"As Commander of the Army of the LORD I Have Now Come":
Joshua 5:13-6:27 as War Narrative in Context

by

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ABSTRACT

War, and what constitutes the waging of successful warfare in the Ancient Near East, is the hermeneutical key by which to properly understand texts such as Joshua 5:13-6:27. Traditionally, scholars have sought to understand biblical war narrative such as Joshua 5:13-6:27 from an ethical perspective, which fails because war generates a culture of its own, with its own set of norms, that are distinct from everyday reality. I describe features of Joshua 5:13-6:27 that persist throughout war narrative from the Ancient Near East and seek to understand those features within the sociology of warfare as described by the sociologist Siniša Malešević. Understanding these features within the context of other Ancient Near Eastern material illuminates the paradigmatic nature of Joshua 5:13-6:27 as war narrative and helps us to draw out its essential theme: the kingship of YHWH.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

Throughout this thesis I will show that Joshua 5:13-6:27 is a paradigmatic war narrative from the Ancient Near East and it thus needs to be primarily understood within the context of warfare itself. My thesis is that war, and what constitutes the waging of successful warfare in the Ancient Near East, is the hermeneutical key by which to properly understand texts such as Joshua 5:13-6:27. This is not to say that this is the only way to understand texts such as Joshua but, rather, interpreting Joshua 5:13-6:27 through a war-narrative lens is a matter of first importance. In order to show what constitutes war narrative, we need to understand the underlying sociological elements of war. Attempts to understand (or even worse, to justify) war narrative ethically, or as part of a wider literary and theological context, will always fall short and/or meet some level of inadequacy precisely because, as we will see, war generates a culture all its own with its own set of norms that are plainly distinct from what might be considered everyday reality.

In order to fully appreciate the common elements of what constitutes the waging of successful conquest campaigns in the Ancient Near East (that is, "successful" according to the victors, and thus the writing about such victories) it will be necessary to examine the sociological backdrop of warfare itself. Therefore, I will address the sociology of warfare because, in order to understand what we might expect from a war narrative in the first place, some understanding of warfare *per se* as well as the ways that human beings commemorate warfare is in order. Having established an understanding of war in and of itself, we will be in the position to understand why war narrative is both necessary to a given militaristic project and, furthermore, why it is distinct. This is because all the typical conventions of a culture or society are overturned during times of

war and, therefore, the heuristic key to understanding war narrative can only *be* war. The writer and former war correspondent Chris Hedges has written:

> I learned early on that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug, one I ingested for many years. It is peddled by mythmakers - historians, war correspondents, filmmakers, novelists, and the state – all of whom endow it with qualities it often does possess: excitement, exoticism, power, chances to rise above our small stations in life, and a bizarre and fantastic universe that has a grotesque and dark beauty. It dominates culture, distorts memory, corrupts language, and infects everything around it.[1]

The fact that warfare generates a culture of its own means that we should expect warfare to be incongruent with the symbols, beliefs and praxis which typically govern daily life. Once warfare's consistent propensity for overturning normative taboos is grasped, any effort to interpret warfare or, for our purposes, narrative concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible, and in the Ancient Near East more generally, will at once be regarded as misguided if the attempt at interpretation involves couching the narratives within the symbols, beliefs and practices which govern daily living. This, of course, raises the question, "How have scholars sought to understand narratives concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible?"

In the first chapter of this thesis I will address the numerous ways in which the violent texts within the Hebrew Bible have been approached in the past. We will see that these approaches have been dominated by various means of attempting to ethically understand the texts in light of the Christian revelation of God as a God of love. I will also discuss efforts to contextualize the texts concerning warfare within a wider consideration of warfare in the Hebrew Bible as a whole, as well as within a wider corpus

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[1] Chris Hedges, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Random House, 2002), 3.

of Ancient Near Eastern material. I will then address the sociology of warfare, which is necessary to appreciate precisely because warfare generates a culture of its own, and it is from the culture generated by warfare that the texts concerning warfare in the Ancient Near East, including those within the Hebrew Bible, emerge.

In the second chapter I will delineate the sociological factors that underlie the emergence of organized violence (i.e. warfare). Following a description of the sociological underpinnings of warfare I will discuss the presence of those indispensible foundations of organized violence in the Ancient Near East through an examination of the Akkadian Empire. I will then illustrate that those underpinnings were intentionally incorporated into Israelite society, according to the biblical narrative, before the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan.

In Chapter Three I will describe features of Joshua 5:13-6:27 which constitute persistent normative elements of war narrative from the Ancient Near East. Describing these features within the context of other Ancient Near Eastern material will illuminate its paradigmatic nature as a war narrative and help us to draw out its essential theme, which is not so much about warfare, but the kingship of YHWH. Furthermore, I will illustrate the manner in which those normative elements of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative not only exhibit the presence of the underlying foundations of organized violence, but help to reinforce them, thereby contributing to Israel's military success.

Finally, in the concluding chapter of this thesis, I will describe how an appreciation of the sociology of warfare helps us to understand Joshua 5:13-6:27 in the context from which it emerged. That context was not merely "the Ancient Near East," which is certainly invaluable to appreciate but, more importantly, that context was war.

Once that is grasped, our understanding of the text as one that helped the Israelites survive under hostile circumstances becomes more appreciable, which will open the door for scholars to ethically and/or theologically interpret the texts in a way that was unavailable before; that is, through a hermeneutic of war.

Chapter One

1.1 Approaches to the Question of Warfare in the Hebrew Bible

Most, if not all attempts to understand texts that describe warfare in the Hebrew Bible have been problematic for at least one of three reasons: (1) the persistent idea that the character of God should present a consistent face throughout the canon;[2] (2) the attempts to understand the violent texts are limited to the confines of the Hebrew Bible itself; and (3) a failure to properly contextualize war narratives within their proper primary category, that is, as *war narrative*. Underlying all three of the above issues is the enduring assumption that the violent texts of the Hebrew Bible ought to be understandable (in one fashion or another) ethically. It may indeed be the case that discussions concerning the ethics of these parts of the Hebrew Bible are warranted, especially in light of the way that the conquest narratives have been used to justify numerous conflicts. I argue, however, that in order to do so, the texts ought to first be understood for what they are. Also, any attempt to understand them from an ethical perspective requires an immersion into the "intellectual framework" of the Ancient Near East and recognition of the way in which warfare generates exceptions to normative taboos.[3] Instead, however, scholars have been largely preoccupied with the question of

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[2] This seems to underscore virtually all of the attempts to understand violence in the Hebrew Bible, that is, the underlying (and often unspoken) question is almost always "How could 'God' (whether as an ontologically real being, or as a character in the text) command this?" It is a question that has its source in a very specific type of understanding of the Bible as divine revelation. This, it seems to me, is a very strange place to start one's investigation into gaining greater insight into the violent texts of the Hebrew Bible.

[3] Carly L. Crouch describes the failure of scholars to appropriately contextualize the violent texts in the Hebrew Bible: "The tendency in biblical scholarship (and even ancient Near Eastern scholarship, in which the personal attachment tends to be less) to recoil in disgust at the more violent descriptions of war has usually aborted prematurely any attempt to explain or understand these acts in their own context. Where

the morality of warfare in the Hebrew Bible, largely perpetuated by a Christian understanding of a benevolent God which, upon a superficial reading, appears to contradict the portrayal of YHWH in the Hebrew Bible. The effort to reconcile the seemingly disparate pictures of God in the canon has generated several approaches to the texts.

Eryl Davies distinguishes six approaches that scholars have traditionally used in efforts to understand the violent texts in the Hebrew Bible, these include: (1) the evolutionary approach; (2) the cultural relativists' approach; (3) the canon-within-a-canon approach; (4) the holistic approach; (5) the paradigmatic approach; and (6) the reader-response approach.[4] The *Evolutionary Approach* basically argues that:

> The more primitive concepts of Israel's early period gave way, in time, to more advanced and cultured ideas as God's people gradually developed their moral perception and felt their way on matters of religious and ethical import.[5]

By thus arguing that the morality and culture of the Israelites progressed we can justify the texts by saying they reflect a primitive understanding of God and morality. The problem here is that it is still an attempt to understand, or rationalize, the sayings and doings of God rather than an attempt to understand the text for what it is and in its own context, that is, war narrative.

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warfare is concerned, scholars seem to have observed reports of violence with total disregard for context, apparently presuming that ancient peoples engaged in violent practices despite consciously and knowingly considering them immoral." Carly L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 6.

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

[5] Davies, 200. This view can be seen in T. Arnold, *Sermons* II, 3rd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1844). Also, F.D. Maurice, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1841). Both are also cited in Davies, 200.

The *Cultural Relativist's Approach* emphasizes that "the texts of the Hebrew Bible evolved out of a particular historical, social and cultural situation and must be understood in the context of the society for which they were written."[6] I agree with this approach, but worry about the word 'relativist' as the word implies a moral justification that I do not wish to make. Nonetheless, without an understanding of the texts within their own historical, social, and cultural situation, one does not even arrive at the texts themselves. Failing to understand the texts themselves, one is certainly not able to make ethical determinations based upon them, and this is true whether the reader believes that biblical texts are a source of moral guidance or not.

The *Canon-within-a-Canon Approach* "recognizes that we are bound to find in the Hebrew Bible material that we will regard as offensive or unpalatable, and it invites us to sift through the biblical texts in search of what we may find useful and valuable as a source of ethical guidance in our lives."[7] This approach, then, maintains that the reader should pick and choose which texts are appropriate for moral imitation and which are not on the basis that this is, in fact, what people do anyhow. James Dunn describes what he perceives as our tendency to be selective at both the individual level and at the level of tradition when he says, "the fact is, like it or not, that we each one individually, and as part of a particular tradition, work with what amounts to a canon within the canon in order to justify the distinctive emphases of that tradition."[8] However, as with the others,

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[6] Davies, 205. This view is present in T.R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989). Also, R. Mason, *Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1997). Both cited in Davies, 207.

[7] Davies, 208. This approach is characteristic of G.E. Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). Also, James D.G. Dunn, "The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture," *Churchman* 96 (1982): 104-22, 201-25. Both cited in Davies, 208.

[8] Dunn, 115.

this approach also presumes that the Bible is a collection of texts meant for moral imitation. Within such a reductionist presumption, the violent texts, especially when YHWH expressly commands the violence, become problematic.

The *Holistic Approach* represents the opposite of the *Canon-within-a-Canon Approach* and asserts that we should "not try to elicit ethical norms from isolated texts but look, rather, at the broader picture and go by the general impression of the biblical message as a whole."[9] In this approach the details of specific events and stories are considered to be of a lesser importance than the wider message of the Bible. This approach, however, advocates avoiding texts that challenge readers, rather than seeking a greater understanding of them.

The *Paradigmatic Approach* maintains that the reader should not be concerned with the details of belief and practice outlined in the Hebrew Bible but, rather, with the "broad, general principles that guide us in our ethical decisions-making."[10] This may sound like the *Holistic Approach* but the above takes a holistic approach to the narrative of the Bible, whereas the *Paradigmatic Approach* attempts to be a holistic approach with regard to the ethics of the Bible. However, it is problematic for the same reason as the *Holistic Approach*; that is, it advocates that one ignore specifics and avoids complicated issues such as YHWH's command to kill the Canaanites.[11]

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[9] Davies, 212. This view is utilized by B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (London: SCM Press, 1985). Also, J.A. Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). Both are cited in Davies, 212. I also include Mark McEntire, *The Blood of Abel: The Violent Plot in the Hebrew Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), as representative of this approach.

[10] Davies, 215. This is the approach of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). Also, W.C. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983). Both cited in Davies, 217.

[11] Deuteronomy 20:16-18.

Finally, there is the *Reader-Response Approach*. This method of approaching the text(s) maintains that "readers of literature have a duty to converse and interact with the text, and that literary compositions must be read in an openly critical, rather than in a passively receptive, way."[12] Furthermore, "instead of tacitly accepting the standards of judgment established in the text and capitulating uncritically to its demands, they [i.e. the readers] must be prepared to challenge its assumptions, question its insights, and (if necessary) discredit its claims."[13] As such, this last approach posits that critical engagement with the text is necessary and that it is appropriate to critically engage with the text on ethical issues. Susan Niditch is of this school of thought and recommends "contextualization and identification."[14]

Niditch's recommendation that readers engage with the uncomfortable elements of the biblical narratives stands in contrast to the attempts to appropriate the texts ethically. For Niditch, the first way of ethically responding to the texts is the act of "scholarly distancing of contemporary religion from ancient precursors."[15] In this approach, Niditch tells us that the Israelites are viewed as an "ancient people from another time and culture"[16] and that, therefore, we should not expect to find their moral actions to be appropriate guides today. Such a distancing, for the followers of Judaism and Christianity, insists that "our Judaism or Christianity is not the Israelites' religion."[17] This is akin to the cultural relativists' approach as described above by Davies. These

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

[13] Davies, 219. Square brackets mine.

[14] Susan Niditch, "War in the Hebrew Bible and Contemporary Parallels," *Word and World* XV Number 4 (1995), 404.

[15] Niditch (1995), 403

[16] Niditch (1995), 403

[17] Niditch (1995), 403

attempts at distancing fail because, as Niditch rightly points out, the behaviour within, and the justifications for, modern warfare are not particularly different from its ancient precursors, even if we claim that our religions are.[18]

Niditch calls the second approach to ethically justify the texts "selective appropriation."[19] Here, that which is morally preferable by an individual or religious tradition is emphasized and that which is considered "an unfortunate feature of the Israelite world-view" is minimized.[20] This second way could be considered an amalgam of Davies' canon-within-a-canon, holistic, or paradigmatic approaches, and it fails to come to grips with the texts for the same reasons: that is, it simply does not actively engage with the texts. Rather, this approach prefers to treat the texts as strange exceptions to otherwise moralizing writings.

The last problem with ethical approaches Niditch describes is "sympathetic justification."[21] This approach dignifies accepting the texts at face value and might lead one to conclude, for example, "the Israelite sacred scripture does appear to approve of wholesale slaughter in war, but idolaters are idolaters, and God's justice must be done."[22] The troubling nature of this approach is most obvious because as soon one decides that another group is idolatrous the texts take on a prescriptive nature with respect to how that group ought to be treated. This approach to the texts has led to the biblical justification

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[18] Niditch (1995), 403.
[19] Niditch (1995), 403.
[20] Niditch (1995), 403.
[21] Niditch (1995), 403.
[22] Niditch (1995), 403.

for numerous invasions and violent conflicts, rightly or wrongly, including some aspects of the crusades and, arguably, colonialism.[23]

In response to these methods, however, Niditch responds with contextualization and identification. Niditch says that "if we explore not just Deuteronomy or Joshua, but a wide and representative range of texts dealing with war in Israelite literature, we find, in fact, that … Israelite views of war are many. Views of violence in war, of the role fighters should play, of causes of fighting, and of treatment of enemies, military and non-military, reflect a complex culture allowing for various views of war-related issues, some views overlapping, some contrasting."[24] Niditch describes six Israelite ideologies of war that are present in the Hebrew Bible.

The first Israelite war ideology is the Ban,[25] which Niditch tells us is present in two varieties: (1) the Ban as Sacrifice; and (2) the Ban as Justice. In the former, the Ban as Sacrifice "is an ideology of war in which the enemy is to be utterly destroyed as an offering to the deity who has made victory possible."[26] She continues, however, to admit, "we have no way of knowing for certain"[27] if the Israelites actually fought wars "motivated by the ban as sacrifice."[28] Nonetheless, she describes the Moabite Stone's description of King Moab's "imposition of the ban (*ḥerem*) against an Israelite city in his

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[23] Niditch affirms the use of colonialism and the crusades as examples here when she states, "The third response is, for me, the most troubling, a process of judgmental identification. Who are the new idolaters worthy of destruction? Falling in the biblical medium, St. Bernard thought they were the Muslims, Cotton Mather thought they were the native Americans of New England." Niditch (1995), 403.

[24] Niditch (1995), 404.

[25] The Ban (חרם) refers to the killing of every living thing in a conquered area of Canaan as per YHWH's command (Deuteronomy 20:16-18).

[26] Niditch (1995), 404. Cf. Niditch (1993), 28-55.

[27] Niditch (1995), 405.

[28] Niditch (1995), 405.

famous victory inscription,"[29] and that, therefore, the "notion of devoting human conquests to the deity, be it the Israelite Yahweh or the Moabite Chemosh, existed in Israel's immediate world of thought."[30]

The second form the Ban takes, according to Niditch, is the Ban as Justice. Here, "the enemy is totally annihilated because they are sinners, condemned under the rules of God's justice."[31] This ideology allows killing in war to "be rationalized" and any accompanying guilt to be "assuaged."[32] Here, the Israelites are understood "to be regarded as God's instrument of justice, and the enemy is a less-than-human monster who must be eradicated (Deut 7:2-5, 23-26)."[33] Later, I will illustrate that this is a common motif throughout the Ancient Near East, however, Niditch does not explore the ubiquitous nature of this theme throughout the Ancient Near East as her contextualization is limited to the Hebrew Bible.

The next ideology of war that Niditch delineates is "The Priestly Ideology of War."[34] Here, as in the Ban as God's Justice, "the enemy is regarded as deserving of God's vengeance and is almost annihilated, but virgin girls are spared."[35] In this ideology of war Niditch finds the stress is upon issues of what is "clean and unclean,"[36] which leads her to conclude that it is a late, post-monarchic, Priestly, "glitch."[37] This glitch, she says, is because "female children who have not lain with a man are clean slates in terms

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[29] Niditch (1995), 405.
[30] Niditch (1995), 405.
[31] Niditch (1995), 405. Cf. Niditch (1993), 56-77.
[32] Niditch (1995), 406.
[33] Niditch (1995), 406.
[34] Niditch (1993), 78-89.
[35] Niditch (1995), 406.
[36] Niditch (1995), 406.
[37] Niditch (1995), 406.

of their identity, unmarked by the enemy, and, after a period of purification, can be absorbed into the people Israel."[38] Thus, Niditch gives us a way of understanding this apparent exception to the *ḥerem*.

Thirdly, Niditch outlines "The Bardic Tradition of War."[39] She calls this ideology "bardic" because of its "beautiful and traditional narrative style," which "glorifies warriors, their courage, daring, leadership, and skill." In these narratives, war is seen as sport, taunting as a form of "war behavior," there is an emphasis "on a code of fair play" and the spoils in the form of "goods and women" are "sought after and enjoyed."[40]

Niditch's fourth category is "Tricksterism."[41] Tricksterism, according to Niditch, is the "war ethic of the underdog who must use deception or trickery to improve his lot." Tricksterism is "akin to guerrilla warfare" and "allows for no code in the fighting." As such, it exists in apparent contrast to the Bardic ideology and is viewed as "an avenue available to those out of power."[42]

Fifthly, Niditch describes the ideology of "Expediency."[43] This ideology of war speaks to the fact that, in the Ancient Near East, war was often seen as "business as usual, practiced by Israelite rulers and their ancient near eastern counterparts."[44] Expediency posits that "anything can be done to achieve objectives" and "to subjugate the defeated

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[38] Niditch (1995). 406.
[39] Niditch (1993), 90-105.
[40] Niditch (1995), 406.
[41] Niditch (1993), 106-122.
[42] Niditch (1995), 407.
[43] Niditch (1993), 123-133.
[44] Niditch (1995), 407.

enemy." However, Niditch says that whether war is for defense, or in the name of open conquest, it is still undertaken "with God's blessing."[45]

Finally, Niditch describes the ideology of "Non-Participation."[46] This ideology is "rooted in biblical traditions that describe God's capacity to save Israel through the performance of miracles."[47] Furthermore, the ideology of non-participation is "reinforced by prophetic injunctions not to rely on mere humans and their governments for salvation."[48]

Rather than considering the way in which Hebrew Biblical war narrative might reflect, and contribute to, one underlying ideology necessary to mobilize a people for combat, Niditch instead outlines six distinct ideologies. These ideologies, however, do offer scholars a convenient means of classification. Nonetheless, Niditch's contextualization is entirely *sui generis* to the Hebrew Bible itself, which leads Niditch to conclude that "the history of attitudes to war in ancient Israel is complex, involving multiplicity, overlap, and self-contradiction."[49]

McEntire's study is literary in nature wherein he applies rhetorical criticism to several violent episode in the Hebrew Bible, namely: Genesis 4:1-16; Exodus 1:8-22; Exodus 11:1-12:39; Joshua 6:1-27; 1 Samuel 4:1-22; 1 Kings 12:1-20; and, 2 Chronicles 36:15-21. McEntire's approach, however, is also is also *sui generis* and primarily concerned with the ethical implications of the narratives, which is apparent when he states, "the most important questions I will be attempting to answer are: What view of the

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[45] Niditch (1995), 407.
[46] Niditch (1993), 134-149.
[47] Niditch (1995), 407.
[48] Niditch (1995), 407.
[49] Niditch (1995), 408.

world and how it works emerges from the biblical text? and, In what way do we apply this worldview to our own world?"[50] His concluding chapter opens with a rhetorical question concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible, wherein he asks whether the violent plot he has delineated throughout his examination of specific violent episodes is at "The Heart of the Hebrew Bible?"[51] I will argue that the question offers a helpful hint towards how the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible ought to be read. Indeed, a hermeneutic of war would begin by treating the texts concerning warfare as normative, rather than exceptional, and then seek to understand the purposes of the text within its own context. A context in which, at the very least, warfare was considered to be a mark of civilization.[52] Peter Craigie's project also represents an attempt to reconcile the warfare in the Hebrew Bible with his Christian understanding of God. His project is revealed in the straightforward title of his book: *The Problem of War in the Old Testament.*[53] In response, T. Ray Hobbs, whom I will consider again shortly, answered that war was not a "problem" in the Old Testament.[54]

All of these previous approaches to the violent texts of the Hebrew Bible represent attempts to ethically understand the texts in contexts that are not exclusively their own. That is, due to a failure on the part of scholars to properly appreciate the mechanisms of warfare and, for my purpose, the elements that constitute the waging of successful

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[50] McEntire, 11.

[51] McEntire, 160.

[52] Bahrani writes, "For the Mesopotamians, the arts of war, plunder, and taking booty were all aspects of civilized behavior. These are the forms of behavior of people who have become urbanized, that is, settled into urban communities interacting within urban social structures." Bahrani, 10.

[53] Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament.*

[54] Hobbs writes, "For whom is warfare in the Old Testament a problem? It is clear from a reading of the Old Testament itself that the act of war was *not* a problem for the ancient Israelites. The Old Testament is full of examples of warfare, and there is no evidence to suggest that warfare *per se* is regarded as even a necessary evil. It is taken for granted as a part of life." Hobbs (1989), 17.

warfare in the Ancient Near East, all of the six approaches fail to understand the way in which warfare generates exceptions (however much these exceptions are unwanted) to ethical norms. Furthermore, these approaches attempt to understand the texts ethically, socially, and/or theologically, rather than militarily.[55] Some advocate that the context in which Joshua is to be understood is simply within the Josianic redaction of the Deuteronomistic History[56] and that, from within that context, sociologically, the theology of the narrative – including the Ban – makes sense. I argue, however, that true contextualization of war narratives such as Joshua 5:13-6:27 needs to be within the context of other war narratives from the Ancient Near East adding that this must be done within an appreciation of the social mechanisms that lead to and perpetuate militaristic goals.[57]

The ethical approaches that have been outlined do not, and cannot, serve as a hermeneutical key to understanding the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible because they fail to contextualize the texts concerning warfare within the conceptions of warfare held by Ancient Near Eastern peoples, and they fail to appreciate the way in which warfare overturns normative cultural taboos. Bahrani has stated that "war is a strictly organized activity that at the same time allows for forms of behavior that are non-

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[55] Hobbs is an exception as he does seek a military understanding of the texts.

[56] Martin Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr, 1953). Cited also in Rowlett who approaches the text in a similar manner: Lori L. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence: A New Historicist Analysis* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996). And, J. Alberto Soggin, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: SCM Press, 1972).

[57] The following also contextualize their research within Ancient Near Eastern war narrative: Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1989); Hobbs (1989); K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Rowlett (1996); Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996); and, Pekka Pitkänen, *Joshua,* Vol 6, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary,* ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010).

normative and taboo. Like the festival and some religious rituals, war occupies a place

outside; it is a phenomenon that stirs and interrupts."[58] As such, outside of a hermeneutic

of war, we should not expect a method of understanding the texts concerning warfare in

the Hebrew Bible to be satisfying if it is seeking to fit the texts into an ethical paradigm to

which neither the history, nor the historiography, were meant to apply.

This review of the literature concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible would be

incomplete without discussing von Rad's seminal work on warfare in the Hebrew Bible

originally published in 1952,[59] as well as Smend's work published eleven years later.[60]

Both of these studies are concerned with the historicity of the events described in the

Hebrew Bible as well as discussions concerning their miraculous nature (e.g. Exodus 14,

and Joshua 6). They posit the attribution of YHWH's saving actions to later theological

redaction,[61] or seek to explain the theologizing of the events by couching them within an

understanding of the covenant established at Sinai.[62] The failure of both approaches lies

in the fact that neither scholar recognizes that war narratives often recall events (even

knowingly) in a way that exaggerates the contributions of gods and kings, both to please

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

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

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

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

[62] Rudolf Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation*, 109-135. Millard C. Lind also builds upon this view with the added caveat that the Sinai covenant did not exist in tension with warfare (as per Smend) but, rather, that the Sinai covenant "was caused by an event that had happened within warfare itself, the escape from Egypt by prophetic agitation and miracle. This event, occurring within the institution of warfare, provided the basis for the new structure of the Sinai covenant, the rule of Yahweh founded upon Torah and prophetic word." Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1980), 32, cf., 170.

the king (or for that matter, priest-king and/or god) as well as to encourage later

allegiance to a character central to the ideological justification required for human beings

to embark into combat.[63] That is to say that the miraculous description of an event within

the context of warfare is in keeping with the way warfare is often remembered, especially

when the memory is seeking to forward a theological and/or ideological agenda toward a

contemporary audience. This is not to say that significant redaction does not take place

but, rather, theological interpretations of historical events via descriptions of the

miraculous do not, in and of themselves, indicate redaction. In fact, it is commonplace

for Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts that are written contemporaneously with the

events they describe to glorify the might of kings and the assistance of gods as it

reinforces the authority of the ruling powers, the ideology, and the social structures to

which the readers and hearers of such accounts are committed. As such, we should not

expect narratives concerning warfare from the Ancient Near East to read as factual

accounts, and the fact that they do not read as factual accounts (in a modern sense) does

not necessarily mean that significant theological redaction has taken place, let alone

redaction that is generations removed.[64]

While the literature concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible is dominated by

scholars who prefer a *sui generis* approach, there are scholars who seek to gain greater

insight into the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible by comparing and

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[63] These issues are will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

[64] Pitkänen points out the way in which Younger has shown that "the genre of Joshua 9-12 is perfectly compatible with other Ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts that demonstrably do not in any way result from a long oral tradition (Younger 1990) … These Ancient Near Eastern sources were generally pretty much contemporaneous with the events they describe, and thus there is no need to assume a long prehistory for a biblical text that depicts similar events." Pitkänen, 58-59. I discuss the issue of divine assistance in battle in more detail in Chapter Three.

contrasting them with texts concerning warfare from other Ancient Near Eastern peoples.

My approach represents a similar concern for other Ancient Near Eastern war narratives

as that of Hobbs,[65] Kang,[66] Younger,[67] Rowlett,[68] and Pitkänen,[69] and is an explicitly

contextual approach wherein I will compare and contrast Joshua 5:13–6:27 with other war

narratives from the Ancient Near East. Oftentimes, attempts to discredit the contextual

approach have been made on the grounds that Israelite culture is so unique in the Ancient

Near East that comparison and contrast could not reveal anything of merit.[70] However,

while it is true that the Israelites possess unique characteristics, to discredit a

methodology of comparison and contrast, due to findings made *by comparison and*

contrast seems unwarranted, especially in light of what the ancient Israelite culture shares

with its Ancient Near Eastern counterparts. Therefore, with Younger, I believe that "this

objection should be spurned."[71] Younger describes the importance of contextualizing

texts like Joshua within their wider Ancient Near Eastern milieu:

> If one compares the conquest account in the book of Joshua with other
> ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts, one will gain a better
> understanding of the biblical narrative. Such a method offers control on
> the data. It is exactly a lack of controls which has contributed – at least in
> part – to some of the interpretive problems in Old Testament studies.[72]

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[65] Hobbs (1989). Cf. Hobbs (1988).

[66] Kang (1989).

[67] Younger (1990).

[68] Rowlett (1996).

[69] Pitkänen (2010).

[70] Younger points out that Thompson "argues that because Israel was unique in the ancient Near East (Israel alone developed real historiography), the relevance of the comparative material is questionable." Younger., 52. Younger cites R. J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism Since Graf* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 118-120.

[71] Younger, 53.

[72] Younger, 52. Richard Hess is in agreement: "Recent studies have revived an earlier hypothesis which identified priestly editorial work in Joshua … However, the identification of a series of Deuteronomistic and priestly editorial layers in the book of Joshua cannot be accepted without qualification.   There are difficulties with assumptions that Deuteronomistic theology must be confined to the period of Josiah and with the analysis of the Joshua narratives divorced from their Ancient Near Eastern context …Younger has

It is precisely such problems that I am seeking to avoid in this study as I attempt to get closer to the mindset of those who recorded and redacted the narrative within Joshua 5:13-6:27.

Hobbs, Kang, Younger, Rowlett, and Pitkänen all seek greater understanding of the texts via contextualization. For this study I will also bring current insights concerning the sociological underpinnings of warfare to bear upon the war narratives of the Hebrew Bible. I maintain that proper contextualization of the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible needs to be within the context of other war narratives from the Ancient Near East and within an appreciation of the social mechanisms that lead to and perpetuate militaristic goals. Hobbs does seek to understand the texts militarily, however, like Rowlett (and to some degree Niditch), his sociological lens is focused upon group identity and, when he does focus on warfare itself, it is with outdated sociology that assumes a homogenous military core (in the form of pre-existing military organisations) which then "affect host societies."[73]

Rowlett's approach resembles my own inasmuch as she is concerned with comparing conquest narrative's war rhetoric in the book of Joshua to Neo-Assyrian war rhetoric. This approach makes sense in Rowlett's view as, after some reflective deliberation with earlier scholarship she sides with the mainstream Josianic dating of the

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demonstrated that the relationship of the central historical section of Joshua 9-12 is too close to that of contemporary (1300-600 BC) conquest accounts (which themselves are normally used as historical sources – though biased – by historians of the Ancient Near East) to allow certainty of identification of later insertions. Thus statements about the work and words of God are not later insertions into a battle chronicle, but are an essential feature of all Ancient Near Eastern battle accounts. The theology and the narrative should not be separated." Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 33. I will show that the same is true for Joshua 5:13-6:27.
    [73] Hobbs (1988), 464.

book of Joshua. She then argues for a sociological understanding inasmuch as the

Josianic period created a need for narratives that bolstered national identity.[74] She agrees

with scholars who consider Joshua to be a thinly veiled Josiah.[75] Rather than theorizing

about the way that narrative may contribute to group identity, I will be turning the

sociological lens towards warfare itself in order to gain a greater understanding of what

we ought to expect from texts that commemorate warfare. Furthermore, having

discovered that narratives concerning warfare and conquest bear remarkable similarity

and persistent normative elements throughout the Ancient Near East, I have not found it

necessary to confine this study to Neo-Assyrian war narrative held to be

contemporaneous with the reign of Josiah, as Rowlett has done. Rather, I will show that

there are numerous themes within Joshua 5:13-6:27 that are normative to war narrative

from the Early Bronze Age to the period of the exile, and from Egypt to Assyria. The

tropes used to describe warfare throughout the Fertile Crescent during this vast expanse

of time remain remarkably consistent.

Thus, to conclude this review of the literature concerning warfare in the Hebrew

Bible I should clarify why this thesis is unique. While there has been a great deal of

scholarship concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible, all the studies are either: (1)

concerned with the ethics of warfare; (2) fail to contextualize Hebrew war narrative

within the war narratives of other Ancient Near Eastern peoples; or (3) contextualize the

war narrative, but at best offer further descriptive insights rather than arrive at a

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

[75] Rowlett, 47.

hermeneutic which accommodates most of the data. In my study I intend to bring current work concerning the sociology of warfare to bear upon Joshua 5:13-6:27 (due to its paradigmatic nature) by comparing and contrasting the text with other Ancient Near Eastern war narratives. Having done so, I will then describe elements of war narrative within the Hebrew text that are normative to war narrative in the Ancient Near East, and then illustrate that the text is best understood within the context of warfare itself. Concerning war narratives generally, and specifically those of the Hebrew Bible, I will be making the case for a hermeneutic of war. To do this, I must first address the sociology of warfare, however, before I get to that, an even more basic question must be asked.

Chapter Two

2.1 Why Are Human Beings Violent?

At first glance it may appear that human beings are drawn to violence and,

without strict rules and regulations, human beings would engage in violent activity

habitually. This has often been the view put forward by those who reflect upon the

popularity of violence in film and the way in which many are often drawn to depictions of

violent activity, and it is a view that has had many notable proponents. Thomas Hobbes'

famous understanding of the original 'state of nature' of human beings, which he

describes in *Leviathan*, is seen as inherently violent:

> So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First,
> Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.
> The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third,
> for Reputation. The first use Violence, to make themselves masters of other
> mens persons, wives, children, and cattell; the second, to defend them; the third,
> for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of
> undervalue, either direct in the persons or by reflexion in their Kindred, their
> Friends, their Nation, their Profession, or their Name.
> Hereby it is manifest that during the time when men live without a common
> Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre;
> and such a warre is of every man, against every man.[76]

In one of his later writings, the philosopher Immanuel Kant adopted a view similar to that

of Hobbes: "The state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state

(*status naturalis*); which is rather to be described as a state of war: that is to say, although

there is not perhaps always actual open hostility, yet there is a constant threatening that an

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[76] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1651]), 88.

outbreak may occur."[77] The view that human beings are naturally violent without laws to curb and contain their violent impulses has been very popular.

An opposing view, however, is also quite influential. This opposing view states that human beings are essentially peaceful and that it is due to particular 'social ills' that we become violent.[78] This view has its roots in Rousseau and, as Siniša Malešević writes, "is currently echoed in much of the literature that dominates such fields as conflict resolution and peace studies."[79] Consider Rousseau's views on private property rights as a source of violence:

> The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said 'this is mine', and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this imposter; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.[80]

While these two points of view seem to run counter to each other, there is another view that has only been considered recently.

The sociologist of warfare, Siniša Malešević, tells us that these two opposing viewpoints, represented best by Hobbes and Rousseau, "misdiagnose social reality" because both views suffer from the lack of "the sociological eye."[81] The debate between these two opposing views actually fails to appreciate the paradox at its heart. That is,

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[77] Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay (1795)," in *Early Notions of Global Governance: Selected Eighteenth-Century Proposals for 'Perpetual Peace'*, ed. Esref Aksu (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 185.

[78] Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

[79] Malešević, 2.

[80] J. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (New York: Dover Publications, 2004 [1755]), 27. Also, Malešević, 2.

[81] Malešević, 3.

when a group acts in a way that resembles Hobbes' understanding of our 'state of nature,' they do so for reasons that are essentially Rousseauian.[82] Malešević states: "As we need others to kill so we also need others for whom to sacrifice ourselves. Our social embeddedness is the source of both our selfishness and our altruism."[83] Therefore, if we were to take Rousseau's example of the first person who fenced in a piece of land, we come to recognize that it was likely for the sake of protection, rather than to selfishly stake a claim. As we will see, the historical and archaeological record appears to bear witness to this.

Why then, one might ask, do human beings seem obsessed with violence? The reason for this is not because we like violence, but rather the complete opposite. "It is precisely because we share a normative abhorrence towards violent behaviour, are generally – as individuals – feeble executioners of violent acts and much of our daily life is free of violence, that we find wars and killing so fascinating."[84] This, of course, raises the point of this entire chapter, and the reason for this thesis: that is, why does violence persist if we find it so abhorrent and are, moreover, so incompetent in it? Why is it prevalent throughout human history, and why, therefore, is it virtually omnipresent throughout the Hebrew Bible?

2.2 The Sociology of Warfare

Malešević argues that "although as individuals we are neither very willing nor very capable of using violence, social organisations and the process of ideologisation can

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[82] Malešević, 3.
[83] Malešević, 3.
[84] Malešević, 4.

and often do aid our transformation into fervent and adept killing machines."[85] Malešević

identifies two essential elements which underlie the emergence of warfare as organized

violence. They are: (1) The *Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion*; and (2)

Centrifugal Ideologization.[86]

The Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion

　　Malešević defines the *Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion* as the

processual growth of social organizational structure that requires the tacit approval and

action of human beings at all levels of the given hierarchy, and which requires

"continuous ideological legitimation."[87] As such, it is not something that imposes itself

upon human beings and then has the power to "entirely determine human behaviour,"[88]

but is rather a dynamic process that assumes the active engagement of human agents. He

argues that, "there is no effective use or threat to use violence [that is, large scale

"organised violence"] without developed social organisation."[89] This social organization

is necessary because, generally speaking, "human beings as individuals are circumspect

of, and incompetent at, violence."[90] That is, generally speaking, individual human beings

are not very good (if such a word can even be applied) at being violent towards other

human beings. Malešević tells us "it was warfare that gave birth to, and consequently

depended on the existence of, large-scale social organisation."[91] It is for this reason that

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[85] Malešević, 4.
[86] Malešević, 4.
[87] Malešević.,7.
[88] Malešević, 7.
[89] Malešević, 6. Square brackets mine.
[90] Malešević, 8.
[91] Malešević, 6.

the discipline and obedience required for the existence and maintenance of all social organization has its roots in the military. As such, military threats to a group will tend to give rise simultaneously and, in a mutually reinforcing way, to social organization and the ideology necessary to maintain, reinforce, and expand the group's capacity for survival. Malešević states that "all bureaucratisation is deeply rooted in coercive control … In this sense a factory worker, a civil servant, a teacher or a nurse are, in a general sense, governed by the very same principles of bureaucratic organisation as soldiers and the police."[92] This requires, and is further enforced, by clear hierarchies, loyalty to a given organization, and "legal codes that stipulate penalties for noncompliance."[93] Notably, there is a direct correlation between the emergence of civilization and the emergence of warfare:

> There was little, if any, warfare before the origin of civilisation. Thus, it was the early Bronze Age that is both the cradle of civilisation and the cradle of war. It is here that one encounters large-scale violence operating as a politically motivated organised social practice.[94]

In light of this one can immediately see the importance of studying the biblical texts concerning warfare as it is precisely in this period that the biblical narrators claim that the story of Israel began.

While social organization is an essential element that underlies the emergence of organized violence, such social organization could not be brought about, nor maintained for very long, without the understanding by its members (or at least a significant percentage of its members) that its actions are morally just. Malešević tells us that this

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[92] Malešević, 6.
[93] Malešević, 6.
[94] Malešević, 93.

"is particularly relevant for organisations that utilise violence since violent action per se is nearly universally perceived as an illegitimate form of social conduct."[95] As such, something additional was required, both for the emergence and preservation of social organization, and as a motivating and justifying factor of organized violence.

Centrifugal Ideologization

According to Malešević *Centrifugal Ideologization* is the tie that binds the social organization together, and gives moral justification to any organized violence that it carries out.[96] While traditionally ideology has been considered to be a "rigid, closed system of ideas that govern social and political action,"[97] Malešević maintains that it is "best conceptualised as a relatively universal and complex social process through which human actors articulate their actions and beliefs. It is a form of 'thought-action' that infuses, but does not necessarily determine, everyday social practice."[98] As such, human beings are not mindlessly coerced by ideology as though we do not conceive of its underlying ideas, but rather we contribute to and perpetuate ideology, which Malešević describes as a "complex process whereby ideas and practices come together in the course of legitimising or contesting power relations,"[99] hence his use of the term *ideologization*.

This process of ideologization is *centrifugal* because historically it:

Spreads from the centre of social organisations (or social movements, or both) to gradually encompass an ever wider population…because it is created by the political and cultural elites, it initially originates in small circles of dedicated

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[95] Malešević, 8.
[96] Malešević, 8.
[97] Malešević, 8.
[98] Malešević, 9.
[99] Malešević, 9.

followers and it radiates from the centre of the ideological activity (i.e. the state, religious organisation, military institution or the social movement) towards the broader masses of population.[100]

Malešević makes it clear, however, that this is not to say that it is a one-way street:

> Rather its strength and pervasiveness are dependent on mutual reinforcement: while the social organisations help disseminate and institutionalise the ideological message…groups in civil society and family networks buttress the normative scaffolding which ties the ideological macro-level narrative with the micro-level solidarity of face-to-face interaction.[101]

It is important to understand this mutual reinforcement. Otherwise one will presume that either the social organization, or the ideologization, has a causal priority that it does not. Malešević's point is that they both expand together. The ideology, including the means by which it is promulgated, reinforces and upholds the social organization which, as it develops, further disseminates the ideologization at both the societal level, as well as the personally interactive level. Smaller social organizations will inevitably share a common understanding of the world, however, larger social organizations replete with the requisite underpinnings of organized violence, require larger, more potent, and authoritative ideological buttressing. Malešević states:

> [The cumulative bureaucratization of coercion] is a process that entails tacit and sustained support at all levels of society. It is a product of long-term human action and, as such, is much more overbearing precisely because it necessitates, and grows on, continuous ideological legitimation … It is coercive since it involves not only the control and employment of violence and the waging of wars but it is also able to internally pacify social order by establishing the monopolistic threat on the use of violence.[102]

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[100] Malešević, 10-11.
[101] Malešević, 11.
[102] Malešević, 7.

Thus, the process in which a group expands in size and in its level of social organization involves a correlative and reinforcing ideology, which is spread and reinforced by the social organization itself.

To conclude this description of Malešević's sociology of warfare, Malešević describes why it is important to understand the social with respect to warfare:

> It is the internal disciplinary effects of social organisations that make soldiers fight by inhibiting them from escaping the battlefields and it is social organisation that transforms chaotic and incoherent micro-level violence into an organised machine of macro-level destruction. However, no social organisation would be able to succeed in the long term if its actions were not popularly understood as just. This is particularly relevant for organisations that utilise violence since violent action per se is nearly universally perceived as an illegitimate form of social conduct. Hence, the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion often goes hand in hand with the legitimizing ideology.[103]

To illustrate the requirement of both large-scale social organization (cumulative bureaucratization of coercion) and legitimizing ideology (centrifugal ideologization), I will now describe an example couched firmly within the Ancient Near East: Akkadian Mesopotamia.

Malešević points out that traditionally it has been held that the very existence of the state owes a debt to warfare, that is, "that state formation is directly linked to violent subordination and territorial expansion of one group over another."[104] However, as we have already seen, this view oversimplifies the issue as, in order for anything in the way of conquest to happen in the first place, "a substantial degree of social organisation and centralisation had already to be in place."[105] Nonetheless, it has long been maintained that Akkad owed not just its expansion, but its very existence, to warfare – specifically

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[103] Malešević, 9.
[104] Malešević, 95.
[105] Malešević, 96.

the conquests of Sargon I. This is not entirely without foundation for the Akkadians certainly used warfare for their expansion. Furthermore, "most of the preserved historical documents from Mesopotamia and other early civilisations are records of various military undertakings and wars which can easily create the impression that the pre-modern world was nothing more than a giant battlefield."[106] However, the precursors of Akkad existed before Sargon became history's first-recorded emperor and indeed, necessarily so.[107] Mario Liverani states that, "In no case is the Akkad empire an absolute novelty, it is rather a point in a process which already had its precedents."[108] So, what exactly *was* in place as far as social organization is concerned prior to Sargon's rise to power and subsequent military expansion of what would become the Akkadian Empire?

2.3 Akkad and the Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion

The period directly before Sargon makes his first mark in history is known as Early Dynastic III and is divided into two parts: ED IIIa, which runs from c. 2600 – 2500 BCE, and ED IIIb, which runs from c. 2500 – 2350 BCE, slightly before Sargon rises to power in 2334 BCE.[109] There are a number of things that we know about the ED III period that are relevant to our discussion.

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[106] Malešević, 95.

[107] Liverani says that "we know that Semites were settled in Mesopotamia well before Sargon, since the beginning of the onomastic and linguistic documentation. We know that the personal story of the *homo novus* Sargon has no relation to the history of an entire people (not new at all)…Lastly we know that the culture and politics of the Akkad dynasty, notwithstanding their marked originality, were the issue of the continuous and coherent development of lower Mesopotamia during a millennium." Mario Liverani, "Akkad: An Introduction" in *Akkad: The First World Empire*, ed. Mario Liverani. Vol 5 of History of Ancient Near East Studies (Sargon srl: Padova, 1993), 2.

[108] Liverani, 3.

[109] Nicole Brisch, "History and Chronology," in *The Sumerian World*, ed. Harriet Crawford (New York: Routledge, 2013), 119-120.

Recall that Malešević defines the *Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion* as the processual growth of social organizational structure that requires the tacit approval and action of human beings at all levels of the given hierarchy, and which requires "continuous ideological legitimation."[110] Again, this social organization is necessary because, generally speaking, "human beings as individuals are circumspect of, and incompetent at, violence."[111] The EDIII period bears witness to the presence of the *Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion*.

Firstly, "in addition to military conflicts, the royal inscriptions of the ED III period often mention the building of temples in various cities"[112] which indicates a significant measure of social organisation, as well as ideologisation.[113] Furthermore, this period describes "the first king in Mesopotamian history to institute reforms and release his citizens from work obligation, including debt."[114] This king's name was Emetena, or 'Entemena.' The reforms which Emetena brought about "already points to internal economic and social problems that kings needed to address by occasionally instituting reforms, a phenomenon that is well known from later periods of Mesopotamian history."[115] This, of course, indicates that there was enough social organization in place that it begged reform and that the king had the power to bring the reforms about. In addition, Nicole Brisch tells us that there is "frequent mention of military conflicts in the royal inscriptions of the ED IIIb period"[116] which suggests "that there were power

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[110] Malešević, 7.
[111] Malešević, 8.
[112] Brisch, 119.
[113] I will discuss the latter in more detail in the second portion of this chapter.
[114] Brisch, 119.
[115] Brisch, 119.
[116] Brisch, 120.

struggles among city-states."[117] It would be difficult to do much other than fend for oneself without a regulated central administration; similarly, one can see the necessity of a regulated central administration for successful conquest beyond one's own city-state.

Indeed, as early as the Late Uruk period (3500 - 3000 BCE) Uruk had become "the greatest city of the age"[118] and had a population of 40,000 to 50,000 people.[119] Cities such as Uruk "were ruled by a hierarchy of priests and kings…though they were always dependent on town councils for making major decisions. They organized a central hierarchical government overseeing a stratified society."[120] Social organization did not stop here: as city-states emerged so did division of labour. Notably, at this time less and less people engaged in agriculture to earn their living as more people moved into the larger centres and into "non-food-producing occupations such as priests, scribes, craftsmen and merchants."[121] Not surprisingly, some also became soldiers: "the development of economic specialization gave rise to military specialists, who would develop into military professionals, elites, and ultimately martial aristocracies."[122]

Brisch tells us "there is no doubt that the state of Akkad created a new paradigm of kingship and statehood in early Mesopotamia – that of the territorial state seeking to

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[117] Brisch, 120.

[118] William Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36.

[119] Hamblin, 36.

[120] Hamblin, 37.

[121] Hamblin, 37.

[122] Hamblin, 37. See also Malešević who writes, "The availability of storable food provided further impetus towards establishing long-term settlements – city states – which became densely populated and hence provided a large-scale labour force and contributed further to economic, political, religious and military specialisation and the development of social stratification. Although the overwhelming majority of the population were pesants, regular access to stored food created a situation whereby some peasants could also act as soldiers when the need arose." Malešević, 94.

expand its boundaries and seeking to institute a centralised rule."[123] Notably, while

Sargon is considered to have founded the Old Akkadian dynasty, "it appears that he

governed by leaving most of the administrative structures of the southern Babylonian

city-states intact."[124] The social organization that these structures reflected and

maintained was absolutely necessary to Sargon's project of conquest and expansion.   The

presence of this level of social organization has lead Liverani to conclude that, in fact,

Sargon is actually "pre-Sargonic,"[125] and that though Akkad has been "mainly considered

the starting point of a process"[126] we now "consider it mainly as a culminating point."[127]

However, we still need to observe Malešević's other category at work. Although I have

already mentioned the presence of priests and temples in Akkadian Mesopotamia prior to

Sargon's expansion (which is indicative of the presence of centrifugal ideologization) it is

important to explore the presence of proto-ideology in more detail. So, if we return to our

example of the ancient Akkadian Empire, do we find evidence of significant centrifugal

ideologization prior to the conquests of Sargon? Does the reign of Sargon in this regard

also indicate a point of culmination rather than a starting point?

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[123] Brisch, 120.
[124] Brisch, 121.
[125] Liverani, 4.
[126] Liverani, 4.
[127] Liverani, 4. Indeed, social organisation of great complexity was present in Mesopotamia long before
ED III. The late Uruk period (a millennium earlier than Sargon) has left us fragments of text which
documents "over 120 categories of specialized administrative and priestly personnel in some sort of
hierarchical order…The ranked list starts with an entry that on the basis of later parallels may be interpreted
as 'king.' Subsequent entries are not all clearly understood but include the titles of administrators and
lesser officials in charge of various state institutions including individuals in charge of the administration of
justice, the city assembly, plowing, sowing and other agricultural activities, temples, etc." Guillermo
Algaze, "The End of Prehistory and the Uruk Period" in *The Sumerian World,* edited by Harriot Crawford
(New York: Routledge, 2013), 80.

2.4 Akkad and Centrifugal Ideologization

We have a great deal of evidence that the level of centrifugal organization necessary for warfare to emerge was developing long before Sargon. Malešević states, "traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquests and coercive forms of governance."[128] William Hamblin tells us that, with respect to Akkadian Mesopotamia, "the centralization of power in the hands of allied royal and priestly classes was associated with the emergence of a divinely mandated martial ideology."[129] As early as the Late Uruk period (3500-3000 BCE) "the kings and priests embarked on a flamboyant program of monumental building of immense temples, palaces and city fortifications."[130] The most extravagant of these building projects were their temples.[131] The building of these exceptional structures was correlated with an emerging ideological development.

During the Late Uruk period "a royal ideology of divine kingship developed in which the king was chosen by the gods as his representative on earth."[132] It appears that this development could take two distinct forms. The first would sometimes express the idea that the king was a son of a god, the second would indicate that the king was

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[128] Malešević, 9. Also, Malešević emphasizes the importance of religion in the Ancient Near East for large-scale social organisation when he states, "What was also important for the long-term success of this process [of growing social organisation] was a degree of societal solidarity enhanced by shared religious tradition." Malešević, 94.

[129] Hamblin, 37.

[130] Which themselves are also indicative of large-scale social organisation. Hamblin, 37.

[131] Hamblin tells us that "the most lavish building projects were temples, such as the great Eanna ('House of Heaven') temple complex at Uruk (CAM 61-3). None the less, massive monumental fortifications were also built, such as the great mud-brick wall of Uruk, built around 3000, which had a circumference of six miles; its ruins can still be seen 5000 years later. By the Early Dynastic period all Mesopotamian cities were fortified with such huge mud-brick walls." Hamblin., 37.

[132] Hamblin, 37.

perceived as "a god incarnate."[133] For our purposes, we are interested in the moral

justification for the perpetuation of violence required for the emergence of organized

violence under a ruler. Thus, it comes as no surprise that as early as the Late Uruk period

the ideology which emerges and is perpetuated is the belief that "when the king acted as

warlord, he was acting under the express command of the gods as revealed through

divination and oracles. The gods themselves were the ultimate arbiters of war."[134] In

addition, Hamblin tells us "the patron goddess of Uruk – where we first see evidence of

this new ideology – was Inanna ('Lady of Heaven', the Akkadian Ishtar), patroness of

love and war."[135] We find this martial ideology in the art that has been left to us from the

period.[136] Hamblin states that the "glorification of the martial deeds of the gods,

legendary heroes, or kings clearly points to a fundamental martial ideology as a

significant indicator that Mesoptamia had crossed the military threshold by the mid-fourth

millennium."[137] As such, the historical record bears witness to the presence of military

ideologization in Mesopotamia for a minimum of 700 years (to a possible millennium)

prior to Sargon's rise to power.

In addition, the Late Uruk period also bears witness to the emergence of a

phenomenon known as the "Priest-King."[138] Images of the 'Priest-King,' which emerged

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[133] Hamblin, 37.

[134] Hamblin, 37.

[135] Hamblin, 37.

[136] Hamblin describes the appearance of Mesopotamian military art: "The earliest Mesopotamian art was largely ornamental and often abstract. This type of art continued throughout the Late Uruk period, during which we also find the first ideologically-rich martial art, from both sculpture and cylinder seals." Hamblin, 37.

[137] Hamblin, 38.

[138] Hamblin, 37. Also, in describing the Priest-King Algaze states, "much of Uruk art…deals with the ideologically charged activities of a larger-than-life bearded male figure, who wears his hair in a chignon and sports a net-like shirt. Typically depicted as a hunter of wild animals and men, as a leader in battle, as a fountain of agricultural wealth…and as the main officiator in various religious rituals." Algaze, 80.

during the Late Uruk period, portray male figures with various weapons and engaged in numerous martial activities. These activities include "fighting enemies, assaulting fortified cities, transporting captives by boat, and torturing or executing bound prisoners."[139] While it is hard to determine (due to a lack of inscriptions) whether these depictions are historical, idealized, or a combination of both, there is one thing that we can say with certainty: "minimally, the Priest-king iconography demonstrates that martial kingship was ideologically highly developed in Uruk by the late fourth millennium."[140] It was precisely because this ideology of a divine king, or at least a divinely approved or appointed king, was firmly in place for hundreds of years prior to Sargon, along with essential elements for social organization,[141] that an inscription left to us from a temple in Nippur was able to state that Sargon "won thirty-four military campaigns and destroyed all his enemies and 'as chief of the gods' permitted no rivals."[142] Bahrani, while discussing the Victory Stele of Naramsin (ca. 2254-2218 BCE), writes, "the king's deification is the primary feature that stands out in the relief. The horned helmet he wears is a direct signal. The iconographic helmet corroborates the written accounts that describe his deification and strengthens his divine status by means of the image."[143] She goes on to say that "the image is not just concerned with divine kingship or the

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[139] Hamblin, 39.

[140] Hamblin, 39. Also, Malešević tells us that "the gradual development of a polity's organisational power went hand in hand with the proliferation of elaborate belief systems centred around the emperor who was depicted and perceived either as a god or the deity's only legitimate representative on earth. Although the historical evidence is largely lacking on how ordinary peasants understood these religious doctrines it seems from the scant archaeological findings that most shared the belief in the divine origins of their rulers. The political power of rulers was enhanced as much by military victories as by these shared beliefs in serving the real divine authority." Malešević, 95.

[141] The essential elements of social organization include, "writing, social hierarchy, a significant population density and rudimentary elements of statehood." Malešević, 95. n. 4.

[142] Malešević, 95.

[143] Bahrani, 106.

declaration of the king as divine; it is about the king as one who defeats and subjugates others through war, violence, and physical aggression."[144] The divinity of an Ancient Near Eastern king is also on bold display on the Codex Hammurabi, the law stele of the Babylonian king by the same name (1792 – 1750 BCE).[145] At the top of the codex, Hammurabi is depicted as standing in front of the god Šamaš. Bahrani says that the depiction of Hammurabi in front of Šamaš illustrates that:

> He enters his world. The spaces of the sacred and the profane are merged in ways that are perhaps more alarming than the Victory Stele of Naramsin or Naramsin's transfiguration of himself into divinity. Hammurabi has come face-to-face with the god. He is smaller than the god Šamaš, yet very like him in many respects.[146]

The role of the kings and the role of gods in Ancient Near Eastern war narrative often overlap, which in itself is also indicative of the ubiquitous nature of the ideology of divine kingship throughout the Ancient Near East.

It is essential to discuss the way in which the centrifugal nature of ideologization manifests in the Ancient Near East so that later we can better appreciate the nature of Israelite oral historiography. When discussing ancient Egypt, Younger writes:

> With regard to the diffusion of the Egyptian imperialistic ideology, it is very clear that the message was communicated by the visual, oral and written modes. The publication of the texts on the outside walls of temples, on stelae set up in key locations throughout the empire, and the very nature of the hieroglyphys themselves demonstrate that the messages of the texts were intended for the public and that some attempt at a high-redundance message was being undertaken. Since the temple-centred towns probably formed the backbone of urbanism in Egypt during the Empire period (ca. 1500-1200 B.C.), the diffusion of these messages was greatly enhanced.[147]

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[144] Bahrani, 107.
[145] Bahrani, 114.
[146] Bahrani, 118.
[147] Younger, 189.

It is clear, however, that the same could be said regarding the diffusion of all royal ideology in the Ancient Near East. Consider the following texts which come directly from Assyrian annals describing conquest. From the Annals of Shalmaneser III (859 – 824 BCE), "I massacred them. I carried off their spoils. I made two stelae of my royalty. I wrote on them the praise of my power. I erected the first at the beginning of his cities and the second at the end of his cities, where the sea begins."[148] Another, from the "Marble Slab," also representative of Shalmaneser III, "I went to the mountains of Ba'li-ra'si at the side of the sea and (lies) opposite Tyre. I erected a stela of my royalty there."[149] The slab also records Shalmaneser III's recalling, "I went up on Mt. Lebanon. I set up a stela of my royalty with the stela of Tiglath-Pileser (I), the great king who went before me."[150] Thus, we observe the role which stelae played in diffusing the ideologisation concerning the authority of a king, particularly in a conquered area.

It is an issue of primary importance to appreciate the Ancient Near Eastern mindset concerning the relationship between gods, kings, and the land. C.T. Gadd observed that "God and king are two conceptions so nearly coupled in the oriental mind that the distinction is constantly blurred."[151] What Gary Smith adds to this understanding is worth quoting at length as it is indispensible to our understanding of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative, and Israelite conquest narrative in particular:

> Israelite kings ruled, shepherded and governed their people, sat upon a throne in a palace, judged important court cases, and were the commanders-in-chief of the army just like the kings in other neighboring nations. But the Israelites did not

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[148] Younger, 103.
[149] Younger, 106.
[150] Younger, 107.
[151] Cited in Gary V. Smith, "The Concept of God/the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible," in *Trinity Journal* 3 NS (1982), 32.

believe the human king was a mediator between God and men, or the one who integrated and harmonized man with the natural world, as was the case in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Israelite king was not deified and did not serve in the cultic drama which re-enacted a divine battle in the New Year's festival. Human kingship in Israel was introduced well after the formation of the nation, so this institution appears less significant than kingship in cultures around Israel.

These factors draw the focus of attention to the unique character of Israel's true king, Yahweh. This uniqueness does not deny certain conceptual or functional similarities with the ancient Near Eastern ideas about the kingship of the gods. Three primary components which unite themselves in the Israelite metaphor of God as king are similar to those used in other religions: (a) Yahweh (as other gods) is Lord and king of the world; (b) Yahweh (as other gods) is a mighty warrior who destroys his enemies; and (c) Yahweh (as other gods) is a judge over his kingdom.[152]

We will see the way in which normative elements of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative

exist in pre-monarchical Israelite war narratives, that is, pre-monarchic as far as the

narrative is concerned. Indeed, as we shall see, YHWH embodies characteristics

typically associated with the king in annals of other Ancient Near Eastern cultures. I will

illustrate the way in which these normative elements reflect, and reinforce, the

ideologization and social organization foundational to the emergence of organized

violence in the Ancient Near East generally, but with special attention to the way in

which these elements manifest in Israelite historiography in light of the kingship of

YHWH.[153] Bahrani tells us that that "deities were associated with particular cities as

patron gods,"[154] indeed, so much so that "the removal of the god from the city had

disastrous consequences. The god was exiled. He (or she) went into a form of occultation

wherein divine power and protection were removed from the city."[155] In light of the well-

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[152] Smith, 33.
[153] Smith informs us that "Martin Buber defines Israelite religion as the belief in the kingship of God." Smith, 33-34.
[154] Bahrani, 165.
[155] Bahrani, 165. I will discuss representations of divine presence in more detail in Chapter Three.

known connection between the gods, kings, and land, YHWH would have *had* to promise

a land to his people. Indeed, without land, in order for the Israelites to have confidence in

YHWH, a covenant would have been necessary, a promise with conditions that would

lead the Israelites to finally possess a land of their own. Also, unlike those in fortified

cities with statues of their gods and central temples which gave confidence to the

residents of city-states that their god was with them, the Israelites required a portable

confidence, one they found in YHWH's covenant with them and embodied by the ark,

that is, until such time that they would have a land of their own. The intimate relationship

of these motifs will become clear, particularly when I discuss the destruction of the walls

of Jericho, the Ban (חרם), demonization of the enemy, the burning and cursing of

conquered cities, and the bodily display of defeated kings.

I will reveal the way in which elements of Joshua 5:13-6:27, which are normative

to Ancient Near Eastern war narrative, reflect the presence of social organization and

ideologization, as well as help to reinforce them. Furthermore, we will see that the

narrative testifies to the presence of elements of warfare in the Ancient Near East that

were normative in the effort to achieve militaristic goals.[156] Therefore, in the final

analysis it is my hope that this thesis will contribute to a discussion regarding the

purported historicity of the militaristic elements of the conquest of Canaan.

Finally, for the purpose of this thesis I will be using the Masoretic Text (herein the

MT) of Joshua 5:13-6:27. The Septuagint (herein LXX) and the MT do depart from each

other in some verses of Joshua 5:13-6:27, which I will address in just one instance

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[156] See Chapter Three.

because it reinforces my thesis' central point. In every other instance, however, the differences are negligible and do not affect the arguments that I am putting forward.[157]

2.5 The Sociology of Warfare and the Book of Joshua

In the above section concerning methodology I described Malešević's two underlying sociological necessities for the emergence of organized violence. We noticed that the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion was firmly in place before Sargon had his military successes. As we shall also see, the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion was firmly and necessarily in place before Joshua crossed the Jordan and before the fall of Jericho. Recall that the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion refers to the processual growth of social organizational structure that requires the tacit approval and action of human beings at all levels of the given hierarchy, and which requires "continuous ideological legitimation."[158] Indeed, before there is any discernable social structure for the Israelites (that is, as far as the biblical narrative is concerned) God is portrayed as doing all of the fighting for them (Exodus 7-11, 14) until they were attacked by Amalek and his men (Exodus 17:8-14). When the Israelites fell under attack all that Moses could do was command Joshua to take some men and fight Amalek and his soldiers (Exodus 17:9). The narrative describes the battle as having been long and close though finally won with God's assistance via a "staff of God" (Exodus 17:8). Notably, immediately following the battle, Jethro (Moses' father-in-law), expresses concern for

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[157] Pitkänen, 154-155. Hess also admits this regarding Joshua more generally: "The LXX and the MT preserve two separate editions of the text of Joshua. The differences between the two editions are minor," and, "One should not assume the priority of one text over the other in any particular instance." Hess, 18.
[158] Malešević, 4.

Moses because he is the sole judge over Israel (Exodus 18:13-18). Jethro then suggests to

Moses that he appoint other judges as officers over the people, each taking equal portions

of the Israelite populace (Exodus 18:19-26).[159] The text thus indicates that better social

organization was needed to be a more effective military machine. Such social

organization would also be required for Israel's centrifugal ideologization, the perfusion

of which would be necessary to unite and bind the tribes together under a common

purpose (*sans* the city walls that were typical of their Ancient Near Eastern neighbours).

Thus, the Law (Exodus 20-23), the establishment of a formal priesthood (Exodus 28-29),

and construction of the tent of meeting and the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 36-40)

followed the establishment of a legal hierarchy. The social organization started by

Jethro's suggestion to Moses continues in the book of Numbers.

The first census of Israel is described to have been done according to clan and

ancestral house (Numbers 1) and then each group are said to have been enrolled as in an

army (Numbers 1:19-43) with the exception of the Levites, who had been designated

priests with the purpose of looking after everything relevant to the tabernacle (Numbers

1:48-54). Numbers 2 then describes that the order of the Israelite encampment was to be

according to their "respective regiments, under ensigns by their ancestral houses"

(Numbers 2:2). Each ancestral house was assigned a place of encampment respective to

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[159] The following describes Jethro's advice to Moses: "Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let them sit as judges over for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves…So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens." (Exodus 18:19-25) All biblical quotations are from the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) unless otherwise stated.

the tent of meeting, which was run by the Levites (Numbers 2:2-16; 18-34) with the

Levites encamped in the middle with the tent (Numbers 2:17). In recognition of the need

for ongoing leadership Joshua was appointed Moses' successor (Numbers 27:12-23). As

such, as far as the biblical narrative is concerned, all of the conditions of large-scale

social organization were in place before the crossing of the Jordan as well as a legal code

which outlined "penalties for noncompliance."[160]

Centrifugal Ideologization is the tie that binds a social organisation together,

assumes the active involvement and approval of human agents, permeates from

centralized political and cultural figures towards wider populations, and gives moral

justification to any organised violence that it carries out. I argue that centrifugal

ideologization is evident in the biblical narrative prior to the crossing of the Jordan as

well. We can see this both at the micro/familial level and the macro/tribal level. First,

consider the way in which Deuteronomy insisted that the Law was to be recited to the

children of the Israelites.[161] The narratives of the Israelites were necessary for their social

organization, as well the perpetuation of the ideologization which provided the necessary

justification for entering into combat. At the macro-level the Israelite ideological

narrative was recited in its most obvious way via the recitation and celebration of another

war narrative, their flight from Egypt, that is, the Passover (Numbers 9:1-5; Joshua 5:10),

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[160] Malešević, 6.

[161] The following, from Deuteronomy, describes the way in which Israelite ideologization was to perpetuated at the micro/familial level: "Now this is the commandment – the statutes and the ordinances – that the LORD your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, so that you and your children and your children's children may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life…Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 6-9).

as well as the regular recitation of the Law to the entire assembly of Israel (Deuteronomy 31:9-13). As such, according to the biblical narrative the centrifugal nature of the ideologization among the Israelites radiated outward from within individual families as well as from the judges, prophets and priests. However, it must be admitted that the mere institution of social organization and ideologization would not be enough to support the emergence of organized violence, that is, without time for them to take hold.

The book of Numbers describes twelve spies, one from each tribe, spying out the Promised Land, and returning terrified of the giant peoples and the fortified cities that they saw.[162] For failing to trust YHWH and giving a report that caused fear to overcome the Israelites, the Israelites are described to have been condemned to wander the desert for forty years, but now it is with their new social organization and ideologization firmly in place.[163] Indeed, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb we are told that it was an entirely new generation of Israelites that crossed the Jordan.[164] As such, as far as the narrative is concerned, the newly implemented cumulative bureaucratization of coercion, and centrifugal ideologization, had forty years to homogenize the twelve tribes around a central ideology of YHWH worship and within a social hierarchy which emphasized the rule of law, and the leadership of the judges and priests.

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[162] The following describes the way in which the Israelite spies saw the inhabitants of Canaan: "So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, 'The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are of great size. There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim); and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them" (Numbers 13:32-33).

[163] Here, we see a description of YHWH's condemning the Israelites to wander the desert for an additional forty years: "'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.' I the LORD have spoken; surely I will do thus to all this wicked congregation gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die" (Numbers 14:34-35).

[164] Numbers 14:38.

Finally, the Israelites were in a position to cross the Jordan. The description of the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan intentionally alludes to an earlier war narrative wherein YHWH did the fighting for them, that is, the Exodus. In Joshua 3 we are told of the way in which the waters of the Jordan stopped flowing when the priests and the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the water, which allowed the Israelites to cross.[165] YHWH was represented by the Ark of the Covenant, and Joshua's role as YHWH's representative was also portrayed when YHWH said to Joshua, "this day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the Ark of the Covenant."[166] Having crossed the Jordan we next hear of Joshua choosing twelve men, one from each of Israel's tribes, taking stones from the middle of the Jordan after passing in front of the ark of YHWH and then laying them where they were to camp.[167] In doing so, the stones would have been laid in such a way as to surround the Ark of the Covenant and the priests according to the order of encampment prescribed to the Israelites in Numbers 2. The stones would then function as a memorial emphasizing the centrality of the ark, the priests and, therefore, YHWH, which served as a reminder of the social organization and the ideology to which the Israelites were committed.

Having established that the biblical narrative describes the presence of the *Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion* and *Centrifugal Ideologization* despite the Israelite's unique nomadic status, I will now move into the comparison and contrast of Joshua 5:13-6:27 with other war narratives of the Ancient Near East. In doing so I will

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[165] Joshua 3:14-17.
[166] Joshua 3:7-13.
[167] Joshua 4:1-9.

show that Joshua 5:13-6:27 possesses elements that are normative of war narrative throughout the Ancient Near East. Finally, I will illustrate the way in which those elements reflect, and contribute to, the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion and centrifugal ideologization, as well as describe how they were required for the waging of 'successful' warfare within its Ancient Near Eastern context. Normative elements of war narrative perpetuate the social organization and the ideological project necessary to mobilize future military endeavors aside from those described in the narratives, as the narratives were, both in their sources, and in their later redacted form, directed towards contemporary audiences.[168]

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[168] For some, these biblical narratives continue to perpetuate the underlying ideological project necessary for the existence of the modern state of Israel in our own day.

Chapter Three

3.1 The Presence of Divine Mandate

In Joshua 5:13-6:27 there are numerous tropes which exhibit precisely what Malešević refers to as "proto-ideology,"[169] that is, exhibit both centrifugal ideologization and the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion. A divine mandate to carry out warfare was an essential feature of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative as it provided ideological justification to the unnatural act of killing. Joshua is described as having divine authority to carry out battle. The book of Joshua begins with these words from YHWH:

> My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life.[170]

Furthermore, the appearance of "the Commander of the army of YHWH" in a vision to Joshua in 5:13-15 admits to the divine sanction of war, as well as the explicit instructions given to Joshua by YHWH in Joshua 6:2-5.

The divine mandate to carry out war is an essential feature of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative and many of the additional elements that I will describe depend upon the presence of this first characteristic, while the remaining elements are indirectly dependent. Divine mandate to carry out warfare lies at the heart of any justification for war and reinforced the status of Ancient Near Eastern kings as those who carry out the

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[169] Recall that according to Malešević, "traditional rulers made extensive use of the legitimising potency of proto-ideologies, such as religion and mythology, to justify conquests and coercive forms of governance." Malešević, 9.

[170] Joshua 1:2-5.

divine will; furthermore, the divine mandate also reinforced the social hierarchical role of the king and legitimately appointed authorities, including legitimate priesthoods, as these elements of Ancient Near Eastern culture were commonly held to have been given by the gods.

The earliest monument of war from the Ancient Near East that Bahrani says we "have identified with certainty" is the Early Dynastic Stele of Eannatum.[171] This sculpture gives us an example wherein the Sumerian king of Lagash, Eannatum (2454-2425 BCE), received the divine mandate via a dream omen "from the patron god of his city-state, Ningirsu."[172] Bahrani tells us that "the dream omen that was given told him that 'the sun-god will shine at your right,' Lagash would defeat Umma, and 'myriad corpses will reach the base of heaven.'"[173] As such, victory was understood to be in accordance with the will of Ningirsu, and the battle was "sanctioned by the gods."[174] This "served to justify the battle as a defensible, just war,"[175] which is essential to justifying organized violence. More than a millennium later, the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I were recorded. Younger tells us "that the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE) represent the 'first true annalistic text' among the Assyrian royal inscriptions."[176] The Annals, written in the first-person, describe Tiglath-Pileser I saying, "With the exalted strength of Aššur, my lord, against the land Haria and the army of the extensive land of Paphe in high mountains, where no king had ever gone, Aššur, the lord, commanded me to march."[177]

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[171] Bahrani, 184. Carved c. 2460 BCE (147).
[172] Bahrani, 184.
[173] Bahrani, 151.
[174] Bahrani, 151.
[175] Bahrani, 184.
[176] Younger, 79.
[177] This is taken from the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I, Episode 7 (III. 35-65), cited in Younger, 87.

The Annals also record that "with the onslaught of my fierce weapons by means of which

Aššur, the lord, gave me strength and authority I took with thirty of my chariots escorting

my aggressive personal carriers, my warriors trained for successful combat."[178] From a

prism inscription describing the first five years of Tiglath-Pileser I's reign it is recorded

that "Assur and the great gods, who have made my kingdom great, and who have

bestowed might and power as a (*lit.,* my) gift, commanded that I should extend the

boundary of their land, and they entrusted to my hand their mighty weapons, the storm of

battle."[179] Here, we see three examples of war narrative which begin with a statement

that immediately declares the source of Tiglath-Pileser's authority, that is, his god Aššur.

Similarly, the Annals of Ashur-Dan II (king of Assyria from 935 – 912 BCE) also

bear witness to the divine mandate. For example, in Episode 4 we read, "[By] the

command of Aššur, [my lord], I marched [to the land of Ka]dmuhu";[180] Episode 7 states,

"By the command of Ašš[ur, my lord,] I marched [to the land of Kirr]iuru."[181]

Sennacherib (king of Assyria from 705/704 – 681 BCE) offers a less direct example, "In

my second campaign: Aššur, my lord, encouraged me, and I indeed marched against the

land of the Kassites."[182] Finally, the Summary Text[183] of Aššur-nasir-pal II (king of

Assyria from 883 – 859 BCE), offers us this example: "When Aššur, the lord who called

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[178] Younger., 86. Taken from the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I *Episode 4* (III. 63-84).

[179] Daniel David Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon: Volume I Historical Records of Assyria from the Earliest Times to Sargon* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968 [1926]), 73.

[180] Younger, 92.

[181] Younger, 93.

[182] Annals of Sennacherib, Second Campgaign (1. 65-80a) from Younger, 111. This exact wording emerges again in Sennacherib's Seventh Campaign, "Aššur, my lord, encouraged me, and I (indeed) marched against the land of Elam." Younger, 114.

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

me by name (and) made my kingship great, entrusted his merciless weapon in my lordly arms, I felled with the sword in the midst of battle the wide-spread troops of the Lullume."[184]

Oftentimes, the divine mandate even extended into specific strategic battle plans.[185] The Neo-Assyrian king Esarhaddon (681 – 669 BCE) is depicted asking the following:

> Should Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, send Ša-Nabu-šu, chief eunuch, and the army at this disposal to take the road and go to capture the city of Amul? If they go and set up camp before the city Amul, will they, be it by means of war, or by force, or through tunnels and breaches, or by means of ramps, or by means of battering rams, or through friendliness or peaceful negotiations, or through insurrection and rebellion, or through any other ruse of capturing a city, capture the city, Amul? Conquer that city. Will it be delivered to them.[186]

Bahrani also discusses the oftentimes complex battle strategies that were literally brought to the statue of a god. She says, "at times in the Neo-Assyrian queries to Šamaš, an entire complicated battle strategy was drawn out on a papyrus and placed before the god (in front of his cult statue in the temple). The questioner then asked 'Should this particular strategy, on this document, be followed?' The strategy was not written out in detail, like the other queries, but put before the god in the form of a drawing or diagram. The god, in the guise of his cult statue, observed the document and gave his response (whether positive or negative) through the entrails of the sacrificial animal, which was offered at

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[184] Younger, 120-121.

[185] Bahrani, 185.

[186] Bahrani, 185. Here is another example of Esarhaddon seeking battle advice: "Šamaš, great lord, give me a positive answer to what I am asking you. Should Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, strive and plan? Should he take the road with his army and camp and go to the district of Egypt, as he wishes? Should he wage war against Taharqa, King of Kush, and troops which he has? If he goes, will he engage in battle with Taharqa, King of Kush, and his army? In waging this war, will the weapons of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, and his army prevail over the weapons of Taharqa and his troops?" Bahrani, 185.

the same time as the submission of the document for divine consent."[187] That such

complicated battle strategies would be brought to a god's statue for approval is neither

strange, or exceptional in the Ancient Near East, in light of the role of the gods in

determining the outcome of battles.

The feature of the divine mandate is omnipresent throughout the Ancient Near

East and certainly not limited to Assyian inscriptions. Consider the Ten Year Annals of

Muršili II (king of the Hittite empire from 1321 – 1295 BCE):

> After having sat myself on the throne of my father, I have ruled already 10 years.
> These enemy countries I conquered in 10 years by my (own) hand. The enemy
> countries which the royal princes and the generals have conquered, are not
> (preserved) herein. But what the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady, assigns to me,
> that I will carry out, and I will accomplish.[188]

We will return to the Hittites in more detail shortly when we describe another common

feature of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative, which implicitly indicates the presence of

the divine mandate, that is, divine assistance in battle. For now, however, let us examine

another Ancient Near Eastern example from Egypt.

Younger tells us that "at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, as the Egyptian

ideological foundations of kingship were reformulated, divine authority took precedence

over the monarchy. In order to legitimate his rule, the king alludes to his 'election' by a

god. In order to justify his actions the monarch claims to be acting according to the

'commands' of the god."[189] The Great Sphinx Stela at Giza regarding Amenhotep II (c.

1426 – 1400 BCE) is an illustration of this:

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[187] Bahrani, 188.
[188] Younger, 144.
[189] Younger, 302.

> He Himself <Amun-Re> caused him <Amenhotep> to appear as King upon the throne of the living, He assigned to him the Black Land (Kmt) as his retinue, the Red Land as his serfs; He bestowed on him a heritage forever, a kingship for all time. He gave to him the throne of Geb, the mighty rulership of Atum, the Two Lords portions, the Two Ladies' shares, their years of life and of dominion.[190]

Thus, we have numerous examples from the Ancient Near East of the presence of divine mandate, which in turn is indicative of widespread ideologization concerning the king's divine authority to carry out warfare. The presence of the divine mandate also reflects the peoples' acceptance of the king's authority. The placement of annals and victory stelea akin to the ones that I have described were within the palaces of the king, other administrative centres, and sometimes served as boundary markers. As such, they are placed in such a way to encourage centrifugal ideologisation from both administrative centres as well as areas concerning the general populace of a territory. They reminded everyone of the exalted status of the king and his command over issues concerning life and death – an authority given to him by a god or goddess. The aforementioned Stele of Eannatum of Lagash[191] was a public monument which "was carved and erected after the settlement of a border dispute around 2460 BC."[192] The carving depicts the defeated "as corpses piled high in mounds or trapped in a net by the god."[193] This, of course, sent a strong message deterring any further rebellion and ensured that the people of the defeated area knew to whom they owed their allegiance. Most importantly, however, these monuments reminded everyone of the authority under which they carried out the violence

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[190] Younger, 176.
[191] Pg. 49.
[192] Bahrani, 147.
[193] Bahrani, 147.

that their king asked them to perpetrate upon others. The book of Joshua displays a similar, but unique, means of ideologization.

In chapters four and five of Joshua, after the crossing of the Jordan,[194] but before the conquest of Canaan, we hear of a recommitment to the ideology of Israel and the centrifugal way in which it is spread. First, as was discussed in the introduction, we hear of Joshua selecting twelve men, one from each of Israel's tribes, to take stones from the middle of the Jordan after passing in front of the ark of YHWH and then laying them where they were to encamp at night.[195] The stones were laid in such a way as to surround the ark according to the order of encampment outlined in Numbers,[196] thus creating a memorial which emphasized the centrality of the ark, the priests, and therefore, YHWH, which served as a reminder of the social organization and the ideology to which the Israelites were committed. Only after all of this had been completed are we told that "forty thousand armed for war crossed over before YHWH to the plains of Jericho for battle."[197]

Next, there is YHWH's command to Joshua to circumcise Israel for a whole new generation had arisen who had not yet been circumcised according to the Law of Moses.[198] Afterwards we are told that the Israelites "remained in the camp until they

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[194] Joshua 4 describes the crossing in a way that is meant to remind the reader (hearer) of the exodus. Notably, the centrality of the priests and the ark of YHWH serves the narratological role of reminding the Israelites of the primacy of place maintained by YHWH (i.e. He is king). Implicit in such a reminder is YHWH's law, and the consequences of disobedience outlined within it, including the laws of warfare in Deuteronomy 20.

[195] Joshua 4:1-9

[196] Numbers 2

[197] Joshua 4:13

[198] The following describes the new and uncircumcised generation: "This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the warriors, had died during the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. Although all the people who came out

were healed,"[199] which is to say that the Israelites spent yet more time in the space which

had been designed to reflect and convey to them the centrality of YHWH. However,

most importantly, before we hear of the conquest of Jericho, the reader is told of the

Israelites' celebration of the Passover. As we have seen,[200] the reciting of the deliverance

from Egypt displays the centrifugal spread of Israel's ideology via an earlier war narrative

which reflected, and therefore contributed, to Israel's willingness to obey the orders of

YHWH's representative: Joshua (a name that literally means "YHWH saves").

After this recommitment to their ideologization comes Joshua's vision:

> Once when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?" He replied, "Neither; but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, and he said to him, "What do you command your servant, my lord?" The commander of the army of the LORD said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.[201]

Pitkänen notes the allusion to the burning bush narrative in Exodus 3,[202] which highlights

the commander's authority and his being indicative of YHWH's presence. We will see in

more detail later that "divine presence in war was seen by Ancient Near Eastern peoples

as necessary for success."[203] Following this introduction, YHWH proceeds in chapter six

with detailed battle instructions, which ought to remind us of the way in which detailed

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had been circumcised, yet all the people born on the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised." Joshua 5:4-5.

[199] Joshua 5:8

[200] See Chapter Two, Section Five.

[201] Joshua 5:13-15.

[202] Pitkänen describes the allusion to the burning bush narrative when he states, "in a manner reminiscent of the burning bush narrative (Exod. 3), Joshua encounters the commander of the army of Yahweh from the supernatural realm. In both cases, Moses and Joshua are to take off their shoes, as the ground where they are standing is holy (v. 15; Exod. 3:5)." Pitkänen, 150.

[203] Pitkänen, 151.

battle plans were laid out for approval before Šamaš. Such explicit approval by YHWH

to carry out war with Jericho, and those in the Promised Land more generally, assured the

Israelites that the war they were carrying out was just, which was a central component of

the ideologization at the heart of Israel's young, yet effective, bureaucracy of coercion.

3.2 Divine Assistance in Battle

Similar to an overtly expressed divine mandate is divine assistance in battle. This

second normative element of war narrative expresses the first, though indirectly. Perhaps

because the first is implied within this second feature it also appears more frequently.

Joshua 6:2 describes YHWH's clear statement that he had "handed Jericho over" to

Joshua, "along with its king and soldiers." Joshua 6:3-5 describes YHWH's instructions

to Joshua which were to be followed to ensure victory, and Joshua 6:20 describes the

resultant fall of Jericho's wall which, as far as the narrative is concerned, enabled the

Israelites to defeat Jericho.

Similarly, Hittite narratives give clear attestation to the presence of divine

assistance. The Ten Year Annals of Muršili II (king of the Hittite empire between 1321-

1295 BCE), describes the king praying to Arinna:

> Oh, sungoddess of Arinna, my lady – stand beside me, and defeat the
> aforementioned neighboring enemy countries before me. And the sungoddess of
> Arinna heard my word, and she stood beside me. And when I had sat down on
> the throne of my father, I conquered these enemy countries in ten years; and
> defeated them.[204]

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[204] Younger, 144.

Muršili describes the help he believes that he has received even more overtly as the

annals continue. He describes his victories as having been dependent upon numerous

gods taking a stand with him. For example:

> The sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezulla,
> (and) all the gods ran before me. And I conquered Piyama-KAL, the son of
> Uhhaziti, together with his troops and charioteers … Then I, my sun went after
> the inhabitants to Mt. Arinnanda, and I fought (them) at Mt. Arinnanda. The
> sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezulla (and) all
> the gods ran before me.[205]

While it is repetitive, nonetheless, what becomes an exhausted turn of phrase also makes

it clear to anyone reading that Muršili has divine assistance and, therefore, authority on

his side. Throughout the Ten Year Annals this phrase, or one very similar to it, appears at

least twelve times.[206] Muršili II also recorded the accomplishments of his father

Suppiluliuma (king c. 1344-1322 BCE) for prosperity.[207] The Deeds of Suppiluliuma

state, "the gods stood by him: the sungoddess of Arinna, the storm god of Hatti, the storm

god of the Army, and Ištar of the Battlefield, (so that) the en[emy] died in multitudes."[208]

The Assyrian texts, due to their sheer availability, also provide us with countless

examples. Consider Episode 19 (V.99-VI.21) of the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I wherein

we read, "I inscribed on them (a description of) the conquest of the lands which by Aššur,

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[205] Episode 9 of The Ten Annals of Muršili II. Younger, 151.

[206] For example, Episode 11, "And I, my sun, fought against him; and the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the might stormgod, my lord; Mezzulla; and all the gods ran before me. And I conquered Tapalazunauli … together with his troops and charioteers;" Episode 14, "And the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the might stormgod, my lord; Mezzulla; (and) all the gods ran before me. And I conquered Puranda;" Episode 19, "Then I, my sun, went to the land of Arawanna. And I attacked the land of Arawanna. And the sungoddess of Arinna, my lady; the mighty stormgod, my lord; Mezzulla; (and) all the gods ran before me. And I conquered all of the land of Arawanna." Similarly, Episodes 26, 7, 18, and 20. Younger, 151-156.

[207] Younger, 160.

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

my lord, I had conquered."[209] Also, "the annalistic narrative sections of Aššur-nasir-pal II's inscriptions"[210] describes Aššur-nasir-pall II saying, "With the assistance of Aššur my lord, I departed from Tušhan" and "with the exalted strength of Aššur my lord (and) with a fierce battle I fought with them. For two days, before sunrise, I thundered against them like Adad-of-the-Devastation, (and) I rained down flames upon them."[211] Similarly, a Summary Text of Aššur-nasir-pal II known as The 'Standard' Incription narrates Aššur-nasir-pal II saying, "When Aššur, the lord who called me by name (and) made my kingship great, entrusted his merciless weapon in my lordly arms, I felled with the sword in the midst of battle the wide-spread troops of the Lullume. With the aid of Šamaš and Adad, my divine helpers, I thundered like Adad, the destroyer, against the armies of the lands of Nairi, Habhi, the Shubare, and Nirib."[212]

Around 1280 BCE the inscriptions of Shalmaneser I were created.[213] Here we have an example of a war narrative couched within a wider narrative concerning the rebuilding of the temple of Eharsagkurkurra.[214] The text portrays Shalmaneser I saying, "the lord Assur chose me for legitimate worshipper, and, for ruling of the black-headed people, gave me scepter, sword, and staff, he presented me the diadem of legitimate rulership."[215] This text, therefore, asserts Shalmaneser's divinely given authority, which allowed Shalmaneser to engage in battle with "the land of Uruadrie" who "rebelled."[216] Finally, Shalmaneser asserts, "The city of Arina, a strongly fortified mountain fortress,

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[209] Younger, 81.
[210] Younber, 94.
[211] Younger, 98.
[212] Younger, 120-121.
[213] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 38.
[214] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 38.
[215] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 39.
[216] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 39.

which had formerly revolted, despising the god Assur, by the help of Assur and the great

gods, my lords, I took that city, I destroyed it and scattered *kudime* over its (site)." The

Prism of Esarhaddon attests to Esarhaddon saying, "By the might of Ashur, Sin,

Shamash, Nabû, Marduk, Ishtar of Nineveh, Ishtar of Arbela, I conquered all arrogant

foes."[217] Another example from the prism of Esarhaddon starts with Esarhaddon

receiving divine authority and then the promise of assistance:

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

Divine assistance in battle was the narrative device used to convey that the gods

determined the outcome of combat and that, therefore, the violence carried out was just.

Thus, it provided the ideological legitimation necessary to justify the violence carried out

by a king and an empire.

In Joshua 6:2 we hear YHWH say to Joshua, "See, I have handed Jericho over to

you, along with its king and soldiers." Notably, unlike Ancient Near Eastern war annals

wherein the king describes his actions in the first person, this narrative is told in the third

person by an observer. The emphasis, therefore, is not upon the actions of a human king,

prophet or judge but, rather, upon YHWH's actions. Compared with Esarhaddon's

aforementioned petitions regarding how to proceed in battle, YHWH gives clear

instruction regarding how the Israelites are to proceed without being petitioned at all:

> You shall march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once. Thus you
> shall do for six days, with seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns

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[217] R. Campbell Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal: Found at Nineveh, 1927-8* (London: British Museum, 1931), 22.

before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. When they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and all the people shall charge straight ahead.[218]

The clarity of instruction, and the promise of supernatural assistance in such overt tones reads almost polemically against other Ancient Near Eastern narratives like the supplications of Esarhaddon. That is, it reads as though unlike other Ancient Near Eastern gods who need to be petitioned endlessly and then have their responses read through omens "written in the body of the sacrificial animal,"[219] YHWH, without supplication from Joshua, tells Joshua what to do in straightforward language, which in itself possesses a message: YHWH is God and king of Israel and, therefore, able to give clear instruction.

L. Daniel Hawk outlines a pattern of command-execution throughout Joshua 6, noting that

by appropriating this pattern to shape the whole of the account, the narrator powerfully demonstrates the nation's complete obedience to YHWH and Joshua … a description of the execution of commands often follows the particular language of the commands themselves. The technique further underscores the meticulous manner in which the exact words of the command are carried out and reinforces the chain of command.[220]

Hawk describes the command-execution precision in detail: Joshua 6:3 (command) – Joshua 6:11a, and 14a (execution); Joshua 6:3-4 (command) – Joshua 6:13a, 14b (execution); Joshua 6:4b (command) – Joshua 6:15-16a (execution); Joshua 6:5 (command) – Joshua 6:20b-c (execution); Joshua 6:6b (command) – Joshua 6:8b-c, 13

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[218] Joshua 6:3-5.
[219] Bahrani, 186.
[220] L. Daniel Hawk, *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry, Joshua* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2000), 88.

(execution); Joshua 6:7 (command) – Joshua 6:9a, 13 (execution); Joshua 6:10

(command) – Joshua 6:16b, 20a (execution); Joshua 6:17a (command) – Joshua 6:21

(execution); and Joshua 6:22 (command) – Joshua 6:23 (execution).[221] In its overt

display of command and execution the text exhibits the centrality of the ark, YHWH, the

priests, and Joshua's authority. Inasmuch as it does so it buttresses the cumulative

bureaucratization of coercion and the centrifugal ideologization necessary for Israel to

embark into combat, which would be equally essential at the time of Josiah as it would

have been at the time of Joshua. YHWH's divine assistance is perhaps most boldly

displayed by the destruction of Jericho's wall. Due to the complexity associated with any

discussion concerning the destruction of Jericho's wall, I have opted to discuss the issue

separately. However, it is, of course, an example of YHWH's divine assistance being

described.

3.3 The Presence of Priests on the Battlefield

The presence of priests served a multifaceted function. First, it reminded those

embarking into battle of the justification for the violence that they are about to commit,

that is, the divine authority to which their actions have been given. It also served to

embolden the warriors and discourage the enemy, as the presence of priests, and the

divine authority with which battle was carried out was believed to be accompanied by the

previously discussed divine assistance in battle.[222] Finally, it reminded the king's

subjects, including his warriors, of their place in the social hierarchy, or the

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[221] Hawk (2000), 88-89.
[222] Similarly, Hawk observes that "priests represent a mediating and transforming presence and, in their role as bearers of the ark, the presence of God among the people." Hawk (2000), xxi.

bureaucratization of coercion, within which the warriors had a part, and any penalties for going against it, which was tantamount to treason against the king and, therefore, by divine mandate, the god(s) to which they were committed. Even today, the connection between the presence of military chaplains and the morale of soldiers is well known.[223] In the Jericho narrative priests are explicitly mentioned in Joshua 6:4, 6, 8, 12-13, and 16. Similarly, there are numerous examples of bas-reliefs depicting the presence of priests on the battlefield in the Ancient Near East.

The earliest versions of bas-reliefs depicting priests in areas of battle that we possess are from Ashurnasirpal II's palace in Nimrud (883-859 BCE).[224] These reliefs depict "a priest in a military camp leaning over an altar, in the process of examining the entrails of a sacrificial animal."[225] Similarly, in the reliefs depicting Sennacherib's battle of Lachish priests also appear before an altar "within the military camp."[226] Bahrani also tells us "similar scenes of priests at camp appear in battle reliefs from the reign of Sargon II."[227] Fleming concludes that "Mesopotamian diviners (Akkadian *bārû*) not only joined military campaigns to provide up-to-date divine guidance and encouragement, but they went to battle, sometimes at the head of an army."[228] The presence of the priests (*barû*)

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[223] Seddon, Jones and Greenberg point out that "the available literature, although sparse, appears to suggest that a chaplain's 'Ministry of Presence' has raised the morale of soldiers on the battlefield. High morale has long been known to have a positive psychological effect on soldiers … High levels of morale have been shown to enhance performance both while deployed on and following recovery from operations." R. L. Seddon, E. Jones, and N. Greenberg, "The Role of Chaplains in Maintaining the Psychological Health of Military Personnel: An Historical and Contemporary Perspective," *Military Medicine* 176 Number 12 (2011), 1359.

[224] Bahrani, 188.

[225] Bahrani, 188.

[226] Bahrani cites British Museum 124548 and 124914. Bahrani, 188, and 238 n. 8.

[227] Bahrani, 188.

[228] Daniel E. Fleming, "The Seven-Day Siege of Jericho in Holy War" in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine,* ed. Chazon, Hallo and Schiffman (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 223.

in these situations, according to the depictions in the bas-reliefs, was to read omens.[229]

Bahrani tells us that "these oracular consultations and requests for signs of sanction from

the gods at the moment of battle were a necessary step in justifying war and ensuring

victory through the approval of the war by the divine."[230] We know, however, that the

reading of omens and the consultation with gods was not an ideological justification

pushed on the people in the form of propaganda, rather, it was a persistent belief

throughout the Ancient Near East that the outcomes of battles were determined by the

gods, and even the king participated in the process of ideologisation which buttressed the

bureaucracy of coercion in which he held his power by divine sanction or pedigree.[231] It

ought then to be no surprise to find the description of priests present in Hebrew biblical

war narratives as well.

The presence of priests in Israelite warfare is indeed mandated by the Torah

according to Deuteronomy 20 and, amongst other things, they are to help mitigate fear in

the face of a stronger enemy. The Hebrew text states:

> When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots, an
> army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them; for the LORD your
> God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Before you engage
> in battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the troops, and shall say to
> them: 'Hear, O Israel! Today you are drawing near to do battle against your
> enemies. Do not lose heart, or be afraid, or panic, or be in dread of them; for it is
> the LORD your God who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to
> give you victory.'[232]

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[229] Bahrani, 188.

[230] Bahrani, 188-189.

[231] Bahrani describes the kings adherence to the same ideologization when she states that "it is clear that the omens were taken seriously; they were not propagandistic acts for repression or coercion of the people but part of a religious ideology to which the king himself submitted." Bahrani, 197.

[232] Deuteronomoy 20.2-4.

Indeed, the Hebrew Bible testifies to the necessity of the presence of priests most clearly

in the story of Saul's battle with the Philistines and Samuel's late arrival. The story

displays the importance of the priest by way of a description of the priest's absence.[233] In

the story, Saul, having grown tired of waiting for Samuel to arrive and perform the

requisite sacrifice before battle with the Philistines, took matters into his own hands and

performed the sacrifice himself. Because Saul had not obeyed YHWH, Samuel told him

that his kingdom would not last.

There is, nonetheless, a perplexing issue here, that is, the priests and the ark are

missing from the LXX account of Joshua 6:3-5:

> σὺ δὲ περίστησον αὐτῇ τοὺς μαχίμους κύκλῳ, καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἂν σαλπίσητε τῇ
> σάλπιγγι, ἀνακραγέτω πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἅμα, καὶ ἀνακραγόντων αὐτῶν πεσεῖται
> αὐτόματα τὰ τείχη τῆς πόλεως, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὁρμήσας ἕκαστος
> κατὰ πρόσωπον εἰς τὴν πόλιν.[234]

Certainly, if priests were absent from the entire pericope that I am examining in this thesis

it would undermine my attempting to show the way in which this particular war narrative

reflects the ideologization and social organization that I maintain is at its heart. It seems,

however, that the lack of the priests' presence in these few verses of the LXX is not

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[233] The following describes the events: "He [Saul] waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people began to slip away from Saul. So Saul said, 'Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the offerings of well-being.' And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived; and Saul went out to meet him and salute him. Samuel said, 'What have you done?' Saul replied, 'When I saw that the people were slipping away from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines were mustering at Michmash, I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down upon me at Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of the LORD'; so I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering.' Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you. The LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom will not continue." 1 Samuel 13.8-14.

[234] "And do thou set the men of war round about it. And it shall be that when ye shall sound with the trumpet, all the people shall shout together. And when they have shouted, the walls of the city shall fall of themselves; and all the people shall enter, each one rushing directly into the city." LXX translations are taken from Sir Lancelot Brenton's classic translation of the LXX (London, 1851) unless otherwise stated.

problematic for two reasons. The first is that the priests are immediately present in the

very next few verses:

> καὶ εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυη πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς λέγων
> Παραγγείλατε τῷ λαῷ περιελθεῖν καὶ κυκλῶσαι τὴν πόλιν, καὶ οἱ μάχιμοι
> παραπορευέσθωσαν ἐνωπλισμένοι ἐναντίον κυρίου· καὶ ἑπτὰ ἱερεῖς ἔχοντες ἑπτὰ
> σάλπιγγας ἱερὰς παρελθέτωσαν ὡσαύτως ἐναντίον τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σημαινέτωσαν
> εὐτόνως, καὶ ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης κυρίου ἐπακολουθείτω· οἱ δὲ μάχιμοι
> ἔμπροσθεν παραπορευέσθωσαν καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς οἱ οὐραγοῦντες ὀπίσω τῆς κιβωτοῦ
> τῆς διαθήκης κυρίου πορευόμενοι καὶ σαλπίζοντες.[235]

Also, if their presence in these few verses is a later addition there is, nonetheless, no

indication that the priests were inserted into the pericope as a whole at a late date. Rather,

there is an attempt by a later redactor to emphasize the command-execution motif

outlined by Hawk, by ensuring that Joshua 6:13-14 accurately reflects an earlier

command, the command in Joshua 6:3-5. If the latter is the case then the priests' absence

from Joshua 6:3-5 in the LXX is rendered meaningless, on the other hand, their addition

in the MT further reinforces my point that the text is illustrating the centrality of the

priests and the ark, both of which are necessary to mobilize Israelite organized violence

by emphasizing Israelite ideology, and visually (as well as physically, by their place in

the order of march) representing Israelite social organization.[236] As such, it is not

necessary to presume that the priests (τοὺς ἱερεῖς) are a later addition intended to

"transform the narrative from a battle story to cultic drama,"[237] especially in light of the

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[235] "And Joshua the son of Naue went in to the priests, and spoke to them, saying, Charge the people to go round, and encompass the city; and let your men of war pass on armed before the Lord. And let seven priests having seven sacred trumpets proceed thus before the Lord, and let them sound loudly; and let the ark of the covenant of the Lord follow. And let the men of war proceed before, and the priests bringing up the rear behind the ark of the covenant of the Lord proceed sounding the trumpets" (LXX, Joshua 6:6-9).

[236] Soggin rightly points out, however, that the LXX version of verses 3-4 does not mention that the Israelites are to march around the town so much as surround it which may indicate an earlier tradition reminiscent "of the preparations for an armed conquest." Soggin, 81.

[237] Trent C. Butler, *Word Biblical Commentary Volume 7: Joshua* (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 68.

well-known presence of priests on the battlefield in the Ancient Near East. Any addition

that may have been made was likely done to emphasize the command-execution format of

Joshua 6 as outlined by Hawk, which as has already been stated, would have been as

important to Josiah as it was to Joshua. If this were the case then the addition of the

priests to these few verses would be a matter of clarification rather than an attempt to

theologize history. Trent Butler goes so far as to say that the priests "play no essential

element in the narrative. If they were totally removed from the story, the narrative would

still be complete and even easier to comprehend."[238] Here, I must disagree with Butler.

In light of the fact that only the priests can carry the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy

10:8),[239] the ark's well-attested presence in Israelite warfare throughout the Hebrew

Bible, and our awareness of the reminders of Israelite social organization and

ideologization required to mobilize organized violence, I maintain that without the priests

there would be no battle story at all; as Bahrani points out "performative ritual generates

its own ideological foundation."[240] In this way, the depiction of the priests carrying the

ark around the walled Jericho reminded the Israelites of the ideologization and social

organization in which they were active participants.

3.4 Fear

Fear is implicitly present in the Jericho narrative via Joshua 2:9-11, wherein

Rahab describes hearing of the Israelites' defeat of kings Sihon and Og, after which she

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[238] Butler, 68.

[239] Butler admits the priests "may belong to the original story as bearers of the divine symbol." Butler, 68.

[240] Bahrani, 69.

said "there was no courage left in any of us because of you." Joshua 5:1 recounts that the hearts of the kings of the Amorites and the kings of the Canaanites "melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the Israelites." Such descriptions of fear are a common motif in Ancient Near Eastern war narrative.

The prism inscription commemorating the first five years of the rule of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I states, "(the people) of Urratinash, a stronghold of theirs which lies on Mount Panari, - terror and fear of the splendor of Assur, my lord, overwhelmed them, and, to save their lives, they carried off their gods, and fled like birds to the tops of the lofty mountains."[241] In the Monolith Inscription, which is the "earliest annals text of Shalmaneser,"[242] Shalmaneser says, "the awe-inspiring fear of Assur, my lord, overcame them. They came down (and) seized my feet."[243] The role of king and the role of the gods in war narrative is intentionally blurred, such that, due to the king's divine authority, and therefore, the size of his army and his capacity to wage successful warfare, fear is driven into the hearts of the king's enemies. The king's divine authority, may come from a divine command, but may also be said to be due to divine pedigree. Consider, for example, the famous Merneptah stele. On the stele, Merneptah, king of Egypt (c. 1200 BCE) is referred to as the "Son of Re," and is described as "one who fortifies the hearts of hundreds of thousands" and "who puts eternal fear in the heart(s) of the Meshwesh."[244] It goes on to state that "he caused the Libyans who entered Egypt to retreat, great in their hearts is the fear of Egypt. Their front troops abandoned their

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[241] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 75-76.
[242] Specifically, Shalmaneser III. Luckenbill, Vol 1, 211.
[243] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 213.
[244] Pitkänen, 49.

rear(guard), their legs were not (able to) make a stand, except to run away."[245] Thus, the

fear that is caused by the king, and the strength of his army, is directly attributed to his

status as "Son of Re." Sennacherib, regarding the Battle of Halule (691 BCE) claims that

the kings of Babylon and Elam were so overcome with terror and that "they let their dung

go into their chariots."[246]

The placement of fear in the king's enemies reinforces the cumulative

bureaucratization of coercion by reminding a king's subjects of his authority, and the

ideologization of the king's divine authority to which a king's subjects subscribe.

Consider the way in which the latter reinforces the former in this example from the Prism

of Esarhaddon. The Prism of Esarhaddon describes Esarhaddon (King of Assyria 681 –

669 BCE) saying:

> The fear of the great gods, my lords, overwhelmed them and they saw the fierce
> front of my array, and became as though possessed. Ishtar, the lady of war and
> battle, who loveth my priesthood, took her stand at my side and shattered their
> bows, broke up their well-knit battle array and amid themselves they spake thus:
> 'This is our king.' By her supreme command they returned to my side, coming
> after me. Weak as young lambs they besought my lordship. The people of
> Assyria who had sworn agreements by the name of the great gods before me
> came into my presence and kissed my feet, while, as for those scoundrels who
> were making rebellion and revolt, they heard of the march of my expedition and
> deserted the troops who were helping them, and fled to an unknown land.[247]

Here we have divine assistance in battle, and fear overcoming the enemy. Notice

especially, however, that the enemies in this instance are traitors who, out of fear, turned

back to Esarhaddon. As such, we see the way in which fear, which is an aspect of the

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[245] Pitkänen, 49.
[246] Luckenbill, Vol 2, 158.
[247] This example also makes it clear that the fear of the gods is a type of divine assistance in battle. R.C.
Thompson, 12.

ideologization of the king's divine authority, reinforcing the social organization, or the

bureaucratization of coercion, to which his subjects are committed.

The exaggerated deeds and excessive violence described in war narrative is meant

to reinforce one's commitment to one's ruler, and also place fear in the enemy. As such,

war narrative *per se* could also be said to fall under this heading. Tiglath Pilesar I

reminds anyone who would read his annals that his military might is terrifying to anyone

that would oppose him:

> Now the remainder of their troops, which had taken fright at my fierce weapons
> and had been cowed by my strong and belligerent attack, in order to save their
> lives took to secure heights in rough mountainous terrain. I climbed up after
> them to the peaks of high mountains and perilous mountain ledges where a man
> could not walk. They waged war, combat, and battle with me; (and) I inflicted a
> decisive defeat on them. I piled up the corpses of their warriors on mountain
> ledges like the Inundator (i.e. Adad). I made their blood flow into the hollows
> and plains of the mountains.[248]

The message is clear, anyone who opposes Tiglath Pilesar will surely die as it is

tantamount to disobeying Aššur. In most of the Ancient Near Eastern annalistic texts we

see hyperbolic, exaggerated numbers of defeated enemies, graphic descriptions of what is

done with the bodies of enemies, and a minimization of casualties sustained by the king's

army. All of this, of course, is meant to terrify the king's enemies and keep the king's

subjects in a state of subjugation. Younger has referred to this as an "ideology of terror,"

which "enhanced the maintenance of control."[249] This ideology of terror, tied as it was to

the king's divine authority, was so important that competing ideologies posed a threat.

Younger continues: "The process [of de-culturation of one's enemies was] accomplished

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[248] Younger, 84.
[249] Younger, 66.

by the breaking down of the foreign ideologically active centers (temples, palaces)."[250]

This de-culturation limited the capacity of one's enemies to revolt and reinforced the fear

of their new ruler, and therefore, their new god. Sargon gives us an example of this de-

culturation in his 'Letter to the God' where he states, "The house (temple) of Haldi, his

god, I set on fire like brush; and I destroyed his shrine (sanctuary)."[251] As such, we can

see the importance of centres of worship, symbols of the divine authority, and the social

hierarchy to which Ancient Near Eastern people were committed in the way they are

undermined by conquering forces. Indeed, their importance to the Israelites is observable

in the reasons given for the Ban (חרם), which I will discuss in the next section.

Descriptions of fear permeate biblical war narrative as well. Chapter five of

Joshua begins with a description of the way in which the Amorites and "all the kings of

the Canaanites by the sea, heard that YHWH had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the

Israelites until they had crossed over."[252] Upon hearing of it the text tells us that "their

hearts melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the Israelites."[253]

The Ban (חרם) refers to the command to kill of every living being in a given area

in accordance with Deuteronomy 20:17-18. We will see that the ban can be considered to

be an aspect of the divine mandate,[254] however, it also plays the role of instilling fear in

the enemy, not unlike the fear instilled in the enemy by the annalistic writings of other

Ancient Near Eastern kings.[255] It is precisely fear that prompts Rahab and her household

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[250] Younger, 66. [Brackets mine]
[251] Younger, 116.
[252] Joshua 5:1
[253] Ibid.
[254] See section on the Ban, following.
[255] Gwynne Dyer describes the military benefit of the Ban's role in instilling fear in the enemy: "the ruthless extermination of the entire population, even down to babies and animals, of the city of Jericho after

to help the Israelite spies; she even relays her knowledge of YHWH's power and what

YHWH had done for the Israelites prior to their arrival at Jericho. After hiding the

Israelite spies she says to them:

> I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear befoe you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The LORD your God is indeed God in heaven above and earth below. Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the LORD that you will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith that you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.[256]

Indeed, Deuteronomy 2 and 3 describes the defeats of King Sihon and King Og in a way

which is in perfect accordance with the rules of warfare laid out in Deuteronomy 20.

That is, first the Israelites offered king Sihon terms of peace as required in Deuteronomy

20:10.[257] When the king refused the Israelites ensured that everyone was killed in

accordance with Deuteronomy 20:16-18.[258] Rahab's knowledge that everyone is killed

under Israelite methods of war and the desire to protect herself and her family leads her to

cooperate with the Israelites. In a way, her proclamation of faith ("The LORD your God is

indeed God in heaven above and earth below") also admits to her becoming a Yahwist of

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the Israelites captured it was presumably an act of calculated frightfulness meant to ease the conquest of the 'promised land' by terrifying the rest of the original inhabitants into submission or flight." Gwynne Dyer, *War* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2005), 105.

[256] Joshua 2:9-13.

[257] Deuteronomy 2:26-29.

[258] The following describes the destruction: "At that time we captured all his [Sihon's] towns, and in each town we utterly destroyed men, women, and children. We left not a single survivor." Deuteronomy 2:34. And, in Deuteronomy 3:4-6, the following is reported: "At that time we captured all his [Og's] towns; there was not a citadel that we did not take from them – sixty towns, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these were fortress towns with high walls, double gates, and bars, besides a great many villages. And we utterly destroyed them, as we had done to King Sihon of Heshbon, in each city utterly destroying men, women, and children."

sorts, and therefore, possibly even Israelite in the process, which may also have precluded her from coming under the sword.[259] Rahab seems to be neither a Canaanite in its fullest idol-worshipping sense, or an Israelite. Her living in the wall of Jericho (היא יושבת ובחומה)[260] poetically portrays her opaque identity.[261] The Ban, inasmuch as it is meant to be applied to those in the Promised Land who refuse peace and who may, if allowed to live, undermine Israelite religious devotion to YHWH, reinforces the ideologization of YHWH's kingship and reminds the Israelites that allegiance is to be given to YHWH alone as it is YHWH who is giving them the land that they are entering.[262]

Crouch examines, what is to her, a curious absence of the mention of a king in the rules of warfare (which include the חרם) in Deuteronomy 20:10-18. This absence perplexes Crouch in light of Ancient Near Eastern kings' well-known "role in facilitating the legitimacy of warfare, by acting as the human half of the divine-human agency against chaos."[263] However, in light of the pre-monarchical nature of these texts (regardless of the time in which they found their final form) we discover that the

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[259] Butler has also considered the possibility that Rahab was exempt from the Ban. "Yet not every foreigner stood under the curse! Long ago Rahab had seen the deeds of God and confessed him as her God. Her reward lasts to this day. Was it not still possible for Israel to do mighty deeds in the power of her God which would win the nations to her God? Rahab stood beside Joshua as examples of the blessing of God upon an obedient person, no matter what the racial origin. Over against them stood the warning of a curse to whomever would dare disobey." Butler, 72.

[260] "And in the wall itself she dwelled" (Joshua 2:15). Translation mine.

[261] Hawk describes Rahab's opaque identity when he says, "Rahab belongs neither in the city of Jericho nor in the camp of the Israelites. She has collaborated with the invaders against her own people and has praised Israel's God yet remains one of the 'peoples of the land.' Waiting in the wall-boundary that separates Israelite from Canaanite, her paradoxical identity both reinforces and blurs the distinction between the peoples." Hawk, 102.

[262] The connection between the Ban and YHWH's gift of the land to the Israelites could not be more explicitly stated than it is in Deuteronomy 20:16-18 itself: "But as for the towns of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites – just as the LORD your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the LORD your God."

[263] Crouch, 187.

theological emphasis in them is upon the kingship of YHWH, which allows the text to facilitate the legitimacy of warfare without the need of a human king. In fact, the presence of a human king would only serve to undermine the theme of YHWH's kingship. In carrying out the Ban, the Israelites are also given the strictest reminder of the consequences of religious syncretism and implicitly come to recognize that in the Promised Land death is the consequence of failing to follow YHWH exclusively[264] which, as we have seen, is essential to the divine mandate and, therefore, to the ideologization, and the social organization necessary for the successful implementation of a military means of conquest. While I have discussed the Ban in relation to fear in Joshua and in Ancient Near Eastern war narrative it, nonetheless, requires additional special attention due to the way an understanding of the Ban in its Ancient Near Eastern context contributes to central motifs regarding YHWH's kingship, which is central to Israelite ideology and social organization.

3.5 The Ban (חרם)

As we have seen (i.e. pp. 11-12) Susan Niditch describes the Ban as meeting two purposes, which on the surface appear contradictory. The first, she calls the "ban as sacrifice."[265] Here, the Ban is "an ideology of war in which the enemy is to be utterly

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[264] Rachel Billing describes the Ban's applying equally to Israel if it falls into religious syncretism when she states that "the *ḥerem* injunctions correspond to the extremity of Israel's situation as a people that has fallen under YHWH's wrath, and therefore bear a message for Israel itself: the extremity and totality with which the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan are to be eradicated is the same degree of force with which YHWH strikes Israel because it failed to serve Him alone." Rachel M. Billing, *"Israel Served the Lord": The Book of Joshua as Paradoxical Portrait of Faithful Israel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2013), 76.

[265] Niditch (1995), 404.

destroyed as an offering to the deity who has made victory possible."[266] While it is true

that חרם is used to denote things devoted to God (Deuteronomy 13:16-17; Leviticus

27:21)[267] these examples do not refer to human beings. Furthermore, the Hebrew Bible

only ever refers negatively to the practice of human sacrifice, which Niditch herself

points out.[268] Niditch, however, believes this ideology of "Ban as Sacrifice" may have

existed due to "the notion of a god who desires human sacrifice."[269]

Her second category for understanding the Ban is, in her view, "a response to the

former, an inner Israelite attempt to make sense of a troubling ancient tradition,"[270] which

she refers to as the "Ban as God's Justice." Here, "the enemy is totally annihilated

because they are sinners, condemned under the rules of God's justice."[271] I will discuss

the demonization of the enemy as a common thread in Ancient Near Eastern war narrative

in due course. At this time, however, in addition to the Ban's role of instilling fear in

one's enemy, I will offer another way of understanding the Ban.

First, it must be said that the Ban is not a uniquely Israelite phenomenon. Most

scholars of the Hebrew Bible are aware of the Moabite (or Mesha) stone's description of

Mesha, the ninth century BCE Moabite king, putting all the inhabitants of two cities to

death and devoting them to his god Chemosh.[272] It is, of course, true that not all war

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[266] Niditch (1995), 404.

[267] Cited also in Niditch (1995), 404.

[268] Niditch (1995), 404.

[269] Niditch (1995), 405.

[270] Niditch (1995), 404.

[271] Niditch (1995), 405.

[272] The following, from the Moabite Stone, describes the account of destruction as sacrifice: "Now the men of Gad had always dwelt in the land of Ataroth, and the king of Israel had built Ataroth for them; but I fought against the town and took it and slew all the people of the town as satiation (intoxication) for Chemosh and Moab." William F. Albright, "Palestinian Inscriptions," in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 320-322. Cf. The divine mandate of Chemosh is also apparent: "'Go, take Nebo from Israel!' So I went by

accounts from the Ancient Near East tell of total destruction, however, it is also the case

that many accounts go beyond the standard description of the destruction of warriors.

The following is typical, "I piled up the corpses of their warriors on mountain ledges like

the Inundator (i.e. Adad)."[273] Here we see this line following other lines describing

Tiglath-Pileser's army chasing down warriors who had tried to run. There is no mention

of non-warriors and we hear of the destruction of warriors, and the resultant rivers of

blood, consistently in war narratives of the Ancient Near East. This, however, is also

commonplace: "I threw down their corpses on the mountain. I massacred 172 of their

troops; (and) I poured out many troops on the mountain ledges … I hung their heads on

the mountain trees. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls."[274] While it is true that

there is no explicit mention of the devotion of his deceased enemies to a god, it is notable

that young boys and girls are specifically mentioned. The question, therefore, becomes

"Who lived?" How is the description of the killing of all of the youth to be taken except

as a description of everyone being destroyed? Tiglath-Pileser says this of the fortified

city of Araštu: "I massacred them. I carried off their booty, herds, and flocks. I razed,

destroyed and burned their cities. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls."[275] The

accounts are numerous, here is another: "I impaled 700 troops on stakes before their gate.

I razed (and) destroyed the city. I turned the city into ruin hills. I burned their adolescent

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night and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon, taking it and slaying all, seven thousand men,
boys, women, girls and maid-servants, for I had devoted them to destruction for (the god) Ashtar-
Chemosh." Ibid.
[273] Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I. Younger, 84
[274] Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I. Younger, 95.
[275] Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I. Younger, 96.

boys (and) girls."[276] Indeed, Crouch agrees that total destruction was described

frequently in the Ancient Near East, whether it was actually carried out or not:

> That Assyria [for example] has no *ḥērem* is accurate insofar as Akkadian has no
> equivalent root in its vocabulary … the complete destruction of the enemy is
> frequently reported and, regardless of whether or not total destruction was
> actually achieved (or even attempted), makes clear the ideological importance of
> the eradication of the enemy.[277]

As such, the fact that the Israelites had a word for total destruction that Akkadian lacks

provides sufficient explanation for its appearance in Israelite texts as an imperative versus

the colorful language used in Akkadian to denote the total destruction of a populace.[278]

Finally, J.G. McConville also maintains that *ḥerem* "was a phenomenon widely known in

the ancient world."[279] Indeed, from the perspective of warfare itself, especially in a time

and place dominated by ethnic homogeneity, we should expect to see the total destruction

of enemies in war narrative. To allow any of one's enemies to live would simply be to

spend one's life awaiting retaliation. Unless, of course, the victor is large enough that it

can exile and assimilate a people until their gods, and correlating ethnic social

commitments, are traded in for the gods, ideology, and social organization of their

conquerors. As such, the Ban is perfectly understandable within a warfare hermeneutic,

or within the ideology of war which Niditch has called "Expediency."[280]

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[276] Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I. Younger, 98.

[277] Crouch, 182.

[278] Crouch writes, "What we are lacking elsewhere, therefore, is not so much the phenomenon of total destruction, but the articulation of the phenomenon as an imperative." Crouch, 182.

[279] J.G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Vol 5, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary*, ed. David Baker and Godron J. Wenham (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 321.

[280] To remind the reader, Niditch states that "the ideology of expediency suggests that once there is war, anything can be done to achieve objectives. Once the war is won, anything can be done to subjugate the defeated enemy." Niditch (1995), 407.

Niditch also arrives at a conclusion regarding the Ban which is in perfect keeping with the ideology of expediency. She states that the ban provides a "sense of inevitability that allows the killers to eschew responsibility for the kill."[281] This, of course, is in keeping with the central idea of this thesis, that is, that war itself is the best means of understanding the Hebrew Biblical texts which describe warfare. We have already seen that a potent legitimizing ideology is central to the emergence of organized violence. In light of the way in which human beings generally abhor violence, a divine mandate and an express command to kill without recourse to having to distinguish between the people in a given area, would certainly appear to be a necessary and central feature. In fact, I maintain that the חרם is primarily to be understood in relation to the prohibition against killing in Deuteronomy 5:17 and Exodus 20:13.

Both Deuteronomy 5:17 and Exodus 20:13 state: לא תרצח "You shall not kill." The לא indicates that it is a permanent prohibition, as opposed to a negotiable one which might be justified in distinct circumstances. If the latter were implied the prohibition would have been preceded by אל.[282] Because the command not to kill is so absolute, only an equally emphatic command to the contrary by the lawgiver himself, YHWH, could legitimize the violence that the Israelites needed to carry out in order to take their place in the land they believe had been given to them by YHWH, which was/is, arguably, a legitimizing belief in itself.

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[281] Niditch (1995), 405.
[282] Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A.E. Cowley (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2006 [1909]), 478-483.

Similarly, Deuteronomy 5:19 ולֹא תגנב "and you shall not steal" (or, "neither shall you steal") is overturned in the taking of booty.[283] Recall that Malešević tells us

> all bureaucratisation is deeply rooted in coercive control. Since bureaucratic domination rests on the inculcation and control of discipline and remains dependent on disciplined action, it requires and demands obedience … Moreover, all of these organisational demands are underpinned by the legal codes that stipulate penalties for non-complicance.[284]

The laws against killing and stealing in Deuteronomy and Exodus serve to "internally pacify social order"[285] within a homogenous group. Therefore, the laws to act contrary to them, must be given by the same lawgiver, YHWH, and be equally, if not more, imperative and emphatic. When we look at the law in Deuteronomy 20:16-17, we discover that it is. Michael Hasel has shown that לֹא תחיה כל־נשמה, "you shall save nothing that breathes," is followed in verse 17 by a Hiphal infinitive immediately preceding the Hiphal imperfect wherein the text states: "You shall utterly destroy them, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites as the Lord your God has commanded you."[286] Hasel tells us "this use of the infinitive absolute, according to Gesenius/Kautzsch, emphasizes 'either the certainty (especially in the case of threats) or the forcibleness and completeness of an occurrence,'"[287] asserting that it might also be called "an intensifying infinitive."[288] The failure to execute the dramatic

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[283] We see the taking of booty described in Joshua 6:24: "The silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD." See also 1 Samuel 15 which describes Saul's failure to devote to destruction all that YHWH had commanded after Samuel had anointed him king which, at least arguably, may have led Saul to mistakenly think he was entitled to booty which belonged to YHWH.

[284] Malešević, 6.

[285] Malešević, 7.

[286] Michael G. Hasel, *Military Practice and Polemic: Israel's Laws of Warfare in Near Eastern Perspective* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2005), 28.

[287] Hasel, 28.

[288] Hasel, 28.

reversal of these normative prohibitions is dramatically played out in Joshua 7, which I will discuss shortly.

Finally, that the booty is placed "in the house of the LORD" raises another issue. The Ban presents the reader of the Hebrew Bible with a unique situation as non-Israelite conquest narratives are delivered in the first person, from the perspective of the king. As such, the taking of booty and the killing of one's enemies were described as having been with one's god's help, but the spoils belonged to the king. For example, in Episode 9 of Tiglath Pileser I's annals the king is described as saying, "The corpses of their men-at-arms I laid out on the mountain ledges like grain heaps. I conquered their cities. I carried away their gods. I carried off their booty, possessions and property."[289] In Episode 19 he says, "I cut off their heads like sheep. I made their blood flow into the hollows and plains of the mountains. (Thus) I conquered that city. I took their gods; (and) I carried off their booty, possessions (and) property."[290] Episode 2 states, "I conquered the land of Kadmuhu in its entirety. Their booty, property, (and) possessions I brought out."[291] This theme permeates Tiglath-Pileser's entire annals as well as those of other Assyrian kings. Aššur-nasir-pall II's are filled with the same: "I brought back booty, possessions, herds and flocks. I burned their cities. I hung their heads on the mountain trees. I burned their adolescent boys (and) girls."[292] Also, "I conquered the city of Hudun and 30 cities in its environs. I massacred them. I carried off their booty, herds and flocks."[293] Sennacherib, however, is perhaps most explicit regarding his ownership of the spoils, including the

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[289] Younger, 80.
[290] Younger, 81.
[291] Younger, 83.
[292] Younger, 95.
[293] Younger, 96.

lives of those conquered, "The people, together with the gods dwelling there, I counted as spoil."[294] The Hittites express the same idea. Episode 3 of Hattušili I's annals states, "I destroyed these countries. I took (their) goods away from them; and I filled my house up to the brim with their goods."[295] Muršili II is portrayed saying, "I took out from them the inhabitants (as captives), cattle (and) sheep."[296] It should, therefore, come as no surprise when after the defeat of Jerusalem in 587 BCE described in 2 Chronicles 36 that King Nebuchadnezzar is described as having taken everything out of "the house of the LORD."[297] As such, it is plain that the spoils of conquest belong, primarily, to the king. Therefore, Israelite conquest narrative had to illustrate that the Israelite king had received the booty, including the lives of one's enemies.

Uniquely, however, as far as the biblical narrative is concerned, the Israelite king at this stage was a god, YHWH.   If the narrative were to attribute the booty as having gone to Joshua (or another representative) instead, without the express permission of YHWH,[298] then the status of YHWH as king would effectively be undermined by the text. The text forbids any such subversion of YHWH's ultimate authority even when YHWH makes an allowance for a king over Israel after the Israelites have settled in the Promised Land.[299] Although Niditch's understanding of the ban involves both sacrifice and

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[294] Luckenbill, Vol 2, 138.

[295] Younger, 138.

[296] Younger, 146.

[297] This was also noted by McEntire, 111. "All the vessels of the house of God, large and small, and the treasures of the king and of his officials, all these he brought to Babylon" (2 Chronicles 36:18).

[298] Certainly not Achan!

[299] Deuteronomy 17 places limitations on royal authority forbidding the king from exalting himself over the community, from acquiring too much wealth, and insists upon kings following the strict letter of the law (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

justice,[300] I maintain that there are not two ideologies behind the Ban but one: YHWH is

king. The kingship of YHWH is, of course, central to the entire ideologization and

bureaucratization of Israel in the Ancient Near East necessary for the emergence of

organized violence.

Achan is portrayed as having kept for himself some of what was to be devoted to

YHWH. The punishment for failing to carry out YHWH's orders is not only the death of

Achan, but the destruction of all that he had along with the death of his children.[301] His

punishment for disobeying the Ban is extreme and best understood in relation to the

normative prohibitions which are overturned by YHWH. That YHWH is the absolute

ruler of Israel with the authority to make exceptions to his own laws is made clear. The

booty that was taken belonged to YHWH, Israel's king, therefore, the taking of the ruler's

booty is not just theft, but treason. The centrality of YHWH's authority is absolute and,

therefore, central to the divine mandate and the justification of violence. Again, to stress

a point I made in the introduction, warfare is the heuristic key to understanding these texts

because of its capacity to overturn normative taboos.[302]

In radical comparison to Joshua 6 is 2 Chronicles 36, which describes Israel as

having lived in stark contrast to the Israelites under Joshua's leadership. The connection

of adherence to YHWH and his law, which leads to military victory, is displayed in

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[300] Niditch (1993), 28-55, 56-77.

[301] The following, from Joshua 7:24-26 describes the fate of Achan and his family: "Then Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan son of Zerah, with the silver, the mantle, and the bar of gold, with his sons and daughters, with his oxen, donkeys, and sheep, and his tent and all the he had … And all Israel stoned him to death; they burned them with fire, cast stones on them, and raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day."

[302] Bahrani emphasizes the exception to the normal moral order during war when she says, "to kill in war is appropriate and sanctioned. It is not a punishable act. It is a transgression that forms an exception to the normal order of things and to the law." Bahrani, 212.

Joshua 6 and the fall of Jericho. Conversely, the defeat of Judah under Zedekiah to King

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is said to be precisely because of the failure of Judah to

follow YHWH. The message of the Ban was clear: the land promised to the Israelites

was for devotees of YHWH. In response to their failure, 2 Chronicles describes Judah as

falling under YHWH's Ban:

> The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent persistently to them by his
> messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place;
> but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing
> at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD against his people became so great
> that there was no remedy. Therefore he brought up against them the king of the
> Chaldeans, who killed their youths with the sword in the house of their sanctuary,
> and had no compassion on young man or young woman, the aged of the feeble,
> he gave them all into his hand.[303]

Here we see an unmistakable link between devotion to YHWH and, by fiat, the

cumulative bureaucratization of coercion and the centrifugal ideologization which forms

the foundation of military success, or conversely, failure. In bold illustration of this the

punishments of Judah in 2 Chronicles 36, Zedekiah in 2 Kings 25, and Achan in Joshua 7,

are consistent with the punishment for apostasy in Deuteronomy 13:6-18.[304]

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[303] 2 Chronicles 36:15-17. Notably, the account of Judah's defeat in 2 Kings 25 reports that after a breach was made in Jerusalem's wall King Zedekiah and his soldiers fled. Nebuchadnezzar's army then pursued King Zedekiah to "the plains of Jericho" (2 Kings 25:6) where Zedekiah was overtaken and forced to watch his sons murdered before his eyes were removed and he was taken to Babylon. It is as though the writer wanted to purposefully contrast the success of Israel at Jericho in the book of Joshua, characterized by exclusive devotion to YHWH and his law, with the final destruction of Judah under Zedekiah who, like his predecessors, did "what was evil in the sight of the LORD" according to 2 Kings 24:19 and 2 Chronicles 36:12.

[304] The relationship between Achan's punishment and Deuteronomy 13:6-18 has also been noted by Hawk when he says, "the story of Achan's transgression alludes at many points to the Deuteronomic laws concerning apostasy (Deut 13:6-18), thus hinting that the story is a paradigm for issues of greater communal import than the theft of dedicated plunder." Hawk (2000), xviii. The following from Deuteronomy 13:6-16 describes the punishment for apostasy: "If anyone secretly entices you – even if it is our brother, your father's son or your mother's son, or your own son or daughter, or the wife you embrace, or your most intimate friend – saying 'Let us go worship other gods,' whom neither you nor your ancestors have known, any of the gods of the peoples that are around you, from one end of the earth to the other, you must not yield to or heed any such persons. Show them no pity or compassion and do not shield them. But you shall surely kill them; your own hand shall be first against them to execute them, and afterwards the

3.6 Physical Representations of the Presence of Divine Agency

It is unique that the Israelites, presumably because of their nomadic situation during the conquest of Canaan, travelled with the Ark of the Covenant - the physical representation of YHWH. As we will see, the war narratives of other Ancient Near Eastern peoples did not describe their bringing representations which indicated the actual presence of their gods. The presence of their gods was usually ascertained by the oracles obtained by priests, and/or battle standards.[305] Instead, Ancient Near Eastern war narrative describe the taking of the statues that represented the gods of their enemies, indicating to their enemies that their god's presence was no longer with them. Bahrani, however, thinks that sometimes the statues of their gods may have accompanied Assyrian troops into battle.[306] The Israelites were unique due to the portability of YHWH's physical representation in the Ark, and because it was specifically not a statue in accordance with the forbiddance of creating graven images (Deuteronomy 5:8; Exodus 20:4). Nonetheless, the biblical narrative still tells the reader that the Ark of the Covenant was stolen by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:11) which, we will see, is in keeping with the behaviour of Ancient Near Eastern peoples during warfare.

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hand of all the people. Stone them to death for trying to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the house of slavery. Then all Israel shall hear and be afraid, and never again do any such wickedness. If you hear it said about one of the towns that the LORD your God is giving you to live in, that scoundrels from among you have gone out and led the inhabitants of the town astray, saying 'Let us go and worship other gods,' whom you have not known, then you shall inquire and make a thorough investigation. If the charge is established that such an abhorrent thing has been done among you, you shall put the inhabitants of that town to the sword, utterly destroying it and everything in it – even putting its livestock to the sword. All of its spoil you shall gather into its public square; then burn the town and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It shall remain a perpetual ruin, never to be rebuilt."

[305] Ashur-Dan II is recorded entering into battle with battle standards: "[With the support of Aššur], my [lord] and the divine standard which goes before me." Annals of Ashur-Dan II. Younger, 93.

[306] Bahrani, 197.

Descriptions of carrying away the gods of one's enemies is virtually omnipresent in war narrative from the Ancient Near East. First, let us consider Assyrian examples. The Annals of Tiglath Pilesar I describes the king saying, "I conquered their cities. I carried away their gods."[307] Then, "I conquered that city. I took their gods; (and) I carried off their booty, possessions (and) property."[308] This example from the Annals of Ashur-Dan II is particularly interesting as there is a correlation with the description of the Ark of the Covenant being taken and placed next to Dagon, a god of the Philistines, in 1 Samuel 5. There is a correlation inasmuch as it describes the gods of a conquered people being given as booty to another god. "I took (them) to my city Aššur. I gave their gods as gifts to Aššur, my lord."[309] The practice of taking the gods of one's enemies is especially present in Hittite annals.

Consider, for example, the 'Concise' Annals of Hattušili I.[310] In Episode 2, Hattušili is described saying, "Thereafter I went to Zalpa; and destroyed it. Its gods I took away; and (its) 3 'madnanu'-chariots I gave to the sungoddess of Arinna. I gave one silver bull (and) one 'fist' of silver to the temple of the stormgod; but those [gods] who remained, I gave to the temple of Mezzulla."[311] Like the above example of gods being given to Aššur by Tiglath-Pilesar, we see Hattušili doing the same: "I destroyed Zippassana. I took its gods away from it; and I gave them to the sungoddess of Arinna."[312] And so, we see the importance of the physical representations that indicate the presence of one's gods. Their removal would have ensured that the conquered

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[307] Annals of Tiglath Pilesar I, Episode 9. Younger, 80.
[308] Annals of Tiglath Pilesar I, Episode 19, Youner, 81.
[309] Younger, 93.
[310] Younger, 138-139.
[311] Younger, 138.
[312] Younger, 139.

peoples understood that they had been conquered, that their god(s) had been conquered, and that they now owed their allegiance to another, that is, if they wanted to live. Bahrani tells us that sometimes "wars were fought specifically for images, to acquire royal monuments and the cult statue of a god, or to recover a divine statue that had been carried off by an enemy in an earlier battle."[313] She goes on to say:

> The power of cult images of the god and depictions of the god and depictions of the king on statues, stelae and ancient public monuments was such that the removal of any of these was believed to have serious consequences for the state. Each of these works of art was linked to the land in its own way: the god was connected to the city, the king to the land and, in time, the empire, the standing monument to the inherited historical, ancestral space of time and memory.[314]

That is, they reflected and reinforced the social organization and the ideology of a people.

Bahrani tells us that:

> Deities were associated with particular cities as patron gods, and each city was the place in which that deity's house, his or her main temple, was located and where the cult statue lived. Representations of each deity existed in various forms and media, but the cult statue was more than an image. It was the manifestation of the god in the realm of human beings. The cult statue was made according to specific elaborate ceremonies, using particular materials that were treated by priests. The statue was then put through a mouth-opening ceremony, in which the image was brought to life. After that, the statue was no longer an image; it was the phenomenon of the deity proper on earth. The texts no longer use the word ṣalmu (image) to refer to the sculpture after the mouth-opening ceremony: it is referred to simply and directly as the god, by his or her specific name.[315]

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[313] Bahrani, 160.
[314] Bahrani, 163.
[315] Bahrani, 165.

Therefore, when they were undermined, taken, destroyed or otherwise mutilated, the social organization of the group, and their adherence to their ideology, were similarly undermined and, therefore, so was their capacity to wage effective warfare.[316]

The physical representation which indicates the presence of divine agency for the Israelites is the Ark of the Covenant present in Joshua 6:4, 6-7, 9, and 12-13. The Ark, like the statues described by Bahrani, also demanded elaborate instruction for its construction and specific materials.[317] For the inhabitants of a town, in this case Jericho, watching the representation of the Israelite God being portably walked around Jericho, as if stating ownership, would have had a profoundly terrifying impact on the Israelites' enemies. Recall the fear that Rahab described had overcome her people in chapter two of Joshua.[318] Rahab had recounted not merely what the Israelites had done but, rather, what YHWH had done for the Israelites. Now, the Ark of the Covenant, the physical representation of YHWH's presence, was at Jericho and silently being escorted about the town walls as though YHWH were depicting that he already owned the city and the land upon which it stood. Given what we know about the importance attributed to the physical representations of one's gods, this could be seen as a type of psychological warfare.[319] Fear of YHWH made visible in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant is also attested to in 1 Samuel 4:5-9.[320]

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[316] For images of the removal of statues of gods see Bahrani, 161-162. Bahrani provides images of gods being removed from Nimrud during the reign of Tiglath-Pilseer III c. 730 BC.

[317] Exodus 25:10-22.

[318] Discussed in Chapter Three, Section Four.

[319] Bahrani notes the psychological dimensions of the removal of statues when she says, "the taking of statues was therefore not an impulsive act during a raid on an enemy city or land. It was a productive operation of war, like what are known in today's military terminology as 'psyops.'" Bahrani, 163.

[320] The following, from 1 Samuel 4:5-9, describes the fear which the biblical narrative says befell the Philistines due to the Ark's presence: "When the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all

It is unique that the Israelites, presumably because of their nomadic situation during the conquest of Canaan, travelled with the Ark of the Covenant, the physical representation of YHWH's presence. As we have seen, other Ancient Near Eastern conquest narratives often describe the destruction and/or removal of a conquered people's gods. However, we can only speculate as to whether or not other Ancient Near Eastern peoples brought physical representations of their gods, that is, beyond battle standards and emblems on war equipment (viz. their statues) into combat.[321] Bahrani, however, thinks that sometimes the statues of their gods may have accompanied Assyrian troops into battle. She states, "The gods traveled in chariots. When the cult statues were transported by land, it was in special vehicles, and some references to the gods' accompanying the troops at war may mean that the cult statue was taken into battle."[322] However, the idea that other Ancient Near Eastern peoples brought the statues of their gods with them into combat remains purely speculative. Bahrani cites Black and Green's *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* which states, "perhaps on occasion, when documentary accounts describe a god as overseeing or actually involved in a battle, the statue of the god was conveyed to the battlefield."[323] Nonetheless, I have yet to come across direct evidence of the statues of gods being carried into battle in Ancient Near Eastern literature. As such, I maintain that in one's own city-state the presence of one's

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Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. When the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, 'What does this great shouting mean?' When they learned that the Ark of the LORD had come to the camp, the Philistines were afraid; for they said, 'Gods have come into the camp.' They also said, 'Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness.'"

[321] Bahrani, 193-197.

[322] Bahrani, 197.

[323] Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (London: The British Museum Press, 2004), 52.

god, represented by the god's statue, was central to the social organization and ideologization necessary to mobilize a people for combat, which is why they were so readily removed or destroyed by conquering armies. However, there is no evidence that it was common practice to carry statues of one's god to the battlefield. Therefore, the Ark of the Covenant represents something entirely unique in the Ancient Near East. The Israelites were distinct inasmuch as the physical representation of their god's presence was portable, and did not require special chariots but, rather, the presence of priests to carry it.[324] The ark's portability was because it was specifically *not* a statue, which was in keeping with the forbiddance of creating graven images (Deuteronomy 5:8; Exodus 20:4).[325] One might ask why this, like other normative taboos, is not overturned in war. This, however, would be to overlook the fact that when, for example, prohibitions against killing are overturned, and emphatically commanded, the Israelites become more effective as a fighting force. Similarly, the portability of the Ark gives the Israelites a significant military advantage inasmuch as it strikes terror into the hearts of their enemies. We see this fear in 1 Samuel 4 when the Philistines react to the uniqueness of the physical representation of a people's god entering into their presence. When they hear about the arrival of the Israelites' Ark of the Covenant into the camp their response is, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before."[326]

The physical representations of gods served several functions: (1) they served as a physical reminder of Ancient Near Eastern peoples' ideological justification to wage war; (2) they reminded everyone of the social hierarchy within which they played an active

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[324] Deuteronomy 10:8.
[325] A commandment which in and of itself kept Israel's god out of physical reach from its enemies.
[326] 1 Samuel 4:7.

role and to which they were committed; and (3) they served to instill terror in one's

enemies and thus served an overt militaristic goal (1 Samuel 4:5-9). This is not to say

that, in the Ancient Near East, people who were not prone to superstition saw a value in

physical representations of their gods in order to cast terror into their enemies but, rather

that in the ancient world such intimacy between gods and human affairs was an everyday

assumption. Since it was an everyday assumption, it was simply good military tactics to

enter into combat with one's priests and, at least as far as the Israelite's are concerned, the

representation of one's gods. As such, the physical representations of one's gods both

reflect, and contribute to, the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion and the centrifugal

ideologization at its heart, both of which are necessary because "violence does not come

naturally and automatically to humans."[327]

3.7 The Destruction of the Walls

On the surface, this may appear to be a strange aspect of war narrative to discuss

on its own. However, descriptions of wall destruction and breaches are common

throughout the Ancient Near East. In the Joshua narrative it is where YHWH's divine

assistance is most obviously on display, however, as we will see, YHWH's destruction of

the walls of Jericho also illustrates, and further reinforces, a central motif of Israelite

ideologization. Before I discuss the destruction of the walls of Jericho, however, I will

examine some overt extra-biblical references from the Ancient Near East.

Descriptions of cities being razed and destroyed appear in literally every single

annal text describing the destruction of cities. Sometimes, however, city walls are

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[327] Malešević, 4.

specifically mentioned. For example, Tiglath-Pileser I is described as saying of the city

Hunusu, "the three great walls which were constructed with baked bricks and the entire

city I razed (and) destroyed. I turned (it) into a ruin hill and a heap."[328] Consider this

example from Assur-nâsir-pal, "The city was exceeding strong and was surrounded by

three walls. The men trusted in their mighty walls and in their hosts, and did not come

down, and did not embrace my feet. With battle and slaughter I stormed the city and

captured it … At that time the cities of the land of Nirbi and their strong walls I

destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire."[329] Similarly, Aššur-nasir-pall II describes his

destruction of the city Pitura, "The city was very difficult. It was surrounded by two

walls; its citadel was like a mountain summit … With the might and power of my combat

troops I flew against them like the Storm Bird. I conquered the city."[330] From Sargon

II's 'Letter to the God (Aššur),' a Neo-Assyrian clay tablet, we read, "Bubuzi, the fortress

of Hundur, that was surrounded by two walls, erected … along the moat of the … of the

tower, Ayyalê, Sinišpalâ, Siniunak, Arna, Sarnî, seven strong cities, together with thirty

towns of their neighborhood, which lie at the foot of Mt. Ubianda, uncultivated

mountains, I destroyed in their entirety; and I leveled to the ground."[331] Sargon repeats

similar victories again and again with incredible hyperbole and he does not attribute the

destruction of fortifications to anyone other than himself. In one instance he says "I

approached the land of Ayadu"[332] then goes on to describe thirty cities that "were lined up

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[328] Younger, 81.
[329] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 147.
[330] Younger, 98.
[331] Younger, 115.
[332] Younger, 117.

on the shore of the 'gallu' sea,"[333] and "strong fortresses, erected among them, which rise

above Mt. Arsidu and Mt. Mahunnia like stars."[334] Sargon continues, "Their strong walls,

together with 87 towns of their neighborhood I destroyed; I leveled to the ground."[335]

When Sargon defeated Zirkirtu he is quoted as saying, "I destroyed their walls, I set fire

to the houses inside them, I destroyed them like a flood, I battered them into heaps of

ruins."[336] Similarly, Esarhaddon is described as saying, "Those (places) whereof the wall

was difficult, I broke their stones as though they were a potter's vessel."[337] When

describing the fenced city of Sidon, under the rule of King Abdi-milkutti, Esarhaddon

says, "like a storm I swept; its wall and its dwelling I tore out and cast into the sea, and

made ruins of the place of its site."[338] Plainly, Ancient Near Eastern kings described the

way in which the walls of a city had not stopped them from conquering cities before,

which sends the message to anyone who encounters their stelae, and/or tablets, that

fortifications will not stop them in the future either. It means that people within fortified

cities, however large or small, should fear the king's army. A king powerful enough to

destroy a city's fortifications was divinely sanctioned and assisted. The Hebrew Bible

also attributes the destruction of city walls to kings. King Uzziah, "went out and made

war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and

the wall of Ashdod."[339]

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[333] Younger, 117.
[334] Younger, 117.
[335] Younger, 117.
[336] Crouch, 56
[337] R.C. Thompson, 23.
[338] R.C. Thompson, 16.
[339] 2 Chronicles 26:6. Cited also in Crouch, 88.

The destruction of the wall of Jericho has garnered a great deal of attention, certainly more attention than seems warranted in light of the descriptions of the destruction of walls that we have considered so far. Indeed, just two verses of Joshua 6 refer to it, first, YHWH's instructions to Joshua in 6:5, and then the execution of YHWH's orders in 6:20. The phrase in the first instance is simply: ונפלה חומת העיר תחתיה, "and the wall of the city shall fall flat"[340] ('flat' reads literally as 'under it' and the phrase is made imperfect by the presence of the waw consecutive), which emphasizes that it will fall of its own accord without being battered down, that is, YHWH will flatten the wall.[341] The latter instance describes the successful execution of YHWH's command: החומה תחתיה ותפל, "and the wall fell flat"[342] (again, 'flat' is literally 'under it' and the phrase is rendered perfect by the presence of the waw consecutive), which fulfills YHWH's promise of causing the wall to fall without the need of human assistance. With the destruction of the wall, the Israelites, led by Joshua, were able capture the city and devote it to destruction.[343] Nowhere, however, is the wall described as particularly large or ominous. Nonetheless, biblical scholars have scoured the archaeological data that has emerged from Tell es-Sultan, the generally accepted site of Jericho,[344] looking for data that will prove or disprove the existence of a remarkably defensive city wall dating to the Late Bronze Age.[345] The text does admit to the existence of a wall, and one which

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[340] Translation mine.
[341] It is notable that wall is in the singular, which implies that there was either one wall, or that the city's wall was circular. In light of the city's being described as 'fenced in', that is, "shut up inside and out," the latter appears more likely.
[342] Translation mine.
[343] Joshua 6:20-21.
[344] Pitkänen tells that "the identification of Jericho with Tell es-Sultan is generally accepted." Pitkänen, 162.
[345] For a summary of the archaeological work that has been done at Tell es-Sultan see Pitkänen, 162-169.

required Rahab to let the Israelite spies down via a rope.[346] However, we are also told

that Rahab resided on the outside of the wall, within the wall itself (ובחומה היא יושבת).[347]

This hardly seems suitable of a strong militarily defensive fortification from any period.

However, the existence of any wall provided a means of protection and certainly would

pose a problem for any conquering force. After an examination of the archaeological

evidence at the Jericho site, Pitkänen concluded "that it seems entirely possible that a

town (albeit most likely a modest one) stood in Jericho at the time when Joshua and the

Israelites conquered it."[348] If the town were a modest one, however, then how are we to

understand the description of YHWH's bringing down the wall of Jericho?

As has already been described, it was popular practice for Ancient Near Eastern

kings to brag about the lack of consequence that defensive walls posed for them. Here,

we have an example of the popular hyperbole of Ancient Near Eastern kings being

ascribed to YHWH, though admittedly, with less dramatic language rather than more.

The ascribing of the collapse of the wall to kingship hyperbole assigned by a

writer/compiler/redactor to YHWH seems especially likely in light of another tension that

appears between a surface reading of the narrative and a closer examination of the text. I

refer here to Rahab's help which is implied by the text, and the ascription of the wall

posing no consequence to YHWH's direct intervention. Avraham Dafna has argued on

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[346] Joshua 2:15.

[347] "And in the wall itself she dwelled." From Joshua 2:15. Translation mine. Pitkänen says, "The narrative seems to state that the house was by the town wall, or even part of the town wall. That the Israelites could be let down by rope through the window would be in line with the house being part of the wall. In other words, it may be that the town was delimited by houses in a casemate-type structure, rather than a wall proper, as in the Middle Bronze Age. This would fit the idea of a more meagre extent and status of the town during the Late Bronze Age … Also, it would seem that if it were not a known practice to have one's house or dwellings as part of a city wall, the story would not make good sense to its first hearers and they would be likely to question it." Pitkänen, 124.

[348] Pitkänen, 16.

the basis of other uses of the root נפל, that what is being indicated in Joshua 6 is a

surrender which was seen as miraculous.[349] This, however, seems unlikely, as while the

verb נפל has been used to denote surrender it appears to always be in obvious reference to

people.[350] That said, the text of Joshua does tell the reader that the Israelites had an asset

within the wall of Jericho, that is, Rahab. After a description of Rahab's sheltering the

spies, she is said to have let them down from her window by a rope. Rahab's home, as I

have already indicated is said to have been on the outside of the wall, and that she

dwelled within the wall itself. In order to protect her and her family from the Ban she is

told by the Israelites spies:

> If we invade the land and you do not tie this crimson cord in the window through
> which you let us down, and you do not gather into your house your father and
> mother, your brothers, and all your family. If any of you go out of the doors of
> your house into the street, they shall be responsible for their own death, and we
> shall be innocent.[351]

The text continues with a description of Rahab tying the crimson cord in the window.[352]

As is now well-known, Jericho was said to have been circled silently by Israel's warriors,

the Ark, and the priests once each day, until the seventh day when the trumpets were

blown, the Israelites shouted, and the wall is said to have fallen. Given Rahab's

willingness to help the Israelites, the text appears to suggest that they may have been

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[349] Dafna says, "it is clear to this author (as it was to the early commentators), that this episode – the surrender – and the story of the fall of the city was interpreted by the nation as a 'great miracle' (see Num. 26:10. Insofar as one can refer to the 'miracle' of the collapse of the wall as it is related in Joshua 6, one cannot negate the possibility that it is actually a description of the surrender of the city." Avraham Lorberbaum Dafna, "Did the Wall of Jericho Collapse or Did the City Surrender," in *Jewish Biblical Quarterly* 38 Number 1 (2010), 40.

[350] The examples that Dafna gives are Psalm 45:6 in reference to 'kings', and Psalm 18:39-40, which is another reference to kings. Dafna, 39. It seems, therefore, entirely speculative to say that those defending the wall at Jericho surrendered, especially as Dafna's examples do not describe surrender *per se* but, rather, kings falling. Furthermore, whether 'surrender' or straightforward defeat is the implication in these examples is unclear, but an initial reading leaves one assuming it is the latter.

[351] Joshua 2:18-19.

[352] Joshua 2:21

entering Jericho via Rahab's dwelling for six days before the signal was given from the

outside. That is, the text itself wants to convey, on the one hand, the evident help that

was extended to the Israelites by Rahab, who secured the safety of herself and her family

from the Ban by compliance with the Israelites' demands; on the other hand, the text

wants to convey the victory over Jericho to YHWH, the king of Israel, without whom –

given what we know of the intimacy of gods, kings and the land – victory in the land

promised to them by their god would not be possible. Bernard Robinson describes this

tension in the text well:

> The narrative of the mission of the spies and of Rahab's intervention sits oddly
> with the story of the settlement of the land as a divinely directed conquest; "it
> sticks out", says Boling, "like a sore thomb." What room is there in the
> supernatural tale told in chapters 1 and 6 of Joshua for the covert human action of
> chapter 2? … It has been plausibly suggested that Josh 2 derives from a tradition
> about the fall of Jericho which attributed it to a betrayal from within by Rahab,
> rather than to the miraculous intervention narrated in chapter 6. Just as an
> inhabitant by Bethel shows spies the way in that city (Judg 1,22-26), so in this
> tradition Rahab will have used her scarlet cord to guide the Israelites into Jericho,
> perhaps by marking a weak point in the wall.[353]

Robinson also tells us of the other supporters of this view, which include: de Vaux, W.

Rudolph; K. Möhlenbrink; M. Noth; J. Gray; and M. Weippert.[354] However, the text also

seeks to convey that the Israelites' plan of attack upon Jericho could only have succeeded

because YHWH was with them, and because YHWH had delivered the inhabitants of

Jericho into their hands. In fact, the text itself attests to the fact that at least a part of the

wall (the part in which Rahab and her family lived) was still standing after v. 20 wherein

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[353] Bernard P. Robinson, "Rahab of Canaan – and Israel," in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament: An International Journal of Nordic Theology* 23 Number 2 (2009), 259.
[354] Robinson, 259. n, 11.

the wall is described to have fallen.[355] Robinson also notes this seeming discrepancy,

"Although Rahab's house is built into the city walls (2,15) it seems from 6,22 that it is

still standing after the walls of the city collapse. This oddity may well derive from the

splicing together of the two traditions that have been posited."[356] Indeed, the whole wall

may have remained standing, but that is not the point of the text, and there is no need to

posit two traditions in order to understand it.

   Malešević (citing Galtung and Ruge)[357] tells us that when war is retold (as 'white'

propaganda)[358] it often includes a

> Manichaean dualist portrayal of actors and events (i.e. reducing the complexities
> of the conflict to only two mutually antagonistic parties), decontextualisation of
> violence (the emphasis on the spectacular, dramatic and irrational actions with no
> attempt to explain the sources of the conflict), a focus on individual acts of
> brutality or heroism while avoiding the structural causes, and presenting the
> cycles of violence as inevitable and unstoppable.[359]

Why, one may ask, do we see such spin? The spin is due to the purpose of the war

narratives (that is, beyond the preservation of history), which is to enforce and legitimize

the universally abhorred and unnatural practice of killing, which at times may be required

for the survival of a self-identifying homogeneous group.[360] The fact that Ancient Near

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[355] The destruction of the walls is described in Joshua 6:20, however, the following from Joshua 6:22-24 describes the retrieval of Rahab and her family from her home, which was in the wall and, therefore, should have been destroyed with the wall: "Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, 'Go into the prostitute's house, and bring the woman out of it and all who belong to her, as you swore to her.' So the young men who had been spies went in and brought Rahab out, along with her father, her mother, her brothers, and all who belonged to her – they brought all her kindred out – and set them outside the camp of Israel. They burned down the city, and everything in it."

[356] Robinson, 260.

[357] J. Galtung and M.H. Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News. The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers," in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 2. (1965), 64-91.

[358] As opposed to 'black' propaganda, which is propaganda in which lies are deliberately told. Malešević, 207-208.

[359] Malešević, 209.

[360] Malešević states, "Since the principal purpose of all propaganda is to legitimize the ideas and actions of one's side, and delegitimize those of the opponents', and since, in wartime, these actions include deeply

Eastern war narratives would include the bold display of the actions of gods and/or kings, may strike the modern reader as strange, but for Ancient Near Eastern peoples the fact that gods determined the outcome of warfare was assumed.[361] Therefore, we should expect that war narratives from the Ancient Near East would attribute victory to gods and, sometimes, even tell of the events in such a way that full credit is given to deities and/or kings. Taking too much credit for oneself may indeed offend one's god, or one's king, and the safer route would be to give all credit to one's god and/or king, which could only incur favour, and more importantly, reinforce the centrality of one's god/king's authority.

The way that the battle has been commemorated by the text is in perfect keeping with this 'white' propaganda. This is not something that can be said to be the equivalent of 'black' propaganda in which lies are told deliberately with the intention to mislead, rather, the "emphasis on the spectacular"[362] reinforces Israelite ideologization concerning their god and king, YHWH. Bahrani tells us

> it is difficult to sustain the equation of ideology with falsehood. In many images, the event depicted is factually true but nonetheless ideological, rendering the dichotomy of ideology and representation untenable. Examples of narrative images from Antiquity that have been taken as ideological are the Assyrian reliefs and the narrative militaristic events on Trajan's Column, but it is certain that these narratives are based on actual historical events.[363]

I maintain that the same regard ought to be extended to Hebrew war narrative such as that of Joshua 6. This is not to say that in Joshua 6 we are encountering war propaganda which has manipulated the historicity of events to promote an agenda; that would be a

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contested practices such as killing, dying, destruction and suffering, much of war propaganda is centred on justifying, rationalizing or vilifying particular courses of action and those responsible for such action." Malešević, 209.

[361] Bahrani emphasizes role of the gods when she says, "the course of battle was determined by the gods." Bahrani, 183.

[362] Malešević, 209.

[363] Bahrani, 67.

very modern, and overly-simplistic understanding of propaganda. Rather, Joshua 6 could

be said to be more consistent with the view put forward by Malešević who has said "most

propaganda serves as a cognitive, moral and legitimising map utilised by those who

already subscribe to the values espoused by the propaganda."[364] That is, the text is not

meant to deceive; rather, it is to tell the tale in a way that upholds the beliefs of the

Israelites – beliefs to which they consciously and willingly subscribe – with respect to

their god, king, and the land.[365] While I do not believe that it would be fair to reduce the

beauty and complexity of any biblical text to the level of propaganda – popularly

conceived – nonetheless, there is present in Joshua an undeniable presence of Israelite

ideologization concerning YHWH, and the roles of his prophet Joshua, and the priests,

with respect to their conquering of Canaan. Butler admits, "the form of the narrative

would not be etiological saga but popular war narrative, ridiculing the enemy, while

encouraging the local populace by reporting how easy victory had been won with God's

help."[366] This is consistent with Malešević's thinking that "the principal target of war

propaganda is the domestic audience and occasionally an audience of already sympathetic

external organisations and states."[367] Generally speaking, while Ancient Near Eastern

war narrative attests to the fact that the gods determined the outcome of battles, it was,

nonetheless, the kings who won them. Since YHWH was the Israelite king, it had to be

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[364] Malešević, 202.
[365] Bahrani describes the presence of descriptions of historical events along with the ideological messages in the narratives when she says, "there is usually the historical event of a war, real and documentable according to contemporary notions of history, and there is the ideological message of justification, glory, and victory." Bahrani, 59.
[366] Butler, 68.
[367] Malešević, 206.

shown by those passing on the oral tradition, as well as the writers/compilers/redactors, that YHWH had indeed won Israel's battles too.

As such, the text reinforced Israelite ideologization concerning the divine assistance of YHWH, which further buttressed the divine mandate to carry out warfare, and emphasized the kingship of their god, YHWH. The emphasis on the kingship of YHWH further reinforced the bureaucracy of coercion led by their king's representatives in the persons of the prophets and the priests and whose justice the Israelites' elders and judges administered. In the Joshua narrative YHWH's kingship is emphasized as well as his divine assistance, which gave evidence for the presence of the Israelites' divine mandate to carry out warfare against Jericho, and further legitimized the Israelites' following of Joshua, Moses' successor and prophet, the lead judge over Israel.

3.8 Demonization of the Enemy

The wickedness of the inhabitants of the Promised Land, including Jericho, is described in Deuteronomy 9:4-5, 12:29, and in 20:17-18. The demonization of one's enemy is a common motif in the Ancient Near East. As Crouch writes, referring to one's enemies as 'wicked,' or 'evil,' "is an important means of legitimating the use of military force against them."[368] Assyrian evidence for the demonization of enemies to legitimize warfare is exceptionally common and is held in contrast to the justice and morality of Assyrian kings.[369] Consider these very familiar sounding epithets:

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[368] Crouch, 51.
[369] Bustenay Oded, *War, Peace and Empire: Justifications for War in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1992), 30-31.

> The Assyrian king bears hyperbolic epithets – *nūr kiššat nišē; nūr kibrāti* "the light of all mankind"; "the light of the entire world". He is a lover of uprightness (*rā'im mēšari*), the defender of the weak, rectifier of the wrongs, persecuting injustice wherever it occurs. In a word, equity and law uphold his throne.[370]

In stark contrast, the enemy of any Assyrian king "is always described in derogatory terms, as a complete evildoer, a wicked devil, a sinner who breaks the laws of morality and tramples right and justice underfoot."[371] These are some of the epithets that "are generic to all enemies of Assyria."[372] "Trained in murder"; "culprit"; "sinner"; "malefactor"; "wrongdoer and criminal"; "murderer"; "wicked"; "evildoer"; "an evil demon"; "robbers, thieves and murderers"; "villain"; "accursed by the gods."[373] Oded gives numerous other examples as well along with their Akkadian phrasing.[374] He has pointed out that the Akkadian terms *lemni* and *bēl lemutti* have two meanings: enemy and wicked and tells us, "this duality conveys the idea that wickedness is inherent in the enemy."[375] Consider the following from the Annals of Sennacherib, "In my second campaign Assur, my lord, encouraged me, and against the land of the Kassites and the land of the Iasubigallai, wicked enemies, who from of old had not been submissive to the kings, my fathers, I marched."[376] As such, we do not need to see the overt expressions of demonization in a war narrative itself, though, of course, we often do, because the enemies' deserving to be conquered is inherent in their enmity. Here is an example, however, of Esarhaddon describing the sinfulness of his enemy (in this case, his own brothers) directly in his war annals: "The (way) of the gods they abandoned and to their

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[370] Oded, 31
[371] Oded, 31.
[372] Oded, 34.
[373] Oded, 34-35.
[374] Oded, 34-35.
[375] Oded, 36. Crouch discusses this as well. Crouch, 51.
[376] Luckenbill, Vol 2, 135.

own violent deeds trusted, plotting evil, evil tongue, lying slander, against the will of the

gods, they set afoot against me and (with) unholy disloyalty behind my back they planned

rebellion with each other."[377] Esarhaddon calls Shamash-ibni "a lout, an outlaw, who

does not fear the command of the lord of lords."[378] Ashurbanipal describes Urtaku, the

king of Elam, "as one who 'with his lips speaks greetings, but within his heart plots

murder.'"[379] The demonization of the enemy, which persists throughout the Ancient Near

East, is tied to an even more socially entrenched understanding of the king as one who

metes out justice.

We see this understanding of the king as the harbinger of justice in Egypt's

Thutmose III (c. 1479-1425 BCE) who was described as "The good god, who conquers

with his arm, who smites the southerners, who beheads the northerners. Who scatters the

heads of those of bad character."[380] The Babylonian king Hammurabi "was called by the

gods to establish justice in the land."[381] The Assyrian Tiglath-pileser I was said to have

been the one "who ruled over the four quarters of the world in righteousness."[382] Oded

tell us that "one of the fundamental functions of kingship was to uphold justice. This is a

longstanding and basic idea among the monarchies of the Ancient Near East … The kings

in the Ancient Near East were formally and conceptually under the obligation to establish

justice in their lands."[383] Indeed, it is plain that kings in the Ancient Near East had the

role of delivering their people from external threats, and also maintaining justice

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[377] R.C. Thompson, 10.
[378] Oded, 35.
[379] Oded, 35.
[380] Younger, 178.
[381] Oded, 36.
[382] Oded, 37.
[383] Oded, 36.

internally.[384] Oded has said that war is the agency through which an Assyrian king "sets

right the injustice committed by the transgressors."[385]   In fact, the Assyrian Royal

Inscriptions give us the impression "that waging war was the rule rather than the

exception."[386] Also, "war became the natural vocation of the king, and his campaigns

against the sinner king (i.e. the enemy) are the manifestation of his fitness for

kingship."[387] Because the kings in the Ancient Near East were the ones who meted out

justice they possessed an especially important role in the maintenance of law within their

own states and the administration of justice outside of them, through the waging of war.

This conception of kingship permeated the entire Ancient Near East and was a central

theme within the ideology of Ancient Near Eastern people, without which the divine

mandate's attestation to just war would be rendered meaningless, as well as any desire of

subjects to participate in a given social hierarchy which formed the heart of the

bureaucracy of coercion.

In light of the popular conception in the Ancient Near East of kings as the

administers of justice, the following from Deuteronomy 9, which justifies entering and

taking the land promised to the Israelites is especially telling:

> When the LORD your God thrusts them out before you, do not say to yourself, 'It
> is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to occupy this
> land'; it is rather because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is
> dispossessing them before you. It is not because of your righteousness or the
> uprightness of your heart that you are going in to occupy their land; but because
> of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is dispossessing them

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[384] Oded describes the role of the king as protector of his people, but also the preserver of justice within his kingdom when he states, "the king has the duty not only to deliver his people from external enemies but also to enact justice in society at ordinary times and to right the wrongs that are perpetrated constantly." Oded, 37.

[385] Oded, 37.

[386] Oded, 38

[387] Oded, 38.

before you, in order to fulfill the promise that the LORD made on oath to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.[388]

On the one hand, the reader understands that YHWH has promised Canaan to the Israelites; on the other hand, the writer wants to make it clear that those who are killed in the process are wicked. In this way, YHWH also fulfills the role that is expected of any other Ancient Near Eastern king – the administration of justice. Another example, which highlights the wickedness of Israel's enemies, reads:

> When the LORD your God has cut off before you the nations whom you are about to enter to dispossess them, when you have dispossessed them and live in their land, take care that you are not snared into imitating them, after they have been destroyed before you: do not inquire concerning their gods, saying, 'How did these nations worship their gods? I also want to do the same.' You must not do the same for the LORD your God, because every abhorrent thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods. They would even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. You must diligently observe everything that I command you; do not add to it or take anything from it.[389]

Here we see the reinforcement of the law, central to the bureaucracy of coercion, and a description from the writer regarding what is necessary to maintain the kingship of YHWH, which is to keep the Israelites from anything that might lead them to worship other gods. Following other gods would lead to a collapse of YHWH's kingship as well as lead the Israelites to the opposite side of the administration of YHWH's justice.

Deuteronomy 20:17-18 brings YHWH's justice with respect to the ban into full relief:

> You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites – just as the LORD your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the LORD your God.[390]

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[388] Deuteronomy 9:4-5.
[389] Deuteronomy 12:29
[390] Deuteronomy 20:17-18.

We have discussed the way in which the "Ban as God's Justice,"[391] has been illustrated by Niditch, however, in light of the role of Ancient Near Eastern kings as administrators of justice, it becomes clear that the means to understanding the ban (including the king's reception of booty) is the kingship of YHWH. If the total destruction commanded by YHWH seems more extreme than the expectations of other Ancient Near Eastern kings it is because Israel's king is also their god and, therefore, there is no room for anything that might threaten either his divine or his earthly authority. Anything that might lead the Israelites to follow another god, could also lead them to follow another king. Conveniently, as a motif, demonization of the enemy cooperates with the administration of justice expected of YHWH, and it also cooperates with a human psychological need.

As has already been stated, killing does not come naturally to human beings and, therefore, along with the bureaucracy of coercion, it requires ideological legitimation. While we have already examined the way in which demonization of one's enemy in the Ancient Near East is a theme which is synergistic with the administration of justice by a king, we should also pay attention to the fact that demonization – even by itself – seems essential in war towards legitimizing violence against others. This had led Malešević to state, "justifications of bloodshed are often couched in words that depict the 'enemy' not as an honourable or worthy adversary but as a subhuman, monstrous creature hell-bent on destroying the social order."[392] Here, Malešević is referring to modern warfare, however, I maintain that his point is equally true in the ancient world. Malešević has said that in the "pre-modern world there was no structural need to depict your enemy as less than

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[391] Niditch (1995), 405.
[392] Malešević, 271.

human … because this was a profoundly hierarchical world where everybody knew his or her place."[393] Malešević, of course, is entirely correct, however, this is precisely why in the Ancient Near East the enemy is demonized, rather than dehumanized. The enemy are wicked, evil, and idol worshipping; their humanity need not be questioned because there are greater and lesser human beings in the Ancient Near Eastern mindset. Thus, Malešević's point, while couched within a different communicative ontology, remains structurally sound in any context and central to the necessary ideologization of organized violence.[394]

3.9 The Burning and Cursing of Conquered Cities

Joshua 6:24-26 describes the burning and the cursing of Jericho. The burning of conquered areas is present in almost every single description of defeat by a conquering king throughout the Ancient Near East, and descriptions of such destruction are sometimes accompanied by the presence of cursing as well. The reason for this destruction is tied directly to the centrifugal means of perpetuating Ancient Near Eastern ideologisation concerning gods, kings, and the possession of land.

Tiglath-pileser I is described saying this of Sarauš and Ammauš, "I burned, razed, and destroyed their cities."[395] When describing his defeat of Hunusu he said, "I burned the city. The three great walls which were constructed with baked bricks and the entire city I razed (and) destroyed. I turned (it) into a ruin hill and a heap. I strewed 'ṣipu'-

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[393] Malešević, 142.

[394] Pitkänen concluded, "if one compares the ideology of Joshua with modern genocide studies, seeing the Canaanites as a threat and the appeal to their sinfulness can be seen as part of a standard strategy of demonization and dehumanization of the opposition in comparable situations in order to rationalize acts of violence." Pitkänen, 79.

[395] Younger, 80.

stones over it. I made bronze lightning bolts (and) I inscribed on them (a description of) the conquest of the lands which by Aššur, my lord, I had conquered, (and) a warning not to occupy that city and not to rebuild its wall."[396] Thus, in this instance, we see the presence of curse along with the description of the cities physical destruction. Ashur-Dan II is described saying, "I burned their cities (and) their citizens."[397] Shalmaneser III is quoted as having said, "I went to the mountains of Haurani. Cities without number I destroyed, devastated, I burned with fire. I carried off their spoils. I went to the mountains of Ba'li-ra'si at the side of the sea and (lies) opposite Tyre. I erected a stela of my majesty there."[398] Similarly, in the Aššur Annal Fragment, Shalmaneser III says, "I went to the mountains of the land of Hauran. Cities without number I destroyed, razed (and) burned with fire. I plundered their booty without number. I went up to the mountains of the land of Ba'lira'si which is on the seashore. I erected a stela of my majesty there."[399] The same wording appears again on the Kurba'il Statue, also of Shalmaneser III.[400] The Hittites have also left us numerous examples as well. The Ten Year Annals of Muršili II states, "I completely burned down Halila (and) Dudduska";[401] I completely [burned] down the city";[402] "And the enemy of Pishuru I defeated behind Palhuissa";[403] and, "I completely burned down the land of Ziharriya."[404] One might ask,

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[396] Younger, 81.

[397] Younger, 90.

[398] Younger, 106.

[399] Younger, 107.

[400] The same wording appears upon Shalmaneser III's Kurba'il Statue: "I marched as far as the mountains of Hauran. I destroyed, devastated, (and) burned with fire countless cities. I carried away their booty without number. I marched to the mountains of Ba'li-rasi which is over against the sea; I erected a stela of my sovereignty there." Younger, 109.

[401] Younger, 146

[402] Younger, 147.

[403] Younger, 156.

[404] Younger, 157.

however, "If we have an example in Joshua of YHWH destroying the walls of a city, something for which credit is taken by Ancient Near Eastern kings, is there an example of YHWH destroying a city with fire?" Of course, the question is rhetorical as everyone is familiar with the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. As such, Genesis 19 displays YHWH's kingship and, therefore, the expectation that he will administer justice in the land. Recall that under *Demonization of the Enemy* I discussed the relationship of both of these motifs and they are on obvious display in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, in which the inhabitants were said to have been totally depraved. After a debate between Abraham and YHWH wherein Abraham demands that YHWH must be "just,"[405] YHWH is said to have not been able to find even ten righteous people there.[406] As a result, with the exception of Lot and his daughters, everyone was said to have been killed: "Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground."[407] All of this, however, raises the question, why burn the cities, especially in light of the benefit that the structures might possess for the conquering powers?

As should by now be well-appreciated, cities were the centres of both the cumulative bureaucracies of coercion and the centres from which the centrifugal ideologization of a people spread. We have already seen the importance of the

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[405] Genesis 18:23-25 describes Abraham asking YHWH, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

[406] Genesis 18:32.

[407] Genesis 19:24-25.

destruction of temples and the removal of representations of the divine in conquered

areas. We are also well acquainted with the Ancient Near Eastern practice of kings

erecting stelae attesting to their own authority and that of their gods. So the burning of

cities after they were conquered served to reconfigure the space as a centre from which

the authority of the conquering king and, therefore, the conquering gods was well known.

New stelae would be erected in the area,[408] and if the city was to be rebuilt new reliefs

were built into new walls of baked brick, as well as new temples. We know these things

occurred from stelae themselves. Consider the following from Adad-nirâri, ruler of

Assyria (ca. 1300 BCE):

> Whoever blots out my name and writes his own name (in its place), or breaks my
> memorial stele, or consigns it to destruction, or throws it into the river, or covers
> it with earth, or burns it with fire, or casts it into the water, or takes into a dark
> chamber (*or*, pest house) where it cannot be seen, and sets it up therein, or if
> anyone because of these curses sends a hostile foe or an evil enemy, or an evil
> tongue (i.e., a slanderer), or any other man, and has him seize it, or if he plans
> and carries out any other plot against it, may Assur, the mighty god, who dwells
> in Eharsagkurkurra, Anu, Enlil, Ea, and Ishtar, the great gods, the Igigu of
> heaven, the Anunaku of earth, all of them, look upon him in great anger, and
> curse him with an evil curse. His name, his seed, his kith and kin, may they
> destroy from the land. The destruction of his land, the ruin of his people and his
> boundary, may they decree by their fateful command. May Adad overwhelm him
> with an evil downpour, may flood and storm, confusion and tumult, tempest,
> want and famine, drought and hunger, continue in his land; may he (Adad) come
> upon his land like a flood and turn it to tells and ruins (*v. adds*, may Ishtar, the
> queen, bring about the overthrow of his land; may he not be able to stand before
> his enemy). May Adad destroy his land with destructive lightning (*v. adds*, and
> cast famine upon his land).[409]

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[408] Here is an example of Sennacherib attesting to the erection of a stela in a conquered area: "I had a
stele made, and the might of my conquering hand which I established upon them, I caused to be inscribed
thereon. In the midst of the city I set it up." Luckenbill, Vol 2, 118. Similarly, "a memorial stele I caused to
be made, and I had them inscribe (thereon) the might and power of Assur, my lord … Whoever destroys the
writing of my name, may Assur and the great gods look upon him [in anger] and destroy him." Luckenbill,
Vol 2, 140.

[409] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 28.

There are numerous other examples. Shalmaneser I had said, "the one who blots out my inscription and my name, may Assur, the lord, overthrow his kingdom, destroy his name and his seed from this land; may a hostile king take away his throne, and give his land to whom he pleases."[410] Tiglath-pileser I is described saying:

> Whosoever shall break my memorial tablets and my prism, or shall deface them, or shall cast them into the water, or shall burn them in the fire, or shall cover them with earth, or shall throw them like – into a pesthouse, where they cannot be seen, or shall blot out my name which is written (thereon) and shall inscribe his own name (in place thereof), or shall devise any other evil scheme, to do violence unto my memorial tablets: - may Anu and Adad, the great gods, my lords, look upon him in anger, may they curse him with an evil curse; may they overthrow his kingdom; may they uproot the foundations of his royal throne; may they destroy his lordly seed; may they scatter his weapons; may they bring defeat upon his hosts and set him in bonds before his foes. May Adad destroy his land with (his) destructive thunderbolt, and hurl hunger, famine, want, and bloodshed upon his land; may he command that he shall not live one day (longer), and may he destroy his name and his seed from the land.[411]

The severe cursing indicates that it was a common practice to destroy, and/or to replace those things which served to perpetuate the authority of a king, and/or gods. Bahrani tells us, "a distinctive military tactic in Near Eastern Antiquity was the assault and abduction of monuments of war. To the extent that war aims for the annihilation or defeat of the enemy and the control of land, military acts that rely upon the efficacy of public monuments, buildings, and other works of art, were – and remain in contemporary warfare – an integral aspect of military strategy."[412] As such, the burning of a city's structures was essential to defeating an 'evil' enemy, nothing of the 'wicked' could remain inasmuch as the monuments, walls, buildings, temples, and stelae communicated messages at the root of their 'depravity.' "The identities of the ancient city-states were

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[410] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 44.
[411] Luckenbill, Vol 1, 90-91.
[412] Bahrani, 159.

continually constructed and marked through monuments, images, public rituals, and architectural structures. War was fought at the level of monuments as much as land and natural and economic resources. War was a means of unsettling and reordering space, monuments, and populations and reconfiguring them into new formations."[413] All of this, of course, is visible in the destruction of Judah itself in 2 Chronicles 36:19, "They burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire."

In Joshua 6, after Rahab and her family are safely removed, we read, "They burned down the city, and everything in it … Joshua then pronounced this oath, saying, 'Cursed before the Lord be anyone who tries to build this city – this Jericho! At the cost of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest he shall set up its gates!' So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was in all the land."[414] Indeed, 1 Kings 16:34 describes the fulfillment of Joshua's curse.[415] In reference to Joshua 6:26 Pitkänen reminds us of what we have already seen, that is, "putting curses on things one did not wish to be disturbed or altered was normal in the Ancient Near East."[416] Joshua pronounces it as an oath and Joshua's curse is entirely similar to that of Tiglath-Pileser I concerning Sarauš and Ammauš.

At this stage, as far as the biblical narrative is concerned, the ideologization of Israel, and its centrifugal nature, which lies at the heart of Israel's bureaucracy of coercion, is largely oral in accordance with the Torah. Therefore, it possesses the same portability as the ark, and is untouchable compared to the monuments, stelae, and bas-

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[413] Bahrani, 160.

[414] Joshua 6:24, 26-27.

[415] 1 Kings 16:34 tells us that "Hiel of Bethel built Jericho; he laid tis foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up tis gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua son of Nun."

[416] Pitkänen, 160.

reliefs of other Ancient Near Eastern peoples. This makes the Israelites uniquely flexible and, therefore, uniquely capable militarily in the Ancient Near East. Indeed, the exilic prophets, after the destruction of Jerusalem go to great lengths to remind the Israelites of the ways in which they have fallen from the pristine image of Joshua's obedience, and Israel's success. Ezekiel describes images of other gods portrayed on the walls of the Temple,[417] and YHWH's glory leaving Jerusalem.[418] Israel's continued rebellion – failure to follow the law, and thus, YHWH, which was central to Israelite social organization and ideologization – is said to be the reason for Jerusalem's destruction.[419] At the heart of Ezekiel's vision was to place YHWH and his law back to the centre of Israel's life, and in the centre of the lives of individual Israelites, which means it was a prescription for Israelite restoration.[420] We may observe, therefore, in light of the role of the bureaucracy of coercion, and centrifugal ideologization, inasmuch as they are foundational to the emergence of organized violence and military success, that Ezekiel's prescription for Israel's restoration, when placed within the context of the positive portrayal of Israel's obedience in the book of Joshua, is not an empty piety divorced from the real historical circumstances of Israel but, rather, is central to Israel's military successes and failures. As such, the knowledge of Israel's time in the desert, and of their

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[417] Ezekiel 8:10.

[418] Ezekiel 10.

[419] Ezekiel 33:17-21.

[420] Ezekiel eloquently describes the centrality of YHWH worship, with all that it entails, to Israel's restoration when he says, "I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God." Ezekiel 36:24-28.

conquest of Canaan, would have served as a source of enormous strength for Israel during

the exile. That is, the knowledge – or belief – that their historiography, their celebration

of the Passover, their appointment of judges and elders in a social hierarchy, their formal

priesthood, and their law, were all in place without a Temple and large centres of

administration (as per Jerusalem) in the past, provided comfort to Israel during their exile,

and was at the centre of their hope for restoration.

3.10 The Bodily Display of Defeated Kings

Texts describing the torture, disfigurement, and displaying of conquered Ancient

Near Eastern kings are commonplace throughout the Ancient Near East. While

describing the burning and cursing of cities, the movement and destruction of

representations of divine presence, and the Ban, we observed the intimate connection

within the Ancient Near Eastern mindset of gods, kings, and the land. Therefore, it

should come as no surprise to discover that, like the monuments, temples, and walls of

defeated cities which depict conflicting ideology regarding legitimate authority, kingship,

and worship, the king too – represented by his body – is also representative of a

conflicting ideology. Therefore, the king's body sometimes demanded equally bold

disfigurement and destruction in order to send a clear message to all that the conquering

king and, therefore, the conquering god, are the new legitimate authorities in a conquered

area. Such displays also reinforced what Younger described as the 'ideology of terror'

with respect to the "breaking down of [other] foreign ideologically active centers (temples, palaces)."[421]

Ashur-Dan II is described saying the following, "[By the command of Aššur, [my lord], I marched [to the land of Ka]dmuhu. The city of Sara [… I destroyed], ravaged, (and) burnt. I captured Kundabhale, [the king of the land of Kadmuhu] inside his palace. [….] bronze, tin, precious stones of the mountains, [….], his valuable booty [I brought] to [my] city [Aššur]. [On the throne I set …-s]illa, a man loyal to me. Kundabhale, king of the land of Kadmuhu, [I carried off] [(and) in the city] Arbail I flayed (him and) and I draped his skin [over the wall of the city …]nash."[422] Rather than merely mention the flaying of Kundabhale, and the display of his skin, I included this entire quote in order to allow it to illustrate the intimacy between the bodily disfigurement of Kundabhale and the authority by which Ashur-dan II carried out his war against the land of Kadmuhu.

Sargon II had this to say when taking back Mannea, "To Assur, my lord, that the Mannean land might be avenged and that it might be restored to Assyria's rule, I raised my hand (in prayer), and in Mount Uaush, the mountain where they had cast out the body of Azâ,[423] I flayed Bagdattu, and showed him to the Manneans."[424] The following is from Esarhaddon's historical texts: "In the month of *Tashritu*, the head of Abdimilkutti, in the month of *Adaru*, the head of Sanduarri: in the same (*lit.*, one) year I cut off their heads] … That the might of Assur, my lord, might be made manifest, I hung their heads upon the shoulders of their nobles [and with singing] and music [I paraded through] the public

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[421] Younger, 66.
[422] Younger, 92.
[423] Azâ was Sargon II's son.
[424] Luckenbill, Vol 2, 5.

square [of Neneveh]."[425]   Ashurbanipal is described saying the following, "I,

Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, displayed publicly the head of Teumman, king of Elam, in

front of the gate inside the city, where from of old it had been said by the oracle: 'The

head of thy foes thou shalt cut off.'"[426]   With respect to this particular instance, Bahrani

tells us, "the king's head is the most important element in the Til-Tuba relief. It is not

merely a display of violence for the sake of coercive propaganda through the terror of a

violent act. It is a fulfillment of an oracle, the destiny of Ashurbanipal's victory as

decreed by the gods. In other words, in this composition, both the justification for war

and the Assyrian victory are signaled through the king's head. The severed head becomes

at once a sign of just war and its inevitable victory."[427]   As such, we observe the

connection of the divine mandate of a conquering king, present in a curse inscription,

being fulfilled by the conquering king, Ashurbanipal, which boldly displays the way in

which the themes (divine mandate, burning and cursing of cities, bodily display of

defeated kings, and fear) that have been discussed can merge in a very specific instance,

hence displaying, and reinforcing, the centrifugal ideologization, and the cumulative

bureaucratization of coercion, of a conquering people.

     Joshua 6 does not explicitly mention any actions toward the body of the king of

Jericho, but given the outline of command-execution illustrated by Hawk[428] we can infer

that if chapter 8 of Joshua describes YHWH saying to Joshua, "You shall do to Ai, and its

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[425] Luckenbill, Vol 2, 206.
[426] Luckenbill, Vol 2, 396. Cited also in Bahrani, 41.
[427] Bahrani, 41.
[428] See Chapter Three, Section Three.

king as you did to Jericho and its king"[429] that whatever is described to have been done to

the king of Ai was also done to the king of Jericho. After the defeat of Ai by an elaborate

strategy the city is put under the Ban,[430] then the text tells us that the king of Ai was taken

alive to Joshua.[431] Next, however, we are told that Joshua "hanged the king of Ai on a

tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua commanded, and they took his body down from

the tree, threw it down at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised over it a great

heap of stones, which stands there to this day."[432] This act is in keeping with the

description of the defeat of other Ancient Near Eastern kings and eloquently displays the

ideological connection of a city's god to its king, and a city's king to its land, which is

persistent throughout the Ancient Near East.

It is notable, again, like oral historiography, and the portability of the Ark of the

Covenant, the way in which the kingship of Israel is also untouchable at this stage of the

biblical narrative. That is, because YHWH is king (already on bold display with the

receiving of booty, the ban, the destruction of the walls) there is a sense in which the

Israelites cannot be defeated. Their ideological justification for war is literally

untouchable. Their king cannot be bodily assaulted, or similarly molested and put on

bold, arrogant display. Unlike, for example, the way in which the five kings, enemies of

Israel, are hung on trees in Joshua 10:26-27, or the way in which the Israelites, led by

Joshua's successor Judah, treated the Canaanite king Adoni-bezek.[433] The one situation

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[429] Joshua 8:2
[430] Joshua 8:21-26.
[431] Joshua 8:23.
[432] Joshua 8:29.
[433] The following, from Judges 1:1-7, describes the treatment of King Adoni-bezek by the Israelites: "Adoni-bezek fled; but they pursued him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes. Adoni-bezek said, 'Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table; as I have

where we see the Ark of the Covenant, the physical symbol of YHWH's presence taken,

Dagon, the god of the Philistines, is the one found to be bodily assaulted by YHWH.[434] It

is no coincidence that the narrative of the ark's capture and the bodily abuse of Dagon, is

followed just four chapters later with a description of the Israelites begging Samuel for a

king like other nations.[435] The capture of the ark left the Israelites feeling abandoned[436]

and despite Samuel's efforts to restore Israel's faith,[437] the fear that YHWH might

abandon them again never left them. This fear led them to ask Samuel to appoint a king

over them "like other nations":

> 'Appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations.' But the thing
> displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to govern us.' Samuel prayed
> to the LORD, and the LORD said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people in all
> that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me
> from being a king over them.'[438]

Samuel fights to keep YHWH as king by appointing his sons to be judges over Israel,

however, they prove to be untrustworthy in the eyes of the elders of Israel who are leaders

over their respective tribes.[439] Again, we see the ideologization of Israel, along with the

social organization represented by the Judge, Prophet and Priest, Samuel, on bold display

as he represents Israel's true king, YHWH. YHWH is their king who led them out of

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done, so God has paid me back." Cited also in T. M. Lemos, "Shame and Mutilation of Enemies in the Hebrew Bible," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125 Number 2 (2006), 236.

[434] The fate of the statue of Dagon, when left alone in Dagon's temple with the ark of the covenant, is described in 1 Samuel 5:2-4: "Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and placed it beside Dagon. When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. But when they rose early on the next morning, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him."

[435] 1 Samuel 8

[436] 1 Samuel 7:2

[437] 1 Samuel 7:3-17

[438] 1 Samuel 8:5b-7

[439] 1 Samuel 8:1-4

Egypt, destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, and gave Jericho into the hands of

Joshua and the Israelites by destroying its wall. As such, the Jericho narrative stands in

stark contrast with the history of Israel under both the United and Divided Monarchies

culminating in the total defeat of Judah described in 2 Chronicles 36 and 2 Kings 25, the

latter of which describes King Zedekiah's being overtaken and finally defeated "in the

plains of Jericho."[440] After the Israelites take on a human king, the victories and defeats

of Israel are attributed to the measure by which Israel lives according to the Torah; both

the defeats and the victories, however, are noticeably human in comparison to the

descriptions of Israel's success when YHWH was Israel's only king. The divine

intervention on Israel's behalf by YHWH, which is illustrated by descriptions of the

miraculous throughout Exodus and Joshua, is no longer visible in the same overt way

throughout the rest of the Deuteronomistic History. Asking for a king like other nations

is where, according to those who compiled/redacted the biblical texts into its final form,

the destruction of Judah in 587/586 BCE began. Furthermore, their survival as a people

would be in remembering the kingship of YHWH while they were in exile under foreign

kings, according to Ezekiel's prescription for Israel's restoration.[441]

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[440] 2 Kings 25:5 states that "the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; all his army was scattered, deserting him."

[441] See previous section.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have researched war narrative throughout the Ancient Near East and sought to discover how they might help our understanding of war narrative in the Hebrew Bible. This research has taken me throughout Hittite, Egyptian, and particularly Assyrian annalistic texts and bas-reliefs. I started by asserting that Joshua 5:13 – 6:27 was a paradigmatic war narrative from the Ancient Near East, and that it, therefore, needed to be understood primarily within the context of warfare itself. I intended to show that war, and what constituted the waging of successful warfare in the Ancient Near East, was the hermeneutical key necessary to understanding texts such as Joshua. In order to make explicit a hermeneutic of war I relied upon the sociology of Malešević with respect to the foundations of organised violence. I have argued that a sociological appreciation of the underpinnings of organised violence offers us a way in which to understand the texts concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible that takes into account the way in which warfare has a tendency to overturn normative taboos, and argued that such a hermeneutic is necessary *because* warfare overturns normative taboos. This is why the attempts to appreciate the texts from an ethical perspective, or within a wider framework of Hebrew biblical theology – as understood in modern communities of worship – have always left us unsatisfied.

Before it was possible to examine Ancient Near Eastern texts, as well as Hebrew Biblical texts concerning warfare, through the lens of the sociology of warfare, it was necessary to establish an understanding of Malešević's sociology of warfare. To this end I described the two main underpinnings necessary for the emergence of organized violence according to Malešević: (1) The *Cumulative Bureaucratization of Coercion*; and

(2) *Centrifugal Ideologization.* The first was defined as the processual growth of social organisational structure that requires the tacit approval and action of human beings at all levels of the given hierarchy, and which requires "continuous ideological legitimation."[442] In short, we have come to understand this as complex social organization, which in the Ancient Near East included a social hierarchy, laws, complex religious ritual and priesthoods, writing, and rudimentary elements of statehood, which began for the Israelites in the desert prior to crossing the Jordan, accumulated over time, and culminated in the centralisation of worship and administration in Jerusalem. The second, *Centrifugal Ideologization*, was defined as the tie that binds the social organization together, and gives moral justification to any organised violence that it carries out.[443] I illustrated that the presence of ideologization in the Ancient Near East, as well as the centrifugal way in which it was spread, via stelae, bas-reliefs and war monuments, was also visibly present in the biblical texts and the oral historiography to which the biblical texts attest. I also illustrated that the centrifugal ideologization was present amongst the Israelites prior to the crossing of the Jordan, and culminated with the centralization of worship and administration in Jerusalem. Malešević had illustrated that both are necessary because killing comes entirely unnaturally to human beings and so, complex social organization complete with laws for non-compliance, as well as potent ideological justification, was/is necessary for the emergence of organised violence, or war.

Before discussing war narrative *per se*, I described the way in which Malešević's categories were visible in the Akkadian empire, prior to, and at the time of Sargon I. This

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[442] Malešević, 7.
[443] Malešević, 8.

was necessary in order to corroborate Malešević's assertion that the Fertile Crescent in the Ancient Near East was not only the cradle of civilization, but because it was the cradle of civilization, it was also the cradle of warfare, that is, large-scale organised violence.[444] It was also necessary to exonerate Malešević's sociology from any claims that it is only relevant to modern warfare, and not equally underscoring warfare in the Ancient Near East. Having established that Malešević's theory concerning the sociological underpinnings of war is universal and, therefore, visibly present in the Ancient Near East, I then briefly discussed a theme which emerged consistently throughout this thesis, and which formed part of the intellectual framework of Ancient Near Eastern peoples, that is, the intimate relationship between gods, kings, and the land. In doing so, I asserted that because there is such an intimate relationship between the three themes in the Ancient Near East, it was necessary for the Israelites to have understood that YHWH had promised them the land west of the Jordan prior to any attempt to take it.

I then continued with a discussion of the normative elements of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative, which are visibly present in the book of Joshua. I discussed the presence of divine mandate and the way in which it was central to the ideologization of Israel, and a necessary element of Israel's bureaucracy of coercion. Similarly, I explained the way in which divine assistance in battle, also present in other Ancient Near Eastern peoples' warfare accounts, further buttressed the divine mandate and, therefore, the social organization, and ideologization of Israel at the time of the conquest. While discussing divine assistance in the book of Joshua, I described the command-execution motif that

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[444] Malešević, 93.

had been highlighted by Hawk and which highlighted the explicit way in which YHWH approved of Israel's battle with Jericho, as well as led the battle through his representative, Joshua.

Connected to these themes of divine mandate and divine assistance was the commonplace, even requisite, presence of priests on Ancient Near Eastern battlefields. I illustrated the way in which Hawk's command-execution motif highlights the necessity of the priests in Joshua 6 and thereby undermines any credence given to the absence of priests in the LXX version of Joshua 6:3-5. Typically, the absence of priests in these verses has been used to suggest that the priests were a later addition by a source that wanted to highlight their role in the narrative. I argued that without the priests there would have been no narrative to discuss at all, and that any addition made was likely to clarify the command-execution motif highlighted by Hawk, since the priests are present in the remainder of the LXX version. Inasmuch as the addition of the priests reinforced the command-execution theme, it also reinforced the centrality of YHWH's authority, and that of his representatives. Both of which were central to Israel's ideologization and social organization.

The virtually omnipresent theme of fear throughout Ancient Near Eastern war narrative was also visibly present in the book of Joshua, especially in Joshua 2 with respect to Israel's spies and Rahab's help. This theme is intimately connected to the חרם (the Ban) and, therefore, special attention was given to the centrality of the חרם to the fear described in the book of Joshua, as well as the role of the חרם in overturning the normative, and imperative, prohibition against killing in Deuteronomy and Exodus. I described the way in which Achan's punishment for failing to live up to the prescriptions

required by the חרם in Joshua 7 dramatically displayed Israelite bureaucratization of coercion via the law, and the centrality, therefore, of YHWH's authority in Israelite ideologization. In addition, I discussed the Ban's bringing together the themes of YHWH being a harbinger of justice (as per other Ancient Near Eastern kings), YHWH's kingship, YHWH's exclusive ownership of the land and, therefore, the land's being for devotees of YHWH alone. I illustrated that Israel's failure to exhibit devotion to YHWH throughout its history was the reason given by the writers/redactors of 2 Chronicles 36 and 2 Kings 25 for the ultimate fall of Judah in 586 BCE culminating in a punishment for Judah which bore remarkable similarity to the punishment of Achan in Joshua 7 and corresponded with the punishment outlined in Deuteronomy for apostasy.[445]

During my research I noted the importance of physical representations of the presence of divine agency in the Ancient Near East. When examining extra-biblical texts I discovered that it was the removal and destruction of gods' statues and temples that served to demoralize a conquered people, undermine their ideologization and social organization, and establish the authority of the conquering king and gods. I argued, against Bahrani, that Ancient Near Eastern peoples did not carry statues of their gods into combat and that the Israelites were entirely unique inasmuch as they carried the physical representation of their god, YHWH, the Ark of the Covenant, and established that the portability of the ark gave the Israelites a uniquely advantageous flexibility with respect to their capacity to wage war.

The theme of YHWH's kingship emerged again when examining the destruction of Jericho's wall. While examining war narrative throughout the Ancient Near East I

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[445] Deuteronomy 13:6-18

discovered that kings consistently bragged about the lack of consequence that fortifications posed for them when conquering cities. I argued, therefore, that the destruction of Jericho's wall was an instance of kingship hyperbole being ascribed to YHWH in order to emphasize YHWH's kingship over Israel and the land that had been promised to them. By examining the text through Malešević's sociology of warfare I discussed the way in which the apparent contradiction in the text of Joshua 6 between the fall of Jericho's wall, and the removal of Rahab and her family who were said to reside within the wall after the wall was said to be destroyed, could be explained by recourse to 'white' propaganda. That is, we can maintain, on the one hand, the obvious help infiltrating Jericho that had been extended to the Israelites by Rahab and, on the other hand, the miraculous description of the fall of Jericho's wall, by understanding the text to be an example of propaganda which served to uphold and reinforce the beliefs of the Israelites concerning YHWH's kingship and his authority in the land promised to them. Inasmuch as the text ridiculed the enemy, and encouraged the Israelites in a way that was consistent with other Ancient Near Eastern war narratives, which also reported historical events though with an ideological message, there was no need, I argued, to posit two distinct traditions coming together in Joshua 6.

Also visibly present in the Hebrew Bible and the book of Joshua is the role of Ancient Near Eastern kings as the administrators of justice. I explained that this theme was central to understanding the demonization of the enemy, which we see throughout the Ancient Near East, and is fundamental to the divine mandate, both of which were essential to the Israelites' understanding of any war as a just war. The understanding that a war is just is central to any ideological legitimation whether ancient or modern and,

therefore, an essential element of any ideologization that forms the foundation of organized violence. Similarly, the burning and cursing of conquered cities also appeared regularly throughout the Ancient Near East, which is consistent with the understanding of Ancient Near Eastern cities as centres of ideologization and bureaucracies of coercion, especially with respect to the well known relationship of gods, kings, and the land. City walls, temples, administrative centres, and buildings possessed bas-reliefs that perpetrated competing ideological messages. I argued that total destruction would have to eliminate competing messages that might detract from the legitimately perceived authority of a conquering king, and his god(s), which would have to include the destruction of cities, their walls, buildings, monuments and stelae.

This destruction, I argued, has also extended to the bodies of Ancient Near Eastern kings. The disfigurement, torture, and display of defeated kings was also commonplace in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible is no exception. I described the inference in the narrative that Jericho's king was hung from a tree, based on the text's description of the same being done to the king of Ai in Joshua 8, the five kings in Joshua 10, and the description of the way the body of Adoni-bezek was treated by Joshua's successor, Judah, in Judges 1. Notably, the way in which Ancient Near Eastern kings are disfigured and displayed was in keeping with the description of what happened to the Philistine god Dagon, when the Ark of the Covenant was captured and brought into its presence in 1 Samuel 5, which, I maintain, is consistent with the way in which the narratological roles of gods and kings often overlap in Ancient Near Eastern literature. I argued that, like other normative elements of Ancient Near Eastern war narrative, this too

sought to emphasize the kingship of YHWH, as well as his desire and capacity to fight for his people, even when it appeared that he had abandoned them.

Throughout this thesis I have examined annalistic texts concerning warfare throughout the Ancient Near East, in particular, Hittite, Egyptian, and Assyrian war narrative, with a special emphasis on Assyrian literature due to its high availability. Having done so, I determined that themes which are particularly visible in Joshua 5:13-6:27, and other Hebrew biblical war narrative, emerged consistently throughout the Ancient Near East. Furthermore, I illustrated that those normative elements of war narrative, reflect and contribute to Malešević's categories which underscore the emergence of organized violence. I have determined that an area for potential future research would be to examine warfare throughout the Hebrew Bible as a whole and examine the way in which the prophets and prophetic schools both contribute to and, at times, detract from Malešević's categories culminating in Judah's eventual defeat in 587/586 BCE.

In conclusion, I have illustrated that rather than being an exception to an otherwise moralistic collection of books, that warfare, being normative, rather than exceptional in the Ancient Near East, is the heuristic key to understanding the narratives concerning warfare in the Hebrew Bible. Joshua 5:13-6:27 exhibits elements of war narrative, which I have argued, are characteristic of Ancient Near Eastern accounts of warfare and that, therefore, it is a paradigmatic war narrative from the Ancient Near East. The book of Joshua rather poetically, like Rahab, resides in the wall between the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History. Inasmuch as the text embodies the intimate relationship between YHWH, his kingship, and the land, it represents a climax in Israel's story.

However, to the extent that it is the climax it also marks the beginning of Israel's descent, which ended in the defeat of Judah in 586 BCE. Israel's disobedience is foreshadowed by Achan in Joshua 7 and emerges forcefully at the outset of the book of Judges. Nonetheless, the exilic prophets were hopeful and looked forward to Israel's restoration via a return to a pure worship of YHWH, which as we have seen, was no mere 'spiritual' piety, but was/is intimately connected to Israel's ideologization, and bureaucratization of coercion, both of which were essential to Israel's military success in the ancient world and is, arguably, still today.

It is important to appreciate the way in which biblical accounts of warfare reinforce the sociological foundations of organized violence, not because such texts might cause war but, rather, because such an appreciation helps us to understand them in the context from which they emerged. This context is not merely "the Ancient Near East," but warfare itself. Once texts such as Joshua 5:13-6:27 are understood in their proper contexts, popular misapplications of the texts can be avoided, as well as misguided attempts to ethically appreciate the texts in light of the New Testament, which at the very least, for the Christian, denotes a fulfillment of Hebrew Biblical themes which renders the waging of war akin to that which is on display in the Hebrew Bible (in order to establish YHWH's kingdom on earth) obsolete. In light of our understanding of the Ancient Near Eastern mindset with respect to the relationship of gods, kings, and land, one can immediately appreciate how using the biblical texts to justify ownership of territory is misguided in the modern context. However, in the context from which the texts emerged they served to reinforce the centrifugal ideologization, and the cumulative bureaucratization of coercion, necessary to preserve Israel in a harsh Ancient Near

Eastern context where military capability was seen as a sign of civilization and where

"might was right" and believed to be a sign of divine sanction. Furthermore, a narrative

such as Joshua 5:13-6:27 displayed the necessary centrality of YHWH worship for

Israel's survival in that context, wherein one must admit, in light of our understanding of

Ancient Near Eastern warfare, that YHWH – according to the narrative – is Israel's ideal

king and Commander-in-Chief. This is the intellectual framework from which Ezekiel is

prompted to say that YHWH's promise would be fulfilled:

> I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and
> will gather them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. I will
> make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall
> be king over them all. Never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms.
> They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable
> things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the
> apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be
> my people, and I will be their God.[446]

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[446] Ezekiel 37:21-23.

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