

Joshua 24 Re-examined

S. DAVID SPERLING

Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, New York

The present paper* is a detailed analysis of the language and themes of Joshua 24:1–28. On the basis of this analysis, it is concluded that the chapter is the work of a single author, not identical with the Deuteronomist as argued by Perlitt, nor, as maintained recently by van Seters, with the Yahwist. The author of Joshua 24:1–28 utilized sources of the Pentateuch and other parts of the Bible but differed from them on significant points of history and theology. The chapter preserves pre-monarchic Shechemite traditions, but was written in the eighth century B.C.E. before the fall of Samaria.

The scholarly literature on Joshua 24 is voluminous. The chapter has been studied from the viewpoints of classical source criticism, form criticism, and tradition-history, but little consensus has emerged with regard to its authorship, the date of its composition, the antiquity of its traditions, its *Sitz im Leben* or its historical value.¹ The present paper was written primarily in response to the analysis of Joshua 24 by Lothar Perlitt in his *Bundestheologie*² and the recent paper by John van Seters in the *Ahlström Festschrift*.³

On the basis of his literary analysis, Perlitt attributes Joshua 24 to the Deuteronomist and traces its historical background to the Assyrian crisis of the seventh century. In contrast, it will be argued here that a) Joshua

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(1) For bibliography to 1970 see J. Soggin, *Joshua* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 222–223; and Y. Kaufmann, *Sepher Yehoshua* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1970), 248–256. Recent relevant studies include F. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973), 84, n. 15; A. van Selms, "Temporary Henotheism," in *Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae Francisco Mario Theodoro de Liagre Böhl Dedicatae*, (eds.) M. Beek and A. Kampen (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 341–348; D. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978), 221–242, 279–284; G. Wright and R. Boling, *Joshua* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 527–545.

(2) L. Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969), 239–284.

(3) J. van Seters, "Joshua 24 and the Problem of Tradition in the Old Testament," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G.W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 139–158.

24:1–28⁴ is a unified literary work by a single author who is not to be identified with the Deuteronomist or any other Pentateuchal source;⁵ b) that author was able to utilize the sources of the Pentateuch and other parts of the Bible and at the same time to deviate from them for literary or ideological purposes; c) the author of Joshua 24 differed with the Pentateuchal sources as well as with traditions preserved elsewhere in the Bible on significant points of history and ideology; d) Joshua 24 preserves pre-monarchic Shechemite traditions⁶ but was written sometime in the eighth century before the fall of Samaria.

The setting of Joshua 24 is Shechem,⁷ a city not connected with the conquest traditions of the books of Joshua and Judges. Joshua has summoned all of Israel to stand before God (האלהים). In their presence he relates the story of Israel's ancestors who "lived beyond the river . . . and served other gods."⁸ Joshua speaks of Jacob's descent into Egypt, the dispatch of Moses and Aaron, the striking of Egypt, the drowning of the Egyptian army in the darkness, the sojourn in the wilderness, the conquest of Transjordan, the battle with Balaq aided by Balaam the curser,⁹ the crossing of the Jordan, the battle at Jericho, the dispatch of the צריפה,¹⁰ and God's gift of the land.

(4) For the treatment of 1–28 as the extant literary unit, see M. Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (HAT; Tübingen: Mohr, 1953), 135–140; Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, 248–255; H. W. Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 131–138; McCarthy, *Trinity*, 221–234.

(5) Cf. Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, 248.

(6) On Shechemite traditions in general, see E. Nielsen, *Shechem, A Tradition-Historical Investigation* (Copenhagen: Gad, 1969); on the city itself, see E. Campbell, "Shechem (City)," *IDBSup*, 821–822; cf. *idem*, "Judges 9 and Biblical Archeology," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday*, (eds.) C. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 263–271.

(7) LXX reads 'Shiloh' in vs. 1 and vs. 25. The Greek reading is secondary. 'Shiloh' may be an attempt at harmonization with 18:1 or the result of a later anti-Samaritan bias. See Nielsen, *op. cit.*, 18:1; Boling, *op. cit.*, 533.

(8) The 'other gods' of vs. 2 recurs in vs. 17. In vs. 20 and 22 they are replaced by 'foreign gods'. For the alternation of אחר 'other' and נכר 'foreign', cf. Exod 34:14 and Ps. 81:10.

(9) The reference to Balaam and Balaq is not significant for dating. The Deir 'Allā texts show that Balaam was a character of folklore, who like Gilgamesh or Ahiqar was popular in more than one culture. For recent studies of the Deir 'Allā Balaam material with bibliography, see J. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Allā* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984); A. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Deir 'Allā et la littérature araméenne antique," *CRAIBL* (1985)270–285. The reference in Mic 6:5 to Balaam and Balaq as ancient figures who would be known to Micah's listeners is probably older than the Deir 'Allā text. According to Lemaire ("Deir 'Allā" 272–273), the Deir 'Allā text dates from ca. 750 B.C.E. but is based on an original a century or two older.

(10) Aside from Joshua 24, צריפה is attested only in Exod 23:28 and in Deut 7:20 which is derived from it. On the relation between these passages, cf. G. Schmitt, *Du sollst keinen*

After completing the narration, Joshua turns to the people, admonishing them to remove the “foreign gods” and serve Yahweh exclusively. He notes that they have the option of serving other gods if they do not wish to serve Yahweh. He and his household however will serve Yahweh. The people then affirm that they too will serve Yahweh. Joshua then warns them that Yahweh’s service is “impossible” because as a jealous god Yahweh will not forgive them if they “sin in their rebelliousness” and serve the “foreign gods”. The people protest that they are prepared to serve Yahweh and to bear their own witness to their choice. Once the people have agreed to abandon all the “foreign gods”, Joshua makes a covenant on their behalf. There in Shechem he provides them with a fixed rule. All these matters, he sets down in writing in a document of God’s teaching (ספר תורת אלהים). Finally, Joshua erects a large stone under the oak in Yahweh’s sanctuary which he designates as witness to Yahweh’s words to the people.

The structural unity of Jos. 24:1–28 is most obvious in the rhetorical progression of Joshua’s argument. Speaking in Yahweh’s name in the manner of a prophet,¹¹ Joshua begins with a recital of the *magnalia dei* performed on the people’s behalf. Inasmuch as Yahweh has always aided his people, fought for them, and given them unearned victories and unworked for prosperity, they must serve Yahweh alone and remove all other objects of worship. In 24:15 Joshua gives the people a “choice” of worshipping the gods “beyond the river” (left behind by their ancestors) or the local gods (whose people were delivered into Israelite hands). Here, Joshua of necessity speaks for himself and not Yahweh asserting that he and his household will serve Yahweh. The people respond appropriately, virtually summarizing the long account of Yahweh’s saving acts. Joshua eggs on the people by telling them that they cannot possibly serve Yahweh, thus making His exclusive worship a goal to be attained. He is then able to reiterate the demand of verse 14 to remove all the other gods and to bring about the people’s compliance. The actions of covenant and its accompaniments follow.

The logical structure of Joshua’s rhetoric is heightened by the repetition of key words and phrases. Not surprisingly the name Yahweh

Frieden schliessen mit den Bewohnern des Landes, BWANT (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970) 17–20; The traditional translation of צרעה as ‘hornet’ is supported by an Egyptian pun in an early text. See J. Wilson in *ANET* 477, n. 36; For a recent attempt to explain the significance of the צרעה, see O. Borowski, “The Identity of the Biblical צרעה,” in *Essays Freedman*, 315–319.

(11) Kaufmann, *Yehoshua*, 251, terms the entire chapter “a prophetic story”; cf. McCarthy, *Treaty*, 239 and van Seters, “Joshua 24,” 147.

occurs eighteen times.¹² Forms of אלהים occur sixteen times.¹³ The verb עבד 'worshipped' also occurs sixteen times.¹⁴ Other significantly repeated words are forms of אב 'ancestor' (eight times),¹⁵ עבר 'crossed/across' (seven times),¹⁶ מצרים 'Egypt/Egyptians' (seven times),¹⁷ ישב 'dwelt' (six times),¹⁸ נתן 'gave, granted' (six times),¹⁹ and שלח 'sent' (four times).²⁰ In addition, Giblin's important study has demonstrated how the placement of significant words and the repetition of grammatical forms serve to tighten the structure of the chapter.²¹

When Perlitt wrote in 1969, he noted the great variety of earlier opinion regarding the source identification of Joshua 24,²² but made the generally accurate observation that recent scholars, even those who maintained the antiquity of its traditions, acknowledged its Deuteronomistic/Deuteronomistic language.²³ Proceeding from this literary 'consensus',²⁴ Perlitt attempted to show that the historical circumstances underlying the chapter fit the seventh century only.²⁵ More recently, John van Seters has correctly noted that Perlitt's historical argument is flawed.²⁶ For his part, van Seters²⁷ identifies the author of Joshua 24 with the Yahwist of the Pentateuch, whom he dates to the Exilic Period.²⁸ Our study begins therefore with a detailed analysis of the language of the chapter.²⁹

24:1: As Nielsen³⁰ and Hertzberg³¹ have noted, the leadership ele-

(12) Vss. 2, 7, 14^a, 15^a, 16, 17, 18^a, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27.

(13) Vss. 1, 2^a, 14, 15^a, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23^a, 24, 26, 27.

(14) Vss. 2, 14^b, 15^b, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 31.

(15) Vss. 2^b, 3, 6^a, 14, 15.

(16) Vss. 2, 3, 8, 11, 14, 15, 17.

(17) Vss. 4, 5, 6, 7^a, 14, 17.

(18) Vss. 2, 7, 8, 13, 15, 18.

(19) Vss. 3, 4^a, 8, 11, 13.

(20) Vss. 5, 9, 12, 28.

(21) C. Giblin, "Structural Patterns in Joshua 24:1-25," *CBQ* 26(1964)50-69; cf. Boling, *Joshua*, 533.

(22) Perlitt, *Bundestheologie*, 238; cf. Nielsen, *Shechem*, 90-92.

(23) Perlitt, *ibid.*, 239; Kaufmann, *Yehoshua*, 248, whose work was not consulted by Perlitt, calls the writer of Joshua 24 "an independent author, writing in an archaic style containing linguistic ingredients from various 'sources'."

(24) McCarthy refers to "the rather uncritical assumption that the text is Distic." See *Treaty*, 283, cf. *ibid.*, 221-234.

(25) See below.

(26) van Seters, "Joshua 24," 145-146; cf. my comments to vs. 2 below.

(27) van Seters, *ibid.*, 149.

(28) van Seters, *ibid.*, 153.

(29) The method followed here is similar to McCarthy's (*Treaty*, 221-234), whose treatment of the language is much less detailed.

(30) Nielsen, *Shechem*, 79, 87.

(31) Hertzberg, *Josua*, 133.

ments enumerated here are characteristic of Deuteronomy. The phrase **וַיִּתְּצוּ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** 'they stood themselves before God' is unique. Its closest parallel is **הִתְּצוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה** 'stand yourselves before Yahweh' in 1 Sam 10:19.

24:2: **בְּעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר** 'beyond the river' recurs in vss. 14–15. From the Syro-Palestinian perspective, the expression means 'east of the Euphrates'. Cf. 2 Sam. 10:16, 1 Kgs. 14:15.³² The claim that Israel's ancestors were 'settled beyond the river' contradicts Deut. 26:5 in which the unnamed ancestor of Israel was a 'wandering'³³ Aramean whose ultimate origin was unknown. Perlitt makes much of this geographic datum: "Von jenseits des Stromes droht Israel Lebensgefahr! Jenseits des Stromes aber leben die Assyrer, deren Götter hier und heute mitten in Israel zur Anbetung aufgestellt sind. Dafür kommt nur e i n e Zeit in Betracht: die des 7 Jh.s, und das ist die Zeit, in und aus deren religiösen Nöten die dt Predigt erwuchs."³⁴ There are a number of problems with this analysis. First, the danger from Assyria was not limited to the seventh century. Assyria's first incursion into Israelite territory was in the ninth century and continued for the next two.³⁵ Second, were Perlitt correct, some reference to the fall of Samaria, however veiled, would be expected. Third, Joshua 24 does not refer to any 'mortal danger' from 'beyond the river'. Mortal danger, described in vague terms, comes from Yahweh if one chooses to worship gods from that region, or any other, along with Him (vs. 20). Fourth, there is no evidence that Assyria demanded the adoration of its gods in its conquered or tributary territories.³⁶ **בְּעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר יֹשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם** 'your ancestors had always dwelt beyond the river.' The term **מֵעוֹלָם** connotes antiquity and permanence.³⁷ The closest

(32) Cf. L. Toombs, "Beyond the River," *IDB* 1, 405–406.

(33) 'Fugitive' may be a better translation. Borger (*BAL*, III, 114), has compared Sennacherib's characterization of Marduk-Apla-Iddina as *arami halpu munnabtu* 'fugitive Aramaean runaway' (OIP 242 v 22); cf. G. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973), 137.

(34) Perlitt, *Bundestheologie*, 251.

(35) See P. Machinist, "Assyria and its Image in the First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103(1983)720–721.

(36) See M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974); cf. van Seters, "Joshua 24," 146.

(37) West-Semitic *ʾln* is semantically equivalent to Akkadian *dārū* 'everlasting'. (For references to *dārū*, see *CAD D*, 115). Cf. Phoenician *ʾln* 'eternal sun', Ugaritic *ʾln* 'eternal' and Amarna *ʾln* 'from of old' attested at Amarna and Boghazköy (see *CAD D*, 114b) prove the antiquity of West-Semitic *nʾln*. See also S. Gevirtz, "West-Semitic Curses and the Problem of the Origin of Hebrew Law" *VT* 11(1961)143 and n. 5; *idem*, "On Canaanite Rhetoric: The Evidence of the Amarna Letters from Tyre," *Or* 42(1973)177; H. Tawil, "Some Literary Elements in the Opening Sections of the Hadad, Zakir, and the Nerab II Inscriptions in the Light of East and West Semitic Royal Inscriptions," *Or*

parallel³⁸ to this verse is in the ninth century Mesha inscription (KAI 181:10): *ואש גר ישב בארץ עשרת מעלם*: 'the Gadites had lived in the land of Ataroth from of old.'

תרח אבי אברהם ואבי נחור 'Terah, father of Abraham and father of Nahor'. Neither the name Terah, nor the name Nahor is mentioned in Deuteronomy.

ויעבדו אלהים אחרים 'they served other gods.'³⁹ No other biblical tradition says explicitly that the immigration of Israel's ancestors was responsible for their rejection of the foreign gods and their adoption of Yahweh worship. According to J, Yahweh had been worshipped everywhere from earliest times.⁴⁰ In consequence, Abraham's departure from Haran did not represent a departure from previous religious practice. According to P, the god known to Abraham as *El Shaddai* was not distinct from Yahweh whose name was revealed first to Moses.⁴¹

בכל ארץ כנען 'in all of Canaan-land'. *כל ארץ כנען* occurs only in Gen. 17:8 (P) but is not distinctive. Cf. Amarna *mât kinahhi gabbala* (EA 162:41). *וארב את ורעי* 'I made his offspring numerous'. Cf. Gen. 16:10, 22:17; Exod. 32:13; Jer. 33:22.

Vs. 4: *ואתן לעשו את הר שעיר לרשת אותו* 'I gave Mt. Seir to Esau as his inheritance'. For the thought, cf. Deut. 2:5. The closest linguistic parallels, however, are Lev. 20:24 and Num. 33:53.

Vs. 5: *ואשלח את משה ואהרן* 'I sent Moses and Aaron'. Cf. the early tradition in Mic. 6:4 and the late one in Ps. 105:26. In Deuteronomy nothing is said of Aaron's mission. He is recalled only in connection with Yahweh's anger against him (9:20) and his death (10:6, 32:50).

ואגף את מצרים 'I struck Egypt'. The verb *גף* appears in Deuteronomy only in the *nif'al*.⁴² Deuteronomy does not employ *גף* for the smiting of the Egyptians, preferring instead the 'mighty hand' (6:21), accompanied

43(1974)42, n. 10; F. Bron, *Recherches sur les inscriptions phéniciennes de Karatepe* (Geneva: Droz, 1979), 187–188.

(38) 1Sam 27:8 may be parallel. Note however that NJV a.1. translates *מעלם* as 'from the region of Olam'.

(39) The notice about the service of other gods led later Jewish tradition to depict Terah as the proprietor of an idol shop and Abraham as an idol smasher. Cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1937) I.213–217; cf. Nielsen, *Shechem*, 87.

(40) See Gen 4:1, 26.

(41) See Gen 17:1; Exod 6:2–3. For a recent survey and discussion of the different modern theories about religion in the patriarchal narratives, see G. Wenham, 'The Religion of the Patriarchs,' in *Essays of the Patriarchal Narratives*, (eds.) A. Millard and D. Wiseman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 161–195; to the bibliography add J. van Seters, 'The Religion of the Patriarchs in Genesis,' *Biblica* 61(1980)220–225.

(42) Deut 1:42, 28:7, 25.

by the 'outstretched arm' (11:3, 26:8). The phrasing here is closest to Exod. 7:27, 12:23.

כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי בְּקִרְבֹךָ 'as I did in its midst'. As Nielsen has noted, this looks like an abbreviation.⁴³ Cf. Exod. 3:20, 10:1; Num. 14:11.

וְאַחֵר הִצַּאתִי אֹתְכֶם 'then afterwards I brought you out'. The construction וְאַחֵר + verb immediately following does not occur in Deuteronomy. Cf. Deut. 21:13 with Lev. 14:8.

Vs. 7: וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֶל יְהוָה 'they⁴⁴ cried out to Yahweh'. Cf. Exod. 14:10.

וַיִּשֶׂם מָאֵל 'he put darkness'. This form of the word for 'darkness' occurs nowhere else in the Bible. In its version of this event Exod. 14:19–20 refers to עַמּוּד הָעָנָן 'the cloud-pillar' and הָעָנָן הַחֹשֶׁךְ 'the dark cloud'. Deut. 11:4 makes no mention of the darkness.

וַיָּבֵא אֶת הַיָּם עָלָיו וַיִּכְסֶה 'he brought the sea over him, covering him'. There is no exact parallel, but cf. Exod. 15:10, Ps. 78:53. Deut. 11:4 has the interesting reading: הִצִּיף אֶת מֵי יָם סוּף עַל פְּנֵיהֶם 'He caused the water of the Red Sea to overflow them'.

וְתִרְאִינָה עֵינֵיכֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם 'Your own eyes beheld what I did to Egypt'. The closest parallels are Exod. 19:4, Deut. 29:1.

יָמִים רַבִּים 'many days'. The figure may be indeterminate. Cf. Deut. 1:46, 2:1, and see Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 31–34. It is possible however that the writer is referring to the ancient forty-year wilderness tradition (Amos 2:10). In the Mesha stele the יָמֵי רַבָּן 'many days' (KAI 181:5) during which Omri humbled Moab are equivalent to the אַרְבַּעַן שָׁנָה 'forty years' during which he occupied Medeba (KAI 181:8).

Vs. 8: וַאֲבִיאתִי אֹתְכֶם אֶל אֶרֶץ הָאֲמֹרִי הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן 'I brought you to the land of the Amorite who dwells on the far side of the Jordan'. Amos 2:9, 10 refer to the conquest of אֶרֶץ הָאֲמֹרִי 'land of the Amorite' as a well-known tradition. According to Nielsen, "the word אֲמֹרִי does not appear in any *ancient [emphasis his — SDS] tradition*"⁴⁵ about the Transjordan-

(43) *Sherken*, 88. He does however, not rule out its originality.

(44) In vs. 6–7 there is an alternation between third person (ancestors) and second person (present generation). Van Seters ("Joshua 24," 147) claims that "this is not a feature of early prophecy so that one must conclude that it is a special feature of the Dtr tradition." Naturally, this requires him (*ibid.*, 157) to assign a late date to Amos 2:4:

עַל מִאֲסַם אֵת תּוֹרַת יְהוָה חֲקִי לֹא שָׁמַר וַיִּחְשַׁב כּוֹכְבֵי אֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ אֲבוֹתָם אֲחֵרִים.

The late dating of Amos 2:4 is in agreement with a number of other scholars who assign the verse to the Dtr redaction of Amos. See e.g. J.L. Mays, *Amos, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969) 40–42. It must be noted however that the similar כּוֹכְבֵי אֲבוֹתָם occurs in Isa 5:24 and that תּוֹרַת יְהוָה and חֲקִי are unattested in Deuteronomy. But even if we grant the lateness of Amos 2:4, this so called "special feature" of alternation between third person (ancestors) and second person (present generation) is found in Amos 2:6–15 and very prominent in Hosea 12–13.

(45) Nielsen, *Sherken*, 94, n. 3.

ians. Nielsen believes that אַמֹרִי was applied secondarily “to the Transjordanian population as a consequence of the policy of the house of Joseph, from the period of Judges until the kingdom of Jeroboam II, and more probably in the latter.”⁴⁶ But see Num. 32:39, Judg. 10:8. J. van Seters holds a more extreme view: “it is very difficult to date any Old Testament source which uses the term ‘Amorite’ . . . for inhabitants of Palestine before the eighth century B.C.”⁴⁷ Biblical sources, argues van Seters, were influenced by the term *amurrû* ‘Westerner’ in cuneiform sources which began in the early eighth century to employ *amurrû* for ‘the kingdoms of Syria . . . Palestine, including Phoenicia, Israel, Moab, Ammon, Edom and the Philistine cities.’⁴⁸ It must be replied first that the fluidity of Akkadian *amurrû* is much earlier than the eighth century;⁴⁹ that the use of biblical אַמֹרִי, however fluid, does not designate the same groups as Akkadian *amurrû*;⁵⁰ that it is unlikely that Hebrew writers learned from outsiders how to apply their own local designation.

<The two Amorite kings>⁵¹ וַיִּלְחֲמוּ אִתְּכֶם >שְׁנֵי מַלְכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי< did battle with you’. The reference to the two Amorite kings must be moved here from vs. 12 where it is difficult syntactically and contextually. The two kings are not named, in contrast to Jos. 2:10, 9:10, 12:2, 4, 5, 13:10, 12, 21, 27.

וַיִּירֶשׁוּ אֶת אֶרֶצָם ‘you took possession of their land’. Cf. Moabite: וַיִּירֶשׁוּ אֶת אֶרֶצָם ‘Omri had taken possession of all Medeba-[La]nd’ (KAI 181:7–8).

וַיִּשְׁמַדְתֶּם מִפְּנֵיהֶם ‘I destroyed them on your behalf’. The phrase is very similar to Amos’ description of the destruction of the Amorites (2:9).

(46) *Ibid.*

(47) J. van Seters, “The Terms ‘Amorite’ and ‘Hittite’ in the Old Testament,” *VT* 22(1972)81.

(48) *Ibid.*, 66.

(49) See *AHW*, 46a; *CAD AII*, 93–95: There is a similar fluidity in early Egyptian sources. Rameses II, in a text ca. 1296 speaks of “the shore in the land of Amurru” with reference to the Phoenician coast. See *ANET*, 256, n.9; contrast van Seters, “Amorite,” 69.

(50) Note, for example that Phoenicia and Edom are never called ‘Amorite’ in the Bible and that biblical ‘Amorite’ never means ‘Westerner’. On the problems involved in the relation between the Hebrew and Akkadian terms, see N. Tsur-Sinai, *The Language and the Book: Beliefs and Doctrines* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1955), 134–139; H. Huffmon, “Amorites,” *IDBSup*, 20–21; J. Luke, “Your Father was an Amorite” (Ezek 16:3, 45): An Essay on the Amorite Problem in OT Traditions,” in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, (eds.) H. Huffmon and A. Green (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 221–237; A. Altman, “The Original Meaning of the Name Amurru ‘Ha’emori,’” in *Studies in Hebrew and Semitic Languages Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Eduard Yechezkel Kutscher* (eds.) G. Sarfati and P. Artzi (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan, 1980), 76–102 [Hebrew; English summary, LX].

(51) LXX to vs. 12 refers to ‘twelve Amorite kings’.

Vss. 9–10: Mic. 6:5 cites an exchange between Balaq, King of Moab, and Balaam, son of Beor, as a familiar tradition but mentions no battle between Israel and Moab. The narrative of Judg. 11:25 explicitly says that Balaq did not engage Israel in battle. Accordingly, both differ with Jos. 24:9–10. There is some linguistic resemblance between Jos. 24:9–10 and Deut. 23:5 which refers to Balaam as being called on to ‘curse’ קלל Israel and to Yahweh’s (lack of) ‘desire’ אבה to comply. Nonetheless the phrase *יִכְרֹךְ בָּרֶךְ* is unique to Joshua 24. At the same time the derivative character of Deut. 23:5 is apparent because the Deuteronomist cites the episode as a legal precedent to justify the exclusion of Ammonites and Moabites from the Israelite community.

... וישלח ויקרא ל...” Not distinctive. Cf. e.g., Gen. 27:42, Judg. 4:6, 16:18.

Vs. 11: וילחשו בכם בעלי יריחו ‘the inhabitants of Jericho did battle with you’. The battle with the Jerichonians contradicts the narrative of chapter 6, which, as Soggin has noted, has “a completely ritual context [in which] there is hardly room for any kind of military action.”⁵²

בעלי יריחו ‘the inhabitants of Jericho’. The plural of בעל for inhabitants of a place is confined to the books of Judges and Samuel. See e.g., Judg. 9 (passim), 1 Sam. 23:11, 12, 2 Sam. 21:12. There is a similar use in late Phoenician texts. See KAI III, 5. Deuteronomy employs ישבי העיר (13:16), and אנשי עיר (Deut. 21:21, 22:21).

The list of the seven nations is apparently a gloss designed to mitigate the contradiction between the beginning of vs. 11 and the tradition of chapter 6. It may be noted however, that the sequence ‘Amorite, Perizzite and Canaanite’ is unique.⁵³

Vs. 12: ואשלח לפניכם את הצרעה ותגרש אותם מפניכם ‘I sent the hornet ahead of you and it drove them out before you’. Structurally this verse resembles Exod. 23:28: ושלחתי את הצרעה לפניך וגרשה את... מפניך. The צרעה is also mentioned in Deut. 7:20. The idiom גרש מפני ‘drove out before’ recurs in vs. 18. McCarthy correctly describes גרש as “un-Distic”.⁵⁴ See e.g., Exod. 34:11; Judg. 2:3. Once again there is a ninth century Moabite parallel: ויגרשה כמש מפני ‘Chemosh drove him out before me’ (KAI 181:19).

לא בחרבך ולא בקשתך ‘Not by your sword nor by your bow’. The hendiadys ‘sword and bow’ means ‘warfare’. Cf. Gen. 48:22; 2 Kgs. 6:22.

(52) J. Soggin, “The Conquest of Jericho through Battle,” *Erlsr* 16(1982)*215.

(53) The order differs in the versions. See Nielsen, *Shechem*, 89.

(54) McCarthy, *Treaty*, 232. In Deuteronomy גרש “expel” appears only in 33:27, in a poetic chapter whose relation to the rest of the book is questionable. Deuteronomy prefers forms of ירש. See e.g., Deut. 11:23, 12:2, 29, 18:14, 19:1.

Vs. 13: 'ארץ אשר לא יגעת בה' a land for which you did not toil'. The phrase is unique. But see e.g., Isa. 62:8; Ps. 6:7.

'וערים אשר לא בניתם ותשבו בהם כרמים ויתים אשר לא נטעתם אתם אכלים' (I have given you) cities which you inhabit although you did not build them. You enjoy olive groves and vineyards which you did not plant'. This verse has a close parallel in Deut. 6:10–11: 'והיה כי יביאך יהוה אלהיך אל הארץ אשר נשבע לאבותיך אברהם ויצחק וליעקב לתת לך ערים גדולות וטבות אשר לא בנית. ובתים מלאים כל טוב אשר לא מלאת וברת חצובים אשר לא חצבת כרמים ויתים אשר לא נטעת ואכלת ושבעת'. 'When Yahweh your god brings you into the land which He swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you great prosperous cities which you did not build, and houses filled with every delight which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns⁵⁵ which you did not hew, and you enjoy to satiety olive groves and vineyards which you did not plant ...'

The Joshua passage is obviously primary. In Jos. 24:13 the 'land' and 'cities' are the objects of *ראתן*. In Deut. 6:10–11, the 'cities' and 'houses' stand without a governing verb (*לתת* complements *נשבע*). In addition, Deuteronomy explicitly assigns the promises to the Patriarchs. The primacy of Joshua 24 is also reflected in its realistic picture of a victorious force occupying the territory of the defeated. This picture is elaborated by the Deuteronomist, who describes the cities as great and prosperous, populated with houses which are filled with delights and which contain private cisterns. The Israelites do not merely eat, but eat to satiety. The Deuteronomist apparently employed Joshua's words as part of Moses' prophetic warning.

Vs. 14: 'ועתה יראו את יהוה' 'Now then, fear Yahweh.' Cf. 1 Sam. 12:24; Ps. 34:10.

'ועבדו אתו בתמים ובאמת' 'and serve Him with wholehearted devotion.' The phrase occurs nowhere else. The pair is attested in reverse order in Judg. 9:16, 19, likewise set in Shechem. In Deuteronomic language the concept of wholehearted devotion is expressed by *בכל לבבכם* [and] *בכל נפשכם* [and]. See Deut. 6:5, 11:13.

'והסירו את אלהים אשר עבדו אבותיכם בעבר הנהר ובמצרים' 'and remove the gods your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt'.⁵⁶ Cf. vs. 23 below.

(55) For these private cisterns, cf. Isa 36:16. Cf. also Moabite: 'So I said to the entire people: Each of you make a cistern for yourselves in your own home' (KAI 181:24–25).

(56) Pace Nielsen (*Shechem*, 102) and van Seters ("Joshua 24," 149), there are no explicit statements in Joshua 24 that Israel served Egyptian gods in Egypt. Vs. 14 refers to Israel's persistence in the service of its ancestral gods in Egypt. In vs. 15 Joshua tells the people to choose between the ancestral gods from beyond the river and the local Amorite gods if they do not approve of Yahweh's service. The writer of the chapter believes that Joshua's

For similar removals of offending gods, see Gen. 35:3; Judg. 10:16; 1 Sam. 7:3–4. A. van Selms refers to this action as “temporary henotheism” and cites parallel phenomena in other Near Eastern cultures.⁵⁷

Vs. 15: *בחרו לכם היום את פי תעבדון* ‘choose now whom you will serve’. In Deuteronomy it is Yahweh who chooses, not the people. See Deut. 4:37, 7:6, 7, 10:15, 14:2. For the people choosing gods, see Judg. 5:8, 10:14; Isa. 1:29.

היום ‘now, right away, presently’. The form is common in Deuteronomy. See e.g., Deut. 1:10, 39, 4:4, 8, 5:1. It is also well-attested elsewhere. See e.g., Gen. 19:37, 21:26, 22:14, 24:12, 30:32, 42:13, 47:23; Exod. 2:18, 13:4; Lev. 9:4; Judg. 21:6.

אלהי האמרי אשר אתם יושבים בארצם ‘the gods of the Amorite in whose land you dwell’.⁵⁸ Cf. Judg. 6:10.

ואנכי וביתי נעבד את יהוה ‘but I and my household shall serve Yahweh’. The phrase is unique.

Vs. 16: *חלילה לנו מעזוב את יהוה* ‘far be it from us to forsake Yahweh’. The word *חלילה* does not occur in Deuteronomy.

Vs. 17: *כי יהוה אלהינו הוא המעלה אתנו ואת אבותינו מארץ מצרים* ‘for Yahweh our god is the one who brought us and our ancestors up out of the land of Egypt’. The verb *העלה* ‘brought up’ is found in exodus traditions of all periods. For early examples, see Amos 2:10, 3:1, 9:7; Hos. 12:14; Mic. 6:4. Cf. Gen. 50:24; Exod. 32:4, 7, 8, 33:1; Lev. 11:45; Num. 14:13, 20:5; Deut. 20:1; Judg. 6:13; 1 Sam. 12:6; 1 Kgs. 12:28; 2 Kgs. 17:36; Jer. 16:14–15; Ps. 81:11; Neh. 9:18.

בית עבדים ‘slave-house’. The term occurs in the Bible in texts of all contemporaries might continue in the service of their ancestral gods and that they might be drawn to the service of the local gods, but that they presumably would not be tempted to serve the gods of those who put them in the ‘slave house’ (vs. 17). It was the Deuteronomist who first suggested that Israel might be tempted to worship the gods of Egypt (Deut 29:15–17). He was followed by Ezek 20:5–8 which explicitly attributes the worship of Egyptian gods to Israel in Egypt.

(57) A. van Selms, “Temporary Henotheism,” in M. Beck and A. Kampman, et al. (eds.), *Symbiar Biblicae et Mesopotamicae Francisco Mario Theodoro de Liagre Böhl Dedicatae* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 341–348. As far as the author of Joshua 24 was concerned, the removal of the foreign gods was supposed to be permanent. Most Israelites apparently accepted the notion that it was sinful to worship other gods in the presence of Yahweh (Exod 20:3). At the same time however, the priesthood taught that all sins could be expunged (Lev 16:30). In consequence, it was popularly believed that a (temporarily) reformed thief, murderer, adulterer, liar under oath, or Baal worshipper could participate in the cult with a clear conscience. See Jer 7:9–10.

(58) ‘Amorite’ clearly refers to the earlier Canjordanian population as it does in vs. 18. See Kaufmann, *Yehoshua*, 253, 254; The ‘gods of the Amorite’ are the Baals and Astartes. See O. Eissfeldt, “El and Yahweh,” *JSS* 1(1956)31.

periods as an epithet of Egypt. See e.g., Exod. 13:3; 14. 20:2; Deut. 5:6, 7:8, 13:6; Judg. 6:8; Jer. 34:13; Mic. 6:4.

בה *ישמרנו בכל הדרך אשר הלכנו בה* 'who protected us throughout our entire journey'. Cf. Gen. 28:20. See further Exod. 18:20; Deut. 1:31.

Vs. 19: *לא תוכלו לעבד את יהוה* 'you will be unable to serve Yahweh'. The statement is unique.⁵⁹

הוא *אלהים קדשים* 'He is a holy god'. The plural *קדשים* with *אלהים* in reference to Yahweh is unique. It is more at home in polytheistic language. Cf. Dan. 4:5, 6, 15.

הוא *אל קנא* 'He is a jealous god'. The closest parallel is Nah. 1:2. Cf. Exod. 20:5, 34:14; Deut. 5:9, 6:15.

לא *ישא לפשעכם ולהטאותיכם* 'He will not forgive your sins of rebelliousness'. For the language, cf. Gen. 50:17; Exod. 23:21, 34:7. The singular *פשעכם* in hendiadys with *הטאותיכם* is to be understood adjectivally. It must be emphasized that although *פסע* is already attested in Ugaritic⁶⁰ and very frequently in biblical Hebrew, it does not occur in Deuteronomy.⁶¹

Vs. 20: *ושב הרע לכם* 'He will turn and do you harm'. The phrase is unique. For the construction, see Deut. 23:14, 30:3; 1 Kgs. 8:47; Isa. 6:10, 12; Jer. 18:4; Mic. 7:9; Mal. 3:18; Ps. 78:34.⁶²

הוא *יכלה אתכם* 'he shall destroy you'. The verb *כלה* 'destroy, annihilate' occurs in all periods of Hebrew and is attested earlier as *ḫly*, in the same sense, in Ugaritic.⁶³ The threat is general and lacking in specific historical allusions.

אחרי אשר *היטיב לכם* 'after having dealt kindly with you'. For *אחרי אשר* see Deut. 24:4; Jos. 7:8, 9:16, 23:1; Judg. 11:36, 19:23; 2 Sam. 19:31. For the thought of the passage, cf. Deut. 28:63.

Vs. 21: *לא כי את יהוה נעבד* 'Not so! We shall serve Yahweh'. For examples of the emphatic denial *לא כי* see Gen. 19:2; Jos. 5:14; 1 Sam. 12:12; 1 Kgs. 3:22.

Vs. 22: *עדים אתם בכם... ויאמרו עדים* 'You are your own witnesses ... They replied 'We are'.'⁶⁴ Cf. 1 Sam. 12:5; See also Ruth 4:11.

(59) The notion is completely incompatible with the thinking of the Deuteronomist. See McCarthy, *Treaty*, 229, 240.

(60) CTA 17:VI: 83 *ḫg'm*; The virtually identical parallelism is attested in Ben-Sira. See Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Languages* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1984), 409–410.

(61) This observation also argues against Perlit's assignment of Hos 8:1b to the "dtr redigierten Hoseabuch" (*Bundestheologie*, 147).

(62) There are similar constructions in Akkadian and post-biblical Hebrew. See D. Sperling, "Late Hebrew *ḫr* and Akkadian *ḫr*," *JANES* 5(1973)404.

(63) See J. Paton, *opud* Avishur, *Word-Pairs*, 46.

(64) So, Hertzberg, *Josua*, 132, and see below at vs. 27.

Vs. 23: *ועתה הסירו את אלהי הנכר אשר בקרבכם* 'now remove those foreign gods that are among you'. Cf. vs. 4 above; Gen. 35:2-4; Judg. 10:16; 1 Sam. 7:3-4.⁶⁵

אל יהוה אלהי ישראל 'direct your heart to Yahweh, god of Israel'.⁶⁶ Despite the many attestations of *לבב* in Deuteronomy the idiom *אל יהוה* does not appear there. Deut. 32:46 has *אל שיש לבבכם* for 'turning toward'. 'Turning/directing the heart (away)' is expressed by *סור* (Deut. 17:20. The parallel in 1 Kgs. 11:2-4 has *הסטה*), and *פנה* (Deut. 29:17).

Vs. 24: *את יהוה אלהינו נעבד ובקולו נשמע* 'We shall serve Yahweh our god and obey Him'. The closest parallel is 1 Sam. 12:14. For the reverse sequence of *בקולו נשמע* and *נעבד*, see Deut. 13:5.

Vs. 25: *ויכרת יהושע ברית לעם ביום ההוא* 'On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people'. Although *ברית* has several meanings,⁶⁷ the appropriate sense here is 'in behalf of'.⁶⁸ Cf. Hos. 2:20. Joshua acts as mediator in behalf of the people. He himself requires no covenant because he is already committed to Yahweh's service.

וישם לו חק ומשפט בשכם 'He established a fixed rule for them at Shechem'. See 1 Sam. 30:25; cf. Exod. 15:25; Ps. 81:5; Ezra 7:10.⁶⁹ The hendiadys *חק ומשפט* is not attested in Deuteronomy.

(65) On the relation between the demand for removing the foreign gods in Joshua 24 and Gen 35:2-4, see A. Alt "Die Wallfahrt von Sichem nach Bethel," in A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, (Munich: Beck, 1953) 1.79-89. Outside of Joshua 24, the demanded removal of the foreign gods is followed by an explicit statement of compliance. In Joshua 24, in contrast, that notice is absent because it is the only case in which the demand is not connected to a military threat. It appears that the writers of these other pericopes wanted to demonstrate that obedience to the call for the physical removal of competing deities in wartime would result in Yahweh's full military cooperation.

(66) Cf. Gen 33:20; see Noth, *Josua*, 139. The repetition of 'Yahweh, god of Israel' from vs. 2 serves to frame the words of Joshua and the people and to provide a transition to the next series of actions.

(67) Perlitt, *Bundestheologie*, 261-262.

(68) L. Kochler, "Problems in the Study of the Language of the Old Testament," *JSS* 1(1956)4; cf. Soggin, *Josua*, 225. The *לעם* is balanced by *לו* in the next phrase. Both mean 'for, in behalf of'.

(69) As Perlitt notes (*Bundestheologie*, 268, n. 3), in the first three passages *חק ומשפט* refers to a specific custom; 1 Sam 30:25 to spoils division; Exod 15:25 to water purification; and Ps 81:5 to sounding the ram's horn. In Ezra 7:10 however, *חק ומשפט* seems to have a more general sense of 'statutes and decrees' somehow associated with the written *תורה* referred to in the same verse. Perlitt argues from the proximity of *סור תורה אלהים* in Jos 24:26 that *חק ומשפט* in vs. 25 carries a meaning similar to *חק ומשפט* in Ezra 7:10, thus reflecting late usage. It is, however, much more natural to understand *חק ומשפט* in Jos 24:25 as a reference to the specific action of covenant making in the same verse. See NJV and Boling (*Josua*, 529) a.1. In addition, the MT of Ezra 7:10 is uncertain. Both LXX and Peshitta indicate a plural *חקים ומשפטים*, which unlike *חק ומשפט*, is well-attested in Deuteronomy (e.g.,

Vs. 23: ועתה הסירו את אלהי הנכר אשר בקרבכם 'now remove those foreign gods that are among you'. Cf. vs. 4 above; Gen. 35:2-4; Judg. 10:16; 1 Sam. 7:3-4.⁶⁵

אל יהוה אלהי ישראל 'direct your heart to Yahweh, god of Israel'.⁶⁶ Despite the many attestations of לכבב in Deuteronomy the idiom שישו לכבב אל does not appear there. Deut. 32:46 has שישו לכבב אל for 'turning toward'. 'Turning/directing the heart (away)' is expressed by סור (Deut. 17:20. The parallel in 1 Kgs. 11:2-4 has הסה), and פנה (Deut. 29:17).

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vs. 26: 'Joshua wrote these words down in a document⁷⁰ of God's teaching'.⁷¹ The expression ספר תורת אלהים occurs only here. The similar ספר תורת האלהים is found in Neh. 8:18.⁷² It is difficult to determine whether ספר תורת אלהים refers to an already existing document to which Joshua added or whether his record constituted that ספר תורת אלהים.⁷³ The Peshitta to this passage reflects the reading: ספר תורת משה. Inasmuch as the historical summary earlier in the chapter makes no mention of Moses as lawgiver, it is likely that the Peshitta's reading was influenced by the better attested ספר תורת משה of Jos. 8:31, 32, 23:6. No mention is made of the disposition of the document such as we might have expected from a comparison with 1 Sam. 10:25 and similar passages.

וַיִּקַּח אֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וַיִּקְּמָהּ תַּחַת הָאֵלֶּה בְּמִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה 'he took a large stone⁷⁴ and stood it up at the foot of that oak⁷⁵ which is in Yahweh's sanctuary'. Joshua's action violates Deuteronomy's prohibition against dedicating standing stones (Deut. 16:22). In addition, the Deuteronomist prohibits trees in the Yahweh sanctuaries.⁷⁶

Deut 4:5, 8, 13, 5:1, 6:1, 7:11, 11:32, 12:1) and a sure sign of Deuteronomy's influence elsewhere. See e.g., 2Kgs 17:37; Mal 3:22.

(70) *qpr* is the common West Semitic word for 'document'. For comparisons, see Y. Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 207. In biblical Hebrew ספר can refer to a written document of any length. See Gen 5:1; Num 5:23; Deut 24:1; Jos 1:8; 2Kgs 5:5, 22:8; Isa 29:11; Jer 52:11.

(71) On the differences among MT, Peshitta, and LXX with regard to ספר תורת אלהים, see Nielsen, *Shechem*, 108.

(72) Cf. Neh 8:8; 9:3. Neither the expression תורת אלהים, nor the concept of written divine תורה are significant for dating. For early examples see Isa 1:10; Hos 4:6, 8:12. Perlit (*Bundestheologie*, 270) takes ספר תורת אלהים as proof of the lateness of Jos 24:26 because it employs terminology similar to Neh 8:8, 9:3. Perlit understands that usage to reflect the conceptions of Deuteronomy and those works composed under its influence. He is surely correct with regard to Nehemiah but in that book much more than the phrase תורת אלהים is involved. The Nehemiah references are to some form of the Pentateuch, i.e. the same document referred to in Neh 8:1 as ספר תורת משה "the book of the Law of Moses"; in Neh 8:2,9 as תורה "the Law", and in Neh 8:3 as ספר התורה "the Book of the Law". Unlike the author of Joshua 24, the writer of Nehemiah 8-9 describes the public reading of divine תורה. His heroes however, do not write in that תורה or write a תורת אלהים of their own.

(73) In either case, Joshua's action would be opposed to the ideology of Deuteronomy (4:2, 13:1) which views its teachings as complete and unalterable. Early Jewish sources attempted to resolve the contradiction. See Kaufmann, *Yehoshua*, 254, n.7; note the Targum's translation: 'He secreted them in the Torah-book'.

(74) The excavations at Shechem uncovered a great standing stone and its socket in the forecourt of the temple precinct there dated 1450-1100 B.C. See the discussion by E. Campbell, "Judges 9 and Biblical Archeology," in *Essays Freedman*, 263-271.

(75) Cf. Gen 12:6, 35:4; Judg 9:6.

(76) Deut 15:21. The medieval Jewish commentators were troubled by Joshua's violation of this law and attempted to mitigate the difficulty. The Targum, for example, translated אלה by Aramaic אלתא 'doorpost'. In contrast, Rashi and Qimbi explained that

Vs. 27: הנה האבן הזאת תהיה בנו לעדה כי היא שמעה את כל אמרי יהוה והיתה בכם: "This stone then shall be a witness in our midst for it has heard all of Yahweh's words. Indeed it will witness against you should you deny your god". This is a pun on *עד ב'* 'witness to' (see e.g., 1 Sam. 12:5) and *עד ב'* 'witness against' (e.g., Num. 5:13). For the stone as witness, see Gen. 31:52. The phrase *אמרי יהוה* is unique. It must also be noted that the verb *כחש* does not occur in Deuteronomy in the sense 'deny'.⁷⁷

Vs. 28: וישלח יהושע את העם איש לנחלתו 'Joshua then dismissed the people, all of them, to their allotted portions'. Cf. the dismissal of the people in 1 Sam. 10:25. For the expression *איש לנחלתו*, see Judg. 2:6, 21:24; Jer. 12:15. The writer of Judg. 2:6ff. borrowed this verse in order to begin his tale of the people's infidelity after Joshua's death.

This detailed study of words, expressions and grammatical constructions in Josh. 24:1–28 leads to the conclusion that Perliitt's attempt to link Joshua 24 to Deuteronomy on linguistic grounds has virtually no basis. The language of the chapter is not Deuteronomistic or Deuteronomistic. Aside from the tribal leadership terminology of vs. 1, in those passages in which genuine resemblances to Deuteronomy were observed, it was shown that the Deuteronomist was the borrower. Other elements were seen to have parallels in Deuteronomy as well as in other parts of the Bible and therefore are not distinctive. Indeed, several parallels to the ninth century Moabite inscription of King Mesha were noted. At the same time, we have found no words, phrases, grammatical constructions, or historical allusions which indicate a date later than the eighth century B.C.E.⁷⁸

In his recent article, John van Seters makes some observations on the form of Joshua 24, arguing that it is based on the Deuteronomistic parenesis. He begins by citing similarities to 1 Sam 10:17ff. which also contains the formula "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel," and noting that it is followed by a (very brief) recital of saving history, which in turn is followed by Samuel's rebuke (vs. 19) that the people have rejected Yahweh. But as van Seters himself remarks, the order of elements in 1 Sam. 10 is not the same as in Joshua 24.⁷⁹ We may add that Joshua 24 in

Shechem had acquired temporary sanctity by serving as host to the Ark. As such, it could accurately be called a *מקדש* without housing an altar.

(77) The verb *כחש* in Deut 33:29 is probably related to post-biblical *כחש* 'was weak/meager'. For references, see Jastrow, 629a.

(78) According to Campbell, "Shechem," 821, Shechem was continuously occupied from ca. 1000 B.C.E. until it suffered a major destruction in 724. Joshua 24 is set in a flourishing Shechem oblivious to any impending doom.

(79) van Seters, "Joshua 24," 146.

contrast to 1 Sam. 10, contains no rebuke nor does it call for an array of Israel according to its tribal elements. In sum, 1 Sam. 10 and Joshua 24 share the motifs of divine speech and recital of sacred history. But these are also combined in prophetic speeches uninfluenced by the Deuteronomistic paranesis such as Hos. 12:1–13:10, Amos 6:1–5, and Mic. 6:1–8.

To prove that 1 Sam. 10:7f. is “thoroughly” Deuteronomistic van Seters compares that passage to Judg. 6:8–10 which “contains the prophetic speech: ‘Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel’, followed by a summation of the salvation history and a divine admonition against worshipping the ‘gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.’” But as van Seters himself observes, this pericope differs from both Joshua 24 and 1 Sam. 10 in lacking an assembly.⁸⁰

van Seters then turns for further proof to 1 Sam. 12:7ff. “where a convocation is presupposed.” Samuel calls on the people to “take their stand before Yahweh and then recounts to them God’s acts of deliverance towards them and their forefathers. At the end of this is a warning against disobedience and disloyalty.”⁸¹ van Seters is certainly correct to compare Joshua 24 with the Samuel pericope but that section is generally considered to belong to the early stratum of the Book of Samuel.⁸²

According to van Seters, all of the above texts and Joshua 24 are dependent on the Deuteronomistic paranesis: “It is not just a question of some vague prophetic influence . . . This reference back to the fathers, whether in terms of what God has done for them or how they sinned against Yahweh by serving other gods and the consequences for the present generation addressed in the second person by prophet or speaker, is found most frequently in Dtr preaching.”⁸³ Indeed, van Seters is correct with regard to frequency, but frequency does not mean invention. The technique is already found in Hosea⁸⁴ and Amos.⁸⁵

Believing that he has demonstrated that the form of Jos. 24:1–27, is derived from the Deuteronomistic paranesis, van Seters turns to the contents of its historical summary. He draws the questionable inference that the historical summary in Joshua 24 must be “later than all the Dtr examples”⁸⁶ because it is so elaborate, and observes that vs. 24:2–13 depart radically in matters of detail from the Deuteronomistic tradition

(80) *Ibid.*, 147.

(81) *Ibid.*

(82) See N. Gottwald, “Samuel, Book of,” *EncJud* 14:792.

(83) van Seters, *op. cit.*, 147.

(84) See Hosea 9:10–17, 10:9–13:10.

(85) Amos 2:6–15. Cf. n. 44 above.

(86) van Seters, *op. cit.*, 148.

and agree substantially with the Yahwistic source of the Pentateuch. In consequence, van Seters concludes, "the author of Jos. 24:1-27 is none other than the Yahwist of the Pentateuch," whose work was composed during the exilic period as an addition to the Deuteronomic history.⁸⁷

The exilic dating leads van Seters to understand Joshua 24 as reflective of exilic concerns. The people assembled at Shechem are no longer a nation but simply individual households who are bidden to follow Joshua's example. The references to the foreign gods must also be understood in this vein. "The theological crisis of the exile meant that the Jews in these regions of the diaspora were sorely tempted to worship the gods of these regions."⁸⁸

We cannot enter here into the literary-critical problems involved in dating the Yahwist⁸⁹ and must be content with the following observations. First, that Jews, and earlier, Israelites, were tempted to serve other gods is no indication of date. Unless Yehezkel Kaufmann was correct in his radical view that biblical descriptions of Israel's worship of other gods than Yahweh are merely prophetic exaggerations,⁹⁰ there was always a "theological crisis" in Israelite Canaan. Second, there is an important ideological difference between the J source of the Pentateuch and Joshua 24. According to J, Yahweh worship was instituted during the first human generation.⁹¹ Joshua 24 in contrast, and specifically that section which van Seters views as the contribution of the Yahwist to the Deuteronomic history,⁹² connects Yahweh worship with Abraham's immigration to Canaan. This tradition, by the way, would seem to be a bad lesson for the exile. Why cite a precedent which justifies the worship of the gods of the nations in the lands of the nations?⁹³ Third, Joshua 24 makes no reference to any earlier covenant or law associated with Moses at Sinai, Horeb, or the plains of Moab. In the exilic period, why stress a

(87) *Ibid.*, 149.

(88) *Ibid.*, 153. Note however, that the gods of the Amorites are local, the ancestral gods are traditional, and the gods of the Egyptians are not mentioned. In sum, the gods of the diaspora regions are not the concern of Joshua 24.

(89) For a recent discussion with bibliography see W. Schmidt, "A Theologian of the Solomonic Era? A Plea for the Yahwist," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, (ed.) T. Ishida (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1982) 55-73.

(90) Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); for a recent critique see D. Sperling, "Israel's Religion in the Ancient Near East," in *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible to the Middle Ages*, (ed.) A. Green (New York: Crossroad, 1986) 16-21.

(91) See n. 40 above.

(92) van Seters, *op. cit.*, 148.

(93) Note that Jeremiah's adversaries in Jer 44:17 justify their worship of the Queen of Heaven by citing ancestral precedent.

covenant made in the land? A far better lesson for the exiles would have been the Horeb or Sinai covenant traditions in which Israel bound itself exclusively to Yahweh outside of Canaan. Fourth, the covenant to serve Yahweh alone is a monolatrous, not monotheistic, notion.⁹⁴ The consistent monotheism which began to assert itself in the exilic period preferred different religious imagery.⁹⁵

Joshua 24 clearly does not fit the conditions of the exile. At the other extreme, the chapter cannot be contemporary with the events it describes because it accepts the fall of Jericho to the Israelites as a real event and views Joshua as a full-fledged leader of all Israel. These traditions would have taken some time to develop. In addition, it seems as though the author of Joshua 24 had access to the JE literature in some form.⁹⁶

By combining our analysis with the results of earlier scholarship and with what is known about Shechem from biblical and extra-biblical sources, we may draw certain conclusions about the dating of the chapter: Shechem was an important city with ancient religious traditions dating back well into the second millennium. The Israelites reinterpreted those traditions in the light of their own historical, mythical and cultic traditions. It is well-known that the worship of a god El/Baal Berith is attested at Shechem. Joshua 24 is based on an early northern Israelite reinterpretation of that tradition in which Yahweh, the god of the exodus, became the covenant-god at Shechem.⁹⁷ The language of Joshua 24, however, points to the ninth-eighth centuries and this agrees with the historical perspective of the chapter. The people live in peace and comfort. We have noted that destruction is threatened only in general terms and that there is no reference to exile. The historical setting fits nicely with the conventional dating of JE as earlier than D. In consequence, we would date the composition of Joshua 24 to a period early in the long and prosperous reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 786–746).

(94) See Sperling, *op. cit.*, 16.

(95) See my forthcoming monograph, *No Other Gods*.

(96) See the Pentateuchal citations in the detailed comments above. There are no specific indications that the author of Joshua 24 had access to P.

(97) See McCarthy, *Treaty*, 222.