

SONIA KWOK WONG

The Solomonic Fantasy

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Mohr Siebeck

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Sonia Kwok Wong

The Solomonic Fantasy

The Political Unconscious of the
Imperialized Yehudites

Mohr Siebeck

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In loving memory of my mother, Rita Shun-Pik Tsoi

Preface

This monograph is a revised version of my dissertation submitted to Vanderbilt University in 2017. I would like to thank the Faculty of Arts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for the publication subvention fund in support of the indexing of this monograph. With a project as enormous and venturous as this monograph, I would never have been able to complete it without the inspirational works of many established scholars, the input of my mentors, and the moral and tangible support of my family and friends. The merit of bringing this project to fruition is never exclusively mine, but it belongs also to them.

First of all, I would like to thank my mentors at Vanderbilt. I am much indebted to my dissertation supervisor, Douglas Knight, whose valuable advice, suggestions, and guidance have augmented the quality and the substance of this study. I thank him for directing my choice of minor toward the Ancient Near East. The decision has proved to be savvy and correct in retrospect, in spite of my initial unease and shortsightedness. Knowledge of the culture and literature of ancient Southwest Asia that I have acquired during my graduate studies is indispensable for the aim of this study. It is a great honor and privilege to be the last Ph.D. student working under his supervision and mentorship prior to his retirement.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Jack Sasson for his persistent support and words of encouragement. During the abysmal period of my life, in which I had sporadically contemplated ending my academic pursuits, his repeated assurance and affirmation carried me through the moments of radical self-doubt, uplifted my despaired soul, and helped me to envision the possibility of a brighter future. His simple utterance, “I believe in you,” has kept ringing in my ears even to this day and provided me with momentum to persist. I will forever be grateful for all that he has done for me.

I am thankful to Herbert Marbury for introducing me to the world of Greek historiography and Persian imperialism through his course *Empire and Canon*. Many of the positions taken in this monograph regarding the signifying context of the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story were conceived in this class, such as the idea that the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story was produced consequential to the literary development of Greek historiography and that its political ambiguity was conditioned by Persian imperialism. I am indebted to him for helping me to form new perspectives on old issues.

Annalisa Azzoni has been most nurturing and reassuring throughout the course of my graduate study. With her guidance, I have developed an unrelentingly critical attitude toward the very notion of “ancient Israel” and the methods used for its reconstruction. During the most difficult time of my life, when I was not capable of experiencing excitement, her enthusiastic reaction and contagious passion had a mimetic effect on me. They made me realize that this is how I would have felt toward this project if I were in my normal state of being. I thank her for her contagious passion, critical guidance, genuine caring, and her timely embraces.

A special thanks goes to Choon-Leong Seow for his many acts of kindness. I thank him for his valuable comments and suggestions to fortify the arguments of this thesis and for the doors that he opened for my career advancement. Another special thanks goes to Fernando Segovia who has mesmerized me with his postcolonial perspective on the Bible. I am indebted to Volney Gay, whose expertise in psychoanalysis has been an immense asset to the aim of this study. He has exerted an influence on me far more than he knows. As the result, I have developed an even stronger interest in psychoanalysis than I had when I first started this project.

In addition to my mentors at Vanderbilt above, I would like to thank those who have played significant and helpful roles in my academic career. I thank Archie Chi Chung Lee for inspiring me to pursue an academic career in biblical studies; Reverend LO Lung-Kwong for his many acts of kindness and mentorship; my colleagues at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, especially Francis YIP Ching Wah, Tobias Brandner, and Christina WONG Wai Yin, for their collegial support in the past few years; Thomas L. Thompson whose scholarship I have always admired and sought to emulate; and Konrad Schmid for his candid and valuable comments on the manuscript.

Last but not least, I thank my family and friends for their continuous support. I thank Terence Tang for his encouragement; my brother Lam Wong for making himself available whenever I needed him; and my beloved friends Ajanta Roy, Gayathri Narasimham, Megan McMurtry, Luis Menéndez Antuña, and Joe Fareed who shared the vicissitudes of life, both joy and sadness, with me during my Nashville days and thereby contributed to the completion of this project. I dedicate this study to the most significant person in my life, my late mother, Rita Shun-Pik Tsoi, who passed away in the first year of my graduate study at Vanderbilt. She taught me the most important lessons of life – love, forgiveness, resilience, and perseverance – qualities that have sustained me throughout the course of my academic pursuits and will continue to do so.

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List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
AEL	<i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> . Miriam Lichtheim. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973–1980
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ARE	<i>Ancient Records of Egypt</i> . Edited by James H. Breasted. 5 vols. Chicago, 1905–1907. Reprint, New York, 1962
ARI	<i>Assyrian Royal Inscriptions</i> . Albert K. Grayson. 2 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1972–1976
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
CANE	<i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . Edited by Jack M. Sasson. 4 vols. New York, 1995
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: 1997–2002
DSM-V	American Psychiatric Association. <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i> . 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013. http://dsm.psychiatryonline.org
EA	El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of Jørgen A. Knudtzon. <i>Die el-Amarna-Tafeln</i> . Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–1915. Repr. Aalen: Zeller, 1964. Continued in Anson F. Rainey, <i>El-Amarna Tablets, 359–379</i> . 2nd rev. ed. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1978

<i>FGH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Edited by Felix Jacoby. Leiden: Brill, 1954–1964
<i>GTTOT</i>	<i>The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Jan J. Simons. Studia Francisci Scholten memoriae dicata 2. Leiden: Brill, 1959
<i>HALOT</i>	Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte</i>
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>LAI</i>	Library of Ancient Israel
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LHBOT</i>	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
<i>LSJ</i>	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996
<i>LXX</i>	The Septuagint
<i>MT</i>	The Masoretic Text
<i>NAC</i>	New American Commentary
<i>NEAEHL</i>	<i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Edited by Ephraim Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993
<i>NRSV</i>	New Revised Standard Version
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLANEM</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near East Monographs
<i>SBLWAW</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
<i>SE</i>	<i>The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud</i> . Edited by J. Strachey. 24 vols. London, 1953–1974
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>

<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Ernst Jenni, with assistance from Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The Issue

This study is a historical-critical approach to the investigation of the literary production of the Solomonic Kingdom in 1 Kings 1:1–12:24 (hereafter the Solomonic narrative) employing a new reading strategy of a postcolonial-psychoanalytic perspective. I will analyze it as an episodic story of the larger coherent literary unit of what Martin Noth calls the “Deuteronomistic History.”¹ Due to the concern over the possibility of engendering genre confusion and unnecessary genre expectations for modern readers, the term “Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story” will be used instead.²

This study is built on the theories and the works of historical critics, without whose keen observations, meticulous analyses, sound arguments, and inspiring approaches to the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story this work would not have been possible. For this reason, I am much indebted to the historical critics whose works have inspired this study. However, this study departs from traditional historical-critical methods and seeks to approach the Solomonic narrative and the larger Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story from a set of postcolonial-psychoanalytic presuppositions. The use of postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories to a historical-critical approach to the Solomonic narrative is not an arbitrary choice. These theories are deliberately employed to tackle how ancient imperialisms may have conditioned the literary production of the Deuteronomist whose psychology, as well as signifying practices, was inevitably conditioned by their imperialized circumstances.³ Since signifying practices always involve both

¹ Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, trans. Jane Doull, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); trans. of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: I. Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1943), 1–110.

² See pp. 45–69 below for a detailed elaboration on this position.

³ The collective term “Deuteronomist” is used to designate the people involved in the literary production and transmission of the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story. In this study, “Deuteronomist” will be treated as a collective entity with plural verbal construction. The unconventional choice of “Deuteronomist” is intended to avoid any conceptual confusion with the plural term “Deuteronomists,” which has been used to designate the multiple, identifiable writers, editors, redactors, and/or redactional layers. The present writer rejects the notion of identifiable redactions or redactional layers that are devoid of linguistic and ideological

conscious intent and unconscious forces, psychoanalytic theories are brought in to uncover the psychological forces involved in the Deuteronomist's signifying practices. Even though many scholars have acknowledged that the Hebrew Bible is by and large produced in imperial contexts, how ancient imperialisms may have affected the biblical writers' signifying practices has thus far not been systematically delved into and theorized. The proposed postcolonial-psychoanalytic approach seeks to fill up this research gap.

The proposed approach requires that the text to be analyzed with a new set of presuppositions that depart from the historical-critical methods in the past. First, I reject a set of modernist assumptions on textual features to which historical critics in the past have been accustomed in their diachronic readings. I will argue that such assumptions are hermeneutically unsound and preclude new insights from forming that would lead to a more plausible scenario for the Deuteronomist's signifying process. I will point out the methodological shortcomings and modernist assumptions behind the traditional historical-critical approach to the "Deuteronomistic History." Nevertheless, let me assert that my critique can in no way undermine the contribution of the historical critics, whose insights this study inevitably builds on. Their meticulous internal analysis of the text and their observations on textual features have opened up a new era to the critical study of the literary integrity and disjunctions of the "Deuteronomistic History." They were the trailblazers making breakthrough critical approaches and bringing in new perspectives to Deuteronomy–Kings.

Second, I employ postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories to illuminate how the flesh-and-blood experience under imperialism could induce psychic conflicts among the imperialized. These imperializer-induced psychic conflicts would have played a major role in the Deuteronomist's signifying process of the Solomonic narrative. Even though many biblical scholars agree that the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story emerged from imperial contexts and that it was written by the subjugated Judeans or Yehudites, due attention has not been paid to the relations between imperialism, the psychology of the imperialized, and their signifying activities. This study endeavors to fill these interpretive lacunae in the historical-critical approach. In the ancient Southwest Asian world, social relations were determined with respect to imperial hierarchy, and the imperialized Deuteronomist, in some manner complicit with the imperializer, belonged to a special category of people whose social and ethnic identity, along with their allegiance, was torn between two major social forces. From a psychoanalytic perspective, they were split subjects. The unique social locations they occupied in relation to Persian imperialism created a liminal space that would inevitably have affected their signifying activities. In this regard, both postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories are indispensable and powerful

inconsistencies, contradictions, ambiguities, and tensions. For a detailed elaboration of the term and the Deuteronomist's identity and social location, see pp. 69–79.

hermeneutic tools to elucidate their signifying process that resulted in the invention of the Solomonic Kingdom.

2. Scholarship on Solomon and His Kingdom

2.1 *From the Quest for the Historical Solomon to the Question of an Invented Solomon*

Research on Solomon and his Kingdom (1 Kgs 1–11) in the twentieth century has been dominated by the quest for the historical Solomon and his powerful kingdom. Only in recent decades have more and more biblical scholars, historians, and archaeologists of the Levant come to share the view that the Solomonic Kingdom is a part of the invented history of the Israelites/Yehudites, a literary construct of an imagined heyday of their past.

In spite of the lack of contemporaneous extrabiblical evidence and the ostentatious nature of the Solomonic Kingdom, many scholars in the past have presumed the historicity of Solomon and the historical reliability of 1 Kgs 1–11. From the second half of the nineteenth century up to the end of the twentieth century, paraphrasing of these texts, supplemented with ancient Southwest Asian and Egyptian analogies, was the dominant method of reconstructing the Israelite history of the tenth century BCE.⁴ The historicity of the biblical narratives is commonly argued, first, on the grounds of its similarities to the Egyptian imperial apparatus, which Israel had supposedly adopted, and the close relations between Egypt and Israel in the tenth century BCE.⁵ Paul S. Ash has

⁴ For the paraphrasing of 1 Kgs 1–11 in ancient Israelite history, see John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 211–28; Jan Alberto Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 3rd ed. (London: SCM, 1999), 76–94; idem, “The Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom,” in *Israelite and Judean History*, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 332–80; Benjamin Mazar, “The Era of David and Solomon,” in *The Age of the Monarchies: Political History*, ed. Abraham Malamat, World History of the Jewish People 4/1 (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1979), 76–100. Although Jan Alberto Soggin (*Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 35) criticized the method of paraphrasing as “a wrong method,” his approach to the Solomonic period includes considerable paraphrasing. For adoption of the biblical accounts on Solomon and the Solomonic Kingdom in reconstructing Egyptian history, see for instance Jason Thompson, *A History of Egypt: From Earliest Times to the Present* (Cairo: American University in Cairo, 2008); Emmet John Sweeney, *Empire of Thebes or Ages in Chaos Revisited* (New York: Algora, 2006); Erik Hornung, *History of Ancient Egypt: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Kenneth A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 B.C.)*, 2nd ed. (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1986).

⁵ See Soggin, *Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 76–77. For the assumption of Egyptian influences on the Israelite administrative system, see for instance Donald B. Redford, “Studies in Relations between Palestine and Egypt during the First Millennium B.C., I. The Taxation System of Solomon,” in *Studies in the Ancient Palestinian World: Presented to Professor F. V. Winnett on the Occasion of His Retirement 1 July 1971*, ed.

convincingly argued that a close tie and regular interactions between Egypt and the southern Levant during the first millennium BCE was historically implausible because there was no substantial Egyptian presence in the southern Levant during that period.⁶ Therefore, without dismissing the similarities in administrative practices and infrastructure between Egypt and Solomonic Israel, he concludes that they were either “coincidental” or that the biblical portrayal of the Davidic-Solomonic imperial apparatus was anachronistic.⁷

Second, the historicity is argued on the grounds of the text’s inclusion of historical facts, such as Pharaoh Shoshenq’s (biblical Shishak’s) invasion of Syria-Palestine (1 Kgs 14:25), and seemingly authentic archival documents, such as the list of state officials (4:1–6), the list of districts (4:7–19), the note on forced labor (5:27 [Eng. 5:13]; cf. 9:15–22), and references to commercial activities (10:11). The Syro-Palestinian campaign of Shoshenq I of the Twenty-Second Dynasty was a well documented and widely propagated event in both Egypt and the Levant.⁸ Considering the intentional commemoration and

John W. Wevers and Donald B. Redford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 141–56; idem, “Studies in Relations between Palestine and Egypt during the First Millennium B.C., II. The Twenty-Second Dynasty,” *JAOS* 93 (1973): 3–17; Eric W. Heaton, *Solomon’s New Men: The Emergence of Ancient Israel as a National State* (New York: Pica Press, 1974); Cornelis H. J. de Geus, “Reflections on the Continuity of Egyptian Influence on the Administration and the Material Culture of Pre-Exilic Israel,” in *Meilenstein: Festgabe für Herbert Donner zum 16. Februar 1995*, ed. Manfred Weippert and Stefan Timm, *Ägypten und Altes Testament* 30 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 44–51; Roland de Vaux, “Titres et fonctionnaires égyptiens à la cour de David et de Salomon,” *Revue biblique* 48 (1942): 394–402; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *Solomonic State Officials: A Study of the Civil Government Officials of the Israelite Monarchy*, *Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series* 5 (Lund: Gleerup, 1971); Abraham Malamat, “A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relations with Egypt,” in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1979), 189–204.

⁶ Paul S. Ash, *David, Solomon and Egypt: A Reassessment*, JSOTSup 297 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

⁷ Ibid., 130.

⁸ A victory relief was engraved on the Bubastite Gate at Karnak to commemorate the event, which includes a geographical list of the Pharaoh’s Syro-Palestinian enemies. However, Judah was not listed among Shoshenq I’s enemies. For a complete translation of the hieroglyphic text, see Robert Kriech Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt’s Third Intermediate Period*, SBLWAW 21 (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 193–213. In addition, a fragment of the Shoshenq Stela was discovered in Stratum V of Megiddo. It was likely erected for the commemoration of the Pharaoh’s Syro-Palestinian campaign. See Robert S. Lamon and Geoffrey M. Shipton, *Megiddo I: Seasons of 1925–34 Strata I–V* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 60–61; David Ussishkin, “Notes on Megiddo, Gezer, Ashdod, and Tel Batash in the Tenth and Ninth Centuries B.C.,” *BASOR* 277–278 (1990): 72–74. Given the monumental importance and publicity of the campaign, it is reasonable to assume that as a learned scribe and an able researcher the writer would have acquired the knowledge of Shoshenq I’s military exploits in Syria-Palestine.

publicity of Shoshenq I's Asian campaign, even a learned scribe in the Persian period could have acquired the knowledge of Shoshenq's Syro-Palestinian military campaign through a monumental inscription, historical research, or scribal education, and used the event as an anchoring device for the chronological framework in his writing. The chronological framework that holds the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story into a coherent whole requires that the narratives to be anchored with scattered historical events and/or figures, which the Deuteronomist could have gathered from epigraphical or archival sources and from the oral and written traditions passed down to them. As for the so-called archival documents in 1 Kgs 1–11, their supposed authenticity based on "realism" is groundless and unsound.⁹

Third, the argument that the writer's critical attitude toward the past seems to support the view that 1 Kgs 1–11 was not a piece of royal propaganda, but a genuine historical account is also problematic. Ancient Southwest Asian historical writings were almost exclusively written as royal propaganda. The lack of a royal propagandistic tone may well be read as a sign of its ahistoricity. In sum, the historicity of 1 Kgs 1–11 is presumed in past scholarship without carrying out a detailed analysis of the literary and ideological features of 1 Kgs 1–11 or questioning the historical plausibility of whether the hill countries of the southern Levant could have achieved commensurable social, economic, and cultural developments that matched that of its superpower neighbor Egypt in the tenth century BCE.

From the 1920s onward, many archaeological sites identified in 1 Kgs 1–11 were excavated. Especially noteworthy were the excavations in Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer, the three Solomonic cities explicitly mentioned in 9:15. Biblical archaeologists attributed many architectural structures and artifacts found in these sites to the Solomonic period based on the results of pottery stratigraphy, biblical references, and the presumed historical trustworthiness of the biblical texts. These findings were then used in support of the historicity of Solomon and the Solomonic Kingdom. The argumentation follows the logic of circular reasoning. What is used to sustain a claim is what the claim purportedly corroborates. In his 1990 article "Myth of Solomon," Gregory J. Wightman reviewed decades of the "Solomonic archaeology" and concluded that the Solomonic finds are based on intuitive guesses, untested assumptions, and circular argumentation.¹⁰ Three decades have passed since the article was published, and what Wightman calls the "imaginary link between archaeological remains and the biblical traditions"¹¹ has persisted even though many remains associated with the Solomonic sites are now convincingly dated at least a century

⁹ For an instance of such an assumption, see Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 146–48.

¹⁰ Gregory J. Wightman, "Myth of Solomon," *BASOR* 277–278 (1990): 5–22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

later to the Omride dynasty of the ninth or eighth century BCE by archaeologist Israel Finkelstein and others based on the low chronology of stratigraphy.¹²

However, rather than totally dismissing the historicity of David and Solomon, Finkelstein and others downsize the evidence-defying vastness of the tenth-century Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom and postulate a more historically viable scenario of a dimorphic Davidic-Solomonic chiefdom that gradually developed into the state of Judah.¹³ The lexeme *bytdwd* in the Tel Dan Inscription, dating to the ninth century BCE, is often used as corroborative evidence for the historicity of David.¹⁴ However, the most it can prove, beyond reasonable doubt, is that the dynasty named after the eponymous founder David was well established by the ninth century, but whether or not David existed is still a moot question.¹⁵ As for Solomon, to date there is still no archaeological or

¹² For Israel Finkelstein's view of the Megiddo remains, see Deborah O. Cantrell and Israel Finkelstein, "A Kingdom for a Horse: The Megiddo Stables and Eighth Century Israel" in *Megiddo IV: The 1998–2000 Seasons*, ed. Israel Finkelstein, David Ussishkin, and Baruch Halpern, 2 vols., Tel Aviv University Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology Monograph Series 24 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Institute of Archaeology, 2006), 2:643–65. For Finkelstein's view of the Hazor remains, see Israel Finkelstein, "Hazor and the North in the Iron Age: A Low Chronology Perspective," *BASOR* 314 (1999): 55–70. For Finkelstein's view of the Gezer remains, see idem, "On Archaeological Methods and Historical Considerations: Iron Age II Gezer and Samaria," *BASOR* 277–278 (1990): 109–19. For a recent article on the dating of Stratum VA–IVB at Megiddo and Stratum X at Hazor to the ninth century according to the low chronology, see Israel Finkelstein and Eli Piasetzky, "Radiocarbon Dating the Iron Age in the Levant: A Bayesian Model for Six Ceramic Phases and Six Transitions," *Antiquity* 84 (2010): 374–85.

¹³ Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 41–43, 52–53; idem, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 144; Finkelstein and Piasetzky, "Radiocarbon Dating the Iron Age in the Levant," 383.

¹⁴ For the editio princeps of the Tel Dan inscription, see Avraham Biran and Joseph Naveh, "An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan," *IEJ* 43 (1993): 81–98. For the use of the Tel Dan inscription to support the historicity of David, see Gary A. Rendsburg, "On the Writing בִּית־דָּוִד in the Aramaic Inscription from Tel Dan," *IEJ* 45 (1995): 22–25; Nadav Na'aman, "Beth-David in the Aramaic Stela from Tel Dan," *BN* 79 (1995): 17–24; William M. Schniedewind, "Tel Dan Stela: New Light on Aramaic and Jehu's Revolt," *BASOR* 302 (1996): 75–90; Paul E. Dion, "The Tel Dan Stele and Its Historical Significance," in *Michael: Historical, Epigraphical and Biblical Studies in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer*, ed. Yitzhak and Avishur and Robert Deutsch (Tel Aviv: Archaeological Center Publications, 1999), 145–56; Gershon Galil, "A Re-Arrangement of the Fragments of the Tel Dan Inscription and the Relations between Israel and Aram," *PEQ* 133 (2001): 16–21; Finkelstein and Silberman, *David and Solomon*, 261–66.

¹⁵ However, the lexeme *bytdwd* cannot be unambiguously interpreted as "the house/dynasty of David." Alternate readings such as a toponym, a theonym, and a temple name have been proposed. See Ernst A. Knauf, Albert de Pury, and Thomas Römer, "*BaytDawīd* ou *BaytDōd*?", *BN* 72 (1994): 60–69; Thomas L. Thompson, "'House of David': An Eponymic

epigraphical evidence to support his historicity. Even if the historicity of David and/or Solomon were proven, the magnificence of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom would still be historically implausible. If David and/or Solomon ever existed as political leaders in the tenth-century southern Levant, they were at best petty rulers or tribal leaders. Nevertheless, the chiefdom thesis remains a conjecture.

Historian Mario Liverani holds a similar view that the Davidic-Solomonic political entity was only a petty kingdom covering at most the central and southern highlands and not beyond Shechem. According to Liverani, the “United Kingdom” was an invented notion that reflects the royalists’ ambition to restore the state of Judah and Josiah’s attempt to extend domination over the northern territories originally belonging to the defunct state of Israel.¹⁶ The unification rhetoric was used in support of Josiah’s northward territorial expansion and the Davidide Zerubbabel’s governorship of Yehud.¹⁷ He also suggests that the “fairy-tale style” court vendettas of David and Solomon fit better in the literary context of the sixth and fifth centuries in the Persian period rather than the tenth century, implying that the Persian Deuteronomist may have borrowed literary motifs in their cultural milieu and transplanted them into the Davidic-Solomonic court.¹⁸ As Liverani points out, the Solomonic Kingdom, while filled with “fairy-tale elements,” was modeled after an imperial reality.

Referent to Yahweh as Godfather,” *SJOT* 9 (1995): 59–74; Frederick H. Cryer, “A ‘Betdawd’ Miscellany: Dwd, Dwd’ or Dwdh?” *SJOT* 9 (1995): 52–58; Hans M. Barstad and Bob Becking, “Does the Stele from Tel-Dan Refer to a Deity Dōd?” *BN* 77 (1995): 5–12; George Athas, *The Tel Dan Inscription: A Reappraisal and a New Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003). Even if it is to be taken as “the house of David,” it is arguable if David is a reference to a historical founder of a dynasty or an eponymous one. An eponym, from an anthropological perspective, may represent a historical person or a completely fictional figure. Thus, the Tel Dan inscription is inconclusive regarding David’s historicity.

¹⁶ Mario Liverani, *Israel’s History and the History of Israel*, trans. Chiara Peri and Philip R. Davies (London: Equinox, 2005), 92–103, 308–23; trans. of *Oltre la Bibbia: Storia Antica di Israele* (Rome: Laterza, 2003).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁸ To quote Liverani: “To these possible ‘authentic’ sources and stratified traditions the post-exilic historian added a great deal of fairy-tale style [sic] material (of the ‘intrigue at the king’s court’ type) – tales of harems and rivalry between old and young wives, feuds and vendettas, oppression and repentance, generosity and cruelty, which make the tales of succession about David and Solomon as we have them now, genuine historical novels, obviously selecting the most famous characters in the entire dynasty for the leading roles in dramas that actually fit better in the literary framework of the sixth and the fifth centuries than in that (which was at the most only epigraphic) of the tenth century” (*ibid.*, 318). Even though Liverani did not explicitly acknowledge his modified Crossian assumptions, there are traces of a modified double-redaction theory of the “Deuteronomistic History” in his work, with a Josianic edition and an updated postexilic edition. The “fairy-tale elements” and the dramatized court-stories in the narrative of the United Kingdom belong to the updated edition. See *ibid.*, 97–98, 116–20, 313–16.

Even the architectural style of the Solomonic palace and temple seems to be modelled after the Persian palatial buildings similar to those found in Susa and Persepolis.¹⁹ To Liverani, the Solomonic Kingdom reflects “a *dream* of being able to match the great powers” (emphasis mine).²⁰ My view comes very close to Liverani’s view in three aspects. First, the invention of the Solomonic Kingdom was most likely to have stemmed from the signifying context of the Persian period. Second, the Deuteronomist sought symbolically to emulate the real empires, particularly the Persian empire, with the creative adoption of dominant literary motifs, genres, and conventions of their time. Third, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the Solomonic narrative may appropriately be categorized as a “dream,” namely a wish-fulfilling narrative of grandiose nature. Thus, it warrants a psychoanalytic analysis as such.²¹

Many scholars have suggested that the Deuteronomist portrayed the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom in the image of the great empires of their time. Some scholars who date the text to the Josianic period argue for a Neo-Assyrian imperial prototype.²² Ehud Ben Zvi, however, argues against the causal link between the textual signs of Assyrian influence and the Josianic date.²³ He argues that the Neo-Assyrian empire remained a powerful imperial symbol even in the succeeding eras and that “Assyria” may well be a displaced signifier for the subsequent imperial powers or an undifferentiated signifier for imperial superpower in general.²⁴ Those scholars who date the text to the late Persian or early Hellenistic period tend to see a Persian imperial prototype.²⁵ Pierre Briant notes that many local potentates attempted in their own residence to emulate

¹⁹ Ibid., 326–29.

²⁰ Ibid., 96, 100.

²¹ Gösta W. Ahlström (“The Role of Archaeological and Literary Remains in Reconstructing Israel’s ‘History’,” in *The Fabric of History: Text, Artifact and Israel’s Past*, ed. Diana V. Edelman, JSOTSup 127 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991], 140), in spite of his high regard for the historicity of David and Solomon, notes the biased and fictional nature of the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom: the biblical writers never meant to give an accurate account of the past, rather they presented “an intentionally *wishful* and/or theological picture of past times” (emphasis mine).

²² For instance, Finkelstein and Silberman, *David and Solomon*, 154, 163–68, 173–77; Ernst Axel Knauf, *Die Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar, Altes Testament 29 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994), 215; Moshe Weinfeld, “Traces of Assyrian Treaty Formulae in Deuteronomy,” *Biblica* 46 (1965): 417–27; idem, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 51–115.

²³ Ehud Ben Zvi, “Josiah and the Prophetic Books: Some Observations,” in *Good Kings and Bad Kings*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 47–64.

²⁴ Ibid., 59–60.

²⁵ Niels Peter Lemche, “The Old Testament – A Hellenistic Book?,” *SJOT* 7 (1993): 175–77.

the lifestyle of the Persian King.²⁶ Solomon's imitation of the Persian king may be regarded as a symbolic emulation through literary production. In sum, scholars tend to see the portrayal of the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom, along with the characterization of David and Solomon, as an invention built on the real-life counterpart of the Deuteronomist's supposed period of literary production, which overlooks the possible composite nature of the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom. The cumulative and composite nature of the Deuteronomistic (Hi)Story implies that even the late Persian (or early Hellenistic) Deuteronomist were able to utilize diverse, multiple sources and imperial symbols of different eras, including their own and traditions that they had received in the formulation of the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom. Moreover, some imperial features were not unique to a certain historical period but were long-standing features observable in successive imperial eras. The persistence of imperial policies must be taken into consideration to avoid anachronistic dating.

I have no intent to rule out the historical existence of David and/or Solomon,²⁷ but only to point out that until irrefutable evidence is established their historicity and historicity (namely, how their historical existence was conceptualized by the ancient people) remain subject to imaginative reconstruction or fantasizing by scholars without solid evidence. My concern is that once such an imaginative construct assumes an axiomatic status, it continues to propagate like pre-critical historiographical traditions and to be adopted as a fact.²⁸ What may be asserted beyond reasonable doubt, even if David and Solomon were historical, is that the imperial magnificence of the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom as portrayed in the biblical texts was historically implausible and the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom was a fanciful imagination of the Deuteronomist. What are the sources of this fantastic portrayal? How much content is modelled after a real-life imperial apparatus, and how much stemmed from the Deuteronomist's fantasizing? Which imperialism is its primary imperial model? How do we identify these historical traces amidst the fictive elements in the text? What are the psychic mechanisms involved in the Deuteronomist's psychic production of the Davidic-Solomonic Kingdom? What are the psychic

²⁶ Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. Peter T. Daniels (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 172, 201–02; trans. of *Histoire de l'Empire perse* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1996).

²⁷ Such as the position of Giovanni Garbini, *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel*, trans. J. Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 17.

²⁸ For instance, Walter Brueggemann (*Solomon: Israel's Ironic Icon of Human Achievement* [Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2005], particularly 19–21, 66–67) builds on Finkelstein and Silberman's proposal of a Davidic-Solomonic chiefdom in his theological interpretation of 1 Kings 1–11, seeking to establish Solomon's transformation from the "historical" chief to the imagined Great King. However, the direction of Solomon's transformation seems to be the reverse, namely from the imagined Great King of the biblical texts to the imagined "historical chief" of the archaeologists and biblical scholars.

mechanisms involved in the Yehudite readers/auditors' participation of this cultural fantasy? What are the psychic functions that it could serve to them? These questions warrant a postcolonial-psychoanalytic approach to the magnificent kingdom portrayed in the biblical texts. For my purposes, I will limit the scope of my study to the Solomonic narrative.

2.2 Reading Strategies on Solomon and the Solomonic Kingdom

The ambiguous, heterogeneous portraiture of Solomon is a widely recognized literary characteristic of 1 Kings 1–11. The legendary pious king possesses unsurpassable wisdom and incomparable affluence and power, but dramatically turns into an exemplary philogynist-cum-idolator. A variety of interpretive lenses have been employed to explain the uneasy bipolarity of Solomon's characterization. In the past few decades, biblical scholars' debate follows predominantly the binary logic of the historical-critical methods and revolves around whether the text conveys a diachronically differentiated pro-Solomonic view or anti-Solomonic view,²⁹ how the text should be atomized into the two polarized categories diachronically or synchronically,³⁰ and how 1 Kgs 1–11 may be interpreted as an antimonarchic text in light of the Deuteronomic Law of the King (Deut 17:14–18).³¹ Based on internal analysis, more scholars have found

²⁹ See Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 114 (1995): 607–22. For a short critique of the application of binary logic in the reading of 1 Kgs 1–11, see Eric A. Seibert, *Subversive Scribes and the Solomonic Narrative: A Rereading of 1 Kings 1–11* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 101–03.

³⁰ See Bezalel Porten, "The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (1 Kings 3–11)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 38 (1967): 93–128; Marc Z. Brettler, "The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11," *JSOT* 49 (1991): 87–97; David Jobling, "'Forced Labor': Solomon's Golden Age and the Question of Literary Representation," *Semeia* 54 (1991): 57–76; Kim Ian Parker, "Repetition as a Structuring Device in 1 Kings 1–11," *JSOT* 42 (1988): 19–27; Gary N. Knoppers, *The Reign of Solomon and the Rise of Jeroboam*, vol. 1 of *Two Nations under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 52 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 57–168.

³¹ See Ernest W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 58–82; idem, "Traditum and Tradition: The Case of Deuteronomy 17:14–20," in *Scriptural Exegesis: The Shapes of Culture and the Religious Imagination: Essays in Honour of Michael Fishbane*, ed. Deborah A. Green and Laura S. Lieber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52–53; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 168; Brettler, "The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11," 97; Sweeney, "The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History," 616–17; Walter Dietrich, "History and Law: Deuteronomistic Historiography and Deuteronomistic Law Exemplified in the Passage from the Period of the Judges to the Monarchical Period," in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*, ed. Albert de Pury, Thomas Römer, and Jean-Daniel Macchi, *JSOTSup* 306 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 333–40; Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading*, *Overtures to Biblical*

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