar conclusion likening the Ark to a "rendezvous where God would meet the people ... not the locus of a throning presence."<sup>39</sup> The Ark represented YHWH's "chosen place"<sup>40</sup> in P. It was not the only place, however. "By implication, then, God could still abide in the midst of the people even after the concrete symbols of Presence were no more. God's presence was not limited by the existence of a box."<sup>41</sup> The Ark was significant but it was not a throne or footstool. Further, Haran<sup>42</sup> observes that the Ark existed in P only within the ecosystem of the Tabernacle. Haran discusses the Ark in this context at great length, outlining its deep integration into the

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*the Name Theology: Lešakkēn Šemô Šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, BZAW 318 (New York: de Gruyter, 2002), esp. 7–11 and on 1 Kgs 8 see 76–90; Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 38–79 (esp. 48–50); Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 191–209; Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, ; 2 vols., trans. J.A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961–1967[1933]), 1:206–10; von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, 37–44.

<sup>31</sup> This is expressed especially clearly in Solomon's prayer in 1 Kgs 8:14–69, a Deuteronomistic expansion I discuss in Chapter 4.

<sup>32</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 37.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Sommer, *Bodies of God*.

<sup>34</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 78.

<sup>35</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 37.

<sup>36</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 80–115.

<sup>37</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*. On models for the cherubs on the throne, see Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 378–379, 516–519; and Raanan Eichler, "The Function of the Cherubs on the Ark," *Tarbiz* 79.2 (2011): 165–85.

<sup>38</sup> C.L. Seow, "The Designation of the Ark in Priestly Theology," *HTR* 8 (1984): 185–98.

<sup>39</sup> C.L. Seow, "Ark of the Covenant," *ABD* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1:386–93.

<sup>40</sup> Seow, "Ark of the Covenant."

<sup>41</sup> Seow, *Designation of the Ark*, 191.

<sup>42</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 158.

priestly ritual system.

Studies of the Ark Narrative in 1 Sam 4–6; 2 Sam 6 and the account of the Ark’s installation in the Temple in 1 Kgs 8 have tended to ask primarily literary questions about the relationship between the texts and the remainder of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). Bodner<sup>43</sup> has identified a trend in scholarship on the Ark Narrative concerning the relationship between it and the rest of the DtrH. Earlier research on this relationship suggested that the Ark Narrative is an early independent unit.<sup>44</sup> More recent studies have suggested that it is a later addition.<sup>45</sup> Both earlier and later works agree that it represents a unit, crafted as a whole either before or after the Exile. This assumption seems to me unnecessary—the Ark Narrative may, as Van Seters argues, contain sections that bear the mark of the exile (the “exile” of the “glory” from Israel, for example)<sup>46</sup> and not be an entirely exilic text. Other sections, such as, for example, the carrying of the Ark into battle, are distinctively pre-exilic. 1 Kings 8 also clearly has a pre-DtrH core that appears to have undergone a number of expansions.<sup>47</sup>

Text-, source-, and redaction-criticism has of course been a part of historical and literary studies of the Ark. It has served a number of key roles in these analyses, but it has not been a primary mode of interrogating representations of the Ark. In this dissertation, I contend that these critical approaches can also help us understand how the memory of the Ark changed over time. The textual expansions and revisions that these approaches reveal represent the trajectories of memories the Ark, impacting the significance of both the Ark and the text in which it is embedded. Why the Ark was so central to the religious outlooks of such diverse biblical writers, why authors habitually returned to and contested the nature of the Ark, are questions that have not been satisfactorily answered, and that this dissertation begins to address. Employing

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<sup>43</sup> Keith Bodner, “Ark-Eology: Shifting Emphases in ‘Ark Narrative’ Scholarship.” *CBR* 4 (2006): 169–197.

<sup>44</sup> Leonhard Rost, *The Succession to the Throne of David*, trans. Michael D. Rutter and David M. Gunn (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), on whose work this theory is built; see also Antony F. Campbell, *The Ark Narrative, 1 Sam 4–6; 2 Sam 6: A Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical Study*, SBLDS 16 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); idem, “Yahweh and the Ark: A Case Study in Narrative,” *JBL* 98.1 (1979): 31–43; idem, *1 Samuel*, FOTL 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). Patrick D. Miller, Jr. and J.J.M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the ‘Ark Narrative’ of 1 Samuel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

<sup>45</sup> See recently Graeme Auld, “1 and 2 Samuel,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, eds. J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp 213–245; John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

<sup>46</sup> Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 252.

<sup>47</sup> See recently the general analysis of Thomas Römer, “Redaction Criticism: 1 Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, RBS 56 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Lit, 2009), 69–70; and Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz. *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, JSOTSup 115, ASORMS 5 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992): 260–277, who illuminates the structure and priestly expansions in 1 Kgs 8.

techniques of text-, source-, and redaction-criticism, this dissertation attends to the internal development of the text and considers the ways in which these biblical texts serve as forums for the contestation of the Ark and, through the Ark, the identities of Israel and their god YHWH.

## I.2. Remembering the Ark in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Biblical Interpretation

Existing scholarship has interrogated the Ark's history, representation, and reception, enriching our understanding of the Ark's journey history in biblical writings and interpretations. These studies have illuminated the Ark's roles in different biblical writings and interpretations. However, as yet there has been no systematic, trans-historical analysis of the Ark and its meaning and purpose across the breadth of biblical writings and interpretations. There has been discussion of what the Ark may have been historically and what the Ark was in each text, but not why it comes to be so widely represented and, I would argue, *remembered*. Further, discussions of the Ark have tended to focus more on its role in ritual life than social life. This project interrogates the Ark's social lives, putting the Ark into conversation with social thinkers from anthropology, sociology, and memory studies. Addressing these questions is the central purpose of this dissertation.

Yet the very need to ask these synthetic questions has even been questioned. McConville cautions against overemphasis of the differences in representations of the Ark: "To claim ... that Deuteronomy and Exodus 25–31 [P] have different theologies of the ark is to fall into the fallacy of assuming that every reference to a phenomenon conveys the writers' whole concept of it." McConville is correct that these representations of the Ark share certain features; they refer to the same chest, emphasizing different aspects. That does not mean that these differences in representation should be ignored, however. What matters is what their writers *actually say* about the Ark, *forming* and *conveying* contrasting worldviews through this singular object from Israel's shared past. The presence of these differences in the text is sufficient to warrant further analysis. Historical-, literary-, and reception-critical analyses have shown the different forms that the Ark has taken in biblical literature. To represent an object like the Ark is to remember the Ark. This study builds upon and reorients historical-, literary-, and reception-critical questions and combines them with analysis of the internal development of biblical writings to explore how biblical writers remembered the Ark and continued to construct its symbolic values by describing, invoking, and claiming it before and after its loss. It considers social, historical, and literary questions about the Ark. It begins with the careful text- and redaction-critical analysis of texts, continues through the explication of different ways that the Ark is constructed and it draws conclusions about the use of the Ark and its memory. These biblical texts reflect and helped to form cultural memories. Reception history shares much with mnemohistory, an approach to the diachronic analysis of memory that I engage in across this dissertation.<sup>48</sup> In doing so, it aims at

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<sup>48</sup> See discussion in Chapter 2 and Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); idem, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); idem, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Ronald Hendel, "Cultural Memory," in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*, ed. Ronald Hendel (New York: Oxford



something more than a history of the biblical cult or biblical interpretation, though it engages both scholarly traditions. Beyond this, it is motivated by broad theoretical questions concerning the social entanglements of memory, religion, and culture, and in particular questions about the ways in which humans and material things interact in those spheres, even after objects cease to exist materially. It is interested broadly in the power of the material and its place in religious life, with a particular emphasis on what happens when important materials of religion are lost. How has lost biblical material culture, including the Ark, been sought, recreated, and, significantly, claimed and contested. This project explores the ways and forms that the lost Ark lives on in those societies: its lives and its afterlives; put differently, its cultural biography and the broad and deep relationship between religious memories and material culture that underlies all aspects of religious life.

## II. Objects, Absence, and the Construction of *Lieux de Mémoire*

Before turning to the initial phase of the cultural biography of the Ark in Chapter 2, I will consider a curious counter-memory. Not all biblical writers remember the Ark positively. Chapter 3 of the Book of Jeremiah offers one example:

Jer 3:14 Back, backsliding boys—an oracle of YHWH—  
for I myself am your master.

I will take you, one from a city  
two from a family, I will bring you to Zion.

15 I will give you shepherds after my own heart;  
they will shepherd you with knowledge and understanding.

16 And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days—an oracle of YHWH—they will never again say “The Ark of the Covenant of YHWH.” It shall not come to mind; they will not remember it, they will not miss it, and another will not be made. 17 At that time, they will call Jerusalem “The Throne of YHWH”; all nations will gather to it, to the name of YHWH, to Jerusalem; they will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil minds. 18 In those days, the House of Judah will go up to the House of Israel and they will bring them back together from the Land of the North to the land I gave to their ancestors.

19 I myself thought how I would set you among my boys,  
and give you a pleasant land,  
the most beautiful heritage of all the nations.

And I thought you would call (*ketiv*: תִּקְרָאֵי, *qere*: תִּקְרָאֵי)<sup>49</sup> me, My Father,

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University Press, 2010), 28–46, who articulates the value of mnemohistory for the study of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>49</sup> In v. 19, note the difference between *ketiv* and *qere* of the verbs קרא and שׁוּב. In both cases, the *ketiv* is second person common plural and the *qere* is second person feminine singular. In both cases, the *ketiv* is to be preferred for two reasons. First, in v. 20 it becomes clear that the verbs address the House of Israel. In Jeremiah, “House of Israel” most often takes a second person common plural verb (cf. Jer 2:26; 11:10; 48:13). Second, there is reason to believe that the prose of Jer 16–18 represents a later addition, cutting into an originally contiguous poetry of

and you would not turn (*ketiv*: תְּשׁוּבוּ, *qere*: תְּשׁוּבֵי)<sup>50</sup> from following me.

20 Instead, the faithless wife has left her husband:

thus you have been faithless to me, House of Israel—an oracle of YHWH.

In vv. 16–18, the text of Jeremiah on Judah to *forget* the Ark: “It shall not come to mind; they will not remember it, they will not miss it, and another will not be made” (3:16). The Ark must not even be mentioned. This is a bold statement for a number of reasons. First of all, Jeremiah 3:16 represents one of only two acknowledgements of the Ark’s disappearance in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>51</sup> If there were an Ark, all accounts report that it was last kept in the First Temple.<sup>52</sup> Biblical writings do not however explicitly account for the Ark’s fate when Babylonian forces loot and destroy the Temple in 586 BCE.<sup>53</sup> The chest is not listed among the items removed from the Temple by foreign powers<sup>54</sup> or among the holy vessels and utensils the Persians return for the Second Temple.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, there does not appear to have been an ark in the Second Temple at all.<sup>56</sup> Though the texts that describe the destruction of the Temple are admittedly short, the Ark remains a loose end. Gaps of this significance in biblical writings tend not to remain unfilled, as they attract the ongoing work of biblical interpreters<sup>57</sup> beginning in ancient Jewish<sup>58</sup> and

vv. 14–15, 19–20. I discuss this in greater detail in the notes below. For now, it should suffice to note the following: vv. 14–15 address group in the second person common plural (וְאַתֶּם ... וְאַתֶּם ... וְאַתֶּם). If indeed vv. 14–15, 19–20 were originally contiguous, the *ketiv* (in the second person common plural) likely represents the original reading. If that is the case, it is also possible to explain the *qere*. Immediately following v. 19, the subject of the verbs קרא and שׁוּב is likened to a “faithless wife.” It is not unreasonable to suspect that the verbs became second person feminine singular due to the “faithless wife.”

<sup>50</sup> See note above. Note further: The second half of the two-part parallel line in v. 19 ends with תְּשׁוּבוּ (“you (pl) will return”), connecting with the opening imperative of the poem in v. 14: “Back” (שׁוּבוּ).

<sup>51</sup> Lamentations 2:1 may obliquely acknowledge the Ark’s loss when it laments the loss of God’s “footstool,” destroyed “in the day of his anger” (cf. Ps 132:7).

<sup>52</sup> 1 Kings 8; 2 Chr 5; no texts describe its removal from the Temple, though 2 Chr 35:3 notes that Josiah directs the reinstallation of the Ark in the Temple as a part of a broader religious reformation. As the reinstallation of the Ark is not reported in Kings, the episode likely represents a Persian period expression of anxiety over the Ark’s fate and more broadly, the Hebrew Bible’s silence on the Ark after its installation.

<sup>53</sup> The Babylonians despoil the Temple twice, first in 597 BCE (2 Kgs 24:10–13; 2 Chr 36:9–10) and second (for the last time) in 586 BCE (2 Kgs 25:8–17; 2 Chr 36:17–19; Jer 52:12–23).

<sup>54</sup> Biblical writings note that the First Temple was looted a number of times before the Babylonians, by the Egyptians under Shoshenq I c. 925 BCE (1 Kgs 14:25–27) and by Israel under Jehoash in 2 Kgs 14:11–14.

<sup>55</sup> Ez 5:13–15.

<sup>56</sup> Josephus, *J.W.* 5.5; cf. *m. Mid.* 3.6 and *b. Yoma* 22b.

<sup>57</sup> Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 6; for a survey of ancient Jewish materials, see John Day, “Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?” in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, LHB/OT 422 (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 250–70.

Rabbinic<sup>59</sup> literature and continuing through the present day.<sup>60</sup> This process also shaped the Hebrew Bible, as the Ark attains increased prominence in some literature written and/or completed after the Exile.<sup>61</sup> For example, the text in which the Ark appears most frequently per 1000 words is 1 Chronicles (34 times; 2.03/1000 words), which postdates the Ark's likely loss by hundreds of years.<sup>62</sup> Whatever became of the Ark, its specter and its presumed reality and relevance persist long after the destruction of the First Temple.

With this as background, the Ark text in Jeremiah 3, which appears to be secondary addition to the poetic oracle, boldly envisions the restoration of Jerusalem *without* the Ark. In fact, the ideal future the text outlines in some ways depends on the Ark passing into oblivion. Internal tensions within Jeremiah 3:14–20 suggest that the text is not the product of one hand, but rather three pluses cutting into a classically formed pre-exilic poem addressed to Israel (3:14–15, 19–20).<sup>63</sup> The three prose additions in vv. 16–18 each begin with disjunctive markers typically associated with additions: “It will be ... in those days” (וְהָיָה בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה [v. 16]), “At that

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<sup>59</sup> See chapter 6; for a survey of Rabbinic materials, see Chaim Milikowsky, “Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant? The True History (of the Ancient Traditions),” in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Michael Segal et al., STDJ 113 (Boston: Brill, 2015), 208–29.

<sup>60</sup> The Bible's silence on the Ark's fate has inspired countless modern claims on the Ark, from Ethiopia to Hollywood. See, for example, Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Ark of the Covenant: Solving the 2,500 Year Old Mystery of the Fabled Biblical Ark* (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> The Ark features prominently in P, Chronicles, and the DtrH, but is not addressed in Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah 40–66, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi; on this tension and the Ark in Chronicles, see Christopher T. Begg, “The Ark in Chronicles,” 133–45.

<sup>62</sup> The term אָרוֹן appears across 15 books, in order of frequency per 1000 words: 1 Chr (34 times; 2.03/1000 words), 1 Sam (33; 1.92/1000), Josh (30; 1.89/1000), 2 Sam (21; 1.22/1000), Exod (30; 1.16/1000), 2 Chr (18; 0.85/1000), 1Kgs (12; 0.59/1000), Deut (8; 0.35/1000), Num (8; 0.32/1000), 2 Kgs (2; 0.11/1000), and Jud (1; 0.06/1000), Lev (2; 1/1000), Jer (1; 0.03/1000), Pss (1; 0.03/1000).

<sup>63</sup> The original literary unity of Jeremiah 3:14–15 and 19–20 is suggested by the recurrence of language (“return” [שׁוּבוּ]; “I myself+1st person verb” [אָנֹכִי+י]; “sons/children” [בְּנֵי]), as well as a common theme and structure. Thematically and structurally, both 14–15 and 19–20 address YHWH's gift of the land to his people Israel—first prospectively, then retrospectively. The text begins and ends with direct addresses, which form a chiasmic structure linked by “oracle of YHWH” and marital imagery:

14a “oracle of YHWH” (נְאֻם־יְהוָה)

14b For I myself am your master/husband (כִּי אֲנֹכִי בַעַלְתִּי בְכֶם)

20a “Instead, as a faithless wife ...” (אַכֵּן כַּגִּידָה אִשָּׁה מְרֻעָה)

20b “oracle of YHWH” (נְאֻם־יְהוָה)

When the two halves of the poem are considered together, it becomes clear that the “backsliding boys” that are the subject of the initial imperative “back” (שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי שׁוֹבְבִים) can only be Israel. The closing line makes this explicit, likening the House of Israel to a faithless wife (20). For this reason, this layer of the text can be dated to between the fall of Israel in 722 and the fall of Jerusalem in 587. Note the deft re-identification of the “backsliding boys” in the three prose additions, first with Jerusalem (16–17) and second with both Judah and Israel (18).

time” (בְּעַת הַהִיא [v. 17]), and “In those days” (בְּיָמֵי הַהֵמָּה [v. 18]).<sup>64</sup> Each of these markers fold new visions for Jerusalem into the poem. The texts and ideas they introduce represent ongoing additions to what McKane calls the “rolling corpus”<sup>65</sup> of Jeremiah, adding to and reframing what comes before. The three “rolling” layers of this prose addition can be indicated as follows:

16 And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days—an oracle of YHWH—they will never again say “The Ark of the Covenant of YHWH.” It shall not come to mind; they will not remember it, they will not miss it, and another will not be made. 17 At that time, they will call Jerusalem “The Throne of YHWH”; all nations will gather to it, to the name of YHWH, to Jerusalem; they will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil minds. 18 In those days, the House of Judah will go up to the House of Israel and they will bring them back together from the Land of the North to the land I gave to their ancestors.

The three additions in verses 16 to 18 form a broad and radical vision for the reformation of religious life in Jerusalem, distancing the national cult from both its exclusivity and its ritual and material entanglements. In their creative vision, the Ark stands metonymically for both the exclusivity and the material and ritual dimensions of the First Temple. The Ark was believed to have been the focus of the Temple’s elaborate ritual cult, a complex of practices that were for the most part localized in Jerusalem.<sup>66</sup> By folding its call to forget the Ark into the poetry of 3:14–15, the first addition in v. 16 opposes “knowledge” and “understanding” (3:15) with the Ark. YHWH is to bring the “backsliding children” back to Zion, envisioning their restoration under pious shepherds—but only after the people move past the Ark. The Ark is established as the antithesis of “knowledge” and “understanding,” no doubt due to its embeddedness in Temple ritual. The second addition in v. 17 pushes this already radical idea even further, envisioning the expansion of the cult and the inversion of Jerusalem’s sacred geography. With the Ark forgotten, “all nations will gather to it, to the name of YHWH, to Jerusalem” (3:17). Intriguingly, the City of Jerusalem is to replace the Ark as the Throne of YHWH. As a component of the Throne of YHWH (perhaps its footstool), the Ark was kept away from all but a select few in the Temple’s Holy of Holies—the most hallowed precinct in the City of Jerusalem. In the future this stratum of Jeremiah envisions, the people are invited in; the City itself becomes the Throne, with its walls, its streets, and perhaps even its citizens.<sup>67</sup> The critique of the Ark, the Temple, and Israel’s “stubborn... evil minds” is consistent with Jeremiah’s broader critique of the Temple and

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<sup>64</sup> On this phenomenon in Deuteronomy, see S.E. Lowenstamm, “The Formula בְּעַת הַהִיא in Deuteronomy,” *Tarbiz* 68 (1969): 99–104 [Hebrew]. The three plusses can be dated to after the Exile because they envision the restoration of Jerusalem, the condition for the possibility of which is the exile.

<sup>65</sup> William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), xlix-lxxxiii (esp. xlix-l).

<sup>66</sup> Leviticus 1–16 preserves one example, a Priestly memory of this cult likely dating to after the Temple’s destruction. On the Ark’s role in the Priestly cult these chapters outline, see Chapter 3.

<sup>67</sup> If Jer 31:31–34’s vision of a new covenant inscribed on the hearts of the people dates to this same stratum or is engaging this stratum, the metaphor may go even deeper. If the city becomes the Ark, its citizens become its “tablets.”

Israelite ritual social life.<sup>68</sup> In Jer 7:1–15, Jeremiah emphasizes in the Temple’s gate that YHWH will only dwell in Jerusalem as long as Israel acts justly: “if the alien, the orphan, and the widow, you do not oppress; if innocent blood you do not spill in this place; and if after other gods you do not go” (Jer 7:6). For Jeremiah, exclusive worship of YHWH and just personal conduct are both incumbent upon Israel.<sup>69</sup>

The third addition in v. 18 refocuses the text yet again. Perhaps in an effort to re-integrate the prose additions into their poetic context, the third addition draws on the poetic language of verses 19 and 20 to refocus the vision from all nations to the House of Judah and the House of Israel—they shall return together from the Land of the North to the land YHWH gave to their ancestors.<sup>70</sup> As this line references the exile of Judah, it must date to after 586 BCE—and likely to the post-exilic period. The cult these three additions to Jeremiah outline departs radically from the cult of the First Temple. For this future to come to pass, the text is clear: The Ark must be forgotten.

The question is *why*—why must the Ark be forgotten? What exactly is it about the Ark’s memory that would so disturb Jeremiah’s vision for the future? Further, what is it about the City of Jerusalem that might offer the writer a suitable, even superior, material replacement? Underlying the first of these questions is another question, concerning the significance of remembering and forgetting. What does it mean to remember something like the Ark? Conversely, what does it mean to forget the Ark; what is gained—what is lost? Employing the Ark as a case study, this dissertation considers these and related questions concerning the entangled relationships that exist between material culture and the formation of shared memories and identities. Jeremiah 3 illustrates some of the great tensions between material culture and cultural memory. The text’s insistence that the Ark should not come to mind, be remembered, or missed shows that the Ark’s material presence contributed to the formation of the communal memory and identity of Jeremiah’s people—not only *before* its loss, but *after*, in its absence, as well.

## II.1. Material and Non-material *Lieux de Mémoire*

To begin, it cannot be incidental that both the Ark and the City of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 3 are material. One is a chest and the other an expansive complex of objects large and small—walls, streets, people, food; they are vastly different, but they both represent varieties of material culture. Material culture can play an important role conveying cultural memories in religious communities, offering physical touchstones and referents for the imaginary—lending the

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<sup>68</sup> Ronald Hendel, “Away from Ritual: The Prophetic Critique,” in *Social Theory and the Study of Israelite Religion: Essays in Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Saul M. Olyan (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 59–79.

<sup>69</sup> There is an intriguing connection to the Ark in this address. Should Israel not obey YHWH’s instructions concerning just conduct and worship, YHWH will do to Jerusalem what he did to Shiloh. The Ark was kept in Shiloh in 1 Samuel, prior to its capture by the Philistines.

<sup>70</sup> There are two linguistic connections drawn in this addition: (1) Both v. 18 and v. 20 refer to the “House of Israel” (בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל); and (2) The verb “I gave” (הִנְחַלְתִּי) in v. 18 connects with the noun “inheritance” (נַחֲלָה) in v. 19.

imaginary their material reality and presence. In this regard, both the Ark and the City function as *lieux de mémoire*: significant material and non-material entities “which by dint of human will or the work of time ... become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community.”<sup>71</sup> Nora develops the concept of *lieux de mémoire* in his monumental seven-volume, three-part “symbolic typology” of France.<sup>72</sup> As examples, Nora offers a wide range of French cultural spaces, objects, concepts, and rituals in which memory “crystallizes and secretes itself,” including, for example, l’Arc de Triomphe de l’Étoile, the French flag, *liberté*, and commemorative moments of silence. What distinguishes these *lieux de mémoire* from other spaces, objects, concepts, and rituals is the investment of symbolic value. A moment of silence without the “concentrated appeal to memory” is just a moment, passed by unnoticed.<sup>73</sup> Since shared memory is socially generative, the *lieux de mémoire* that Nora catalogues serve in different ways in different times as focal points for the generation, formation, and reformation of French social groups. Intriguingly in the present context, Nora also offers the “tablets of the Law” as an example of a portable material *lieux de mémoire* for “the people of memory, the Jews.” Nora contrasts the tablets with topographical *lieux de mémoire*, which—unlike the tablets—“owe everything to the specificity of their location and to being rooted in the ground.”<sup>74</sup>

Nora’s passing reference to the “tablets of the Law” illustrates some of the tensions in his work of memory and history. The tablets are described as having been inscribed by God for Moses in the Hebrew Bible, but if they ever existed they have not been accessible objects since biblical times. We can infer that the Jews in Nora’s discussion must be modern, because for Nora all *lieux de mémoire* are modern phenomena. Nora argues that *lieux de mémoire* emerge as a product of two complementary modern developments:

1. The emergence of a historical consciousness that the present is something new and distinct from the past; and
2. Accidental historic ruptures with the past that force groups out of environments of memory.

The example Nora offers is the displacement caused by industrialization in modern France. As Nora artfully puts it: “There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory.”<sup>75</sup> Historic rupture enables—and at times requires—the concentration of memories in particular spaces, objects, concepts, and rituals. These memories are remains of what was, their consolidation and association with particular *lieux* helps stave off the complete loss of the past in an age where the past is separate from the

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<sup>71</sup> Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, eds., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 4 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1.xvii.

<sup>72</sup> Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 7 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992). Translated into English in two collections: Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory*; Pierre Nora, ed., *Rethinking France*, 4 vols., trans. Mary Trouille and David P. Jordan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001–2010).

<sup>73</sup> Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 18–19.

<sup>74</sup> Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 22.

<sup>75</sup> Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7.

present. If the modern Jews that Nora is referring to do not have access to the particular tablets described in the Bible, the portable, material *lieux de mémoire* that Nora is referring to can only be reproductions and representations of the tablets. Nora's comparison raises important questions about the different qualities of representational and original *lieux de mémoire* applicable to our study of the Ark, which I explore in the coming chapters. What roles can *lieux de mémoire* that are believed to be real things associated with a group's meaningful past serve that a representation cannot? Conversely, what memory-work might be better accomplished with representations?

A more fundamental question Nora's discussion raises concerns what the Tablets might have represented to pre-modern biblical societies, if not *lieux de mémoire*. Though Nora is no doubt correct that representations of the Tablets serve as important *lieux de mémoire* in modern Jewish communities, evidence suggests they served similar roles in biblical times.<sup>76</sup> There are three different stories of the inscription of the tablets, one in Deuteronomy (5:4–21) and two in Exodus (20:1–17 and 34:11–26). Each collection contains variations large and small, in both the details of their laws and the contexts biblical writers provide for them. These variations represent contestations of the Tablets, as writers inscribe different concepts into them to reshape and redeploy the Tablets as *lieux de mémoire*.<sup>77</sup>

The Tablets are not the only examples of premodern *lieux de mémoire*, including some included within Nora's own collection.<sup>78</sup> Cases like these challenge Nora's argument that the emergence of *lieux de mémoire* is a modern development emerging from the confluence of historical consciousness separating past from present, and collective trauma, forcing groups out of environments of memory. The sense of a difference between the past and present is not a modern phenomenon; in fact, it is a condition produced by collective trauma.<sup>79</sup> However, because memories help form and reform social groups, there does seem to be the strong connection with historic ruptures. Trauma and historic rupture force groups to distinguish between the past and present, which—along with the ruptures themselves—create the conditions that Nora identifies for the emergence of *lieux de mémoire*. It is especially in turbulent times like these, Nora argues, that groups need the space for social reformation offered in both non-material and material *lieux de mémoire*.

Though both non-material and material *lieux de mémoire* offer platforms for social reformation during times of rupture, I would argue that non-material *lieux* are often better equipped to survive rupture's hazards. Non-material *lieux de mémoire* like, for example, Sabbath observance, are not as entangled in material culture as material *lieux* tend to be, and as such their

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<sup>76</sup> Consider, for example, the differences between the accounts of the ten commandments in Deuteronomy 5:4–21 and Exodus 20:1–17 and 34:11–26. Each modification to the three collections represents concerted memory work.

<sup>77</sup> On Exodus 34, please see Chapter 2.

<sup>78</sup> Jean-Paul Demoule, "Lascaux," in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, 3:163–90.

<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1–30.

core components are less likely to be lost, broken, or destroyed. Though items of material culture like candlesticks are associated with and produced for the Sabbath, the Sabbath itself remains at its core non-material. As such, its essential components are portable, flexible, and, because they have no necessary material presence, they are in some ways more *durable* than material *lieux de mémoire*. The same condition applies to the Bible itself, which is a text, and hence not limited to its materiality. The poetry of the Bible was created and conveyed by memorization. The text of Deuteronomy instructs its audience to memorize its laws: “Put these words of mine on your heart” (Deut 11:18). Material *lieux de mémoire* are more deeply entangled in the physical world, and as such are vulnerable in ways that non-material *lieux* are not. Because of their physicality, material *lieux de mémoire* lack the durability and flexibility of non-material *lieux*; they can be broken, taken, lost, and destroyed. The Ark shares features of both material and non-material *lieux*. It is described as a physical thing, but it is perpetually absent—first in the Temple and then lost.

Halbwachs—whose foundational work on collective memory serves as a starting point for Nora—speaks of mnemonic material culture as having a “double focus”:

collective remembrance has a double focus—a physical object, a material reality such as a statue, a monument, a place in space, and also a symbol, or something of spiritual significance, something shared by the group that adheres to and is superimposed on this physical reality.<sup>80</sup>

The City of Jerusalem, for example, has played a prominent role in biblical, Jewish, and Christian memories since biblical times, as, for example, the site of the Temple and a focus of Jesus’s ministry. These patinas of memory shape the ways that the city is perceived, understood, and invoked; they are as much a part of the city as its physical presence, though they are not stable, uniform, or necessarily a part of it for all who engage with it. Halbwachs describes the ways in which contact with landscapes associated with collective memories—material *lieux de mémoire*—serves to “refresh” and “revitalize” cultural memories.<sup>81</sup> For Halbwachs, the relationship between items of material culture and cultural memory is reciprocal. Memories give meaning and significance to objects, and objects prove the reality of the memories with which they are associated by being what Halbwachs calls “real things.” The physicality of “real things” endows them with an inherent reality, which comes to be entangled in the memories with which they are associated. Though material *lieux de mémoire* may be in some ways more vulnerable than non-material *lieux*, as “real things” they are also capable in ways that non-material *lieux* are not.

Considering the capabilities and limitations of “real” things, Halbwachs reflects on memories of Jerusalem in Christian communities inside and outside of the Holy Land. Both groups have over the course of history invoked the image of Jerusalem differently in their ongoing processes of group fashioning. Unlike Christians living in the Holy Land, those living outside of the Holy Land have been able to invoke the image of Jerusalem “without fear of being

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<sup>80</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 204.

<sup>81</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 199–200.



contradicted by a clashing reality.”<sup>82</sup> Their imagined Jerusalem “adjust[ed] itself to beliefs, not to real places”<sup>83</sup> For Christians living outside the Holy Land, Jerusalem was imagined as “a celestial city, suspended between heaven and earth.”<sup>84</sup> This image of Jerusalem corresponded with and was supported by religious dogma, which it at the same time helped to convey and sustain. In contrast, for Christians in Jerusalem it was “a city built with stones and made of houses and streets that were familiar to them.”<sup>85</sup> The loss of material culture—in this case, separation from Jerusalem—can also be socially generative. Halbwachs explains:

Undoubtedly, the stability of the image [of Jerusalem] accounts for the fact that beliefs continue. But this stability is not at the mercy of physical accidents that transform the object; the image subsists independently because the believers are unaware of such accidents.<sup>86</sup>

In Halbwachs’ example, Jerusalem was able to refresh and revitalize early Christian memory in its absence, when the varied range of memories that were associated with it could not be tested against its basic material reality. For this group, Jerusalem served as a real, but absent material *lieux de mémoire*. It is not only the real thing itself that revitalizes memory, but the specter of the real thing and knowledge of its continued reality that empowers the memory of Jerusalem. Jerusalem remained a real place with the imagined stability of real things, but its inaccessibility to some Christians who identified with it made it possible for them to determine and re-determine its value socially as they negotiated their Christian identity outside the Holy Land. In a sense, Jerusalem led two social lives: one among Christians living in Palestine and one among Christians living abroad. Individuals need not engage personally with material *lieux de mémoire* for them to serve as reminders; knowledge of their reality can be sufficient for their service as material referents for memories. In fact, Halbwachs has shown that there are times when separation from “real” *lieux de mémoire* can be positively productive for the formation of collective memory and identity.

The Ark has a lot in common with Halbwachs’ Jerusalem; it too is mobilized in its absence—at times, perhaps because of its absence. The Ark—and, in Nora’s discussion, the Tablets—might have at one point had a real, material presence, but both have long been absent. The Hebrew Bible and ancient Jewish writings account for its features and after its loss, its whereabouts. Whether or not the Ark existed historically, biblical writers and interpreters certainly believed it to have been real, empowering it and, after its loss, its representations to serve as touchstones for remembering. Material *lieux de mémoire* like the Tablets, the City of Jerusalem, and the Ark hold what Susan M. Pearce calls “the power of the real thing,” the power to “move” and “excite” group members that engage with them.<sup>87</sup> This “emotional potency”<sup>88</sup> of

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<sup>82</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 205.

<sup>83</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 205.

<sup>84</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 204.

<sup>85</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 204.

<sup>86</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 205.

<sup>87</sup> Susan M. Pearce, “Objects as Meaning; or Narrating the Past,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (ed. Susan M Pearce; London: Routledge, 1994), 20.

<sup>88</sup> Pearce, “Objects as Meaning,” 26.

old things comes from the belief that they have endured stably across time, Pearce explains: “unlike we ourselves who must die, it [as an object from the past] bears an ‘eternal’ relationship to the receding past, and it is this that we experience as the power of ‘the actual object.’”<sup>89</sup> Objects of this order cut across time and allow those who identify with them to engage with them personally, a process that—as Halbwachs would say—serves to “refresh” and “revitalize” cultural memories. From a distance, the real thing retains its status as “real” as long as the communities formed around it believe it to be real. The real thing is able to play these roles, Pearce explains, because it serves as a “message-bearing entity”—conveying and lending its real presence to whatever past people associate with it. In this way, the real thing can serve as both a sign of the past and “a metaphorical symbol,” wielding the power of the past.<sup>90</sup>

Engagement with these real things need not be direct; in fact, there are certain advantages for groups engaging with real things from a temporal or spatial distance. Jerusalem for the Christians inside and outside the Holy Land served as a kind of metonym for Jesus’s life, ministry, and death on the cross; how that metonym was deployed as a metaphor for the fashioning of their two groups inside and outside the land was determined socially. Christians outside the land had significantly more flexibility because their Jerusalem was real, but distant. It was an absent, material *lieu de mémoire*, something between a material and non-material site that wields the power of the real thing but has the flexibility and durability of a non-material *lieu de mémoire*. Absent material *lieux de mémoire* are not restricted or limited by the physical properties of material culture, opening up new horizons of meaning and value and ensuring the ongoing durability of the memories associated with them. In cases of group loss and separation, I argue that material *lieux de mémoire*—composed as they are of both memories and material things—acquire an increased flexibility while retaining their powers as “real things.”

The power of real things like the Ark develops its association with the meaningful past, and this, like the designation of *lieux de mémoire*, is a social process. Real things are in some ways empty and capable of being associated with different complexes of memory, but the associations that they can acquire are limited by their physical properties and known previous associations.<sup>91</sup> The mnemonic values of objects are determined socially; in the case of the Ark, this happens in the biblical writings and interpretations that describe the chest. These values vary across time and space as things move through history—symbolic values are not stable. As Nora

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<sup>89</sup> Pearce, “Objects as Meaning,” 25.

<sup>90</sup> Pearce, “Objects as Meaning,” 20; idem, “Introduction,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994), 1–6.

<sup>91</sup> Barry Schwartz, “The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory,” *Social Forces* 61.2 (1982): 374–402; Barry Schwartz, Yael Zerubavel, and Bernice M. Barnett, “The Recovery of Masada: A Study in Collective Memory,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 27.2 (1986): 147–64. The rationale here borders on tautological, but is not without merit. Memories and their material agents must connect in some ways with earlier versions, else they become new, unconnected memories. This connection can be tangential or even inverted, but there must be a connection or it will be an unrecognizable new memory. The situation with material *lieux de memoire* is no different, though perhaps more acute because of the real features they hold. The real features guide and at times limit their potential as loci of remembering.

observes, *lieux de mémoire* also vary across social groups; Arjun Appadurai<sup>92</sup> argues that because their value is determined socially, it might be said that “real things” like the City of Jerusalem—and, I will argue, the Ark—have social lives. The course of the social lives of things is shaped by their engagements with subjects, with people.<sup>93</sup> Though Halbwachs and Nora do not go so far as to say that things have social lives, they do imply that their symbolic values are determined socially and vary across social groups. To Appadurai’s observation, I might add that real, material things can lead both multiple lives and afterlives. Since the (mnemonic) values of objects are determined socially, single items of material culture can be *lieux de mémoire* in multiple ways, both synchronically across social groups and diachronically across history. The Ark is a real and material *lieu de mémoire* and it is no exception; its biographies—its symbolic values and the memories for which it serves as a powerful material referent—vary as it moves through time and space, from Israel in the pre-exilic period forward. Like the tablets, the Ark’s deployment as a *lieu de mémoire* continues after its loss, perhaps even with greater force. The Ark does not only have social lives, it has social afterlives.

As a *lieu de mémoire* with a biography that transcends genres and generations, I propose that the Ark has a great deal in common with Halbwachs’ Jerusalem. It derives its force from the belief that it is a real, material thing from biblical Israel’s shared past; it has a certain “stability”—but in many ways its career trajectory has really been defined by its absence. The Ark was always thought about in its absence, always suspended between materiality and immateriality. It is both a material and non-material *lieu de mémoire*. Like the City of Jerusalem in Halbwachs’ discussion, it wields features of both. It is in this space that biblical writers remember the Ark, capitalizing on both its *real associations* with the shared past and its *remoteness*, its *absence*. The Ark lives in the biblical imagination somewhere between *here* and *there*—a fact biblical writers exploit, as we have seen in Jeremiah 3.

### III. Conclusions

The anonymous expander of Jeremiah—and it turns out, Maurice Halbwachs—both appreciate the power of old things, the power of things that are present and the power of things that are lost or that indeed must be lost. Jeremiah needed Israel to forget the Ark in order to bring about a broad shift in Judah’s religious practice. The Ark would have stood in the way, despite its loss and because of its memory. Just as the Christians outside Jerusalem Halbwachs discusses were able to invoke the image of Jerusalem “without fear of being contradicted by a clashing reality”—so too the memory of the Ark stood, dangerously appealing, very flexible, and potentially endangering Jeremiah’s religious shift. The example of Jeremiah 3 illustrates some of the great tensions between material culture and cultural memory. It is only through the material that Jeremiah’s vision could be made real, through the replacement of the Ark with Jerusalem. The designation of Jerusalem as YHWH’s throne attests to the power of material culture to facilitate the reformation of social memory. The hope that the Ark will be forgotten reflects

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<sup>92</sup> Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things*.

<sup>93</sup> Appadurai, “Introduction.” See also Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things,” 64–91.

material culture's capacity to impede such a reform. Material culture can both convey and frustrate the sharing of memories—even after its loss. The concern expressed in Jeremiah 3 was not misplaced.

This dissertation explores this dynamic, structured around five interrelated episodes from the Ark's biography. I employ each as a case study to consider different dimensions of memory's entanglement in material culture. Chapters 2 and 3 consider the contrasting narratives of the Ark's construction in Deuteronomy (10:1–5, 8–9; 31:25–27) and Priestly writings (P, Exod 16:34–36; 25; 37; Lev 16; Num 7:89; 17:21–28). The two different contexts that these documents provide for the Ark empower it as a real thing to metonymically represent two different versions of the past, enabling its use as a symbol by Priestly writings and Deuteronomy in the realization of their contrasting visions of Israel's present and future. In this connection, Priestly writers pay particular attention to the ritual services surrounding the Ark—a tradition continued in later Rabbinic writings. I consider further what memory work P accomplishes by means of these descriptions, controlling the Ark in its absence through texts—a kind of hegemony of description. Chapter 4 explores the circulation of these memories in the heavily redacted text of I Kings 8, Solomon's dedication of the Temple. The fifth chapter builds upon and expands the implications of the loss of the Ark, pairing a discussion of the story of the Ark's loss to the Philistines and its subsequent return in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 with its historic loss, during or slightly before the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. This chapter probes the fragility of things, testing the limits of their power to convey and sustain memory in their loss. The Ark, after all, is not rebuilt as a part of the Second Temple. Chapter 6 explores the legend of the lost or hidden Ark and its imminent return in the End Times (2Mac. 2:4–8; Rev. 11:19; and *m. Sheq.* 6:1–2; among others). What does the Ark offer to these writers, and how might it authorize or inaugurate apocalyptic visions in a way that other things might not be able to? Why are these writers drawn to the Ark; what does it add to their apocalyptic visions? More broadly, what place do “old things” have in the new religious world orders they envision?

## 2. CONSTRUCTING THE ARK, CONTESTING ISRAEL I: THE ARK IN DEUTERONOMY

Deut 10:3 And I made an ark of acacia wood, and I carved two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand ... 5 And I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the Tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, as YHWH commanded me

Exod 37:1 Bezalel made the Ark of acacia wood: two and a half cubits, its length; a cubit and a half, its width; and a cubit and a half, its height. 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside; and he made a molding of gold upon it all around. 3 He cast for it four rings of gold for its four feet, two rings on the first side of it and two rings on the second side of it.

The Ark is constructed twice in the Hebrew Bible, once in Deut 10:1–5 and once in the Priestly stratum of Exodus (25:10–22; 37:1–9). Chapter 2 and 3 explore these competing memories of the Ark's origins. Both accounts date the Ark's construction to the legendary wilderness period, but offer dramatically different visions of its origins, physical characteristics, and, most importantly, its symbolic and ritual values. Deuteronomy avoids connecting the Ark with YHWH's presence. The account in Deuteronomy credits the construction of the Ark to Moses and represents it primarily as a chest for the Tablets of the Covenant. Its significance comes from its contents, the Tablets of the Covenant. Inscribed with the terms of YHWH's covenant with Israel, the Tablets connect the Ark fundamentally with the version of the law Deuteronomy claims was given to Moses at Horeb. In contrast, the Priestly account in Exodus represents the Ark as a focal point for ritual, elaborately gilded by the enigmatic Israelite master artisan Bezalel at God's command through Moses. The Ark is built to hold a text of some kind (תַּבְּלוֹת), but its real significance comes from its other relationships. Through its association with its lid (on which Bezalel affixes two cherubs of hammered gold) and the rest of the Tabernacle, the Ark is mobilized as a part of a complex, multi-dimensional constellation of *lieux de mémoire*. Together they lend reality to the Priestly vision of religious life, around which they either lived or wished to live. Though the two accounts are not entirely dissimilar, they are not reconcilable. They represent two visions for the Ark and its people; the Arks they envision differ fundamentally physically and symbolically, and are built at different times, in different places, by different craftsmen.

Employing the contrasting memories of the Ark in Deuteronomy and Priestly writings as a case study, Chapters 2 and 3 consider the ways in which the Ark has engaged as a *lieu de mémoire* in both its presence and its absence. Through text, both Deuteronomy and Priestly writings contest the history, the form, and the significance of this single object. I argue that the two groups of writers form and mobilize the Ark in two different ways as a *lieu de mémoire*. The two Arks serve in different ways as powerful, "real" focal points for the writers' competing

social and religious programs. This section asks what the Ark brings to these constructions of the past. How does its status as an object presumed to have been real affect its mobilization? These chapters also consider how its absence and ultimate loss in or before the 6th century BCE might have enabled the formation of different kinds of memories that would not otherwise have been thinkable.

## I. Introduction

In Deut 9:7–10:11, the Ark appears in the course of an extended rebuke of Israel’s repeated and ongoing failure to observe YHWH’s commandments:

Deut 9:7 Remember, do not forget how you enraged YHWH your God in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against YHWH.

Calling on Israel to “remember” and “not forget,” the Deuteronomist’s (D) Moses describes Israel’s great apostasy at Horeb: the construction of a golden calf image while he was at the top of the Mountain receiving “the two stone tablets, the Tablets of the Covenant” (Deut 9:11). Upon discovery of the image, Moses destroys the Tablets and the Calf. In forgiveness, the Ark is commissioned and constructed in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9:

Deut 10:1 At that time, YHWH said to me [Moses], “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones, come up to me on the mountain, and make you an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered, and you shall put them in the Ark.” 3 And I made an ark of acacia wood, and I carved two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand 4 And he wrote on the Tablets like the first writing, the ten words that YHWH had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; YHWH gave them to me. 5 And I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the Tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, as YHWH commanded me ... 8 At that time, YHWH distinguished the Tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH, to stand before YHWH to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. 9 For this reason, Levi has no share or an inheritance with his brothers. YHWH is his inheritance, as YHWH your God promised him.

Two currents run through Deuteronomy’s representation of the Ark. First, Deuteronomy’s Ark exists to help Israel “remember” and “not forget” their failure to observe YHWH’s commandments. In this connection, the Ark is built by Moses to recall the commandments. The significance of the Ark is defined primarily in relation to the Tablets. Second, the Ark is both real and at least theoretically available to the text’s audience. As Moses explains in the Deut 10:5, “I put the Tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, as YHWH commanded me.” These final words of v. 5 read almost like an invitation to the audience, assertively pointing to the reality of the Ark and its survival until the audience’s day. Here the Ark is mobilized as a real thing, pointed to as a material referent for the memory of the law that it holds. This represents a major departure from the earlier conception of the Ark as a locus for YHWH’s

mobile corporeal presence.

In this chapter, I explore Deuteronomy's formation of the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* in the context of D's most significant religious innovation: the centralization and textualization of the cult in Jerusalem. In Deut 9:7–10:11, Deuteronomy's writers construct the Ark as a real and material, though largely absent, *lieu de mémoire*. The text reimagines the Ark through the revision of the Elohist (E) stratum of Exod 34:1–34:28, which also describes Israel's construction of the Golden Calf and the Tablets but does not include the Ark. Quoting verbatim and reworking the source text, the writers of Deuteronomy masterfully fold the commissioning and construction of the Ark into their story of the Golden Calf and the Tablets. In doing so, D reconfigures the Ark to suit the text's broad centralization and reconfiguration of the Israelite cult. With particular focus on the mnemohistory and poetics of the Ark's representation across Deuteronomy, this chapter investigates the complex place of the Ark in Deuteronomy's vision of YHWH's covenant with Israel. Part I reviews where Deuteronomy describes the Ark. Part II begins with the relationship between cultic innovation and memory in Deuteronomy. Focusing on the mnemohistory of representations of the Ark in Deuteronomy, Part III of this chapter shows how the text remembers the Ark through the revision and redaction of the E stratum of Israel's covenant at Horeb in Exod 32:1–28. This section investigates the text's investiture of the chest with reality and presence through retelling, cutting across time and space to encapsulate the text's particular version of the events at Horeb. Part IV focuses on the poetics of the mnemonic relationships Deuteronomy establishes through literature, connecting the Ark with the Tablets of the Covenant and the Golden Calf to reconfigure all three—along with their god—as *lieux de mémoire*. This section concludes with an analysis of Deut 31, an addition to a conclusion appended to an early edition of the text that focuses attention squarely on the Ark and its Covenant—further specifying its legal nature. Deuteronomy's textual reimagining of the Ark illustrates the power of text to shape practice, as well as the entangled relationships that exist between text and objects even after their loss.

## II. The Ark in Deuteronomy

The term “ark” (אָרוֹן) appears eight times in Deuteronomy, concentrated in chapters 10 and 31:

1. The construction of the Ark in covenant renewal at Horeb (10:1–5, 8–9)
2. The completion and deposition of the “Scroll of this Law” before the Ark (31:25–28)

While both of these texts contribute to the overall representation of the Ark in Deuteronomy over and against inherited conceptions of the Ark as a locus for YHWH's presence, they appear to have been composed separately. The construction of the Ark in covenant renewal at Horeb (10:1–5, 8–9) is likely to be the earliest for two reasons. First, Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 is integral to D's revision of the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28—from which it repeats verbatim and reworks prose. Second, the completion and deposition of the Scroll of this Law (31:25–28; סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה) before the Ark both depends on information from Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 and appears in an extended addition to the core of Deuteronomy. It is possible to date Deuteronomy's origins with some confidence. This is in large part due to its engagement with the Succession Treaty of Essarhadon (EST, 672

BCE), especially in Deut 13 and 28.<sup>1</sup> Levinson and Stackert<sup>2</sup> show that Deut 13 and 28 represent critical and integrated components of D, an argument that is buttressed by discussions of the coherence of D as a revision of E.<sup>3</sup> Deut 31:24–30 appears in prose sections (Deut 31:24–30; 44–47) that bracket and interpret the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1–43) with a keyword chiasmus.<sup>4</sup> The song is undoubtedly early, though it is not typically grouped with the earliest examples of Hebrew poetry in the Bible.<sup>5</sup> The prose’s tight literary structure draws upon and redirects the force of the song to the law, in this case the newly completed Book of Deuteronomy.

At all events, the texts speak in one voice: The Ark is a container for the Tablets and more broadly Deuteronomy’s legal collection. I expand upon these arguments below with particular focus on their literary antecedents and intertexts, but it will first be helpful to discuss the relationship between cultic innovations like these and memory in Deuteronomy.

### III. Cultic Innovation and Memory in Deuteronomy

Memory plays a central role in Deuteronomy. Hendel characterizes the text as a work of “countermemory or invented tradition,”<sup>6</sup> which advances a new vision of Israel’s past that combines inherited and innovated elements. Weinfeld shows Deuteronomy’s legal and narrative material advances an innovative agenda of cultic centralization and “secularization” or

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<sup>1</sup> On EST, see Donald J. Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon,” *Iraq* 20.1 (1958): i–99. On EST in Deuteronomy, see Weinfeld and Frankena’s independent articles from 1965: Moshe Weinfeld, “Traces of Assyrian Treaty Formulae in Deuteronomy,” *Bib* 46 (1965): 417–27; Rintje Frankena, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy,” *OtSt* 14 (1965): 122–54.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard M. Levinson and Jeffrey Stackert, “Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty: Deuteronomy 13 and the Composition of Deuteronomy,” *JAJ* 3 (2012): 123–140; see also Jeffrey Stackert, *A Prophet like Moses: Prophecy, Law, and Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32–33.

<sup>3</sup> See the discussion of Deut 10:1–5, 8–9’s revision of the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28 below; Joel S. Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, FAT 68 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013), 844, who observes the following chiasm structure:

“the words of this law”	31:24
“these words”	Deut 31:28
“the words of this song”	Deut 31:30
“all words of this song”	Deut 32:44
“all these words”	Deut 32:45
“all the words of this song”	Deut 32:46

<sup>5</sup> Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 2 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Hendel, “Culture, Memory, and History: Reflections on Method in Biblical Studies,” in *Historical Biblical Archaeology and the Future: The New Pragmatism*, ed. Thomas E Levy (London: Equinox, 2010), 257.



“demythologization.”<sup>7</sup> Cultic centralization involved the concentration of sacrifice at the Jerusalem Temple, “the place at which YHWH chose to cause his name to dwell.”<sup>8</sup> As this expression suggests, the Jerusalem Temple is not however associated with YHWH’s physical presence. Deuteronomy distances both the Temple and the Ark from their inherited associations with the physical presence of YHWH, in favor of YHWH’s “name” or YHWH’s direct disembodied speech. In conjunction with this innovative understanding of the Temple and YHWH, Deuteronomy authorizes the creation of a new “secular” or “demythologized” sphere of activity.<sup>9</sup> This involved a number of innovations, including: the legalization of “secular” animal slaughter;<sup>10</sup> reworking the ritual system to enable the Israelite offerers to keep their firstlings and tithes, which had previously been owed to the Levites and YHWH; and reimagining of holidays and rituals, creating historical “de-mythologized” justifications for the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread/Passover.<sup>11</sup>

A further key innovation in Deuteronomy concerns the textualization of religious life, which involved a shifting of religious authority from prophets to the text. Stackert shows that Deuteronomy circumscribes prophecy, requiring that prophets must be “like Moses”—not to set an unachievable high bar but to require that they work with and in support of the text attributed to Moses.<sup>12</sup> An early version of Deuteronomy has long been identified with the scroll “discovered” by Josiah in 2 Kgs 22–23, as the reforms the text inspired correspond in a number of ways with the laws of Deut 12–26. Schniedewind explains that in this connection, the text becomes the arbiter of “religious orthodoxy.”<sup>13</sup> This move corresponds with Deuteronomy’s instructions concerning its promulgation, that they be memorized and taught:

Deut 6:6 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 Recite them to your children; speak about them when you are sitting in your homes and when you are going on your way; when you are lying down and when you are standing. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand; fix them as an ornament on your forehead; 9 and write them on the

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<sup>7</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Deut 12:11

<sup>9</sup> The language Weinfeld employs here is important, but somewhat problematic. This sphere of human activity was religiously authorized and therefore not “profane” or “secular” in any modern sense of the term. See Moshe Weinfeld, “On ‘Demythologization and Secularization’ in Deuteronomy,” *IEJ* 23.4 (1973): 230, who explains that “the term ‘secularization’ does not refer to an atheistic trend or to any opposition to religion or religious institutions. ‘Secularization’ means the general tendency to free religious institutions and ways of thinking from strict adherence to rules of taboo, etc. and thus to give them a more secular appeal.”

<sup>10</sup> Animal slaughter had previously been permitted only at local cult sites. Deuteronomy outlaws local cult sites, requiring the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> See Weinfeld, “Demythologization and Secularization,” 230–233, for a convenient summary.

<sup>12</sup> Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*.

<sup>13</sup> William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 108.

doorposts of your house and on your gates.<sup>14</sup>

These physical instructions are metaphoric, illustrating the initial command to memorize the law. The fact that the physical instructions have come to be literally enacted through ritual objects like the mezuzah and phylacteries in Jewish tradition illustrates how powerfully they convey Deuteronomy's central point: that the text is the locus of religious authority.

With Levinson, Hendel argues that Deuteronomy asserts the authenticity of these innovations in at least two ways.<sup>15</sup> First, the text quotes and revises existing literature. Levinson characterizes Deuteronomy as a work of "transformative exegesis" that "rework[s] prestigious texts in light of the innovation of centralization."<sup>16</sup> Second, Hendel explains that Deuteronomy cloaks its innovation through the revision of inherited texts and the deployment of the rhetoric of memory:

The rhetoric of memory is one of the ways that Deuteronomy masks and authorizes its radical revision, asserting itself through Moses' voice as the authoritative memory of God's revelation. Deuteronomy is a book of cultural memory precisely as a counter-memory ... which substitutes its revised or reinterpreted memories for the cultural memories embodied in the earlier traditions and sources (especially J and E).<sup>17</sup>

Levinson's argument focuses on innovations in three key legal areas, but its method and implications are broadly applicable and I would argue extend even to the Ark in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 and 31:25–28. Levinson shows that Deuteronomy's legal innovations flow from the centralization of the cult. The Ark that Deuteronomy inherited was fundamentally associated with YHWH's mobility and divine presence. It was a mobile throne or footstool, which marched before Israel into battle and in their journey through the wilderness. Weinfeld shows that this conception was known to Deuteronomy. In Deut 1:42–43, the text omits the Ark from its revision of the account of the battle Num 14:42–44.<sup>18</sup> Deuteronomy's conception of the divine could not require or for that matter physically utilize such an item of furniture, forcing D to form a compelling counter-memory of the Ark as an instrument of the Tablets and more broadly the text of Deuteronomy: YHWH's law.

This chapter engages representations of the Ark in Deuteronomy as formative literary expressions of memories of the Ark from two complementary perspectives: with attention to their *history* and *poetics* as memories asserting the association of the Ark with the Tablets and the law—with the content of Deuteronomy itself. Assmann<sup>19</sup> initiated the study of the histories

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<sup>14</sup> Deut 6:6–7 NRSV

<sup>15</sup> Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6; Hendel, "Culture, Memory, and History," 257.

<sup>16</sup> Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, 6; Hendel, "Culture, Memory, and History," 257.

<sup>17</sup> Hendel, "Culture, Memory, and History," 257.

<sup>18</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 37.

<sup>19</sup> Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*

of memories, “mnemohistory,” including the diachronic analysis of their narratives, their social frameworks, and the media by which they are conveyed and sustained. At each stage of their development, biblical memories of the Ark are fundamentally literary. As such, their analysis calls for attention to the synchronic poetics and rhetoric of their representation. Hendel emphasizes the complementarity of these approaches.<sup>20</sup> This hybrid diachronic and synchronic approach is particularly apt for Deuteronomy, of which Alter has said: “The resources of rhetoric are marshaled to create through a written text the memory of a foundational national event, so that the latter-day Israelites listening ... will feel that they themselves are reenacting the event.”<sup>21</sup> Across the texts’ varied strata, different authors have competed to effect the engagement Alter describes. In Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 and 31:25–28, these efforts involved and ultimately *reshaped* the Ark. While the present text elides the differences between their approaches, it is worth looking deeper into the historical formation, trajectories, and poetics of the memories of the Ark in Deuteronomy.

#### IV. Mnemohistory: Deuteronomy and the Elohist (E) Stratum of Exod 34:1–28

The mnemohistory of Deuteronomy’s Ark begins with its engagement with the Elohist (E) stratum of Exod 34:1–28, the E account of the second set of tablets YHWH gives to Moses at Horeb. The two accounts share a core narrative, offering parallel accounts of the events at the Mountain expressed with common structure and language. The substantial overlap indicates the two texts are related.<sup>22</sup> The primary differences between the two accounts concern length and

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(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); idem, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); idem, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Hendel, “Cultural Memory,” in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*, ed. Ronald Hendel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 28–46.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004): 870.

<sup>22</sup> There is broad agreement that Deut 9:7–10:11 reworks some form of Exod 32:1–34:28. See Stackert, *A Prophet like Moses*; and Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, who argue separately that D reworks E before its combination with J and P. See also Christine Hayes, “Golden Calf Stories: The Relationship of Exod 32 and Deut 9:7–10:11,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation*, eds. Hindy Najman and Judith Newman, *SupJSJ* 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 45–93, who argues that D reworks Exod 32 but does not distinguish between strata in Exodus; and Christopher T. Begg, “The Destruction of the Calf (Exod 32,20/Deut 9,21).” Pages 208–251 in *Das Deuteronomium*, ed. Norbert Lohfink (Leuven: University Press, 1985), who makes a similar argument on the basis of a single parallel in Exod 32:20 and Deut 9:21.

Contra John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 290–318, who argues for the dependence of Exod 32:1–34:28 upon Deut 9:1–10:11 as a part of his broad vision for the composition history of the Pentateuch. Van Seters argues that the account in Exod 32–34 represents a conflation of the account of the Golden Calf in Deut 9:1–10:11 with 1 Kgs 12, the account of Jeroboam’s establishment of cults involving golden calves at Dan and Bethel. Van Seters’s case hinges the

narrative perspective. Hayes describes Deuteronomy's version as a "gap-filling and revisionist"<sup>23</sup> midrash on Exod 33:1–34:28, reimagining the events at the Mountain from the perspective of Moses. Deuteronomy's revision is not comprehensive, but rather depends on the audience's familiarity with the Exodus account as background. Deuteronomy's shorter account rewrites its source text as a first-person narrative, converting the persons of its verbs and omitting all episodes that Moses would not himself have experienced.<sup>24</sup> The revision also reimagines YHWH, shifting away from the inherited conceptions of his presence<sup>25</sup> and character.<sup>26</sup>

The Ark's inclusion in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 represents one of Deuteronomy's most significant additions, though this relationship is complicated by redactional developments that took place in both texts after their point of exchange. In Deuteronomy, this redactional activity includes the addition of an itinerary fragment in Deut 10:6–7. In Exodus, this redactional activity includes two primary additions: a Yahwistic theophany and prayer (J; Exod 33:12–22; 34:2–3, 4, 5aβ–9, 27) and a collection of laws featuring later concepts (Exod 34:10–26).<sup>27</sup> Discussion of the mnemohistory of the Ark begins here with the identification and discussion of these literary strands. The table below compares Deut 10:1–9 and Exod 34:1–9, 27–28. I discuss Exod 34:10–

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verbatim similarity between Exod 32:4 and 1 Kgs 12:28. In both texts, images of golden calves are constructed for worship and declared "your gods ... who brought you out of the land of Egypt"—by the people in Exod 32 and by Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 12. Noting that the plural form of "gods" (אֱלֹהִים) fits the context of the two images at Dan and Bethel better than the single image in Exod, Van Seters argues that Exodus revises Deuteronomy to include a critique of Jeroboam's cult reforms. This argument comes apart under Hayes's critique, which points out that no episode from the camp is described in Deuteronomy while Moses is atop Horeb. Further, the phrase "these are your gods" does not fit any better in 1 Kgs 16 than it does in Exod 32. William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2B (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 548, notes that Jeroboam's new calves cannot have been taken Israel out of Egypt. The use of the plural is rather a biblical convention for expressing idolatry, found elsewhere in Is 42:17 and 1 Sam 4:8 and 28:13. In all cases, idolaters are represented as referring to images of singular deities in the plural.

<sup>23</sup> Hayes, "Golden Calf Stories," 86.

<sup>24</sup> Hayes, "Golden Calf Stories," 74–75; Deuteronomy omits the construction and worship of the Calf in Exod 32:1–6, for example.

<sup>25</sup> Deuteronomy omits the description of the tent of meeting in Exod 33:7–11. The divine presence a tent of meeting implies goes against Deuteronomy's vision of YHWH, who is present through his speech from the fire.

<sup>26</sup> Hayes, "Golden Calf Stories," 85–86; In Exodus, YHWH appears to vacillate between forgiveness and punishment between 32:25 and 33:7–11—texts Deuteronomy either omits or (possibly) refers to obliquely. Deuteronomy includes only one threat in 9:13–14. YHWH is steadfast in forgiveness.

<sup>27</sup> In my discussion of Exod 34, I develop a division articulated by Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 169–170 and Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*, 84–86. Stackert and Baden build on an observation from Menahem Haran, *The Biblical Collection: Its Consolidation to the End of the Second Temple Times and Changes of Form to the End of the Middle Ages*, vol 2. (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 2004), 130, n. 48, which identifies Exod 34:1, 4\*, 5aα, 28 as E and Exod 34:2–3, 4\*, 5aβ–9, and 27 as J.

26 separately below. I have highlighted verbatim or near-verbatim overlapping material in Deut 10:1–9 and Exod 34:1–9, 27–28 in red. I have underlined material that appears to have been common to both sources, but preserved only in one source represented in the present text. Following the table, I will show:

1. The itinerary fragment in Deut 10:6–7 represents an addition to Deut 10:1–5, 8–9;
2. The non-overlapping material in Exod 34:2–3, 4, 5aβ–9, 27 continues a J narrative strand beginning in Exod 33:12–22;
3. The legal collection in Exod 34:10–26 represents an addition to Exod 34:1–9, 27;
4. The overlapping material corresponds with the E stratum of Exod 34; and
5. Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 represents transformative exegesis of the E stratum of Exod 34.

Table 1: Deut 10:1–9 and Exod 34:1–28

Deut 10:1–9	Exod 34:1–9, 27–28
<p>10:1 בַּעַת הַהוּא אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי פְּסַל־לִי שְׁנַי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים      2 וְאֶכְתֹּב      עַל־הַלוחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הַלוחֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר      שִׁבַרְתָּ וְשָׂמְתָם בְּאָרוֹן: 3 וְאַעַשׂ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְאֶפְסַל      שְׁנַי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרִאשׁוֹנִים וְאַעַל הַהָרָה וְיִשְׁגִּי הַלוחֹת בְּיָדִי: 4      וְיִכְתֹּב עַל־הַלוחֹת כַּמִּכְתָּב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת עֲשֶׂר־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר      דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלַיכֶם בְּהַר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקִּהָל וַיִּתְּנֶם יְהוָה      אֵלַי: 5 וְאָפֹן וְאָרַד מִן־הַהָר וְאָשַׁם אֶת־הַלוחֹת בְּאָרוֹן אֲשֶׁר      עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִי שֵׁם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי יְהוָה: 6 וּבְגִי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִסְעוּ      מִבְּאֵרֶת בְּנֵי־יִעֲקֹב מוֹסְרָה שָׁם מֵת אַהֲרֹן וַיִּקְבֹּר שָׁם וַיִּכְתֹּו      אֶלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: 7 מִלְּשֵׁם נִסְעוּ הַגִּדְגָדָה וּמִן־הַגִּדְגָדָה      יִטְבְּחָה אַרְצָן גִּחְלֵי מַיִם: 8 בַּעַת הַהוּא הִבְדִּיל יְהוָה אֶת־שִׁבְט      הַלְוִי לַשָּׂאֵת אֶת־אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה לַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְשָׁרְתוֹ      וּלְבָרָךְ בְּשִׁמּוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: 9 עַל־כֵּן לֹא־הָיָה לָלוּי חֵלֶק      וְנַחֲלָה עִם־אֲחָיו יְהוָה הוּא נַחֲלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־הָיִד      לוֹ:</p>	<p>34:1 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פְּסַל־לִי שְׁנַי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים      כְּרִאשׁוֹנִים וְכַתְּבֵנִי עַל־הַלוחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הַלוחֹת      הָרִאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַרְתָּ: 2 וְהָיָה נָכוֹן לְבַקֵּר וְעַלִּית בְּבֹקֶר אֶל־      הַר סִינַי וּנְצַבְתָּ לִי שָׁם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַהָר: 3 וְאִישׁ לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עִמָּךְ      וְגַם־אִישׁ אֶל־יְרֵא כְּכֹל־הַהָר גַּם־הַצֹּאן וְהַבְּקָר אֶל־יְרֵעוּ אֶל־      מִוֶּל הַהָר הַהוּא: 4 וַיִּפְסַל שְׁנַי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרִאשׁוֹנִים וַיִּשְׁפֹּם      מֹשֶׁה בְּבֹקֶר וַיַּעַל אֶל־הַר סִינַי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ      שְׁנַי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים: 5 וַיֵּרַד יְהוָה בְּעָנָן וַיִּתְּנֵב עִמּוֹ שָׁם וַיִּקְרָא      בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה: 6 וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה וְעַל־פְּנֵיו וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה וְהָיָה אֵל      רַחוּם וְרַחֲמוֹ אַרְבָּע אַפָּיִם וְרַב־חַסֵּד וְאֶמֶת וְנָצַח חַסֵּד לְאֵלִפַּיִם      נֹשֵׂא עָוֹן וְפֹשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָה לֹא יִנְקָה פֶקֶד וְעַן אַבוֹת עַל־      בְּנֵי וְעַל־בְּנֵי בְנֵי עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רַבְעִים: 8 וַיִּמְהַר מֹשֶׁה      וַיִּקַּד אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶ: 9 וַיֹּאמֶר אִם־נָא מִצְּאֵתִי חֹן בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֲדֹנָי      וְלֹד־נָא אֲדֹנָי כִּקְרַבְנוּ כִי עִם־קוֹשֵׁה־עֵרְף הוּא וְסִלַּחְתָּ לַעֲוֹנָיו      וּלְחַטָּאתָיו וְנִחַלְתָּנוּ: ... 27 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כַּתְּבֵן־לִי      אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי עַל־פִּי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּרַתִּי אֶתְּךָ      בְּרִית וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: 28 וַיְהִי־שָׁם עִם־יְהוָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם      וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתָה וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלוחֹת      אֶת [דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית] עֲשֶׂר־הַדְּבָרִים:</p>
<p>1 At that time, YHWH said to me, “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones, <u>come up to me on the mountain</u>, and make you an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered, and you shall put them in the ark.” 3 And I made an ark of acacia wood, and I carved two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand 4 And he wrote on the Tablets like the first writing, the ten words that YHWH had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst</p>	<p>1 And YHWH said to Moses, “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones and I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered 2 Be ready in the morning. <u>Go up in the morning to Mount Sinai</u> and stand for me there atop the mountain. 3 No man shall not go up with you; no man shall not even be seen on the whole mountain. Even flocks and herds you must not pasture opposite that mountain.” 4 and he carved two tablets like the first ones and he woke early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai as YHWH</p>

<p>of the fire on the day of the assembly; YHWH gave them to me. 5 And I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the Tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, YHWH commanded me. ... 8 At that time, YHWH distinguished the Tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH, to stand before YHWH to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. 9 For this reason, Levi has no share or an inheritance with his brothers. YHWH is his inheritance, as YHWH your God promised him.</p>	<p><b>commanded him and he took in his hand two tablets of stone.</b> 5 And YHWH descended in a cloud and he stood with him there and he stood with him there, and called the name, “YHWH.” 6 YHWH passed before him and he called, “YHWH, YHWH, merciful and gracious god, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and truth, 7 keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but the guilty not clearing: reckoning the father’s iniquity upon the sons and the sons’ sons to the third generation and the fourth generation.” 8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and prostrated himself. 9 And he said, “If, pray, I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, pray, let my Lord go in our midst. Though this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin and make us your inheritance.” ... 27 And YHWH said to Moses, “Write you these words, for according to these words I cut a covenant with you and with Israel.” 28 And he was there with YHWH forty days and forty nights, bread he did not eat and water he did not drink; <b>and he wrote on the tablets [the words of the covenant] the ten words.</b></p>
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#### IV.1. The Itinerary Fragment in Deut 10:6–7

The itinerary fragment in Deut 10:6–7 likely represents an addition to Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 for three reasons. First, it interrupts the chronology of the narrative, describing Israel’s travels in the perfect aspect before the provisions for the recently constructed Ark’s transportation had been issued. Second, the itinerary uses the non-Deuteronomistic term “Israelites” (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Noting this, Tigay identifies the text as an itinerary from another source similar to but not based on Num 33.<sup>28</sup> Driver<sup>29</sup> and Weinfeld<sup>30</sup> identify the itinerary as Elohistic. Third, both the construction of the Ark (1–5) and the provisions for the care and transportation of the Ark (8–9) are introduced with the same formula: “At that time” (בְּעֵת הַהוּא). This formula is sometimes used to introduce supplements, but not always.<sup>31</sup> When the itinerary fragment is excised, it possible to

<sup>28</sup> Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPST/BC 5 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 362 n. 41.

<sup>29</sup> S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deut*, ICC 4 (New York, C. Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 118–121.

<sup>30</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 419.

<sup>31</sup> S.E. Loewenstamm, “The Formula בְּעֵת הַהוּא in Deuteronomy,” *Tarbiz* 68 (1969): 99:7–10:114. If the expression introduces additions in 10:1–5, 8–9, it may be introducing elements not present in the E account: The Ark and the description of the Levites’ responsibilities for the care

see the key literary role that the formula “at that time” plays. The expression marks a shift in voice from the Moses’s first person address to the third person narrator in both Deut 10:1 and 8. Deuteronomy 10:1 follows Moses’s plea to YHWH on behalf of Israel (Deut 9:25–29). Deuteronomy 10:8 follows Moses’s description of the installation of the Tablets in the Ark. More conceptually, the repetition situates both the construction of the Ark and the consecration of the Levites at the Horeb covenant. This has important implications for the text’s transformative exegesis, which I explore below.

#### IV.2. The J Theophany and Prayer (Exod 34: 2–3, 4, 5aβ–9, 27)

In Table 1 above, it is clear that there exists substantial overlap between Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 and Exod 34:1–28. Baden<sup>32</sup> and Stackert<sup>33</sup> show that when material in Exod 34:1–28 that does not overlap with Deut 10:1–5 is extracted, the resulting text represents a coherent continuation of a J narrative strand that begins in Exod 33:12–22. In Exod 33:12–22, Moses requests to see YHWH. In Exod 34:2–3, 4, 5aβ–9, 27, YHWH complies:

Exod 34:2 וְהָיָה נָכוֹן לִבְקָרְךָ וְעֲלִיתָ בְּבִקְרָא אֶל־הָרַיִם לִי שָׁם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַהָרִים: 3 וְאִישׁ לֹא־יַעֲלֶה עִמָּךְ וְגַם־אִישׁ אֶל־יִרְאָה כְּכֹל־הָהָר גַּם־הַצֹּאֵן וְהַבְּקָר אֶל־יָרְעוּ אֶל־מִוֶּלֶד הָהָר הַהוּא: 4 ... וַיִּשְׁכַּם מֹשֶׁה בְּבֹקֶר וַיַּעַל אֶל־הָרַיִם סִינַי 5 ... וַיִּתְקַצֵּב עִמּוֹ שָׁם וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה: 6 וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְדּוֹ אֲפִים וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת 7 נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים גִּשָׁא עֹז וְפִשֵׁעַ וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָה לֹא יִנְקָה פֶקֶד עֹז אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רְבַע־עִים: 8 וַיִּמְהַר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּקְדֹּ אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה: 9 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶם־נָא מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה נָא אֲדֹנָי בְּקִרְבְּנוֹ כִּי עַם־קָשֶׁה־עֲרֹף הוּא וְסָלַחְתָּ לְעֹנְוֵנוּ וְלַחַטָּאתֵנוּ וְנִחַלְתָּנוּ: 27 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב־לְךָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי עַל־פִּי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּתַבְתִּי אֶתְּךָ וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Exod 34:2 Be ready in the morning. Go up in the morning to Mount Sinai and stand for me there atop the mountain. 3 No man shall not go up with you; no man shall not even be seen on the whole mountain. Even flocks and herds you must not pasture opposite that mountain.” 4 ... and he woke early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai ... 5 ... and he stood with him there, and called the name, “YHWH.” 6 YHWH passed before him and he called, “YHWH, YHWH, merciful and gracious god, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and truth, 7 keeping kindness for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but the guilty not clearing: reckoning the father’s iniquity upon the sons and the sons’ sons to the third generation and the fourth generation.” 8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and prostrated himself. 9 And he said, “If, pray, I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, pray, let my Lord go in our midst. Though this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin and make us your inheritance.” ... 27 And YHWH said to Moses, “Write you these words, for according to these words I cut a covenant with you and with Israel.”<sup>34</sup>

Exodus 33:12–23 and Exod 34:2–3, 4, 5aβ–9, 27 represent one continuous narrative featuring a theophany and prayer. The initial request in Exod 33:12–23 is a contiguous block of text. The

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and transportation of the Ark.

<sup>32</sup> Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 169–170.

<sup>33</sup> Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*, 84–86.

<sup>34</sup> See note above. NRSV, lightly revised

account of the theophany and prayer is not contiguous, but emerges clearly after the account of E's restoration of the covenant is extracted from the present text of 34:1–28. Both pericopes exhibit features of J, notably the form and presence of YHWH. Significantly, Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 does not directly engage these elements with shared language. While there are some conceptual similarities, they are broad. Both engagements between man and god take place on mountains. This is not unique in the biblical world, in which worship often took place on high places. Owing to this similarity, there is one key of overlap in Exod 34:1–28 where Stackert<sup>35</sup> argues compellingly that text from J replaced text from E. Moses climbs the Mountain in Exod 34:2 and 4. As the mountain is identified as Sinai, that the text belongs to J rather than E. It is clear that in E, Moses had to have climbed the mountain. The preservation of Moses's ascent in D suggests that it likely occurred in E. In this case, the most reasonable explanation is that rather than retain two nearly identical lines describing an action that could only take place once, the redactor chose J over E.

#### IV.3. The Legal Collection in Exod 34:10–26

The collection of laws known as the “ritual decalogue”<sup>36</sup> in Exod 34:10–26 represents the second unit in Exod 34:1–28 that Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 does not directly engage. The present text of Exod 34:1–28 presents the collection of laws as the text inscribed on the Tablets, “the ten words” (34:28). However, the ritual decalogue includes features of D and P. This means that the ritual decalogue most likely represents an addition to Exod 34:1–9, 28—later than both J and E. Gesundheit<sup>37</sup> shows that Exod 34:18–26 incorporates Deuteronomic and Priestly features into a revision of a calendar preserved in Exod 23:14–19. Exodus 34:10–17 appear to be later additions as well, combining stereotypical Deuteronomic phrasing (10–12) with late conceptions of cult centralization (13–15), endogamous marriage (16), and aniconic worship (17) in what may be fairly described as an accumulation of midrashic supplements on the (admittedly unspecified) contents of the second tablets in Exod.<sup>38</sup> As the opening (10) and closing (26) lines of this pericope depend in the contents of this legal accumulation, they too represent additions. The closing line stands out in particular because it identifies Moses as the one to carve the tablets, when YHWH promises to do so himself in 34:1. This shift likely reflects a shift away from imagining the corporal presence of YHWH, a discourse that incidentally owes much to Deuteronomy's theological innovations. For all these reasons, the collection of laws likely date to after the point of exchange between the two accounts of the covenant renewal.

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<sup>35</sup> Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*, 84–86.

<sup>36</sup> On the intellectual history of this designation and its dating, see Bernard M. Levinson, “Goethe's Analysis of Exodus 34 and its Influence on Julius Wellhausen: The Pfröpfung of the Documentary Hypothesis,” *ZAW* 114 (2002): 212–23.

<sup>37</sup> Shimon Gesundheit, *Three Times a Year: Studies on Festival Legislation in the Pentateuch*, FAT 82 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 1–43.

<sup>38</sup> Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*, argues compellingly that J appears not to be concerned with law at all, offering some support for the identification of this text as a later supplement: “J, E, D, and P all creatively engage a common tradition of Israel's origins, and, within it, Moses's prophetic leadership, but J stands apart from the rest precisely because it does not put these traditions in service of an indictment of prophetic religion and appeal for legal religion.” (168)



There are no clear direct or indirect parallels to the laws of the ritual decalogue in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9. The text reports only that the inscription on the second set of tablets matched the inscription on the first, emphasizing this point twice in 10:2 and 4. Hayes takes this to be an indirect acknowledgement of the laws of Exod 34:10–26.<sup>39</sup> In light of the strong evidence collected by Gesundheit that the present text of the ritual decalogue represents a late composition, the text's insistence on the verbatim similarity of the two inscriptions seems more likely to reflect a general anxiety about the “authenticity” of the second tablets and the full restoration of the covenant. The ritual decalogue does not however line up with the text inscribed on the first set of tablets, outlined in Exod 20:2–17. The ritual decalogue creatively incorporates later texts and ideas into this earlier text, revising and updating the earlier account of the ten words.<sup>40</sup> In a number of ways, this validates Nora's use of the Tablets as an example of his *lieu de mémoire*.<sup>41</sup> This move illustrates a mobilization of the Tablets to represent a different vision of YHWH's covenant, a vision harmonizing later Deuteronomic and Priestly ideas and writings.

#### IV.4. The E Stratum of Exod 34:1–28 and Deuteronomy's Ark

The E stratum of Exod 34:1–28 emerges after the isolation of J theophany and prayer (Exod 34:2–3, 4, 5aβ–9, 27) and the composite legal collection (Exod 34:10–26), as discussed above. What remains of Exod 34:1–28 represents a coherent narrative, continuing Exod 33:7–11: a discussion of how Moses would speak with YHWH.<sup>42</sup> In this context, the text proceeds to outline YHWH's instructions for resolving the Golden Calf Affair: ...

Exod 34:1 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פְּסַל־לְךָ שְׁנַיִם לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כַּאֲבָנִים פְּרִאשְׁוֹנִים וְכָתַבְתִּי עַל־הַלְחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הַלְחֹת הַרְאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁבַרְתָּ: ... 4 וַיִּפְסֹל שְׁנַיִם לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כַּאֲבָנִים פְּרִאשְׁוֹנִים ... וַיַּעַל [הַהָרָה] כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ שְׁנַיִם לְחֹת אֲבָנִים: 5 וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה בְּעָנָן ... 28 וַיְהִי־יָשֶׁם עִם־יְהוָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעַיִם לַיְלָה לָחֶם לֹא אָכַל וַיִּמָּגֵם לֹא שָׁתָה וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְחֹת [אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית] עֲשֹׂרֹת הַדְּבָרִים:

Exod 34:1 And YHWH said to Moses, “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones and I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered ... 4 and he carved two tablets like the first ones ... he went up [the mountain] ... as YHWH commanded him and he took in his hand two tablets of stone. 5 And YHWH descended in a cloud and he stood with him there ... 28 And he was there with YHWH forty days and forty nights, bread he did not eat and water he did not drink; and he wrote on the tablets [the words of the covenant] the ten words.

There are two primary arguments for the existence of this narrative. The first is the coherence of both the E and J narratives.<sup>43</sup> When disentangled, the two literary strands in Exod 34:1–28 exhibit phenomenal independent unity. This unity is best explained as the product of their

<sup>39</sup> Hayes, “Golden Calf Stories,” 45–93 (esp. 85–86).

<sup>40</sup> Gesundheit, *Three Times a Year*, 1–43.

<sup>41</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (1989): 7. See full discussion in Chapter 1. Nora engaged only with the representation of the Tablets in modern times, not their formation in biblical writings.

<sup>42</sup> Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 169–170.

<sup>43</sup> Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 169–170.

independent existence. Second, the E narrative is paralleled in plot and very often in expression in D. Deuteronomy 10:1–5, 8–9 serves as a witness to the early independence of the E stratum of Exod 34. D’s direct engagement affirms the argument for the independent existence of the E stratum.<sup>44</sup> Exod 34:1, 4\*, 5aα, and 28 appear almost in their entirety in Deut 10:1–5, reworked into Deuteronomy’s account of the Ark’s construction. Whether or not one identifies Exod 34:1, 4\*, 5aα, and 28 as E, it is clear that Deuteronomy did not have access to the account of theophany and prayer (Exod 34:2–3, 4\*, 5aβ–9, and 27 [J]) and the collection of laws (Exod 34:10–26). Like the larger texts of which E and D are parts, they differ in both their narrative and ideological perspectives. The major innovations in D’s engagement with the E stratum of Exod 34 consist of a shift in narrative perspective and the addition of the Ark, both of which I argue represent concerted memory work. Deuteronomy 10:1–5, 8–9 expresses its ideological difference from its source text through the inclusion of the Ark—a move that reframes the Ark and all that the text associates with it, Moses, Horeb, and Israel’s covenantal obligations. As a foundation for this broader argument, this section outlines the mechanics of D’s engagement with the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28.

Table 2: Deut 10:1–2 and Exod 34:1

Deut 10:1–2	Exod 34:1
<p>1 בַּעַת הַהוּא אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי פְּסַל־לִי שְׁנֵי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֵׁינִים וְעֲלֵה אֵלַי הַהָרָה וְעֲשִׂיתָ לִּי אֲרוֹן עֵץ: 2 וְאֶכְתַּב עַל־הַלְּחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הִנֵּי עַל־הַלְּחֹת הַרְאִישֵׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ וּשְׂמַתָּם בְּאֲרוֹן:</p>	<p>1 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פְּסַל־לְךָ שְׁנֵי־לוחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֵׁינִים וְכַתַּבְתִּי עַל־הַלְּחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הִנֵּי עַל־הַלְּחֹת הַרְאִישֵׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ:</p>
<p>1 At that time, YHWH said to me, “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones, <b>come up to me on the mountain, and make you an ark of wood.</b> 2 And I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered, <b>and you shall put them in the ark.</b>” 3</p>	<p>1 And YHWH said to Moses, “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones and I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered.”</p>

Both accounts of the second set of tablets begin with the same initial instruction: “Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones” (Deut 10:1; Exod 34:1). To this, Deuteronomy adds instructions to construct an ark and to climb the Mountain.<sup>45</sup> At this juncture in E, there is no

<sup>44</sup> Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 188–195; Conversely, the text negatively affirms the existence of a J stratum separate from the E stratum.

<sup>45</sup> This and the next of these similarities are noted by Hayes in “Golden Calf Stories,” which reads Deut 10:1–5 as a “gap-filling and revisionist” version of Exod 33–34. In Hayes’ view, the text serves to convey the full restoration of the covenant. In these five verses, Deuteronomy speeds up the “tortuously slow” “intense negotiations” (85) between Moses and God in Exod 33–34, as well as revising the content of the revised covenant. Exodus 34:1–28 shares little with the first covenant, in Exod 20:1–14 (85). While she is correct, it is not certain that the writer of Deuteronomy had access to Exod 34:1–28, which Gesundheit, *Three Times a Year*, has persuasively argued is a significantly later pastiche of priestly and other legislation. This being the case, the emphasis on the exact similarity of the two sets of tablets serves only to

acknowledgment of the Ark as central to YHWH's presence or as having been constructed at Horeb. In fact, there is no mention of the Ark at all in E's description of how Moses communicates with YHWH in the Tent in Exod 33:7–11. Here and below, the command to climb the Mountain preserved in Deut 10:1 may have fallen out of E after its combination with J in favor of J's instruction "be ready in the morning, come up in the morning to Mount Sinai" (Exod 34:2). The reconstruction I offer here follows Stackert, on the model of E's description of Moses's first ascent in Exod 24:12.<sup>46</sup> In both accounts, YHWH promises to inscribe the tablets (Deut 9:9; 10:1–2; Exod 24:12).

Table 3: Deut 10:3 and Exod 34:4\*

Deut 10:3	Exod 34:4*
<p>3 וַאֲעֵשׂ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וַאֲפָסַל שְׁנֵי־לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֵׁימֹת וַאֲעַל הַהָרָה וַשְּׂגִי הַלְחֹת בְּיָדִי:</p>	<p>4 וַיִּפְסֹל שְׁנֵי־לְחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֵׁימֹת ... [וַיַּעַל] הַהָרָה [כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ שְׁנֵי לְחֹת אֲבָנִים:</p>
<p>3 <b>And I made an ark of acacia wood,</b> and I carved two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand.</p>	<p>4 and he carved two tablets like the first ones ... he went up [the] mountain ... as YHWH commanded him and he took in his hand two tablets of stone.</p>

Both E and D proceed by outlining Moses's perfect execution of YHWH's commands, which in D include first and foremost the construction of an ark. It is worth noting two features in E. First, D moves "as YHWH commanded him" from here to Deut 10:5. There, it serves the same purpose but shifts the emphasis from the carving of the Tablets to the installation of the Tablets in the Ark. Second, the ascent of the Mountain is not preserved in E. As above, it appears to have been omitted in favor of J's ascent. The reconstruction here mirrors D, on the theory that the ascent is narratively significant at this juncture and is likely mirrored in D (like the rest of the verse).

Table 4: Deut 10:4–5, 9:25–26, and Exod 34:5aα, 28

Deut 10:4–5	Deut 9:25–26	Exod 34:5aα, 28
<p>4 וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְחֹת כַּמְּכַתֵּב הַרְאִשׁוֹן אֵת עֲשֻׁרֹת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם בְּהַר מִתְּוֶה הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקְּהָל</p>	<p>25 וַאֲתִנְאֵל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֵת אַרְבָּעִים הַיּוֹם וְאֵת־אַרְבָּעִים הַלַּיְלָה אֲשֶׁר הִתְנַבְּלֹתִי כִּי־אָמַר יְהוָה לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם:</p>	<p>5 וַיִּרְדַּד יְהוָה בְּעֵינָיו ... 28 וַיְהִי־שָׁם עִם־ יְהוָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לָחֶם לֹא אָכַל וַיִּמֵּן לֹא שָׁתָה</p>

communicate the full restoration of the covenant and the "authenticity" of the Tablets—two significant innovations that should not be understated.

<sup>46</sup> The redactor retained only one of E and J's report of Moses's ascent, per Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, 284 n. 168 and Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*, 86. Stackert explains: "In rare instances the language that the two sources use to describe what the compiler concludes is the same event/action is so similar that that he goes a step further than interlacing the language of the two sources. He instead amalgamates them, combining two (nearly identical) statements into a similar representation. This is the case in Exod 34:4a, where the compiler combines the J and E narrations of Moses's ascent to the mountain" (86)

<p>וַיִּתְּנֵם יְהוָה אֵלָי: 5 וְאֶפֶן וְאָרֶל מִן־הַקָּדֵר וְאִשָּׁם אֶת־הַלְחָת פְּאָרוֹן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִי שֵׁם פְּאָשֶׁר צִנְנֵי יְהוָה:</p>	<p>26 וְאֶת־פְּלִל אֶל־יְהוָה ...</p>	<p>וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְחָת אֵת [דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית] עֲשֵׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים:</p>
<p>4 <b>And he wrote on the Tablets</b> like the first writing, <b>the ten words</b> that YHWH had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; YHWH gave them to me. 5 And I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the Tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, <b>as YHWH commanded me.</b></p>	<p>25 I prostrated myself, before <b>YHWH for the forty days and forty nights</b> I was prostrated because YHWH thought to destroy you. 26 I prayed to YHWH ...</p>	<p>5 And YHWH descended in a cloud and he stood with him there ... 28 And he was there with <b>YHWH forty days and forty nights</b>, bread he did not eat and water he did not drink, <b>and he wrote on the tablets [the words of the covenant] the ten words.</b></p>

Around the E account of YHWH's inscription of the Tablets, D adds its most weighty contribution. The text shifts focus from E's description of YHWH's presence to the Tablets, mirroring its broader reconfiguration of the Ark. Here the text makes two innovations. First, it repeatedly emphasizes the exact similarity between the first and second sets of tablets. Doing so communicates their authenticity, telegraphing the complete restoration of the covenant after the affair of the Golden Calf. Compare the one subtle reference to their similarity in Exod 34:4 to the four emphatic statements in Deut: 10:1, 10:2, and two in 10:4. Second, the text concretizes the significance of the Ark through the installation of the Tablets. Neither the Ark nor the Tablets are complete until they are installed together in v. 5—"and there they are, as YHWH commanded me." Again they share language, except for matters that concern the Ark. Through this addition, Deuteronomy associates the Ark fundamentally with the Tablets. The two are made for each other, for the renewed covenant at Horeb. The text also implies that they survive together as lasting memorials, their ongoing, *real* presence signifying the covenant's reality and power. A third point of departure between these two texts concerns the manner of YHWH's inscription of the Tablets: Deut 10:4–5 and Exod 5a, 28. In Exodus, YHWH descends in the form of a cloud, remaining with Moses for forty days and forty nights (34:28). While the summary of the episode in Deut 9:25 does specify that Moses remained on the Mountain for forty days and forty nights, the text does not articulate them *standing* together either there or in 10:1–5. In fact, the nature of YHWH's presence represents one of the key ideological differences between the two texts manifested in Deuteronomy's revision of these verses. In Deuteronomy, YHWH is present only through his speech from the fire. Set against the source text in Exodus, this represents a fundamentally different mode of divine presence. The Tablets are inscribed with the words YHWH spoke from the fire, but YHWH's presence is purposefully not articulated explicitly. The text's silence speaks volumes. This shift is consistent with the text's avoidance of the episode involving the Tent of Meeting in Exod 33:7–11, where Moses goes to await divine instruction after the second threat to destroy Israel in E. Deuteronomy's textual move reconfigures the presence of YHWH, distancing the deity both from the revelation of the law and as I discuss below, from atop the Ark.

Finally, it is worth noting that the expression "the words of the covenant" in Exod 34:28 is not included in Deut. Its inclusion would not be out of character for Deuteronomy, especially

given the text's emphasis on the covenant and its restoration through the Tablets and the Ark. Its absence from Deut 10:5 therefore represents either an unconscious omission or evidence that the expression "the words of the covenant" was not in Deuteronomy's source text. In connection with the latter possibility, Stackert<sup>47</sup> suggests that "the words of the covenant" in v. 28 represent a redactional gloss meant to integrate the collection of laws (Exod 34:10–26).

Table 5: Deut 10:8–9 and Exod 32:25–29

Deut 10:8–9	Exod 32:25–29
<p>10:8 בַּעַת הַהוּא הִבְדִּיל יְהוָה אֶת־שֵׁבֶט הַלְוִי לְשֵׂאת אֶת־ אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה לְעַמֹּד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְשָׁרְתוֹ וּלְבָרֵךְ בְּשֵׁמוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: 9 עַל־כֵּן לֹא־הָיָה לְלֹנִי תִלְקַךְ וְנִמְלָה עִם־אֶחָיו יְהוָה הוּא נִחְלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לֹ:</p>	<p>32:25 וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם כִּי פָרַע הוּא כִּי־פָרְעָה אֲהָרֹן לְשִׁמְצָה בְּקִמְיָהֶם: 26 וַיַּעֲמֵד מֹשֶׁה בַּשַּׁעַר הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לִיהוָה אֵלָי וַיֵּאֲסֹפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־בְּנֵי לֵוִי: 27 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם כֹּה־ אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂעִימוּ אִישׁ־חֶרְבּוֹ עַל־יָרְכּוֹ עִבְרוּ וְשׁוּבוּ מִשַּׁעַר לְשַׁעַר בְּמַחֲנֶה וְהָרְגוּ אִישׁ־אֶת־אֶחָיו וְאִישׁ־אֶת־ רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־קָרְבּוֹ: 28 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כַּכֵּן לִפְנֵי כָדָבָר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפְּל מִן־הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כַּשְּׁלִשֶׁת אַלְפֵי אִישׁ: 29 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מִלֵּאוֹ יַדְכֶם הַיּוֹם לִיהוָה כִּי אִישׁ בָּבְנוּ וּבְאֶחָיו וְלָתַת עֲלֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרָכָה:</p>
<p>10:8 At that time, YHWH distinguished the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH and to stand before YHWH to serve him and to <b> bless</b> in his name to this day. 9 For this reason, Levi does not have a share and inheritance with <b> his brothers</b>. YHWH is his inheritance, as YHWH your God said unto him.</p>	<p>32:25 When Moses the people, that they were running wild because (for Aaron had let them run wild, to the derision of their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on YHWH's side? Come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. 27 He said to them, "Thus says YHWH, the god of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side, each of you! Go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill your brother, your friend, and your neighbor.'" 28 The sons of Levi did as Moses commanded, and about three thousand of the people fell on that day. 29 Moses said, "Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of YHWH, each one at the cost of a son or a <b> brother</b>, and so have brought a <b> blessing</b> on yourselves this day."<sup>48</sup></p>

D's final expansion concerns the care and transportation of the Ark. In Deut 10:8–9, the text assigns these responsibilities to the Levites. Deuteronomy typically does not distinguish between priests and Levites. This text is no exception. It assigns a responsibility to the Levites without comment on the priests. It does mirror a longstanding tradition that the Levites carried the Ark.<sup>49</sup> At this stage, I would like to briefly note two significant accomplishments of

<sup>47</sup> Stackert, *A Prophet Like Moses*, 84.

<sup>48</sup> Exod 32:25–29 NRSV, lightly revised

<sup>49</sup> cf. among others, Num 4:2–15; Deut 31:9, 25; Josh 3:3; 8:33; 1 Sam 6:15; 2 Sam 15:24; 1 Kgs 8:4; 1 Chr 15:2, 12, 14–15, 26–27; 16:4; 2 Chr 5:4–5; 24:11; 35:3

Deuteronomy's revision.

First, the assignment of the Levites to the care and transportation of the Ark is not paralleled in the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28. In Exod 34:25–29, E does however feature a discussion of the consecration of the Levites, which it attributes to their violent work for Moses in the wake of the Golden Calf Affair. D deliberately ignores this move. Hayes<sup>50</sup> proposes this overwriting is connected with D's position on YHWH's immediate forgiveness. This may well be the case. The implications of this move are equally if not more significant, however. In D, the Ark's significance is connected with the Tablets that by metonymy represent the law itself. This is expressed in the text's designation of the Ark as "the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH" (Deut 10:8). The metonymic relationship between the Tablets and Deuteronomy's law is made explicit in Deut 31, a later expansion in which Moses has the Levites install the completed law scroll alongside the Ark:

Deut 31:24 וַיְהִי כְכֹלֹת מֹשֶׁה לְכַתֵּב אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר עַד תַּמָּם: 25 וַיִּצַּו מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם  
נֹשְׂאֵי אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: 26 לְקַח אֵת סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה וְשַׁמְתֶּם אֹתוֹ מִצַּד אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה אֲלֵהֶיכֶם וְהָיָה־  
שָׁם בְּךָ לְעֵד: 27 כִּי אֲנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־מַרְיָדָה וְאֶת־עֲרֻפְדָּה הַקֹּשָׁה הֵן בְּעוֹדֵנִי חַי עִמָּכֶם הַיּוֹם מִמָּרִים הַיְיָתֶם עִם־יְהוָה  
וְאַף בְּ־אַחֲרֵי מוֹתִי:

Deut 31:24 When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a scroll until their completion, 25 Moses commanded the Levites, the carriers of the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH, saying: 26 "Take the scroll of this law (סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה) and put it beside the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH your god; it shall be there as a witness against you. 27 For I myself know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If you have been rebellious towards YHWH while I am still alive among you, how much more after my death!"

The writers of Deuteronomy form the Ark to remind Israel not only of the Tablets of the Decalogue, but of "the Scroll of this Law" (סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה). The Ark in Deuteronomy represents the whole law, as it its writers present it to had been revealed at Horeb. I return to the significance of this move below; in the meantime, it should suffice to note that this version of the law innovated on inherited traditions, reworking them in much the same way that the text reworks E stratum of Exodus. Note the way the text reaches across time to its audience, referring directly to them in v. 27, to their rebelliousness, to their stubbornness. Moses addresses them when he expresses fear for the time after his death, their time. Doing so broadens and deepens the association between the Ark and the law as a whole, which, like the Tablets, remains with the Ark.

Second, the actions for which the Levites are consecrated are significant: "to stand before YHWH to serve him and to bless in his name to this day." The phrase "to stand before YHWH to serve him" appears elsewhere in biblical writings, often enough to infer it to be a fixed phrase referring to ritual service of YHWH; the subject is always the Levites.<sup>51</sup> In both cases, the object

<sup>50</sup> Hayes, "Golden Calf Stories," 85–86; cf. 32:25 and 33:7–11—texts Deuteronomy either omits or (possibly) refers to obliquely.

<sup>51</sup> Num 16:9; 2 Chr 29:11

of the service is present; in the case of Deut 10:8–9, this tendency leads Wilson<sup>52</sup> to conclude that YHWH remains present atop or with the Ark. Wilson’s argument centers on only one part of the phrase, however. The complete phrase reads “to stand before YHWH to serve him and to bless his name” (לְעַמֵּד לְפָנָי יְהוָה לְשָׁרְתוֹ וּלְבָרְכוֹ בְּשֵׁמוֹ). The closest parallel to this expression appears in 2 Chr 29:11:

2 Chr 29:11 בְּנֵי עֲתָה אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי שְׁלֹו כִּי־בָכֶם בָּחַר יְהוָה לְעַמֵּד לְפָנָי לְשָׁרְתוֹ וְלִהְיוֹת לוֹ מְשָׁרְתִים וּמְקַטְרִים:

2 Chr 29:11 My sons, now: Do not be negligent, for you YHWH has chosen to stand before him to serve him, to be for him ministers and offerers.

There, the expression “to stand before him and to serve him” is clarified with “to be for him ministers and offerers.” It would be a mistake to understate the significance of the qualification in 2 Chronicles or in Deuteronomy. While the fixed expression may indeed imply the presence of the divine on the Ark, here we need to consider both components of the phrases and what their uses together conveys. Their appearance together in 10:8–9 shades the meaning of the fixed phrase; whatever “service” involves concerns blessing in/with his name.<sup>53</sup> In Deuteronomy, the divine presence associated with the Ark is through the divine name. Deuteronomy 10:8–9’s expression of the divine presence is typically Deuteronomic, revising an accepted phrase to orient the presence towards the divine name.

#### IV.5. Preliminary Conclusions on the Mnemohistory of the Ark in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9

Introduced as they are with the commands to “remember” and “not forget” the events at Horeb, these revisions of E in Deuteronomy bear considerable mnemonic weight. With the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem, the Ark is no longer needed as a mobile locus for YHWH. Through the exegesis of the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28, D reconfigures both the Ark and the Levites. D reconfigures the Ark by emphasizing its role carrying the Tablets and by metonymy the law and the text of Deuteronomy itself. D reconfigures the Levites by associating their consecration through the Ark with the law. They are to carry the Ark. They are the keepers of the law. Through this creative exegesis, I argue here that the text constructs the Ark as a Deuteronomic *lieu de mémoire* for the law in at least three ways: for Moses, for the Mountain, and for Israel’s covenantal obligations to YHWH. The following section illustrates the literary-mnemonic mechanics by which the text forms the Ark as a key and critically, *real* symbol in its program for Deuteronomic reformation of Israel around its law—from the very moment of its introduction in the wake of Israel’s greatest apostasy.

### V. Poetics of the Representation of the Ark in Deuteronomy

However Deuteronomy’s conception of the Ark came to be, it survives today expressed

<sup>52</sup> Ian Wilson, “Merely a Container? The Ark in Deuteronomy,” in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, LHB/OTS 422 (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 212–49.

<sup>53</sup> cf. Deut 18:5, 7

as literature. The text of Deuteronomy both reflects and forms cultural memory. As such, it is critical that we proceed by investigating the literary and rhetorical aspects of its representation.<sup>54</sup> Below, I explore the Ark through the associational and oppositional relationships the text establishes for the Ark through its rhetorical and literary artistry. The text forges a profound positive connection with the Tablets and by extension with Moses, Horeb, and the law. At the same time, the text establishes a profoundly oppositional relationship with the Calf.

### V.1. The Ark, the Tablets, and Deuteronomy's Legal Collection

Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 associates the Ark first and foremost with the Tablets YHWH gives Moses on Horeb, an item of material culture that I argue below the writers of Deuteronomy make stand metonymically for their broader collection of laws. The observation of a fundamental connection between the Ark and the Tablets in Deuteronomy dates as early as Driver,<sup>55</sup> but finds full expression in the work of von Rad<sup>56</sup> and Weinfeld.<sup>57</sup> Fretheim argues for this connection most forcefully, though perhaps misses some nuances of the relationship when he asserts: “Deuteronomy makes a complete break from the conception of the Ark [as a war palladium] in the amphyctionic period. There is not a word concerning the role of the Ark in holy war, in representing YHWH, or as the cult object of the central sanctuary.<sup>58</sup> The Ark does represent YHWH, as a repository of his law—a collection through and around which the text envisions Israel should be organized. The Ark's primary association is with the law, but there is certainly more to the Ark. I argue here that the writers of Deuteronomy construct the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* for their whole legal collection through the Tablets. Deuteronomy repeatedly and insistently reminds Israel to observe these laws as they were revealed to Moses on Horeb, despite their often novel and at times radical reinterpretations of inherited legal traditions. The association of the Tablets given to Moses on Horeb with the Ark reforms both as *lieux de mémoire*, along with the man who receives them and the mountain on and of which they are given.

Deuteronomy is the first to connect the Ark with the Tablets in writing; it is not present in Exod 32–34.<sup>59</sup> In connecting the Ark with the Tablets, the writers of Deuteronomy

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<sup>54</sup> Ronald Hendel, “The Exodus and the Poetics of Memory,” in *Reading a Tendentious Bible: Essays in Honor of Robert B. Coote*, eds. Marvin L Chaney et al. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 87–97. Hendel defines the poetics of memory as “the rhetoric and representational capabilities of narrative, poetry and ritual as they elicit and actualize cultural memories.” (88)

<sup>55</sup> Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 117–18.

<sup>56</sup> Gerhard von Rad, “The Tent and the Ark,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E.W. Trueman (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 103–24.

<sup>57</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

<sup>58</sup> Terrence Fretheim, “The Ark in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 30 (1968): 6.

<sup>59</sup> This is the case whether or not the text is identified as Elohistic, though it is worth noting that following this source division the Ark does not appear anywhere in E. In early strata of biblical writings, the Ark appears only in J. In J's account of Israel's journey through the wilderness, the Ark serves as a locus for YHWH's presence. It serves as his war palladium,



metonymically connect the Ark with their entire version of the law. When the first set of tablets are inscribed with the decalogue, Moses prefaces the laws by explaining: “YHWH our God made a covenant with us at Horeb” (Deut. 5:2). Deuteronomy continues to refer to the Tablets as “the Tablets of the Covenant,” referring beyond the decalogue to the complete complex of laws and obligations imposed upon Israel by its god at Horeb;<sup>60</sup> the Ark is “the Ark of the Covenant,”<sup>61</sup> defined by the broader associations of the Tablets it holds. In particular, this connects the Tablets with the entire complex of laws in Deut—Deuteronomy’s covenant.

The text forges this connection by situating the Ark’s construction as a part of the revelation to Moses at Horeb, forming it as a real and material souvenir of that ephemeral, but critical moment in the text’s presentation of Israel’s past. Those tablets are inside the Ark, where Moses placed them. The text invites the reader to recall this fact, mobilizing the Ark as a real and material *lieu de mémoire* for their version of the law. It also proves the historical connection between its version of the law and the revelation at Horeb, supporting their argument with the perceived reality of the Ark. Doing so adds to the Ark’s value, supplementing and strengthening it by the association with this critical moment—with that particular place and that particular prophet.

### ***V.1.a. Why the Law? Deut 31 and Moses’s Law***

The law stands at the center of Deuteronomy’s vision of Ark and more broadly, program for Israel—a movement often characterized by the centralization and textualization of religious life. The book is at its core a legal code (Deut 12–24) revising inherited tradition, presented as Moses’s final address. When in the text Moses is said to have completed the Scroll of this Law, he instructs the Levites to place it next to the Ark:

Deut. 31:26 “Take the scroll of this law (סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה) and put it beside the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH your god; it shall be there as a witness against you. 27 For I myself know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If you have been rebellious towards YHWH while I am still alive among you, how much more after my death!”

The scroll is to stand next to the Ark in silent testimony, asserting through its presence that Israel has since the time of its placement been familiar with the laws that they so rebelliously and stubbornly violate. This testimony holds as long as the text exists, whether or not this supposedly “original” scroll ever existed. What matters is that the text’s audience believed the scroll and the Ark were real. As long as they were believed to be real, they are capable of acting as “real things.” The Ark provides real, material referent for the law, which is located both inside and alongside the chest. The questions that I ask in this section consider Deuteronomy’s relationship

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preceding Israel on their journey and into battle (Num 10:33–35 and 14:44). The Ark is essential to Israel’s victory, but there is no indication that it is associated with the Tablets or the decalogue. In fact, the Tablets do not appear in J. Deuteronomy 10 is responsible for this connection, writing the Ark into the source story of the Golden Calf and the giving of the Tablets at Horeb.

<sup>60</sup> Deut 9:9, 11

<sup>61</sup> Deut 10:8; 31:25–26

with the law, which gives the Ark its enduring significance.

The bulk of Deuteronomy consists of laws, laws that “rebellious” and “stubborn” (31:27) Israel consistently fails to observe. These laws are presented as part of Moses’s final address to Israel. Though the text of Deuteronomy purports to have been delivered by Moses at the end of the wilderness period, it cannot have been written before the time of Josiah in the seventh century BCE and perhaps later. As such its real audience would have been later Israelites, living in the promised land or in exile in Babylon.<sup>62</sup> As noted, the laws the texts present depart from inherited tradition; they were decidedly innovative and in some cases even radical. They are formed by reworking earlier textual material, turning away from ritual to the text. As discussed above, Levinson outlines Deuteronomy’s approach to legislation, which sought to institute new ideas through the creative reworking of earlier legal writings (primarily material that now forms the Covenant Collection in Exod 20:19–23:33).<sup>63</sup> Quoting and creatively reworking earlier texts, the writers of Deuteronomy reform Israel through exegesis. For example, their innovation of cultic centralization in Deut 12 creatively and subversively reinterprets prior legal traditions requiring worship at local sanctuaries.<sup>64</sup> Deuteronomy’s assertion that this law was revealed to Moses at Horeb, combined with the use of earlier, inherited written material provide the authority of antiquity for this novel idea. Deuteronomy’s reworked laws were intended to supersede other previously normative social and ritual practices.

The text is very clear that although God is giving Israel the land beyond the Jordan, Israel’s survival and future possession of it depends on their remembrance of the lessons and the law given in the wilderness: “Take care of yourselves, lest you forget YHWH your God by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today” (Deut 8:11). Failure to observe the laws and remember the lessons of Israel’s time in the wilderness as they are outlined in Deuteronomy will have dire consequences, the text continues: “If you do forget YHWH your God and follow other gods to serve and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish” (Deut 8:19). The law that the text wishes remembered is the law that is it presents, over and against earlier and alternative sets of laws.

Though the text is set in the wilderness, it was written later and its new legal vision is oriented toward its later audience. The text’s concern with its immediate audience is also reflected in its form, as Moses’s final address to Israel. The finely wrought rhetoric of the text draws in readers using second person pronouns, which would have had the effect of involving its later audience in the narrative. The scroll is to remain next to the Ark “as a witness against *you*,” (26) Moses instructs, explaining: “For I myself know *your* rebellion and *your* stiff neck. If *you* have been rebellious towards YHWH while I am still alive among *you*, how much more after my death!” (27) Similarly, in Deut 10:4 Israel’s god inscribes the Tablets with “the ten words that YHWH had spoken to *you* on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.” Though in the world of the narrative Moses is addressing wandering Israelites, the text’s sustained use of second person verbs and pronouns encourages its later audience up to and including present day readers to imagine themselves as the group being addressed. The present

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<sup>62</sup> On why the writers might have invested such value in the Ark after its loss, see below.

<sup>63</sup> Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, 12–52.

<sup>64</sup> Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, 3–22.

tense of Moses' address strengthens this effect, giving the impression that he is speaking to the audience in their time. Moses' reference to the time after his death should in this context be understood as a not so subtle reference to the real later audience of the text, who would have believed themselves to be the ones Moses addresses. This mirrors the text's insistence that this group's possession of the land is connected with their observance of the law.<sup>65</sup>

Deuteronomy mobilizes a version of the past, constructing a memory through the text. Memories exist only when they are remembered, when they are conveyed and sustained. By telling the history of the Ark and the Tablets and pointing to their endurance across time, the Ark and the Tablets are being set up very consciously as *lieux de mémoire* for the law—for the text. This is the case whether the stratum of Deuteronomy that features and forms the Ark is dated to the seventh century or later, after its loss.<sup>66</sup> Both before and after the Ark's loss, the Ark was basically absent. To the extent that most individuals engaged with it, they engaged with it from a distance. Either way, the Ark is constructed as an absent but real *lieu de mémoire*, helping to form their memory and lending it their force as a real thing.<sup>67</sup> These stories empower the Ark as a real thing to stand metonymically for Deuteronomy's version of the past, crystallizing and advancing the Deuteronomic emphasis on the centrality of the law by offering the Ark as evidence of its revelation to Moses at Horeb.

## V.2. The Ark and Moses

Deuteronomy is the only text that explicitly states that Moses constructed the Ark, a point the text advances with considerable rhetorical force.<sup>68</sup> I argue here that by crediting Moses with

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<sup>65</sup> Elsewhere, the text's concern with the generations after Moses is addressed more directly. In Deut 6:7 and 11:19, the text commands its audience to teach its version of Israel's history and Law to their children, perpetuating Deuteronomy's second telling of the Exodus as a counter-memory to the earlier J and E accounts of Israel's wanderings through the wilderness and their (earlier) versions of the law that God gave to Moses. In Deut 27:1–8, Moses instructs Israel to publish the law that he recorded on plaster covered stelae, which are to be unveiled and inaugurated with a series of covenant rituals after they cross the Jordan.

<sup>66</sup> As noted in chapter 1, the Ark seems to have been lost during or before the destruction of the First Temple.

<sup>67</sup> On this, see below. I argue there that Deuteronomy can describe the Ark in any way that it wants because it is functionally absent. The Ark retains the power of the real thing, however. As a real thing, the writers can invite its audience to check its claims against the original.

<sup>68</sup> With the exception of the Priestly writings, no earlier and subsequent representations of the Ark specify its maker—it just is and always has been. One of the major differences between the accounts of the Ark's construction in Deuteronomy and in the Priestly stratum of Exodus is that in Deuteronomy, Moses constructs the Ark and in P the work is carried out by the Israelite artisan Bezalel, under the direction of God through Moses. Readers have long struggled with this incongruity, proposing variously that there were multiple Arks and that the account in Deuteronomy might imply, or, at least, does not preclude Bezalel's involvement. (Histories of both resolutions are summarized in Tigay, *Deuteronomy*.) While it would not be unreasonable to attribute to Moses work completed under his direction, Deut 10:1–5 is altogether too emphatic

the construction of the Ark that the writers imply survives until their day (“and there were there as YHWH commanded me” [Deut 10:5]), D helps to construct the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* for Moses that cuts across time to verify both his leadership of Israel and the version of the law Deuteronomy claims he gave them.

Deut 10:1–5 is clear that God commissions Moses to construct the Ark and the text goes to great lengths to show that he carries out God’s instructions to the letter. God’s initial command that an Ark be made is issued to Moses, for Moses to execute. In Deut 10:1, YHWH instructs Moses:

פִּסְלֵ-לָךְ שְׁנֵי-לִוחֹת אֲבָנִים כְּרֵאשֹׁנִים וְעֹלָה אֵלַי הַהָרָה וְעָשִׂיתָ לָּךְ אֲרוֹן עֵץ

“Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones, and come up to me on the mountain, and make you an Ark of wood”

YHWH issues three commands in this text: “carve” (פִּסַּל), “come up” (עָלָה), and “make” (עָשִׂיתָ). Both “carve” and “make” are followed by לָּךְ—*lamed* prepositions of the *dativus ethicus* or *dativus commodi*, with second person singular suffixes that draw attention to the subjects of the actions that God commands.<sup>69</sup> The text’s repeated use of these prepositions emphasizes the importance of the subject of the commands, Moses. Had God intended for Moses to have another construct the Ark in this account, the text is unlikely to have twice followed imperatives with such prepositions.

Moving forward, Moses reports how he does exactly as God commands him, executing his instructions perfectly and, as noted, repeatedly identifying himself as the one who made the Ark, carved the Tablets, and installed them in the Ark. Later in the text, it is again Moses who records “the Scroll of this Law” (Deut. 31). Moses is the craftsman, just as he is the scribe. The Ark is not the only ritual item attributed to Moses. In Num 21:4–9, Moses constructs a bronze serpent in the wilderness, to heal snake bites. This serpent or something like it is reported to have been kept in the Temple until Hezekiah’s reforms had it removed in 2 Kgs 18:4. At most, these two texts attest to a tradition of Moses as a ritual craftsman; at the very least, it would not have been unreasonable for the writers of Deuteronomy to imagine Moses as a craftsman. To say that Moses implies in Deut 10:1–5 that he had Bezalel construct the Ark requires overlooking the craftsman tradition and the emphasis that the text places on Moses’s direct involvement, a point that is a key part of Deuteronomy’s construction of Moses.

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that Moses constructed the Ark himself for the incongruity with both non-Priestly and Priestly representations of the Ark to be anything other than a conscious rhetorical choice.

<sup>69</sup> Joüon §133d. See also GKC §119s. Both agree that the redundant לָּ preposition draws attention to the subject of the action the imperative form commands, but they disagree over the identification of the construction. GKC argues that the לָּ marks a *dativus ethicus*. Joüon argues that this particular Hebrew construction does not correspond to the Greek and Latin *dativus ethicus*, but that it functions as a *dativus commodi* and carries “indirect reflexive nuance.” Either way, the subject of the imperative is being highlighted and that is the key here: D is emphatic that it is *Moses* who is instructed to carve the Tablets and to build the Ark.

Moses does not mention Bezalel in Deut 10, because Bezalel was not involved in that version of the Ark's construction. By crediting the Ark to Moses, the text forms it as an enduring and material symbol for Moses's leadership of Israel and the law Deuteronomy claims he receives on Horeb—their law. The presence of the Ark that Moses made for the law proves its antiquity, as long as people believe it to exist and have been made by Moses. Moses becomes a key component of the Ark and what it stands for metonymically as a real thing. When the Ark is remembered as the text wishes it to be, Moses too is forced to mind. It is not insignificant that Moses has no other lasting physical memorials: “He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day” (Deut 34:6). Note the way the writers point to the absence of a gravesite to the present day, in the same spirit that they point to the presence of Moses's tablets in Moses's Ark—“and there they are, as YHWH commanded me.” When Moses was long dead and his gravesite lost, the Ark would have stood as one of the only of his works to survive the ages. It wields the power of a real Mosaic thing, standing in Deuteronomy for him and his law.

### V.3. The Ark and Horeb

A second dimension of the basic materiality of the Ark is its construction of acacia wood at Mount Horeb with the Tablets of the Covenant. Deuteronomy 10:1–5, 8–9 also constructs the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* to evoke the wilderness and Mount Horeb, the site of the covenant with Moses and Israel. The primary physical detail that the writers of Deuteronomy offer about the Ark is that Moses makes it of acacia wood at the base of Horeb, to serve as a container for the Tablets. I argue here that the Ark is intended to stand metonymically as a real thing for that experience and everything that happened at Horeb, both because of *where* and *of what* it is constructed. In Deut 10:1–2, YHWH instructs Moses:

Deut. 10:1 Carve you two tablets of stone like the first ones, and come up to me on the mountain, and make you an Ark of wood. 2 I will write on the Tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered, and you shall put them in the Ark.

When Moses explains his perfect execution of God's commands, he reports in verses 3–5:

3 And I made an Ark of acacia wood, I cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. 4 And he wrote on the Tablets like the first writing, the ten words that YHWH had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; YHWH gave them to me. 5 Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and I put the Tablets in the Ark that I had made; and there they are, as YHWH commanded me.

Reporting on his execution of YHWH's instructions to him at the foot of Horeb, Moses repeats God's words almost verbatim—almost, but not exactly. The meaningful difference here is the identification of the wood that Moses uses, acacia (אֲצִי שֵׁטִים). In Deut, the Ark is the only item of any kind made of acacia. Non-verbatim repetition of this order is a narrative technique in biblical writings, which would have been recognized by its immediate audience. Non-verbatim repetition draws attention to the differences between the repeated text, highlighting the addition or

subtraction—in this case, the wood.<sup>70</sup> The fact that the text adds the material into Moses' report suggests strongly that the writers mean to emphasize it, that it is conceptually significant.

Common luxury goods would have been made of gold and silver, as P imagines that Ark was in Exod.<sup>71</sup> That the Ark would be made of “humble” acacia is potentially significant. Acacia is native to the Mediterranean and four varieties are today found in the Sinai.<sup>72</sup> A number of biblical place names include “acacia” (אֲצִיָּה), all of which are along wadis in the wilderness.<sup>73</sup> Its basic value in this context is its growth in the wilderness around Horeb. In addition to being available in the wilderness, acacia wood seems to have symbolically represented the wilderness. The only other items of material culture in the Bible made of acacia are the priestly tabernacle and its furnishings, items that are said to have been made in the wilderness and installed in the Temple.<sup>74</sup> As such, these acacia pieces would have provided a tangible link to the past, their very mnemonic components cutting across history to the imagined wilderness period. As a *lieu de mémoire*, the Ark recalls their experience at Horeb. The text is emphatic that this must not be forgotten. In Deut 4:9–14, for example, Moses “reminds” Israel how they all stood before God at Horeb and beheld the revelation:

Deut 4:9 However: Take care you and watch yourselves closely, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen or you let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children, 10 the day on which you stood before YHWH your God at Horeb, when YHWH said to me, “Assemble for me the people, and I will make them hear my words, by which they will learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and they will teach their sons.” 11 And you approached and you stood at the foot of the mountain and the mountain was blazing with fire up to the heart of the heavens—darkness, cloud, and blackness. 12 And YHWH spoke to you out of the fire; the sound of the words, you heard but a form you did not see; there was only a voice. 13 He declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the ten words; and he wrote them on two stone tablets. 14 And me YHWH charged at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances for you to perform in the land that you are about to cross into to occupy.

Here, as in Deut 8:1–2 and 10:1–15, the rhetoric of the text draws in its readers and hearers, “reminding” them using second person verbs and pronouns how *they* stood at Horeb, and Israel's god made his covenant with *them*. The text reminds Israelites to teach their children about what the text intends to be internalized as personal experience, turning an historical memory

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<sup>70</sup> On repetition and near verbatim repetition, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 103.

<sup>71</sup> See discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>72</sup> I. Jacob and W. Jacob, “Flora,” *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:803; see also Harold N. Moldenke and Alma L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible* (Waltham, MA: Chronica Botanica Co., 1952), 24.

<sup>73</sup> Num 25:1; Josh 2:1; 3:1; Joel 3:18; and Mic 6:5. See also בֵּית הַשֹּׁטָה in Jud 7:22.

<sup>74</sup> Ex. 25:5, 10, 13, 23, 28; 26:15, 26, 32, 37–27:1; 27:6; 30:1, 5; 35:7, 24; 36:20, 31, 36; 37:1, 4, 10, 15, 25, 28; 38:1, 6. There too these objects might be mobilized as souvenirs of the wilderness. See below.

autobiographical. The difference between historical and autobiographical memory is articulated by Halbwachs in his foundational work on collective memory.<sup>75</sup> Historical memory is a memory from the past of a collective experience that an individual has not or cannot have experienced, like the memory of the revelation at Horeb for the actual audience of the text; autobiographical memory refers to memories of things that those individuals experience personally. The Ark serves in some ways alongside the Tablets as a kind of souvenir of Horeb, an experience that all of Israel is instructed to remember. The text seeks to draw in these later readers and hearers and for them to internalize the memory of the revelation of the law as personal, autobiographical memory.

On another key level, this move associates Horeb with Zion. Horeb (/Sinai) and Zion represent the two great mountains in biblical memory: Horeb/Sinai, the Mountain of the Covenant; Zion, the Mountain of the Temple.<sup>76</sup> Horeb/Sinai is the site of the revelation of the law. Zion becomes the cult's center. The Ark is ultimately thought to have been installed in the Temple, becoming the only material, "real" connection between the two—a kind of material to material transfusion of meaning.

According to the writers of Deut 10:1–5, 8–9, the Ark is made of acacia wood at Horeb for tablets carved of the stone of the mountain. As such, they serve as tangible, real, and material souvenirs of the experience of the revelation of the law, as it is presented in the book of Deuteronomy—an experience that its writers intend to be remembered as autobiographical memory. The events and phenomena that Deuteronomy enjoins Israel to recall were ephemeral—the smoke, the fire, the darkness, and especially the speech of their god. The things that remained were the Ark and the Tablets, tablets that Deuteronomy insists (as noted earlier) were inscribed with “the ten words that YHWH had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly” (10:4). The fire on Horeb is extinguished and the words of the god are no longer, but unlike the fire they were recorded—at least according to Deut—perfectly, for posterity on the Tablets. The Tablets and the Ark are souvenirs of the revelation of the law to Moses; they are made by Moses *on* and *of* Mount Horeb, in the midst of the ephemeral, awesome events that the text says Israel beheld there. The recording of God's words on the Tablets turned their raw stone and the Ark into real things that metonymically stand for Israel's experience at Horeb, capturing and communicating them as real things. Engagement with the Ark and knowledge of it as a real thing made by Moses at Horeb—a place that acacia wood would evoke—would facilitate the internalization of historical memory as autobiographical, which the text's frequent use of second person plurals suggests was intentional. In addition to serving as a material referent and *lieu de mémoire* for Deuteronomy's legal collection and Moses, the Ark serves as a *lieu de mémoire* for Horeb that helps to internalize the historical memory of the revelation of the Law.

#### V.4. The Ark and the Calf

An additional key dimension of Deuteronomy's formation of the Ark as a *lieu de*

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<sup>75</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 30–31.

<sup>76</sup> Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987).

*mémoire* is conveyed through the timing of its construction in the text, immediately following the text's account of the Golden Calf in chapter 9. Deuteronomy 9:7–10:11 forms an extended review of Israel's historical failure to observe the law, focused in particular on their construction of the Golden Calf at Horeb. By weaving the Ark into the story of Israel's molten golden calf, I argue here that Deuteronomy establishes the Calf and the Ark as competing and in some ways, inverted material *lieux de mémoire*. Together, the Calf and the Ark force the recollection of Israel's historic failure to observe the law. The text's carefully crafted juxtaposition of the Calf and the Ark further ironizes inherited conceptions of worship and the divine presence, reshaping what it means to live according to their god's laws—while at the same time, underscoring the absolute imperative that Israel do so.

#### ***V.4.a. The Calf as a Lieu de Mémoire in Deuteronomy***

In Deut 9:7–10:11, the account of Israel's construction of the Golden Calf in Exod 32:1–34:28 is reworked to serve as the centerpiece of Moses's discourse on Israel's historic failure to observe the law.<sup>77</sup> The importance of living according to the law in Deuteronomy is clear, Israel's future depends on it.<sup>78</sup> As noted in the introduction, Moses enjoins Israel to remember their construction of the Calf at Horeb as he was receiving the Tablets:

Deut 9:7 Remember, do not forget how you enraged YHWH your God in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against YHWH. 8 Even at Horeb you angered YHWH, and YHWH was so furious enough with you to destroy you... 16 you had indeed sinned against YHWH your god, by casting for yourselves an image of a calf; you had been quick to turn from the path that YHWH had commanded you.

Recalling the construction of the Calf from Moses's perspective, the writers of Deuteronomy associate the Calf with Israel's other failures in order to lay out their legal and religious agenda (9:22–24). It is only through Moses' impassioned intervention that Israel is spared (9:25–29). By insisting that Israel “remember” and “not forget” the Calf, the writers of Deuteronomy form the Calf as a real and material—though at the time of writing, *destroyed*—*lieu de mémoire* for the importance of observing the law and the potential consequences of failure. The Calf forms a key component of Deuteronomy's vision for Israel, contrasted with the Ark.

The text shapes the Calf as a *lieu de mémoire* through Moses' narration of his discovery and destruction of the Calf. The details of the Calf's construction and worship offered in the source text are missing because Deuteronomy tells the story from Moses's perspective. The text does not speak of the construction and worship involving the Calf because it takes place while Moses is on Horeb with YHWH.<sup>79</sup> Hayes refers to Deuteronomy's account as the earliest midrash on the Golden Calf story in Exod, implying that the writers might have depended on the

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<sup>77</sup> Hayes, “Golden Calf Stories,” 45–93.

<sup>78</sup> See discussion above.

<sup>79</sup> Hayes, “Golden Calf Stories”; Begg, “The Destruction of the Calf”; Begg, “The Destruction of the Calf Revisited”; Knoppers, “Aaron's Calf and Jeroboam's Calves.”



source text's recollection by its audiences.<sup>80</sup>

Here again, Deuteronomy's writers again appeal to their audiences through the use of second person verbs and pronouns. This move lends the Ark a sense of reality and the audience a sense of guilt. "Even at Horeb *you* provoked YHWH to wrath, and YHWH was so angry with *you* that he was ready to destroy *you*," Moses explains in 9:8; in 9:16, Moses confirms this with his own eyes: "I saw that *you* had indeed sinned against YHWH *your* god, by casting for *yourselves* an image of a calf; *you* had been quick to turn from the way that YHWH had commanded *you*." The text even points to the land of the audience's current location: "*You* have been rebellious against YHWH from the day *you* came out of the land of Egypt until you came to *this place*." Though the text's language points to Horeb in the context of the narrative, its careful openness allows readers to feel that Moses is addressing them, wherever they are—*there*. As noted, this narrative technique situates the audience of the text in the position of Israel. It draws them in, though they cannot have been at the foot of Mount Horeb or Mount Nebo.<sup>81</sup>

Ultimately, Moses destroys the Calf. Whereas the text of Deuteronomy clearly points to the endurance of the Ark across time, the text is clear that the Calf does not endure. The continued presence of the Ark that the text implies serves to help form it as a *lieu de mémoire*. The Calf does not have the enduring material presence attributed to the Ark. Its absence does, however, leave an enduring, perhaps material, impression. I would like to propose that the Calf serves as a real and material *lieu de mémoire* in a new way—as a destroyed object. When the character of Moses calls on Israel to "remember" and "not forget" the Calf as symbol of their failure to observe the law, he is forming and mobilizing the Calf as a *lieu de mémoire*. The destroyed calf offers space for remembering, mobilized by those who recall its destruction. In its destruction, the Calf recalls both the folly of the people who built and worshipped with it, and the nobility of the one who ended it, Moses.<sup>82</sup> This is similar to the way Moses' construction of the Ark confirms Moses' role in the receipt of the law. Its very real destruction lends reality to Israel's historic failure to observe the law. In some ways, it retains a material presence through its absence, complicating Nora's easy distinction between material and non-material *lieux de mémoire*. The Calf is non-material because it is not there, but the fact that it is not there is the point: Its "material absence," if you will, provides a kind of "material presence." The emptiness of the space that the Calf could have occupied becomes the destroyed calf's physical, material presence, signifying its reality and the reality of Israel's historic failures. The Calf continues to serve important roles in the formation of memory and identity even in its destruction, its very real absence.

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<sup>80</sup> If this is the case, I discuss the implications below.

<sup>81</sup> This critique would have been especially poignant because worship involving statuary, especially bulls, seems to have been an inherited, if not authorized religious practice.

<sup>82</sup> See for example Neh 9:16–21, where Ezra recalls the Calf and Israel's failure to obey YHWH's commands. This text does not recall the Calf's destruction, but its construction. It focuses on Israel's sin. What it does do is illustrate the power of these material sins. Note that the text also recalls the manna as YHWH's commitment to them. On manna and the Ark in the Priestly writings, see below.

#### V.4.b. *The Ark and the Calf, Inverted Lieux de Mémoire*

The comparison that the juxtaposition of the Calf and the Ark invites is more than implicit. The text draws parallels between the cult objects, offering them, I argue, as inverted *lieux de mémoire*. The text employs two linguistic devices to draw parallels between the Calf and the Ark, the first being the *lamed* preposition of the *dativus ethicus* or *dativus commodi*. Recall that when God commands Moses to construct the Ark, he says in a string of commands: “make you an Ark” (עָשִׂיתָ לָּךְ אֲרוֹן עֵץ).<sup>83</sup> All three commands are followed by *lamed* prepositions of the *dativus ethicus* or *dativus commodi*, which draw attention to the subjects of the actions commanded (Moses).<sup>84</sup> When God first tells Moses of the Calf Israel constructed, he does so using the *lamed* preposition of the ethical dative. “Israel has made themselves a molten image” (עָשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסִּכָּה),<sup>85</sup> he says. Descending the Mountain, Moses sees that indeed they had, declaring in 9:16: “you have made yourselves a molten calf image” (עָשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם עֵגֶל מִסִּכָּה). The text’s repeated use of these prepositions emphasizes the importance of the subject of the commands, communicating reflexivity. In this case it also communicates similarity, establishing a verbal affinity between the Calf and the Ark. The addition of “calf” (עֵגֶל) in verse 16 draws attention to the form of the molten image, elaborating and focusing attention on the object. Secondly, the parallel between the Calf and the Ark in Deuteronomy is established in the way the text refers to the Calf and the Ark. Moses refers in 9:21 to Israel’s calf image as the “sinful thing you made, the Calf” (חַטָּאתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתֶם אֶת־הָעֵגֶל); in chapter 10, the Ark is commissioned of Moses (1) and Moses identifies it explicitly as “the Ark that I made” (אֲרוֹן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי).<sup>86</sup> Both add to the source text from Exod. In Exod 32:20, the Calf is referred to simply as the “the Calf that they made” (הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ). As noted, the Ark is not mentioned at all in this stratum of Exod. Deuteronomy’s use of similar relative clauses featuring the emphatic repetition of the verb “to make” in both reports establishes a clear connection between the construction of the Calf and the construction of the Ark in chapter 10, highlighting the pairing in Deuteronomy against the source documents where the two are not linked.

Through the conscious and careful juxtaposition of the Calf and the Ark, the text presents the two ritual objects as opposites. The Calf is illicit; the Ark is commissioned by YHWH and constructed by Moses. The Calf represents a violation of the law; the Ark signifies the law, the whole law as it is presented in Deuteronomy. Even the material presences of the *lieux de mémoire* are inverted; the Calf is destroyed, the text implies that the Ark and its tablets survive to the author’s day. This final inversion is critical. The text contrasts the Calf’s presumed absence with the Ark’s presumed presence.

By bringing the Calf and the Ark together, the writers of Deuteronomy are able to highlight the potential consequences of Israel’s historic failure to observe the law—the law represented metonymically by the Ark. When YHWH observes Israel worshipping a molten image he resolves to end them. It is only through Moses’ intercession that Israel is spared. At the same time, the conscious pairing of the two ritual objects creates an opportunity for the writers to

<sup>83</sup> Deut 10:1

<sup>84</sup> Joüon §133d; GKC §119s. With the ל prepositions, the verbs carry “indirect reflexive nuance.” See also above.

<sup>85</sup> Deut 9:12

<sup>86</sup> Deut 10:5

offer a critique of the association of material culture with ritual practice. As noted, the text revises inherited traditions about the Ark as YHWH's throne. This might find support in the theory that the Calf is in fact a pedestal, not an image representing the deity.<sup>87</sup> Such an understanding of the Calf is parallel with the cherubs of the Ark-throne, an idea the text of Deuteronomy argues against. Critique of the Calf as pedestal would be an indirect, but very incisive critique of the Ark as throne that would support Deuteronomy's distancing of the Ark from divine enthronement. Either way, this fits well with the text's general approach to the divine presence. Recall for example that when the text revises the E account of the second inscription of the Tablets, the writers omit reference to YHWH's presence in the cloud. Instead YHWH speaks to Moses out of the fire. The association of the Ark with the law represents a movement away from the association with the enthroned god.

The text draws a clear connection between the Calf and the Ark; the Calf is illicit, the Ark explicitly commissioned by YHWH. The Ark's construction for the Tablets of the law in the wake of the Golden Calf recalls the folly of idolatry and the idea that YHWH's presence can inhabit multiple objects simultaneously, which Sommers shows remained commonplace until after the widespread acceptance of Deuteronomic and Priestly ideas on the matter.<sup>88</sup> It may indirectly, but incisively critique the idea of divine enthronement, an idea that aligns with Deuteronomy's general approach to the divine presence.

## VI. Conclusions

While Deut 9:7–10:11 is not the earliest biblical representation of the Ark, the Tablets of the Covenant, or the Golden Calf, the text is the first to tell their stories together. Doing so represents significant, thoughtful, and creative memory work, which reshapes all three objects that were presumably sincerely believed to have been from Israel's shared past. Moses' call for Israel to "remember" and "not forget" the Ark, the Tablets, and the Calf *together* represents more than a rhetorical flourish. These imperatives combine with the text's literary features to craft a compelling counter-memory of the covenant at Horeb.

The Ark and the Tablets that it contained are set up in Deut 10:1–5 as *lieux de mémoire* for the law, moving the Ark away from its historic association with the presence of YHWH. As a thing and as a *lieu de mémoire*, the Ark recalls God's revelation of the law to Moses before all of Israel at Mount Horeb. Perhaps most critically, its construction in the aftermath of the Golden Calf recalls the folly of idolatry and the idea that YHWH's presence can inhabit an object, a practice that was not illicit until after the widespread acceptance of Deuteronomy's ideas on the matter. All of these are key components in Deuteronomy's ideology and all are contained in the Ark, written into its very nature along with Moses' law from Horeb. Whether or not the Ark was physically present in the temple during the time Deuteronomy was composed, it was functionally absent. What matters in the text is that it is presented as having been a real thing that survives to the author's day. Deuteronomy's vision of the Ark is empowered by its absence and its reality. Because the Ark is absent, the text can describe it in any way that it wants. Because the Ark is at least described as being real and present, the text can invite its audience to check its claims against the original—the Tablets remain in the Ark, sharing with it their significance helping to

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<sup>87</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*; Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*.

<sup>88</sup> Sommer, *Bodies of God*, 12–57.

form Israel in Deuteronomy's vision around the law.

### 3. CONSTRUCTING THE ARK, CONTESTING ISRAEL II: THE ARK IN PRIESTLY WRITINGS

Exod 25:1 And YHWH said to Moses ... 8 “Have [Israel] make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell in their midst. 9 In accordance with all that I show you concerning the form of the Tabernacle and the form of all its furniture, thus you shall make it. 10 They are to make an ark of acacia wood: two and a half cubits, its length; a cubit and a half, its width; and a cubit and a half, its height ... ”

In the Priestly source (P), the Ark plays a critical role as the locus of the cloudy, glorious, and, above all, *holy* and *dangerous* presence of YHWH.<sup>1</sup> Exod 25:10–16; 37:1–5 describes the commission and construction of the Ark with P’s mobile tent sanctuary, the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting.<sup>2</sup> The Ark occupies the Tabernacle’s innermost and holiest chamber, the Holy of Holies. When the Ark is installed in the Holy of Holies, YHWH promises: “I will meet with you there; I will tell you from above the *kappōret* from between the two cherubs that are above the Ark of the ‘*ēduṭ*’ all that I command you for the Israelites” (Exod 25:22). From this point forward, the Ark comes to be known as “the Ark of the ‘*ēduṭ*’”<sup>3</sup> and sometimes elliptically as “the Ark”<sup>4</sup> or “the ‘*ēduṭ*’”<sup>5</sup> The Ark largely fades into the background of P after its construction, but appears in three significant groups of texts:

1. The Ark appears as the source of the revelation of the P legal collection to Moses (Lev 1:2; Num 7:89);
2. The Ark appears as a part of P’s annual atonement ritual (Lev 16:2); and

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter discusses material in the Priestly Source and not the Holiness source (H), which Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) has shown to be a distinct and later stratum innovating P.

<sup>2</sup> The English term “Tabernacle” is derived from the Latin, *tabernaculum* (“tent” [L&S]). For convenience, this chapter refers to the sanctuary as the Tabernacle unless discussing a text in which it is referred to as the Tent of Meeting.

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear from P to what exactly ‘*ēduṭ*’ refers, though I discuss below that it is likely a text. See, for example, Exod 25:22; 26:33–34; 30:6, 26; 39:35; 40:3, 5, 21; Num 4:5; 7:89.

<sup>4</sup> e.g., Exod 31:7; 40:20

<sup>5</sup> The annual atonement ritual involving entrance into the Holy of Holies in Lev 16:13 is a good example of this phenomenon. The text explains: “The incense will cover the *kappōret*, which is atop the ‘*ēduṭ*’” The *kappōret* was the Ark’s lid. The ‘*ēduṭ*’ was kept inside the Ark. Therefore, the term ‘*ēduṭ*’ here almost certainly refers to “the Ark of the ‘*ēduṭ*’” elliptically (cf. Exod 16:34; 30:36; Num 17:19; 17:25). Note further that the Tent of Meeting (Num 9:15; 17:22–23; 18:2; 2 Chr 24:6), Tabernacle (Exod 38:21; Num 1:50, 53; 10:11), and curtain (Lev 24:3) are all also identified with ‘*ēduṭ*’ in P.

3. The Ark appears during P's description of Israel's journey through the wilderness, which outlines provisions for the Ark's transportation (Num 3:31; 4:1–6) and the Ark's association with two miraculous objects acquired en route: the jar of manna (Exod 16:33–34) and Aaron's flowering staff (Num 17:7–10).

While the Ark had long been associated with YHWH's presence, as YHWH's divine throne, footstool or podium.<sup>6</sup> P reimagines the Ark's connection with YHWH through its representation at the center of the Tabernacle. Inasmuch as the Ark predates P, P's re-contextualization of the chest represents creative memory work. Through its description of the Tabernacle's origins, travels, and ritual service, P advances a compelling counter-memory of the Ark that harnesses its power as a "real thing"—likely after its historic loss—to express and to support a new vision for Israel: YHWH is to dwell in Israel's midst. The realization of this vision requires two related developments, both of which P connects with the Ark: Israel must construct a Tabernacle to accompany the Ark for YHWH, and Israel must observe instructions concerning ritual service as they are revealed in the Tabernacle from between the two cherubs atop the Ark. The consequences of Israel's failure to abide by these rules are dire: abandonment by YHWH and death. The Ark stands at center of it all, reflecting—and revealing—the rules of the priestly ritual system.

This chapter shows how the Priestly writings mobilize the Ark as a real and material, though absent, *lieu de mémoire*. Drawing on the inherited significance of the Ark, P invests the chest with a new backstory and a new role in Israelite ritual. The Ark serves as a locus of negotiation in Priestly writings, where past conceptions of YHWH's presence give way to the authors' unique and forward-looking ritual conception of the ideal relationship between Israel and YHWH. Part I of this chapter offers a framework for understanding representations of the Ark in Priestly writings. Part II explores the concrete ways that Exod 25:10–17; 37:1–5 and Lev 1–16 reimagine the Ark, *reflecting* and *enabling the revelation of* the Priestly ritual system. It explores the legal collection broadly, with particular focus on the Ark in Lev 16. The section then investigates two objects the text associates with the Ark, which offer some confirmation for P's vision for Israel: the jar of manna (Exod 16:34–35) and Aaron's flowering staff (Num 17:7–10). Part IV considers these texts together, as they look to the future, offering a material—potentially *reconstructible*—point of connection between Israel's two sacred mountains: Sinai and Zion.

### I. The Ark in P: An Overview and Interpretive Key

P is unusually forthright in articulating why Israel must construct the Tabernacle. Exodus 25:8 explains: "Have [Israel] make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell in their midst." The Tabernacle is to enable YHWH to dwell among Israel. On how and why this is the case, the text is somewhat less direct. Priestly writings do not always articulate their vision for Israel with the rhetorical flourish or clarity found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, they exhibit what Mary Douglas has called a "correlative" thought style:

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 1.

Leviticus' literary style is correlative, it works through analogies. Instead of explaining why an instruction has been given, or even what it means, it adds another similar instruction, and another and another, thus producing its highly schematized effect. The series of analogies locate a particular instance in a context. They expand the meaning. Sometimes the analogies are hierarchized, one within another making inclusive sets, or sometimes they stand in opposed pairs or contrast sets. They serve in place of causal explanations. If one asks, Why this rule? the answer is that it conforms to that other rule. If, Why both those rules? the answer is a larger category of rules in which they are embedded as subsets or from some of which they are distinguished as exceptions.<sup>7</sup>

The Priestly legal collection does not explain or attempt to persuade, except through the authoritative presentation of the rules as incumbent upon the people of Israel. As Douglas puts it: "Instead of argument there is analogy."<sup>8</sup>

While Douglas focuses on P's legal writings, P's style of thought also shaped their narratives. This is especially clear in P narratives concerning the Tabernacle. First, the significance of the Tabernacle extends by analogy to the First Temple.<sup>9</sup> Because the text likely dates to after the First Temple's destruction, we may understand its extension to offer visions of either what *should be* or *will be* in the Second Temple. Second, the significance of each item in the Tabernacle narrative is expressed in relation to the other items, constructing a clear (but not necessarily clearly articulated) vision of the world. Beginning with the Tabernacle's outer court, the items of furniture combine to articulate three hierarchical grades of sanctity leading to the Holy of Holies in which the Ark stands.<sup>10</sup>

With each item commissioned (Exod 25–31) and constructed (Exod 35–40) in the P Tabernacle narrative, this system unfolds to create conditions enabling YHWH's presence among the people in the camp. "They are referred to incidentally ... as if they did not require explicit mention," Haran notes.<sup>11</sup> P perceives the universe in binary terms, divided, for example, between the holy and the profane or the clean and the unclean. YHWH is holy. Israel is profane, at least for the most part. These binaries structure P's worldview. P presents the role of the priests as mediators: "You are to distinguish between the holy and the profane and between the unclean and the clean" (Lev 10:10). As Propp notes: "The Tabernacle is dedicated to a paradoxical proposition. God and Israel both want to live together, yet Yahweh's attribute of

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8. On the impact of Mary Douglas in biblical studies, see Ronald Hendel, "Remembering Mary Douglas: *Kashrut*, Culture, and Thought-Styles," *Jewish Studies* 45 (2008): 3–15.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 189–194; see also Ziony Zevitt, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 340–342.

<sup>10</sup> On the graded sanctity of the Temple, see Menachem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1978), 175–188; and Philip Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, JSOTSup 106 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 89–114.

<sup>11</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 175.

Holiness is incompatible with earthly corruption.”<sup>12</sup> YHWH was holy and required purity. Douglas shows that purity can be dangerous, as it requires separation from “dirt” (“matter out of place”):

Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the byproduct of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.<sup>13</sup>

Maintenance of the system’s distinctions was of the utmost importance, complicating YHWH’s commitment to dwelling in Israel’s midst and requiring the Tabernacle and Priestly intervention with the ritual system.<sup>14</sup> P routinely reminds its audience that proper care must be taken when interacting with the Tabernacle and especially the Ark in its Holy of Holies or “you will die.”<sup>15</sup> The Tabernacle creates an insulated space for YHWH in Israel’s midst, free from “dirt.” In the Tabernacle, YHWH is protected from Israel’s impurities by “concentric circles of diminishing sanctity”<sup>16</sup> expressed both by rules and the composition of the Tabernacle’s ritual furniture. Haran<sup>17</sup> outlines the parameters of this pattern in considerable detail, which govern touch, sight, and entry into the Tabernacle for members of different groups: Israelites, Levites, and the priests. In this context, one illustrative example should suffice: The quality of the materials used for items of furniture reflects and reifies the sanctity of each “circle.” In P, areas of higher sanctity were furnished with items of higher value. The Tabernacle complex had three areas: the Outer Court; the Tabernacle’s front room; and the Holy of Holies. The outer court featured an altar (Exod 27:2) and basin (Exod 30:18) of bronze. The Tabernacle’s featured items were made of pure gold. In the front room, the Tabernacle featured the lampstand (Exod 25:24), the table for showbread (Exod 25:31), and the incense altar (Exod 30:3). In the Holy of Holies, the Tabernacle featured the Ark (Exod 25:11) and the *kappōret* (Exod 25:17).<sup>18</sup> The material gradations Haran identifies extend to the fabrics used in the tent, the curtains, and the priestly vestments.<sup>19</sup> The materials parallel access prohibitions. While the items in the outer court would have been visible to Israel and the Levites, Haran explains: “A non-priest [including a Levite]

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<sup>12</sup> William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 2B (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 686.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1984), 35.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas is correct that “where there is dirt there is system.” Note however T.M. Lemos’ qualification in “Where There Is Dirt, Is There System? Revisiting Biblical Purity Constructions,” *JSOT* 37.3 (2013): 265–294. Lemos shows that while dirt does point to system, that system may vary across biblical texts.

<sup>15</sup> eg. Lev 16:1, 13

<sup>16</sup> Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 688.

<sup>17</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 175–188.

<sup>18</sup> Across all zones of sanctity, items that touch the ground are made of less precious metals. Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 527, points out that the for the Tabernacle frame and veil posts have silver bases (Exod 26:19, 25, 32) and the screen posts have bronze bases (Exod 27:10, 11, 17). Likewise, I would add that the Ark’s rings and poles are plated with gold and not pure gold (Exod 15:12–13).

<sup>19</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 158–174.



may not even look at any of the articles of furniture within the tabernacle.”<sup>20</sup> For example, Levites of the line of Kohath are charged with carrying the items of furniture from the Tabernacle including the Ark (Num 4:4). They are not however permitted to see the items. Numbers 4:5–6 explains: the priests (“Aaron and his sons”) are to prepare the Ark and other items for transportation by covering them. Only after the priests have covered all the items may the Levites of the line of Kohath fulfill their assigned duties. But the text concludes with a warning: “they must not touch the holy things or they will die” (Num 4:15).

It is possible to determine the role of the Ark in the Tabernacle from the synthetic analysis of Priestly writings. YHWH’s presence was a source of great danger; the Tabernacle insulates the god from the people and the people from the god. YHWH “meets” (יָעַד) with Israel in the Tabernacle “between the two cherubs” (Exod 25:22; cf. Num 7:89). When the Ark, the *’ēdut*, and its lid the *kappōret* are in place in the completed Tabernacle, YHWH takes his place settled among Israel:

Exod 40:34 Then the Cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the Glory of YHWH filled the Tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to go into the Tent of Meeting because the Cloud settled upon it and the Glory of YHWH filled the Tabernacle.

From this, two conclusions may be drawn. First, the Ark, the *’ēdut*, and the *kappōret* play central roles in the Tabernacle’s ritual ecosystem. Second, YHWH does not live at all times in the Tabernacle. YHWH “meets” with Moses there, meaning that he is sometimes there and sometimes elsewhere. YHWH is able to withdraw from the Tabernacle, as apparently occurs for the cleansing of the Holy of Holies during annual atonement ritual (Lev 16). Seow characterizes the Tabernacle as a “rendezvous.”<sup>21</sup> This in itself represents a departure from earlier conceptions of the divine, where the Ark was paired rigidly with YHWH.<sup>22</sup> The Ark is associated with the divine presence in earlier biblical writings. The divine presence is even understood as dangerous in earlier biblical writings, for example in the Ark Narrative. YHWH’s presence decimates the Philistines in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1, as the Ark moves through the Philistine cities of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron.<sup>23</sup> When the Ark returns to Israel, an Israelite named Uzzah is *killed* for reaching out to stabilize the Ark on a bumpy road (1 Sam 6:7). The Ark P recalls is not new. The danger P attributes to the divine presence is not new. It is P’s *solution* that represents innovation: the Tabernacle and the Priestly ritual system.

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<sup>20</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 178.

<sup>21</sup> See below and Seow, “Ark, of the Covenant.”

<sup>22</sup> On shifting conceptions of the divine body in the ancient world, see Benjamin Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> See discussion in chapter 4.

## I.1. Notes on the Date of P

In contrast to controversy concerning other documentary sources of the Pentateuch, there is broad agreement concerning the existence of P.<sup>24</sup> That P represents a coherent and independent document has also been well established.<sup>25</sup> Its date is somewhat less secure, though the balance of evidence suggests that it was composed after the First Temple's destruction during the Babylonian exile or the Persian period. It is difficult to date P on linguistic grounds.<sup>26</sup> It exhibits features of Standard<sup>27</sup> and Late<sup>28</sup> Biblical Hebrew, which may point to an origin in the early Persian period. Religious language can be especially conservative, retaining earlier vocabulary and form. (Consider, for examples, the English use of "Ark," "Tabernacle," and the language of the KJV). A Persian period date is supported by literary evidence. Wellhausen<sup>29</sup> shows that pre-exilic texts like Samuel–Kings, Deuteronomy, and Ezekiel do not acknowledge the existence of the institutions, rituals, and events P describes. That Chronicles updates Samuel–Kings to incorporate P shows that this was both recognized and addressed in the Persian period.<sup>30</sup> Cross<sup>31</sup> adds to this, noting that P shares linguistic features with sixth century BCE material from Ezekiel and Zechariah: Priestly theophoric elements begin to appear in names at this time, including the verb "to dwell" (שָׁכַן) that is so central to the Priestly conception of the Tabernacle. The most prominent objection to the exilic or Persian period dating of P comes from Haran. Haran argues that P addresses the concerns of the pre-exilic period better than the exilic or Persian periods.

<sup>24</sup> Friedhelm Hartenstein and Konrad Schmid, eds., *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte*, VWGTh 40 (Leipzig: EVA, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Baruch J. Schwartz, "The Priestly Account of Theophany and Lawgiving at Sinai," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, eds. Michael V. Fox et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 103–34.

<sup>26</sup> Lina Petersson, "Priestly Source of the Pentateuch," in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, 4 vols., ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3:230–32.

<sup>27</sup> On the historical linguistics of biblical Hebrew, see Ronald Hendel and Jan Joosten. *How Old is the Hebrew Bible? A Textual, Historical, and Linguistic Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming). See also Victor (Avigdor) Hurvitz, "The evidence of language in dating the Priestly Code: A linguistic study in technical idioms and terminology," *RB* 81 (1974): 24–56; idem, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (Paris: Gabalda, 1982); idem, "Once again: The linguistic profile of the Priestly material in the Pentateuch and its historical age—A response to J. Blenkinsopp," *ZAW* 112 (2000):180–191; see also Gary Rendsburg, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the date of 'P,'" *JANES* 12 (1980):65–80.

<sup>28</sup> For example, P's use of אָנִי over אֲנִי for the first person pronoun or מְנוּסִים ("pants"). On the latter, see S. David Sperling, "Pants, Persians and the Priestly Source," in *Ki Baruch Hu. Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, eds. R. Chazan et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 373–85.

<sup>29</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1885); see convenient synthesis in John Muddiman and John Barton, eds. *The Pentateuch*, OBC (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 24–26.

<sup>30</sup> Chapter 4 outlines this process in greater detail, including one instance of the incorporation of Priestly material in 1 Kgs 8.

<sup>31</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 324.

Against Wellhausen, Haran concludes: “there is no primary, basic correlation between P’s legal and historical presuppositions and the actual conditions of the post exilic period.”<sup>32</sup> Rather, Haran suggests that P was composed during reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah “within the semi-esoteric circle of the Jerusalemite priesthood.”<sup>33</sup> It remained “the special possession of that circle”<sup>34</sup> until it was promulgated by Ezra as described in Neh 8–10. Though Haran’s argument is grounded in the fit between P and pre-exilic Judah, Haran concedes that P contains both “historical” and “utopian” elements.<sup>35</sup> For example, Haran dates P to a time in which Israelites worshipped at high places; he credits the text with inspiring Hezekiah’s reform, but P does not directly critique or acknowledge high places.<sup>36</sup> If indeed P is a utopian text, it may well be that sections Haran deems fit historically with pre-exilic Judah are also utopian projections written in the exilic or Persian periods. At all events, Haran’s dating requires the acceptance that the text was kept for the internal use of Jerusalem priests without radiating outwards. If it had radiated outwards, it would have left an imprint on non-Priestly literature. While possible and potentially supported by linguistic evidence, a pre-exilic date for P does not seem probable.

## I.2. Notes on P and Priestly Ritual as Memory Work

Insofar as the Ark predated P, its use represents creative memory work. The ritual system in which Priestly writings involve the Ark is also bound up in memory. Connerton<sup>37</sup> argues that ritual performance represents one of the key ways in which memory is conveyed and sustained, a social framework that prompts recollection. As Douglas notes, as well, ritual has the capacity to link individuals with the remembered past:

[R]itual focusses attention by framing; it enlivens the memory and links the present with the relevant past. In all this it aids perception. Or rather, it changes perception because it changes the selective principles. So it is not enough to say that ritual helps us to experience more vividly what we would have experienced anyway. It is not merely like the visual aid which illustrates the verbal instructions for opening cans and cases. If it were just a kind of dramatic map or diagram of what is known it would always follow experience. But in fact ritual does not play this secondary role. It can come first in formulating experience. It can permit knowledge of what would otherwise not be known at all. It does not merely externalise experience, bringing it out into the light of day, but it modifies experience in so expressing it.<sup>38</sup>

The ritual system P creates “frames” and “formulates” Israelite experience, infusing all aspects of life from Israel’s sacrifices (Lev 1–7) to Israel’s diet (Lev 11) with “what would otherwise not

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<sup>32</sup> Menachem Haran, “Behind the Scenes of History: Determining the Date of the Priestly Source,” *JBL* 100.3 (1981): 326.

<sup>33</sup> Haran, “Behind the Scenes of History,” 330.

<sup>34</sup> Haran, “Behind the Scenes of History,” 330.

<sup>35</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 122.

<sup>36</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 145.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 65.

be known at all.”<sup>39</sup> Doing so “enlivens” memory, conveying and sustaining particular formulations of the past by making them *present*. In the following sections this chapter turns to the biblical text to investigate how the Ark contributes to Priestly ritual performance. While only the High Priest was permitted to come into contact with the Ark, the Priestly ritual system is comprehensive and structures nearly all aspects of Israelite life. In what ways does the Ark reflect this ritual system? What roles does the Ark play in them and their perpetuation, both changed by them and changing them? Finally, of what use is the Ark—especially as it appears to have been lost by the time of the composition of P?

## II. The Commission, Construction, and Contribution of the Ark in P

In this section, I show that P’s Ark is entangled in memory work in three ways. First, P’s very *description* of the Ark represents memory work. Second, the performance of the rituals revealed from atop the Ark represents memory work that reifies P’s ritual system’s distinctions between purity and pollution even when performed at a distance from the Ark. Third, P mobilizes the Ark’s very real absence to support its case for the imperative of keeping that which is pure separate from that which is polluted.

### II.1. The Commission and Construction of the Ark in P

Priestly writings refer to their mobile tent sanctuary alternately as the Tabernacle and Tent of Meeting.<sup>40</sup> The Tent of Meeting appears first in the Elohist source (E). There, it is described as a tent periodically pitched by Moses outside the camp for “everyone who sought YHWH”<sup>41</sup> The tent served as a meeting place administered by Moses and “his servant (נֶעֶר), Joshua son of Nun” (Exod 33:10). The only physical detail that the text offers is that it is a tent, though the text three times stresses that it is located outside the camp.<sup>42</sup> Because Israelites were

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<sup>39</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 65.

<sup>40</sup> Michael B. Hundley, “Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting? The Dual Nature of the Sacred Tent in the Priestly Texts,” in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*, eds. Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen, RBS 82 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 3–18.

<sup>41</sup> Exodus 33:7; see also Num 11:16–29 and 12:4–10. The tent in E is a place to commune with YHWH, a locus for his presence. There is no linguistic or other positive evidence that the P is remembering this particular narrative. Accordingly, it is more likely that both texts are remembering the same idea from Israel’s shared past—the idea of an archaic tent sanctuary. On this, see Daniel Fleming, “Mari and the Possibility of Biblical Memory,” *RA* 98 (1992): 41–78; and Michael M. Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel! The Terminology, Function, Form, and Symbolism of Tents in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, CHANE 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

<sup>42</sup> “And Moses used to take the tent and pitch it *outside the camp, far off from the camp*; he called it the Tent of Meeting. And everyone who sought YHWH would go out to the tent of meeting, *which was outside the camp*” (Exod 33:7).

welcome to gather “at the entrance,” it must have been thought to have had a single entryway.<sup>43</sup> Only Moses and Joshua were allowed in the Tent, along with other specially designated elders (Num 11:16–29). In E, the tent’s features were less important than its function. It is from the Tent that Moses is issued the instructions to ascend Horeb to receive the second set of tablets (Exod 33:7–10, 34:1 [E]). Critically, *there is no Ark in E*. The E stratum of Exod 34:1–28 is reworked in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 to include the instruction to construct an ark.<sup>44</sup> Though the Tent of Meeting is largely forgotten in Deuteronomy’s revision, it becomes a key part of the Priestly memory of the wilderness, and, as I discuss in this section, P’s vision of the Ark. The tent serves elsewhere in E during the commission of the seventy elders (Num 11:16–29) and the affliction of Miriam with scale disease (Num 12:4–10).

Perhaps drawing on E’s tent, the Priestly writers center and reimagine the Tent of Meeting on the model of the Temple in Jerusalem; P describes the tent sanctuary and its furniture in opulent detail, with dimensions half the scale of the First Temple.<sup>45</sup> To support the construction of this magnificent tent complex, YHWH mandates the collection of material donations from the people in Exod 25:1–9. Doing so builds a certain reciprocity into the ritual space, making the tent both *for* the god and *of* the people.<sup>46</sup>

Beginning in Exod 25:10, YHWH outlines the requirements for the tent and its furniture. The text proceeds from the tent’s innermost chamber outwards, beginning with the Ark and its becherubed lid, the *kappōret*:

Exod 25:10 They are to make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits, its length; a cubit and a half, its width; and a cubit and a half, its height. 11 You are to overlay it with pure gold; from the inside and from the outside you shall overlay it; you shall make a molding of gold upon it all around. 12 You shall cast four rings of gold for it; put them on its four feet; two rings on the first side of it and two rings on the second side of it. 13 You shall make poles of acacia wood; overlay them with gold. 14 And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the Ark, with which to carry the Ark. 15 In the rings of the Ark, the poles shall be; they shall not be taken from it. 16 You shall put into the Ark the *‘ēduṭ* (עֲדוּת) that I shall give you. 17 And you shall make a *kappōret* (כַּפֹּרֶת) of pure gold; two cubits and a half, its length; a cubit and a half, its width. 18 You shall make two

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<sup>43</sup> Exodus 33:8 and 10 outline the ritual requirements for Israelites, who are required to stand outside the tent.

<sup>44</sup> See discussion in Chapter 2.

<sup>45</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 189–204; Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 703–10. See also Menahem Haran, “The Nature of the “Ohel Mo‘edh” in Pentateuchal Sources,” *JSS* 5.1 (1960): 50–65.

<sup>46</sup> This practice finds an interesting parallel in the hereditary bronze casters of South India discussed in Thomas Levy, *Masters of Fire* (Bochum: Deutsches Bergbau Museum, 2008). In Levy’s study of one such workshop, individuals and families who commission cult images donate jewelry for their production. There and in the biblical texts, the commissioners symbolically and physically smelt themselves into their objects through the craftspersons’ use of their jewelry. A similar observation might be made of the Elohist account of calf in Exod 32–34, which is elegantly rebalanced with Moses’ feeding of the calf in 32:20.

cherubs of gold; of hammered work, you shall make them at the two ends of the *kappōret*  
 19 Make one cherub at the one end of it, and one cherub at the other end of it; from the  
*kappōret*, you shall make the cherubs at its two ends. 20 The cherubim shall spread out  
 their wings above, covering the *kappōret* with their wings. They shall face one to another;  
 toward the *kappōret*, the faces of the cherubim shall be turned. 21 You shall put the  
*kappōret* on the top of the Ark and into the Ark, you shall put the *'ēduṭ* that I shall give  
 you. 22 I will meet with you there; I will tell you from above the *kappōret* from between  
 the two cherubs that are above the Ark of the *'ēduṭ* all that I command you for the  
 Israelites.

The text presents the Ark and the *kappōret* as separate items of furniture to be made for the tent sanctuary with a shared purpose, to hold the *'ēduṭ* (Exod 25:16 and 21) and to serve as the primary locus of YHWH's earthly presence in the tent: "I will meet with you there; I will deliver to you from above the *kappōret* ... all that I command you for the Israelites" (Exod 25:22). The text's phrasing here is significant. The term "meet" implies that YHWH is not always present in the Tent. This is the case in E, as well. When Moses enters the tent in 33:7–10, the pillar of cloud descends upon the tent. And in Num 11:16–23, YHWH descends to the tent to meet the elders. These verbs all imply that YHWH was not already in the Tent of Meeting. What P distinctively adds is the ritual system, which is delivered in its entirety from atop the Ark's *kappōret*. The statement "all that I command you for the Israelites" implies completeness to the system the text presents, as well as a certain exclusivity. That which is not delivered from atop the Ark cannot have been truly commanded by YHWH. The Ark therefore plays a critical role in the Priestly imagination of the law by which Israel is to live. When in the course of the Priestly narrative YHWH does meet with Moses atop the Ark, the Ark fades into the background as a part of the larger sanctuary complex and the ritual system moves into the foreground: "all that I command you for the Israelites." Exod 25 and 37 represent the only description of the Ark in Priestly writings, other than the passing references to its features in the cleansing ritual Lev 16 outlines. As such, the Priestly account of the commission and construction of the Ark plays a key role in the Priestly reimagining of the Ark as a part of the Tent of Meeting and YHWH's commandments for the life of Israel. E's description of the tent included no physical details whatsoever, save for its location—and critically, did not feature the Ark. It is useful therefore to pause to consider not only the details the text remembers and offers for its audience's recollection, but the significance of their having been recorded: the power of description.

### ***II.1.a. The Ark and its kappōret in Exod 25 and 37***

The Priestly Ark stands at the center of a dynamic, complex sacred ecosystem, based in and around the Tent of Meeting. Exod 25:10–22 and 37:1–9 describe the Ark and its *kappōret* in considerable detail, outlining their features and precise, though not exhaustive dimensions. Construction is attributed to a craftsperson from the tribe of Judah by the name of Bezalel ben Uri ben Hur who constructs the Ark under Moses' direction.<sup>47</sup> Bezalel is something of an

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<sup>47</sup> Other tasks are accomplished by Bezalel's assistant Oholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan and others endowed with skill by YHWH (36:2). Bezalel and his assistant were endowed with the power to teach; YHWH was likely thought to have endowed others with skill through those two figures.

enigmatic figure; the text introduces him with his lineage, explaining that YHWH called him “by name” (Exod 35:30) and “filled him with divine spirit, with wisdom, with understanding, and knowledge of every craft” (Exod 35:32). The figure of Bezalel was sufficiently mysterious that 2 Chr 2:20 develops a more extensive lineage for him, as a descendent of Caleb. Noth suggests that Bezalel was written into P, in order to provide a genealogy for a prominent post-exilic family with members that returned with both Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:6; Neh 7:11) and Ezra (Ezra 8:4).<sup>48</sup>

### II.1.a.i. Differences between the MT and LXX of Exod 35–40

YHWH commissions the Ark and the *kappōret* in Exod 25:1–9. There is no meaningful variation between the MT and LXX editions of the commission account. Bezalel constructs the Ark and the *kappōret* in Exod 37:1–9 MT / 38:1–8 LXX. There are intriguing and potentially significant differences between the construction accounts in the MT and LXX. The MT construction account follows the language of the MT commission account nearly verbatim. The LXX construction account is shorter than both the LXX commission account and MT commission account.<sup>49</sup> For example, the LXX construction account does not describe the construction of the Ark’s poles (Exod 38:3–4 LXX; cf. Exod 37:3–5 MT).<sup>50</sup> Aejmelaeus<sup>51</sup> has shown convincingly that the text quantity of the LXX gave rise to the longer MT. The MT represents a later edition, harmonizing the construction account with the commission account. I would argue that the MT’s revision of the shorter text (that underlies the LXX) represents careful memory work that unfolds through literary expansion and harmonization.<sup>52</sup> The difference between the commission and construction accounts must have bothered the reviser of Exod 37:1–9 MT. The reviser of Exod 37:1–9 MT sought to represent Bezalel’s work as perfectly executing YHWH’s instructions. The verbatim repetition reinforces the perfection of the Ark, aligning with YHWH’s instructions and providing what YHWH requires to dwell in Israel’s midst as laid out in Exod 25. The reviser did not change every item in the MT construction account, however. There was something special about the Ark and the *kappōret*, perhaps its centrality in the Tabernacle. At all events, Exod 25–31 and Exod 35–40 offer a detailed blueprint for the tent sanctuary, the *kappōret*, and the Ark.

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<sup>48</sup> Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. Bernhard W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 187–188. While this may be a part of their motivation, I return to the question of Bezalel’s identity and roles in priestly memory below.

<sup>49</sup> John Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, SC 30 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). See also Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 366–367.

<sup>50</sup> Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 366–367; There also exist differences in the arrangement of the MT and LXX construction accounts. On these differences, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “Septuagintal Translation Techniques: A Solution to the Problem of the Tabernacle Account?” in *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators: Collected Essays*, 2nd ed., CBET 50 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 107–121.

<sup>51</sup> Aejmelaeus, “Septuagintal Translation Techniques,” 102–121.

<sup>52</sup> See also the discussions of redaction as memory work in Chapter 2 with reference to Deut 10:1–5, 8–9 and the E stratum of Exod 34; in Chapter 4 with reference to expansions to 1 Kgs 8:1–14; and in Chapter 5 with reference to expansions to the Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4:1b–7:1).

## II.1.a.ii. Physical Properties of the Priestly Ark

Exodus 25:10–17 and 37:1–5 describe the Ark’s commission and construction. The Ark is to be an acacia chest, 2.5 x 1.5 x 1.5 cubits (25:10; 37:1). It is to be plated with pure gold on all its surfaces, on both its interior and exterior (25:11; 37:2).<sup>53</sup> The purity of its gold is potentially significant, given its place at the center of the tent sanctuary—in the holiest and as a result, most pure and potentially dangerous sector of their camp to humans. As discussed above, Haran shows convincingly that the priestly document constructs concentric spheres of holiness beginning with the Ark’s confines and radiating outwards.<sup>54</sup> Each zone requires increasingly pure and precious materials in accordance with their level of sanctity.<sup>55</sup> Situated in the holiest area of the tent sanctuary, the use of pure gold would have been necessary for the Ark. It would have been expedient as well, because pure gold is more malleable.<sup>56</sup> Pure gold is also to be used to form a molding (רַז) around the Ark (25:11; 37:2). A similar molding is to be made around the tent sanctuary’s table (25:24–25) and incense altar (30:3).<sup>57</sup> At its four “feet,” the text instructs that four gold rings of unspecified dimensions are to be attached; gold plated acacia poles are then to be threaded through the rings (25:12–14; 37:3–5). This feature is mirrored in the incense altar (30:4). As noted above, the inferior quality of the gold relative to pure gold is likely connected with their position on the Ark. They are closest to the ground and as elsewhere, inferior metals are used by the ground.

The text does not offer the diameter or length of the poles, except in its implication that they are small enough to fit through the rings and long enough to be used to carry the Ark. The text does note that the poles are not to be removed from the Ark—a significant point. Measured in words, the commission of the Ark devotes more attention to the poles and their rings (36) than to the Ark itself (25). On one level, the attention devoted to discussion of the poles emphasizes that the Ark was built to be portable. The inclusion of poles would have been necessary for the narrative context, as Israel needed to be mobile on their journey through the wilderness. The text’s warning that the poles are not to be removed gestures towards the future, addressing its audience and implying the continued existence of the Ark. In some ways, this move recalls Deuteronomy’s insistence that the tablets remain with the Ark until the present day—asserting its reality and endurance across time. At the very least, it asserts the Ark’s reality.

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<sup>53</sup> The detail of the text is sometimes exaggerated. There is more detail than is necessary for the casual non-specialist, but not exactly enough to build a model. The text does not specify the thickness of the wood, for example. Exodus represents more of a conceptual blueprint than one that is ready for construction.

<sup>54</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 156–165.

<sup>55</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 156–165.

<sup>56</sup> I argue in Chapter 2 that the acacia makes the Ark a souvenir of the wilderness in Deuteronomy. The same holds here.

<sup>57</sup> On the history of the interpretation of *zēr* and a possible solution, see Raanan Eichler, “The Meaning of *zēr*,” *VT* 64 (2014), 196–210. Eichler proposes that *zēr* refers to a cavetto cornice. It may well. As there is no indication of whether these descriptions reflect a historic Ark, table, table enclosure, and incense altar, the question of the feature’s identity is secondary to the significance of the feature’s being mentioned—the focus of this chapter.



The text introduces the *kappōret* as a distinct item of ritual furniture, beginning its commission in v. 17 with the same formula used to introduce each item: “And you/they shall make.”<sup>58</sup> YHWH commissions the *kappōret* from Moses immediately after commissioning the Ark in Exod 25:17–22. In Exod 37:6–9, it is the second item of ritual furniture Bezalel constructs. It is a cover, upon which Bezalel is instructed to construct two facing cherubs of hammered gold.<sup>59</sup> Mettinger has pointed out that these would make a poor seat.<sup>60</sup> They were not intended as a throne but a locus for the presence of YHWH.<sup>61</sup> YHWH’s non-anthropomorphic presence in fact could not “sit,” indicated as it is by the Glory—YHWH’s numinous and dangerous form accompanied by a cloud. YHWH instructs Moses to place the *kappōret* atop the Ark, but only after installing an object identified as the *‘ēduṭ*—a point the text emphasizes twice (25:16 and 21) As the significance of containers is necessarily connected with their contents, the Ark’s *‘ēduṭ* bears further scrutiny.

### II.1.a.iii. Inside the Ark: The *‘ēduṭ*

Above all, the Ark is a container. As a container, it is ultimately defined by its contents: the *‘ēduṭ*.<sup>62</sup> Like Bezalel, the *‘ēduṭ* is something of an enigma. Its precise identity has been the subject of considerable debate, which has been in the end inconclusive. The term *‘ēduṭ* appears in priestly writings with reference to the object installed in the Ark.<sup>63</sup> On the basis of the expression “Tablets of the *‘ēduṭ*” (*luḥōṭ hā‘ēduṭ*) in Exod 31:18; 32:15; and 34:29, it is conventional to identify the *‘ēduṭ* with the Tablets YHWH gives Moses on Horeb.<sup>64</sup> The difficulty with this argument is that each of those texts represent seams between Priestly and Elohist material.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Each item is introduced with this formula, with minor variation: Exod 25:10, 17, 23, 31; 26:1, 7, 11, 15, 26, 31, 36; 27:1, 9; 28:2, 6, 15, 31, 36, 39, 40; 30:1, 17.

<sup>59</sup> Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 378–379, offers two models, one with four legged facing winged cherubs and another with standing cherubs. Raanan Eichler, “The Function of the Cherubs on the Ark,” *Tarbiz* 79. 2 (2011): 165–85, offers an alternative model of the cherubs, arguing that their wings were not crossed but enclose a roughly rectangular space atop the chest’s cover. What matters for the present discussion is not the precise form that they are described as having, but that they did not form a seat—i.e., the negative space above them does signify not divine enthronement, but divine presence.

<sup>60</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*.

<sup>61</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*; see also C. L. Seow, “The Designation of the Ark in Priestly Theology,” *HTR* 8 (1984): 185–98, who separately reached a similar conclusion. Recently, see also the model for the cherubs of the *kappōret* in Eichler, “The Function of the Cherubs.” Both proposed configurations of cherubs accomplish the same purpose, as Mettinger might put it: “dethroning” Sabaoth.

<sup>62</sup> Jean-Pierre Warnier, “Inside and Outside: Surfaces and Containers,” in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley et al. (London: SAGE, 2006), 186–96.

<sup>63</sup> Exod 25:16, 21, 22; 26:33; 27:21; 30:6, 26; 31:7, 39; 35; 40:3; 40:5; 40:20, 21; Num 4:5; 7:89

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Seow, “The Designation of the Ark” and Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, who argue following Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 296–300.

<sup>65</sup> Schwartz, “Priestly Account of Theophany.”

If not the Tablets, what was (or were) the *'ēduṭ*? On etymological and contextual grounds, it seems likely that the term denotes a legal text of some kind. The term is likely related to the Akkadian *ādū/ēdū* (referring to a suzerainty oath,<sup>66</sup> often written<sup>67</sup>) and the Aramaic *'dyn, 'dy* (“treaty stipulations”). Both occur only in the plural. Perhaps most tellingly, *'ēduṭ* appears fairly often in the plural in non-Priestly writings, paired with “laws” and “statues.” For example, Deuteronomy 4:5: “These are the *'ēdōṭ*, laws, and the statutes.”<sup>68</sup> The best evidence for meaning is context. The only occurrences of the term in the singular in biblical writings, not in reference to the priestly *'ēduṭ* are found in 2 Kgs 11:12 and 2 Chr 23:11, as well as in several Psalms.<sup>69</sup> In 2 Kgs 11:12 and 2 Chr 23:11, an *'ēduṭ* is given to Joash along with the crown and during his coronation. There, the *'ēduṭ* may serve as some sort of “evidentiary object.”<sup>70</sup> In Psalms 25:10 and 132:12 *'ēduṭ* is poetically paired with “covenant”; there, it seems to denote some aspect of the law, a sense also conveyed in Ps 19:8, 78:5, 119:88, and 122:4.

As noted above, the Tent (of Meeting),<sup>71</sup> Tabernacle,<sup>72</sup> and a curtain<sup>73</sup> are all also identified with *'ēduṭ*. The identification of the Ark with the *'ēduṭ* in priestly writings is so strong that at times it is emphasized over the Ark itself—it is simply *hā'ēduṭ*.<sup>74</sup> The fact that these key items of ritual furniture would be identified in relation to the *'ēduṭ* says something about its prominent role in the priestly imagination of the tent—a structure imagined to have been built to enable YHWH to dwell among Israel. This might lead one to assume that the *'ēduṭ* contained the Priestly collection of laws, but those are not conveyed until after the *'ēduṭ* is installed in the Ark. With the available evidence, what we can say is that the *'ēduṭ* is a text of some kind associated with Sinai. Physically, the *'ēduṭ* could have been no larger than the interior of the Ark (smaller than 2.5x1.5x1.5 cubits).<sup>75</sup> It would have been light enough for Moses to lift, as he carries it down from Sinai and installs it in the Ark without comment (Exod 40:20). God gives the *'ēduṭ* to Moses there, and like the Ark in Deuteronomy it retains value as a real thing signifying the presence of God’s with Moses at Sinai. This forms the Ark as a material souvenir of the revelation in the wilderness, connecting, as I discuss below, Sinai with Zion. Beyond that, it is difficult to say with any certainty what the *'ēduṭ* may have been.

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<sup>66</sup> *CDA*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> *CAD* A/1, 131–134

<sup>68</sup> Under influence from the priestly concept of *'ēduṭ* translates the term here as “testimonies” (τὰ μαρτύρια). This is the use that most clearly connects with the Akkadian (*HALOT* I.790–791). Cf. Deut 6:17, 20; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 11:12; 17:15; 23:3; Jer 44:23; Ps 19:8; 25:10; 78:6; 93:5; 99:7; 119:2, 14, 22, 24, 31, 36, 46, 59, 79, 95, 99, 111, 119, 125, 129, 138, 144, 146, 152, 157, 167–168; 132:12; Neh 9:34; 1 Chr 29:19; 2 Chr 34:31; Sir 45:5

<sup>69</sup> Pss 19:8; 78:5; 80:1; 81:6; 119:88; 122:4

<sup>70</sup> Schwartz, “Priestly Account of Theophany,” 126 n. 52.

<sup>71</sup> Num 9:15; 17:22–23; 18:2; 2 Chr 24:6

<sup>72</sup> Exod 38:21; Num 1:50, 53; 10:11

<sup>73</sup> Lev 24:3

<sup>74</sup> Exod 16:34; 30:36; Lev 16:13; Num 17:19; 17:25

<sup>75</sup> As noted, the thickness of the walls is one detail missing from the priestly blueprint in Exod 25.

The mystery of the *‘ēduṭ* may have been strategic. Hundley<sup>76</sup> suggests that the P’s use of unexplained terms to describe essential ritual functions would have served to enhance Priestly credibility and power. “With ... so much at stake, it would take a brave Israelite to challenge the veracity of the account,” Hundley notes.<sup>77</sup> This may well have been the case, a possibility I expand upon below.

### ***II.1.b. The Priestly Ark and the Power of Description***

The fine detail of P’s description of the Ark in Exod 25:10–16; 37:1–5 accomplishes two related objectives. First, it makes the Ark’s reality believable in the context of the Tabernacle. The details of the text’s description of Tabernacle give a sense of reality, which, as Janzen suggests, is “rich in varied colors, textures, and aromas ... a feast for the senses.” Second, the text’s description asserts Priestly control over the memory of the Ark. It asserts the Ark’s place in the binary world of purity and impurity that P envisions. P’s description gives the Ark form, over and against other conceptions of the Ark that may have been in circulation. Nowhere else is the Ark described. Jeremiah does not describe the Ark’s form (Jer 3:16); Jeremiah in fact calls on Israel to forget the Ark—a counterpoint to the power of P’s memory of the Ark. The Ark is not described in 1 Sam or non-Priestly material in Num. In contrast, the Ark is a key actor in the non-Priestly account of Israel’s journey through the wilderness (Num 10:35–36) and the drama of the Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4:6–7:1). Perhaps most surprisingly, Deuteronomy does not really describe the Ark either. It notes only that it is a chest and that it is made of acacia wood (Deut 10:1–5, 8–9). From these texts, certain physical features may be reasonably inferred. That is not the point of these texts, however. Even though few would have ever seen the Ark, its physical form went without saying.

It is therefore intriguing that P offers such a detailed description of the Ark. This description is in the context of a larger articulation of a worldview. The position P advances concerns the Ark, the cosmos, and the binary opposition between pure and impure in which all things are entangled. Its style of argumentation mobilizes detail to claim the Ark as a part of this broader binary and ritual-focused worldview. The purity of the gold enables it to serve as a locus for YHWH’s presence in the Holy of Holies. The length, width, and height of the chest offer support for this position, claiming knowledge and by extension authority over the Ark and against other claimants. Whether this knowledge was assumed by previous writers cannot be known. What can be known is that P claims the knowledge, articulating in an attempt to assert the orthodoxy and antiquity of its position. It may also offer a blueprint for the construction of the Ark in a utopian future, a possibility I explore below.

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<sup>76</sup> Michael B. Hundley, “The Way Forward is Back to the Beginning: Reflections on the Priestly Texts,” in *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah*, eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, FAT 85 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 209–224.

<sup>77</sup> Hundley, “Reflections on the Priestly Texts,” 222.

## II.2. The Ark and the Revelation of the Priestly Ritual System

It has been observed that the Ark reflects the ritual system and worldview of P, expressing through its very existence the binary distinction between purity and impurity. The Ark also serves as the locus of the revelation of the details of that ritual system. With the tent and its furniture all in place, YHWH is able to fulfill the covenant to dwell among the people. In Priestly writings, these regulations are revealed to Moses by YHWH from atop the Ark in the Tabernacle. Exod 25:21–22 explains:

Exod 25:21 You shall put the *kappōret* on the top of the Ark and into the Ark you shall put the *'ēduṭ* that I shall give you. 22 I will meet with you there; I will tell you from above the *kappōret*—from between the two cherubs that are above the Ark of the *'ēduṭ*—all that I command you for the Israelites.

In Lev 1:1, YHWH calls to Moses from the Tent of Meeting. From there, YHWH reveals the core of the priestly ritual system in Lev 1–16. When YHWH speaks from the Tent of Meeting, he speaks from atop the Ark's *kappōret* immediately after the Ark's installation in the tent (Exod 40:1–33)<sup>78</sup> The priestly narrative should be taken as a coherent, independent source.<sup>79</sup> As such, it follows that the content of YHWH's speech in Lev 1–16 comes from atop the Ark. Numbers 7:89 is even more explicit, introducing instructions concerning a ritual candelabra (Num 8:1–4) and the service of the Levites (8:5–26):

Num 7:89 When Moses would go into the tent of meeting to speak with him, he would hear the voice speaking to him from atop the *kappōret* that was on the Ark of the *'ēduṭ*, from between the two cherubs. Thus it spoke to him.

The priestly writings outline the priestly system of purity, especially Lev 1–16. This system enabled YHWH to fulfill his commitment to encamp among the Israelites. It is not revealed, indeed, it cannot be revealed, until the Ark is installed in the Tabernacle with the *kappōret* and the *'ēduṭ*

The presence of YHWH in Israel's midst was as dangerous as it was essential. Exposure to YHWH's glorious and cloudy presence could kill, as God's explains to Moses in Lev 16:

Lev 16:1 And YHWH spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they approached YHWH and died. 2 Tell Aaron your brother he shall not come at just any time into the sanctuary, inside the curtain before the *kappōret* that is upon the Ark, lest he die; for *in a cloud* I appear above the mercy seat. 3 But at this time shall Aaron come into the holy place...

Lev 16 begins by recalling the death of Aaron's sons. In Lev 10:1–7 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu encounter the danger of YHWH firsthand, when they are consumed by YHWH's fire in response to using alien fire in rituals before YHWH, presumably before the Ark. The presence of YHWH was necessary but dangerous, if proper care was not taken. Leviticus 16:1–3 reminds the

<sup>78</sup> This is indicated by Num 7:1–9.

<sup>79</sup> Schwartz, "The Priestly Account of theophany and Lawgiving at Sinai."

audience of the dangers of pollution before outlining the only solution: Aaron is permitted to enter the sanctuary once a year in order to perform an annual expiatory ritual. While Aaron is to perform the כפר, P does not articulate exactly what this involved.<sup>80</sup> Milgrom<sup>81</sup> has shown that the ritual cleanses accumulated bodily pollution from the tent and renders it acceptable as a place for YHWH to continue to encamp; without the ritual, YHWH would be forced to depart from among Israel, which would be disastrous. The warning against entering the Holy of Holies at all other times reinforces this message, encapsulating the entire system of purity and danger before outlining the one thing that will keep the system in place: the atonement ritual. The atonement centers on the high priest offering אֲשָׁמֶיךָ sacrifices for his house and for Israel. For himself, the High Priest is to offer a bull. For Israel, the High Priest is to offer one of two rams. Before the entrance of the Tabernacle, the High Priest is to cast lots. One ram will be the אֲשָׁמֶיךָ. One ram will be the scapegoat: a goat sent out into Azazel (Lev 16:10) bearing all the impurities away from the Tabernacle. The blood of the two אֲשָׁמֶיךָ sacrifices is to be used to cleanse the *kappōret* (Lev 16:14–15). Intriguingly, the High Priest is instructed to light incense before approaching the Ark “or he will die” (13). It was earlier observed that P outlines grades of sanctity governing what may be seen, approached, or touched. For all but one day a year, the Ark is out of sight behind the curtain in the Tabernacle. On the one day a year that the Ark is approached, it remains out of sight obscured by the incense.<sup>82</sup> This extra layer of protection is necessary because the priest must then approach the most pure space in the Tabernacle—the *kappōret* that rests upon the Ark from which YHWH has shared all that he requires of Israel (Exod 25:22). Blood acts in this case as a kind of ritual detergent, cleansing the Ark’s lid above which YHWH’s presence is concentrated of Israel’s accumulated impurities. When this is complete, the Priest shall transfer Israel’s sins, iniquities, and pollutions to the live goat; the goat is to be released to Azazel (Lev 16:20–22). After that, the priest is to clean himself and all who were involved including the person to took the goat to the barren region (Lev 16:23–28).

While much of the ritual action takes place in the Tabernacle, it concerns the collective and unavoidable impurities of all Israel and it is paralleled by ritual action in the Israelite camp. Leviticus 16:29–34 concludes:

Lev 16:29 This shall be for you a statute forever: In the seventh month on the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves; all work, you shall not do; the citizen, the alien and the alien who resides among you. 30 For on this day atonement (כפר) shall be made for you, to purify you; from all your sins before YHWH, you shall be purified. 31 A total sabbath it shall be for you; you shall deny yourselves; it is a statute forever. 32 The priest who is anointed and installed as priest in place of his father shall atone (כפר); he shall wear the linen vestments, the holy vestments. 33 He shall atone (כפר) for the holy

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<sup>80</sup> Michael B. Hundley, *Keeping Heaven on Earth: Safeguarding the Divine Presence in the Priestly Tabernacle*, FAT 2/50 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 191.

<sup>81</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3A (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 254–58; see also Baruch J. Schwartz, “The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, eds. D. P. Wright et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 3–21.

<sup>82</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service*, 178.

sanctuary; for the Tent of Meeting and for the altar, he shall atone; for the priests and for all the people of the assembly, he shall atone. 34 This shall be for you a statute forever, to atone (כפר) for the Israelites for all their sins once in the year.

Lev 16:29 and 34 envelop the text by addressing P's audience directly: "This shall be for you a statute forever."<sup>83</sup> Lev 16:29 proceeds to outline what it required of Israel for all time. Leviticus 16:34 concludes with the significance of the ritual action: "to atone (כפר) for the Israelites for all their sins once in the year." The actions the text calls for are both to be performed by the high priest (significantly, an Aaronid priest "installed as priest in place of his father") in the Tabernacle and the Israelites in the Israelite camp. In the camp, Israel are to deny themselves. This too is "a statute forever" (Lev 16:31) What that means is not clear. The text describes it as "a sabbath" and elsewhere Priestly texts outline certain behavioral requirements, including abstention from collecting wood and manna.<sup>84</sup> The detail is less important than the fact of its existence as a ritual action required by Israel. It was earlier observed that ritual plays a key role in the conveyance and sustenance of cultural memory. Recall that Douglas observes:

[R]itual focuses attention by framing, it enlivens the memory and links the present with the relevant past. In all this it aids perception ... It can come first in formulating experience. It can permit knowledge of what would otherwise not be known at all. It does not merely externalise experience, bringing it out into the light of day, but it modifies experience in so expressing it.<sup>85</sup>

Leviticus 1–16 requires a range of everyday ritual actions of Israel in order to maintain purity. Leviticus 16 outlines an annual ritual "atone for the sanctuary ... for the Tent of Meeting and for the altar, and ... for the priests and for all the people of the assembly" (Lev 16:33–34). Whatever remained had to be cleansed; YHWH was dangerous; God's encampment required separation from the community and the maintenance of purity, involving the imposition of an elaborate system of laws and practices. Performance of these practices everyday and on the day of the annual atonement ritual framed Israel's experience, every day of their lives prompting the perception and reification of Israelite purity laws. *And these laws all lead to the Ark.* They were revealed from atop the Ark. The maintenance of purity focuses ultimately on the Ark in the Tabernacle, which requires special annual attention. The people of Israel are to "deny themselves." Whatever this means, it is a ritual action. It is to atone and it addresses collective sins with priestly and community ritual action. In all these ways, the ritual laws frame reality around the Ark and YHWH's pure and dangerous presence atop its *kappōret*.

Priestly writings remember the Ark as an active, participating agent in a complex sacred eco-system: the tent sanctuary. Though the tent and every item in it play integral roles in the priestly eco-system, the Ark with its contents the *'ēduṭ* and its lid the *kappōret* are of exceptional significance. The very appearance of the Ark in the Tabernacle narrative represents memory work. It validates the Priestly vision of the Tabernacle and by extension the ritual system that it reflects and enables.

<sup>83</sup> P includes a number of "forever statutes": cf. Exod 29:9; Num 10:8; 19:10, 21

<sup>84</sup> See discussion below.

<sup>85</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 65.

### III. The Jar and the Staff: Before the *'ēduṭ*, Before YHWH

Both the jar of manna (Exod 16:34–36) and Aaron’s staff (Num 17:21–28) are placed “before the *'ēduṭ*” for future generations to behold, illustrating the imperative of the priestly ritual system through the experiences of their ancestors when they were taken out of Egypt. These two items are formed as souvenirs from the wilderness, memorializing episodes from the priestly account of Israel’s journey in which the people fail and their god forgives and allows them to survive. In both, the souvenirs “before the *'ēduṭ*” connect with YHWH’s life giving power. The writers point assertively at the jar and the staff, forming them as auxiliary, real and material *lieux de mémoire*—along with the Ark of the *'ēduṭ*—reinforcing the Priestly ritual system that enables Israel to *live* and to *live with* YHWH.

#### III.1. The Ark and the Jar of Manna

The priestly story of the manna jar begins immediately following YHWH’s drowning of Pharaoh’s chariots in the sea (Exod 14:27a, 28–29). The congregation of Israel gathers to complain of hunger, recalling the fleshpots of Egypt (Exod 16:2–3). YHWH hears Israel and provides them with manna (Exod 16:11–12). Even in the wake of YHWH’s great triumph against Egypt and production of the miraculous manna, the people twice fail to heed God’s command. Moses instructs the people that YHWH commands them to gather only what they need, one omer per head. First, the people collect more than they are instructed to by Moses on weekdays (Exod 16:15–19). Their leftovers grow putrid overnight (Exod 16:20). Second, YHWH tells Israel to collect two omers on the sixth day to prepare for the cessation of work on the Sabbath (Exod 16:22–26). Even though their second omer of manna keeps until the morning, some fail to heed YHWH’s command a second time and attempt to collect on the Sabbath.

Twice Israel failed to heed YHWH’s instruction, despite his clear and generous commitment to the people. The text concludes this story with a curious, intriguing instruction:

Exod 16:32 And Moses said, “This is the word that YHWH has commanded: ‘A full omer of is to be a relic (משקרת) for your generations, in order that they may see that with which I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” 33 And Moses said to Aaron, “Take one jar and place in it a full omer of manna. And rest it before YHWH, to be a relic (משקרת) for your generations.” 34 As YHWH commanded Moses, Aaron rested it before the *'ēduṭ* as a relic (משקרת).

The term relic (משקרת) appears three times in this passage. The jar of manna is to be a relic, for subsequent generations to see YHWH’s care for Israel during the journey out of Egypt.<sup>86</sup> It is to

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<sup>86</sup>Though the term has been conventionally translated as “safekeeping,” that doesn’t convey the importance of it being seen by Israel conveyed in 16:32. The term is a nominal form of “to keep” (שמר), which William Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 582–584 translates as “a kept thing.” This reading underscores its materiality and the importance of its survival. It does not however convey its function as a memorial—to show Israel their god’s commitment, feeding them when he took them out of Egypt.

recall that YHWH provided Israel with food and did so in spite of Israel's disobedience. Food is life, especially in the wilderness. Significantly, Moses instructs that it be installed before YHWH (Exod 16:33). When Aaron executes Moses' instruction, he places the jar before the 'ēduṭ—the priestly Ark.<sup>87</sup> The text uses “before the 'ēduṭ” and “before YHWH” interchangeably, even after it the Ark comes to be less identified with YHWH's presence than with the 'ēduṭ.

### III.2. The Ark and Aaron's Flowering Staff

The dual emphasis on the Ark as the chest of the 'ēduṭ and the earthly locus of YHWH's presence underlies the priestly account of Aaron's flowering staff, a second “relic” kept by the Ark. Aaron's staff is installed by Moses at Israel's god's command “before the 'ēduṭ, at which I meet with you” in Num 17:16–28.<sup>88</sup> Korah's contention was that the entire congregation was holy, undercutting Aaron and the Levites' claim to authority and more broadly the ritual system they maintain with its distinctions between holy and not holy. Though he manages to assemble two hundred and fifty people who agree with him, things end poorly when divine fire consumes them from the Tent of Meeting.<sup>89</sup> Following the rebellion, YHWH instructs Moses to assemble the tribal heads and to collect from them one staff from each ancestral house. Moses is to write the name of each tribal head on their staff, with Aaron representing Levi. Moses is instructed to place the staffs before YHWH in the Tent, the source of the divine fire. In the morning, when the tribal heads return to the tent they see that Aaron's staff has flowered, blossoming and yielding almonds (17:23). When the tribal heads retrieve their staffs, Moses receives word from YHWH to leave Aaron's:

Num 17:10 And YHWH said to Moses, “Return the staff of Aaron before the 'ēduṭ, to be a relic (לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת) as a sign (לְאוֹת) to rebels, so that you may make an end of their complaints against me, lest they die.” 11 Moses did so; just as YHWH commanded him, so he did.

There are two features of the Ark that I would like to note. First, staffs are symbols of leadership.<sup>90</sup> Second, staffs are made of wood and are by definition *dead*. Aaron's miraculous staff was brought back to life. In the wake of Korah's attempt to usurp the Levitical authority, this staff is a real and material sign to all—as a “relic” (לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת) and a “sign” (לְאוֹת), as a sign for all rebels.” It is recalled here with the intention of its further recollection to support Levitical authority against those who speak against their order: the ritual system that maintains the possibility for life in Israel. The message is apparently received by the Israelites, as the text concludes they declare emphatically and expressively in 17:12–13. The real audience of the text is offered this miraculous staff; whether or not they can actually visit the staff, it is given the

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<sup>87</sup> On the elliptical or metonymic reference to “the Ark of the 'ēduṭ” as “the 'ēduṭ,” see above.

<sup>88</sup> See Adriane Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 122–139, who also explores this text as memory work.

<sup>89</sup> The story of Korah's rebellion is priestly, but it is spliced together with the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram. Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005), 268–272, disentangles the narrative clearly.

<sup>90</sup> Leveen, *Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers*, 122–139.



power of the real thing. It lends its reality to the account and the very real danger that the priestly writers imagine was associated with the Ark.

Like the jar of manna in Exod 16, the staff is installed as a relic “before the ‘*ēduṭ*’—the Priestly Ark. Both items are meant for later generations of the people to see, or at least to remember and to know were there. There is something about the material that is very important to the relic. The priestly writers could have easily told the stories of the manna gatherers or the rebels without these two items, but they do not. They gesture towards their audience and all but invite them to see these items, which through their status as real things (or at least the belief that they are real) *prove* the stories. The writers mobilize these two items to establish a particular social order. The reality attributed to the Ark, the jar, and the staff combine with the presumed reality of the tent and its other items of ritual furniture to affirm and reaffirm Levitical social order. The manna jar reinforces the importance of heeding YHWH’s command. The staff establishes the Levites through Aaron as God’s agents exercising God’s will concerning purity and pollution, without which the text is clear: Israel would die. In both cases, the objects recall Israel’s violation of priestly authority over matters of purity. Their installation next to the ‘*ēduṭ*’ cannot have been incidental. By narrating their installation with the ‘*ēduṭ*’ as relics for later generations, the text sets them up along with the ‘*ēduṭ*’ as *lieux de mémoire* for both priestly authority and the system that enables the enduring and life-giving presence of YHWH.

#### IV. The Ark between Sinai and Zion

The Ark journeys through Israelite history like no other person, place, or thing in the Hebrew Bible. Significantly, it represented a material point of connection between Israel’s two sacred mountains: Sinai and Zion. The Ark is widely understood to have been constructed before the Temple in DtrH, J, D, P, and Chr. It is installed in the Shiloh Temple. It is installed in the Jerusalem Temple, where it remains until it is lost to history. 1 Kings 8:3–4 describes the Ark’s installation in the Jerusalem Temple:

1 Kgs 8:3 וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשָּׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן׃ 4 וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־

כָּל־כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם׃

1 Kgs 8:3 And all the elders of Israel came. And the priests carried the Ark. 4 And they brought up the Ark of YHWH, **the Tent of Meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent. They brought them up, the priests and the Levites**

On the model of וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה, I argue in chapter 4 that the text above marked in red represents an exegetical plus introduced with וְאֶת and concluded with a resumptive repetition: וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם. The Ark is associated with the Tent of Meeting and its other ritual furniture and utensils only in P. The expansion to v. 4 connects the Priestly Tent of Meeting with Solomon’s Temple by explicitly referencing Tent of Meeting, and all the holy vessels from P. This is not the only “Priestly” expansion I discuss in chapter 4. One further such significant expansion concerns YHWH’s inhabitation of the Temple, which is described on the model of

YHWH's presence on Sinai and Zion.<sup>91</sup> Propp<sup>92</sup> notes that P draws an explicit parallel between Sinai and the Tabernacle, a literary move upon which a creative editor of 1 Kgs 8 appears to have picked up and expanded:

Table 6: Exod 24:15–16; Exod 40:34–35; and 1 Kgs 8:10–11

Exod 24:15–16	Exod 40:34–35	1 Kgs 8:10–11
<p>15 וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָהָר וַיִּכַּס הָעָנָן  אֶת־הָהָר: 16 וַיֵּשְׁכֶן כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה  עַל־הָר סִינַי וַיִּכַּסְהוּ הָעָנָן שֵׁשֶׁת  יָמִים וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  מִתּוֹךְ הָעָנָן:</p>	<p>34 וַיִּכַּס הָעָנָן אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה  מְלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן: 35 וְלֹא־יָכַל מֹשֶׁה לְבוֹא  אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי־שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעָנָן וַיִּכְבֹּד  יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן:</p>	<p>10 וַיָּהִי כַּצֵּאת הַכֹּהֲנִים מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהָעָנָן  מְלֵא אֶת־בַּיִת יְהוָה: 11 וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים  לְעֹמֵד לְשָׁרֵת מִפְּנֵי הָעָנָן כִּי־מְלֵא כְבוֹד־  יְהוָה אֶת־בַּיִת יְהוָה:</p>
<p>15 Then Moses went up on the mountain and the Cloud covered the mountain. 16 The Glory of YHWH settled on Mount Sinai and the Cloud covered it for six days; he called to Moses on the seventh day out of the Cloud.</p>	<p>34 And the Cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Glory of YHWH filled the Tabernacle: 35 And Moses was not able to go into the Tent of Meeting because the Cloud settled upon it, and the Glory of YHWH filled the Tabernacle.</p>	<p>10 And when the priests came out of the holy place, the Cloud filled the House of YHWH 11 and the priests could not stand to serve because of the Cloud, for the Glory of YHWH filled the House of YHWH.</p>

Exod 24:15–16 and Exod 40:34–35 share explicit language: the cloud (עָנָן) covers (כָּסַי) and the glory (כְּבוֹד) fills (מְלֵא) the location, either Sinai (Exod 24:15) or the Tabernacle (Exod 40:34). These nouns and verbs appear also in 1 Kgs 8:10–11, with the strongest parallels to YHWH's inhabitation of the Tabernacle. It was earlier observed that the Tabernacle was constructed on the model of the Temple. The Ark's installation in the Temple concretizes the connection between Sinai and the Tabernacle/Temple in P, mirroring and affirming the linguistic parallels. The pious supplementer identified this connection and sought to expand upon it by writing the tent, utensils, and Priestly idiom for the divine presence into 1 Kgs 8 alongside the Ark. The Ark establishes this connection in P. It is from Sinai and it is installed on Zion, materially supporting the connection Levenson discusses between the two cosmic mountains in the biblical imagination.<sup>93</sup>

The priestly account of the Ark and its significance in the Tabernacle and in the Temple as the locus of YHWH's presence in Israel raises a potentially provocative question: Why would the priestly writers, arguably writing after the loss of the Temple and the Ark, in the exilic or the Second Temple period, assign such central significance to something that the Priests and the people of Israel could not access?

<sup>91</sup> Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987).

<sup>92</sup> Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, 688.

<sup>93</sup> Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 187–205.

Seow proposes that P wrote to assure the exiled people of Judah that despite the loss of these material symbols, “all was not lost ... God was still present, even if the Ark was not.”<sup>94</sup> Seow also argues that the association of the Ark with the *‘ēduṭ* rather than the divine name represents a movement away from the inherited conception of the Ark as YHWH’s throne.<sup>95</sup> This parallels the move in Deuteronomy, where the Ark comes to be associated with YHWH’s covenant with Israel. Seow explains:

The Ark was a *rendezvous* where God would meet the people, but it was not the locus of a throning presence. Such is the nature of divine presence, according to P: it is not confined to one place; rather, it is manifested from time to time as the deity wills (Lev 16:2). According to P, in the time of Moses YHWH chose to speak from between the cherubim on the *kappōret* of the Ark (Num 7:89). That was a chosen place; it was theologically significant.<sup>96</sup>

Lev 16:2 identifies the one time that Aaron may enter the holiest sector of the Tabernacle in order to clean it. It does indeed show that YHWH can withdraw his presence from the Ark, an idea that might seem foreign in earlier conceptions. Note for example the reactions to the loss of the Ark in the Ark Narrative, where YHWH was thought to have been captured by the Philistines along with the Ark.<sup>97</sup> Though this is not incorrect, I would argue that this example is the exception that proves the rule. After the construction of the Ark along with the Tabernacle and its furniture, that area remains YHWH’s earthly locus—especially the Ark and its *kappōret*. YHWH commands that it be built and it plays a critical role in the priestly ecosystem, enabling the fulfillment of his covenant. YHWH cannot encamp among Israel without the tent and its Ark.

Seow is correct that the material of the Ark is distanced from the presence of YHWH, but the explanation offered does not fully account for the significance the priestly writers assigned to the materials of the tent and its contents, materials that had been lost. One compelling though speculative answer is that the Priestly source was written, as Frank Moore Cross proposes, with “the central goal [of] the reconstruction of the covenant of Sinai and its associated institutions... [I]t was a program written in preparation for and in hope of the restoration of Israel.”<sup>98</sup>

The highly detailed description of the tent of meeting and its cult mirror the temple and its furniture, shifting away from the singularity of the temple and making its reconstruction and restoration *thinkable*. If the rituals of the Temple were performed in the wilderness, as P says they were, they could also be performed in a *restored Temple*. P was remembering the Ark in anticipation of its reconstruction, offering a highly detailed vision of it that not only identified its physical characteristics, but assigned to it perhaps the most important symbolic value possible as

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<sup>94</sup> Seow, “Designation of the Ark,” 189.

<sup>95</sup> Seow, “Designation of the Ark,” 186–7. This idea he develops independently of Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*.

<sup>96</sup> C.L. Seow, “Ark of the Covenant,” *ABD* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1:386–93.

<sup>97</sup> cf. 1 Sam 4:21.

<sup>98</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 324.

a focus of God's presence and Levitical authority; making provisions for its reconstruction and restored cult.

The Ark in Deuteronomy was commissioned by God and constructed by Moses. In P, it is commissioned by God from Moses but *constructed by Bezalel the Israelite artisan*. Taking the construction of the Ark away from Moses and placing it in the hands of an artisan would make the reconstruction of the Ark possible by the same means. No one could make an ark like Moses—he was a singular figure in Israelite memory. Bezalel, on the other hand, does not have the gravitas of Moses, he is not so central or legendary a figure and an ark *like one made by Bezalel could be reconstructed*. What's more, Bezalel is a figure known in the Second Temple period. As noted, 2 Chr 2:20 gives Bezalel an extended genealogy and they are featured among the group of returnees with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:6; Neh 7:11) and Ezra (Ezra 8:4). Not only is the Ark's reconstruction thinkable, the priestly writings may offer both the blueprint and the contractor.

The priestly vision of the Ark after its loss is of the *future* Ark, the next Ark. P's proposal for the reconstruction of the Ark is empowered by the Ark's absence to form an image that fits with its vision for the restoration of Israel. P is freed by the Ark's absence to form this image and to put together a blueprint for its reconstruction, remembering the lost Ark in order to plan for its next construction and the affirmation of YHWH and the priestly authority.

## V. Conclusions

In P, the Ark is commissioned and constructed as a part of the Tabernacle complex. These writings reform the Ark through P's characteristic correlative thought-style, addressing audiences indirectly—but as powerfully and authoritatively as Deuteronomy and earlier biblical writings. P projects upon the Tabernacle ritual furniture and practices that reflect the Priestly vision of ritual practice as P believes they ought to have been. In some ways, this all serves to reinforce Priestly authority. The presence of YHWH is of the utmost importance, but it is also very dangerous—it is possible only through the ritual and social intervention of the priests mediating between the pure and the polluted that life may proceed. The Priestly Ark represents a key component of the Levitical sacred eco-system, reinforcing and making possible this binary worldview and their control over Israel's ritual life. To that end, the Priestly document mobilizes the image of the Ark as a metonym for the ritual system that enables YHWH's presence in Israel's midst. The memory of the Ark lends support to the Priestly claims that their ritual system and authority go back to the wilderness period, attributing its origin to YHWH. The ritual system is said to have been revealed from atop the Ark, reflecting and in some ways *making real* the global distinctions between purity and pollution that underlie it. The Ark both *reflects this ritual system* and *makes this ritual system possible* as the source of its revelation. P mobilizes the Ark's absence, describing its presence in the Holy of Holies to prove the binary system of pure/impure and capitalizing upon its historic loss to create the conditions for a new Ark that is modeled on a priestly vision of the world: of the pure, the polluted, and the system—their system—that keeps everything in place.

#### 4. THE ARK, REDACTED AND REMEMBERED: REWRITING AND THE ART OF FORGETTING IN THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

### I. Introduction

The dedication of the First Temple in Jerusalem represented a major turning point in the history of Israel. Religious buildings like the Temple loomed large over both landscapes and imaginations across the ancient Near East, anchoring ritual, social, and economic life.<sup>1</sup> Temple construction represented a cherished prerogative for rulers in the region, the successful exercise of which was customarily articulated for posterity to the gods and to the people through literature: in building inscriptions, royal annals, and, in the Hebrew Bible, incorporated into the historical books.<sup>2</sup> These texts form components of complex rhetorical programs that link structures with particular conceptions of divine, ritual, and royal power, activating the physical temple as a real and material site of memory.<sup>3</sup> In biblical writings, the dedication of the First Temple is represented in three divergent present text editions: the Masoretic Text (MT) of 1 Kgs 8, the Old Greek (OG) of the Septuagint (LXX) of 3 Kgdms 8,<sup>4</sup> and 2 Chr 5:2–7:10. While they

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<sup>1</sup> The literature on temples in ancient Near Eastern societies is voluminous. See Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*, WAWSup 3 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013) for an overview of form, function, and ritual formation and maintenance of temples in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Hittite Anatolia, and Syria-Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> A wide range of examples from across the region including the Hebrew Bible are discussed in the chapters of Mark J. Boda and Jamie R. Novotny, ed., *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, AOAT 366 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> On this dynamic, see Chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> The present text of 3–4 Kgdms LXX (=1–2 Kgs MT) is composed of two originally distinct translation units, the theodotonic/*kaige* revision (3 Kgdms 1–2:11; 3 Kgdms 22–4 Kgdms) and the OG edition (3 Kgdms 2:12–21:43). The account of the temple dedication appears in OG. The theodotonic/*kaige* revision follows the MT closely. In contrast to the theodotonic/*kaige* revision, the OG diverges from the MT significantly in both text quantity and arrangement, including, as noted, the account of the temple dedication. Both the theodotonic/*kaige* revision and the OG appear to have developed out of Hebrew Vorlagen, as indicated by fragments at Qumran. On the relationship between the two Greek editions, see Percy van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2–11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2–11*, VTSup 104 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); and Emanuel Tov, “3 Kingdoms Compared with Similar Rewritten Compositions,” in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, eds. Anthony Hilhorst et al., SupJSJ 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 345–66. On the Qumran fragments of the Books of Kings, see Julio Treballe, “Qumran Fragments of the Books of Kings,” in *Books of*

differ substantially in text quantity and arrangement to offer competing visions for Israel through the account of the temple dedication, they share a common three phase structure that Hurowitz<sup>5</sup> has shown shares features with Neo-Assyrian literature from the Sargonid period (722–612 BCE):

- Phase 1. The procession and installation of the Ark (1 Kgs MT 8:1–11; 3 Kgdms LXX 8:1–11; 2 Chr 5:2–14)
- Phase 2. Dedicatory poem and extended address from Solomon (1 Kgs MT 8:12–61; 3 Kgdms LXX 8:14–53, 54–61; 2 Chr 6:1–42)
- Phase 3. Sacrifices and feasting (1 Kgs 8:62–66 MT; 3 Kgdms LXX 8:62–66; 2 Chr 7:1–10)

In part due to these structural parallels, this overall three-phase framework is likely pre-exilic and predates the composition of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). From its incorporation into DtrH forward however, the account of the temple dedication has undergone substantial revision including the incorporation of later Deuteronomic and Priestly perspectives on the Temple, the Ark, and YHWH. The Deuteronomic and Priestly features appear in Phases 1 and 2 across all three editions of the text, indicating that they were added before they split.

Within the Hebrew Bible, the Ark appears perhaps most notably as a palladium, pedestal,<sup>6</sup> or footstool<sup>7</sup> figuring the presence of YHWH—a conception that appears to underlie the earliest stratum of the three editions of the temple dedication. Later, the Ark comes to be represented in different ways. Chapter 2 shows that the Ark comes to be represented as a chest or reliquary for the Tablets of the Covenant in Deut 10:1–5, 8–9; 31:9–13, 24–29. Chapter 3 shows that the Ark comes to be represented as an item of furniture in the Priestly tent sanctuary in Exod

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*Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography, and Reception*, eds. André Lemaire, Baruch Halpern, and Matthew J Adams, VTSup 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 19–40.

<sup>5</sup> See Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz. *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, JSOTSup 115, ASORMS 5 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992): 260–277, who discusses the structure of 1 Kgs 8 that I argue underlies 2 Chr 5:2–7:10.

On Neo-Assyrian period temple dedications including Sargonid rulers, see Jamie Novotny, “Temple Building in Assyria: Evidence from Royal Inscriptions,” in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, AOAT 366, eds. Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 109–140.

<sup>6</sup> Num 10:35; 14:44, for example; Menachem Haran, “The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Symbolic Significance in Biblical Ritual,” *IEJ* 9.1 (1958): 30–38; 9.2 (1958): 89–94. On the earliest stratum of this text, see discussion of the likely archetype below.

<sup>7</sup> This is articulated explicitly outside of Jer 3:16–17 and 1 Chr 28:2, but appears to underlie Pss 99:5; 132:7; Lam 2:1; and the account of the death of Eli in the Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4:1–7:2). In 1 Sam 4:18, Eli (ironically) falls off his throne (סִדָּן) when he learns about the Ark’s loss. On this literary move, see Chapter 5.

25:10–16 and 37:1–5—the locus of the cloudy, glorious presence of YHWH. These descriptions establish distinct conceptions of the Ark that circulate for the most part independently in biblical writings, featuring different histories, forms, and, most importantly, competing associations with Israel’s god. The dedication of the Temple represents one of the few places in biblical writings where the wandering paths of these memories of the Ark cross, as glosses and other textual expansions revise the text with Deuteronomic and Priestly conceptions of the Ark. Perhaps most intriguingly however, the Ark disappears in subsequent additions to Solomon’s address in Phase 2 (1 Kgs MT 8:14–61; 3 Kgdms LXX 8:14–53, 54–61; 2 Chr 6:1–40a)—appearing only once in the MT and LXX before it comes to be forgotten in the additions’ broad Deuteronomic re-envisioning of the temple cult. While 2 Chr 6:41–42 reintroduces the Ark into Solomon’s address by quoting a lightly revised quote from Ps 132:8, the text shares the same overall trajectory: As the text grows, the Ark recedes into the background and eventually *disappears*.

With particular focus on the enigmatic, shapeshifting, and, ultimately, *lost* Ark in the three extant editions of the dedication of the Temple, this chapter investigates redaction as memory work—mirroring and forming the earliest expressions of ancient Jewish intellectual history. Employing the narrative of the installation of the Ark as a case study, this chapter considers the ways in which the different writers form competing visions of their people, their temple, and their god through the Ark. This chapter investigates the redactional reception history of the temple dedication, from the incorporation of the text into the DtrH through Chronicles. Beginning with an analysis of the present texts of the account of the installation of the Ark in 1 Kgs 8, 3 Kgdms 8, and 2 Chr 5:2–7:10, the chapter establishes the relationship between the three editions and works backwards to investigate the dynamics of memory in their likely archetype (the earliest inferable version of the text). 1 Kings 8 and 3 Kgdms 8 predate 2 Chr 5:2–7:10, which re-envision the dedication of the First Temple in the early Second Temple Period. All the three present text editions appear to have grown significantly, as writers contest the Ark’s significance through redaction. I show that the text provides a forum for the *contestation* and *erasure* of the Ark’s memory, where through redaction biblical writers negotiate and ultimately synthesize counter-memories of Israel’s past in a contest over Israel’s future.

## II. Three Editions of the Dedication of the Temple: A Text-Critical Analysis

The dedication of the Temple exists in three present text editions, distinguished by variations in text quantity, arrangement, and perspective: 1 Kgs 8 MT, 3 Kgdms 8 LXX, and 2 Chr 5:2–7:10. In view of this textual plurality, discussion of memories of the Ark in the temple dedication must begin with discussion of the three editions and their possible relationship. The three editions share the core three-phase structure identified above, within which exist a range of pluses and minuses as well as one key difference in the arrangement of the second phase. Qumran materials suggest that the MT and OG both descend from divergent Hebrew Vorlagen.<sup>8</sup> The following table lays out the broad outline of the three editions of the temple dedication, with the second phase parsed structurally in order to illustrate the difference in arrangement:

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<sup>8</sup> Julio Trebolle, “Qumran Fragments of The Books of Kings,” 36–39.

Table 7: Overall Structure of the Temple Dedication

<i>Phase</i>	<i>1 Kgs MT</i>	<i>3 Kgdms LXX</i>	<i>2 Chron</i>
1. Procession and installation of the Ark	8:1–11	8:1–11	5:2–10a, 13b–14 <sup>9</sup>
2. Solomon’s dedicatory address	8:12–61	8:12–61	6:1–42
2a. Dedicatory poem (MT)	8:12–13	--	6:1–2
2b. Opening benediction	8:14–21	8:12–21	6:3–11
2c. Prayer	8:22–53	8:22–53	6:12–40a <sup>10</sup>
2a. Dedicatory poem (OG)	--	8:53a	--
2d. Closing benediction	8:54–61	8:54–61	-- <sup>11</sup>
3. Sacrifices and Feasting	8:62–66	8:62–66	7:1–10 <sup>12</sup>

Due to the nature of the differences between the three editions, I will analyze them separately focusing first on the MT and LXX and second on 2 Chr.

The bulk of the textual variation between the MT and LXX is concentrated in Phase 1 and in the dedicatory poem (8:12–13 MT and 8:53a LXX), which represents the earliest stratum of Phase 2.<sup>13</sup> Phase 1 of the LXX is considerably shorter than the MT, lacking some but not all of the MT’s more cumbersome literary features. Phases 2–3 of the temple dedication ceremony are more stable, with the notable exception of the location of Solomon’s poem (1 Kgs 8:12–13 MT; 3 Kgdms 8:53a LXX). Solomon’s poem appears at the beginning of Phase 2 in 1 Kgs. 2 Chr follows the MT in Phases 1–2, with three major expansions writing their distinctive conceptions of the Temple and its service into the text. In 3 Kingdoms, the poem appears with a subscription and an additional colon between Solomon’s prayer (8:22–53) and closing benediction (8:54–61). I argue below that the form and location of the poem in 3 Kgdms 8:53a helps illuminate the text’s complex redactional history, having likely been moved from its original location at the

<sup>9</sup> 2 Chronicles 5:10b–13a includes an expansion discussing the Levitical orders including the musicians in place to praise YHWH, which is not paralleled in either the MT or LXX editions of the temple dedication.

<sup>10</sup> In place of the prayer and the closing benediction, 2 Chr 6:40–42 quotes a lightly revised fragment of Ps 132:8.

<sup>11</sup> See below.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Chronicles revises this text heavily, incorporating the consumption of Solomon’s sacrifices by fire from heaven. On the role of this addition in the legitimization of the monarchy and the Temple location, see below.

<sup>13</sup> On this point, I stand with the majority of scholars. See for example Thomas Römer, “Redaction Criticism: 1 Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, RBS 56 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Lit, 2009), 69–70; Marc Brettler, “Interpretation and Prayer: Notes on the Composition of 1 Kings 8.15–53,” in *Minha Le-Nahum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of His 70th Birthday*, eds. Marc Brettler and Michael A. Fishbane, JSOTSup 154 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 17–35; Jon D. Levenson, “From Temple to Synagogue: 1 Kings 8,” in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, eds. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 153.



beginning of Solomon's dedicatory address (preserved in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles) but retaining the more original wording.

The relationship between Chronicles and Kings/Kingdoms is more straightforward. The three phases of 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 follow the order and largely the text of 1 Kgs 8, revising, omitting, and adding throughout to advance the text's particular agenda. While at times the revisions may appear to parallel 3 Kgdms 8, most represent "false friends"—agreement between the OG and 2 Chronicles provoked by similar discomfort with the admittedly problematic MT. Both 2 Chronicles and III Kingdoms struggle with versions of the overloaded MT. Accordingly, 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 is best characterized as an expansive revision of the MT dating to the Persian period.<sup>14</sup>

While significant, variations between the three editions are far outweighed by the similarities between the three editions. All three narrate the dedication of the First Temple as the "core"<sup>15</sup> or "high point"<sup>16</sup> of the Solomon Narrative, a heterogeneous unit of the DtrH corresponding to 1 Kgs/3 Kgdms 1:1, 2:10, or 3:1–11:43 and revised in 2 Chr 1–9.<sup>17</sup> Porten<sup>18</sup> and others<sup>19</sup> have illustrated the overall unity of the present text of the Solomon Narrative, featuring

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<sup>14</sup> Contra this position, Graham Auld's *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994) argues that Samuel–Kings and Chronicles share a common source consisting of overlapping material. Auld argues against the scholarly majority, which maintains that Chronicles revises Samuel–Kings. While the existence of a common third source is plausible, Zipora Talshir correctly identifies a number of critical difficulties in his argument in "The Reign of Solomon in the Making: Pseudo-Connections Between 3 Kgdms and Chronicles," *VT* 50.2 (2000): 233–249. There are also significant historical-linguistic grounds for the privileging of Kings over Chronicles. Kings is written in Classical Biblical Hebrew. On the history of the Hebrew language, see Ronald Hendel and Jan Joosten, *How Old is the Hebrew Bible? A Textual, Historical, and Linguistic Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). Chronicles represents a later stratum of Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew. In the temple dedication, this is especially clear in revision of the paronomastic infinitive in 1 Kgs 8:12 in 2 Chr 6:2 (בָּנִיתִי > בָּנִיתִי). The infinitive absolute declines in LBH. The infinitive absolute appears very rarely in Qumranic and Midrashic Hebrew. On the decline of the infinitive absolute, see Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, HSM 29 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 47–48; Robert Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*, HSM 12 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 44.

<sup>15</sup> Talshir, "Reign of Solomon," 233.

<sup>16</sup> Bezalel Porten, "The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (1 Kgs 3–11)," *HUCA* 38 (1967): 107.

<sup>17</sup> As Solomon's ascent to the throne was somewhat complicated, opinions vary on where the account of his reign begins. Intriguingly but perhaps coincidentally, the OG edition of 3 Kgdms picks up in 2:12 immediately following the report of David's death.

<sup>18</sup> Porten, "The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative," 93–128.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Römer, "1 Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists," 63–76. See also John A. Davies, "Heptadic Verbal Patterns in The Solomon Narrative of 1 Kgs 1–11," *Tyndale Bulletin* 63.1 (2012): 21–33; Talshir, "Reign of Solomon"; Amos Frisch, "Structure and its Significance: The

patterns, structuring devices, and a unified, if not entirely perfect chronological arrangement that suggest skilled redaction. The framework of the temple dedication preserved partially in 8:1–11, 12–13 (=53a LXX), and 62–66 appears to have been one such source that was integrated into the Solomon narrative. From the very beginning of the account of Solomon’s reign, the Temple appears to have been the primary focus of at least the text’s initial redaction. Following the description of Solomon’s consolidation of power in 1 Kgs 3:2, the third person narrator/redactional voice notes apologetically that “no house for the name of YHWH (בֵּית לַיהוָה) had been built at the time.” The expression “house for the name of YHWH” is typical of the Deuteronomistic redactors, expressing the group’s particular demythologized conception of their god and their temple.<sup>20</sup> The expression distances the temple from its historical association with YHWH’s presence, no longer God’s dwelling in any literal sense. Its use in 1 Kgs 3:2 highlights two aspects of the account of the Temple’s construction and dedication. First, the Solomon narrative was likely brought together by a Deuteronomistic redactor around the construction of the Temple—Solomon’s signal achievement. Second, the line highlights the dissonance between the heavily redacted present text and the likely pre-Deuteronomic and pre-Priestly framework of the temple construction and dedication. The expressed objective of the temple dedication ceremony was the establishment of a dwelling for YHWH. This objective is achieved when the Ark is installed in the Temple’s innermost chamber, prompting Solomon to declare his dedicatory poem “I have certainly built you an exalted house / a place for you to dwell in forever” (8:13 MT; 8:53a LXX).

Following a review of further evidence for the early non-Deuteronomistic and non-Priestly origin of the framework of the temple dedication, in this chapter I survey scholarship on the relationship between its three present text editions. I investigate the tensions between the earliest material in Phases 1–2 of the text and its later redactors, first in 1 Kings/3 Kingdoms and then in 2 Chr—as they remember the event differently to form three competing accounts. I discuss Phase 3 of the proto-M and proto-G only in the context of Phases 1–2, as the text itself contains some variants but nothing that on its own affects the recollection of the Ark. Having established the likely relationship between the versions, I reconstruct its archetype—the earliest inferable form of the account of the temple dedication.<sup>21</sup> The most revealing collisions of memory take place within the archetype. This chapter will conclude with an analysis of redaction and memory within the archetype and through its reception, after the MT, LXX, and Chronicles editions of the temple dedication parted ways.

## II.1. Signals of the Antiquity of the Framework of the Temple Dedication

The Solomon Narrative in 1 Kings / 3 Kingdoms is composed of a range of earlier source materials that have been revised extensively from their incorporation in the DtrH forward. The

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Narrative of Solomon’s Reign (1 Kgs 1–12:24),” *JSOT* 51 (1991): 3–14; idem, “The Narrative of Solomon’s Reign: A Rejoinder,” *JSOT*: 22–24; Kim I. Parker, “Repetition as a Structuring Device in 1 Kgs 1–11,” *JSOT* 42 (1988): 19–27.

<sup>20</sup> See discussion above.

<sup>21</sup> See Ronald Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, SBLTCS 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 21–25, and below on pp. 38–40 for discussion of the concept and utility of archetypes.

dedication of the temple in chapter 8 likely represents one such source, due to its structure and its pre-exilic concepts and language—concentrated but entangled with later supplements in 8:1–11, 12–13 (=53a LXX), and 62–66.<sup>22</sup>

As noted above, Hurowitz has shown that the temple dedication in the three editions shares both a core structure and specific features with Mesopotamian building inscriptions. The strongest parallels date to Sargonid rulers of the Neo-Assyrian Period.<sup>23</sup> Though no single text exhibits the expansive detail found in the three biblical editions, Hurowitz brings together a wide range of temple and palace dedication ceremonies that share the biblical account’s “essence” and “structure,”<sup>24</sup> which together suggest that the biblical account at least shares their context. Particularly notable are the parallels to Sargon II’s dedication of Dur-Sharrukin<sup>25</sup> and Esarhaddon’s dedication of the Assur Temple.<sup>26</sup> The essential objective of both the Neo-Assyrian and biblical accounts was the installation of the god in the temple. In the Neo-Assyrian accounts, this is accomplished through the procession and installation of cult images.<sup>27</sup> In the biblical accounts, this is accomplished through the procession and installation of the Ark—in direct contradiction to the Deuteronomistic conception of the temple as the “house for YHWH’s name” (1 Kgs 3:2). This represents the first of three structured phases of the Neo-Assyrian temple dedication ceremonies Hurowitz discusses, followed by royal blessings and prayer (Phase 2) and group sacrifices and feasting (Phase 3).<sup>28</sup> Key features that Hurowitz identifies are shared by both accounts include the invitation of a wide range of participants in the celebrations,<sup>29</sup> the holding of the festivities outside the site to be dedicated,<sup>30</sup> the extended duration of the celebration,<sup>31</sup> the offering of “countless” sacrifices,<sup>32</sup> and the formal dismissal of celebrants.<sup>33</sup> This would not be the first detection of the literary influence of Neo-Assyria in the Hebrew Bible, as the Succession Treaties of Esarhaddon<sup>34</sup> (EST) have long been understood to have

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<sup>22</sup> For a full discussion of the Deuteronomistic expansions in Phase 2, see below.

<sup>23</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 260–277.

<sup>24</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 273.

<sup>25</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*; Arthur Gotfred Lie, *The Inscriptions of Sargon II, King of Assyria. Part I* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1929), 78–83.

<sup>26</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*; Rykle Borger, *Die Inschriften Assarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien*, AFO Beiheft 9 (Graz: Im Selbstverlage des Herausgebers, 1956).

<sup>27</sup> On the significance of cult images in Mesopotamia, see Michael B. Hundley, “Here a God, There a God: An Examination of the Divine in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *Altorientalische Forschungen* 40.1 (2013): 68–107.

<sup>28</sup> See especially the discussion in Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 273–277.

<sup>29</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 274.

<sup>30</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 275.

<sup>31</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 275.

<sup>32</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 276.

<sup>33</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 277.

<sup>34</sup> Donald J. Wiseman, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon,” *Iraq* 20.1 (1958): 1–99.

influenced the covenant formula in Deuteronomy.<sup>35</sup> To Hurowitz's discussion, I would add that the version of Solomon's poem in the OG edition may also preserve a memory of the Neo-Assyrian and broader Near Eastern custom of conducting astrological divination before temple construction.<sup>36</sup> This evidence suggests strongly that the text developed in the cultural world of the Neo-Assyrian period, likely before or at the very least separate from the Deuteronomistic redaction(s) of the text.

Though this core three-phase structure has been heavily revised in the biblical accounts of the temple dedication to include a range of later Deuteronomic and Priestly expressions, from which the framework is not extractable with any certainty—the text has retained core elements that reflect pre-exilic language and concepts.

First, the text refers to the temple's inner sanctum as the דְּבִיר in 1 Kgs/3 Kgdms 6:5, 16, 19–23, 31; 7:49; and 8:6, 8 (= 2 Chr 3:16; 4:20; and 5:7, 9), a term that appears outside of the temple construction and dedication only in Josh 10:3 and Ps 28:2. In Joshua 10:3, the term appears as a non-Hebrew personal name. Psalm 28:2 is difficult to date due to its elevated poetic language. The term was sufficiently opaque as to give pause to both its later Hebrew and Greek scribes. In v. 6, Hebrew scribes felt it appropriate fit to gloss “to the דְּבִיר of the Temple” with “to the Holy of Holies” (אֶל-דְּבִיר הַבַּיִת אֶל-קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים)—the term assigned to this sector of the Temple in Priestly writings.<sup>37</sup> The OG scribe translators transcribe דְּבִיר as δαβιρ, avoiding even an attempt at translation.<sup>38</sup>

Second, the text dates the ceremony to the month of Ethanim in 8:2, a Canaanite month common to groups across the region including Israel.<sup>39</sup> As with דְּבִיר, the later writers have difficulty with this earlier expression. Early supplements to 1 Kgs 8 worked to clarify the month, adding “that is the seventh month” (8:2).<sup>40</sup> The rewriters of 2 Chr 5:3 omitted the term Ethanim altogether, retaining only the explanatory supplement “that is, the seventh month.”

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<sup>35</sup>See Rintje Frankena, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy,” in *OtSt* 14 (1965): 122–54; and Moshe Weinfeld, “Traces of Assyrian Treaty Formulae in Deuteronomy,” *Bib* 46 (1965): 417–2; and *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 94–129.

<sup>36</sup>See discussion of 8:53a LXX below.

<sup>37</sup>While the expression “Holy of Holies” does appear to channel Priestly ideas, there is no reason to suspect that the glossator was P. On this gloss and others, see below.

<sup>38</sup>Note the contrast with their treatment of פָּלֵי (“pole”), which the OG translators render roughly as “holy things”—τὰ ἁγία in 8:7 and τῶν ἁγιασμένων in 8:8. On this technique, see James Barr, “‘Guessing’ in the Septuagint,” in *Bible and Interpretation: The Collected Essays of James Barr*, 3 vols, ed. John Barton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3:28–43.

<sup>39</sup>The chronological information in 1 Kgs / 3 Kgdms 6:1, 37 also follows the common Canaanite calendar (“the month of Ziv”). Other Canaanite months in the Hebrew Bible include Abib (Exod 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deut 16:1), and Bul (1 Kgs 6:38). While James Vanderkam, “Calendars—Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish,” *ABD* 1:814–820, attributes its usage in 1 Kgs 6–8 to the influence of Phoenician workers, this calendrical system more likely predates the numbered and Babylonian systems that come into use in later biblical literature.

<sup>40</sup>cf. 1 Kgs 6:1

Third, the text appears to promote non-Deuteronomistic and -Priestly concepts of the Temple and the Ark. As noted above, the text represents the Temple as YHWH's "eternal dwelling" (8:12 MT; 8:53a LXX). This conception contrasts with the redactional observation in 1 Kgs 3:2, which represents the Temple in typical Deuteronomistic fashion as the place where YHWH "rests his name." The Ark is initially represented as connected with YHWH's physical presence, a dynamic I explore in greater detail below. The text's representation of the roles of the priests, the Levites, and the king in the officiation of the cult differs from Deuteronomistic and Priestly literature, as well. In chapter 8, King Solomon presides over ritual functions including sacrifice later explicitly allocated to the Priests and Levites.

Both Deuteronomistic and Priestly writers resist these concepts in different ways, intriguingly, as I argue below, even within the redactional strata of 1 Kgs 8. The contestation of these features and others continues through the formation of the present texts of Kgs (MT and LXX) and Chronicles, as will become clear in the textual analyses that follow. For present purposes, it should suffice to say that at the very least it appears that this non-Deuteronomistic, likely *pre*-Deuteronomistic framework forms the core of the three accounts of the dedication of the Temple. Following a survey of approaches to the relationship between the three editions, I will undertake comparative textual analysis of 1 Kgs/3 Kgdms 8 and second 2 Chr 5:2–7:10.

## II.2. The Relationship between 1 Kgs 8 and 3 Kgdms 8

As the present text's supplemental clarifications of likely pre-exilic, -Deuteronomistic, and -Priestly material indicate, the early framework of the temple dedication has grown significantly over the course of its history ultimately yielding three qualitatively different editions. In order to appreciate the journeys of the Ark across these texts, it is necessary to understand how they came to be. This is the basic challenge of textual criticism, shared by analysts of inner-biblical interpretation: *Utrum in alterum abiturum erat?* ("Which of the two will have departed into the other?").<sup>41</sup> 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 follows the MT closely, with a few notable exceptions including substantial supplements to revise the text's representation of the temple cult that I address below. As such, 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 can be identified with considerable confidence as a Persian-period revision of proto-M, the textual ancestor of the present MT. The relationship between 1 Kgs 8 and 3 Kgdms 8 is somewhat more complex. Approaches are divided on two variables: (1) the direction and (2) the level of the revision that yielded the two editions of the temple dedication.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986), 72.

<sup>42</sup> See David W. Gooding, "Pedantic Timetabling in 3rd Book of Reigns," *VT* 15.2 (1965): 153–66; idem, "Temple Specifications: A Dispute in Logical Arrangement between the MT and the LXX," *VT* 17. 2 (1967): 143–72; idem, "Text-Sequence and Translation-Revision in 3 Reigns IX 10–X 33." *VT* 19. 4 (1969): 448–63; idem, "The Septuagint's Rival Versions of Jeroboam's Rise to Power," *VT* 17. 2 (1967): 173–89; idem, "The Septuagint's Version of Solomon's Misconduct," *VT* 15. 3 (1965): 325–35; idem, "Problems of Text and Midrash in the Third Book of Reigns," *Textus* 7 (1969): 1–29, who argues that proto-G reworks proto-M in the Greek using a range of traditions including Hebrew; van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, whose extremely detailed text critical analysis largely supports Gooding; Zipora Talshir, "1 Kgs and 3 Kgdms - Origin and Revision; Case Study: The Sins of Solomon (1 Kgs

The MT is substantially longer than the OG, featuring material that poses a range of difficulties—at times chronological, at times grammatical; at times the Hebrew text also appears to be tedious and perhaps a bit clumsy. The OG is leaner in contrast, particularly in its opening four verses. Which text is more likely to have developed into the other: the more cumbersome, overstuffed proto-M or the sparer proto-G (the textual ancestor of the present OG)? Hendel<sup>43</sup> offers an intriguing solution to this question, based on the analysis of the variant chronologies of the proto-M and proto-G from Omri to Jehu. Hendel argues on internal text critical grounds that the double chronology results from the correction of the text, based on a particular reading of one verse: 1 Kgs 16:23. The systematic revision that followed shows the dependence of proto-G on the proto-M. For reasons that will become clear in the discussion of the synoptic text laid out below, I argue that chronological details in the account of the temple dedication are also the key to understanding the stemmatic relationship of the proto-M and proto-G of chapter 8. The balance of probability supports the view that at least in chapter 8, the proto-G revises the proto-M—preserving a small number of superior readings but otherwise abbreviating and critically correcting the timeline of the construction and dedication of the temple complex.

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11).” *Textus* 21 (2002): 71–105; idem, “The Reign of Solomon in the Making: Pseudo-Connections Between 3 Kgdms and Chronicles.” *VT* 50.2 (2000): 233–249; idem, “The Image of the Septuagint Edition of the Book of Kings [Hebrew].” *Tarbiz* (1990): 249–302, who argues focusing primarily on 1 Kgs 11–12 that the Hebrew proto-G represents a midrashic revision of proto-M, translated fastidiously into Greek; Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, who argues on the basis of Priestly additions that 1 Kgs 8 serves as a source text for 3 Kgdms 8; Frank H. Polak, “The Septuagint Account of Solomon’s Reign: Revision and Ancient Recension,” in *X Congress of the International Organization of Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1998*, ed. B.A. Taylor (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 139–64, who argues that the MT and LXX of the Solomon narrative both separately revise a common Hebrew “ancient Solomon account” (149); Julio Treballe Barrera, “Textual Criticism and the Literary Structure and Composition of 1–2 Kings / 3–4 Reigns. The Different Sequence of Literary Units in the MT and LXX,” in *Die Septuaginta - Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte: 3. Internationale Fachtagung Veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 22.-25. Juli 2010*, eds. Siegfried Kreuzer, Martin Meiser, and Marcus Sigismund, WUNT 286 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 55–78; idem, “Kings (MT/LXX) and Chronicles: The Double and Triple Textual Tradition,” in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*, eds. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H Lim, and W. Brian Aucker, VTSup 113 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 483–501, who argues that the OG faithfully translates a Hebrew Vorlage both anterior and superior to the Proto-M; and Adrian Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l’histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 Rois 2–14*, CahRB 48 (Paris: Gabalda, 2000), who argues that the LXX is superior and anterior to the MT; Philippe Hugo, *Les deux visages d’Elie: texte massorétique et Septante dans l’histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 Rois 17–18* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2006), who argues that the LXX is superior and anterior to the MT.

<sup>43</sup> Ronald Hendel, “Two Editions of the Royal Chronology in Kings,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Treballe Barrera: Florilegium Complutense*, eds. Andrés Piquer Otero and Pablo A. Torijano, SupJSJ 157 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 99–114.

## II.3. The First Two Editions of the Installation of the Ark: Proto-M and Proto-G

In order to illustrate the stemmatic relationship between proto-M and proto-G, the earliest strata of Phases 1–2 of the temple dedication are laid out synoptically in the table below. For clarity, I have indicated variants and plusses with red typeface and minuses with ellipses and double-hyphens (--) in this table and throughout this chapter.<sup>44</sup>

Table 8: 1 Kgs 8:1–13 and 3 Kgdms 8:1–11, 53a

1 Kgs 8:1–13	3 Kgdms 8:1–11, 53a
8:1 אז יקהל המלך שלמה לבנות את בית יהוה ואת בית המלך	8:1 ויהי ככלות שלמה לבנות את בית יהוה ואת בית המלך
מקץ עשרים שנה אז יקהל המלך שלמה את כל זקני ישראל	מקץ עשרים שנה אז יקהל המלך שלמה את כל זקני ישראל
2 ויקהלו אל־המלך שלמה כל־איש ישראל	2 ויקהלו אל־המלך שלמה כל־איש ישראל
3 ויבאו כל זקני ישראל	3 ויבאו כל זקני ישראל
4 ויעלו את־ארון יהוה	4 ויעלו את־ארון יהוה
5 והמלך ... וכל ... ישראל הנועדים עליו אתו לפני הארון מזבחים צאן ובקר אשר לא יספרו ולא ימנו מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את הארון	5 והמלך ... וכל ... ישראל הנועדים עליו אתו לפני הארון מזבחים צאן ובקר אשר לא יספרו ולא ימנו מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את הארון
7 כי הכהנים והלויים	7 כי הכהנים והלויים
8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן הקדש על פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה	8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן הקדש על פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה
9 אין בארון רק שני לחות האבנים	9 אין בארון רק שני לחות האבנים
10 ויהי בצאת הכהנים מן־הקדש והענו	10 ויהי בצאת הכהנים מן הקדש והענו
11 ולא יכלו הכהנים לעמד לשרת מפני הענו כי מלא כבוד יהוה את בית יהוה: פ [ ... ]	11 ולא יכלו הכהנים לעמד לשרת מפני הענו כי מלא כבוד יהוה את בית יהוה: פ [ ... ]
12 אז אמר שלמה	53a אז אמר שלמה
אל הבית ככלתו לבנות	אל הבית ככלתו לבנות
שמש הודיה בשמים	שמש הודיה בשמים

<sup>44</sup> Note that I have retained the pointing of the MT, inasmuch as it likely represents an early reading tradition. I have not attempted to reconstruct the pointing of the proto-G or the archetypal texts I identify throughout the chapter.

יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל בנה בניתי בית זבל לך מכון לשבתך עולמים הלא הגה היא כתובה על ספר השיר:	יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל בנה בניתי בית זבל לך מכון לשבתך עולמים --
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### II.3.a. Chronological Corrections in Proto-G of Chapters 6–9

The account of the temple dedication begins with chronological markers in verses 1 and 2—both of which diverge significantly in the proto-M and proto-G. These chronological corrections offer critical insight into the likely direction of the revision of the two editions of this text. In order to understand the origin and significance of these discrepancies, it is necessary to consider them in the context of the larger timeline of chapters 6–9:

Table 9: Chronological Markers in Chapters 6–9

Event	Proto-M	Proto-G
Foundations laid (6:1)	1 ויהי בשמונים שנה וארבע מאות שנה לצאת בני ישראל מארץ מצרים בשנה הרביעית בחדש זו הוא החדש השני למלך שלמה על- ישראל	1 ויהי בארבעים שנה וארבע מאות שנה לצאת בני ישראל מארץ מצרים בשנה הרביעית -- הוא החדש השני למלך שלמה על- ישראל
Temple construction concludes; construction of temple furnishings and palace begins (6:37–7:1)	37 בשנה הרביעית יסד בית יהוה בגירח זו: 38 ובשנה האחת עשרה בגירח בול הוא החדש השמיני פלה הבית לכל- דבריו ולכל משפטו [משפטיו] ויבנהו שבע שנים: 1 ואת ביתו בנה שלמה שלש עשרה שנה ויכל את פל ביתו:	-- -- -- -- -- 1a ואת ביתו בנה שלמה שלש עשרה שנה --
Temple dedication begins (8:1)	-- -- 1 אז יקהל ...	8:1 ויהי ככלות שלמה לבנות את בית יהוה ואת בית המלך מקץ עשרים שנה אז יקהל ...
Date of temple dedication (8:2)	2 ויקהלו אליהם לך שלמה כל איש ישראל בגירח האתנים בחדש הוא החדש השביעי:	-- 2 -- בירח האתנים --
Construction and dedication of temple and palace complex concludes (9:1)	1 ויהי ככלות שלמה לבנות את בית יהוה ואת בית המלך ואת כל חשק שלמה אשר חפץ לעשות:	1 ויהי ככלות שלמה לבנות את בית- יהוה ואת בית המלך ואת כל חשק שלמה אשר חפץ לעשות:



Proto-M does not clearly identify the year in which Solomon dedicated the Temple. Proto-M's account of the dedication begins in 8:1 with the temporal adverb  $\text{אָז}$  ("then").<sup>45</sup> The text specifies the month but not the year: "the month of Ethanim, that is the seventh month" (8:2). Construction of the temple-palace compound took 20 years, 7 for the temple and 13 for the palace. As 6:37–38 MT notes only that construction of the temple concluded in "the month of Ziv, that is the eighth month," the temple dedication could reasonably have been held *during Ziv* anywhere from 11 months after the completion of construction to 13 years—after the completion of the temple-palace compound concluded. For the text's early audience, all possible conclusions were potentially problematic. If Solomon dedicated the Temple after only 11 months, the temple-palace compound would have still been an active construction site for the next 12 years. If however Solomon did not dedicate the Temple after 11 months, YHWH would not have inhabited his eternal dwelling for up to 13 years. Regardless of which circumstance was preferable, the proto-M is not clear when the Temple was dedicated. It has been suggested that the temporal adverb  $\text{אָז}$  ("then") in 8:1 "glosses over" the chronology. For proto-G, this effort appears to have been insufficient.

The chronological ambiguity of proto-M appears to have bothered the proto-G, which addresses the difficult text with a creative addition to 8:1 and equally creative omissions throughout the account of the construction of the temple-palace compound. First, the proto-G prepends two additional clauses to "then" in 8:1—turning the opening line of the proto-M into the apodosis of a conditional sentence. The added protasis combines a verbatim quote drawn from 9:1 with a formulaic<sup>46</sup> line noting the passage of time:

**And when Solomon finished building the house of the Lord and his own house after twenty years, then ( $\text{אָז}$ ) ...**

It is likely that the proto-G protasis is secondary. As the temporal adverb  $\text{אָז}$  has not elsewhere been found to introduce apodoses<sup>47</sup> and there is a clear source for the proto-G protasis which does not appear in the MT, the protasis can be confidently identified as an expansion.<sup>48</sup> The expansion to 8:1 unambiguously indicates that in proto-G, the dedication of the temple took place *after* the completion of the entire temple-palace complex. In support of this emendation, proto-G makes the following creative omissions from chapters 6–9:

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<sup>45</sup> The adverb  $\text{אָז}$  appears at the beginning of text units a number of times in Kings to introduce detail or narrative. See Charles F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903), 35; in addition to the present verse in 1 Kgs 3:16; 8:12; 9:11, 24; 11:7; 16:21; 22:50; 2 Kgs 8:22; 12:18; 14:8; 16:16; and 16:5.

<sup>46</sup> In the OG of Kingdoms, cf. 3 Kgdms 2:39; elsewhere, cf. Gen 16:3; 41:1; Deut 14:28; 31:10; 8:1; 2 Chr 8:1; Is 23:15, 17; Ezek 29:13; Dan 4:30.

<sup>47</sup> Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text*, 104.

<sup>48</sup> See Gooding, "Pedantic Timetabling," 156, who observes theological motivation in this expansion.

1. Proto-G lowers the resolution of the Proto-M timeline of temple construction and dedication, abbreviating the text and omitting the Canaanite month name<sup>49</sup> in 6:1 and the numerical month name in 8:2. As Canaanite month names are by apparent convention glossed with their numerical equivalents, it may be reasonably surmised that they were unfamiliar to biblical readers. Omitting the numerical month name would have reduced the text's clarity.
2. In 6:38–7:1, proto-G lacks the date of the completion of temple construction altogether. Proto-M marks the completion of temple construction and the beginning of palace and temple furnishing construction, offering in summary that construction of the temple began Ziv (the second month) of the fourth year and ended in Bul (the eighth month) of the 11th year.<sup>50</sup> Proto-G marks only the beginning of palace construction. The proto-G omits the detailed chronological summary, abbreviating the text and noting only that Solomon constructed his palace for 13 years. This may be connected to the proto-G's inclusion of a similar summary in 3 Kgdms 8:1, as the protasis that misuses אָז.
3. It is worth noting as well that proto-G abbreviates 7:1, omitting the likely original<sup>51</sup> repetitive וַיִּכְלֹא אֶת-כָּל-בֵּיתוֹ.

Overall, three conclusions might be drawn from this comparison. First, proto-M features a higher resolution timeline including regnal years and months identified both by their Canaanite and numerical names. This timeline is potentially problematic. Second, proto-G features a lower resolution timeline, which does not note either the regnal year or month in which temple construction was completed. Third, proto-G abbreviates proto-M.

All three of these patterns converge in the correction and abbreviation of the chronology in 8:2. While proto-G's expansion of 8:1 asserts that the temple dedication took place after the construction of both the Temple and the palace, the text buttresses its clarification by “cleaning up” the chronological cues that were the source of the confusion in 6:37 and 8:2:

Table 10: “Cleaning up” Chronological Markers in Chapters 6–9

<i>Event</i>	<i>Proto-M</i>	<i>Proto-G</i>
Temple construction concludes; construction of temple furnishings and palace begins (6:37–7:1)	37 בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית יָסַד בֵּית יְהוָה בְּנִיחָה זֹאת:	--
	38 וּבַשָּׁנָה הָאֶחָת עָשְׂרָה בְּנִיחָה בּוֹל הוּא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁמִינִי כָּלָה הַבַּיִת לְכָל־ דְּבָרָיו וּלְכָל־מִשְׁפָּטוֹ [מִשְׁפָּטָיו] וַיִּבְנֶהוּ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים:	--
	1 וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה שְׁלֹשׁ עָשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה	1a וְאֶת־בֵּיתוֹ בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה שְׁלֹשׁ עָשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה
	וַיִּכְלֹא אֶת־כָּל־בֵּיתוֹ:	--

<sup>49</sup> See James Vanderkam, “Calendars—Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish,” *ABD* 1:814–820, on the Canaanite calendar.

<sup>50</sup> The proto-M glosses Bul but not Ziv, as the chapter has already glossed Ziv (6:1). The proto-G edition does not gloss either, though I argue below for other reasons.

<sup>51</sup> cf. 1 Kgs 6:9, 14; the OG includes only 6:9.

Date of temple dedication (8:2)	וַיִּקְהֵלוּ אֶל־הַמְּלָךְ שְׁלֹמֹה כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָרַח הָאֶתְנַיִם בְּחָג הוּא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי:	2 -- -- בִּירַח הָאֶתְנַיִם --
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As noted above, the proto-G of 6:38–7:1 lacks the date of the completion of temple construction altogether. Proto-G of 8:2 includes only “in the month of Ethanim,” a prepositional phrase modifying 8:1—identifying the time of year in which “Solomon gathered all the elders of Israel.” Absent are the opening and closing phrases represented in the proto-M. Both expressions are somewhat clumsy. וַיִּקְהֵלוּ אֶל־הַמְּלָךְ שְׁלֹמֹה כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל combines features from different documentary sources.<sup>52</sup> בְּחָג הוּא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי appears to be a compound of two supplements, בְּחָג and הוּא הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי<sup>53</sup>—as the former interrupts the latter’s glossing of בְּיָרַח הָאֶתְנַיִם. Neither expression conveys any critical new information, perhaps part of the reason for their omission in proto-G. Having already made clear in 8:1 that the dedication took place after the completion of all construction, proto-G appears to omit the unnecessary information that prompted the tension: the chronological notices in 6:37 and 8:2. In 6:37, all chronological information is omitted. In 8:2, proto-G omits only the numerical month. As noted, Canaanite months are conventionally glossed with their numerical months in Biblical writings. This indicates that the Canaanite months had fallen out of use, or else they would not require explanation. As such, the omission of the numerical gloss would have the same effect of the complete omission—lowering the resolution of the timeline in support of proto-G’s revisions. Proto-G’s omission thus accomplishes two related objectives. First, the omission of the numerical month name served as a part of the proto-G’s chronological correction of proto-M. In combination with the expansion in 8:1, the proto-G tradition makes it absolutely clear that the temple dedication took place *after* the completion of both the Temple and the palace. Second, an equally significant part of proto-G’s approach involves the abbreviation of clunky supplemental material. The clauses omitted in proto-G were not necessary to the narrative. Proto-G undertakes two kinds of revision in the chronological notices. First, proto-G corrects what the reviser may have perceived to be a chronological difficulty: the uncertain timing of the temple dedication. Second, the reviser abbreviated large sections of the text—an editorial move that I show below appears to have taken place throughout 3 Kgdms 8.

<sup>52</sup> This line represents a compound of terms and expressions from different biblical sources. The verb קהל in the nifal appears most often in Priestly and Priestly-influenced literature: Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Kings*, 105; Lev 8:4; Num 16:3; 17:7; 20:2; Ezek 38:7; 2 Chr 5:3; 20:2. כל איש ישראל appears only in Deuteronomic literature (Deut 27:14; 29:9; Josh 10:24; Jud 7:8; 20:11, 33; 1 Sam 11:15; 14:22; 17:19, 24; 2 Sam 16:18; 17:14, 24; 19:42; 20:2; 1 Kgs 8:2; 1 Chr 10:7; 16:3; 2 Chr 5:3)

<sup>53</sup> Canaanite months like Ethanim are always glossed with the numerical months in both the Hebrew and the Greek (for example “Ziv, which is the Second Month” in 1 Kgs 6:1). בְּחָג interrupts this gloss ungrammatically, likely harmonizing with 1 Kgs 8:65 (MT and OG).

### ***II.3.b. Other Abbreviations, Plusses, Minuses, and Archetypal Readings in 3 Kgdms 8:1–11, 53a***

In addition to the abbreviated and corrected timeline of the construction and dedication of the temple, proto-G features the following revisions including abbreviations and creative omissions; additions; and arguably archetypal readings I discuss below in order to identify the baseline text with which both editions craft their visions of the temple dedication:

8:1 אָז יִקְהַל שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל appears in the proto-G with two additional features: (1) Solomon is identified as “King Solomon” and (2) Solomon gathers “all the elders of Israel.” Neither variant is especially significant. There may be a certain slippage between “King Solomon” and “Solomon” in the text. The LXX of both variants are paralleled elsewhere—the former in 8:1 and the latter in 8:3. Alternately or perhaps additionally, “all the elders of Israel” may well have been added in anticipation of the subsequent clause, which begins with “and all the ... ” (וְאֵת כָּל ...). Absent text critical criteria that might justify their loss in the MT, it is likelier that the MT is archetypal.

8.1 אֶת-כָּל-רְאִשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת נְשִׂאֵי הָאֲבוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל The MT lists “all the elders of Israel—all the heads of the tribes, the patriarchs of the families of the Israelites” (8:1). The LXX specifies only “all the elders of Israel” (8:1). The expressions the LXX lacks are typical of P, though not necessarily exclusively so.<sup>54</sup> Their omission would fit the pattern of the abbreviation of duplicative material already noted. Other Priestly expressions are included in the proto-G.<sup>55</sup> The absent clauses are therefore likely archetypal.

8:1 אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה The expression “to King Solomon in Jerusalem” that appears in the proto-M but not the proto-G is grammatically problematic. Normal usage would feature אֶל with a 3ms suffix.<sup>56</sup> In context however, it arguably represents an admittedly awkward resumptive repetition following the list of distinguished groups Solomon gathered.

8:1 יְרוּשָׁלַם Proto-G features Zion in place of Jerusalem. Later in the verse, proto-M glosses “City of David” with the parenthetical “that is, Zion.” As Zion comes to metonymically represent all of Jerusalem, this may represent either an honest mistake in anticipation of the glossed “that is, Zion”<sup>57</sup> or a simplification limiting the three geographic names in this verse to two. The place

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<sup>54</sup> רִאשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת appears in Num 30:2; 32:28; יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבְנֵי הָאֲבוֹת appears in Num 7:2; but also in Josh 14:1; 19:51 (Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 10 [New York: Doubleday, 2001], 278). the terms appear in a different configuration together in Num 1:16. The significant thing to note here is the difference between this text and for example 2 Sam 6:1—אֶת-כָּל-בְּחֹר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף. The text there does not include these additional perhaps Priestly designations.

<sup>55</sup> See discussion in above. This forms a major component of Hurowitz’s argument in *I Have Built You and Exalted House*, 260–277.

<sup>56</sup> van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, 153; see also Bernhard Stade and Friedrich Schwally, *The Books of Kings: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1904), 98.

<sup>57</sup> Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Kings*, 105.

name appeared either with אֵל<sup>58</sup> or without a pronoun, as in Jud 1:7 as an accusative of local determination.<sup>59</sup> Either way, Jerusalem in the proto-M is arguably archetypal. Proto-G's use of "to Zion" is most likely to be secondary, on attraction to the "Zion" at the end of the verse.

8:3–4 The proto-G appears to abbreviate these verses, cutting repetitive duplicate material from these two verses as follows:

Table 11: 1 Kgs 8:3–4 and 3 Kgdms 8:3–4

<i>1 Kgs 8:3–4</i>	<i>3 Kgdms 8:3–4</i>	<i>Proposed Archetype</i>
3 וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן: 4 וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם:	3 -- וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת הָאָרוֹן 4 -- וְאֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת כָּל כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל --	3 וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן: 4 וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם:

8:3 וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל likely represents an archetypal description of the arrival of the elders gathered in 8:1, cut in the abbreviation of the proto-G. Note that this occurrence describes them as “all the elders of Israel,” paralleling the OG—which I argue above is not likely archetypal. If the כָּל in 8:1 is indeed not archetypal, its inclusion here might represent an effort to include אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־רְאִשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת נְשִׂאֵי הָאֲבוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל in the resumptive supplement.

8:3–4 Proto-M contains both וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן and וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה. Proto-G offers only וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן. Both are likely archetypal as they describe different actions concerning the Ark. In the first, the priests bring the the Ark. In the second, they carry the Ark up to the Temple.

8:4 It is possible to say with some confidence that וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם represents a Priestly expansion, as it incorporates a list of Priestly ritual objects attested elsewhere primarily in Priestly writings.<sup>60</sup> As it appears at least in part in both proto-G and proto-M, it is archetypal.

Table 12: 1 Kgs 8:5–8 and 3 Kgdms 8:5–8

<i>1 Kgs 8:5–8</i>	<i>3 Kgdms 8:5–8</i>	<i>Proposed Archetype</i>
5 וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה וְכָל־עַדְתֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנוֹעֲדִים עָלָיו אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי הָאָרוֹן מִזְבְּחִים צֹאן וּבָקָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִסְפְּרוּ וְלֹא	5 וְהַמֶּלֶךְ ... וְכָל ... יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנוֹעֲדִים עָלָיו אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי הָאָרוֹן מִזְבְּחִים צֹאן וּבָקָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִסְפְּרוּ וְלֹא	5 וְהַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנוֹעֲדִים עָלָיו אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי הָאָרוֹן מִזְבְּחִים צֹאן וּבָקָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִסְפְּרוּ וְלֹא יִמְנוּ

<sup>58</sup> cf. Num 20:10; Deut 31:28

<sup>59</sup> Joüon §126h; van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, 158.

<sup>60</sup> The מוֹעֵד אֹהֶל appears across Priestly writings in Exod 27:21; 28:43; 29:4, 10–11, 30, 32, 42, 44; 30:16, 18, 20, 26, 36; 31:7; 35:21; 38:8, 30; 39:32, 40; 40:2, 6–7, 12, 22, 24, 26, 29–30, 32, 34–35; Lev 1:1, 3, 5; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4–5, 7, 14, 16, 18; 6:9, 19, 23; 8:3–4, 31, 33, 35; 9:5, 23; 10:7, 9; 12:6; 14:11, 23; 15:14, 29; 16:7, 16–17, 20, 23, 33; 17:4–6, 9; 19:21; 24:3; Num 1:1; 2:2, 17; 3:7–8, 25, 38; 4:3–4, 15, 23, 25, 28, 30–31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47; 6:10, 13, 18; 7:5, 89; 8:9, 15, 19, 22, 24, 26; 10:3; 11:16; 12:4; 14:10; 16:18–19; 17:7–8, 15, 19; 18:4, 6, 21–23, 31; 19:4; 20:6; 25:6; 27:2; 31:54; note however the existence of an earlier Elohist conception of the Tent of Meeting in Exod 33:7–10. כָּל־כֵּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ appear in Num 3:31; 4:15; 18:3; 31:6.

מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את-ארון ברית-יהוה אל-מקומו אל-דביר הבית אל-קדש הקדשים אל-תחת כנפי הכרובים: 7 כי הכרובים פרשים כנפים אל-מקום הארון ויסכו הכרבים על-הארון ועל- בדיו מלמעלה: 8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן-הקדש על-פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה ויהיו שם עד היום הזה:	ימנו מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את הארון -- אל מקומו אל דביר הבית אל קדש הקדשים אל תחת כנפי הכרובים: 7 כי הכרובים פרשים כנפים אל מקום הארון ויסכו הכרבים על הארון ועל בדיו מלמעלה: 8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן הקדש על פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה :--	מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את-ארון ברית-יהוה אל-מקומו אל-דביר הבית אל-קדש הקדשים אל-תחת כנפי הכרובים: 7 כי הכרובים פרשים כנפים אל-מקום הארון ויסכו הכרבים על-הארון ועל בדיו מלמעלה: 8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן-הקדש על-פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה ויהיו שם עד היום הזה:
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8:5 שְׁלֹמֹה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה proto-G lacks. The proto-G otherwise follows the MT throughout this verse. 2 Chr 5:6 follows the proto-M. Burney suggests that the MT's שְׁלֹמֹה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ represents a harmonizing addition, bringing the text in line with v. 1b ("to King Solomon").<sup>61</sup> As שְׁלֹמֹה וְהַמֶּלֶךְ is ungrammatical, the proto-G is to be preferred.

8:5 וְכָל-עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל proto-G lacks. The proto-G otherwise follows the MT throughout this verse. The expression עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל appears almost exclusively in P. P material was identified as archetypal above. As P material was identified as archetypal above, it seems most likely that proto-G abbreviates proto-M.

8:5 וְלֹא יִמְנּוּ מֵרֵב appears in OG as ἀναρίθμητα (innumerable), which elsewhere most commonly translates the Hebrew expression אֵין מִסְפָּר (Job 21:33; Joel 1:6).<sup>62</sup> Hurowitz<sup>63</sup> identifies this as an abbreviation. I am inclined to agree, as if the proto-G were archetypal proto-M would have to both erase מִסְפָּר and add וְלֹא יִמְנּוּ מֵרֵב.

8:6 ויבאו הכהנים את-ארון בְּרִית-יְהוָה in the proto-M is represented in the proto-G as ויבאו הכהנים, lacking the Deuteronomistic designation for the Ark. Hurowitz<sup>64</sup> identifies proto-G as an abbreviation. In 8:3 the proto-G likely abbreviated ארון יהוה to ארון. In light of this apparent editorial tendency, I am inclined to agree. The entire clause as represented in the proto-M exhibits Deuteronomistic features, including the identity of the bearers of the Ark and the designation for the Ark. The text features a range of Deuteronomistic expressions attested in both editions, which I discuss below. The designation for the Ark in the proto-G is also attested in Deuteronomistic literature.<sup>65</sup>

8:7 The poles (בְּדִיּוֹ) in the proto-M are translated in the OG as "Holy Things" (τὰ ἅγια in 8:7; τῶν ἁγιάσματων in 8:8). This likely represents a translational guess or theological gloss, as the term בֶּד appears nowhere else in the OG of Kingdoms.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Kings*, 106.

<sup>62</sup> See also Prov 7:26; Job 22:5; 31:25

<sup>63</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You and Exalted House*, 263.

<sup>64</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You and Exalted House*, 263.

<sup>65</sup> 1 Sam 6:13; 7:2; 2 Sam 6:4; 11:11; 1 Kings 8:3, 5, 7, 9, 21

<sup>66</sup> Barr, "'Guessing' in the Septuagint," 3:28–43.

8:8 Proto-G omits *וַיִּהְיוּ שָׁם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה*, a typical Deuteronomic expression that appears in connection with Tablets installed in the Ark in Deut 10:1–5.<sup>67</sup> Here, the expression refers to the Ark’s poles—echoing the Priestly instruction that the poles never be removed (Exod 25:15; 37:5). The presence of this expression fits well with other Deuteronomic additions. Burney<sup>68</sup> proposes that it was omitted by the LXX (here proto-G) scribes after the First Temple’s destruction, when the Ark and its poles were no longer present. This is possible, but calls for two qualifications. First, it may equally have been omitted in the interests of brevity. Second, the final word of the expression (*הַזֶּה*) and the preceding phrase (*הַחִיצוֹנָה*) end in *ה*. It is equally possible that this expression fell out as a result of homoeoteleuton. In any of these three cases, the expression is likely archetypal.

8:9 The variation in 8:9 can be adjudicated on the basis of its parallel in 2 Chr 5:10. For reasons outlined below, the longer proto-G reading is likely archetypal:

Table 13: 1 Kgs 8:9; 3 Kgdms 8:9; and 2 Chr 5:10

1 Kgs 8:9	3 Kgdms 8:9	2 Chr 5:10
אֵין בָּאָרוֹן רַק שְׁנֵי לַחֹת <b>הָאֲבָנִים</b>	אֵין בארון רק שני לחות <b>האבנים</b>	10 אֵין בָּאָרוֹן רַק שְׁנֵי הַלַּחֹת
--	<b>לוֹחֹת הַבְּרִית</b>	--
אֲשֶׁר הִנִּיחַ שָׁם מֹשֶׁה בְּחֹרֵב אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִם־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצִאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:	אֲשֶׁר הִנִּיחַ שָׁם מֹשֶׁה בְּחֹרֵב אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִם־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצִאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:	אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן מֹשֶׁה בְּחֹרֵב אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִם־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצִאתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם:

The Deuteronomic expression *לוֹחֹת הָאֲבָנִים לַחֹת הַבְּרִית* appears in Deut 9:9, 11. It is possible that the expression *לוֹחֹת הַבְּרִית* was added to proto-G in transmission by a scribe with the full Deuteronomic phrase in mind. Inasmuch as the temple dedication includes a number of Deuteronomic expressions however, the longer reading preserved by the proto-G could also reasonably be archetypal. If so, the absence of *לוֹחֹת הַבְּרִית* in the proto-M could be attributed to parablepsis triggered by the repetition of *לוֹחֹת*. There are two reasons that this is likely the case. First, all three editions use the verb *כָּרַת* in 8:9 as in *כָּרַת בְּרִית*, “to make a covenant.” *כָּרַת* does not appear without *בְּרִית* as its object until late texts, in which it appears to have developed an idiomatic elided meaning.<sup>69</sup> The presence of *כָּרַת* suggests that the text likely originally featured *בְּרִית* from *לוֹחֹת הַבְּרִית* as its object. Second, the variant in 2 Chr is more likely to have developed

<sup>67</sup> On the expression, see Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, *The Time, Place, and Purpose of the Deuteronomistic History: The Evidence Of “Until This Day.”* BJS 347 (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2006). The expression appears both inside and outside of Deuteronomic literature, in Gen 26:33; 32:33; 47:26; 48:15; Exod 10:6; Num 22:30; Deut 2:22; 3:14; 10:8; 11:4; 29:3; 34:6; Josh 4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28–29; 9:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10; 22:3, 17; 23:8–9; Jud 1:21, 26; 6:24; 10:4; 15:19; 18:12; 19:30; 1 Sam 5:5; 6:18; 8:8; 12:2; 27:6; 29:3, 6, 8; 30:25; 2 Sam 4:3; 6:8; 7:6; 18:18; 1 Kgs 8:8; 9:13, 21; 10:12; 12:19; 2 Kgs 2:22; 8:22; 14:7; 16:6; 17:23, 34, 41; 20:17; 21:15; Is 39:6; Jer 3:25; 7:25; 11:7; 25:3; 32:20, 31; 35:14; 36:2; 44:10; Ezek 20:29; Ez 9:7; Neh 9:32; 1 Chr 4:41, 43; 5:26; 13:11; 17:5; 2 Chr 5:9; 8:8; 10:19; 21:10.

<sup>68</sup> Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Kings*, 107.

<sup>69</sup> cf. Is 57:8; Neh 10:1; 2 Chr 5:10; and 7:18.

from the form in the proto-G than the proto-M. 2 Chr 5:10 omits **ה** (adding a **ה** before the remaining **לוחות**). This could easily have developed as a transmission error, as the proto-G **לוחות הברית** ends in **ת** that could have triggered parablepsis by with **לוחות**.

8:10 **יהוה בית יְהוָה** appears in the proto-G as **הבית**. Hurowitz<sup>70</sup> identifies this as an abbreviation. Together with other abbreviations noted here, this assessment appears fair.

8:12–13/53a There are two groups of differences between the two editions of the poem that Solomon recites upon the installation of the Ark; the first involves textual quantity and the second involves its location. The edition of the poem in proto-G is longer, featuring an extended introduction, an additional colon, and a subscription referencing “the Book of the Song.” In proto-M, the poem appears immediately following the installation of the Ark at the beginning of what I have designated phase 2 (8:12–61). In proto-G, the poem appears in 53a—between the prayer (22–53) and the closing benediction (54–61). While the text of the proto-G poem is in some ways more archetypal, the opening line suggests that it may have been moved from its original preserved in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles:

Table 14: 1 Kgs 8:12–13 and 3 Kgdms 8:53a

<i>1 Kgs 8:12–13</i>	<i>3 Kgdms 8:53a</i>	<i>Proposed Archetype</i>
12 אָז אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה	53a אז אמר שלמה	12 אז אמר שלמה
--	אל הבית ככלתו לבנות	--
--	שמש הודיה בשמים	שמש הודיה בשמים
יְהוָה אָמַר לְשָׁכֵן בְּעֶרְפָּל:	יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל	יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל
13 בָּנָה בְּנִיתִי בַּיֵּת זָבַל לָךְ	בנה בניתי בית זבל לך	13 בנה בניתי בית זבל לך
מִכּוּן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ עוֹלָמִים:	מכון לשבתך עולמים	מכון לשבתך עולמים
--	הלא הנה היא כתובה על ספר השיר	הלא הנה היא כתובה על ספר השיר
--	--	--

8:53a LXX **אל הבית ככלתו לבנות** appears only in proto-G.<sup>71</sup> The expression situates the dedication prayer in time, immediately following construction—though the text does not specify whether it refers to the Temple, the palace, or both. However, in proto-G the poem appears toward the end of Solomon’s dedicatory address (phase 2). The line suggests that the location of the poem in proto-G is secondary.<sup>72</sup> The line’s existence is a product of the text’s movement, inserted to give context to Solomon’s dedicatory poem. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand the poem. The wider context of 8:14–53 offers little in the way of connections to the poem, beyond references to YHWH’s heavenly dwelling<sup>73</sup>—and even that stands at odds with the poem. Gooding argues that the poem was moved in order to protect or perhaps to amplify the piety of Solomon. In both proto-M and proto-G, Solomon turns to issue his extended prayer in 8:14. The glory of YHWH fills the temple in 8:1–11. Following the proto-M, the dedicatory

<sup>70</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You and Exalted House*, 263.

<sup>71</sup> On this retroversion, see 3 Kgdms 8:54, 4Kgdms 10:25.

<sup>72</sup> Contra Schenker, *Septante*, 135, who suggests that the OG location is primary and that the poem was moved in order to juxtapose the “thick darkness” with the cloud in 1–11.

<sup>73</sup> van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, 178.



poem is issued while facing the glory. By moving the poem, proto-G avoids the possibility of Solomon impiously facing YHWH.

8:53a LXX שמש הודיה בשמים and יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל appear together only in proto-G; proto-M lacks שמש הודיה בשמים. The subject of the 3ms verb in the omitted line would appear to be YHWH, as specified in the following colon. Van Keulen<sup>74</sup> argues that the “peculiarity” of expression and word order in the first line suggest that the translator “mechanically rendered” a corrupt Hebrew Vorlage I would identify with proto-G. With Schenker<sup>75</sup> however, I would argue that the text is not necessarily corrupt—just old and perhaps a bit peculiar. Some have identified in the line a fragment of an account of the installation of YHWH by the Sun deity.<sup>76</sup> A number of commentators have taken issue with the verb in this line: ἐγνώρισεν, “to make known” (3sg aor act ind, γνωρίζω). Burkitt<sup>77</sup> takes issue with this emendation, suggesting that while ἐγνώρισεν most likely renders הודיע (“he made known”; hif perf 3ms ידע, “to know”)<sup>78</sup>—the term represents a corruption of הופיע (“he made shine”; hif perf 3ms יפע, “to shine”). There are two difficulties with this emendation. First, it makes the poetry worse. Burkitt is correct that the OG ἐγνώρισεν most likely renders the proto-G הודיע, however. The term הודיע parallels perfectly with אמר in the subsequent colon, intensifying from divine sign to divine speech.<sup>79</sup>

Second and perhaps most importantly, the unemended expression הודיע actually makes very good sense, when set in the context of ancient Near Eastern and in particular Neo-Assyrian temple building practices. Recall that Hurowitz identifies the three-phase framework around which 1 Kgs 8 is built to have emerged from the Neo-Assyrian cultural milieu.<sup>80</sup> Prior to the construction of temples in Neo-Assyria, it was necessary for kings to seek divine approval including from Šamaš through various forms of divination. On this imperative, Nissinen observes: “It is clear that prophecy was an important vehicle for establishing the divine will during the late Neo-Assyrian period, and that priests and temple administrators were responsible for reporting prophetic messages to the king.”<sup>81</sup> Without the diviner’s approval, construction typically would not proceed. The biblical text may be alluding to this its frequent indication that YHWH did not authorize David to build the Temple.<sup>82</sup>

While discussions of this phase in Mesopotamian literature are not common, they increase significantly in frequency under the Sargonid kings (722–612 BCE) at the end of the

<sup>74</sup> van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, 167.

<sup>75</sup> Schenker, *Septante*, 130–135.

<sup>76</sup> J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel*, JSOTSup 111 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 107–183.

<sup>77</sup> F.C. Burkitt, “Lucianic Text if I Kings VII 53b,” *JThS*, 10.39 (1909), 440–441; others suggest following Wellhausen that הכין (“he set”) came to be הבין (“he understood”), approximates ἐγνώρισεν (cf. Is 40:2).

<sup>78</sup> cf. 3 Kgdms 1:27

<sup>79</sup> See the further analysis of the poem’s artistry below.

<sup>80</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 277.

<sup>81</sup> Martti Nissinen, *References to Prophecy in Neo-Assyrian Sources*, SAAS 7 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Corpus Project, University of Helsinki, 1998).

<sup>82</sup> cf. 1 Kgs 5:3; 1 Chr 22:8

Neo-Assyrian period—the very era Hurowitz connects with the structure of the temple dedication in Kings.<sup>83</sup> With specific reference to the inscriptions of Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE) and Assurbanipal (668–627 BCE), Novotny observes the lengths they reported that they would go to seek divine affirmation before initiating temple construction:

The literary craftsmen responsible for Esarhaddon's *res gestae* composed for Esagila (Babylon) and Eḫursaġgalkurkurra (Assur) record that these projects began after: (1) the temple's deity sent good omens and favourable signs; (2) auspicious planetary alignments and movements were observed; (3) Sin and Šamaš gave positive responses to haruspical queries; (4) Nudimmud (Ea) put the idea in the king's head; and (5) messages were received from ecstasies and in dreams.<sup>84</sup>

Assurbanipal reports that among other precautions before undertaking refurbishment of the cult image of Šarrat-Kidmuri in Nineveh: "I asked Šamaš and Adad (for approval) and they gave me a positive answer. I refurbished the emblem of her great divinity (and) made her reside on (her) raised dais for eternity."<sup>85</sup> Two features of this Neo-Assyrian approach to temple construction may have influenced the text of Solomon's poem. First, both involve the sun or sun god. The first colon preserved in proto-G describes YHWH "making known" the Sun—elsewhere known as Šamaš (3 Kgdms 8:53a). This difficult line may be speculatively understood as just such a propitious omen or planetary movement, enabling Solomon to begin construction of the Temple.<sup>86</sup> The second colon of Solomon's poem contains an additional possible parallel to the literary pattern Novotny identifies. There, Solomon reports that YHWH expressed a desire to live in thick darkness. Without commenting on the nature of the declaration, it is clearly a report of communication with YHWH—not unlike the communications Novotny describes.<sup>87</sup> While there is no other indication that divination took place in the biblical temple dedication in chapters 6–8, in light of the Neo-Assyrian parallels its presence in this archaic poem would not be unprecedented. I would argue that the expression הוֹדִיעַ ("to make known") is not only *not corrupt* but quite possibly appropriate in light of the necessity of divination in temple construction. The

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<sup>83</sup> See discussion above.

<sup>84</sup> Novotny, "Temple Building in Assyria," 114; see further Kiersten Neumann, *Resurrected and Reevaluated: The Neo-Assyrian Temple as a Ritualized and Ritualizing Built Environment*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 2014), 150; R. S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia*, YNER 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968): 6–7.

<sup>85</sup> Novotny, "Temple Building in Assyria," 114.

<sup>86</sup> This would echo but not confirm or necessarily support the theory of A.F. von Gall, "Ein neues astronomisch zu erschließendes Datum der ältesten israelitischen Geschichte," in *K. Budde zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag am 13 April 1920*, ed. K. Marti, BZAW 34 (Giessen: Topelmann, 1920), 52–60., who argues that 8:53a LXX referenced an eclipse that took place during his rule on May 22 948 BCE. On this and other examples of attempts to find the solar alignment of Solomon's temple, see Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun*, 79–86.

<sup>87</sup> See for example Novotny, "Temple Building in Assyria," 115, where she shares Assurbanipal's report that "Šarrat-Kidmuri ... constantly sent me (orders) through dreams and messages from ecstasies to complete (the image of) her exalted divinity (and) to glorify her precious cultic rites."

primary objective of divination is knowledge.<sup>88</sup> Inasmuch as the primary meaning present in the proto-G concerns the production of knowledge, its text is preferable to emendations.

If *שמש הודיע בשמים* is understood as recalling pre-construction divination in the Neo-Assyrian tradition, it is clear how the colon came to be omitted in the proto-M. Schenker<sup>89</sup> suggests that it was dropped to better identify the thick darkness of the poem with the divine cloud in v. 11 that prevents the Priests from ministering. This may well have been part of proto-M's motivation, but beyond that both Deuteronomic and Priestly texts prohibit divination.<sup>90</sup> Such a calculated omission would not be unprecedented in the Hebrew Bible, considering the extensive anti-polytheistic revisions both in the MT and LXX that redacted non-Yahwistic theophoric elements like *בעל*.<sup>91</sup> The impulse to suppress divination and enhance piety in Solomon's dedication of the temple represents a strong early example of the exegetical tendency to enhance Solomon's piety that develops in the revisions of the proto-G.

8:13/53a *הלא היתה כתובה על ספר השיר* appears only in proto-G. The line parallels subscriptions elsewhere, including notably Josh 10:13: *הלא היתה כתובה על ספר הישר*. The OG features *ἰδοὺ*, suggesting that *הנה* was present in its Vorlage.<sup>92</sup> This text likely developed in the Hebrew, as it contains what appears to be a transposition of Hebrew letters *י* and *ש*. The Greek *βιβλίῳ τῆς ψαλμῶν* (ספר השיר, “the Book of the Song”) is attested nowhere else in biblical literature. This in itself would not be disqualifying, but *ספר הישר* appears twice in similar contexts—in addition to Josh 10:13 noted above, 2 Sam 1:18. The corruption could have happened in translation to Greek or in transmission, but it is likely based on a Hebrew Vorlage. The question is whether this is archetypal. It is difficult to say. It fits, but is that because it was added on analogy to the parallel in Josh 10:13? In the poem's original location, there would have been some narrative justification for creatively omitting the line. The text develops the poem in phase 2 with an extended benediction and prayer sequence. Speculatively the subscription may have given an impression of finality, requiring its omission as Solomon's dedication grew in 1 Kgs 8:14–53.

### *II.3.c. An Archetype and Other Preliminary Text-Critical Conclusions*

This text critical analysis has shown that proto-G of 3 Kgdms 8 represents a distinct edition of the temple dedication, based on a creative revision of proto-M of 1 Kgs 8. The proto-G edition was likely Hebrew. It is considerably shorter and cleaner, though it retains a number of fragments of the more cumbersome proto-M. The foregoing discussion has evaluated which variants of the proto-M and proto-G are likely archetypal, that is belonging to the earliest

<sup>88</sup> One particular class of diviners is referred to as *יִדְעָנִים*, though they do not appear to be astrologers; see Lev 19:31; 20:6; 1 Sam 28:3; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; Is 8:19; 19:3.

<sup>89</sup> See Schenker, *Septante*, 130–135, for whom this forms a part of an argument for the priority of the location and form of the proto-G poem. While I would dispute this aspect of his argument, we agree on the originality of this colon.

<sup>90</sup> See for example, Deut 18:10–11; Lev 19:26, 31; 20:1–6, 27; Exod 22:18; 2 Kgs 21:6.

<sup>91</sup> Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 267–269.

<sup>92</sup> In OG Kingdoms, cf. 2 Sam 1:18; also 2 Chr 25:26

inferable version of the text.<sup>93</sup> These features are not necessarily original. The archetype contains whatever errors and supplements existed in the text at the time of the splitting of the hyparchetypes, in this case proto-M and proto-G.<sup>94</sup> The archetype is to be distinguished from the original, as Hendel explains:

The archetype and the original are distinguishable in terms of history and epistemology (i.e., what we can know about them). In historical terms, the original is the oldest common ancestor and the archetype is the latest common ancestor. There may have been some or many changes in a book's textual state during its transmission between these two points. There is also a crucial epistemological distinction. We cannot know the original because we lack access to it. But we can know the archetype, because it is inferable (by definition) through careful analysis of the existing manuscripts. Since our inferences are often fallible, in a practical sense we can only hope to approximate the archetype. We cannot plausibly claim to reconstruct all of its details perfectly.<sup>95</sup>

However hypothetical and admittedly reconstructed, the archetype underlies all consideration of the text's history. In order to discuss the very real hyparchetypes and their movement through the world, beginning with their differentiation from the archetypes it is therefore useful to articulate this earliest inferable edition in full:

1 Kgs 8:1 אז יקהל שלמה את־זקני ישראל את־כל־ראשי המטות נשיאי האבות לבני ישראל אל־המלך שלמה ירושלם להעלות את־ארון ברית־יהוה מעיר דוד היא ציון: 2 ויקהלו אל־המלך שלמה כל־איש ישראל בירה האתנים בחג הוא החדש השביעי: 3 ויבאו כל זקני ישראל וישאו הכהנים את־הארון: 4 ויעלו את־ארון יהוה ואת־אהל מועד ואת־כל־כלי הקדש אשר באהל ויעלו אתם הכהנים והלוים: 5 והמלך שלמה וכל־עדת ישראל הנועדים עליו אתו לפני הארון מזבחים צאן ובקר אשר לא־יספרו ולא ימנו מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את־ארון ברית־יהוה אל־מקומו אל־דביר הבית אל־קדש הקדשים אל־תחת כנפי הכרובים: 7 כי הכרובים פרשים כנפים אל־מקום הארון ויסכו הכרבים על־הארון ועל־בדיו מלמעלה: 8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן־הקדש על־פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה ויהיו שם עד היום הזה: 9 אין בארון רק שני לחות האבנים לוחוד הברית אשר הנח שם משה בחרב אשר כרת יהוה עם־בני ישראל בצאתם מארץ מצרים: 10 ויהי בצאת הכהנים מן־הקדש והענן מלא את־בית יהוה: 11 ולא־יכלו הכהנים לעמד לשרת מפני הענן כִּי־מלא כבוד־יהוה את־בית יהוה: פ  
12 אז אמר שלמה  
שמש הודיה בשמים  
יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל  
13 בנה בניתי בית זבל לך  
מכון לשבתך עולמים  
[הלא הגה היא כתובה על ספר הישר]

<sup>93</sup> See Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition*, 21–25 on the idea of the archetype.

<sup>94</sup> See Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, trans. Glenn W. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 50, who reflects on the role of chance in the formation of archetypes—"even if it is later than the author by many centuries, even if it has been preserved by chance and is devoid of any "official" quality or authority, even if it is disfigured by errors or lacunas."

<sup>95</sup> Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition*, 23.

1 Kgs 8:1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel—all the heads of the tribes, the patriarchs of the families of the Israelites—to King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH out of the City of David (which is Zion). 2 Every man of Israel assembled to King Solomon in the month Ethanim. At the festival. It is the seventh month. 3 And all the elders of Israel came. And the priests carried the Ark. 4 And they brought up the Ark of YHWH, the Tent of Meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent. They brought them up, the priests and the Levites. 5 King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel who had assembled before him were with him before the Ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered due to their abundance. 6 And the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH to its place, to the *debir* of the house (to the Holy of Holies) to underneath the wings of the cherubs. 7 For the cherubs spread out their wings over the place of the Ark and the cherubs made a covering over the Ark and its poles from above. 8 The poles were long; the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day. 9 There is nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses had rested there at Horeb where YHWH made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 When the priests left the holy place, the Cloud filled the house of YHWH 11 and the priests could not stand to minister because of the Cloud; for the Glory of YHWH filled the house of YHWH 12 Then Solomon said,  
 A sun YHWH made manifest in the sky;  
 “YHWH intended to dwell in deep darkness.  
 13 I have indeed built you an exalted house,  
 a fixed place for your eternal abode.”  
 [And behold: Is this one not written in the Book of Yashar?]

The differences between this hypothetical archetype and the present MT and LXX texts of the temple dedication enable the discussion of aspects of the text’s mnemohistory.<sup>96</sup> The MT appears to have consciously retained the longer text, valuing textual integrity and the information conveyed by the supplements over concision. The proto-G had a different, no less valid approach to textual integrity. From the abbreviations discussed above, it was clearly more open to clarifying abbreviation and rewriting than the MT. This fits with a range of other rewritten literature. Tov draws parallels between 3 Kgdms and other works of rewritten scripture and Greek Translations of Esther and Daniel 4–6, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Qumran materials (notably 11QT<sup>a</sup> cols. LI-LXVI, which reorders and adds to legal material from Deut).<sup>97</sup> These reorder and contribute a range of additions, but tend not to add except through summaries and

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<sup>96</sup> Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). On mnemohistory in biblical studies, see recently Ronald Hendel, “The Exodus as Cultural Memory: Egyptian Bondage and the Song of the Sea,” in *Israel’s Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, eds. Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider, and William H.C. Propp (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 65–77.

<sup>97</sup> Emanuel Tov, “Three Strange Books of the LXX: 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel Compared with Similar Rewritten Compositions from Qumran and Elsewhere,” in *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible and Qumran: Collected Essays*, TSAJ 121 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 283–305; idem, “3 Kingdoms Compared with Similar Rewritten Compositions,” 345–66.

the duplication of material from elsewhere. This move appears in 3 Kgdms 8:1's transposition and supplementation of 9:1. That the proto-G was received as an authoritative account of the temple dedication can be assumed from its translation into Greek. As such, its reconfiguration of the temple dedication deserves attention.

### *II.3.d. Preliminary Thoughts on Memory in the Text-Critical Folds of the Temple Dedication*

I would like to offer two preliminary observations on memory in the proto-M and proto-G editions of the temple dedication. First and most generally, proto-G abbreviates a number of longer and perhaps unclear Hebrew supplements. This has the immediate effect of cutting right to the main event: the installation of the Ark. Nothing that was cut necessarily affects the presentation of the Ark; this is in itself remarkable. In contrast to this “less is more” approach, the proto-M might be fairly characterized as a “more is more” edition of the text. The value of the supplements outweighed the potential value of the text slimmed down. This logic is common to biblical writings, which often represent apparently contradictory and mutually exclusive texts together.<sup>98</sup> This mode of memory embraces plurality, eliding differences of opinion by including as much as possible. The next section investigates the significance of many of these supplements, which will potentially illustrate the critical value they provided both proto-M and proto-G. Second, the proto-G's chronological clarification and relocation and abbreviation of the poem have the effect of enhancing the text's representation of Solomon. The relocation of the poem cast Solomon in a more pious light, turning immediately after the appearance of YHWH's glory. The chronological correction made it clear that Solomon dedicated the Temple as soon as construction on the integrated temple-palace complex was complete, foreclosing the (perhaps confusing) possibility that the king waited 11 months after the completion to conduct the ceremony on a construction site. The omission of the opening colon of the poem had the clear and immediate value of removing a potentially prohibited and certainly confusing line, whether it is understood as a reference to an astrological sign or just an archaic line about the sun. 3 Kingdoms 8 might be best understood with Gooding, Talshir, and Van Keulen as a midrashic revision, a second edition of the text that offers a more unified recollection of the Temple. In this sense, it should be discussed together with rewritten scripture and midrash as memory work, reformatting and synthesizing the past to convey a clarified and updated message. In this case, the message concerns the king and the Temple; the king is represented as pious with as little noise as possible. Intriguingly, the text does this not with a new text but with an old text. What power does the old text bring? Why preserve it at all? With these parallels and questions in mind, 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 represents an alternative second edition worthy of discussion. Before undertaking that analysis however, it is important to consider how the representation of the Ark in the text's archetype came to be—how it developed before the splitting of the three editions of the temple dedication: the earliest *Wanderstraßen* (“roaming streets”)<sup>99</sup> of the memory of the Ark.

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<sup>98</sup> See for example Gen 1–3.

<sup>99</sup> See Christopher D. Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, Signale 9 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 23.

### III. Tensions within the Archetype of 1 Kgs 8:1–13: A Redaction-Critical Analysis

Within the first phase of the account of the dedication of the Temple in 1 Kgs / 3 Kgdms 8 are two classes of tensions. The first, discussed above, includes textual differences between the proto-M and proto-G.<sup>100</sup> The second consists of conceptual tensions internal to the archetype and largely appearing as well in both the proto-M and proto-G traditions, in which Deuteronomic and Priestly memories grind against the pre-Deuteronomic framework of the text. Appendix 1 breaks down the proposed archetype, identifying what I argue to be redactional additions channeling Deuteronomy and Priestly writings. The addition of Deuteronomic and Priestly visions of the past to the text represents memory work, recasting earlier authoritative materials through textual expansion. These tensions were introduced at least conceptually above in II.1. Signals of the Antiquity of the Framework of the Temple Dedication. To recap briefly, Hurowitz<sup>101</sup> showed that 1 Kgs 8 shares a three-phase structure with Neo-Assyrian and other ancient Near Eastern temple dedications: the procession and installation of the deity; prayer and dedicatory speech; and sacrifices and feasting.<sup>102</sup> These ceremonies in Mesopotamia and biblical Israel are all designed to facilitate the inhabitation of the deity (Phase 1). This is expressed through the conceptual vocabulary of temples. Though obscured somewhat by the English “temple,” in Neo-Assyria and biblical Israel the temple was above all a house (*bītu* or *bīt* DN in Akkadian; בית in Hebrew).<sup>103</sup> This domestic language is not incidental. Houses are built to be occupied. This takes place typically through the procession and installation of divine statuary—the Ark in 8:1–11. While I demonstrate below why it is somewhat difficult to read the framework through the fog of later additions, the significance of the Ark is clear. Solomon assembled notables to behold the procession of the Ark. Before the Ark is installed, YHWH does not inhabit the Temple. YHWH inhabits the Temple only upon the installation of the Ark, prompting Solomon to sing the following poem:

A sun YHWH made manifest in the sky;  
 “YHWH intended to dwell in deep darkness.  
 13 I have indeed built you an exalted house,  
 a fixed place for your eternal abode. (8:12–13 MT / 8:53a LXX)

It is worth dwelling briefly on the poetic artistry of these two verses. While the poem itself is undoubtedly early, doubts have been raised concerning its place in the text's early framework.<sup>104</sup> These critiques are grounded in concern with differences between the MT and LXX editions of the poem. In the discussion above, I outline the text critical and historical reasons that the poem's archetype likely had the text of the proto-G tradition and the location of the proto-M tradition.<sup>105</sup> The archetypal text appears to have grated on later writers, promoting a range of revisions—from

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<sup>100</sup> See discussion above.

<sup>101</sup> Hurowitz, *I Have Built You and Exalted House*, 260–277.

<sup>102</sup> See also Römer, “I Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists”; Cogan, *I Kings*, 291–293; and Porten, “Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative.”

<sup>103</sup> *CAD bītu* 2.282–196. See discussion in Neumann, *Resurrected and Reevaluated*, 37–56.

<sup>104</sup> Römer, “I Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists.”

<sup>105</sup> See discussion above.

the omission of the opening colon to the expansion of Solomon's speech in Phase 2 (8:14–61 MT; 8:14–53, 53–61 LXX).

The opening colon may describe an astrological sign enabling the beginning of construction, the sun coming to be known in the heavens. Its meaning may range from a banal reflection of the sun to the divine enthronement of YHWH by the sun god, Šamaš.<sup>106</sup> The second colon, both inverts and intensifies the first by recalling YHWH's expressed desire to live in darkness. The temple construction was prompted by the god. With full credit to the creativity of the poet, the god's desire is contrasted with nature of the astrological sign: brightness. Further, there may be a certain intensification conveyed by the pairing of "he made known" / "he said" in the first bicolon. In both, the god conveys his will—first by sign and second by direct speech. The second bicolon expresses clear intensification. The text identifies Solomon emphatically as the temple builder, a common motif in late Neo-Assyrian and other Near Eastern literatures.<sup>107</sup> The description of the temple in the first colon is intensified and developed in the second by the pairing of "exalted house" / "place for your eternal habitation."

The four-colon poem describes a not atypical late Neo-Assyrian literary pattern for the description of royal temple building and renovation. Novotny<sup>108</sup> identifies a number of necessary stages represented in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, of which I would argue the strongest parallels to the biblical poem date to the Sargonid period (722–612 BCE). It is then that the seeking of astrological signs and direct communication with the divine come to prominence: "In the Sargonid period, particularly in the reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, inscriptions refer to this stage of building more often and in more detail. On occasion, the means of communication between god and king are mentioned; sometimes it is the god who initiates the project and other times it is the king."<sup>109</sup> The biblical poem exhibits both of these features. Intriguingly, the chapter that precedes the account of the temple construction offers a counter-narrative<sup>110</sup> describing the initiation of construction in a letter Solomon sends to Hiram:

1 Kgs 5:17 "You yourself know my father David, that he could not build a house for the name of YHWH his God due to the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until YHWH put them under the soles of his [*qere*: my] feet. 18 But now YHWH my god has given me rest on every side; there is no adversary and no misfortune. 19 So behold, I intend to build a house for the name of YHWH my god, as YHWH said to my father

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<sup>106</sup> Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun*.

<sup>107</sup> Novotny, "Temple Building in Assyria," 109–114.

<sup>108</sup> Novotny, "Temple Building in Assyria."

<sup>109</sup> Novotny, "Temple Building in Assyria," 114.

<sup>110</sup> See Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, "'Solomon Built the Temple and Completed It': Building the First Temple according to the Book of Kings," in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, eds. Mark J. Boda and Jamie R. Novotny, AOAT 366 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 284–287, who breaks down the phases of temple construction and offers this text as the indication of Solomon's decision to build.



David: “Your son, whom I will set in your place on your throne, he shall build the house for my name.”<sup>111</sup>

Solomon’s letter acknowledges the imperative of divine consent by referencing YHWH’s instruction to David concerning the House for the Name of God, but couches the impetus to build at that particular time in practical terms of war, peace, and fortune. These factors would certainly have affected the ability of regents to embark upon major construction projects.<sup>112</sup> There is no mention of astrological signs, however. What is interesting here is that the counter narrative in 5:3–5 appears to be a Deuteronomic addition, as it repeatedly refers to the temple as a place for the “Name of YHWH.”<sup>113</sup> However the expression is understood, it creates distance between the temple and the divine presence—the exact message conveyed by the poem. As noted, a *possible* reference to the astrological affirmation in the poem is omitted in proto-M. While it is certainly possible that the preparations for construction described in the poem and in the letter are of equal antiquity, the omission of the colon and the Deuteronomic representation of the temple as Solomon’s pious initiative represents one key example of the growing text grating against its pre-Deuteronomic framework. Divination is widely prohibited in biblical writings, in both law and moralistic stories that both suggest its pervasiveness in ancient Israel.<sup>114</sup> Sun worship is no less verboten.<sup>115</sup> The scribes could not countenance Solomon even approaching either practice before temple construction, leading (at least in part) to the omission of the colon and the promotion of Solomon’s own pious initiative as the starting point for temple construction. Omission represents memory work. Moving forward, this poem serves as the hook on which the extended prayers and benedictions of phase 2 are hung—redactional additions further recasting the poem that I investigate below. The poem’s treatment shows that addition and redaction are effective technologies of forgetting. Before that is possible however, it is necessary to focus on the two groups of additions that come to form the archetype of phase 1. In what follows, I identify examples of texts that likely represent comparable pious literary supplements that write memories that channel Deuteronomic and Priestly writings into the temple dedication. The earlier conception of Israel’s god that Solomon expresses in his poem underlies the “Priestly” and “Deuteronomic” additions that recast the presence of the divinity—reworking and remembering the Ark in a contest over the nature of YHWH’s relationship with his Temple and his people Israel. Taken together, these conceptual tensions and textual divergences offer windows into religious innovation as the text develops, as writers reimagine and reframe the Ark *before* their textual trajectories part ways from the archetype.

### III.1. Redactional Expansions Reflecting Priestly Writings

The first group of additions this chapter will address channel Priestly concepts and language, at times perhaps a bit imperfectly but always clearly contesting the significance of the

<sup>111</sup> 1 Kgs 5:17-19 NRSV, lightly revised

<sup>112</sup> See Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*, 7, who argues further that the maintenance of these conditions would have further served as an impetus to build a temple out of “a real fear of the consequences of neglecting the gods.”

<sup>113</sup> On Deuteronomic conceptions of the Temple, see Chapter 2.

<sup>114</sup> See the circumscription of prophecy and divination in Deuteronomy, see Chapter 2.

<sup>115</sup> See discussion in Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun*, 92–255.

Temple. Found primarily in the first phase of the temple dedication (8:1–11), these words, phrases, and verses write Priestly memories into the early framework of the text—remembering the dedication of the Temple on the model of the dedication of the Tent of Meeting in Priestly writings (Exod 40:34–35; and Num 7).<sup>116</sup> The construction of the Tent of Meeting including the Tabernacle and its furniture represented a critical moment in the Priestly vision of Israel’s past, enabling YHWH to execute his covenantal promise to dwell (שכן)<sup>117</sup> in their midst. Only once the Ark was in place with its associated ritual objects in the completed Tent of Meeting, does YHWH take his place dwelling among Israel. Doing so is not only significant, but necessary. It fulfills YHWH’s covenant with Israel, expressed in Exod 29:45–46:

Exod 29:45 I will dwell (ושכנתי) among the Israelites, and I will be their god. 46 And they shall know that I am YHWH their god, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell (לשכני) among them; I am YHWH their god.

Though essential, the presence of YHWH in Israel’s midst was also perceived as dangerous. Exposure to YHWH’s Glory could kill, as God explains to Moses in Lev 16:2 “Tell Aaron your brother he shall not come at just any time into the sanctuary, inside the curtain before the *kappōret* that is upon the ark, lest he die; for *in the Cloud* I appear above the mercy seat.” As is typical of P, no explanation is given beyond the statement of the fact of the Cloud’s danger. It may be inferred from the text’s discussion of the deaths of Aaron’s sons, however; in Lev 10:1–2, Nadab and Abihu are consumed by Yahweh’s fire for using alien fire in rituals before Yahweh. The presence of Yahweh was necessary but dangerous, if proper care was not taken.<sup>118</sup> In what follows, I review phrases that have been identified as Priestly.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The third phase may include two examples of Priestly expansions, as well. First, Proto-M includes יום עֶשֶׂר יָמִים אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר following the shorter יָמִים אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתָ, which is common to both the proto-M and proto-G. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text*, suggests that this represents a harmonizing plus with 2 Chr 7:9. As the following verse indicates that Solomon dismissed officiants on the eighth day, I am inclined to agree that this likely represents a clumsy pious expansion introduced with a ו of clarification. Second, the detailed list of sacrifices in 8:64 introduced by the disjunctive כִּי together with the text’s apology for Solomon not using the bronze altar appears to represent a Priestly addition. This combination of offerings appears together only here, but separately the terms appear most often in Priestly and Priestly-influenced writings (עֹלָה and מִנְחָה appear together frequently but not exclusively in such texts [Exod 30:9; 40:29; Lev 7:37; 9:17; 14:20, 31; 23:18, 37; Num 7:87; 15:24; 28:13, 31; 29:6, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38–39; for example] and הַשְּׁלֵמִים הַלְבִּי הַלְבִּי appears in Lev 6:5; 2 Chr 7:7; 29:35). The fact of its interruption and its departure from the vague sacrificial language of vv. 1–11 to specify both the sacrifices offered and apologize for the not using the bronze altar suggests that this may be a Priestly addition.

<sup>117</sup> On the nature of the Priestly presence and the ritual service required to maintain it on earth, see Hundley, *Keeping Heaven on Earth*; and classically, Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 90–96.

<sup>118</sup> On this, see chapter 3.

<sup>119</sup> 1 Kings 8:1, 2, 4 and 6 (MT) are noted by Menachem Haran in *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 141 n. 11; all are noted in Hurowitz, *I Have Built*, 263.

The table below lists the texts and locations of this material. I will evaluate whether they likely in fact represent (a) supplements to the pre-Deuteronomic framework and (b) Priestly supplements—and if so what intertextual memory work they empower:

Table 15: Possible “Priestly” Linguistic Units

MT	LXX	Possible “Priestly” Linguistic Units
8:1	--	אַת־כָּל־רְאִשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת נְשִׂאֵי הָאֲבוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הַמִּלְחָה שְׁלֹמֹה
8:4	8:4	וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֵהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם
8:5	--	עֲדַת
8:5	--	הַנוֹעֲדִים עָלָיו
8:6	8:6	אֶל־קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדְשִׁים
8:8	8:8	וַיֵּאָרְכוּ הַבָּדִים וַיֵּרְאוּ רְאִשֵׁי הַבָּדִים מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל־פְּנֵי הַדְּבִיר וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ הַחוּצָה [וַיְהִי וְשָׁם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה]
8:10–11	8:10–11	וַיְהִי בְצֵאת הַכֹּהֲנִים מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהָעֲנָן מָלֵא אֶת־בַּיִת יְהוָה: וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים לַעֲמֹד לְשֶׁרֶת מִפְּנֵי הָעֲנָן כִּי־מָלֵא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶת־בַּיִת יְהוָה:

8:1 This epexegetical plus found only in proto-M glosses the archetypal *יִשְׂרָאֵל*, inscribing the text with approximations of Priestly group designations.<sup>120</sup> *אֶל־הַמִּלְחָה שְׁלֹמֹה* likely represents a resumptive repetition designed to return focus to Solomon as he proceeds to officiate the inaugural ceremony

8:4 *וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֵהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם* represents an epexegetical plus introduced with *וְאֶת* in imitation of the preceding clause *וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם*. The items the supplement writes into the text are distinctly Priestly, as outlined in Exod 25–27; 35–40. Verse 4 links the Priestly Tent of Meeting with Solomon’s Temple, connecting the sacred spaces and mobilizing the power of these items from biblical Israel’s shared past as real things, to authorize the new temple as they wish it had been. In verses 3–4, the Priests carry the Ark and the Levites carry the Tent of Meeting and its utensils. The early framework describes only the installation of the Ark, carried by the Priests. In Priestly writings, the Ark is carried by Levites. The Tent of Meeting and its utensils appear almost exclusively<sup>121</sup> in Priestly writings, where they are constructed along with the Ark in order to allow for YHWH to fulfill his covenant to dwell among the Israelites. In verse 4, a writer is channeling the Priestly document’s account of the Ark and its significance, which there is fundamentally entangled with the Tent of Meeting and its other utensils. They are written into the account of the Ark’s installation in the Temple. Doing so remembers the Ark that is installed in the Temple as the Priestly writer would have—signifying the cloudy Glory of YHWH, in and with the tent. They transport its significance into the Temple structure—a “material” to “material” transfusion of meaning conveying the power of the “real.” The final clause represents a creative resumptive repetition, at first blush recasting the line it

<sup>120</sup> These terms appear in varying configurations across Priestly writings. For example, *יִשְׂרָאֵל* (Num 30:2); *רְאִשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* (Num 36:1); *רְאִשֵׁי אֲבוֹת* (Exod 6:25; Num 31:26; 32:28; 36:1; Ezra 8:1; Neh 12:22; 1 Chr 8:6, 10, 28; 9:9, 33; also Josh 14:1; 21:1); and *נְשִׂאֵי* appears most frequently in Priestly writings and Ezek.

<sup>121</sup> Deut 31:14; Josh 18:1; 19:51; 1 Sam 2:22

repeats in a Priestly key by distinguishing between the Priests and Levites.<sup>122</sup> Upon closer inspection, the text seems to imply that the Priests carried the Ark—a decidedly non-Priestly idea I return to below.

8:5 עֲדַת and הַנוֹעְדִים עָלָיו both represent Priestly expressions, perhaps added to the early framework.<sup>123</sup>

8:6 אֶל־דְּבִיר הַבַּיִת represents a Priestly exegetical plus, glossing the obscure הַבַּיִת with the later Priestly term;<sup>124</sup> introduces gloss with אַל in imitation of preceding and subsequent clauses<sup>125</sup>

8:8 This line represents a simple expansion incorporating features of the Ark from Exod 25 and 37; וַיְהִי יָשֶׁם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה; is an intriguing typically Deuteronomic addition to this line; see discussion below.

8:10 This simple expansion describes YHWH's inhabitation of the Temple drawing on the Priestly conception of the divine presence. The verses reimagine YHWH taking up residence in the Temple, projecting the model of his inhabitation of the Tent of Meeting in Exod 40:34–35:

Exod 40:34 וַיִּכַס הָעֶנָן אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּמָּלֵא יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן: 35 וְלֹא־יָכַל מֹשֶׁה לָבוֹא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי־שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעֶנָן וַיִּמָּלֵא יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן:

Exod 40:34 And the Cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the Glory of YHWH filled the Tabernacle: 35 And Moses was not able to go into the Tent of Meeting because the Cloud had settled over it and the Glory of YHWH filled the Tabernacle.

In both texts, the Cloud and the Glory of YHWH fill the sacred space; in Exod 40, the Cloud covers the Tent of Meeting and the Glory fills the Tabernacle; in 1 Kgs 8 the Cloud and the Glory fill the House of YHWH. In both texts, humans are not able to stand in the inhabited space—Moses in Exodus, the Priests in Kings. In Exodus, the Cloud covers the Tabernacle. By relocating YHWH's Cloud into the sacred space with the numinous Glory, I argue the rewriter is able to explicate a potentially difficult line in Solomon's poem: "YHWH has said that he would dwell in thick darkness" (עַרְפָּל; verse 12). While the imagery of thick darkness may have fit well paired with the bright sun (perhaps as astrological sign) in the previous colon, here it seems out of place—unless of course it refers to the darkness of the windowless inner chamber. Verses 10–11 offer another solution: the thick darkness refers to the Cloud that accompanies YHWH's Glory.

<sup>122</sup> P distinguishes between Priests and Levites (for example, Num 3:5–10).

<sup>123</sup> עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל appears in Exod 12:3, 6, 19, 47; Lev 4:13; Num 16:9; 32; עֲדָה appears across Priestly writing unbound, as well; הַנוֹעְדִים עַל appears in Num 14:35; 16:11; 27:3.

<sup>124</sup> Exod 26:33–34; Lev 21:22; Num 4:4, 19; 18:9–10; and texts under Priestly influence Ezek 41:4; 42:13; 44:13; Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65; 1 Chr 6:34; 2 Chr 3:8, 10; 4:22; 5:7; 31:6, 14.

<sup>125</sup> cf. 1 Kgs 6:16; 7:50

These supplements clearly channel Priestly ideas about the Temple and draw power from the remembered and material biblical past. There is no indication that the supplements are necessarily the work of P, as that documentary source appears to have been a complete and discrete narrative unit.<sup>126</sup> While it is possible that P both wrote an independent document and supplemented others, there is scant evidence beyond the present text.<sup>127</sup> It is certainly conceivable, but less likely than the alternative: that they were added by a pious supplementer to harmonize and remember intertextually. I have been careful in my analysis not to identify this redactor with P, but to suggest that the redactor channels Priestly ideas—remembering with them the Ark and the Temple. What is clear is that this rewriter or rewriters are remembering with the Priestly document, reimagining the Ark and the presence of YHWH in the Temple with P. In doing so, the text reforms the account of the installation of the Ark and the dedication of the Temple, mobilizing it along with the Ark and the tent as powerful real and material evidence of the Priestly conception of YHWH in order to help realize the sort of community in which YHWH could dwell.

### III.2. Redactional Expansions Reflecting Deuteronomy

In many ways, the very survival of the temple dedication owes itself to Deuteronomic writers who incorporated it into what has become the present texts of Kings and Kingdoms. It exists in the Solomon Narrative, which forms a key part of the DtrH. That being the case, there is nevertheless a certain dissonance between 8:1–11 and the overtly Deuteronomic representations of the Ark and the Temple.<sup>128</sup> The revision of the poem from vv. 12–13 in phase 2 recasts the nature of the ceremony, writing in distinctively Deuteronomic ideas. I discuss this below. Perhaps for this reason it is all the more remarkable that this pre-exilic, non-Deuteronomic framework has not been rewritten entirely. The discussion of the Ark's contents in 8:9 represents the one place in the text where it seems beyond question that the text has been expanded by a rewriter, remembering the Ark as it is represented in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy constructs the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire*, recalling the covenant, and, more broadly, the law. Verse 9 is emphatic that the Ark contains only the tablets of stone Moses placed there at Horeb, where YHWH makes a covenant with the Israelites after they leave Egypt:

1 Kgs 8:9 אין בארון רק שני לוחות האבנים לוחות הברית אשר הנח שם משה בחרב אשר כרת יהוה עם־בני ישראל בצאתם מארץ מצרים:

<sup>126</sup> See Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), who makes a compelling case for the completeness of P.

<sup>127</sup> Other likely Priestly additions to the DtrH have been identified. See, for example, Ronnie Goldstein “Joshua 22:9–34: A Priestly Narrative from the Second Temple Period,” *Shnaton* 13 (2002), 43–81; and Alexander Rofe, “Joshua 20: Historico-Literary Criticism Illustrated,” in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, ed. Jeffrey Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 131–47.

<sup>128</sup> On Deuteronomic conceptions of the Temple, see Chapter 2.

1 Kgs 8:9 There is nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses had rested there at Horeb where YHWH made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt.

Two points suggest this as an addition to verses 1–11, channeling ideas about the Ark and the Temple from Deuteronomy. First, verse 9 cuts in to offer new information at a natural break in the text, following the Ark’s installation. It interrupts with a grammatically disjunctive noun (אֵין), expanding upon the significance of the Ark—it is a disjunctive explicating comment. Second, the information that the verse adds draws on vocabulary and ideas from Deuteronomy that stand out in the pre-Deuteronomic framework of verses 1–11. The expression לַחֹת הָאֲבָנִים (and with the proposed archetype, likely also לַחֹת הַבְּרִית) appear in connection with the Ark only in Deuteronomy. It appears three times describing the first set of stone tablets God gives Moses on Horeb in three verses in Deut 9:9–11, but also in Deut 10:1–5: “At that time YHWH said to me, “Carve you two tablets of stone (שְׁנֵי לַחֹת אֲבָנִים)... and make you an Ark of wood (אֲרוֹן עֵץ)” (10:1). Deuteronomy connects the tablets with the Ark, in ways beyond the simple but perhaps profound parallelism of thing and material in 10:1—forming the chest as a *lieu de mémoire* for the tablets of the covenant and more broadly, the law.<sup>129</sup> The text points to the tablets’ endurance across time in verse 5, inviting the audience to check—though, of course, they could not do this even before the Ark’s loss. Deuteronomy’s move distances the Ark from its historic connection with the presence of YHWH, a move that fits with the Deuteronomic program for the Temple articulated in Deut 10:10–12. The Temple is the place where YHWH sets his name—not his abode in the traditional sense.

Verse 9 is found in both proto-M and proto-G, suggesting that it is early—perhaps, but not necessarily a part of the first Deuteronomistic redaction of the framework of verses 1–11. Though verse 9 is clearly supportive of Deuteronomy, it is not clear that this writer should necessarily be identified with D or Dtr. The reason I hesitate is that this is the only place in DtrH that the text goes to such lengths to specify the contents of the Ark.<sup>130</sup> It is possible that the momentousness of the installation of the Ark in the Temple moved the Deuteronomistic historians to do so, but I would not want to go any further than to note that this rewriter is remembering *with* Deut—shaping the text as the writers of Deut 10 would have wished it to have been. Doing so writes the tablets of the covenant, as well as Deuteronomy’s law, into the inauguration of the Temple, sharing with it the Ark’s power as a real thing.

### III.3. Memory Work in Phase 1 of the Temple Dedication

Both the Priestly and Deuteronomic redactors/rewriters have been confronted with dissonance between their memories of the Ark and its representation in the account of its installation in the Temple. This disharmony is as stark as it is because the Ark acts so powerfully as a real *lieu de mémoire*—helping to form competing and hitherto mutually exclusive visions of Israel. Deuteronomy employs the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* for its legal vision for Israel around

<sup>129</sup> On this, see chapter 2.

<sup>130</sup> cf. Jud 20:27; 1 Sam 3:3; 4:3–6, 11, 13, 17–19, 21–5:4; 5:7–8, 10–11; 6:1–3, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18–19, 21–7:2; 14:18; 2 Sam 6:2–4, 6–7, 9–13, 15–17; 7:2; 11:11; 15:24–25, 29; 1 Kgs 2:26; 3:15; 6:19; 2 Kgs 12:10–11.

which it seeks to reform Israel—beginning to move away from ritual. Priestly writings form the Ark along with the Tent of Meeting as a complex constellation of loci of memory, an ecosystem for the earthly presence of YHWH—a presence that requires Israel to live a particular kind of religious life.

It is not clear which redaction came first, but once combined something incredible happens: they form a new representation of the Ark—an Ark with features of both Deuteronomistic and Priestly memories as well as the early conception of the Ark represented in the redacted framework of the text. This “new” memory retains the once dissonant features that called for verses 1–13 to be reworked, incorporating them into a new, more complex recollection. This has the effect of preserving at least a shadow of the previously dissonant memories, but that potential limitation is outweighed by the possibilities of the compromise their reframing offers. We know that by the time of the additions to the pre-Deuteronomistic framework, biblical writers are reading intertextually. If they were not, the contrasting memories of the Ark would not pose a problem. The inclusion of the memories together in one text offers a new way forward, emphasizing their compatibility—and critically, offering a new way to read the dissonance between the representations of the Ark in Deuteronomy and the Priestly writings. While not all texts include all the features outlined in 1 Kgs 8:1–13, the story of the installation of the Ark shows their ultimate compatibility.

The fact that this compatibility is expressed through the reworking of an old text suggests one further point about the “power of the real thing.” That old texts are preserved and re-mobilized suggests that they were valued, they had power—why else would they be saved? The power of the old text is co-opted in the new, expressing new ideas and lending them their authority and antiquity. Redaction co-opts and reforms that value, creating something new; remembering in new ways with old texts. As illustration of this process, I would like to return to the description of the Ark’s poles in verse 8. Priestly writings specify that the Ark’s poles are never to be removed.<sup>131</sup> Intriguingly, text of Kings engages with this idea intertextually:

1 Kgs 8:8 ויֵאָרְכוּ הַבַּדִּים וַיֵּרְאוּ רֵאשֵׁי הַבַּדִּים מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל־פְּנֵי הַדְּבִיר וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ הַחוּצָה וַיְהִי שֵׁם עַד הַיּוֹם  
הַזֶּה:

1 Kgs 8:8 The poles were long; the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day.

The proto-M and arguably the archetype assert that that the poles remain in place “until this day,” applying a typical Deuteronomistic expression to the fundamentally Priestly poles. There are no poles in the Ark Moses crafts in Deut 10:1–5; this does not matter to the supplementer. This supplement interacts intertextually with both P and D, creating something new—harnessing the power of the real, old text. This asserts the Priestly vision of the Ark—and invites the audience to check its claim against the original, which, of course, it cannot. The supplementers may well have genuinely believed what was written. The representation of the poles as real things proves the Priestly vision of the Ark and its god, first that it was constructed in the wilderness; second

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<sup>131</sup> Exod 25:15

that it was not built for the Temple, otherwise the poles would fit in the Temple's innermost chamber; and third that as YHWH commanded, the poles have never been removed. Redaction is an intriguing form of memory work, both limited and in some ways especially powerful and well suited to compromise and change. This is just what happens in the temple dedication, as the text becomes a forum for the confirmation and ultimately the synthesis of competing memories of the Ark.

#### IV. The Work of Forgetting in Phase 2 of 1 Kgs / 3 Kgdms 8

Thus far this chapter has investigated two related ways of remembering in 1 Kgs / 3 Kgdms 8, omission and expansion. The example of the lost opening colon of Solomon's poem illustrates the power of omission to prompt forgetting, in this case either a connection between YHWH and the sun or an historically normative astrological consultation. "The sun he made known in the heavens" (8:53a) does not appear in the proto-M or 2 Chr. The line is preserved only in the proto-G.<sup>132</sup> Absent text critical indications, its omission can only represent conscious revision.<sup>133</sup> Proto-M's move is best characterized as a pious omission, enhancing the representation of Solomon in light of widespread critique and condemnation of divination. The power of *addition* to prompt forgetting is illustrated by the emphasis on the Temple as Solomon's personal initiative, generally authorized by YHWH but prompted by practical considerations having to do with peace and prosperity. While the kingdom's wellbeing is credited to YHWH, it is not expressed as a sign that the god authorized the construction of his new house.<sup>134</sup> Phase 2 of the temple dedication is dominated by extensive supplements to Solomon's poem (1 Kgs 8:11–12 MT; 53a LXX) that continue this memory work in 1 Kgs 8:14–61, offering further insight into the power of addition to overwrite memory. That is not to say that chapter 8 is necessarily a unified work of a single author integrating the early framework, though that is among the arguments for the section's composition.<sup>135</sup> Other approaches are divided between those working with the theories of Smend<sup>136</sup> and Cross.<sup>137</sup> It is not productive in

<sup>132</sup> 1 Kgs 8:11–12 MT; 53a LXX

<sup>133</sup> van Keulen, "Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative."

<sup>134</sup> 1 Kgs 6:3–6.

<sup>135</sup> See Gary Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," *CBQ* 57.2 (1995): 229–254, who argues for the literary unity of the poem on the basis of structural patterns and themes; B.O. Long, *1 Kings: With an Introduction to Historical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1984), 94–108, who argues that Phase 2 was redacted artfully and ordered by an exilic Deuteronomist;

<sup>136</sup> See Rudolf Smend, "The Law and the Nations: A Contribution to Deuteronomistic Tradition History," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, eds. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 95–110, who articulates a triple redaction theory (DtrH, DtrP, and DtrN); Römer, "1 Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists," 69–73; and Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 38, who separately attribute 8:14–61 to Smend's DtrH, DtrP, and DtrN.

<sup>137</sup> See Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 274–289, who articulates the theory of the double pre-exilic (Dtr<sup>1</sup>) and exilic (Dtr<sup>2</sup>) redaction of the DtrH; Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the*



the present context to adjudicate the textual history of Phase 2. Rather, I propose that it would be more productive to focus on points of agreement to explore what can be learned from the present text.

First, Solomon's address in Phase 2 (8:12–61) appears to contain four carefully structured literary units:

1. Solomon's poem (8:12–13 MT; 53a)
2. An opening benediction (8:14–21)
3. A prayer and petition (8:22–53); and
4. A closing benediction (8:54–61).

Knoppers emphasizes the thematic and structural unity of the text, including its petitions.<sup>138</sup> Brettler<sup>139</sup> points out that each section advances a different vision of YHWH and the Temple's function. As noted, Phase 1 presumes that YHWH physically occupies the Temple—"his eternal dwelling" (8:13).

#### IV.1. Opening Benediction (8:14–21)

The second literary unit envisions a Temple that differs considerably from the Temple of the pre-Deuteronomistic framework. The text represents the Temple as the place for YHWH's name, emphasizing its location in Jerusalem playing with the words "name" (שֵׁם) and "there" (שָׁם):

1 Kgs 8:14 And the king turned his face and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. 15 And he said, "Blessed be YHWH the God of Israel, who fulfilled with his hand what he spoke with his mouth with my father David, saying: 16 "From the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I have not chosen a city from any of the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name (שֵׁם) might be there[ and I chose no one as ruler over my people Israel; 6 but I have chosen Jerusalem in order that my name (שֵׁם) be there,]<sup>140</sup> and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel." 17 It was in the heart of my father to build a house for the name (שֵׁם) of YHWH

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*Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup18 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 69–73; and Richard E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works*, HSM 22 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981), 1–43, who refine Cross's theory; Levenson, "From Temple to Synagogue," who attributes 8:14–61 to post-exilic Dtr<sup>2</sup>—divided into four distinct speeches building; 12–13 (drawn from a pre-exilic poem); and 14–21; 23–53; and 56–61.

<sup>138</sup> Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda," 236–237.

<sup>139</sup> Marc Brettler, "Interpretation and Prayer: Notes on the Composition of 1 Kings 8.15–53," in *Minḥa Le-Nahum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of His 70th Birthday*, eds. Marc Brettler and Michael A. Fishbane, JSOTSup 154 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 18.

<sup>140</sup> See Trebelle, "Qumran Fragments of the Books of Kings," 21–22, who argues that that 4Q54 frg. 7 preserves a reading attested in 2 Chr 6:5–6 that appears to have fallen from both proto-M and proto-G due to homoioteleuton.

the God of Israel. 18 But YHWH said to David, my father: ‘Because it was in your heart to build a house for my name (בֵּיתִי), you did well—because it was in your heart. 19 Only you yourself shall not build the house, but your son who shall come forth from your loins, he himself shall build the house for my name (בֵּיתִי).’ 20 And YHWH has fulfilled the word which he spoke; for I have risen in the place of my father David; and I sit on the throne of Israel, as YHWH spoke; and I have built the house for the name (בֵּיתִי) of YHWH the God of Israel; 21 and I have set there (בֵּיתִי) a place for the ark, in which there (בֵּיתִי) is the covenant of YHWH that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.” (1 Kgs 8:14–21)

Using typical Deuteronomistic language, the opening benediction celebrates the dedication of the Temple as the culmination of Israel’s history from the exodus forward. The text links the Davidic dynasty to the Temple, emphasizing YHWH’s choice of both—a point Römer suggests indicates Josianic authorship.<sup>141</sup> The text apologizes for the delay in temple construction, illustrating the linguistic repetition in v. 17 the fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy to David in 2 Sam 7:12–13: “When your days are complete and you rest with your fathers, I will establish your seed after you ... He shall build a house for my name and I shall establish his throne forever.”<sup>142</sup> As noted above, this idea is anticipated by Solomon’s letter to Hiram (1 Kgs 5:2–5). The triumphant tone of the text reaches its crescendo in the installation of the Ark. At the end of the opening benediction, Solomon declares that his succession, his throne, and his construction of the Temple fulfill promises that date back to the exodus. As proof, he points to the Ark. He has provided a place for the Ark and the Covenant it holds. The Covenant is his, creating a durable and through the Ark *material* connection between the Davidic promise and the Mosaic covenant. Significantly, this text remembers with the Ark—capitalizing on its reality and its presumed material presence. The Temple was entirely new. The text goes to considerable lengths to describe its glorious novelty. The Ark (and in the Priestly expansions, the tent, and the utensils) are the only old objects in the Temple. Here the text points to their antiquity, drawing together the exodus, the conquest, and the Davidic period in a potent articulation of Solomonic—or perhaps more accurately, *Solomonic-Temple*—propaganda. The material of the Ark makes it an especially powerful vehicle. The text repeatedly points to its materiality. 8:21 text twice employs the deictic “there” (שָׁם), first to refer to the place of the Ark and the Covenant. The significance of the Ark’s real presence appears to be embraced by the text’s language. But then something curious happens, the Ark *disappears*. It appears nowhere else in the prayer, not in any of the seven petitions or in the concluding benediction. The Ark is not mentioned in the sacrifices and feasting. In fact, the Ark appears nowhere else in the DtrH. For reasons I discuss below, the Ark is lost; “there” no longer—if not necessarily in historical reality certainly in the textual imagination.

#### IV.2. Prayer and Petition (8:22–53) and Closing Benediction (8:54–61)

The third section following the poem (8:12–13 MT; 53a) and the opening benediction (8:14–21) features seven petitions (8:31–32, 33–34, 35–36, 37–40, 41–43, 44–45, and 46–51) bracketed by invocations (8:23–30 and 8:52–53). The petitions and invocations themselves may

<sup>141</sup> Römer, “I Kings 8 and the Deuteronomists,” 70.

<sup>142</sup> Knoppers, “Prayer and Propaganda,” 244; Levenson, *From Temple to Synagogue*, 153.

or may not be of the same hand, but they share a clear structure and theme. As a unit, the texts envision the Temple as a hub for prayer. The fourth section does not directly address the Temple. If the preceding benediction and prayers saw the Ark recede into the background, the final benediction sees the Temple join the Ark. The text focuses on YHWH's role in Israel's history, prefacing an appeal to obey YHWH's statutes and commandments with a survey of YHWH's complete fulfillment of his promise to Israel's ancestors. The final verse of the text places focus firmly on the law: "Be your hearts full with YHWH our God—walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments as at this day" (8:61). The strong association between the Ark and the law underscores the significance of the Ark's absence from this section of the text. The text disassociates the Ark from the law, carrying the latter forward in the recollection of the Temple's significance.

Ultimately, how one reconstructs the history of the remainder of Phase 2 is not critical to this argument. Whether the text was crafted by a single author, by Cross's two Deuteronomists, or by Smend's three Deuteronomists, the text clearly shifts away from the Ark in Solomon's prayer (22–53) and the closing benediction (54–61). The text moves away from the Ark and the historical ritual cult with which it was intimately associated. This movement is all the more jarring when compared with the sacrifices of Phase 3. The installation of the Ark colors these sections of the Solomon's address, whether they are additions or a unified composition; anchoring them in the people's ancient cult from the exodus forward. Perhaps unsurprisingly however, the Ark does not appear again in the DtrH. The focus of the cult Solomon's prayer and closing benediction envision is distanced from the material and ritual entanglements of the Ark. This in some ways recalls Jeremiah's plea to the people in Jer 3:16, that they forget the Ark—pursuing instead "knowledge and understanding." Unlike that text however, even as the prayer forgets the Ark through addition—it's vision is grounded in the Ark and the potency of the moment of its installation "there ... there."

## V. The Ark in 2 Chr 5:2–7:10: Select Intertextual Engagements

The Ark also recedes into the background of the Chronicler's edition of the dedication of the Temple in 2 Chr 5:2–7:10—though not in exactly the same fashion as 1 Kgs 8:14–53. Cultural memory represents the creative mixture of past and present, combining past events with present interests—producing an authoritative image of the past as the community's stakeholders know it must have been. The preceding sections of this chapter have tracked the Ark's movement through shifting spheres of memory within 1 Kgs / 3 Kgdms 8, acquiring and lending its cultural values as it moves forward through the dynamic biblical text and into oblivion. The process of remembering and forgetting through literary revision continues in the account of the temple dedication in 2 Chr 5:2–7:10, addressing similar concerns about the Temple, Temple service, and Davidic authority in part through the installation of the Ark. Chronicles dates to the Second Temple period. There was no Ark in the Second Temple, though the chest takes on increased significance in Chronicles—often through increased attention in synoptic parallels with Samuel–Kings.<sup>143</sup> In 2 Chr 5:2–7:10, the Chronicler initiates a subtle but powerful shift to elevate the

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<sup>143</sup> See for example Christopher T. Begg, "The Ark in Chronicles," in *Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein*, eds. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L.

Priests, Levites, and Temple service if not over the Ark then alongside the Ark—co-opting its significance together with the significance of the Davidic authority to strengthen the foundations of the Second Temple.

2 Chr 5:2–7:10 follows the proto-M, with a range of variations interspersed throughout the three phases of the temple dedication.<sup>144</sup> The major variants concern the temple service, including the designation of who is to attend to the Ark. The comparison of 1 Kgs 8:3–4 and 2 Chr 4–5 is illustrative:

Table 16: 1 Kgs 8:3–4 and 2 Chr 5:4–5

1 Kgs 8:3–4	2 Chr 5:4–5
3 וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן: 4 וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה וְאֶת־ אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם:	4 וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַלְוִיִּם אֶת־הָאָרוֹן: 5 וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶת־הָאָרוֹן וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאֹהֶל הָעֲלוּ אֹתָם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם:

Chronicles makes two subtle but significant changes to 1 Kgs 8:3–4, both of which have to do with the temple service more broadly. In 1 Kgs 8:3–4, the text indicates that the Priests (כֹּהֲנִים) carried the Ark. 2 Chr 5:4–5 revises the text by (a) replacing הַכֹּהֲנִים in 1 Kgs 8:3 with הַלְוִיִּם in 2 Chr 5:4, and (b) removing the conjunctive waw of הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם in 1 Kgs 8:4 to create הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם in 2 Chr 5:5.

Chronicles' change is consistent with Priestly writings including P and Ezekiel, but not the DtrH and Deuteronomy. The issue of who was to bear the Ark is connected with the larger question of the distribution of responsibilities among the Priests and Levites, a subject that 1 Kgs 8:3–4 and 2 Chr 5:4–5 indicate was contested in biblical writings. Priestly writings are “absolutely clear” on this point, Haran<sup>145</sup> explains. Priestly officiation in the cult is restricted to Levites who are descendants of Aaron, the functions and vestments of whom are a fundamental part of the Tabernacle from its construction and dedication in Exod 28; 39–31; they are anointed along with the tabernacle vessels (Exod 3:26–30; 40:9–15). Ezekiel 40–48 assumes a similar distinction, though favors the sons of Zadok in place of the sons of Aaron.<sup>146</sup> As these distinctions are genealogical, it is not possible for a Levite to become a Priest. Levites are assigned duties outside of the Tabernacle. In P, for example, Num 3:31 and 4:15 designate the Levitical Kohathites to carry the Ark. In Deuteronomy and the DtrH, both Priests and Levites carry the Ark—and while there appears to have been a distinction between the two groups, it was not quite as pronounced as in Priestly writings. The DtrH frequently identifies the Priests as the

McKenzie, LHB/OTS 371 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 133–45; Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, “A Literary Approach to Chronicles’ Ark Narrative in 1 Chronicles 13–16,” in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. Astrid B. Beck, Andrew H. Bartelt, Paul R. Raabe, and Chris A. Franke (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 258–74.

<sup>144</sup> See Aba Bendavid, *Makbilot ba-Mikra* (Carta: Jerusalem, 1965–1969), 86–88, for a full synoptic account of the variants.

<sup>145</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 58; see full discussion in 58–61.

<sup>146</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 59; see Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15–16; 48:11.

bearers of the Ark.<sup>147</sup> In 2 Sam 15:24–36, the text actually describes the Aaronid Priests Zadok and Abiatar bearing the Ark before David.<sup>148</sup> Levites are represented favorably, leading Geoghegan<sup>149</sup> to speculate that Dtr was in fact Levite. In Deuteronomy, the responsibility for carrying is assigned more generally to Levites—though the text does not distinguish between Priests and Levites.<sup>150</sup> For Deut, male Levites are all eligible to serve at the Temple:

Deut 18:6 If a Levite ... comes to the place that YHWH will choose—and he may come whenever he himself should desire— 7 then he may minister in the name of YHWH his God like all his brother Levites who stand there before YHWH. (Deut 18:6–7)

Significantly, Deut 17:9, 18; 24:8; 27:9 uses the designation “levitical priests” (הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים)<sup>151</sup>—the very language the Chronicler adopts by creatively omitting the *waw* conjunction of 1 Kgs 8:4. This is a critical, though perhaps easily elided letter, as Haran concludes: “It might be said that the conjunctive *waw* appearing between the Priests and the Levites constitutes the firm and concrete line of differentiation between P’s views and D’s views.”<sup>152</sup>

The status of Priests and Levites in Chronicles is somewhat more complex. Their duties are assigned by David, in the text’s midrashic account of his final days and the orderly succession of Solomon. In David’s final speech to the leaders of Israel in 1 Chr 23:2–26:32 concerning the Priests and the Levites, the King outlines the genealogies and responsibilities of each group. David divides the Levites into 24 divisions (מַחֲלָקוֹת)—an arrangement that appears to reflect opinion in the Second Temple period.<sup>153</sup> Each division is assigned duties. The majority are to work in the Temple (63%); 16% are to serve as officers and judges, 10.5% to serve as gatekeepers, and 10.5% to be temple musicians—to “praise YHWH with the instruments I made for praise” (1 Chr 23:25–26).<sup>154</sup> Levites in temple service are to work under the sons of Aaron, the Priests, who “had as their appointed duty in their service to enter the house of YHWH according to the procedure established for them by their ancestor Aaron, as YHWH God of Israel had commanded him” (1 Chr 24:19). The hierarchy the text outlines is clear, but Levites are still permitted to work in the temple service—unlike for example in P or Ezekiel.<sup>155</sup> The attribution of the divisions and roles of the temple service to David is significant, expressing support for Davidic authority in a time with no Davidic king. In the context of Chronicles, it represents the co-option of the Davidic past by the Temple. Though commentators have argued that the text’s authors were also supporters of either P and Ezekiel or D, the system the text envisions does not

<sup>147</sup> Joshua 3 (glossed הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים [“Levitical priests”] in v. 3 but not, vv. 6, 8, 13–15, 17); 4:9–10, 16, 18; 6:4, 6, 8, 12–13; 8:33 (“Levitical priests” is a likely gloss); 1 Kgs 2:26

<sup>148</sup> cf. 1 Kgs 2:26

<sup>149</sup> Geoghegan, *Time, Place, and Purpose*, 138–148.

<sup>150</sup> See also Deut 10:8; 31:9, 25; Josh 8:33; 1 Sam 6:15; 2 Sam 15:24; in Chronicles, see 1 Chr 15:14–15, 26–27; 16:4

<sup>151</sup> cf. Josh 3:3; 8:33

<sup>152</sup> Haran, *Temples and Temple Service*, 61.

<sup>153</sup> This particular arrangement does not appear to have been in place until the Second Temple period. Different configurations appear in Ez 2:36–39; Neh 7:39–41; 10:2–9; 12:12–20.

<sup>154</sup> These calculations are my own, based on numbers assigned in 1 Chr 23:25–26.

<sup>155</sup> Haran, *Temple and Temple Service*, 61.

necessary align completely with any of these texts. Both Priests and Levites play central roles in the ritual life Chronicles envisions, prompting Knoppers to advise:

The Chronicler, or any writer for that matter, does not present an unmediated view of either the past or the present. To be sure, the Chronicler's work is inevitably affected by his own time and social circumstances ... but his presentation is also affected by his tradition, outlook, commitments, and imagination. The Chronicler draws upon past tradition and present reality, but his history does not duplicate either. Indeed, one could argue that in writing about the past, the Chronicler attempts to shape the present ...<sup>156</sup>

Bearing this cautionary note in mind, this section offers a selective analysis of revisions in 2 Chr 5:2–7:10, with particular focus on two major exegetical plusses that remember David, the Temple service, and the Biblical past through the Ark:

1. Expansions integrating Priestly ritual and musical practices quoting a psalm of praise in 2 Chr 5:11–14
2. The heavenly fire that consumes sacrifices in 2 Chr 7:1–6.

Both of these plusses work with other revisions of DtrH materials in the text to advance a particular vision of the Temple, the Levites, and especially its royal patrons David and Solomon. Taken together, these revisions, omissions, and expansions combine to remember the temple dedication of 1 Kgs 8—mobilizing the Ark to authorize practices, the people, and the very *place* of the Temple as the Chronicler believes it must have been. Doing so does critical and delicate memory work in a time when there was no Ark in the Second Temple, creating distance between the Ark and the Temple service without detracting from the significance of the Ark or the Second Temple.

### V.1. The Psalms and the Levitical Musicians with the Ark in Chronicles

The first of these two additions writes the Levites and the Second Temple ritual service that involved psalms into Phase 1 of the temple dedication. The variant expands upon 1 Kgs 8:10: *וַיְהִי בַצֵּאת הַכֹּהֲנִים מִן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַהֲעֲבֹדוּ מִלֵּא אֶת־בַּיִת יְהוָה*—cutting in following *וַהֲעֲבֹדוּ* with a disjunctive *כִּי* to introduce a third-person comment expanding on the roles of Levites inside the Temple. Note that in place of a resumptive repetition, the expansion is concluded with a paraphrase of 1 Kgs 8:10b (*וַהֲעֲבֹדוּ מִלֵּא אֶת־בַּיִת יְהוָה*) followed by the unmodified text of 1 Kgs 8:11 in 2 Chr 5:13–14:

2 Chr 5:11 When the Priests came out of the holy place (for all the Priests who were present had sanctified themselves without regard to their divisions, 12 and all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons, and their kindred, were arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with one hundred twenty Priests players of trumpets). 13 In unison, it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to

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<sup>156</sup> Gary N. Knoppers, “Hierodules, Priests, or Janitors? The Levites in Chronicles and the History of the Israelite Priesthood,” *JBL* 118.1 (1999), 71.

make themselves heard as one voice to praise and thank YHWH. When the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments in praise to YHWH:

“For he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever,”

the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud<sup>14</sup> so that the Priests could not stand to minister because of the Cloud; for the Glory of YHWH filled the house of God.<sup>157</sup>

This is an intriguing addition for a number of reasons. First, it introduces Priestly-Levitical divisions Chronicles attributes to David in 23:2–26:32. While there was no doubt Priestly stratification and division of labor previously, these Priestly divisions (מחלקת) really emerge in the Second Temple period.<sup>158</sup> By mentioning that the Priests sanctified themselves without regard to their divisions, the text writes the late Priestly division attributed to David into the Temple dedication. Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun appear together in 1 Chr 25:1–8, set aside by David and the army officers for “prophecy with lyres, harps, and cymbals.” They and their kin are assigned to perform the music of the Temple service. Asaph and Heman appear together with a third Levite in connection with the Ark in 1 Chr 15:16–24, the Chronicler’s account of David’s procession of the Ark into Jerusalem. They and their kindred were assigned to “play on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise loud sounds of joy” (1 Chr 15:16)—the very instruments that appear in 2 Chr 5. Jeduthun does not appear there with Asaph and Heman, though he alone appears in the superscription to Psalm 39. Perhaps more significantly, Jeduthun appears as the father of Obed-edom (1 Chr 16:38)—on whose threshing floor the Ark resides for three months (1 Sam 6:11; “gatekeeper for the Ark” in 2 Chr 15:24–25). This addresses the question of who cared for the Ark during its sojourn in Obed-edom’s estate, ensuring that Levitical singers were present at all stages. The presence of musicians in this text performing the exact duties David assigned is significant. The inclusion of these singers creates a connection directly to David and the procession of the Ark into Jerusalem, perhaps in some ways redeeming the King for leaving construction of the Temple to Solomon. The text shows Solomon executing David’s vision. In addition, the psalm excerpted is of interest. The text alludes directly to Psalm 136:1: *הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם תְּהַסְדּוּ* It is this that takes place last before YHWH’s Cloud and Glory fill the Temple, perhaps attributing special significance to the Psalm—to the ritual service at the Temple and especially to David’s Priestly divisions. In some ways, the Psalm acts as effective speech directed by David and executed by Solomon—prompting the presence of YHWH. This fits particularly well in anticipation of Solomon’s discourse on prayer, exhibiting their distinctive conceptions of the real and fundamental value of praise.

## V.2. “Fire from Heaven” in Phase 3

Psalm 136:1 appears one further time in the Chronicler’s account of the temple dedication, in 2 Chr 7:1–6—the second of the two additions found following the consumption of sacrifices in Phase 3. In 2 Chr 5:11–14, the Psalm is sung by the Levitical singers before

<sup>157</sup> 2 Chr 5:11-14 NRSV, lightly revised

<sup>158</sup> Nehemiah 11:36; 1 Chr 23:6; 24:1; 26:1, 12, 19; 27:1–2, 4–15; 28:1, 13, 21; 2 Chr 5:11; 8:14; 23:8; 31:2, 15–17; 35:4, 10; previously the term is used only geographically, cf. Josh 11:23; 12:7; 18:10; Ezek 48:29

YHWH's Cloud and Glory becomes present in the Temple. In 2 Chr 7:1–6, the Psalm is sung by Solomon before fire from heaven consumes the multitude of sacrifices offered to conclude the dedication of the Temple. 1 Kings 8 does not offer details on the consumption of the sacrifices; that they were accepted is assumed. Perhaps it went without saying. In 2 Chr 7:1–6, the text offers additional details in an exegetical plus folded in before 1 Kgs 8:62:

2 Chr 7:1. When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the Glory of YHWH filled the Temple. 2 The Priests could not enter the house of YHWH, because the Glory of YHWH filled YHWH's house. 3 When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of YHWH on the Temple, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and worshiped and gave thanks to YHWH, saying,  
 “For he is good,  
 for his steadfast love endures forever.”<sup>159</sup>

There are at least three possible conclusions suggested by this addition. The first is that the musical service was absolutely central to the temple experience, at least in the view of Chronicles. In 2 Chr 5:13–14, the musical service is added in an expansion that prompts the Cloud and Glory of YHWH to fill the Temple. There, the emphasis is on the Cloud of YHWH. The Glory is referred to in the final clause. Here, the emphasis is on the Glory. The Cloud does not appear at Solomon's declaration of the Psalm—though the text employs a near-verbatim repetition of the line from 2 Chr 5:13–14. Second, by putting the psalm sung by the Levitical musicians in 5:11–14 in Solomon's mouth, the text reinforces the piety of the King—presenting him as supportive of the temple service. Thirdly, the descent of fire from heaven suggests further conclusions about the Chronicler's conception of the Temple. It first of all suggests that YHWH is not present in the Temple. For fire to come from Heaven, YHWH must be in heaven. This is an important point, perhaps correcting earlier conceptions of sacrifice as a part of the temple service. It second of all shows that YHWH desires sacrifice from his abode in heaven, preempting any thought that YHWH might accept the sacrifice from the Temple. In this sense, Chronicles continues the work of the additions to Phase 2 of 1 Kgs. Third of all, the consumption of sacrifices by fire from heaven occurs in Chronicles only one additional time: in David's sacrifice on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite in 1 Chr 21—the place chosen by YHWH for the Temple. There, YHWH consumes David's sacrifice with fire from heaven prompting David to purchase the threshing floor. In a Second Temple context, this helps to endorse the validity of the Temple. 1 Kings does not indicate that YHWH chose the Temple Mount. The text indicates that God's chose Jerusalem in additions to Phase 2, but the parallel in Chronicles highlights the fact that all else is represented as Solomon's initiative.<sup>160</sup> This text shows exactly how YHWH chose the Temple Mount as the Place for him to rest his name. Fire came down from heaven to authorize the site even before the First Temple and by extension, the Second. The somewhat awkward formal politeness of the land purchase recalls Abraham's purchase of the

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<sup>159</sup> 2 Chr 7:1-3 NRSV, lightly revised

<sup>160</sup> See for example Solomon's letter to Hiram in 1 Kgs 5:17–19 (5:3–5 NRSV) discussed above.



Cave of Machpelah in Gen 23.<sup>161</sup> There as here, the formality is significant. By purchasing the land outright, David acquired the right to bequeath it to his descendants—and through his descendants to all Israel in the Second Temple period.

### V.3. Conclusions: Memory Work in the Third Draft of the Temple Dedication

In revisions to 1 Kgs 8, 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 remembers the dedication of the First Temple as the text and its audience no doubt knew it must have been, with strong parallels to the Temple and Temple service that they believe was required of them in the Second Temple. In both major additions surveyed, the material stands at the heart of their reimagining.

The first addition offers a significantly different counter-memory of the installation of the Ark. Whereas in 1 Kgs, the Ark on its own prompts the inhabitation of the Temple by the divine Cloud and Glory, Chronicles incorporates the service of Levitical and Priestly divisions ordained by David. Only when the service is complete do the Cloud and Glory enter the Temple. Doing so underscores their necessity, supporting their attribution to David and the co-option of Davidic authority by the Priests and Levites that the text initiates.

The second addition in 2 Chr 7:1 connects David's choice of the Temple location in 1 Chr 21:26 to the installation, authorizing the material site with the Davidic and the Divine. David chose the site. Solomon built the Temple. By issuing fire from heaven in both 1 Chr 21:26 and 2 Chr 7:1, YHWH indicated his approval and revealed his true habitation: In the heavens above.

In both additions, the Ark cuts across time—here collecting Davidic, Priestly, and Levitical authority in this profoundly reimagined recollection. Perhaps most critically, the elevation of the Temple service in the account of the installation of the Ark co-opts but does not diminish the significance of the Ark. This is a pivotal move in the Second Temple period, which had no Ark. The Ark was a key part of the Temple history. 2 Chr 5:2–7:10 associates the Priestly and Levitical praise with the lost Ark, claiming that it is what prompts the divine Cloud and Glory. The Temple service was at least as significant as the Ark itself. By associating the service with the Ark, the text channels the material power of the Ark for the equally material, but less trans-historically static Temple service. The installation of the Ark serves to authorize the Temple location, the Temple service, and the Temple builder. In doing so, the text shifts the Ark into the background—central, historically significant, but not singular in its ritual significance.

## VI. Memory and Textual Development: The Evidence of the Temple Dedication

The installation of the Ark in the Temple represented a watershed moment in Israel's religious memory, as understood by the subsequent biblical writers that reflect on its significance in the accounts of the temple dedication. It should therefore not be entirely surprising that the

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<sup>161</sup> See Stephen C. Russell, "Abraham's Purchase of Ephron's Land in Anthropological Perspective," *BibInt* 21.2 (2013): 153–70.

account has attracted such sustained attention, which survived through the creative omissions, additions, and rearrangements that shaped the text's early framework from the DtrH through Chronicles. In each of the text's three present text editions, we saw additions and omissions contesting the significance of the Temple and the Ark. The Ark cut across time, from its construction in the wilderness period to its installation in the Temple. The Temple was a new construction. The Ark brought with it powerful historic associations. These were no small matters, as they represented and were entangled in the presence of Israel's god. Though the material presence of the Ark is recalled and mobilized in each edition, I have shown that creative redaction has forced the Ark into the background and ultimately into oblivion in the formation of competing visions for Israel.

Though 1 Kgs 8 and 3 Kgdms 8 differ in text quantity and order, they both represent the Ark's installation as the centerpiece of the Temple dedication. The "less is more" revision of proto-G represented in the present LXX serves to elevate the Ark's position in the text, creating a leaner and streamlined text that cuts right to the chase. The "more is more" edition of proto-M represented in the present MT says as much as possible about the Ark, which the text's scribes no doubt thought to be a good thing. Both retain extensive supplements that channel Priestly and Deuteronomic conceptions of the Ark and the Temple in Phases 1 and 2. Phase 1 directly contests the significance of the Ark, mingling Priestly expressions of the divine presence with Deuteronomic expressions of the Ark's contents. Phase 2 features both additive and subtractive memory work, with the abbreviation of the poem and the expansion(s) of Solomon's address—the benedictions and the prayers. The omissions facilitate the forgetting of the role of the sun in the temple dedication—as a banal presence in the poem, as a deity associated with YHWH, or as I have argued an astrological sign. Whatever the colon signified, it has been forgotten in the later text. That is the critical point. This takes place through subtraction and through addition. The benediction and prayer that grows around it shifts focus onto later conceptions of the Temple as a hub for prayer, recalling the dedication as later writers no doubt knew it had been.

As this chapter demonstrates, this process of remembering through addition and omission continues in 2 Chr 5:2–7:10. The Chronicler's revisions write the Second Temple service into the text. The careful redaction does nothing to diminish the significance of the Ark. Indeed, that significance is critical to the Chronicler's work—capitalizing on the historical significances of the Ark, the Temple, and the Davidic monarchy to support the Temple bureaucracy that the writer either assumes must have always been or *should be* in place. The Priestly and Levitical system is unique to Chronicles, though it shares features with earlier traditions. Critically, it is grounded in material memories of the Davidic monarchy and the pre-exilic cult—including and perhaps especially the Ark.

In a number of ways, Knoppers' warning against looking for Deuteronomic or Priestly conceptions of the Temple service in Chronicles can be applied to all three editions of the temple dedication. Each edition shares features with earlier traditions, but the end product in the received texts of 1 Kings, 3 Kingdoms, and 2 Chronicles represent something new. The Priestly and Deuteronomic ideas written into 1 Kgs 8 cannot express their pure distinctive theologies, if such things exist at all. They are brought together with earlier conceptions of the cult and its god to create a new vision for Israel, perhaps born of contestation but yielding harmony.

By way of conclusion, I would like to discuss two key additions that illustrate the implications of this point. First, the question of who is to carry the Ark. In DtrH, the Priests carry the Ark. In P, this responsibility is assigned to the Levites. In 1 Kgs 8:8, the Priestly glossator expands the list of ancient ritual items installed in the Temple to include the distinctively Priestly Tent of Meeting and Holy Utensils. The addition ends with a resumptive repetition that affirms that the Priests carried the Ark. This distinctively Priestly addition concedes a point to DtrH. Second, 1 Kgs 8:8 asserts that the poles remain in the Ark “to this day.” As discussed above, the idea that the poles remain in the Ark “to this day” is Priestly. The expression “until this day” is decidedly Deuteronomic, as is the broader rhetorical strategy of which it is a part—reaching across time to invite the audience to consider the real things which remain as they always were. It is not clear whether this expression was added by the Deuteronomic glossator or a Priestly glossator. Either way, it expresses a fundamentally Priestly idea in Deuteronomic idiom. Both of these examples describe supplements that contest the existing text through addition. They preserve the text as received and remember with it, glossing and expanding but still preserving. The expansions reframe the earlier material, coopting its authority as an old text to express its new vision. As competing visions for Israel are negotiated through the Ark, the text grows—rewriting the story, reforming its people as heirs to both the Deuteronomic and Priestly traditions. The Temple in 1 Kgs 8, 3 Kgdms 8, and 2 Chr 4:2–7:10 is not P, D or DtrH, it is something new: A temple that is both the abode of YHWH’s Name and YHWH’s Cloud and Glory. This synthetic memory may have been originally expressed through redaction but once in the text, it becomes something new. This approach to memory affirms both the power of the old text and the new idea, emphasizing their consonance even as they reveal their dissonance. Redaction is an intriguingly potent form of memory work, powerful and conservative as it facilitates compromise to articulate novel expressions of Israelite thought.

### Appendix 1. Deuteronomic and Priestly Contributions to 1 Kgs 8

The following text illustrates pre-Deuteronomic, Deuteronomic, Priestly, and undetermined or hybrid contributions to 1 Kgs 8:1–4:

1 Kgs 8:1 אז יקהל שלמה את־זקני ישראל את־כל־ראשי המטות נשיאי האבות לבני ישראל אל־המלך שלמה ירושלם להעלות את־ארון ברית־יהוה מעיר דוד היא ציון: 2 ויקהלו אל־המלך שלמה כל־איש ישראל בירח האתנים בחג הוא החדש השביעי: 3 ויבאו כל זקני ישראל וישאו הכהנים את־הארון: 4 ויעלו את־ארון יהוה ואת־אהל מועד ואת־כל־כלי הקדש אשר באהל ויעלו אתם הכהנים והלויים: 5 והמלך שלמה וכל־עדת ישראל הנועדים עליו אתו לפני הארון מזבחים צאן ובקר אשר לא־יספרו ולא ימנו מרב: 6 ויבאו הכהנים את־ארון ברית־יהוה אל־מקומו אל־דביר הבית אל־קדש הקדשים אל־תחת כנפי הכרובים: 7 כי הכרובים פרשים כנפים אל־מקום הארון ויסכו הכרבים על־הארון ועל־בדיו מלמעלה: 8 ויארכו הבדים ויראו ראשי הבדים מן־הקדש על־פני הדביר ולא יראו החוצה ויהיו שם עד היום הזה: 9 אין בארון רק שני לחות האבנים לוחוד הברית אשר הנח שם משה בחרב אשר כרת יהוה עם־בני ישראל בצאתם מארץ מצרים: 10 ויהי בצאת הכהנים מן־הקדש והענן מלא את־בית יהוה: 11 ולא־יכלו הכהנים לעמד לשרת מפני הענן כִּי־מלא כבוד־יהוה את־בית יהוה: פ

12 אז אמר שלמה  
 שמש הודיה בשמים  
 יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל  
 13 בנה בניתי בית זבל לך

1 Kgs 8:1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel—all the heads of the tribes, the patriarchs of the families of the Israelites—to King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH out of the City of David (which is Zion). 2 Every man of Israel assembled to King Solomon in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. 3 And all the elders of Israel came. And the priests carried the Ark. 4 And they brought up the Ark of YHWH, the Tent of Meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent. They brought them up, the priests and the Levites. 5 King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel who had assembled before him were with him before the Ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered due to their abundance. 6 And the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH to its place, to the *debir* of the house (to the Holy of Holies) to underneath the wings of the cherubs. 7 For the cherubs spread out their wings over the place of the Ark and the cherubs made a covering over the Ark and its poles from above. 8 The poles were long; the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day. 9 There is nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses had rested there at Horeb where YHWH made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 When the priests left the holy place, the Cloud filled the house of YHWH 11 and the priests could not stand to minister because of the Cloud; for the Glory of YHWH filled the house of YHWH  
 12 Then Solomon said,  
A sun YHWH made manifest in the sky;  
“YHWH intended to dwell in deep darkness.  
 13 I have indeed built you an exalted house,  
a fixed place for your eternal abode.”  
[And behold: Is this one not written in the Book of Yashar?]

## 5. THE LOSS AND RECOVERY OF THE ARK IN 1 SAMUEL

The Ark Narrative (AN) in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 represents one of the earliest biblical writings to discuss the Ark. I have reserved discussion of AN for this stage of the dissertation in order to highlight the complex ways in which the text grapples with the possibility of the Ark’s loss, a subject Chapter 6 explores in ancient Jewish and Rabbinic writings. It describes the Ark’s capture in battle by the Philistines, a national catastrophe woven in the present text’s account of the rise of Samuel and the death of Eli and his sons Hopni and Phinehas. AN follows the Ark as it travels through the Philistine cities of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. The Ark is the “chief protagonist”<sup>1</sup> of AN, travelling between these centers and ultimately back to Israel. With the Ark’s return, the text acknowledges but ultimately dismisses the possibility of the Ark’s loss. This chapter considers the text’s engagement with tensions among the Ark’s materiality, divinity, and potential value as symbolic capital that could at least theoretically have been captured. In this chapter, I investigate AN as a literary expression of cultural memory. I consider its redaction and mnemohistory, as writers reconcile the materiality of the Ark with the Ark’s divine and ritual entanglements.

### I. The Lost Ark in Samuel (1 Sam 4:1b–7:1)

Though the boundaries of AN are the subject of some debate, there is overall agreement on three key points. First, AN (in some form) represents at least “a coherent unit of tradition.”<sup>2</sup> Second, AN can be found in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1. Rost<sup>3</sup> (who first identified AN as an early source of 1–2 Sam) and later Campbell<sup>4</sup> argue that AN consists of 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 and 2 Sam 6:1–20a. Miller and Roberts<sup>5</sup> argue that AN consists of 1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, and 27–36 and 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1. Third, there exists a discernible literary shift marking a “new unit”<sup>6</sup> in 1 Sam 4:1b

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<sup>1</sup> P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 107.

<sup>2</sup> R.P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel*, OTG 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 34; See also Anthony Campbell, *The Ark Narrative, 1 Sam 4–6, 2 Sam 6: A Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical Study*, SBLDS 16 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 1–54, who offers a survey of research on 1 Sam 4–6.

<sup>3</sup> Loenhard Rost, *The Succession to the Throne of David* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1982), 33–34; Rost’s AN includes 1 Sam 4:1b–18a, 12–21; 5:1–11b<sup>a</sup>, 12; 6:1–3b<sup>a</sup>, 4, 10–14, 16; 6:19–7:1; 2 Sam 6:1–15, 17–20a

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, *The Ark Narrative*; idem, “Yahweh and the Ark.”

<sup>5</sup> Patrick D. Miller, Jr. and J. J. M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the “Ark Narrative” of 1 Samuel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 34.

LXX:

Table 17: 1 Sam 4:1 MT and 1 Kgdms 3:21–4:1 LXX

1 Sam 4:1 MT	1 Kgdms 3:21–4:1 LXX
<p>וַיְהִי דְבַר־שְׁמוּאֵל לְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל  וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקָרְאֵת פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְמַלְחָמָה וַיַּחֲנוּ עַל־הָאֶבֶן  הָעֶזֶר וּפְלִשְׁתִּים חָנוּ בְּאַפֶּק׃</p>	<p>וַיְהִי דְבַר שְׁמוּאֵל לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעֵלִי זָקֵן מְאֹד וּבָנָיו הָלְכוּ  הַלֹּךְ וְהָרַע דְּרָכָם לְפָנָי יְהוָה  וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּשׁוּבוּ פְּלִישְׁתִּים לְמַלְחָמָה עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל  וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקָרְאֵת פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְמַלְחָמָה וַיַּחֲנוּ  עַל הָאֶבֶן הָעֶזֶר וּפְלִשְׁתִּים חָנוּ בְּאַפֶּק׃<sup>7</sup></p>
<p>And the word of Samuel was unto all <u>Israel</u> ...</p> <p>And Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle. They camped at Eben-ezer, and the Philistines camped at Aphek.</p>	<p>And the word of Samuel was unto all <u>Israel</u>.  <b>And Eli was very old and his sons walked a most wicked path.</b>  <b>In those days, the Philistines mustered for war against <u>Israel</u>,</b>  and Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle; they camped at Eben-ezer, and the Philistines camped at Aphek.</p>

The LXX preserves the earlier reading, which likely fell out in the MT due to haplography triggered by the repetition of “Israel” (יִשְׂרָאֵל).<sup>8</sup> Reconstructed with the LXX, 1 Sam 4:1 contains two distinct units: (1) a summary of the account of Samuel’s rise under Eli at Shiloh in 1 Sam 1:1–3:21 (וַיְהִי דְבַר שְׁמוּאֵל ... לְמַלְחָמָה עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל) and (2) an introduction to the battle in which the Philistines capture the Ark. The second unit begins with a conventional introductory phrase, “In those days” (וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם). This expression typically introduces new units of text.<sup>9</sup> In this case, the new unit shifts focus from Samuel (the focus of 1 Sam 1:1–3:21) to the Ark. The new unit maintains primary focus on the Ark until 7:1.<sup>10</sup> In fact, Samuel does not appear at all in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1. Though several lines in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 do describe the death of Eli’s sons that enables Samuel’s rise to ultimately judge Israel, there is reason to suspect that they (as well as the “idol

<sup>7</sup> Retroversion of LXX in this chapter follows McCarter, *I Samuel*.

<sup>8</sup> Caused by homoiteleton, McCarter, *I Samuel*, 103; Miller and Robers, *Hand of the Lord*, 43; Franz Schickelberger, *Die Ladeerzählungen des ersten Samuel-Buches: eine literaturwiss. u. theologischesgeschichte* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1973), 25–26.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Ex 2:11; Jud 19:1; 1 Sam 28:1.

<sup>10</sup> Though 1 Sam 1:1–3:21 is set in the Shiloh Temple of YHWH where 1 Sam 4:3 indicates the Ark was kept, the text’s focus is clearly on Samuel. In fact, the Ark appears only once in 1 Sam 1:1–3:21—in a secondary gloss to 3:3. In the MT and LXX<sup>L</sup>, 1 Sam 3:3 reads: “And Samuel was lying down in the Temple of YHWH, where the Ark of God was” (וַיִּשְׁמוּאֵל שָׁכַב (בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם אָרוֹן אֱלֹהִים). Due to space constraints in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, it is unlikely that the text included the relative clause “**where the Ark of God was.**” On the absence of the relative clause, Cross (DJD, 47) notes that Jud 20:27 indicated that the Ark was kept at Bethel: “The note in the longer text explains that the ark has been moved from Bethel to Shiloh, presumably by way of gloss.” While this may be the case at least in part, the more immediate need that the gloss addresses is likely anticipatory: to integrate the account of Samuel’s call (1 Sam 1:1–3:21) with AN (1 Sam 4:1b–7:1).

satire”<sup>11</sup> in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon [1 Sam 5:2–5]) represent expansions to AN—linking the originally independent text of AN to the broader narrative of 1 Sam. The overall structure of 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 can be laid out as follows, divided into four major acts with possible secondary additions marked off in square brackets:

- A. Israel does battle with the Philistines at Ebenezer (4:1b–11)
  - a. Israel defeated in the battle’s first engagement (4:1b–3)
  - b. Israel brings the Ark from Shiloh (4:4–9)
  - c. Israel defeated in the battle’s second engagement; Philistines capture the Ark (4:9–11)
- B. Consequences of the Ark’s loss in Israel; News of defeat reaches Shiloh (4:12–22)
  - a. Eli learns of the death of his sons [Hophni and Phinehas] and the Ark’s loss; Eli dies (4:12–18)
  - b. [Report on birth of Ichabod to Phinehas’s wife; Phinehas’s wife dies (4:19–22)]
- C. Consequences of the Ark’s loss in Philistia; Ark Journeys through Philistia (5:1–12)
  - a. Ark brought to Ashdod (5:1)
  - b. [Idol satire in the Temple of Dagon; Ark placed in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon; Ark/YHWH battles Dagon (5:2–5)]
  - c. “Hand of YHWH” brings plague upon Ashdod (5:6–7)
  - d. Ark brought to Gath; “Hand of YHWH” brings plague upon Gath (5:8–9)
  - e. Ark brought to Ekron; “Hand of YHWH” brings plague upon Ekron (5:10–12)
- D. Ark Returns Triumphant to Israel (6:1–7:1)
  - a. Philistines plan to return the Ark to Israel, including guilt offering (6:1–9)
  - b. Ark returns to Beth-shemesh; etiology of the Great Stone in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh (6:10–18)
  - c. Crisis at Beth-shemesh; Ark finally installed in Kiriath-jearim under Eleazar (6:19–7:1)

The relative chronology of the additions listed above will illuminate the date and earliest reception history of AN, reflecting shifts in the memory of the Ark within the Ark Narrative. The report on the birth of Ichabod to Phinehas’s wife in 1 Sam 4:19–22 evokes Priestly conceptions of the Ark. The “idol satire” in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon in 1 Sam 5:2–5 draws the Ark into a post-exilic tradition of “idol satire.” Investigation of these expansions and other reveals the internal development of the memory of the Ark in AN and enables a rough relative dating. With these concerns in mind, it will be helpful to drill down into the boundaries and redaction history of the text under consideration.

## II. The Boundaries and Redaction History of AN

Before turning our attention to the dynamics of memory in AN, it will be helpful to consider the text’s boundaries and redaction history. Discussion of the boundaries of AN must begin with Rost, who argued for the continuity of 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 and 2 Sam 6:1–20a (David’s

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<sup>11</sup> Conventionally, these critiques have been referred to as “idol parodies.” In terms of genre, AN’s critique of the statue of Dagon is closer to satire.

installation of the Ark in Jerusalem) on the basis of “vocabulary, style and range of religious ideas.”<sup>12</sup> With 2 Sam 6:1–20 as the conclusion, Rost understood the text as a “cult legend” of the Ark explaining its movement from Shiloh to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1–20a) and ultimately into the First Temple (1 Kgs 8:1–14). Rost’s general proposition has remained widely accepted, in particular through the work of Campbell,<sup>13</sup> though its details have been the subject of significant critique—in particular concerning its beginning in 1 Sam 4:1b,<sup>14</sup> its middle,<sup>15</sup> and its conclusion in 2 Sam 6:1–20a.<sup>16</sup>

In the present text, 2 Sam 6:1–20a does indeed read as the conclusion of 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1. Despite the apparent continuity of narrative however, it is not clear that 2 Sam 6:1–20a represents the text’s *original* conclusion.<sup>17</sup> There are a number of reasons to be suspicious. First, the linguistic foundation of Rost’s argument does not withstand close scrutiny. Miller and Roberts point out that 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 and 2 Sam 6 share only four of the 55 words Rost identifies as the text’s uniform vocabulary.<sup>18</sup> Second, there is a clear break in the literary characterization of the Ark. In 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1, the Ark exerts agency—acting both as an object and intriguingly as a subject. In 2 Sam 6:1–20a, the Ark is an object. It is moved into the city by subjects. This reflects and helps to form a larger difference in the text’s religious vision. Both texts share certain assumptions about the Ark. The Ark serves as the locus of YHWH’s presence. YHWH protects the Ark in both texts, but the smiting in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 and 2 Sam 6 are in fact quite different. In 1 Sam 4:1–7:1, a range of people touched the Ark, including Philistines. In 2 Sam 6:6–7, Uzzah the Israelite is punished for merely stabilizing the Ark. Third, there are also a number of differences in detail across the two texts. The most problematic difference concerns the location from which the Ark is transferred to Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> In 1 Sam 7:1, the Ark is left in Kiriath-jearim. In 2 Sam 6:2, the Ark is in Baale-judah. It has been argued on the basis of Josh 15:9 that Kiriath-jearim and “Baalath” are two names for the same location, but this does not explain how

<sup>12</sup> Rost, *Succession to the Throne of David*, 8–9.

<sup>13</sup> See especially Campbell, *The Ark Narrative* and idem, “Yahweh and the Ark: A Case Study in Narrative,” *JBL* 98.1 (1979): 31–43.

<sup>14</sup> Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 27–32; John Willis, “An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition from a Prophetic Circle at the Ramah Sanctuary,” *JBL* 90 (1971): 288–308.

<sup>15</sup> See the discussion of Eli’s sons and the Idol Satire below. Note also the proposal in Franz Schicklberger, *Die Ladeerzählungen des ersten Samuel-Buches, Eine literaturwissenschaftliche und theologiegeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Würzburg: Echter, 1973), who argues that AN is comprised of an early “novelistic catastrophe narrative” (1 Sam 4:1, 2–4, 10–12, 13\*, 14b–18a, 19–21) to which material concerning the Ark was added (1 Sam 4:5–9; 5:1–6ba, 7–12; 6:1–4\*, 5aβ–11aba, 12–14, 16; discussed in Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 5–9).

<sup>16</sup> Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 32–36; Schicklberger, *Die Ladeerzählungen*.

<sup>17</sup> Willis, “An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition,” identifies two cases where the text returns to a subject that we don’t consider the same tradition.

<sup>18</sup> Leonhard Rost, *Succession to the Throne of David*, discusses on the vocabulary of AN; see analysis in Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 33.

<sup>19</sup> Gordon, *I-II Samuel*, 32–33



the two terms came to be used in two originally contiguous verses.<sup>20</sup> The similarities that do exist between 1 Sam 4:1–7:1 and 2 Sam 6:1–20a are best understood as the product of the later author of 2 Sam 6:1–20a connecting the installation of the Ark in Jerusalem with the Ark's earlier journey.

Rost's identification of the beginning of AN in 1 Sam 4:1b stands on somewhat firmer ground. Miller and Roberts<sup>21</sup> propose that AN begins with the account of Eli's sons impropriety in 1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, and 27–36, noting that “it is difficult to regard 1 Sam 4:1b as a natural beginning for the following, supposedly independent, complete, and self-contained narrative. Too many questions are left unanswered.”<sup>22</sup> In particular, they identify two difficulties solved by the inclusion of the material from 1 Sam 2:

1. No explanation is offered for the Israelites' defeat at Eben-ezer, as there is for example in the account of Israel's defeat at Ai (Josh 7:1–9)
2. The text does not introduce Eli and his sons Hophni and Phinehas, mentioning them without introduction in 4:4

In the present text, Israel's defeat is justified as punishment for the impropriety of Eli's sons. This implicit justification for the Ark's loss corresponds with Deuteronomistic theodicy, drawing a direct correlation between Israel's wrongdoing and Israel's punishment.<sup>23</sup> By including 1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, and 27–36, Miller and Roberts argue, the writers are able to preserve this explanation for Israel's defeat and introduce Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas. The issues with this Miller and Roberts' approach are threefold, however. First, not all biblical catastrophes receive explicit justification. For example, the enslavement of the Hebrews—which is referenced a number of times in AN is a catastrophe for which the text does not provide a justification.<sup>24</sup> Second, AN does not necessarily represent a “defeat” for which justification would be necessary or appropriate. Without 1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, and 27–36, the text offers a comparably compelling account of the “glorification of the ark.”<sup>25</sup> In fact, one might reasonably read AN as a heroic victory for two reasons. First, the Ark is ultimately victorious. Following an initial defeat, the Ark/YHWH infiltrates and afflicts three Philistine cities and returns with trophies to Israel. In this sense, the text recalls the old divine warrior trope through the Ark. If so, no theological justification beyond the account of YHWH's affliction of the Philistines would have been necessary. Second, AN brings the Ark out of Shiloh. This is significant because, as I discuss below, there is biblical and archaeological evidence that Shilo was destroyed around 1050 BCE.<sup>26</sup> Even if the Ark's loss in battle were a catastrophe, the clear implicit justification

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<sup>20</sup> Gordon, *I-II Samuel*, 32–33; Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 33.

<sup>21</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 27–36; see also the discussion of 1 Sam 1:1–7:1 in John T. Willis, “An Anti-Elide Narrative Tradition.”

<sup>22</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Antti Laato, “Theodicy in the Deuteronomistic History,” in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible*, eds. Antti Laato and Johannes C. De Moor (Boston: Brill, 2003), 183–235.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Sam 4:8–9; 1 Sam 6:6

<sup>25</sup> Gordon, *I-II Samuel*, 32

<sup>26</sup> See Jer 7:12–15; 26:5–9; Israel Finkelstein, “The History and Archaeology of Shiloh from the Middle Bronze Age II to Iron Age II,” in *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site*, ed.

conveyed by YHWH's actions is that YHWH remained in control and intended to afflict Philistia. I explore the implications of these possible readings in the exegesis below.

Further, I would argue that there is strong evidence to suggest that Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas were not a part of the earliest version of AN. Eli's sons appear four times in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1. There is both literary discontinuity and textual evidence that suggests the sons were added secondarily to AN. The literary representation of Eli's sons in the two texts differ. In 1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, and 27–36, Eli's sons are represented in clearly a negative light. The representation of Eli's sons in 4:1b–7:1 is at least neutral—even by Miller and Roberts' own admission.<sup>27</sup> One might reasonably characterize their behavior as heroic, carrying the Ark into battle without complaint or hesitation.<sup>28</sup> It is only in light of the anti-Elide material in 1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, and 27–36 that they appear to be anything less. In addition, there are a number of textual features that suggest the sons' inclusion is best understood as constituent of the redactional seams linking AN to the account of Samuel's rise in 1 Sam 1:1–4:1a, as I discuss in the next section.

### II.1. Additions to 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1: Eli's Sons

In 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1, Hophni and Phinehas first appear in 1 Sam 4:4—tacked onto the end of a line describing the Ark's arrival in the Israelite camp:

1 Sam 4:4 וַיִּשְׁלַח הָעָם שְׁלָה וַיֵּשְׂאוּ מִשָּׁם אֶת אֲרוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים וְשְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלִי עִם־אֲרוֹן  
בְּרִית הָאֱלֹהִים תְּפָנִי וּפִינְחָס:

1 Sam 4:4 And the people sent to Shiloh, and they brought from there the Ark of<sup>29</sup> YHWH Sabaoth Enthroned on Cherubs. **And there were the two sons of Eli with the Ark, Hophni and Phinehas.**

This introduction of Hophni and Phinehas is somewhat unusual. While the text appears to imply that Hophni and Phinehas brought the Ark from Shiloh, it does not do so clearly or as one might expect. Individuals carry the Ark with some frequency in the Hebrew Bible. Its movement is typically described using the hifil of עלה (“to bring up”), as is the case in 1 Sam 7:1.<sup>30</sup> In addition, three factors suggest that the curious expression represents a secondary addition. First, it begins with וַיִּשְׂא—repeating, modifying, and repurposing מִשָּׁם from earlier in the verse. Second, the latter half of the verse refers to the Ark using a modified Deuteronomistic designation, the Ark of the Covenant of God.<sup>31</sup> This designation does not appear elsewhere in AN, where it is

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Israel Finkelstein et al. (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, Publications Section, 1993), 388–89.

<sup>27</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Schicklberger, *Ladeerzählungen*, 62 n. 135.

<sup>29</sup> MT “the Covenant” does not appear in LXX. This overtly Deuteronomistic designation for the Ark was no doubt added to incorporate AN into the larger DtrH.

<sup>30</sup> cf. 1 Kgs 8:1, 4

<sup>31</sup> This designation appears elsewhere only in Jud 20:27; 2 Sam 15:24; and 1 Chr 16:6.

variously referred to as the Ark of YHWH and the Ark of God. Third and most significantly, the curious expression has a clear source: “And there were the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests to YHWH (1 Sam 1:3; וישם שְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלִי הַפְּנִי וּפְנִיָּהס פְּהָנִים לַיהוָה). The expression appears far more natural in 1 Sam 1:3. By quoting and lightly revising the line for context in 1 Sam 4:4, the editors are able to incorporate Eli’s sons through addition to their received text.

Hophni and Phinehas appear two further times in reports of Israel’s defeat in battle, in 1 Sam 4:10–11 and 1 Sam 4:16–18. As above, the brothers appear to have been secondary additions in both:

1 Sam 4:10 וַיִּלְחָמוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּגְגַּף יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּגְסוּ אִישׁ לְאַהֲלָיו וַתְּהִי הַמַּכָּה גְדוֹלָה מְאֹד וַיִּפֹּל מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף רֶגֶל: 11 וְאָרוֹן אֱלֹהִים נִלְקַח וּשְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלִי מָתוּ הַפְּנִי וּפְנִיָּהס:

1 Sam 4:10 And the Philistines fought; and Israel was defeated, and they fled, everyone to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers 11 and the Ark of God was taken; **and the two sons of Eli died, Hophni and Phinehas.**

1 Sam 4:16 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ אֶל־עֲלִי אֲנֹכִי הִבָּא מִן־הַמַּעֲרָכָה וְאָנִי מִן־הַמַּעֲרָכָה נֹסְתִי הַיּוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר מָה־הִנֵּה הַדָּבָר בְּנִי: 17 וַיַּעַן הַמְּבַשֵּׁר וַיֹּאמֶר נָס יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְגַם מַגְפָּה גְדוֹלָה הִיְתָה בָעַם וְגַם־שְׁנֵי בְנֵי עֲלִי מָתוּ הַפְּנִי וּפְנִיָּהס וְאָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים נִלְקַחְתָּ: 18 וַיְהִי כִּהְזָכִירוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּפֹּל מֵעַל־הַכֶּסֶּף אַחֲרָנִית בָּעֵד יַד הַשָּׁעַר וַתִּשָּׁבֵר מִפְּרָקְתּוֹ וַיָּמָת כִּי־זָקֵן הָאִישׁ וְכָבֵד וְהוּא שָׁפֵט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה:

1 Sam 4:16 The man said to Eli, “I myself am the one who has come from the battle; I myself from the battle fled today.” He said, “What is the word, my son?” 17 The messenger replied, he said: “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also there has also been a great slaughter among the army; **and also your two sons are dead, Hophni and Phinehas,** and the Ark of God was taken.” 18 When he mentioned the Ark of God, Eli fell over from his throne backwards by the side (7) of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

In the first report (1 Sam 4:10–11), the third-person narrator presents the death of Eli’s sons as the last of a string of catastrophes including the “very great slaughter” of Israel and the loss of the Ark. The report of the Ark’s loss likely represented the string’s original conclusion, as the word order of the clause fronts the Ark for emphasis. Even Eli considered the death of his sons less significant than the Ark’s loss, as he dies when he hears about the Ark not when he hears about his sons (1 Sam 4:16–18). There are two indications that the material concerning Eli’s sons in the second report represents a secondary addition. First, the repetition of וְגַם to introduce the sons’ death. Second, the third-person report of Eli’s death in 1 Sam 4:8 acknowledges only the loss of the Ark—not the loss of his sons or the end of his priestly line. While it is the case that Eli does not mention the loss of Israelite forces either, the survivor’s report does not list the details of that loss. Eli did not know how many of Israel fell. The detail of his sons’ deaths are made clear to Eli. Eli’s death is written as a response only to the loss of the Ark. Further, the manner of Eli’s death ironically plays on the Ark’s significance as YHWH’s throne. The text described Eli falling to his death from his throne, after emphasizing the Ark’s identification with YHWH’s throne through the use of the epithet “YHWH of Hosts, Enthroned upon Cherubs” in

4:4. I discuss this in further detail below and in Chapter 1.

Following Eli's death, Hophni and Phinehas do not appear again in the foreground of the narrative. Phinehas is however mentioned one final time in 1 Sam 4:19–22, the report Phinehas's wife's death in giving birth to Phinehas's son Ichabod:

1 Sam 4:19 Now his daughter-in-law the wife of Phinehas was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. When she heard the report that the Ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she crouched and gave birth for her labor pains overwhelmed her. 20 And as she was at the moment of her death, the women attending her said to her: "Do not fear, for a son you have borne." And she did not answer or pay attention. 21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying: "glory/honor (כבוד) was exiled from Israel" because the Ark of God had been taken and because of her father-in-law and husband. 22 She said: "glory/honor (כבוד) was exiled from Israel, for the Ark of God has been taken."

The report of Phinehas' son's birth represents an independent unit, which is likely secondary for three reasons. The first is that it represents a digression focusing on a previously unintroduced character, Phinehas's wife. As McCarter observes, "The relationship of the account of the birth of Ichabod to the section as a whole is difficult to determine. It is not really an organic part of the report of Eli's death and seems to have no necessary function in the larger story."<sup>32</sup> Her death does however parallel Eli's death, expanding and, by juxtaposition, commenting upon its significance through her agony and the naming of her son Ichabod (אִיכָבוֹד). The text's commentary incorporates and plays ironically with the two sense of the term כְּבוֹד: "honor" or "glory" and the numinous presence of YHWH that Priestly writings associate with the Ark.<sup>33</sup> The name combines the interrogative particle אַי ("where"<sup>34</sup>) with כְּבוֹד, which in this context likely refers to both senses of the term. In view of the Ark's close association with YHWH's numinous presence in Priestly writings, this secondary addition to the text likely at least refers to this sense of the term. It would not be the first time Priestly language affects presentations of the Ark in DtrH.<sup>35</sup> "Ichabod" likely also refers to "honor" or "glory" for four reasons. First, as noted above victory and defeat in battle including the capture of trophies was a matter of honor. For Israel, the Ark's capture represents a *loss of honor*—a form of "symbolic capital" I discuss below. Second, this meaning is suggested by the wording of the mother's speech. She names the boy Ichabod for two reasons: "because the Ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and husband." There are two components to this lament. The first component laments the loss of the Ark. In this context, she must be referring to כְּבוֹד as YHWH's numinous presence. The second component laments the loss of Eli and Phinehas. In this context, she must be referring to כְּבוֹד as "honor." Here it seems the writer is playing with the sense of כְּבוֹד. As the term כְּבוֹד appears throughout AN and 1 Sam 1–3, doing so recasts the whole text in a Priestly key.<sup>36</sup> The shift in the sense of כְּבוֹד brought about by the Priestly writers' representation of the

<sup>32</sup> McCarter, *I Samuel*, 115

<sup>33</sup> "כְּבוֹד," BDB; see chapter 3.

<sup>34</sup> "אַי," BDB.

<sup>35</sup> See for example 1 Kgs 8:1–14, as discussed above.

<sup>36</sup> כְּבוֹד as "honor" appears both later in AN and in the framework into which the text is

Ark reframed כבוד in AN. Whatever AN's writers and redactors intended, כבוד becomes both “honor” and the numinous presence of YHWH. Below, I consider these possibilities and the degree to which this addition interprets the earliest phase of the reception history of the Ark Narrative. First however, it is necessary to discuss one final significant addition to AN: The Idol Satire of 1 Sam 5:2–6.

## II.2. Additions to 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1: The Idol Satire

One further unit of text appears to be an addition to the framework of AN: the account of the Ark's installation in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon. Following the Ark's loss, the internal structure of AN repeats the same four-part cycle. First, the Ark arrives in a Philistine city—Ashdod in 5:1, Gath in 5:9, and Ekron in 5:10. Second, “The Hand of YHWH” punishes the city. Third, the city residents cry out. Fourth, the city residents send the Ark elsewhere. The one significant departure from this pattern appears in 1 Sam 5:2, which cuts into the first of these narrative cycles—rephrasing 1 Sam 5:1 to introduce an “idol satire” extending the discussion of honor and shame noted above:

1 Sam 5:1 וּפְלִשְׁתִּים לָקְחוּ אֶת אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיְבִיאוּהוּ מֵעִבְרָתָהּ אֶל-אֲשְׁדּוּדָה: 2 וַיִּקְחוּ פְלִשְׁתִּים אֶת-אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיְבִיאוּ אֹתוֹ בֵּית דָּגוֹן וַיִּצְיִגּוּ אֹתוֹ אֶצְל דָּגוֹן: 3 וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ אֲשְׁדּוּדִים מִמַּחְרָת וַהֲנִה דָּגוֹן נָפֵל לְפָנָיו אַרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן יְהוָה וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-דָּגוֹן וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֹתוֹ לְמִקְוֵאוֹ: 4 וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר מִמַּחְרָת וַהֲנִה דָּגוֹן נָפֵל לְפָנָיו אַרְצָה לְפָנֵי אֲרוֹן יְהוָה וְרֹאשׁ דָּגוֹן וּשְׁתֵּי כַפּוֹת יָדָיו פָּרְתוֹת אֶל-הַמַּקְפָּתַן רַק [גו] 5 דָּגוֹן נִשְׂאָר עָלָיו: 5 עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יֵדְרְכוּ כְהֲנֵי דָגוֹן וְכָל-הַבָּאִים בֵּית-דָּגוֹן עַל-מַקְפָּתַן דָּגוֹן בְּאֲשְׁדּוּד עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: 6 וַתִּכְבַּד יְדֵי-יְהוָה אֶל-הָאֲשְׁדּוּדִים וַיִּשְׁמֵם וַיִּדְ אֲתָם בְּעַפְלִים [ב] [טַחְרִים] אֶת-אֲשְׁדּוּד וְאֶת-גְּבוּלָיָהּ:

1 Sam 5:1 And the Philistines took the Ark of God and they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod; 2 And the Philistines took the Ark of God and they brought it to the Temple of Dagon and they stood it by Dagon. 3 And the people of Ashdod awoke early the next day, and behold: Dagon had fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark of YHWH. And they took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4 And they awoke early on the next morning, and behold: Dagon had fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark of YHWH and Dagon's head and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold; only Dagon[’s trunk] was left on him. 5 For this reason, the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day. 6 And the Hand of YHWH was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and he terrified them and struck them with tumors both in Ashdod and in its territory.

embedded. Later in AN, the Philistine priests and diviners return the Ark to Israel on a new cart pulled by two milch cows bearing a guilt offering in order to “give honor/glory (כבוד) to the God of Israel (6:5). The term appears as “honor” in the framework into which AN is embedded, suggesting that the redactors also read the term in this way. In the prophecy of the Man of God in 1 Sam 2:30, Eli received a theological explanation for the decline of his priestly line. Due to the impropriety of Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas, the prophet conveys YHWH's message: “Those who honor me I will honor (מְכַבְּדֵי אֶכְבֵּד), and those who despise me shall be treated with contempt.” The sense of כבוד in this verse is clear.

<sup>37</sup> McCarter, *I Samuel*, 119.

The opening line of the expanded text repeats and gently rephrases the language of the preceding verse, redeploying it to describe the installation of the Ark in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon. This is more or less standard practice, as Miller and Roberts note.<sup>38</sup> Captured deities were historically kept in the temples of their captors. Further, the text expands on existing ideas in AN. The prostration and fragmentation of the Dagon image represents a humbling of the Philistine god to the Israelite god, as I discuss below. However, there are two reasons that this does not appear to have been an original component of the earliest edition of AN. First, as noted above the episode cuts into the four-phase cycle of the text with a repetitious line introducing a new literary unit. Second, the mockery that this text directs at Dagon recalls the later “idol parodies” of Jeremiah (i.e. 10:1–16) and Deutero-Isaiah (i.e. Isa 40:18–20; 41:5–14; 44:6–22).<sup>39</sup> The comparison of idols to YHWH stands at the core of these parodies. Idols are crafted by humans, as Is 40:18–20 explains:

Is 40:18 To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him?  
19 An idol? —A workman casts it,  
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold,  
and casts for it silver chains.  
20 As a gift one chooses mulberry wood  
—wood that will not rot—  
then seeks out a skilled artisan  
to set up an image that will not topple.<sup>40</sup>

The idol is crafted by humans, workmen, goldsmiths, and skilled artisans. The idol is made of earthly materials; mockingly, the text lists gold, silver, and mulberry wood. Though the text notes scoffingly that mulberry wood will not rot, idols made of it are fundamentally *material*. The explicit reference to mulberry wood’s durability indirectly underscores the vulnerability of all idols. Idols are subject to the laws of the material world. Idols are natural, not supernatural. Idols will always *topple*. In this connection, Levtow<sup>41</sup> shows that idol parodies were meant to overturn cultural subjugation of Judahites after the destruction of Jerusalem in and after the Exile.

Toppling stands at the center of the comparison between YHWH and the image of Dagon in 1 Sam 5:2–5. After Israel’s Ark is installed by Dagon in Ashdod, the image topples twice. Dagon falls on its face before YHWH during its first night, prostrated in a position of submission. When the priests put Dagon back in the morning, the idol falls over again during the second night—this time causing its hands and head to break off. This was a truly public humiliation, leading to the establishment of the widely known priestly custom of not treading on the threshold at the Ashdod Temple of Dagon “to this day.” The loss of Dagon’s hands

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<sup>38</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*; see also Mathias Delcor, “Jahweh et Dagon (ou le Jahwisme face à la religion des Philistins, d’après 1 Sam. V),” *VT* 14.2 (1964): 136–154.

<sup>39</sup> Nathaniel Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Isaiah 40:18–20 NRSV

<sup>41</sup> Levtow, *Images of Others*, 33–39.

reconnects the addition to the early framework of AN, emphasizing a final time the contrast between Ashdod's idol and Israel's god. Only an image made of earthly materials could break. Immediately following the expansion in 1 Sam 5:6, the text introduces the plague that originally followed the Ark's introduction to the city: "The hand of YHWH was heavy upon the people of Ashdod." This too represents public humiliation, which the addition comments upon through the inclusion of a later idol satire. AN represents one of Levtow's key case studies, though without distinguishing between its internal strata as I have above.<sup>42</sup> What can be said confidently is that the critique of Dagon mobilizes all of AN as a grand idol satire asserting the strength unity and honor of YHWH over and against other regional deities. Honor and shame underlie the text at all levels. The idol satire expansion concretizes and expounds upon this focus, extending the shame from Ashdod to Ashdod's gods.

### II.3. Additions to 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1: Preliminary Conclusions concerning Dating

For discussions of the impact and reception history of AN, the redaction-critical considerations I have outlined above are secondary. They do however offer evidence of the antiquity of AN. On the basis of these expansions, we may conclude the following relative dates:

1. AN predates the composition of 1–2 Sam, into which it has been woven. The earliest inferable edition of AN does not mention Samuel or Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas, whose deaths enable Samuel's rise. The text comes to be integrated into the larger text of 1 Sam through the expansions I discuss above, writing Hophni and Phinehas into the narrative.
2. AN predates the late idol parodies in Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, with which the expansion of 1 Sam 5:2–5 can be dated.
3. AN predates Priestly conceptions of the Ark as a locus for YHWH's כבוד, though honor (one sense of the term) and shame (the inverse of honor) are fundamental to the Philistine's capture of the Ark even in the earliest inferable edition of the text. I discuss this in greater depth below.

What all this means for the dating of AN is complex. I have affirmed Miller and Roberts' argument for the distinction between 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1 and 2 Sam 6:1–20a. For Miller and Roberts, the identification of the installation of the Ark in Jerusalem as a later addition to the text meant that AN predated the installation of the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup> It could not therefore represent a "cult legend" for the Ark in Jerusalem, as Rost and Campbell argue.<sup>44</sup> I hesitate to advance this conclusion because I do not necessarily agree with one of Miller and Robert's assumptions: their argument assumes that 2 Sam 6:1–20a was composed by David's court upon David's installation of the Ark in Jerusalem. Because 2 Sam 6:1–20a represents a secondary conclusion to AN, they must conclude that AN predates David. However, it is not the case that we can date 2 Sam 6:1–20a to David's time. As this dissertation demonstrated, memories of the Ark persist across history. The most I would affirm is that AN predates 2 Sam 6:1–20a—just as it predates the composition of 1 Samuel text describing Hophni and Phinehas, the idol parodies

<sup>42</sup> Levtow, *Images of Others*.

<sup>43</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 27–36.

<sup>44</sup> Rost, *Succession to the Throne of David*; Campbell, *The Ark Narrative*.

of Jeremiah and Isaiah, and the Priestly conception of the Ark as the locus of the **אֲרוֹן**.

It may further be possible to identify a *terminus ante quem* for the possible composition date of AN. Quite curiously, the text does not describe the Ark's return to Shiloh. In fact, it describes the death of the Shilohnite priest Eli—whose charge included the Ark. When the Ark returns to Israel, it settles in a number of locales. No further mention is made of Shiloh. Jeremiah 7:12–15 and 26:5–9 prominently recall the destruction of Shiloh, inviting Israel to behold the ruins of Shiloh. Affirming the implication of Jeremiah, Finkelstein identifies a layer of destruction at Shiloh to 1050 BCE after which the site largely remains unoccupied until Roman period.<sup>45</sup> AN does not describe the destruction of Shiloh, but that it was destroyed is beyond question. I consider the implications of this below, but for now it might suffice to say that AN recalls Shiloh's destruction indirectly through the description of the Ark's triumphant survival. If the Ark was indeed historically lost at some point in battle, it may be that the Ark was not returned to Shiloh because it had been destroyed. If the story is a pure fabrication not based on historical memory of the Ark, the recollection indirectly tells the story of the its survival without going into the details of Shiloh's fall. This accounts for the itinerary of the Ark after its return, offering as well insight into the time and purpose of the text's composition. The text could not have been composed before 1050 BCE because it assumes the destruction of Shiloh in its description of the Ark's survival and triumph over the Philistines—turning what might have been perceived as Israel's shame into the greatest honor.

### III. Honor, Dishonor, and the Ark as Symbolic Capital

Why did the Philistines take the Ark? In AN, Israel and the Philistines agree that the Ark figured YHWH's presence. The abduction of the gods of vanquished peoples (through their images) is widely attested in the ancient Near East, but what manner of trophy is a god?<sup>46</sup> The underlying answer to these questions has to do with what Pierre Bourdieu would call the Ark's value as symbolic capital. The Ark's value is not economic, at least not as the word is conventionally understood. The Ark has no set "price," though it can be taken—literally (as we see in AN) and perhaps also *conceptually* through its description and re-description in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>47</sup> This is where Bourdieu's approach to the "economy of practices" is clarifying. In a series of writings, Bourdieu extends the logic of economic practices to all matters material and symbolic:

The science of economic practices is a particular case of *a general science of the economy of practices* capable of treating all practices, including those purporting to be disinterested ... and hence non-economic, as economic practices directed toward the maximizing of material or symbolic profit.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Finkelstein, "The History and Archaeology of Shiloh," 388–89.

<sup>46</sup> Delcor, "Jahwe et Dagon," 138–140; Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*.

<sup>47</sup> Along these lines, we might understand the mobilization of the Ark in different biblical expressions of the memory of the Ark as "claiming" the Ark's symbolic capital.

<sup>48</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977): 183.



Bourdieu holds that all practices represent “economic calculations” in pursuit of “capital”—accumulated material and symbolic labor “that present[s] ... as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation.”<sup>49</sup> Bourdieu distinguishes between a number of forms of capital, the most relevant of which to the discussion of the Ark is *symbolic capital*.<sup>50</sup> Symbolic capital is converted from other forms of capital, when “(mis)recognized, and thereby recognized”<sup>51</sup> and “transformed”<sup>52</sup> to endow their possessors with the perception of legitimacy, distinction, and, intriguingly, *honor*.<sup>53</sup> In *Distinction*, Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as: “the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability that are easily converted into political positions as a local or national *notable*.”<sup>54</sup> The public dimension of symbolic value is critical. As it is transformed through recognition, symbolic capital is fundamentally social. It requires an audience, a public, to be of value. Though symbolic capital can be costly in material terms, is it especially valuable as it represents “credit”—“in the broadest sense, a kind of advance, a credence, that only the group’s belief can grant those who give it the best symbolic and material guarantees.”<sup>55</sup> As “credit,” recognized symbolic capital can be exchanged with other forms of capital meaning it is of considerable value.

It is this process that is at work when ancient Near Eastern groups like the Philistines captured the deities of groups they defeated.<sup>56</sup> The spoils of victory were both material and symbolic. The material spoils represent the range of forms of capital. The symbolic violence of capturing a people’s god image was no less real and profoundly damaging. As McCarter puts it: “Clearly a captured god was the final proof of the subjugation of a victim. Even more than

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<sup>49</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline*, 178. On this formulation, see Hugh B. Urban, “Sacred Capital: Pierre Bourdieu and the Study of Religion,” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 15.4 (2003), 360; Pierre Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241, defines capital broadly as “accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its “incorporated,” embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.”

<sup>50</sup> Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital,” 243, identifies three primary forms of capital: “economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.”

<sup>51</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 122.

<sup>52</sup> Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital.”

<sup>53</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline*, 129; Bourdieu, “Forms of Capital.”

<sup>54</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 291.

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu, *Logic*, 120.

<sup>56</sup> Delcor, “Jahwe et Dagon,” 138–140, reviews biblical and ancient Near Eastern examples of this practice.

human prisoners, it demonstrated the utter helplessness of the defeated army.”<sup>57</sup> The expectation that the Ark’s loss represents a transfer of symbolic capital from Israel to the Philistines animates 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1, though the consequences the text lays out do not unfold in the way either group anticipates. Through these reversals of expectation, the text showcases the Ark’s profound symbolic and practical, material value for Israel. The text explores the nature of the Ark’s materiality, considering but ultimately dismissing the possibility of its loss through the account of its journey through Philistia. In the following section, the targeted exegesis explores the dissonance between expectation and outcome in AN—as both sides contend with the Ark’s capture in the battle of Ebenezer.

#### IV. The Ark as Symbolic Capital in 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1: A Targeted Exegesis

This section offers an exegesis of 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1, with particular focus on reversals of expectation in the Philistines’ attempt to capture and keep the Ark. I investigate the text’s negotiation of tensions among the Ark’s materiality, divinity, and value—as symbolic capital that could at least theoretically be lost. When the Philistines capture the Ark, the Israelites believe that they have lost honor through defeat and the Philistines believe they have gained honor through victory. Ultimately, neither is correct to the surprise (and no doubt delight) of the text’s Israelite audience. As the Ark journeys through Philistia, it brings defeat and dishonor upon the Philistines through public humiliation. It returns with trophies to Israel for all to see, though even then things do not go exactly as Israel might expect.

AN’s description of the Ark’s arrival in Israel’s camp lays the foundation for the subsequent narrative, simultaneously expressing core expectations concerning the Ark’s involvement in the battle (victory for Israel, defeat for the Philistines) and foreshadowing what is to come—the immediate and ultimate outcomes of the Ark’s captivity in Israel and for Philistia:

Table 18: Expectations in the Israelite and Philistine Camps

Israel’s Expectations (4:3–5*)	Philistines’ Expectations (4:6–9)
4:3 וַיָּבֹא הָעָם אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמָּה נִגְפָנוּ יְהוָה הַיּוֹם לִפְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים נִקְחָה אֵלֵינוּ מִשְׁלָה אֶת־אָרוֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה וַיָּבֹא בְּקִרְבָּנוּ וַיִּשְׁעֲנוּ מִכַּף אֲיָבֵינוּ: 4 וַיִּשְׁלַח הָעָם שְׁלָה וַיִּשְׂאוּ מִשָּׁם אֶת אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה צָבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרִבִּים ... <sup>58</sup> : 5 וַיְהִי כִּבּוֹא אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה וַיָּרְעוּ כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּרוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וַתְּהֵם הָאָרֶץ:	4:6 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת־קוֹל הַתְּרוּעָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ מָה קוֹל הַתְּרוּעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת בְּמִחֲנֶה הָעִבְרִים וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אָרוֹן יְהוָה בָּא אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה: 7 וַיִּרְאוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי אָמְרוּ בָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אוֹי לָנוּ כִּי לֹא הִיְתָה כְּזֹאת אֶתְמוּל שְׁלֹשָׁם: 8 אוֹי לָנוּ מִי יִצִּילֵנוּ מִיַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֵלֵּי־רִים הָאֵלֶּה אֵלֶּה הֵם הָאֱלֹהִים הַמְּכִים אֶת־מִצְרַיִם כָּכֹל־מִכָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר: 9 הַתְּחִיָּקוּ וַהֲיִו לְאֻנָּשִׁים פְּלִשְׁתִּים פֶּן תַּעֲבְדוּ לְעִבְרִים פֶּאֶשֶׁר עָבְדוּ לָכֶם וַהֲיִתֶם לְאֻנָּשִׁים וְנִלְחַמְתֶּם:
4:3 And the [defeated Israelite] army came to the camp and the elders of Israel said: “Why has YHWH struck us today before the Philistines? Let us bring to us from Shiloh the Ark of the	4:6 And the Philistines heard the sound of the shout and they said: “What is the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?” And when they knew that the Ark of YHWH had

<sup>57</sup> McCarter, *I Samuel*, 125.

<sup>58</sup> וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלִי עִם־אָרוֹן בְּרִית הָאֱלֹהִים חֲפָנִי וּפְיִנְחָס is, as discussed above, likely secondary.

<p>Covenant of YHWH, that he may come among us and save us from the hand (כַּף) of our enemies.” 4 So the army sent to Shiloh, and brought from there the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH of Hosts, Who is Enthroned on the Cherubim ... 5 When the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH came into the camp, all Israel shouted a great shout and the earth resounded.</p>	<p>come to the camp, 7 the Philistines were afraid, because, they said: “gods have come into the camp.” And they said: “Woe to us! It was not like this in the past. 8 Woe to us! Who can save us from the hand (כַּף) of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. 9 Be strong and be men, Philistines, or you will be slaves to the Hebrews as they have been slaves to you. Be men and fight!”</p>
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The opposite reactions to the Ark’s arrival establish a number of core expectations concerning the Ark and the nature of its power to ensure victory for Israel. First and most basically, the text affirms that the Ark is an item of material culture. The text does not specify its form, but it is worth noting this aspect of the Ark’s materiality. As an item of material culture, the Ark is vulnerable to loss and destruction. Second, the Ark signals YHWH’s presence. The text is unusually clear about this aspect of the Ark, about which both the Israelite and Philistine forces agree. Israel rejoices upon the Ark’s arrival, joining together in a mighty battle cry. The Philistines express the inverse sentiment, woe and utter mortal terror at the arrival of the Ark: “Who can deliver us from the power (כַּף, lit. “hand”) of these mighty gods?” Both sides expect the Ark to lead Israel to victory over Philistine forces at Ebenezer. Embedded within these two reactions to the Ark’s arrival, the text lays the groundwork for the immediate and ultimate outcomes of the conflict: the Ark’s loss; Eli’s death; and the punishment of the Philistines in Israel’s ultimate victory.

#### IV.1. The Ark’s Loss

The Ark does not bring Israel victory, at least not immediately. In the immediate aftermath of the battle, the Philistines capture the Ark. The Ark’s loss is foreshadowed in the Israelite elders’ call for the Ark to be brought from Shiloh:

1 Sam 4:3 וְהָיָה וַיָּבֵא בְּקִרְבָּנוּ וַיִּשְׁעֲנוּ מִכַּף אֲדִיבֵינוּ ... 1 Sam 4:3

1 Sam 4:3 Let us bring to us from Shiloh the Ark of ... YHWH, that he may come among us and save us from the hand (כַּף) of our enemies.

This expression alludes to what is to come. The opening clause features the first instance of the association of the verb “to take” (לָקַח) with “the Ark of YHWH”—the qal cohortative first person plural. Modified forms of this expression recur a number of times in AN. In 4:11, the anonymous narrator reports that in Israel’s defeat “the Ark of YHWH has been taken” (וַאֲרוֹן הַיְהוָה נִלְקָחָהּ). In 4:17, the Benjaminite survivor of the battle reports to Eli that “the Ark of YHWH has been taken” (וַאֲרוֹן הַיְהוָה נִלְקָחָהּ). The addition describing the birth of Ichabod features the fixed triad twice in 4:21–22, picking up on the motif. 1 Sam 5:1 explains again that “the Philistines took the Ark of YHWH from Ebenezer to Ashdod” (וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת אֲרוֹן הַיְהוָה מֵעִבְיָהוּ וַיִּבְרְאוּהוּ)—which is, as discussed above, repeated and reformulated to introduce the expansion in 1 Sam 5:2. The capture of the Ark is foreshadowed even within the expression of

Israel's desire to bring the Ark to Ebenezer.

Two more features in this scene come to be developed further in AN. First, the Ark represents the only named actor amid anonymous collective groups of actors. "All Israel" joins in the war cry. "The Philistines" express fear. The public dimension of these reactions is significant. Symbolic capital requires external affirmation. For the possession of the Ark to confer symbolic capital, its value must be collectively recognized as conferring "credit." This becomes an issue as the Ark is lost in battle, but the seeds of the tension are planted here. Second, the text highlights the agency and identity of the Ark. The text represents the Ark both as an object and a subject. In 4:3, the elders of Israel say "let us take the Ark" (נִקְחָה אֲלֵינוּ מִשְׁלָה) (אֶת־אֲרוֹן ... יְהוָה). This foreshadows the Ark's loss, which also uses the nifal of נִקְחָה: "there has also been a great slaughter among the army ... and the Ark of God was taken" (1 Sam 4:10–11; וַיְהִי כְּבוֹא אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה: וַיִּשָּׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאֲרוֹן). When the Ark comes, it is not brought. It clearly *comes*: וַיִּהְיֶה אֲלֵי־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. The Ark acts as the implied subject of the qal infinitive form, exerting at least limited agency. The text could have used the causative hifil, but does not. This contrasts with the Ark's having been carried elsewhere, for example in 1 Kgs 8. There the text clearly identifies who is carrying the Ark: "The Priests carried the Ark" (וַיִּשָּׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאֲרוֹן). We know the Ark must have been carried as it is not independently mobile, but that is not what is significant here and that is not how the Ark's movement is represented here.

#### IV.2. Eli's Death (1 Sam 4:12–18)

The text describes the Ark as the "Ark of YHWH of Hosts, Enthroned on Cherubs" (אֲרוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים ...)—a full title that does not often appear elsewhere.<sup>59</sup> When the Ark is taken, Eli will fall to his death from his throne. News of Israel's unexpected defeat is carried to Shiloh by an anonymous Benjaminite fighter in 1 Sam 4, who arrives from the front in mourning with torn clothes and ashes upon his head:

1 Sam 4:16 The man said to Eli, "I myself am the one who has come from the battle; I myself from the battle fled today." He said, "What is the word, my son?" 17 The messenger replied, he said: "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also there has also been a great slaughter among the army ... and the Ark of God was taken."<sup>60</sup> 18 When he mentioned the Ark of God, Eli fell over from his throne backwards by the side (ד) of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

The irony here is significant. To begin, the soldier repeats that "The Ark of YHWH has been taken"—the twice-used line that (a) the elders of Israel declare to call the Ark from Shiloh in 4:3 and (b) the narrator uses to describe the Ark's loss in 4:10–11. Eli's death is ironic in at least two

<sup>59</sup> On this epithet, see above and Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, "YHWH Sabaoth: The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5–7 December, 1979*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 109–38.

<sup>60</sup> As noted above, the reference to Eli's sons ("your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead") is likely secondary.

ways. First, this text plays on the association the Ark with YHWH's throne—as noted above (either directly<sup>61</sup> or by metonymy<sup>62</sup> as footstool). 1 Sam 4:4 highlights this association by using the epithet “YHWH of Hosts, Enthroned on Cherubs.” Eli's reaction to the Ark's loss is to fall from his throne. The text makes it clear that his death is in response to the Ark's loss, as it takes place when the Benjaminite “mentioned the Ark of God” (4:18). Second, Eli fails to understand the text's core message concerning YHWH's control. Eli falls to his death because he believes Israel has lost critical symbolic capital to Philistia. Eli (and presumably, the audience at this stage) perceives the Ark's loss to represent a loss both of their god and their symbolic credit and honor. Ultimately this is incorrect.

Eli's failure to understand this led to his death and may more broadly be an explanation for the end of the “Elide” Priestly line at Shiloh. That this particular death has significance is indicated by the text's explicit identification of Eli. Other than the Ark, Eli is the first identified character in AN. While the Benjaminite's tribal affiliation may have also been significant, exactly why is not clear. Eli is named and it is clear that his mistaken, but entirely understandable, reaction reflects poorly upon him and his household. Further support for this reading can be found in the description of Eli's death. He falls from his “chair” or “throne” (סֵדֶן) “by the side” (יָד) of the village gate. The village gate was the place of judgment. As the term יָד forms part of a prepositional phrase, it is possible that its use is incidental. In context however, the frequency with which יָד (lit., “hand”) appears suggests that it is a *Leitwort* in AN. The Hand of YHWH plagues the Philistines elsewhere and here appears to pass judgement on Eli. As noted above, Shiloh is destroyed in the text's background. The failure of the Elides may represent an oblique explanation for Shiloh's fall. If so, it may represent the earliest layer of the extended critique of Eli's sons that appears in Sam 1:1–4:1a, which in this later text offers a fuller justification for the end of the priestly line.

#### ***IV.2.a. The birth of Ichabod (1 Sam 4:19–22)***

It was observed above that the report of the birth of Ichabod to Phinehas' wife represents a secondary addition to the text. I do not wish to re-argue this point, but it is worth reflecting on the effect of its inclusion in the text at this juncture. Eli's death is exceptionally well integrated into the narrative, offering an ironic thumbnail illustration of the impact of the Ark's loss. It may further serve to account for the end of the Shiloh Temple of YHWH, by dispatching its priest. Taken on its own, Eli's death in the earliest inferable layer of AN might imply the end of the Elide priestly line. In view of the significance of genealogy in priestly circles, such an outcome would have been undesirable to later writers. A likely gloss to 1 Sam 14:3 seems to appear to identify descendants of Eli through the fraternity of Ichabod and Ahituv, which reflects the general impulse behind the addition of the report of the birth of Ichabod: To preserve the memory and also the possibility of identification with the line of Eli.

As it plays out in the text, the report of the birth of Ichabod expands on the thumbnail illustration of the impact of the Ark's loss in Eli's death. The text repeats and revises the plot of the earlier death, describing the death of Eli's unnamed daughter-in-law—Phinehas' wife and

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<sup>61</sup> cf. 1 Chron 28:2, Pss 99:5, 132:7; Lam 2:1

<sup>62</sup> cf. Jer 3:16

Ichabod's mother. The name she gives Ichabod is significant, especially in view of the anonymity of his mother. It puts a finer point on an idea that underlies the earlier text: the connection between the Ark's loss and dishonor. If the Philistines captured the Ark in an effort to accrue symbolic credit, it works out only in the short term until YHWH strikes the people of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. At this stage in the narrative, we do not yet know that the Ark will rout the Philistines—bringing *dishonor* rather than *honor*. Ichabod's mother does not know this, she knows only that the Ark is gone. As noted above, Ichabod's name means “Where is the honor/glory”—alluding to both senses of *כבוד*: honor and the numinous presence of YHWH. Thus the inclusion of this episode serves two exegetical purposes, enabling the continuation of the Elides and (perhaps playfully) affirming the impression of dishonor caused by the Ark's loss—however temporarily until the Ark returns.

#### IV.3. The Defeat of the Philistines and the Symbolic Debit of the Ark (1 Sam 5)

The Philistines' reaction to the Ark's arrival also ironically foreshadows the details of their ultimate defeat. Their expression of terror (perhaps comically) misrepresents both the singularity and history of YHWH:

1 Sam 4:7 “Woe to us! It was not like this in the past. 8 Woe to us! Who can save us from the hand (יָד) of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. 9 Be strong and be men, Philistines, or you will be slaves to the Hebrews as they have been slaves to you. Be men and fight!”

This terror underscores the difference between the two peoples, highlighting a tension that will persist throughout AN: The Philistines do not comprehend with whom or with *what* they are dealing. Their identification of Israel as “the Hebrews” and YHWH as “the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness” is also significant in this connection. This clearly alludes to the Exodus narrative. All sources in Exodus describe YHWH afflicting the Egyptians in Egypt, not the wilderness. Whether the Philistines are recalling a different version of the exodus or again comically misrepresenting something with which the audience is familiar, the text is mobilizing the memory of Israel's exodus from Egypt. The recollection of “every sort of plague” foreshadows both their specific and more general fate. Note in particular the concern about the Hand of YHWH (expressed through use of יָד). As AN moves forward, the Hand of YHWH will afflict the Philistines with multiple plagues—in Ashdod (5:6), in Gath (5:9), and in Ekron (5:10–12).

In each episode, the Philistine community cries out as one in response to YHWH's plague. In Ashdod, “the residents of Ashdod” declare “The Ark of the God of Israel must not sit with us; for his hand (יָד) is heavy on us” (5:7). In Gath, the Ark had a similar effect: “the hand of YHWH was against the city, causing a great panic” (5:8). Perhaps having heard about YHWH's work in Ashdod and Gath, Ekron's citizens cry out:

1 Sam 5:10 “Why have they brought around to me the Ark of the God of Israel to kill me and my people?” 11 And they sent for and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and they said: “Send the Ark of the God of Israel and let it return to its place and not kill me and my people.”

As noted above, public recognition represents a critical component of the Ark's value as symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is socially determined, for it to serve as credit it must be acknowledged as worthy—otherwise credit would not be forthcoming from its possession. It was earlier observed that the Philistines captured the Ark for its symbolic capital. Combined with the plagues, the public response to the Ark's presence shows that the Philistines were mistaken. The Ark was not to their credit, but rather to their debit—leading to its return to Israel with offerings of guilt to “honor” Israel's god.

#### *IV.3.a. The Ark in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon (1 Sam 5:2–6)*

The present text of AN includes an additional episode, an idol satire set in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon. I outline the reasons that the text likely represents a secondary addition above. To develop this point further, I would like to reflect on the impact of its inclusion in the text at this juncture. Prior to the inclusion of this episode, the text offered a fairly straightforward account of the Ark's routing of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. The idol satire that comes to be redacted onto the front of this account both affirms and complicates the association of the Ark with the presence of YHWH. On one level, the text equates the Ark with the statue of Dagon. Both represent the earthly material manifestations of the divine presence. It was indeed standard practice to place captive gods in the temples of their captors, affirming their reality and power but placing them in a subservient position to the gods of the temples in which they now reside.<sup>63</sup> The idol satire inverts this power dynamic and further emphasizes that the Ark is to the Philistines' symbolic debit, drawing an explicit comparison to between the two gods and their material and divine dimensions—playing on the senses of the Hebrew term for hand (יָד).

The spare five-verse account is narrated in the third-person, largely as the events in the Ashdod Temple of Dagon unfolded from the perspective of the Philistines. Twice following their installation of the Ark in the temple, the Philistines visit the Ark and the Dagon image in the early morning. In 1 Sam 5:2 and 3, the text introduces what they find with the same formula:

וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ ... מִמַּחְרַת יְהוָה דָּגוֹן נָפַל לְפָנָיו אֲרָצָה לְפָנָיו אֲרוֹן יְהוָה

When they rose ... early the next day, and behold: Dagon had fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark of YHWH.

Both mornings, Dagon is found with his face to the ground in the position of prostration. In 5:2, the Ashdodites restore Dagon to its upright position. In 5:3, Dagon is found both prostrated and broken—the god's head and hands “lying cut off upon the threshold.” The significance of this position should not be understated. The formula describing the position of Dagon appears with some frequency in the Hebrew Bible as an idiom describing prostration and death.<sup>64</sup>

Two unconnected examples of this idiom in practice illustrate the idiom's possible connotations: Joshua's response to defeat at Ai (Josh 7:6) and David's victory over Goliath (1 Sam 17:49). In Josh 7:6, Joshua and the Elders of Israel prostrate themselves before the Ark

<sup>63</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*; Delcor, “Jahweh et Dagon.”

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Gen 44:14; Josh 5:14; 7:7:6; 13:20; 1 Sam 17:49; 14:22; Ruth 2:10.

following their initial defeat at Ai:

Josh 7:6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell upon his face to the ground ( וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו ) before the Ark of YHWH until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7 Joshua said, “Ah, Lord YHWH! Why have you brought this people across the Jordan at all, to hand us over to the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content and we had settled on the other side of the Jordan!”<sup>65</sup>

The bodily practices are as critical to Joshua’s plea as its words (which continue through 7:9), including the mourning rituals of torn clothes and ashes in the hair and especially the prostration—expressed with the same idiom as Dagon’s position in AN. Also as in AN, prostration before the Ark represented prostration before YHWH.

In David’s defeat of Goliath 1 Sam 17:49, the giant prostrates in death: “David sent his hand into his bag and took out from there a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead and he fell face down on the ground” ( וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו ). David’s defeat of Goliath offers another potentially illuminating parallel. In both Josh 7:6 and 1 Sam 17:49, the same idiom expressed voluntary prostration and prostration on the ground in death.

Joshua’s prostration is voluntary and before YHWH. Goliath’s prostration is involuntary and a posture adopted only in death. Both types of prostration appear in the idol satire of AN. The first night, Dagon is prostrate before YHWH. The second night, Dagon is “killed,” decapitated, dismembered, and prostrate before YHWH. The critique of idols inherent in the broken Dagon is particularly biting when embedded in the context of AN. The loss of Dagon’s hands (יָד) recalls the Hand of YHWH, which the Philistines fear in their initial reaction to the Ark’s arrival and which routs Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron until the return of the Ark. This move equates, but qualifies and complicates the significance of the Ark, reflecting on its materiality and its divinity. The Ark does represent the presence of YHWH, just as it does in Josh. To prostrate oneself before the Ark is to prostrate oneself before YHWH, but the Ark is not an idol like Dagon. Unlike Dagon, it cannot be broken. The text does not deny that the Ark is made of earthly materials, but the Ark cannot be broken and as the text continues, cannot be captured either.

The Philistines believe that the Ark would be to their symbolic credit. In the framework into which the idol satire is embedded, this turns out not to be the case. Possession of the Ark is more of a symbolic debit, a source of dishonor that they willingly bring into their cities to rout their people. Additionally and perhaps of equal importance, this shaming was public. As noted above, the people cry out. The people know what their leaders have done by bringing the Ark into their cities. The shaming of Dagon is also public. The text concludes with a third person editorial comment explaining the impact of this event on ritual practice in Ashdod: “For this reason, the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.” (5:5). The addition therefore fits within and amplifies the framework into which it is embedded, correctly noting that the Ark would have been brought

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<sup>65</sup> Joshua 7:6-7 NRSV, lightly revised



into the Temple and expanding the public shaming to include not only the three cities but also their god.

#### IV.4. The Return of the Ark (1 Sam 6)

Though delayed, YHWH's victory over the Philistines is total. After the Hand of YHWH defeats the Philistines in Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, their lords assemble to declare: "Send the Ark of the God of Israel and let it return to its place and not kill me and my people" (5:11). The Ark arrived as a trophy of war in 1 Sam 5. In 1 Sam 6, the Ark returns to Israel victorious and *bearing* trophies of war.

Humbled, the Philistine priests and diviners return the Ark to Israel on a new cart pulled by two milch cows bearing a guilt offering of five gold tumors and five gold mice. This is their solution. Though there is some debate concerning these items (especially the mice<sup>66</sup>), the details are less significant than the gift's expressed intention. Proposing a kind of sympathetic magic, the priests and diviners advise:

1 Sam 6:5 You must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land and you must give honor/glory (כבוד) to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand (יָ) from upon you, upon your gods, and upon your land. 6 Why should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had used them, did they not let them go and they left?

I would like to focus on two aspects of the Philistines' solution. First, the allusion to the exodus here is significant—connecting the solution both to the exodus tradition and the Philistines' initial expression of fear upon the Ark's arrival in 1 Sam 4. There, the Philistines declare of the Ark: "These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness" (4:8). As mentioned above, whether this line comically misrepresents Exodus or recalls an otherwise unrepresented exodus tradition, it is immediately dismissed. Ultimately however, their concern proved prescient. The Hand of YHWH plagued Philistia. Here, they again recall the exodus tradition. The exodus narrative inspires the Philistine priests and diviners to return the Ark and critically "give honor/glory (כבוד) to the God of Israel" (6:5). Second, the text's reference to "honor/glory" (כבוד) is not incidental. While the Ark is later associated with the numinous presence of YHWH and the report on the birth of Ichabod connects these two senses of the word, in the message of the priests and diviners the term is best understood as honor. That is the plain sense of the term and in context, all it can mean. Returning the Ark with valuable trophies (in this case gold tumors and mice, two milch cows, and a new cart) would not return the numinous presence of YHWH to the God. It would however bring honor, a form of symbolic capital that the capture of the Ark was meant to accrue. As noted above, both senses of the term כבוד may have become associated with the text following the independent composition of the Priestly vision of the Ark. At the stage of its composition however, we can say with some confidence that this was not yet the case.

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<sup>66</sup> Keith Bodner, "Mouse Trap: A Text-Critical Problem with Rodents in the Ark Narrative," *JThS* 59.2 (2008): 634–649.

#### IV.4.a. Closure in 1 Sam 6 and 2 Sam 6

When the Ark is returned to Israel, one might expect it to receive a triumphant reception. In 4:1, its arrival in the Israelite camp is met with a mighty war cry (from Israel) and comically exaggerated but no doubt sincerely felt terror (from the Philistines). In other texts, the arrival of the Ark is accompanied by a certain amount of pomp and circumstance.<sup>67</sup> In part due to this feature of the text, Rost and Campbell propose that AN concludes with David's installation of the Ark in Jerusalem in 1 Sam 6—a far more explicitly triumphant procession of the Ark.<sup>68</sup> Briefly, I would like to address aspects of the conclusion that do in fact offer closure.

First, the very survival of the Ark is remarkable—following its loss in battle, its ordeal in Philistia, and most dramatically the destruction of Shiloh (though this is admittedly not expressed in the text). The Ark arrives in Beth-shemesh *unguided* with a chest of trophies, pulled on a new cart by two milch cows. When last the Ark was seen by Israel, it was itself a trophy of war. AN must be read against the background of the destruction of Shiloh, which took place around 1050 BCE. In AN, Eli's death and the end of the Elide priestly line are entangled in the loss of the Ark. Perhaps paradoxically, it is the loss of the Ark that ensures its survival. While Shiloh does not continue as a temple city, its centerpiece the Ark returns triumphantly from Philistia *on its own accord*. Here the agency that it was earlier noted the Ark exerts comes into full flower, as the Ark directs the cart in its own unique and absolutely triumphant return.

Second, the arrival of the Ark in Beth-shemesh was so significant that the text notes: “The great stone on which they rested the Ark of YHWH is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh” (6:18). The memory of the Ark's arrival is inscribed on the landscape.

Third, the text concludes finally with the installation of the Ark under Eleazar in Kiriath-jearim: “And the people of Kiriath-jearim came and picked up the Ark of YHWH, and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. They consecrated (לְקַדְּשׁוּ ... לְ) his son, Eleazar, to have charge of the Ark of YHWH.”<sup>69</sup> The language of consecration implies that Eleazar was a priest.<sup>70</sup> This is important, as one of the stranger aspects of the Ark's return concerns the proper treatment of the Ark. Remember that Eli is dead and Shiloh is destroyed. The Ark cannot return to Shiloh. As the text predates cult centralization in Jerusalem, it cannot be expected to have been installed there either.<sup>71</sup> What is important is that the Ark is entrusted to a priest (Eleazar). The proper treatment of the Ark is the focus of one of the texts' final reversals, which contrasts the Philistines' careful treatment of the Ark (new cart, two new milch cows, gold trophies) with the Beth-shemeshites. The Beth-shemeshites initially conduct themselves properly, offering a sacrifice (the two new milch cows, burnt on the wood of the cart) and entrusting the Levites with the responsibility of taking down the Ark (6:13–18). In 16:19, the text describes the brutal punishment of Beth-shemesh for improper treatment of the Ark. In the MT, it is because the

<sup>67</sup> cf. 1 Sam 4:5, when “the earth resounded” as the Ark entered the Israelite camp.

<sup>68</sup> cf. 1 Kgs 8:1–14. Campbell, *The Ark Narrative*; idem, “The Ark of YHWH”

<sup>69</sup> 1 Sam 7:1 NRSV

<sup>70</sup> Miller and Roberts, *Hand of the Lord*, 35–36, who draw parallels between the language used in AN with Exod 28:3, 41; 29:1, 44; 30:30; 40:13; Lev 8:30; 21:8.

<sup>71</sup> Contra Campbell, *The Ark Narrative*, who argues that the Ark should have returned to a recognized sanctuary.

descendants of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the people. In the LXX, it is because the people looked in the Ark. In either case, Beth-shemeshites are punished in stark contrast to the Philistines leading to its proper installation in Kiriath-jearim.

The text not only concludes with the proper installation of the Ark under Elazar, but with a warning against its improper treatment. This represents one final engagement with the tension between the Ark's materiality and association with YHWH's presence. The Ark is a real thing, an item of material culture that can be lost and that can return. Because of its association with the presence of YHWH, it is like no other real thing on earth. This mitigates the risk of its loss, but requires particular care. In Chapter 3, I discussed the association between purity and danger. This is at work in this early text, as AN negotiates between the material and the divine aspects of the Ark.

## V. Conclusions

The tradition of the Ark as a war palladium figuring YHWH's involvement in Israel's battles has deep roots in biblical writings, expressed in Numbers and Joshua.<sup>72</sup> It may be helpful to think through the Ark in AN through an illustrative comparison with the Song of the Ark in Num 10:35:

Num 10:35 When the Ark set out, Moses would say:  
 "Arise O YHWH and your enemies are scattered;  
 and your foes retreat from before you."

1 Sam 4:1–7:1 begins with an attempt to involve YHWH in the battle, with Israel's elders calling for the Ark to be brought from Shiloh. When the Ark arrives in camp, this is exactly what the Israelites and the Philistines expect. The fulfillment of this expectation is delayed until after the battle, however. In this connection, it is as if YHWH's battle begins with the Ark's capture. This ironic turn stands at the heart of AN. The Philistines capture the Ark as a trophy of war, believing that it surely will endow them with symbolic capital. The Ark is not to their credit, however. As AN unfolds, the Hand of YHWH acting with the Ark defeats the Philistines of Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. YHWH is victorious, leading the Philistines to return the Ark together with trophies illustrating their concession of its symbolic capital. Having returned, the text illustrates the importance of proper conduct in connection with the Ark. The punishment of the Beth-shemeshites mirrors the punishment of the Philistines, before the Ark is ultimately installed under the priest Elazar in Kiriath-jearim. This final movement concludes the text's reflection of the tension between the material and divine dimensions of the Ark. The Ark is material and as such, it is vulnerable to the possible fates of all material things. Its physical presence is perceptible and powerful, a real thing that can provoke Israel's celebration and the Philistines' expressions of mortal terror. It can be lost, but its connection with YHWH's presence mediates this risk. The Ark's materiality is entangled in its divinity, making it both physically and metaphysically powerful. Still, its loss is *conceivable*. It may well have been lost to the

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<sup>72</sup> C.L. Seow, "Ark of the Covenant," *ABD* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 1:386–93.

Philistines historically, though there is no support beyond the Hebrew Bible. AN offers a forum for the consideration, the acknowledgment, and ultimately the dismissal of this possibility. As the Ark moves through history and this possibility becomes reality, biblical writers and interpreters are forced to revisit the question.

## 6. THE ARK REGAINED: FINDING THE ARK IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION THROUGH THE MISHNAH

The Hebrew Bible does not comment directly upon the Ark's ultimate fate. Though the text records the destruction of the First Temple by Babylonian forces in 586 BCE, the Ark is not singled out among the items looted or destroyed.<sup>1</sup> In this connection, the Ark represents a "loose end." While the text's silence remains problematic, there are three reasons that the Ark might not have been mentioned.<sup>2</sup> First, the text may not offer a comprehensive account of everything from the Temple that would have been looted or destroyed. After the Ark's installation in the Temple in 1 Kgs 8, it fades into the background as a part of the larger Temple and Temple service. This is evident in expansions in 1 Kgs 8:22–64, where focus shifts away from the Ark.<sup>3</sup> In the midst of the catastrophe of the Temple's destruction, the Ark may very well not have warranted individual attention. Second, the items looted from the Temple seem to have been chosen for their economic or symbolic value. The Temple was stripped of its gold "for the gold," its silver "for the silver," and its bronze "for the bronze."<sup>4</sup> The looting of these metals would have inflicted both economic and symbolic wounds, given the Temple's place in Judah's religious imagination. This being the case, Haran<sup>5</sup> and others<sup>6</sup> have asked why the Ark was not listed as having been stripped along with the rest of the Temple's gold, silver, and bronze. This question assumes that the Ark was gilded and of obvious symbolic value, however. In fact, two descriptions of the Ark exist.<sup>7</sup> In Exod 25 and 37, the Ark is indeed represented as an elaborately gilded chest topped with two gilded cherub images. In Deut 10, the Ark is a more modest wooden chest. Such a wooden chest may not have attracted the attention of looters for its economic or obvious symbolic value. The Ark's absence from the accounts of the Temple's looting suggests that Deut 10's description should be preferred. Third, a number of biblical writings appear to assume the Ark's loss. Jeremiah 3:16 implores Israel to forget the Ark, to move on and above all not to make another Ark.<sup>8</sup> Ezek 40–42 envisions a restored Temple that

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Kgs 25:13–17; Jer 52:17–23; the Ark is also notably absent from the stripping of the First Temple by Shishak in 1 Kgs 14:25–26; Jehoash in 2 Kgs 14:13–14; and Nebuchadnezzar in 2 Kgs 24:13.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion in Chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> See discussion in Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kgs 26:15–18

<sup>5</sup> Menahem Haran, "The Disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant," *IEJ* 13.1 (1963): 46–58.

<sup>6</sup> See review in John Day, "Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?" In *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, ed. John Day, LHB/OTS 422 (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 250–270.

<sup>7</sup> See discussion in the general introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>8</sup> See discussion in Chapter 1.

does not feature the Ark, acknowledging its loss without predicting its return.<sup>9</sup> Further, the text twice alludes to the loss of YHWH's "footstool."<sup>10</sup> Both Jerusalem and the Ark are referred to as YHWH's footstool. The metaphor might have been used twice or the city might have come to be the footstool by metonymy, as the Ark is said to have been kept in Jerusalem. Lamentations 2:1 notes that YHWH has not "remembered the footstool of his feet in the day of his anger." Expressing YHWH's universal power after the Temple's destruction, Is 66:1 notes that: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; What is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place?"<sup>11</sup> These verses situate the Ark in the Temple and in Jerusalem during their destruction, countering and perhaps ironizing concern for their absence.<sup>12</sup>

For the Hebrew Bible's earliest interpreters, the absence of direct comment on the Ark's fate called for further inspection. Two general approaches to the problem emerge in extra-biblical literature, both of which address the literary gap through midrashic interpretation. Midrashic interpretation is above all responsive to the varied topography of the Hebrew Bible, with all the gaps, irregularities, and ambiguities that developed over the long history of its composition. Kugel<sup>13</sup> shows that over time, biblical writings came to assume authority as divine, perfect, relevant, and cryptic. Midrashic interpretation reflects these assumptions, responding to what would otherwise appear as gaps and imperfections, as signals calling for the explication of the text's cryptic significances. In this connection, interpretation functions as memory work. Through interpretation the reader recalls a text's "true" meaning, enabling the creative alignment of biblical texts with shifting individual and community priorities.

Faced with an apparent imperfection in the text's silence on the Ark's fate, Day<sup>14</sup> and Milikowsky<sup>15</sup> show that ancient Jewish interpretive communities found two solutions in post-biblical literature. First, some argue that the Ark was taken to Babylon in 586 BCE. This tradition is expressed in both ancient Jewish pseudepigraphic and tannaitic literature. This position differs from the biblical texts that acknowledge the Ark's loss, which lament or seek to move past the Ark's loss. These ancient Jewish pseudepigraphic and tannaitic interpreters describe the Ark's removal from the First Temple to another place. Second, some argue that the Ark was hidden before the Babylonian destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE. In pseudepigraphic literature, the Ark's preservation is connected with Jeremiah, either directly or

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<sup>9</sup> Compare with Rev 11:19, in which there is a similar vision of a Temple that features the Ark.

<sup>10</sup> Apart from the texts discussed below, see possible references to the Ark as YHWH's footstool in Pss 99:5; 132:7; and 1 Chr 28:2.

<sup>11</sup> Is 66:1 NRSV

<sup>12</sup> Day, "Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant," 263–265.

<sup>13</sup> James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible a Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Day, "Whatever Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?"

<sup>15</sup> Chaim Milikowsky, "Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant? The True History (of the Ancient Traditions)," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Michael Segal et al., STDJ 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 208–229.

by an angel in a vision of Jeremiah's scribe Baruch. In tannaitic literature, the Ark's preservation is either attributed to Josiah or unattributed.

The first general approach outlined above posits that the Ark was taken to Babylon in 586 BCE.<sup>16</sup> Two literary traditions written in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple by Rome in 70 CE exemplify this position, 4 Ez 10:22 and a group of tannaitic texts including *Baraita d'Meleket Ha-Mishkan (B.M.M.)* 7, *t. Šeqal.* 2:18, and *t. Soṭah* 13:1.<sup>17</sup>

The Ark appears in 4 Ez 9:38–10:60 in a vision of a woman mourning her son. In an effort to console the woman, Ezra recalls the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple: “the light of our lampstand has been put out, the ark of our covenant has been plundered, our holy things have been polluted, and the name by which we are called has been profaned.”<sup>18</sup> Suddenly and evidently as a result of Ezra's expression of genuine sorrow, the woman transforms in a burst of light into a vision of the restored Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> In this vision, 4 Ez 10:22 acknowledges the Ark's loss as a part of the destruction of the Temple. Though the Temple Ezra mourns is the First and not the Second, the vision's message of restoration is squarely directed at a post-70 CE audiences. As in Jer 3 and Ezek 40–42, the restored Jerusalem does not feature the Ark.

Within tannaitic literature, the text of *m. Yoma* 5:2–4 notes that the Ark was “taken” (נטל), but does not specify to where or by whom.<sup>20</sup> Milikowsky<sup>21</sup> shows that *B.M.M.* 7, *t. Šeqal.* 2:18, and *t. Soṭah* 13:1 go further:

ר"א אומר ארון גלה/ירד לבבל שנאמר לא יותר דבר אמר ה' ואין דבר אלא דברות שבו

R. Eliezer says: “The Ark was exiled/went down to Babylon, as it is said [in 2 Kgs 20:17]: “No *thing* (דבר) shall be left, says the Lord.” “No thing” (דבר) that is the *commandments* (דברות) which are in it [i.e., in the Ark.]<sup>22</sup>

The text of *t. Šeqal.* 2:18 and *t. Soṭah* 13:1 includes an additional scriptural citation attributed to R. Shimon:

<sup>16</sup> 4 Ezra 10:22; see also in the Talmud, *b. Yoma* 53b and *y. Sheqalim* 6.1.2. For the reasons articulated above, the Ark was not necessarily of economic and symbolic value.

<sup>17</sup> The collection of rabbinic texts I discuss here are all discussed in Milikowsky, “Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?”

<sup>18</sup> 4 Ez 10:22; Ezra's full address is found in 10:5–24; Michael E. Stone, “4 Ezra,” in *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes*, eds. Michael E. Stone and Matthias Henze (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 62.

<sup>19</sup> 4 Ez 10:25–28

<sup>20</sup> Later commenters in *b. Yoma* 53b and *y. Sheqalim* 6.1.2 read “taken” to indicate that the Ark was exiled to Babylon in 586 BCE.

<sup>21</sup> See Milikowsky, “Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?” for more about Rabbinic references to the Ark.

<sup>22</sup> “exiled” (גלה) in *t. Šeqal.* 2:18 and *t. Soṭah* 13:1; “went down” (ירד) in *B.M.M.* 7; See discussion and translation in Milikowsky, “Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?” 221.

רש"א הרי הוא אומר לתשובת השנה שלח המלך נבוכדנצר ויביאהו בבלה עם כלי חמדת בית ה' [הן כלי חמדת בית ה']<sup>23</sup> זה ארון

R. Shimon says: It says [in 2 Chr 36:10] “In the spring of the year, King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon together with the precious vessels of the Temple of YHWH.” [The precious vessels of the Temple of YHWH:]<sup>24</sup> That is the Ark.

These two traditions both argue that the Ark was taken to Babylon, though they have different scriptural anchors.<sup>25</sup> As they share the assumption that the Ark was of economic or symbolic value, it follows that the Ark would have been included among the “precious vessels” taken to Babylon.

While the argument in 4 Ezra and the tannaitic literature requires the simultaneous acceptance that the Ark was both (a) so special that it must have been selected for protection and taken to Babylon and (b) not special enough to have been mentioned by name in biblical writings, the position was clearly compelling to some. In the wake of the Roman pillaging of Herod’s Temple, some interpretive community members may have been especially receptive to this explanation. One need look no further than the Arch of Titus in Rome to see the potential propagandistic impact of Rome’s capture of the Temple’s treasures.<sup>26</sup>

The second general approach to address the literary gap with midrashic interpretation asserts that the Ark was hidden before the Temple’s destruction in 586 BCE. These expressions of the “legend of the hidden ark”<sup>27</sup> accept the Ark’s absence, but deny its loss. In this chapter, I unpack these claims of the Ark’s survival in ancient Jewish and rabbinic literature through the Mishnah. Exploring biblical interpretation as memory work, I show how biblical interpreters are able to inscribe idiosyncratic visions of their community’s past, present, and future into the gaps of biblical literature. Throughout, the Ark remains tantalizingly (and ultimately *productively*) out of reach. By recalling the preservation and concealment of the Ark, biblical interpreters are able to claim the Ark’s “symbolic value”<sup>28</sup> and “power as a real thing”<sup>29</sup> remotely. Ultimately, no one is able to retrieve the Ark. Through midrashic interpretation however, all are able to mobilize the Ark in support of their visions for Israel. What does the Ark offer early Jewish writers? How

<sup>23</sup> Only in *t. Šeqal.* 2:18

<sup>24</sup> See note above.

<sup>25</sup> Milikowsky, “Where is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?” 222.

<sup>26</sup> On memory and the Arch of Titus spolia panel, Steven Fine, “Who Is Carrying the Temple Menorah? A Jewish Counter-Narrative of the Arch of Titus Spolia Panel,” *IMAGES* 9.1 (2016): 19–48.

<sup>27</sup> An early example of the use of this expression can be found in “Introduction,” *The Biblical Antiquities of [Pseudo-]Philo*, trans. M. R. James (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 63; and more recently see Steven Weitzman, “Myth, History, and Mystery in the Copper Scroll,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, eds. Hindy Najman and Judith Newman, *SupJSJ* 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 239–55; and “Absent but Accounted for: A New Approach to the Copper Scroll,” *HTR* 108.3: 424–429.

<sup>28</sup> See discussion in Chapter 5.

<sup>29</sup> See discussion in Chapter 1.



might it authorize or inaugurate apocalyptic visions in a way that other things might not be able to do? Why are they drawn to the Ark; what does it add to their apocalyptic visions? More broadly, what place do old things have in the new world order they envision? This chapter probes the fragility of *things*, testing and pushing the limits of their power to convey and sustain memory long after their loss.

### I. The Lost Ark in 2 Maccabees

The Ark appears in an early addition to 2 Maccabees. The present text of 2 Maccabees consists of an epitome of Jason of Cyrene's history of the Maccabean revolt (2 Macc 3:1–9:29; 10:9–15:36) that resulted in Hasmonean control of Judea and the Jerusalem Temple. In the present text, the following components have been added to the epitome:

1. Two prefatory letters from the Jews of Jerusalem to the Jews of Egypt enjoining the Jews of Egypt to celebrate the festival of the Hasmonean purification of the Temple (2 Macc 1:1–2:18)
2. An introduction (2 Macc 2:19–2:32)
3. An expansion describing the Maccabean purification of the Temple (2 Macc 10:1–8)
4. A conclusion (2 Macc 15:37–39)

Schwartz<sup>30</sup> argues that the present text represents an edited and unified whole produced in order to encourage the Jews of Egypt to celebrate the festival of the Hasmonean purification of the Temple. The Ark appears in the second prefatory letter, as a part of a wide-ranging apocalyptic argument in support of the Hasmonean claim on Judea and the Temple.

The second letter's central contention is that the Hasmoneans are the rightful caretakers for Judea and the Jerusalem Temple because they have preserved its ritual cult, including four items from the First Temple: the ritual fire and the Ark, Tent, and Incense Altar. The letter tells the story of how these items were preserved by Jeremiah before the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in 586 BCE. The ritual fire was preserved in a cistern, where it remained to be used to rekindle the sacrifices in the Second Temple under Nehemiah and the Hasmoneans. With the Ark, the Tent, and the Incense Altar, the text looks toward the apocalyptic future. Upon receipt of an oracle, Jeremiah hid the Ark, the Tent, and the Incense Altar in Mount Nebo:

2 Macc 2:5 Jeremiah came and found a cave-dwelling, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense; then he sealed up the entrance. 6 Some of those who followed him came up intending to mark the way, but could not find it. 7 When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: "The place shall remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. 8 Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, CEJL (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008)

<sup>31</sup> 2 Macc 2:5–8 NRSV

The items are to remain hidden in Mount Nebo until the Lord chooses to disclose its location, at which time the Lord's Cloud and Glory will descend upon the Ark just as they did for Moses in Exod 40:34–35 and Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:10–11. This is apocalyptic language. It forms a key part of the letter's broader apocalyptic argument for the Hasmonean claim to Judea and the Temple summarized in the letter's conclusion:

2 Macc 2:16 Since, therefore, we are about to celebrate the purification, we write to you. Will you therefore please keep the days? 17 It is God who has saved all his people, and has returned the inheritance to all, and the kingship and the priesthood and the consecration, 18 as he promised through the law. We have hope in God that he will soon have mercy on us and will gather us from everywhere under heaven into his holy place, for he has rescued us from great evils and has purified the place.<sup>32</sup>

In inviting the Jews of Egypt to observe the festival of purification, the second prefatory letter makes the following related assertions. First, the letter claims divine support for the Maccabean revolt that led to the purification of the Temple. In this connection, the letter writers appear to represent the Maccabean victory as deferred fulfillment of prophecies concerning control of the land “in the law.” Second, the letter asserts a relationship between the Maccabean victory and purification of the Temple and ingathering of the exiles predicted in contemporaneous apocalyptic literature.<sup>33</sup> This represents the Maccabean victory as a sign of the End Times. Third, the letter implicitly asserts continuity in the “inheritance” that was “returned.” In order to appreciate the place of the Ark among all that was and *will be* “returned” to the Maccabees, it is necessary to consider the Ark in the context of the other preserved items from the First Temple.

### I.1. The Preservation of the Ritual Fire in 2 Maccabees

The majority of the second prefatory letter describes the preservation of the Temple's ritual fire, a matter of some significance through the Talmud where it is repeatedly listed (alongside the Ark) among items in the First Temple but not in the Second Temple.<sup>34</sup> Moving backwards from the eve of the first observance of the festival of purification (1:18) to Nehemiah (1:19–36), Jeremiah (2:1–8), and Solomon (2:9–12), the letter describes the continuity of the ritual fire despite the periodic destruction and pollution of the Jerusalem Temple. The fire first “came down from heaven” to consume Solomon's “sacrifice for the dedication and completion of the [First] Temple.”<sup>35</sup> Prior to the destruction of the First Temple, Jeremiah entrusted a sample of the fire to a group of deportees. The deportees hid the fire in a cistern, where it transformed into a “thick liquid” (1:20; ὕδωρ παχύς); this liquid kindled the fire of both the sacrifices for Nehemiah's dedication of the Second Temple (1:21–22) and the Maccabean purification and rededication of the Second Temple (10:1–8). To dedicate the Second Temple, Nehemiah ordered

<sup>32</sup> 2 Macc 2:16–18 NRSV

<sup>33</sup> cf. Is 11:11–16

<sup>34</sup> Milikowsky, “Where Is the Lost Ark of the Covenant?” 209–210. For example, *b. Yoma* 21a notes: אלו חמשה דברים שהיו בין מקדש ראשון למקדש שני ואלו הן ארון וכפורת וכרובים אש ושכינה ורוח הקודש ואורים ותומים.

<sup>35</sup> 2 Macc 2:9–10 NRSV; cf. 2 Chr 7:1

a portion of the liquid be sprinkled on the wood of the sacrifice. The wood ignited when sunlight “miraculously” broke through the clouds, signifying divine approval (1:22). The remainder was poured over “large stones” (1:31; λίθος μέγας), which fade into the background of the narrative until the description of the Maccabean purification and rededication of the Second Temple in 2 Macc 10:1–8. There, the ritual fire is rekindled with unexplained “stones” (λίθος).<sup>36</sup> While the term λίθος is often translated as “flint”<sup>37</sup> in light of that stone’s use, elsewhere the LXX refers to “flint stones” as πέτρα ἀκρότομος (Deut 8:15) or ἀκρότομος (Ps 114:8). Schwartz points out that even if the stones were flint, without reference to “striking” or “sparks” the text “wants us to understand that the restored fire was one which had been taken out of storage ... having been put there in the days of Nehemiah, and that it contained the original heavenly fire of Solomon’s days.”<sup>38</sup> At all events, the letter is clear that the fire in the Hasmonean Temple is the same fire that burned sacrifices in the Temples of Solomon and Nehemiah. This continuity is critical and brings us to the other focus of the letter, the Ark, the Tent, and the Incense Altar from Solomon’s Temple.

## I.2. The Preservation of the Ark, the Tent, and the Incense Altar in 2 Maccabees

After describing Jeremiah’s preservation of the Temple’s ritual fire, the letter turns its attention to the Temple’s furniture (2 Macc 2:4–8). Upon receipt of an oracle, Jeremiah takes the Ark together with the Tent of Meeting and the Incense Altar from the Temple to Mount Nebo—“where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God” (2 Macc 2:4). Significantly, these items are all unaccounted for in the Hebrew Bible’s description of the destruction of the First Temple. After sealing the items in a cave dwelling, Jeremiah discovers that he had been followed and issues the following proclamation:

2 Macc 2:7 The place shall remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. 8 Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated.<sup>39</sup>

Jeremiah’s concealment of the items in the mountain where Moses looked over into the Promised land is no coincidence. Immediately after seeing the land, Moses is buried nearby though “no one knows his burial place to this day” (Deut 34:6). Just as Moses’ burial place remains a mystery, the items are not to be found until YHWH “will disclose these things.” On that day, the text specifies that YHWH’s Glory and Cloud will appear just as they did for Moses in Exod 40:34 and for Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:10–11. In both cases, the settling of the Cloud and Glory satisfies YHWH’s promise to Moses in Exod 29:45 that he would dwell in Israel’s midst.<sup>40</sup> This

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<sup>36</sup> This is the central piece of the argument for the continuity of the present text in Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*.

<sup>37</sup> The NRSV, for example.

<sup>38</sup> This forms the core of the argument for the unity of this edition of the epitome with the prefatory letters in Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 528.

<sup>39</sup> 2 Macc 2:7–8 NRSV

<sup>40</sup> In Chapter 3, I argue that the 1 Kgs 8:10–11 represents an explicit engagement with Exod 29:45.

promise appears as a crucial climax of the instructions for the Tent of Meeting and its ritual service in P.<sup>41</sup> As YHWH's Cloud and Glory are not reported to have settled in the Second Temple during its dedications in Ez 6:16–18 or 2 Macc 10:1–8, the deferral of the fulfillment of this promise is of some significance—a matter I return to below. The preservation of the continuity in the Temple's ritual fire supports the legitimacy of the Hasmoneans and their control of the Jerusalem Temple. The offering of burnt sacrifices represented one of the core functions of the Temple. By claiming that the sacrificial fire had been repeatedly saved miraculously, the letter asserts divine support for the purification of the Temple and represents the Hasmoneans as the heirs to Solomon, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah—with the authority of continuity to offer sacrifices at the Temple. The fit of the Ark in this context is more complex: Why attribute to Jeremiah the preservation and concealment of the Ark, the Tent of Meeting, and the Incense Altar? Perhaps more fundamentally, why defer the return of the items until the time “the Lord will disclose”?

Jeremiah is involved the preservation of the Ark across a range of non-rabbinic<sup>42</sup> texts, including fragments from Hellenistic Jewish historian Eupolemus preserved in *Praep. ev.*<sup>43</sup> *4 Bar.*<sup>44</sup> and the *Liv. Pro.*<sup>45</sup> Weitzman suggests that this tradition is rooted in a midrashic reading of Jer 3:16, the oracle calling on Israel to forget the Ark:

With some tugging, the Hebrew of this passage can be read not as a prophecy but as divine command: “Let the ark not come to mind, or be remembered, or sought out.” In light of this reinterpretation, the Jeremiah of 2 Maccabees appears to be following the divine order of Jer 3:16, placing the ark out of sight and preventing others from finding it.<sup>46</sup>

This reading is compelling for two reasons. First, 2 Macc 2:4 specifies that Jeremiah's preservation of the Ark was prompted by an oracle. Jeremiah 3:16 is marked as an oracle. Second, the grammatical and lexical shifts are not outside the realm of possibility. The verb פקד translated in Jer 3:16 as “to miss” does elsewhere mean “to seek,” notably in Is 26:16 and Ezra 23:21.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See discussion in Chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> See Milikowsky, “the Lost Ark of the Covenant,” who argues that the preservation of the Ark is either unattributed or attributed to Josiah in rabbinic literature.

<sup>43</sup> *Praep. ev.* 9.39.2–5; Nebuchadnezzar “took as tribute the gold and silver and bronze in the Temple and sent them to Babylon, except for the ark and the tablets in it. This Jeremiah preserved” (Fallon, “Eupolemus,” 871).

<sup>44</sup> *4 Bar* 3:9–20; “Jeremiah and Baruch went into the sanctuary and, gathering up the vessels of the (Temple) service, they delivered them to the earth, just as the LORD had instructed” (Robinson, “4 Baruch,” 419)

<sup>45</sup> *Liv. Pro.* 2:11–19; “[Jeremiah] before the capture of the Temple, seized the ark of the Law and the things in it, and made them to be swallowed up in a rock” (D.R.A. Hare, “Lives of the Prophets,” *OTP* 2:388)

<sup>46</sup> Weitzman, “Myth, History, and Mystery,” 243.

<sup>47</sup> “פקד,” BDB

The legendary reservation of the Temple's ritual fire asserts the continuity of the Temple service, from Solomon through the Hasmoneans. By predicting the apocalyptic return of the Ark and other "loose ends" from the First Temple, the letter buttresses both the assertion of historical continuity and Hasmonean claims for control of the Temple and Temple service. To begin, the absence of the Ark, the Tent, and the Incense Altar from the Second Temple represents a gap in the Hasmonean assertion of historical continuity from Solomon forward. On one level, deferring their return until the End Times solves this problem.

More broadly, the text's apocalyptic prediction shares the Ark's reality with Hasmonean claims of authority over Judea, the Temple, and the Temple service. The recollection of their return claims their absent but *real* significance (their power as "real things") for *their* kingdom and *their* temple. The second letter presents the Maccabean purification of the Temple in apocalyptic terms. Through the Maccabees, God "returned the inheritance to all" (2:17 NRSV). The return of the Ark, the Tent, and the Incense Altar represents a continuation of that process. They lend their perceived reality to the text's apocalyptic vision. Like the ritual fire, it is a return of a "real" element of the First Temple. Unlike the ritual fire, it is yet to come and its location is secret. The anticipation and secrecy are critical here. The location of these items is secret, in the Mountain by the unknown valley where Moses was buried. Like Moses' grave, the location of the Ark, the Tent of Meeting, and the Incense Altar remains secret. As the location is hidden, the Hasmonean argument and claim for authority cannot be checked or verified. The authoritative expression of a secret such as this is sufficient to prove (a) the existence of the secret, (b) the underlying truth of the secret's message, and (c) the authority of the keeper of the secret. Possession and expression of the promise of the Ark's apocalyptic return does the same, but defers the "real" proof until the End Times. That proof will come in the form of the same confirmation that Moses and Solomon received, the settling of YHWH's Glory and Cloud upon the Ark. The promise of the Ark's return in the End Times has one further advantage: It explains why YHWH's Glory and Cloud were not in the Second Temple under Nehemiah and Hasmoneans. Remembering the promise that YHWH's Glory and Cloud would dwell in Israel's midst by projecting it into the apocalyptic future addresses this gap, asserting the Hasmoneans as heirs to Solomon, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah and claiming the promise for their dynasty, their temple, and their future.

## II. The Lost Ark in 2 Baruch

In 2 Bar 6–8, the Ark is spared destruction along with other items of the First Temple's furniture and the priestly vestments by an angel, at whose command "the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up."<sup>48</sup> Written in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple, the text mobilizes the reality and the mysterious absence of the Ark to soothe the wounds of 70 CE. Because the Ark is not listed among the items destroyed or looted from the First Temple, 2 Bar envisions its survival and is able to look toward the future: The Ark is to return to a restored Jerusalem Temple endowed with the power of real things from the First Temple.

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<sup>48</sup> 2 Bar 6:10; Matthias Henze, "2 Baruch," in *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes*, eds. Michael E. Stone and Matthias Henze (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 86.

The text of 2 Bar 6–8 is structured as a vision revealed to Baruch the scribe of Jeremiah, as he is lifted by a strong spirit above the Jerusalem on the day of the Babylonian destruction of the Temple. High in the air, Baruch witnesses five angels: one commander descending from above and four bearing torches ready to advance on each corner of Jerusalem. Instructing the torch-bearing angels to hold, the commanding angel descends into the Holy of Holies. The commanding angel takes from the Temple a range of items including the Ark: “the veil, and holy ark, and the mercy-seat, and the two tables, and the holy raiment of the priests, and the altar of incense, and the forty-eight precious stones, wherewith the priest was adorned and all the holy vessels of the tabernacle.”<sup>49</sup> When these items are removed, the commanding angel declares:

Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of God, the Mighty One, and receive these which I commit to you, and preserve them until the last times, so that, when you are commanded, you will yield them, so that strangers will not have power over them. Because the time has come that Jerusalem will be handed over for a time, until it will be said that it will again be established forever.<sup>50</sup>

The earth swallows up the Ark together with the other items of Temple furniture and the priestly vestments. The objects preserved “until the last times,” the commanding angel instructs the torch-bearing angels to demolish Jerusalem lest the Babylonians claim that they destroyed “the wall of Zion” and “the place of God, the Mighty One.”<sup>51</sup> As the torch-bearing angels comply, a voice from the interior of the Temple declares: “Enter, enemies, and come, those who hate, for he who preserves the house has left [it] behind.”<sup>52</sup> With that, Baruch departs and the Babylonians seize Jerusalem and the Temple.

Broadly, this vision expands upon and qualifies the justification for the destruction of Jerusalem as punishment for Israel’s wrongdoing. This position requires the designation of foreign attackers like Nebuchadnezzar as divine agents, which YHWH expresses in Jer 27:5–6:

Jer 27:5 I myself created the earth, the humans, and the beasts that are on the earth with my great power and with my outstretched arm, and I give it to whomever I please. 6 Now I myself give all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, my servant; even the wild animals of the field I give to serve him.

Effective as this approach may have been for reconciling ideology with grim political reality in Judah after the Babylonian destruction, it has the perhaps unintended consequence of elevating enemies of Israel. This episode of 2 Bar addresses this tension in two ways. First, it explicitly attributes destruction to YHWH’s angels. Second and of most interest in the present context, it shows YHWH mandated that Israel’s defeat may be neither *total* nor *everlasting* and that the Ark is to be preserved. Written in the aftermath of the Roman destruction of the Second Temple, this text draws on imagery and material culture from the First Temple in order to chart a way forward

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<sup>49</sup> 2 Bar 6:7

<sup>50</sup> 2 Bar 6:8–9; Henze, “2 Baruch,” 86.

<sup>51</sup> 2 Bar 7:1; Henze, “2 Baruch,” 87.

<sup>52</sup> 2 Bar 8:2; Henze, “2 Baruch,” 87.

for a Third Temple. As the commanding angel commits the Ark and other items from the First Temple to the earth, the text gestures towards the past, present, and the future. The items from the First Temple in Israel's distant past are to be guarded "so that strangers will not have power over them" until a future time to be determined by YHWH. Though YHWH gives "all these lands" with their people and even the wild animals of their fields to Nebuchadnezzar in Jer 27:56, these items are off limits. As in 2 Maccabees, they will return and they will not be in the possession of strangers. Though the text refers to the Babylonian captivity, the reference to YHWH decreeing "that Jerusalem will be handed over" need not only refer to that captivity. In the wake of Rome's destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, it is highly likely that the writers intended for their words to resonate in their time in relation to their hardships. The prediction that Jerusalem would be "again be established forever" had clearly not come, as Jerusalem had just fallen to Rome. This key line consoles the people on the loss of the Second Temple.

The gesture towards the future is the key element here, however; the sacred objects from the First Temple will be restored permanently. Doing so writes Israel's loss of the Second Temple in 70 CE into the destruction of the First, apocalyptically deferring the ultimate restoration and accommodating contemporaneous less than ideal historical conditions. In the meantime, the text acknowledges and capitalizes on the Ark's absence. It is only because the Ark is both absent and believed to be "real" that its return can inaugurate the permanent restoration of Jerusalem, a balm for the loss of their Jerusalem in 70 CE. By remembering the Ark, the text soothes wounds of 70 CE and envisions a glorious future when the Ark will return; a transfusion of "real" material, meaning, and authenticity that makes sense of their present context.

### III. The Lost Ark in Tannaitic Literature

The Ark appears across rabbinic literature. In the present context, I would like to concentrate on tannaitic reflections on the fate of the Ark. Milikowsky<sup>53</sup> shows that three rabbinic perspectives on the fate of the Ark developed in fairly early in tannaitic literature. The first tradition posits that the Ark was taken as booty to Babylon, which I discuss in this chapter's introduction.<sup>54</sup> The second tradition posits that Josiah hid the Ark. The third tradition posits that the Ark was concealed underneath the Temple woodstore. In this section, I develop this insight in light of another group of texts that recall the Ark: descriptions of the Temple and Temple service that involved the Ark. These texts all exert control over the Ark's memory, mobilizing the Ark in its absence through description in the wake of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

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<sup>53</sup> Milikowsky, "The Lost Ark of the Covenant," 219–227.

<sup>54</sup> See discussion above.

## III.1. “Josiah Hid the Ark”

The tradition that Josiah hid the Ark appears in *S. ‘Olam Rab.* 24, *t. Soṭah* 13:2, and *B.M.M.* 7.<sup>55</sup> In each case, the tradition cites Josiah’s instruction to the Levites in 2 Chr 35:3:

2 Chr 35:3 תָּנִי אֶת־אֲרוֹן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּבַיִת אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה שְׁלֹמֹה בְּוָדֵיִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִין־לְכֶם מִשָּׂא בַכַּתֵּף עִתָּה עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֵת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

2 Chr 35:3 Set the Holy Ark in the Temple that Solomon son of David, king of Israel, built; you are not to carry it on [your] shoulders. Now, serve YHWH your God and his people Israel.

Intriguingly, 2 Chr 35:3 has no parallel in the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). Following Solomon’s installation of the Ark in the Temple in 1 Kgs 8, the Ark fades into the background of DtrH. The Ark does not appear again, a condition that it seems troubled the Chronicler enough to prompt the addition of this passage describing Josiah’s reinstatement of the Ark. No text in Chr or DtrH indicates that the Ark had been removed, however. Into this apparent irregularity, *S. ‘Olam Rab.* 24 cites 2 Chr 35:3 and declares that “Josiah hid the Ark.”<sup>56</sup> *B.M.M.* 7 and *t. Soṭah* 13:2 expand on this tradition to offer explicit justification and connection with the exile:

Table 19: *B.M.M.* 7 and *t. Soṭah* 13:2<sup>57</sup>

<i>B.M.M.</i> 7	<i>t. Soṭah</i> 13:2
אמר להם גזרו אותו שלא יגלה לבבל כשאר כל הכלים שתחזירנהו למקומן	אמר להם לא יגלה עמכם לבבל שתעלו אותו בכתף
He said to them: It will not be exiled with you to Babylon, that you may bring it up “on [your] shoulders.”	He said to them: Hide it so that it will not be exiled to Babylon like the rest, all the other vessels that you will return to their/its place.

Milikowsky suggests that this interpretation explains the fate of the Ark both implicitly and explicitly. Implicitly, the texts interpret Josiah’s instruction to “put the Holy Ark in the Temple” as an instruction to *hide* the Holy Ark in the Temple.<sup>58</sup> Explicitly, the text creatively develops Josiah’s instruction to no longer carry the Ark on their shoulders. The texts interpret Josiah’s comment that the Levites are to no longer “carry [the Ark] on [their] shoulders” (2 Chr 35:3) as a prediction and a prohibition. Should the Ark be taken into exile by the Babylonians, the Levites will not be able to return the Ark because they will not be able to carry it “on [their] shoulders.”<sup>59</sup> I would add that Num 7:9 represents a crucial intertext engaged by both 2 Chr 35:3

<sup>55</sup> *B.M.M.* 7; and *t. Soṭah* 13:1; and in the Talmud *y. Šeqal.* 6:1 (49c) and *b. Yoma* 53b (Milikowsky, “The Lost Ark of the Covenant,” 221–2). Milikowsky argues that the attribution of the hiding of the Ark to Josiah in *B.M.M.* 7 is likely secondary because it does not answer the question posed, “Where is the Ark found?”

<sup>56</sup> *S. ‘Olam Rab.* 24

<sup>57</sup> See discussion and translation in Milikowsky, “The Lost Ark of the Covenant,” 221.

<sup>58</sup> Milikowsky, “The Lost Ark of the Covenant,” 221–2.

<sup>59</sup> Milikowsky, “The Lost Ark of the Covenant,” 221–2.



and *B.M.M.* 7 and *t. Soṭah* 13:2. In Num 7:9, the Levites of the sons of Kohath are charged with carrying the holy things including the Ark “on [their] shoulders” (בכתף). The expression “on [their] shoulders” does not appear in relation to the carrying of anything else in the Hebrew Bible. The expression is not necessary, as the text often refers to the Levites carrying the Ark without specifying that it is carried “on [their] shoulders.”<sup>60</sup> As such, it is possible (though admittedly difficult to prove) that 2 Chr 35:3 is referring to Num 7:9 to explain what became of the Ark after its installation in 1 Kgs 8. As Num 7:9 restricts the carrying of the Ark to the Levites, it lies behind Josiah’s assertion that if the Levites cannot carry the Ark, no one will be able to carry the Ark. In light of these readings of Josiah’s instruction, it might be further appropriate to read “See now to the service of the Lord your God and His people Israel” as an appeal to get to work hiding the Ark for God and country. At all events, the crucial contribution of these texts concerns the preservation of the Ark. It is spared destruction by Josiah. It is hidden in the Temple, though these texts do not specify exactly *where*.

### III.2. “It is in the Woodstore”

The Mishnah does not convey traditions about Josiah hiding the Ark. Broadly, the text observes that the Ark was “taken” (נטל) in *m. Yoma* 5:2. More specifically, there developed an early tradition expressed in *B.M.M.* 7 that the Ark was concealed under the Temple woodstore:

וחכמים אומרים בלשכת דיר העצים

The Sages say: It is in the woodstore<sup>61</sup>

In the Mishnah, the Ark appears in an intriguing passage in *m. Šeqal*. 6:1–2 concerning the locations of “Shofar chests,” tables, and ritual prostration in the Second Temple. The text outlines fourteen places where the the Houses of Gamliel and R. Chanania prostrated themselves in the Temple, thirteen of which were before gates:

*m. Šeqal*. 6:1 והיכן היתה יתרה, כנגד דיר העצים, שפן מסרת בידם מאבותיהם ששם הארון נגנז 2 מעשה בכהן אחד שהיה מתעסק, וראה הרצפה שהיא משנה מחברותיהבא ואמר לחברולא הספיק לגמור את הדבר עד שיצתה נשמתו, וידעו ביחוד ששם הארון נגנז:

*m. Šeqal*. 6:1 And where was the added [place of prostration]? Opposite the woodstore, for thus was the tradition among them from their forefathers, that there the Ark lay hidden. 2 Once when a priest was occupied [therein] he saw a block of pavement that was different from the rest. He went and told it to his fellow, but before he could make an end of the matter his life departed. So they knew assuredly that there the Ark lay hidden.”<sup>62</sup>

In *m. Šeqal*. 6:1–2, the Ark is discovered by a priest working in the woodstore who observes an irregularity in the flooring. He is struck dead before he can resolve “the matter.” The affair

<sup>60</sup> 2 Sam 15:24; 1 Kgs 8:4; and 1 Chr. 15:12, for example.

<sup>61</sup> Milikowsky, “The Lost Ark of the Covenant,” 221.

<sup>62</sup> *m. Šeqal*. 6:1–2; Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 158.

solidified the tradition in two ways, however. First, he was able to tell his “fellow” about his discovery. Second, his death confirmed the authenticity of the tradition and the tremendous danger of seeking further verification.

From this brief account, we can infer three aspects of the text’s thought on the Ark. First, the Ark was real. Weitzman<sup>63</sup> points out that in this passage the Ark is treated as everything else in Second Temple, including the “Shofar chests” of treasure, the tables, and the gates at which members of the Houses of Gamliel and R. Chanania prostrated themselves. Second, the Ark was dangerous. Even knowledge of the Ark’s location was sufficient to end the life of the priest who discovered the irregularity in the flooring. Third, the Ark must remain hidden. The Ark must not be removed from its hiding place underneath the woodstore. The text takes the death of the priest who discovered the Ark as confirmation of the inherited tradition concerning its location under the woodshed. Implicit in this are two assumptions: that God killed him and that God sought to keep the Ark’s location a secret. The second and third of these assumptions may be implicitly related to tannaitic position that expressed in *B.M.M.* 7 and *t. Soṭah* 13:2, discussed above. If the Levites are forbidden from carrying the Ark through their interpretation of 2 Chr 35:3, there is no one authorized to carry the Ark. As such, the Ark must not be moved from its location—whether it is under the woodshed or hidden by Josiah.

### III.3. The Ark and the Power of Description in Tannaitic Literature

It is significant that the Mishnah’s discussion of the Ark’s concealment under the Temple woodstore appeared in the context of discussions of priestly ritual prostration. The study of Temple ritual narratives in the Mishnah is a project in itself, as Cohn shows: “in writing or talking about the Temple and its rituals, the rabbis who created the Mishnah were arguing for their own authority over post-destruction Judaeen law and ritual practice.”<sup>64</sup> The text’s descriptions do not preserve as much as they *project*, “asserting that their own tradition was correct.”<sup>65</sup> Description is therefore an act of control, even if the Rabbis themselves were not powerful in larger Roman or Jewish society. Seen in this light, rabbinic writers are not altogether different from the Priestly writers discussed in Chapter 3. They too exerted control and power through the description of ritual. They too described the ritual of the past in order to chart a way forward for their people, establishing and asserting their worldview through projection on the biblical world.

With the exception of *S. ‘Olam Rab.*, the Ark appears in the context of larger descriptions of ritual practice in the Temple. What value then does consideration of the Ark’s fate add to these descriptions? As above, the answer to this question has as much to do with the future as with the authors’ past and present. The Ark was a loose end. It was not accounted for in biblical texts that outline the temple furniture’s fate. It is clear from the preponderance of expressions of the tradition of the hidden Ark within extra-biblical literature of all kinds that this question was

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<sup>63</sup> Steven Weitzman, “Absent, but Accounted for: A New Approach to the Copper Scroll” *HTR* 108:3 (2015): 441.

<sup>64</sup> Naftali Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 3.

<sup>65</sup> Cohn, *Memory of the Temple*, 3.

troubling—but useful—to communities of biblical interpreters. Through literary description, the rabbis of tannaitic literature are able to exert control over the past and to remember it as they wish it to have been. As the Ark offered an obvious point of continuity between the present and the past, it had to be contained and it had the potential to be capitalized upon. Tannaitic literature does both. By claiming knowledge of the fate of the Ark, they situate the memory within their framework on their terms. By claiming that it is inaccessible, they protect that claim and account for its absence in their time—in a sense, proving their claim against others’ for example in 2 Maccabees and 2 Baruch. Further, the “absent presence” of the Ark serves as profound evidence for their claims of authority. They know where the Ark is. The Rabbis of the Mishnah claim it is under the woodstore, unverifiable only because of God’s protection.

#### IV. Conclusions

The expressions of the hidden ark legend I survey in this chapter are best understood as counter-memories, contending with the silence of the Hebrew Bible on the Ark following its installation in the Temple in 1 Kgs 8. Kugel<sup>66</sup> shows that midrash often responds to the gaps, irregularities, and ambiguities that developed over the long history of the composition and the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. Kugel also shows that biblical text came to be regarded as divine, perfect, relevant, and cryptic, even as every passing day made the text more remote and more foreign. Material in the Hebrew Bible that was not easily understandable or immediately relevant was therefore read as cryptic. Through close reading and positive engagement with the text’s varied topography, interpretation makes that which is foreign *local*. Interpreters “remember” what the text says and the ways that it is relevant to them and their individual and communal needs. In this connection, interpretation functions as memory work—recalling a text’s “true” meaning to align biblical texts with individual and community priorities. The apparent imperfection in the text’s silence on the Ark’s fate yielded a number of solutions from biblical interpretive communities. 4 Ezra and R. Eliezer and R. Shimon believed that the Ark was taken as booty to Babylon. This solution requires the acceptance of two irreconcilable assumptions, that the Ark was (a) of sufficient value to be taken and (b) of insufficient value to have been noted in the context of other items of lost Temple furniture. Further, it assumes that the Ark was somehow more available for capture by the Babylonians than it was by the Philistines in 1 Sam. The expressions of the hidden ark legend this chapter surveys overcome this logical difficulty by imagining the secret preservation of the Ark. According to this tradition, the Ark’s loss is not accounted for because it was not in the Holy of Holies to be taken in 586 BCE. Ancient Jewish writings attribute the preservation to Jeremiah or his scribe, Baruch. When tannaitic texts attribute the preservation of the Ark to anyone, it is to Josiah.<sup>67</sup> This is no coincidence. Jeremiah

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<sup>66</sup> Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*.

<sup>67</sup> Milikowsky, “The Lost Ark of the Covenant,” 224–225, who argues that in non-rabbinic literature Jeremiah is always the concealer of the Ark and in rabbinic literature Josiah always is the concealer of the Ark. This argument glosses over two key differences. First, in 2 Baruch *angels* conceal it before *Baruch’s* eyes in a vision. Though Baruch is traditionally connected with Jeremiah, Baruch is not Jeremiah. Second, many rabbinic texts do not attribute the concealment of the Ark to anyone. While Milikowsky acknowledges this fact, its significance

and Josiah represent the only two named biblical characters to discuss the Ark after its loss, Jeremiah in Jer 3:16 and Josiah in 2 Chr 35:3. By reading intertextually for the cryptic senses of the Jer 3:16 and 2 Chr 35:3, the text is able to account for the Ark's fate and chart a way forward for their interpretive communities.

Each of the texts surveyed in this chapter addresses the Ark's future as much as its past. 2 Maccabees and 2 Bar explicitly predict the return of the Ark in the End Times. While the tannaitic literature I have surveyed does not predict the Ark's return, it accounts for its location and asserts its real presence in the Temple under the woodstore. In doing so, the texts implicitly create conditions for the return of the Ark to active Temple service. This shared focus on the future is significant. Apocalyptic literature represents deferred prophecy, prophecy that cannot be fulfilled in the present that is projected onto the distant and ideal future.<sup>68</sup> There is no biblical prophecy concerning the Ark's return that is being deferred here. Rather, the Ark augments other deferred prophetic visions with its reality. The reality of the Ark lends itself to these visions, asserting the authority of continuity with the past with each. Visions of a re-established Temple and Temple cult would have been powerful, especially in the difficult times that often gave rise to the texts in which the hidden ark legend was recalled. The Ark brings more than anything else to these visions of the future because it is believed to be both real and to predate the destructions of the First and Second Temples. It is a loose end in the text, unaccounted for as the Temples burned. The Ark's installation in the Temple in 1 Kgs 8 authorized Solomon's construction with the authority of continuity with the past, from the wilderness period forward. The Ark's inclusion of apocalyptic visions cuts across time and authorizes the restoration they describe, harnessing its symbolic value and power as a real thing. The Ark does not appear in all visions of the End Times. When it does, however, its perceived reality *grounds* the text's visions for the future in a past articulated to reflect, shift, and reinforce their individual and community priorities.

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is not fully developed. The anonymity of the concealer of the Ark is significant in itself, as one further enigmatic aspect of the Ark's fate.

<sup>68</sup> Ronald Hendel, "Isaiah and the Transition from Prophecy to Apocalyptic," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Chaim Cohen et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 261–279 (esp. p. 277 n. 44).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS: TEXTS, OBJECTS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BIBLICAL PAST

The Ark appears across biblical writings and interpretations, many of which were written for an audience that had never seen it and that had no hope of ever seeing it. The Ark was likely lost in or before the Babylonian destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE, though biblical writings intriguingly do not explicitly describe its fate. The Hebrew Bible represents the Ark as functionally absent before its disappearance, however; always somewhere else, including in temples, tents, and even in the houses of Abinadab and Obed-Edom. Still, the Ark figures prominently in these representations of the biblical past. What does the Ark bring to biblical constructions of the past, despite, and, at times, because of its absence? Employing five episodes from the Ark's biography as case studies, this dissertation explores the ways in which biblical writers and interpreters have engaged the Ark; embracing, contesting, and reimagining inherited conceptions of the Ark and always remembering with the Ark. The prose expansion to Jer 3:14–20 illustrates the roles that texts, objects, and *texts about objects* can play in the formation of cultural memory. The poem envisions Israel returning to the Jerusalem Temple, calling them “back” (Jer 3:14) to Zion. In the future the text envisions, Israel will be shepherded with “knowledge” and “understanding” (Jer 3:15). Cutting into this likely pre-exilic poem envisioning an idyllic future for Israel, a prose oracle offers a critique of the Temple:

Jer 3:16 And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days—an oracle of YHWH—they will never again say “The Ark of the Covenant of YHWH.” It shall not come to mind; they will not remember it, they will not miss it, and another will not be made. 17 At that time, they will call Jerusalem “The Throne of YHWH”; all nations will gather to it, to the name of YHWH, to Jerusalem; they will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil minds. 18 In those days, the House of Judah will go up to the House of Israel and they will bring them back together from the Land of the North to the land I gave to their ancestors.

In the introductory chapter, I show that the Ark stands as a material metonym for the cult of the First Temple. It played a key role in the Temple cult as YHWH's footstool, a key part of the divine throne. The prose expansion shows how material culture can both frustrate and facilitate the realization of this vision. Material vestiges of the Temple cult like the Ark served as obstacles to Israel's pursuit of “knowledge” and “understanding.” In the Ark's place, the expansion to Jeremiah offers a new material touchstone: Jerusalem. When all nations “gather to the name of YHWH” in Jerusalem, Jerusalem will become YHWH's throne in place of the Ark. The Temple cult was largely Israel's alone, in practice if not by fiat. The physical Ark impeded the inclusive cultic reformation Jeremiah envisions. Physically, Jerusalem was fundamentally different from the Ark and the Temple cult. It would be open to all. In fact, “all nations” shall “gather” in Jerusalem when it becomes YHWH's new throne.

Jeremiah 3:16 is equally concerned with Jerusalem and the Ark. To move forward towards “knowledge” and “understanding,” Israel must forget the Ark and remember Jerusalem. That Jeremiah is concerned with the material is clear. Halbwachs offers two observations concerning mnemonic “objects” like the Ark and Jerusalem that may be helpful for understanding Jer 3:16–18. First, such objects have a “double focus” composed of “material

reality” and “something of spiritual significance, something shared by the group that adheres to and is superimposed on this physical reality.”<sup>69</sup> Authoritative texts like the Hebrew Bible have the capacity to convey and form this “spiritual significance.” Second, such objects convey the impression of “stability”<sup>70</sup> even in their absence. In this regard, they share in a form of what Pearce has called “the power of the real thing.”<sup>71</sup> This imagined stability empowers objects like the Ark and Jerusalem to serve as strong and “real” *lieux de mémoire* when represented in biblical writings. In part for this reason, the growth and development of texts about objects like the Ark should be of particular interest. These texts empower the Ark as a real thing, expressing and offering space for the contestation of what Halbwachs calls their “spiritual significance.” In the strata of biblical writings about the Ark it is possible to read the Ark’s mnemohistory in which its “spiritual significance” is contested across Israel’s history and literature.

The five case studies in this dissertation explore different aspects of the Ark’s mnemohistory, drawing on text-, source-, and redaction-critical approaches to investigate the internal development of biblical writings about the Ark. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the two representations of the Ark’s origins, in Deuteronomy (D) and the Priestly source (P). By describing the Ark’s construction in the legendary wilderness period, both D and P form and mobilize the Ark in different ways as a real and material, though largely absent *lieu de mémoire*.

Chapter 2 explores the mnemohistory and poetics of the Ark in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy remembers the Ark as a reliquary that holds the Tablets of the Covenant. This chapter shows that through the revision of the Elohist (E) account of the Golden Calf affair at Horeb, Deuteronomy mobilizes the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* as a part of its broad and radical program of cultural reforms: the centralization and textualization of the cult in Jerusalem. Calling on Israel to “remember” and “not forget” their experience at Horeb, Deuteronomy folds the Ark into a new version of the Golden Calf affair. In both E and D, YHWH issues a second set of tablets in forgiveness of Israel’s transgression. In Deut 10:1–5, 8–9, D quotes and reworks the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28 to include the Ark. The significance of Deuteronomy’s Ark is fundamentally connected with the Tablets, conveying the importance, antiquity, and divine and Mosaic origins of Deuteronomy’s legal collection. The text distances the Ark from its historic association with the presence of YHWH. If YHWH is present with the Ark, it is through the text: through Deuteronomy’s legal collection. This serves two key objectives for Deuteronomy. First, it aligns with and reinforces the text’s particular conception of the divine. In Deuteronomy, YHWH does not dwell on earth. The Temple is the place where YHWH chooses for his *name*, not for his dwelling. YHWH dwells in heaven. Within Deuteronomy’s worldview, YHWH had no need for a footstool on earth. Second, it forms a part of Deuteronomy’s push for the textualization of religious life. Deuteronomy shifts religious authority from prophecy to the text, circumscribing prophecy and calling for the observance of its laws which are to be memorized, posted, and taught. Critically, the text points to the continued presence of the Tablets (Deut 10:5) and the “Scroll of this Law” (Deut 31:26) with the Ark. By gesturing towards these items in the

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<sup>69</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 204.

<sup>70</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 205.

<sup>71</sup> Susan M. Pearce, “Objects as Meaning; or Narrating the Past,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (ed. Susan M Pearce; London: Routledge, 1994), 20.

text, Deuteronomy implies their continued existence mobilizing the Ark as a real and material *lieu de mémoire*.

In contrast, Chapter 3 shows that YHWH's presence is central to the Priestly vision of the Ark. P's Ark represents a key component of the sacred ecosystem created by the Tabernacle and Israel's involvement in the Priestly ritual system. Through the Priestly Tabernacle and Priestly ritual, YHWH is able to dwell in Israel's midst. In Exod 25–31; 35–40, the Ark is commissioned and constructed with the Tabernacle. The Ark, the Tabernacle, and the Priestly ritual system exist in order to enable YHWH to dwell among the impurities of Israel. Accordingly, the Tabernacle's construction and the ritual system's revelation take place together. When the Ark is in place with the *kappōret* and the *'ēdut*, YHWH is able to be present in Israel's midst and to reveal the regulations of the priestly ritual system: "I will meet with you there; I will deliver to you from above the *kappōret* ... all that I command you for the Israelites" (Exod 25:22). Three observations may help clarify the significance of Exod 25:22. First, YHWH is to be present above the Priestly Ark's lid, the *kappōret*, in the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies. The Tabernacle represents a kind of insulated space. The Ark inhabits the innermost sanctum of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies. It is protected by grades of sanctity that emanate outward from the Ark in the Holy of Holies. Second, the Priestly ritual system is necessary to maintain YHWH's presence in Israel's midst. The annual atonement ritual outlined in Lev 16 removes the very physical residue of Israel's iniquities from the Tabernacle. Third, the Ark plays a central role in the Priestly ritual system. It both *reflects* and *facilitates the revelation* of the Priestly ritual system. Constructed of pure gold, the Ark both reflects the distinctions between pure and impure and sacred and profane that underlie the ritual system and through its installation creates the conditions for the revelation of the ritual system: "all that I command you for the Israelites" (Exod 25:22). The maintenance of these distinctions was of the utmost importance. Failure to do so had mortal consequences.

D most likely predates the Ark's loss. P most likely postdates the Ark's loss. In either case, the Ark is absent. In its absence, the Ark's memory lends support and antiquity to the two competing worldviews: Deuteronomy's program of secularization and textualisation and the Priestly ritual system. P claims that its ritual system was revealed from atop the Ark, reflecting and *making real* the distinctions between which the system mediates. Both D and P capitalize on the Ark's absence and reality. D gestures toward the continued presence of the Tablets and the "Scroll of this Law" with the Ark. Because the Ark is away, this claim cannot be verified. P capitalizes upon the Ark's absence by describing its presence in the Tabernacle to support its vision for the Temple: what the Temple *should be* or *will be*. Further, the attribution of the Ark's construction to Bezalel makes its reconstruction thinkable, creating conditions for a new Ark and a new Temple ritual service grounded in the Priestly vision of the world. In these ways, D and P borrow and qualify the Ark's reality to support their competing visions for Israel. Though the two texts are not communicating directly with one another, they are both making claims on the Ark and the shared past of which it is a part. By claiming the Ark, D and P are claiming what it means to be an Israelite in their present and their future. Both writings mobilize the Ark as a *lieu de mémoire* in their contrasting visions for Israel, harnessing its absence and its power as a real thing to help make their visions real. They point to the Ark as evidence for their understandings of Israel's past and their visions for Israel's future. The two groups of writers are remembering the Ark, and in doing so they are projecting with the Ark an image of what they believe Israel should be. Deuteronomy envisions Israel organized around its law. The Priestly Document

envisions Israel as a community organized through Levitical ritual and social coordination. In its absence, the Ark provides a space for the negotiation of these memories and visions.

The role of textual growth in the formation of memories is the focus of Chapter 4. Building on the discussion of D's revision of the E stratum of Exod 34:1–28, this chapter analyzes three editions of the Ark's installation in the Temple: 1 Kgs 8, 3 Kgdms 8, and 2 Chr 5. The installation of the Ark in the Temple inaugurates the Temple, prompting its inhabitation by YHWH. It is therefore understandable that the text attracted the sustained attention of biblical writers. Chapter 4 traces the earliest pre-Deuteronomistic Historical (DtrH) framework of the text in 1 Kgs 8, which comes to be supplemented by expansions channeling Deuteronomic and Priestly conceptions of the Ark and YHWH. In expansions to Solomon's dedicatory prayer, the Ark fades into the background as the text articulates other Deuteronomic concerns. The Ark's role is to inaugurate the Temple with the divine presence. Once in the Temple, the Ark becomes part of the Temple complex. When the expansions to Solomon's dedicatory prayer advance their vision of the Temple, they offer a different vision of the Temple in which the Ark is largely forgotten. The "Deuteronomic" and "Priestly" expansions are also included in the LXX 3 Kgdms 8, though that text appears to have been streamlined to create a cleaner edition of the Temple dedication. 2 Chr 5 reimagines the Temple dedication to align with its later distinctive conceptions of the Temple. In all cases, the text provides a forum for the contestation of the memory of the Ark. Through expansions, these competing memories of the Ark collide in the account of the Temple dedication. In doing so, the writers create a new synthetic memory of the Ark that is not any one of these visions but all of these visions. The ongoing contestation of the Ark in this text further illustrates the power of old texts, as they are remobilized to convey and to form new ideas.

As an object, the Ark's loss appears to have always been at least conceivable. Chapters 5 and 6 explore considerations of the Ark's loss in the Ark Narrative (AN; 1 Sam 4:1b–7:1) and ancient Jewish and Rabbinic writings. AN represents one of the earliest texts to discuss the Ark. Intriguingly, AN meditates openly on the possibility of the Ark's loss. I argue that the text discusses the Ark's loss in context of honor and dishonor, forms of "symbolic capital." In the AN, the Israelites bring the Ark from Shiloh to march with them in battle against the Philistines. Both Israel and the Philistines expect the Ark to bring Israel victory and honor and the Philistines defeat and dishonor. While they are both ultimately correct, the text plays with its audience through a number reversals of expectation. The Philistines defeat Israel in battle and capture the Ark. The Philistines perceive the Ark's capture as a source of honor. They march it into their cities triumphantly. The Israelites perceive the Ark's loss as a source of dishonor. Eli ironically falls from his chair upon news that the Ark (YHWH's footstool/throne) has been captured. Both reactions to the Ark's fate are incorrect, however. The captured Ark journeys through Philistia, with the Ark/YHWH bringing plague upon the inhabitants of each city to which the Ark is brought. The Ark is returned to Israel with trophies: publicly restoring Israel's lost honor. Expansions to the text play on the Hebrew term for "honor" (כבוד). The term is shared by "honor" and YHWH's "Glory" that manifests with the Cloud atop the Ark in P. At all events, the Ark/YHWH makes the Ark's loss thinkable. It is not likely, however. The account of the Ark's return suggests that the Ark is not likely to go anywhere it does not want to go, ultimately dismissing the possibility of the Ark's loss.



Chapter 6 explores reactions to the Ark's loss in ancient Jewish and Tannaitic writings. Despite the central importance of the Ark and images of the Ark, the biblical text is strangely silent on its fate—a lacuna that ancient Jewish and Tannaitic writings step up to fill. Both bodies of literature represent midrashic interpretations of the gap in biblical writings concerning the Ark's fate. 2 Maccabees 2:4–8 and 2 Bar 6–8 claim that the Ark was preserved before the Temple's destruction, in 2 Maccabees by Jeremiah and in 2 Baruch by an angel in a vision of Jeremiah's scribe Baruch. In this connection, they may be creatively reinterpreting and normalizing on Jer 3:16's curious hope for the Ark to be forgotten. Tannaitic literature offers three solutions to the text's silence on the Ark's fate: the Ark was "taken"; Josiah hid the Ark; or the Ark is hidden under the Temple woodstore. In the latter two possibilities, the Ark's loss is denied. It is certainly absent, that much is undeniable. These texts mobilize the Ark's absence in order to advance their interpretive agendas. 2 Maccabees 2:4 mobilizes the Ark to support Hasmonean control of Judea and the Second Temple. The Ark's eventual return is anticipated in the End Times, which, the text implies, are near because of the Hasmoneans. The Hasmoneans are therefore the proper stewards for Judea and the Second Temple. 2 Baruch and the Tannaitic literature write in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. In different ways, they mobilize the recollection of the Ark to soothe wounds caused by the Second Temple's destruction. 2 Baruch envisions the preservation of sacred items from the Temple including the Ark. The day before the Temple's destruction, these items are saved by an angel. The text makes it clear that the Ark and the Temple will eventually be restored permanently. This apocalyptic deferral of the Temple's ultimate restoration acknowledges and capitalizes upon the Ark's absence. The Ark is absent; the text cannot deny that. Because it is also believed to be "real," the text is able to predict and claim knowledge of its future to inaugurate the permanent restoration of Jerusalem, a message that would have resonated strongly in the aftermath of 70 CE. Tannaitic literature also mobilizes the Ark in its absence as a balm for the destruction, describing and capitalizing upon it to claim religious authority. By claiming knowledge of the Ark's location, Tannaitic literature creates the conditions for its restoration without resorting to apocalyptic visions and imagery. In all cases, the Ark brings more than other things to these visions of the future because it is believed both to have been real and to predate the destructions of the First and Second Temples.

This dissertation shows that over time, the Ark became a key site in the process of memory-making. This process begins within the Hebrew Bible itself, with the creation and expansion of biblical literature. Deuteronomy and the Priestly source create new writings that remember the Ark's origins, embedding it into complex visions for Israel in the wilderness period. 1 Kgs 8:1–14 features an early account of the Ark's installation in the Temple, into which Deuteronomistic and Priestly memories of the Ark come to be woven. The Deuteronomistic expansions to Solomon's Deuteronomistic prayer ultimately move past the Ark. 2 Chr 5 revises 1 Kgs 8, weaving in still later ideas about the Temple cult that reflect the Chronicler's idiosyncratic ideas. 1 Sam 4:1–7:1 describes the Ark's glorious victory over the Philistines, a text that comes to be expanded upon by writers weaving AN into the broader narrative of 1 Samuel and critiquing idol worship. In all these texts, text-, source-, and redaction-critical analysis has shown textual growth to be a kind of memory work. These processes continue in material not included in the Hebrew Bible, in 2 Maccabees, 2 Baruch, and tannaitic literature.

There is both continuity and change in the approaches these texts take. To a certain degree, there is continuity in their exegetical approach. Expansions to and within biblical writings respond dynamically to gaps in the text. In 1 Kgs 8, the pre-Deuteronomistic framework of the temple dedication lacked features of the Ark from Deuteronomistic and Priestly writings. Reading intertextually, this represented a problem. By expanding the text to include Deuteronomistic and Priestly features of the Ark, that problem is solved. In this connection and in all the biblical writings I have discussed, there is an implied reverence for old things and old texts. If not, the biblical writers would not have engaged with either. Both approaches continue in post-biblical interpretation of the Ark. As the biblical text became fixed, redaction ceased to be forms of memory work available to them. Though the expansion of biblical writings does not appear to have been possible, the way in which these writers engaged with the text persists. There is also a new openness to the acknowledgement of the Ark's loss. Unlike most biblical writings however, they explicitly address the text's silence on the Ark's fate. Like 1 Sam, they dismiss the possibility. The Ark is simply too deeply embedded in the biblical imagination. This project asks broad questions about the place of the material in the Hebrew Bible. Through these five case studies, it has shown that the Ark has played key roles in remembering and constructing the biblical past. The persistence of the Ark's memory across biblical writings and interpretations underscores this argument, showing the longstanding and dynamic connection biblical societies have with texts, objects, and an evolving and growing corpus of texts about objects.

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