

## ○ GAZING AT HULDAH

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This paper considers the representation of the prophet Huldah in 2 Kgs 22. Huldah has frequently been seen as a positive figure, one of the biblical women who might even be regarded as a model for women readers and women scholars. This paper seeks to query this by asking questions of the way in which the deuteronomistic writers may have been employing her as a woman to set the Josiah reforms in train. As a feature of the reform was the removal of the A/asherah, and if Asherah worship was associated with women as 23:7 would imply, was Huldah set up to justify a removal against her own particular cultural heritage as a woman? *Even a woman* recognised the need for such action. If so, such a strategy has sobering postcolonial implications as can be seen in the situation in which the Maori members of parliament, including the three Maori women members, have found themselves in the current seabed and foreshore debate in New Zealand.

Renita Weems has recently written of the encouragement she found picturing Huldah in 2 Kgs 22:14–20 as ‘a woman sitting at her desk in the middle of the day hunched over a dusty manuscript, peering intently down at its contents, consumed with deciphering the meaning hidden in the script’ (Weems 2003 p. 322).

I like that too, but I am worried by the next clip in this textual film show, where Huldah declares the results of her reading. Would she still be sitting? I think not: I see her standing, holding forth with all the authority and power she can muster. But the more I gaze at her the more her features seem to change and I find myself seeing other faces now imposed upon hers. But I have leaped midway into this narrative for it began with the account of the finding of the long-lost law-book during a maintenance check to the Temple, a discovery that shatters the calm of the king to such an extent that he calls for a verification of its fateful words. This is Huldah’s task, and verify them she does, so that, as readers, we follow Josiah’s seemingly frenzied haste to set things right, ordering instructions for the list of destruction that follows apace. As a whole, the account, with its aftermath in chapter twenty three, reads much as a mission statement of the Deuteronomists – other gods are not to be worshiped and all worship of the one god is to be centralised.<sup>1</sup> Josiah has heard and Josiah has acted; praise be to the good and righteous king Josiah. But behind the figure of Josiah, this good and righteous king, stands the prophet Huldah, the woman who, consulted as the deliverer of the divine word, has set this radical Yahwistic cleansing in action.<sup>2</sup> If the worship of Asherah was a recognised feature of Israelite religion, as 2 Kgs 23: 4–6 would indicate, with its own caste of priests, then this was radical indeed.<sup>3</sup> But all is justified: the word of God has been heard afresh, uncovered from the dust. So speaks the Deuteronomistic Word.

But I begin to wonder, and so go back and questioningly gaze again at Huldah, mindful that it is the textual Huldah who stands here in this her only appearance in Israel’s drama, on stage for a brief but pivotal part in the drama of king Josiah. For he, so the narrative informs us, after recoiling in dismay and tearing his clothes, realises that his own well-being, the well-being of the people and the well-being of all Judah depends upon knowing whether what he has heard being

read to him from this newly found law book is a true word of Israel's God. If so, then the religious and cultic life of Judah is out of kilter with the requirements now revealed once more, and *great is the kindled wrath of YHWH* that will descend. The king is clear: what is needed is a prophetic verification, and this he orders, employing the technical term *daras 'et-YHWH*. Enter Huldah, her status left in no doubt, for not only is she recorded as prophet, as *n<sup>e</sup>bi'ah*, but she begins her oracular delivery in true prophetic manner, *Thus says YHWH* – repeated twice at the beginning and once again at the halfway point. The ambiguity in v.15, *tell the man who sent you to me*, is itself telling: who is the speaker here, who is this 'me'? Is it Huldah or is it God? Are we already reading a fusion of God and prophet? Let no-one doubt that Huldah is God's true messenger. That the fate of the nation hangs upon these words can be heard in the phrase *the God of Israel* added to two of these messenger formula declarations. What Josiah fears, she verifies: God's wrath will indeed be kindled (vv.13, 17).

But I am asking: why a woman prophet, why Huldah? After all, on the narrative level, one might have expected a recognised prophet such as Jeremiah to have been approached in such a circumstance, and indeed Rashi attempted to explain this woman turn by suggesting that 'Josiah expected a woman to reply more gently than would Jeremiah; and besides, Jeremiah was away' (Halpern 1998 p. 493).<sup>4</sup> John Gray is in agreement! 'It was probably felt that ... Huldah, the wife of a minor Temple official, would give the divine authority to what they sought without embarrassing them' in contrast to 'such independent spirits' as Jeremiah or Zephaniah, who 'would give an answer which the priests considered *ultra vires*' (Gray 1977 p. 726). If so, their gender manoeuvring was not the success anticipated! But this is no Hansard reporting, this is a carefully devised narrative. And, intriguingly, if one moves to listen carefully to Huldah's words, following the path of the textual critics who argue on the grounds of terminology for seeing a close relationship between the oracle and the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah remains in view.<sup>5</sup> So even if, on a narrative level, Jeremiah was not regarded as suitable, or quite simply away from home at the time, am I looking at Huldah, but hearing Jeremiah? And, moving behind the text, is this how I am meant to hear her? This would follow Diana Edelman's suggestion that this is how a late post-exilic editor, writing the prophecy himself in the style of Jeremiah, wished us to hear this, so making Huldah a 'female alter ego' of Jeremiah (Edelman 1994 p. 248). Certainly there is no timbre of a woman's voice to be heard here. But the final form of the book of Jeremiah presents Jeremiah as the prophet like Moses, and if the newly found book is the kernel of Deuteronomy, then behind all can be heard the voice of Moses, delivering his words back on the plains of Moab. And, in terms of the narrative, it is Moses' words that this Jeremiah/Huldah is carefully and painstakingly decoding, at the same time as they are driving the narrative itself; as Deuteronomy 28 declares, covenant curses will follow those who disobey the deuteronomistic agenda. But the echoes in Huldah's speech are not confined to those of Jeremiah and Moses. Graeme Auld (2000 p. 25) has recently pointed out 'three unique links between Huldah's words and Solomon's second vision', in that in both God is threatening to 'bring evil' (1 Kings 9,9; 2 Kings 22,16), warning that 'Other gods' are condemned (1 Kings 9,6,9; 2 Kings 22,17) and declaring that Israel's God has been 'forsaken' by his people (1 Kings 9,9; 2 Kings 22, 17), all terms that are part of the literary arsenal of the deuteronomistic scribes. For, finally, this is a deuteronomistic Word; the fact that it is delivered in Huldah's name remains both puzzling and surprising.

As I reread the passage I wonder whether the description of the priest Hilkiah and the others, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah, going off to the Second Quarter of Jerusalem, the Mishneh, is to be read apologetically, making it quite clear that women prophets were not to be found hanging around in the Temple itself. The newly found book has its place there, in the sacred space, but not this woman prophet! I wonder, too, whether the details of her family connections are to make the point that this is no dangerously independent woman, this is Huldah, the wife of Shallum, son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe, a respectable woman, and one quite properly defined through the male line of her husband! As a woman she lacks her own 'proper' place even in the Mishneh. At the same time, the technical terms of consulting the deity and delivering the divine word would indicate that this is not to be understood as some amateur backroom event. The tension is apparent, there is a distance to be maintained on gender grounds, but the words themselves are to be heard with all their divine and unquestioned male authority. Ancient Near Eastern parallels help to highlight this tension, for, as Lowell Handy suggests, in reference to Near-Eastern parallels of kings consulting omens in order to corroborate divine instructions, Huldah is 'clearly play[ing] the narrative role held [there] by the priests of the omen deities' (Handy 1994 p. 45).<sup>6</sup> But even if 'it was necessary for Josiah to inquire of Yahweh because that is how a good ruler in the ancient Near East instigated a reform requested by the deities' (p.53), and even if the Deuteronomists deliberately preserved this tradition in their account, it still leaves unanswered that pivotal question: why through a woman? For even if common practice elsewhere in the Ancient Near East,<sup>7</sup> such a gender role does not seem to have been common in Israel, although, as Renita Weems and Susan Ackerman point out, women such as Deborah and the medium at Endor do appear to have been sought out in times of crisis (Weems 2003 p. 323; Ackerman 2002 p. 80).<sup>8</sup> Weems' suggestion here however, is that the point of highlighting Huldah's role is to imply that '[e]ven a woman could see ... that the kingdom was doomed to disaster', leading to the even sharper point, 'Why couldn't the leading men see the same thing?' (Weems 2003 p. 335). This, I think, probably hits close to the mark.

But I am also wondering whether there is a significant Asherah factor. For the removal of the Asherah and the high places, with which Asherah is often associated<sup>9</sup>, are key items in Josiah's reforming agenda. No sooner do the orders go out than the Baal and Asherah vessels are burnt, the Asherah is brought out from the temple and beaten to dust, the houses where the women wove garments or hangings<sup>10</sup> for Asherah are destroyed, the *asherim* are cut down, their sites covered with human bones, and the Asherah at Bethel burned along with the high place.<sup>11</sup> Defined as one of the 'other' gods, there is to be no reminder of this feminine aspect of deity in Israel. And this results from the words of Huldah! So I am wondering whether the authoritative word of a woman is part of a careful political writing, that *even a woman* can see that Asherah has no place in Israel! Seen in this light Huldah would indeed be, as Michael Orth describes her, 'a prophetess in the pay of the temple, not a voice crying in the wilderness', if one assumes that the temple is the narrative cover in this narrative for the Deuteronomists (Orth 1987 p. 354). But if this is part of a political strategy it is a subtle device for Huldah herself does not mention Asherah; in fact, she does not mention any of the particulars of the reform, just as she herself has no place in chapter twenty three. At the end of chapter 22 Huldah's work is done. But I am wondering whether, in the final canonical form, her silence regarding the deeds carried out in chapter 23 is to be heard accompanying the silencing of Asherah. With her deuteronomistic words, echoing

the voices of Moses, Solomon's God, Jeremiah and others, I am suggesting that she has been set up as none other than a deuteronomistic puppet, pivotally validating the deuteronomic doctrine of 'exact retribution' about to fall on Judah, with all its dire consequences for worshippers of Asherah and 'others'.<sup>12</sup> She has been the puppet and the Deuteronomists the string pullers. As Polzin wrote some years ago the narrator of the DtrH in effect says to the reader, 'In terms of what God and myself say, 'I and the Father are one' (Polzin 1980 p. 21). It does not matter who utters the words, they are to be heard undisputedly as the words of Israel's one-and-one-only male god. Indeed, in the final analysis, it is only YHWH who speaks, but speaks through a woman whose own voice and interests have been silenced, as Huldah announces the words that give the warrant not only for the fall of Judah but for the fall of Asherah, the female figure of the divine for Israel. With the cumulative force of the narrative, its key terms repeated, there is to be no questioning of this. The chapter ends with the narrator's statement that *they took the message back to the king*: no response from Hilkiah, the priest, no response from the king, Josiah. Huldah is the mouthpiece; Huldah, *even a woman*, speaks the words of the Male God, YHWH, and the feminine aspect of deity is silenced.

But I am still wondering about that visit to the Mishneh and whether the movement, both literally and cultic-ly, of the high priest and his companions away from the temple as they went out to the second quarter of the city to consult a woman prophet, the wife of a court official, had further unforeseen consequences. Was that act of distancing a woman from the temple's sacred space already hinting of a move away from the central forces at work in Judah? For however carefully power is shored up there is always a leakage, a crumbling and a falling away. Any and every monological template is difficult to maintain. So here, in the text, cracks appear in Huldah's words as they fall into two utterances. For where v.17 talks of wrath that will not be quenched, two verses on and God is immediately moved by the penitence and humbling of Josiah, which is followed by the *therefore* of verse twenty, which, in turn, gives rise to the question long debated: did Huldah get it right, when she declared, as the divine word, a peaceful death for Josiah, seeing that he died in battle against Neco of Egypt? A question which has seemed to present that teasing alternative: 'is the literary Huldah presented as a true prophet whose utterances are fulfilled or as a false prophet whose words are contradicted?' (Edelman 1994 p. 231). While the list of commentators who come to Huldah's defence is long,<sup>13</sup> the crack in the writing remains visible. For if the task required by Josiah was simply a legitimization of the document, confirming the deuteronomic requirements and the consequences of failing to observe them, that would seem to have been accomplished by the end of v.17. As van Keulen argues what follows from the *as to the king* introduction in v.18, with its second *Thus says YHWH*, reads as 'a salvation oracle, intended to exclude Josiah's fate from the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem who are bound to experience YHWH's wrath' (van Keulen 1996 pp. 258–259). Somewhere in a gap, out of view of the reader, Josiah has repented and humbled himself! More significantly, what is apparent is that with this new voice, there is now a clear visible dialogical leakage, for the new voice wants to say that the God of Israel is not a God of wrath which will not be quenched, but a God who listens to those who listen to God, and act upon it. Could it be that there is dialogue and even contradiction in the very word of God?! The monologism is crumbling as we listen. But it does not end here; there is a rejoinder in v.20b, insisting that disaster will follow, even if Josiah is no longer alive to experience it. If there is now evidence of doubt about the very nature of Israel's

god, as well as the divinely decreed fate for Josiah, this recognition of different divine messages casts doubt upon the authority of all of these divinely uttered words. Are they all equally reliable? For despite attempts to explain the seeming contradiction of the *b<sup>e</sup>salom* the fact remains that, according to the narrative, Josiah, the good king, who immediately orders the removal and destruction not only of the Asherah, the Baals and their high places, but of all the mediums, wizards, idols and other aspects of cultic observation now deemed abominations, still falls, quite literally. What does this mean for Huldah, the mouthpiece of the deuteronomistic God?

But what has been not been questioned by any of these leaky voices, is the silencing of the Asherahs, Baals and other ‘abominations’. Despite the apparent dialogical debate about the nature of God and the death of Josiah, there is no hint of any questioning about the practices that are to be entirely removed from Israel’s religious life. In this respect the text stands witness to a deuteronomistic orthodoxy that would proscribe all those practices that it deemed ‘abominable’. Bakhtin’s definition of monologism as a word that ‘is finalized and deaf to the other’s response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge in it any decisive force’ in that ‘[m]onologue pretends to be the *ultimate* word’ (Bakhtin 1984 pp. 292–293) fits this well. Here, on this issue, Huldah is the mouthpiece of the textual victory of a deuteronomistic monologism that allows no counter voice. Here the *even a woman* strategy is speaking loudly! For despite the tensions in the text, despite the leakages that hint at behind the scenes debates, on this issue, all stand firm. That this is quite particularly a deuteronomistic strategy is attested by the parallel version of the events in the book of Chronicles, where the account of the finding of the lawbook and Huldah’s prophecy are immediately followed by the covenant renewal and the Passover celebration, the major reform having been carried out some years before any of these events (2 Chron. 34). If the Huldah connection with Asherah, Baal and the *bamoth* was of concern to the Deuteronomists, it apparently was not to the Chronicler.

I return to the picture with which I began, and gaze again at Huldah, seeing her now fully decked out in her deuteronomistic guise, no longer the woman scholar, carefully deciphering an ancient manuscript, but a woman carefully groomed as ‘the authorizer of the book’ of Deuteronomy and so ‘its interpreter for the present day’ (Camp 1987 p. 100).<sup>14</sup> As Claudia Camp points out, ‘[t]his woman thus not only interprets but also authorizes the first document that will become the core of scripture for Judaism and Christianity’ (Camp 1992 p. 109). Is this a commendation? While for a woman to be seen exercising such a role might appear encouraging and significant for women, widening the lens to view the Deuteronomists behind Huldah has been more sobering. Moreover “[c]anons were always offensive defences, shield walls of the establishments against the missiles of the movement’ (Orth 1987 p. 353). So rather than seeing a woman sitting at her desk whom I might warmly claim as a foremother in the trade, I now see a Huldah standing there, facing those authoritative and high ranking men, quickly getting into line and justifying an orthodoxy: the Asherah, the Baals *et al.* are to be silenced without question. Huldah’s words are all that is needed. She, as a woman, has been used narratively to give voice to a theological template that justifies the silencing of the feminine aspect of deity. Not only must that silencing have been painful for the women of her own time,<sup>15</sup> but the results of that policy have profoundly

affected the ways of speaking of the divine for several millennia of Judeo-Christian believers. Huldah has had consequences indeed.

If I add a postcolonial race lens to the gender lens that I have been using and turn my attention to my own context of Aotearoa New Zealand I become all the more uneasy about the narrative strategy I have been observing in *2 Kings*; for I have been detecting some parallels in the political moves concerning the issue of who owns this country's seabed and foreshore.<sup>16</sup> While there are inherent risks in attempts to analyse current political moves with any sense of objectivity, it is even riskier to propose parallels with ancient politics, although just as land and the possession of land were key themes in the deuteronomic theology, it is also the case that land and the relationship with land is key in the worldview of the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. But just as I have access to Huldah only through the text, so, too, my understanding and analysis of the current political scene is also via texts, both those of the political parties and of the media. It is in setting some of these side by side that I am detecting an ideological intertextuality. In this I am adopting one of Musa Dube's suggestions for 'viable postcolonial feminist strategies of reading', namely, 'reading sacred and secular texts, ancient and contemporary texts ... side by side, to highlight: (a) the ways in which they propound imperializing or decolonizing ideology; (b) their use of gender in the discourse of subordination and domination'.<sup>17</sup> The official government text states that setting ownership in the Crown will provide and preserve 'open access for all New Zealanders ... in perpetuity and that the use of the foreshore and seabed will be regulated "on behalf of all present and future generations of New Zealanders"'.<sup>18</sup> Other texts, however, suggest that the proposed legislation is, in its own way, as radical a move as Josiah's centralising reform. For the view expressed in *Te Karaka* (2004), the magazine of Ngai Tahu, the large South Island Maori tribe, is that by conferring 'full legal and beneficial ownership of the foreshore and seabed ... in the Crown ... (this legislation) will extinguish all customary rights and interests other than those determined through the new processes', and concludes that 'not only does the Bill not reflect our aspirations and interests; it is contrary to them in almost every sense' (pp. 12–13). Those affected by Josiah's reform might have expressed themselves very similarly. And, just as in *2 Kings*, here too, there are texts in seeming contradiction of other texts, for *Te Karaka* argues the point that the report of the Waitangi tribunal released in January 2004, which condemned the policy as a breach of articles II and III of the Treaty of Waitangi, has been effectively ignored. This highlights a further parallel, in that here too there is a foundational document, the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. A major difference, however, is that the opposing voices, both Maori and Pakeha, have not been silenced; Jane Kelsey, for example, can write, as a *Pakeha* analyst, of the proposed legislation 'reflect[ing] the most crude and instrumentalist practices of an old colonial state' (2004 p.1). What the adherents of the former religious practices in Israel might have written has been covered over by the silencing of their history.

A further link with the Huldah/deuteronomistic scenario is the speech by the National party opposition leader, Don Brash, delivered in January 2004, which, I suggest, could be described as an attempt to forge a new orthodoxy. In this text, advocating a vision of a 'one people' nation, and warning of the danger of a 'minority (i.e. Maori) hav[ing] a birthright to the upper hand', there is, once again as in *2 Kings*, a concern for the legalities of spirituality, for not only is there a commitment to removing 'divisive race-based features from legislation', but the speech talks

of 'the farce' of 'allowing metaphysical and spiritual considerations to be taken into account' in environmental issues where there is, or might be, an encroachment on areas considered *tapu* by Maori (Brash 2004 pp. 2–3, 13, 9). This seems very close to the ploy described by Frantz Fanon in the 1960s where 'the colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its own ego, and from its physiology, its history ...' (Fanon 1967 p. 170). Where 2 Kgs 23 presents Judah's religious scene as one of abominations and detestable elements from which Israel must be protected, the National Party's recent full one-page statement in the major daily newspapers warns of the dangers of the Government's Bill in that the recognition of Maori customary rights will mean that 'Part-Maori descendents of signatories to the Treaty of Waitangi will still be able to hold up any development of our coastline until their 'terms' are met. There's only one word for that. Extortion' (National 2004).<sup>19</sup> Set beside the deuteronomistic account of the reform with its repeated use of 'abomination' the rhetoric of 'extortion' would seem to follow very similar lines in the endeavour to counter opposition from those perceived as 'other'.

But what has brought the Huldah dynamics most particularly alive for me in this debate has been watching the moves of the three Maori women members of parliament being urged, along with their male colleagues, to vote for the Seabed and Foreshore Bill against their own cultural understandings. Jane Clifton, the political commentator for the *New Zealand Listener*, has described the moves as a 'regression' to the Lobster Quadrille: '*Will you, won't you, will you won't you, will you join the dance?*',<sup>20</sup> for just when 'the government must have thought it had neatly quarantined the foreshore and seabed outbreak',<sup>21</sup> one of the three, Tariana Turia, 'in her calm, stoic way ... had Clark dancing to her tune for weeks'.<sup>22</sup> It has seemed to me that the government has been attempting to employ a very similar strategy to the one I have been watching played out in 2 Kgs 22, adding to the *even a woman*, the rider, *even a Maori*. The fact that Tariana Turia both voted against the bill and left the party does not invalidate the parallel. It is the strategy itself and not its lack of success or, at best, partial success, that I am highlighting.

While such dynamics are read as belonging to the texts, writing is always to some extent a political act arising from a particular viewpoint on a particular set of circumstances. So Jane Clifton has described the seabed and foreshore issue as a 'white-knuckle testing-ground' where 'Labour has had to locate the exact tipping-point between keeping the middle New Zealand vote, and losing the Maori vote'.<sup>23</sup> National's orthodoxy move is directed at what Clifton describes as the 'middle New Zealand vote'. If one reads the Kings narrative of Josiah's reform against the politics of that time, allowing at least some kernel of historicity, there are traces of a parallel. Seventh century Judah was still recovering from the Assyrian invasion of Sennacherib, the Shephelah, the country's bread-basket had been lost to the Philistines, and Jerusalem had been flooded with refugees from the north,<sup>24</sup> resulting in a larger administrative bureaucracy, and greater pressure on the peasants to provide the wherewithal to maintain the new infrastructure. If Barrick is right, what had been happening was that 'disillusionment and disorientation ... (had) expanded the gradations of Yahwism' so that 'Josiah, like Oliver Cromwell and the Counter-Reformationists, sought to radically narrow this spectrum' (Barrick 2002 p. 158). This, too, was a back-to-orthodoxy move, initiated by the élite in a polarised community. Moreover as Knoppers notes, 'Josiah's destruction of 'all the cult places in the cities of Samaria' enables the Jerusalem temple to extend its influence northward. There is a method to Josiah's madness' (Knoppers 1994 p. 215). If, however, the text as we have it is a Persian era document, as Raymond Person

and others are suggesting, it may be heard speaking to a politics concerned with the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of the temple cult in collaboration with the Persian administration (Person 2002 p. 58). Assuming that the Deuteronomists are returnees from Babylon, there seems a marked parallel here with the observation of Frantz Fanon that once back in their colonised countries ‘the native intellectuals who have studied in their respective ‘mother countries’ and who then form an ‘intellectual élite ... attach a fundamental importance to organization’ to the extent that it becomes a ‘fetish’ (Fanon 1967 p. 85). Heard afresh in this context Josiah’s reform, with its ‘deep distrust towards the people of the rural areas’ which Fanon sees as characteristic of such élites (p. 87), would provide the warrant for such a centralising temple organisation. If this is the scenario, then Huldah’s oracle would once again serve a political agenda. Not only would the ensuing destruction of the Samaritan shrines speak against the Samaritan sector of the community, but by emphasising their syncretistic ways in following ‘other gods’ it would also allow Huldah’s oracle to justify the returnees’ harsh stance against intermarriage (Person 2002 pp. 117–118): a more sobering use again of the *even a woman* strategy.

So my scrutiny has forced me to realise afresh, as Sugirtharajah reminds biblical readers, that the bible is indeed ‘part of the conundrum rather than a panacea’ for the ills that afflict our own societies, and perhaps especially those still living with the effects of colonialist rule (Sugirtharajah 2002 p. 100). For as I reread the passage in Kings I realise that it was not at all a once-long-ago scenario that I am entering, but one which shares all too familiar features with the politics of my own context. I am left picturing Huldah still standing in the midst of high ranking policy makers but uttering words which are not her own. It is now an uncomfortable picture. If I stay within the narrative I wonder how she felt as the Asherah and the high places were destroyed. But the critical montage soon imposes itself and I am once again watching the Deuteronomists, now putting down their pens, satisfied with their own *even a woman* strategy.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This is spelt out in v.17 in typical deuteronomistic terminology, apart from the language of YHWH’s wrath being kindled, a noun/verb combination that appears only in this chapter, in vv.13 and 17. I am taking the deuteronomistic work as a heuristic category, although I am aware of the caution, urged by W. Boyd Barrick and others, ‘against taking the ‘Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis’ ... as a secure premise for a compositional analysis’ (Barrick 2002 p. 14). See Moshe Weinfeld (1972 pp. 1–6, 320–365) for a detailed discussion of the terminology, although there has been much subsequent discussion as to whether terminology alone indicates a coherency. See Linville (1988 pp. 63–69).
- <sup>2</sup> As Knoppers (1994 p. 139) notes ‘Even by deuteronomistic standards Josiah’s reforms are radical’ as no previous king had attempted such a ‘wholesale revolution’.
- <sup>3</sup> Dijkstra (2001 p. 177) suggests that there may have been women *q<sup>e</sup>desot* among the *q<sup>e</sup>desim* of v.7 who were trained temple priests, in this case serving in the cult of Asherah.
- <sup>4</sup> So too the Talmud, *b.Meg.* 14b.
- <sup>5</sup> See Knoppers (1994 pp. 146–147), who notes the use of the phrase ‘causing or has caused evil to enter’ in Jer. 6:19; 11:11; 19:3. (cf.19:15). Likewise to provoke to anger by the work of their hands has parallels in Jer. 7:19; 25:7 [*Qere*]; 32:20, and make offerings to other gods in Jer. 1:16; 19:4; 44:5, 8, 15. The only other biblical occurrence of the phrase ‘a desolation and a curse’ in v.19 is in

Jer. 42.28; 44.12, 22. Edelman (1994 p. 234) notes that of the thirty eight uses of the term *samma* in the Bible '24 are in Jeremiah'.

6 He cites Esarhaddon and Nabonidus consulting omens for the same purpose (Handy 1994 p. 40).

7 Cogan and Tadmor (1988 p. 284) for example note that 'in the seventh century B.C.E. ... at the court of the Assyrian kings, women prophets often delivered messages concerning the safety of the king and the granting of divine protection against his enemies'.

8 Bird (1997 p.34) in her thesis that while 'the women in the Bible are necessary to the drama and may even steal the limelight occasionally ... the story is rarely about them' suggests, that 'only Deborah and Jezebel stand on their own feet – possibly also Miriam and Huldah'.

9 See Ackerman (1992 p. 193) in the context of her discussion of Isa. 65: 3, 7. As she notes, (p.185), *bamot* are 'considered legitimate sites of Yahwistic worship' in 1 Sam 9:11-26 and 2 Kgs 17:2.

10 The term *battim* has caused considerable discussion, many opting to read it as *baddim*. See Hadley (2000 pp. 72–74).

11 The Astarte of v.13 may be a variant of Asherah, as in the Ugaritic texts it is Asherah who is associated with Tyre and Sidon, and both goddesses were linked with Baal. See Korpel (2001 p. 145) who suggests that 'the goddess Asherah had merged with Anat and Ashtart into a triad when she was attacked by the Israelite monotheists'. There has been much discussion as to whether these goddesses were Assyrian imports rather than Israelite deities. However, whatever their origin, they are regarded as 'other' to true Yahwism by the writers.

12 As Mullen (1993 p. 84) sets it out, 'since the continuation of the narrative demonstrates the ultimate failure of the kings who followed Josiah to maintain his reform, as well as the unwillingness to forgive the deeds of Manasseh (2 Kgs 23:26-27), the ideal of exact retribution, an essential part of the deuteronomic tradition, is maintained, thus insuring a stable and reliable universe within which the entity Israel or Judah might be understood'.

13 Many focus on the phrase *b<sup>e</sup>salom* which may indeed refer only to the circumstances of Josiah's burial, indicating that this will be in a time of peace, i.e., before the disasters of 597 and 587 B.C.E, announced in v. 20b, overtake Judah.

14 See also Tribble (1985).

15 Korpel (2001 p. 146) suggests that as goddesses had played a key role as regards the issues of fertility and protection of mother and children during pregnancy, 'it must have been far from easy for women to entrust even these specific tasks to the one God YHWH-El.' Lohfink (1987 p. 469), suggests that 'the stylized nature of almost all of Deuteronomy's laws of centralization as joy-filled festivals indicates that the people had to be talked out of feeling they had lost something'.

16 The catalyst was the claim lodged by eight *iwi* from the north of the South Island for customary title to the foreshore and seabed in their area. After several appeals the Court of Appeal decided in June 2003 that the Maori Land Court had the jurisdiction to determine the status of the foreshore and seabed. This meant that it was possible that the Maori Land Court could find in favour of *iwi* having rights to title of these areas. Such a consequence had not been anticipated by the Crown.

17 Dube (2000 pp.199–200). This is only a selection from her much longer list. She also includes reading imperializing and decolonizing texts side by side in this list.

18 In the Explanatory note to the Bill on the government's web-site cited at [www.beehive.govt.nz/foreshore/129bar1.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/foreshore/129bar1.pdf) 27/4/04.

19 The introductory paragraph accuses the Government of sending the message 'to Kiwis ... if you're not Maori, then no matter how long you live here, you can never love this land as deeply – or care for it as responsibly – as Maori'. The one Maori woman member of the National caucus had already

been demoted from her shadow cabinet position as spokesperson for Maori affairs because of her refusal to support National's position.

20 Clifton 2004b p. 14.

21 Clifton 2004a p. 14.

22 Clifton 2004c p. 14.

23 Clifton 2004a pp. 14–15.

24 Barrick (2002 pp. 146–147) notes the population expansion from ca. 7,500 to ca. 25,000 in the century between Hezekiah and Josiah.

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