**A comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle
and its implications for deuteronomistic ideology**

by

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Zolang het hart niet spreekt
Kan het hart niet breken
Zolang ik afstand hou
Bestaat de hemel

Zolang het woord niet valt
Wordt het niet gebroken
Dus ik denk aan jou
En aan wat zal komen

Zolang ik aan jou denk
Zolang kan ik niet slapen
Ik zie een schim van jou
In elke schaduw in mijn kamer

Al reis ik door de nacht
Al reis ik onbestemd
Ik zie een vallende ster
En ik doe een wens

Jij weet misschien niet eens
Dat ik denk aan jou
Jij weet misschien niet eens
dat ik zing voor jou
Ik zing voor jou

Durven wij te breken
met wat ons tegenhoudt
Geven wij ons over
of laat het vuur ons koud

Of is dit alleen een vlucht
Is dit een vlucht voor het verleden
Of is het waar dat alles
In de sterren staat geschreven

En wat het ook is
Het breekt mij open
Het geeft mij lucht
Het laat mij dromen
Ik dacht dat dit
Nooit meer zou komen
Dat alles vergaan was
Met wat is geweest

Maar het is er nog steeds …

'Nog steeds'
Stef Bos

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1.   PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The Elijah narratives tell of spectacular and astounding events of famine, fire and faith in the face of a search and battle for religious identity. The investigator of these fascinating tales would do well to avoid a one-sided approach, and to rather combine intra-, inter- and extra-textual information to provide him- or herself with a more comprehensive approach to the study.

Such a multi-dimensional approach needs also to consider the surrounding materials that form the literary context for the Elijah Cycle in its current form. Moving outwards in concentric circles, this includes the Elijah and Elisha Cycles (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 10), the books of Kings, and lastly the scholarly constructed unit of the Deuteronomistic History (DH).[1]

The account of the DH includes the biblical books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings,[2] and traces the events from the last speech of Moses through the life of Israel in the land, ending with the tragic description of the last days of the Kingdom of Judah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the exile of the Israelites to Babylon. The literary unit is bound together by a particular ideology, and it is in the light of this ideology that the exile is portrayed as a result of the failure of Israel to comply with the covenant stipulations of Yahweh, their God. Fretheim goes so far as to say that writing historiography was not the primary purpose, but that the unit was designed to accomplish theological (or kerygmatic-didactic) purposes. 'Their goal is to tell the story of the interaction between God and Israel in order to elicit a response from their audience' (1983:30).

1.2.   RESEARCH PROBLEM

The DH contains literary genres of many types. Systemising currents of cultural and religious life and thought, it has brought together many and various traditional materials (Mayes

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[1] First developed and defended by Martin Noth in his classic, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*.
[2] In Jewish tradition, the books Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings have been preserved as a unit in the form of the four books of the Former Prophets, that balance a further four books of Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve) (Auld 1998:53).

1983:vii). Whether one accepts the theory of one exilic author (Noth), a pre-exilic author and extensive post-exilic redaction (Cross, Nelson) or an exilic author and various exilic redactions and editions (Smend, Dietrich, Veijola), it remains true that the author(s)/editor(s) have incorporated the Deuteronomic law, as well as many other sources into the work, such as tales of conquest and settlement, prophetic narratives, speeches, as well as some official annals and records. To these the author(s) added their own interpretations and comments, and ordered and shaped the sum into a coherent and chronological whole[3] (Noth 1981:9-10; Knoppers 2000:119), often in the form of speeches delivered by significant historical figures (Wolff 1975:84).

One of the genres incorporated in the DH is that of prophetic narratives that revolve around specific individuals that are of specific interest to the story of the nation of Israel. From the account of the schism of the united Kingdom of Solomon in 1 Kings 12, until 2 Kings 17, the narrative in Kings presents the story of the northern and southern Kingdoms by a certain synchronicity which dates each king in relation to his colleague in the other kingdom (Campbell 2004:188). In the middle of Kings are found the extended narratives of the prophets Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 10), set in and focusing primarily on the northern Kingdom during the time of the house of Omri. Auld (1998:55) points out the fact that the greater theme of these narratives is the struggle played out between the divine protagonists of the main characters, Yahweh and Baal.

The importance of the Elijah/Elisha narratives has been the topic of many studies.[4] Recently, Thomas L. Brodie (2000) has presented the narrative as so written that it distills the entire Primary History,[5] but also prepares the literary way for the writing of the Gospels. This study shows that it is no longer merely the significance of the narrative cycle within Kings or within

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[3] It was this compositional technique more than anything else that convinced Noth of a deliberate design. 'Dtr. was not a redactor trying to make corrections, but a compiler of historical traditions and a narrator of the history of his people. When we have learned to regard his work as a self-contained whole, we shall find that he has crafted a work of art which merits our respect' (Noth 1981:84).

[4] Cf. Szikszai (1962[a]), Stamm, (1966), Bronner (1968), Fohrer (1968), Miller (1967), Cohn (1982), Miscall (1989), Würthwein (1989), Smelik (1990), Thiel (1990), Benjamin (1991), Coote (1992), Rentería (1992), Todd (1992), Walsh (1992), Ackerman (1995), Blum (1997), Gese (1997), Olley (1998).

[5] 'Like a deep-seeing mirror near the end of a long busy room, the Elijah-Elisha narrative absorbs the whole scene of the Primary History and reflects it in a way that shows its essence. It synthesizes and interprets. Thus the nature of the Elijah-Elisha narrative begins to emerge: to a significant degree it is an interpretive synthesis of a larger narrative' (Brodie 2000:vi).

the DH that is advanced, but also within the canons of Judaism and Christianity[6] as such. This makes the Elijah/Elisha narratives as significant as ever for continued research and interpretation.

The proposed research will focus on one such cycle of narratives that concerns the prophet Elijah and his religious/political involvement in the northern Kingdom. The research question regards in particular the relationship between the Elijah Cycle as such, and the religious and political agenda of the deuteronomistic editors. Can it be argued that the narratives within the Elijah Cycle have been so structured, edited and placed within its literary context, that it both supports and develops the ideology thereof? Specifically, the research problem surrounds the significance of two narratives within the Elijah Cycle (1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1), and focuses on the possibility that these narratives might fulfill a specific function when read in comparison. The grounds on which the narratives are compared with one another will be discussed in Chapter 3.

1.3. HYPOTHESIS

The thesis will argue that a comparative reading of the two narratives found in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 1 can be based on the literary features and contents of the narratives. Such a comparative reading reveals clear and direct contrasts between the two narratives, which in turn create irony that advances and develops deuteronomistic ideology.

1.4. METHOD

Events of history remain irrelevant to the inquiring subject as long as it is presented as something that merely happened. It is the perceived and imposed relationship between events that results in and in itself already supplies the meaning that transforms a series of unconnected occurrences (Fretheim 1983:28). This fact remains as true for the way in which the events of Israel's past were constructed into a connected series of events in DH,[7] as for the

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[6] 'By shifting the emphasis of the Primary History – from history toward biography, and from history toward the (prophetic) word – the account of Elijah and Elisha prepared the literary way for the writing of the Gospels. Thus the Elijah-Elisha narrative constitutes the key bridge between the foundational narratives of Judaism and Christianity' (Brodie 2000:vii).

[7] '… at least one of the purposes of Kings is to provide its readers with an explanation of their past in terms of the theological programme outlined in Deuteronomy, with a view to promoting that programme in the present' (Provan 1997:24).

process whereby historians, theologians or readers of the biblical text seek to 'discover and interpret meaning, and because the meaning of an event has to do with its relationship not only with events that are proximate but also with all subsequent events that follow in some way from it, the full meaning of an event is never finally available' (Fretheim 1983:28).

As already mentioned, this study will attempt to avoid a one-dimensional approach to the texts under discussion. This means that, even if the emphasis falls on the texts in their final forms, that diachronic aspects will not be ignored. It means also that information from within the texts (intra-textual), from its relations with other texts (inter-textual), as well as information from outside the text (extra-textual) will be employed to unearth the meaning of the text within its literary, historical and socio-cultural contexts.

Brodie points to the increasing evidence that has arisen since the 1970's that texts of the Pentateuch and DH which at first sight appear to be fragmented, are in fact unified (2000:ix). Newer literary approaches to biblical texts differ from source criticism (*Literarkritik* / literary criticism) in that it is concerned with texts as literary objects that make sense in its present form, as opposed to searching for the history of the text prior to its present shape. Therefore it considers the multitude of literary features of a text to see how they present the text as a coherent whole from which meaning can be drawn (Fretheim 1983:36). On the other hand, recent challenges to the unity or existence of DH have called on the same literary features, and have complicated attempts of some literary critics who attempt to present DH as a wholly integrated and carefully crafted work of art, showing that, 'ignoring or defying evidence for diachronic development in DH can lead to superficial or forced arguments for synchronic unity' (Knoppers 2000:125). Furthermore, Provan (1997:97) points to the irony instilled in the extensive usage of terms like 'deuteronomistic theology' and 'Deuteronomistic History' in the works of scholars who read the books of the Hebrew Bible in their final form rather than to speculate about the history of their composition, thereby presupposing the historical critical research behind such concepts. He notes that '… the construct, once embedded in the mind, is difficult to dislodge. Indeed, final-form reading can itself be led astray if the reader is too profoundly convinced that a unified "Deuteronomistic ideology" is historical fact as well as scholarly hypothesis' (Provan 1997:97). It is therefore the intention of this study to be inclusive in its methodology and integrate historical and literary approaches as far as a study of this scope allows.

Another significant development (Stone 1996:30) in literary and semiotic theory has been the increased attention given to the role of reading, so that meaning is no longer understood as residing in a text itself, but rather as generated by

> the interaction of a reading subject, textual structures, and reading conventions, and this interaction takes place within a social context. … textual meaning depends in part upon the tradition and horizon of expectations in which the interpreter of texts is unavoidably embedded …'

Cultural presuppositions, the nature of social life and cultural processes all form part of this 'horizon of expectations', and these are easily transferred to the ancient biblical text by the (post)-modern reader, who stands millennia and continents removed from the original context and the 'horizon' of the author and editor, especially when the text itself presupposes cultural assumptions necessary for the sharing of meaning (Stone 1996:30; cf. Matthews & Benjamin 1994:13-14 on the danger of anachronism and the need to understand the biblical context). To address this problem, I will approach the texts also from a social-scientific angle, making use of anthropological information as an heuristic aid for reading. This once again stresses the multi-dimensional approach taken in this study.

The research will fall into four stages:

- In view of the increasing amount of commentators in recent years who have expressed their doubts about the fundamental tenets of Noth's theory, there no longer exists general scholarly consensus on the existence of DH (Knoppers 2000:120). The first stage will study the research history of the theory of DH and trace its major evolution in recent years, so as to set this study within a context in the current scholarly debate. It will orientate the reader to the contemporary ideas regarding deuteronomistic ideology and also provide a short overview of research regarding the literary history of the Elijah Cycle (Chapter 2).

- Secondly, a thorough literary analysis of 1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1 will enquire as to patterns and stratagems in the text that form the basis of and justify a comparative reading. Important themes that arise from the narratives will be discussed, and it will be illustrated that contrasts between the narratives create irony that serve a literary and didactic purpose in DH (Chapter 3).

- The third phase will build on the findings of the literary analysis, and proceed with a social-scientific analysis of the narratives when they are read in comparison to one another. It will explain certain pivotal values of the ancient Mediterranean World, while providing a motivation for the social-scientific analysis of texts from the west-

semitic world. Applications will be made to the involved narratives where appropriate, which will enhance the results of the literary analysis (Chapter 4).

- The final phase will bring the three processes together to synthesise the information and results obtained by making use of the different approaches to the texts. At this point we will return to the main question of the study, namely the relationship between the Elijah Cycle and the religious and political agenda of the deuteronomistic editors (Chapter 5).

1.5. EXPECTED RESULTS

Reading the two narratives in comparison to one another while keeping in mind both the literary aspects of the texts and the social background against which it should be interpreted, the irony that is constantly being employed by the editor will become clear. These ironies are formed by many contrasts, and serve in turn to illustrate the great contrast between Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, and Baal, his rival deity. It is this great theme that bring the narratives together and place them squarely within their immediate and wider literary context, the book of Kings and DH. The study is expected to illustrate how the Elijah Cycle serves the interests of DH, in that it develops the theme that Yahweh is the only God that Israel should worship.

CHAPTER 2
THE CONTEXT OF THE ELIJAH CYCLE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a detailed discussion of the research history of DH that is based on all primary sources that are available on the topic. Rather, the chapter has as its goal to place the study within the context of the current scholarly debate by providing an overview on the development of and recent challenges that have been posed to the theory. It will briefly discuss a number of important ideological themes that are relevant to the Elijah Cycle, and also provide a short overview of research pertaining to the literary history of the narratives under discussion. The chapter will close with remarks on a personal position that is important for the understanding of the study.

2.2. THE THEORY OF THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGES

Questions have long existed over the connection between the Torah and the Former Prophets, as the names Pentateuch (Genesis – Deuteronomy), Hexateuch (Genesis – Joshua), Octateuch (Genesis – Ruth) and Enneateuch (Genesis – Kings without Ruth) testify. Before Noth launched his theory on the academic world, source criticism and attempts to trace Pentateuchal sources in these books dominated research of the Former Prophets. Even when scholars recognised a deuteronomistic[8] redaction in these books,[9] the role of such a redactor(s) was considered minimal (Gerbrandt 1980:1-2; Provan 1988:1; Fretheim 1983:16; McKenzie 1991:1). According to Fretheim (1983:16), this hypothesis failed to maintain wide recognition due to the lack of consensus regarding the scope of the individual sources, and

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[8] Römer & De Pury (2000:39-40) points out that 'D' was then thought to be limited to the 'primitive Deuteronomy (Deut. 6:4 – 30:20), and that scholars (Ewald, Kuenen etc.) started to speak of the Deuteronomist in the case of texts in Genesis – Numbers that showed a definite affinity with "D". They note that 'what is striking for us is the designation 'Deuteronomist' being used first in the framework of the Hexateuch, and not in regard to the historical books. Furthermore, this Deuteronomist is considered to be a "personality", since a thesis could be devoted to his concept of history.'

[9] 'It had been observed for a long time that there is greater affinity between Deuteronomy and the books from Joshua to Kings than between Deuteronomy and other books of the Hebrew Bible (except perhaps for the book of Jeremiah). This led quite early in modern scholarship to the assertion of Deuteronomic influence on the books of the Former Prophets, or to the detection of Deuteronomic portions within them' (Auld 1998:58-59).

because the account given for the pervasiveness of the Deuteronomic style and outlook in these books was insufficient.

With the emergence of form criticism (*Formgeschicte*) as an alternative method to source criticism, it became possible to discover the stylistic and ideological features of literary collections (Römer & De Pury 2000:45), and it was in this academic hearth that theories of DH was slowly forged. DH should be seen for what it is, namely a working hypothesis for which no manuscript evidence exists. Even if many scholars today view DH as the *Ur-document* of the Hebrew Bible, and credit it with influencing almost every level of its composition, many others plead that we should proceed with caution, before 'the fever of this pan-Deuteronomism reaches epidemic proportions' (Schearing 1999:13). The abundance of theories and related lack of consensus among scholars itself serve as an illustration of the tentativeness of the hypothesis (Holloway 1992:71), as was the case even when there still existed general consensus among scholars of the existence of such a literary unit.[10] It is with this in mind that a brief overview of the research history of DH is provided, so that the current challenges faced by the hypothesis can be understood and contextualised within the purpose of the current study.

Martin Noth

As a fierce wind heralding a new season, Noth introduced a new era in the research of the Hebrew Bible. He argued that the sources identified by Wellhausen in Genesis through Numbers were not continued in Joshua through Kings, and that the deuteronomistic stratum that had previously been recognised as editorial overlay(s) on the separate books, actually lay at the basis of a work that was only later divided into books (McKenzie 1991:2). Römer & De Pury puts is well, stating that 'the novelty of this work resides in the fact that for the first time, it was a matter not so much of identifying or of distinguishing the redactional layers but of raising a question about the *literary plan* that had controlled that redaction' (2000:47). Deuteronomy, the proclamation of the law presented as a long discourse of Moses, was seen to provide DH its logical and programmatic introduction (especially the historical summary of Deuteronomy 1-3), while 2 Kings 25:26 appeared to him to be its 'natural ending, since the

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[10] Provan illustrates this scholarly consensus when he states in 1988, 'The current debate about Deuteronomy and the historical books is not for the most part, then, about whether a DH comprising Deuteronomy-Kings exists, but rather about its precise nature and date' (1988:3). Also Nelson (1981:13), '… the majority of scholars now accept the hypothesis of a Deuteronomistic historian in one form or another'.

events responsible for the exile had now been recounted (Römer & De Pury 2000:51, 50). Noth argued that the individual books needed to be treated not as separate books, but as part of this DH (Gerbrandt 1980:2), which he divided into four periods: that of Moses, the conquest, the period of the Judges and the rise of the monarchy (Mayes 1983:7).

The theological coherence and repetitive phraseology that he found here convinced him that it was the work of a single individual (Holloway 1992:71), who was neither a member of the clergy nor the official intelligentsia, and depended on no institution[11] (Römer & De Pury 2000:52). His theory rested primarily on his linguistic analysis of repeated phrases and terminology, and secondarily on the chronological schema, the series of speeches and evaluations through which the Deuteronomist communicated his ideology (Mayes 1983:4-6; Holloway 1992:72), as well as the unity created by the prophecy-fulfilment schema, which bridges historical periods by the announcement of a word of Yahweh and its subsequent fulfilment (Nelson 1981:13). 'The Dtr[12] is at the same time a redactor and an author completely on his own, who makes use, with great sense of respect, of numerous pre-existing pieces but links them together and gives them a coherence thanks to textual links of his own. He thus creates a truly original historiographical work' (Römer & De Pury 2000:50).

Noth pointed out that the pre-Dtr material had no intrinsic coherence of its own before it was provided with a framework and formed into a continuous narrative (Provan 1988:5). Noth found a number of passages in the Former Prophets that were in his opinion later additions to the original work, some even as extensive as Joshua 13-22 (McKenzie 1991:2). Yet he made no connection between such additions, but understood DH as an original unit, the origin of which he traced back to a single exilic author-editor (around 550 B.C.E.). In that context, its major purpose to be a theological reflection upon the destruction of the two kingdoms of

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[11] Attention has been drawn to the fact that Noth's own historical and sociological situation may have attributed to statements on his Deuteronomist that are being challenged today (cf. Römer & De Pury 2000:52-53).

[12] 'The siglum "Dtr" designates not only the collector/author responsible for having conceived and constructed the great historiographical work, but also the passages within that work that must be attributed to him in particular. This siglum "Dtr" – for Deuteronom*ist* – takes over from the more vague siglum "D" generally used by Noth's predecessors to refer to the strata similar to Deuteronomy. After Noth, when exegetes began to try to distinguish within the Dtr redaction the successive literary strata, the Dtr of Noth will become "DtrG" (*die deuteronomistische Grundschrift*, the Deuteronomistic Text), or "DtrH" (*der deuteronomistische Historiker*, the Deuteronomistic Historian), in order to distinguish the originator of the work from the later revisers, who will find themselves attributed sigla such as DtrP, DtrN, DtrL, and so on… For Noth, the siglum "Dt" refers to the Law of Deuteronomy with its parenetic framing passages, and the siglum "Dtn" refers to the canonical book of Deuteronomy. In these last two cases, the adjective (Dt) is Deuteronom*ic*!' (Römer & De Pury 2000:48).

Israel, interpreting past events as covenant curse due to covenant disobedience, thereby presenting the obedience or disobedience of Israel as the continuous and principal *leitmotiv* of DH (Brueggemann 1968:387; Freedman 1976:226; Römer & De Pury 2000:49). The following can be considered a summary of Noth's thesis in his own words (1981:10-11):

> Dtr. was not merely an editor but the author of a history which brought together material from highly varied traditions and arranged it according to a carefully conceived plan. In general Dtr. simply reproduced the literary sources available to him and merely provided a connecting narrative for isolated passages. We can prove, however, that in places he made a deliberate selection from the material at his disposal. As far as facts were concerned, the elements were arranged as given in tradition … At times the order is determined by the older tradition, as in the incidents prior to the conquest. Elsewhere, though, Dtr. apparently arranged the material according to his own judgement… Thus Dtr.'s method of composition is very lucid.

Astoundingly, Noth's hypothesis was confirmed by A. Jepsen and I. Engnell, who worked independently of him, but whose results pointed in the same direction (Gerbrandt 1980:7-9). 'The fact that three researchers, working with very different exegetical methods and presuppositions, would have ended up with the discovery of a Dtr redaction affecting the whole complex of Deuteronomy – 2 Kings could only confirm the birth of a new explanatory model for the historical books of the Old Testament' (Römer & De Pury 2000: 55). Naturally, all scholars were not as easily convinced, and saw, like others of the pre-Noth period, the existence of a Deuteronomic redactor working during the time of the exile or thereafter, but who was not the purposeful author of Noth. Rather, they viewed the 'period of enlightenment' of the time of David and Solomon as the factory for true history writing in Israel, and the redactor of the exile as somebody who merely combined and updated the major histories of Israel available to him (J and E, or variations thereof) (Gerbrandt 1980:3; Mayes 1983:15). Arguments such as these were made mostly on diachronic levels or that of the history of redaction, and although they remained marginal at the time, they were destined to play a role decades later when faith in Noth's theory would begin to wane (Römer & De Pury 2000:61).

Auld (1998:59) points to two interrelated questions that have dominated discussion since Noth's study. These regarded the unity of the deuteronomistic work, and the issue of the Deuteronomist being (merely) an editor or (actually) an author. Attempts to answer these questions have to a large extent set the stage for the research on DH that followed on the work of Noth, so that scholarship has largely moved beyond the notion of DH as the composition of a single exilic author-editor (McKenzie 1991:3). Other questions that invited much

discussion are the problem of localisation (Soggin, Ackroyd), the perception of the intention of the work (Janssen, Wolff, Brueggemann), and the existence of certain inconsistencies (for example a certain alternation between optimistic and irremediably pessimistic texts) (Römer & De Pury 2000:57-58, 63).

The Cross (Harvard) School

A significant contribution that revived the critical assumptions of Wellhausen and Kuenen (Holloway 1992:72), and that exercised its influence mainly among American scholarship was made by Frank Moore Cross[13] and his student Richard D. Nelson.[14] Cross discerned two major themes in DH. Firstly, there was the sin of Jeroboam and his successors with the subsequent judgment on the northern Kingdom, and secondly, there was the unconditional promise of grace to David and his house. Both these themes reached its climax in the reform of Josiah and his attempted reunion of the two kingdoms (2 Kings 22 – 23:25) (Nelson 1981:22). Therefore Cross held that this must have been a pre-exilic history,[15] written as propaganda[16] for Josiah's reform, that was edited by an exilic deuteronomistic editor (Nelson 1981:121). This exilic editor enlarged the pre-exilic work to its current length around 550 B.C.E. and shifted the emphasis to a call to repentance upon the Judean exiles (Mayes 1983:19, 110-111; O'Brien 1989:10), thereby transforming a 'work of royal propaganda into a doxology of judgment' (Auld 1998:61).

Nelson (1981) briefly discussed four valuable arguments for two editions of DH, which received more attention in the rest of his work. These included the structure of DH that changes toward the last chapter of Kings, the work of traditional literary critics in Kings that showed certain portions to be secondary to main DH, the ambiguous attitude[17] towards the Davidic dynasty portrayed in present DH, and the theological movement in DH.

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[13] Römer & De Pury have noted the possible influence of the Anglo-Saxon context on this theory (2000:73).

[14] In his *The double redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* , Nelson (1981) made a conscious effort to supplement and strengthen Cross' theory by studying the judgment formulas in Kings, and therefore providing it with a firmer source-critical foundation.

[15] Cf. Doorly's chart (1979:48) as an example of the sort of primary sources used by the authors of DH.

[16] 'The deuteronomistic historian deliberately contrasted these two themes, the sinfulness of Jeroboam and the faithfulness of David and Josiah, and in setting them together he provided the platform of Josiah's reform, the means by which the aims of Josiah's reform might be further supported and propagated' (Mayes 1983:111).

[17] Nelson devotes a chapter to this theme and comes to the conclusion that 'the triple invocation of the eternal and unconditional covenant with David cannot be construed to mean anything less than that the Deuteronomistic historian was fully in sympathy with that promise and considered it still in force. He used

He also discusses four theological themes that support the respective dates for the two authors of DH[18] (1981:123-127). Firstly, over against the high interest of the Deuteronomistic Historian in the ark, the exilic editor had apparently no interest in the ark at all. Secondly, the view of the promised land by the Deuteronomistic Historian indicated a Josianic date, while the exilic editor saw the gift of the land as already holding the seeds for Israel's eventual destruction. Thirdly, the Deuteronomistic Historian modelled its spiritual heroes in part upon Josiah, his own contemporary hero, but for the exilic editor there were no heroes, only the characterless, cardboard villains Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah and the arch-villain Manasseh (Nelson 1981:126). Lastly, the northern Kingdom still had some positive value for the Deuteronomistic Historian, while it was essentially negative in the eyes of the exilic editor.

The thematic arguments offered in support of literary critical indications of more than one level of composition, as well as the way that themes are tied to a concrete historical and political *Sitz im Leben*, have made the theory attractive to many scholars (McKenzie 1991:7). Two questions have provided occasion for much subsequent discussion. Firstly, Cross did not treat the northern prophetic stories, and it is unclear how they fit within propaganda for a Judahite king. Secondly, Cross left open the amount of texts that are to be assigned to his exilic editor (McKenzie 1991:7). O'Brien also mentions that 'the failure to accurately identify the text, structure and conceptual plan of the Josianic history leads in turn to a number of problems with the Cross school's identification of subsequent redaction' (1989:12).

Mayes attempts a detailed synthesis of the more recent source critical studies in the books of DH and Cross' double redaction theory (Provan 1988:14). He traces two layers, each with its distinctive emphasis and concerns, through each of the books, and conclude that they represent the same two deuteronomistic stages of editing throughout the corpus (1983:133). The exception is Kings, where Mayes distinguishes between an early stage composed in the

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this concept once to explain the retention of one tribe by David (1 Kings 11:36) and twice to clarify why Yahweh failed to wipe out Judah (1 Kings 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19). In addition, he left the explicitly eternal and unconditional promise of Nathan (2 Sam. 7:11b-16) unrevised, even though this was of great structural importance to him and though he did interrupt it to insert permission for Solomon's Temple construction. On the other hand, the three conditional promises to Solomon cannot be used as a correction to or conditionalization of this eternal promise, for they are clearly limited to Solomon alone and refer explicitly to the loss of the throne of Israel by his descendants' (1981:118).

[18] Provan (1988:14) sees the last chapter of Nelson's work, that embeds this discussion, in many ways as 'the end-point of the move away from the unified Dtr theology of Noth and of the adherents of the "Dtr school" theory.'

context of the reform of Hezekiah and in light of the fall of Samaria, and a second stage when the monarchic history was extended to the reign of Josiah, that was characterised by the presentation of David as an ideal figure against whom subsequent kings of Judah are measured. He notes a third and final exilic stage of redaction for Kings, where the negative attitude towards the monarchy stands apart from the former. Although Mayes favours Cross' theory of a Josianic edition of the DH, he recognises that the later exilic revision was characterised by a strong nomistic interest (as noted by the Smend school, cf. pp. 21-22) (O'Brien 1989:21).

Norbert Lohfink has been an influential scholar stressing exilic work, but operating in constructive critique of both the Cross and Smend schools (Auld 1998:62). Noteworthy is the fact that Lohfink is prepared to accept far more pre-exilic deuteronomistic activity than any of the other scholars who talk of an exilic work (Provan 1988:21). Agreeing on the one hand with the Smend school in seeing at least two exilic reworkings of the DH, he holds, in agreement with the Cross school, that a pre-exilic, proto-deuteronomistic version of Kings and a pre-exilic version of Deuteronomy – Joshua[19] was available to these exilic author-editors (Auld 1998:62). Yet this is to be distinguished from the Pentateuch and the rest of DtrG by language and ideology, and is not to be understood as part of pre-exilic Kings, or as forming the beginning of a pre-exilic DH. These two documents were then combined at an exilic date to form Noth's DH, and its kerygma entailed Israel's guilt and downfall (Provan 1988:21). Another Deuteronomistic writer who retouched the DH after DtrG was DtrN (although this is not the same as that identified by Dietrich in Kings) (McKenzie 1991:9). He also identifies DtrÜ (*Überarbeiter*) at work in the final form of Deuteronomy 7-9, who questions Israel's ability to keep the law, stressing rather the grace of Yahweh in his relationship with Israel (Provan 1988:21).

Although sympathetic to Lohfink's proposal, Provan differs somewhat from him after his analysis of the במות theme of Kings, and stays closer to the Cross tradition than Lohfink, who in some ways have moved closer to the Smend school. Provan dates the pre-exilic edition of Kings early in Josiah's reign (1988:153-155), but suggests that it ran no further than the

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[19]   Lohfink refers to this work as DtrL (*Landeroberungserzählung*). 'Both the message of the work however (that Yahweh gives all peoples their lands for all time), and the ideology which provides the social background to the narrative (that of royal land-allocation to vassals), lead Lohfink to the conclusion that it, too, dates from Josiah's reign. Its purpose was to provide the king with the necessary propaganda material to persuade his subjects that the expansion into the northern kingdom was justified. At the same time, it also served to legitimate the introduction in Josiah's time of the law of Deuteronomy' (Provan 1988:21).

account of Hezekiah's reign, based on changes in the burial formulae (1988:172). In this edition, and due to the unconditional promise to David, a crucial distinction is maintained between the northern and southern Kingdoms, making Hezekiah the king in whom the dynastic promise is clearly fulfilled (McConville 1993:80). Included in the pre-exilic work is most of Samuel, but he understands Deuteronomy – Joshua and Judges as the addition of the exilic editor who revised Samuel – Kings (McKenzie 1991:10). He maintains, therefore, that 'the first DH, although influenced by Dtn laws, probably did not contain the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua. It was simply a history of the monarchy from Saul to Hezekiah, with its necessary prologue in 1 Samuel 1-8, and perhaps in Judges 17-21. Deuteronomy and Joshua were added, along with Judges, at a later time. … Noth's DH seems best understood as an exilic expansion of an early work so as to include an account of the giving of the law, the conquest of the land, the period of the judges and the exile' (Provan 1988:169-170). In contrast to the first, the exilic edition portrays disobedience to the book of the covenant as a decisive factor in the history of Judah (McConville 1993:80-81). Provan has been criticised at two points by McConville (1993:82). First, he holds that Kings shows a progressive blurring of the difference between the northern and southern Kingdoms, instead of a 'double standard' that is being set for them. Second, he believes the wedge driven by Provan between the portrayals of Hezekiah and Josiah to be unconvincing, and refers to the deliberate ambiguities in the former that find echoes in the account of the latter. In his opinion, it is impossible to find a strand of Kings that is ignorant of the fact that the Davidic promise will prove to be an illusion. McKenzie (1991:10) appreciates the significant caution pointed out about drawing conclusions for the entire DH based on Kings, but notes, however, that they do not adequately explain the unity of DH, accounting for the ties between Samuel – Kings and Deuteronomy – Judges. Additionally, they also both fail to explain the role of the northern prophetic stories in a southern work of royalist propaganda.

Others who have tended to accept the Cross hypothesis, focussing on the significance of the exilic revision in select areas of the history, has been Brian Peckham, Richard Elliot Friedman, Jon D. Levenson (O'Brien 1989:11), Soggin and Gerbrandt, although the last questions whether the ideology of the exilic editor was really significantly different from that of the original (1980:25). Holloway (1992:72) has noted the extent to which the first stage of Cross' DH rides on his construction of the religious and political aims of the Josianic reforms and its chronology, with the implication that any challenge to the theory's historicity would seriously undermine its credibility. A further point of criticism is that many scholars from

this school assumes that a pre-exilic Kings entails a pre-exilic DH, which is, according to Provan (1988:27), clearly not the case.

The Smend (Göttingen) School

Another adaption of Noth's thesis, building on the original insights of Jepsen (Provan 1988:15), was proposed by Rudolf Smend, Jr, when he detected compositions and later additions into an already existing DH (DtrH for Smend) on the basis of language, distinctive theology and detected breaks in the narrative (Gerbrandt 1980:15). Since adherence to the law as condition for living in the land guided the interpretations of this editor, Smend called him DtrN (N for nomistic). This hypothesis resolved both a tension in DH between two contradictory pictures of the conquest, and the problem that Noth created by attributing so much material to secondary deuteronomistic editing without providing for a second editor in his hypothesis (Provan 1988:17).

A student of Smend, Walter Dietrich,[20] focused on Kings and added a prophetically inclined redaction (DtrP – around 570 B.C.E.), which integrated most of the prophetic traditions (some pre-Dtr material, some accounts of his own choice) to original DH (called DtrG by Dietrich for *Grundschrift* – around 580 B.C.E.), before the redactional activity of DtrN (around 560 B.C.E.) (Gerbrandt 1980:16). According to Dietrich, DtrP was prompted by the need to instil in the reader the conviction that the word of Yahweh through his prophets was always accomplished.[21] This approach has been adopted by scholars such as R. Klein, E. Würthwein and G.H. Jones (McKenzie 1991:9).

Timo Veijola, a Finnish scholar and former student of Smend who has worked with this theory, and described the concept of kingship held by each of Dietrich's three editions (Gerbrandt 1980:17). According to him, DtrH had been favourable toward the monarchy, while DtrP had been critical. DtrN held a more favourable stance in the form of a

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[20] Römer & De Pury (2000:73-74) have noted the link – that Smend himself had observed – between the description of DH according to the stages of DtrH – DtrP – DtrN and the chronological sequence 'History – Prophecy – Law' that resembles the Wellhausenian idea of religious evolution of Israel. They ask whether Smend's model unconsciously attempts to apply the Pentateuchal documentary theory to the Former Prophets.

[21] '… in general the intention of the author may be described as that of uniting prophecy and the deuteronomistic movement: this editor wished to show the connection of prophecy and history, the role which prophecy plays in history. History is the arena in which the prophetic word works itself out; important events take place in accordance with the prophetic announcement in advance' (Mayes 1983:115).

compromise between this critical attitude and the hope in a Davidic dynasty which would endure, on the condition that the kings were obedient to Mosaic Torah (O'Brien 1989:7; Auld 1998:62).

One methodological problem with this approach is that it simply assumes Noth's exilic date for the DtrH, so that the possibility of earlier redactional layers are never addressed (McKenzie 1991:9). Holloway (1992:72) explains that

> the presupposition which guides the redaction-critical efforts of this school entails the assumption that DtrH was without internal contradictions as a theological and historical work. Contradictions present in the canonical Kings are explained as "additions" of two exilic redactors at odds with the thought of DtrH, and assumes both DtrP and DtrN are subject to detection, with varying degrees of certainty, by the modern redaction critic.

Gerbrandt (1980:20-21) has accused Dietrich of making surprisingly little use of form criticism in his analysis (as has McKenzie (1991:9)), and doubts whether his conclusions make sense, whether they fit with what is known about Israel's history and historiography, and whether the ideology supposedly expressed by the different redactors was really present in Israel at that time.[22] Halpern has also questioned why, if DtrP and DtrN had it as their goal to reform the message of the source, they did not rewrite it instead of juxtaposing conflicting narratives (Holloway 1992:72). Provan (1988:24) has called the separation of DtrP from DtrG the weakest aspect of the theory,[23] and Mayes (1983:113) has labelled Dietrich's distinction of a prophetic stage of redaction 'minutely argued.' In his turn, O'Brien (1989:10) means that, until the Smend school addresses the question of the nature and extent of the history (DtrH) that remains once the layers of later redaction are removed, an important component of the validation of their theories of later redaction will remain missing, and their theories therefore regarded as doubtful.

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[22]   Cf. also McConville (1993:84), 'The exilic situation is thus made the scene of a remarkable amount of rival literary productivity, without any historical evidence for the existence of the kinds of parties that the theory postulates, or any serious explanation of how the successive redactions might have become accepted by the exilic community'.

[23]   'The problem with Dietrich's book lies in the fact that what begins as a distinction between materials on the basis of form ends up becoming a distinction between the redactors who introduced the materials, without sufficient justification being given for this development' (Provan 1988:24; cf. also pp. 25-27).

A single, exilic composer

Scholars in this category have proposed significant revisions concerning aspects of Noth's theory. Hoffmann's view, based on his treatment of Kings, was that DH was basically a fictional history of Israel's cult by an exilic or post-exilic author (Dtr), who did not have many actual sources at his disposal, but linked texts through various techniques to establish the unity of the work through a focus on a consistent presentation of 'reform and reforms' (Auld 1998:63). Josiah's reform was the climax[24] of Dtr's progression of contrasts, and was designed to serve as the model for a new beginning for post-exilic Israel (McKenzie 1991:15; Holloway 1992:72).

Brian Peckham saw DH (Dtr^2 history) not as an editorial compilation of materials, but rather as the outcome of an eminent Israelite literary and historiographic tradition, based upon sources that reflected the nation's story as interpreted and augmented by generations of historians (Peckham 1985:73). Genesis through Kings were formed over centuries in a process of revision of a continuous historical tradition (1985:8). J, that included legal and annalistic materials of special interest to the Judaean monarchy, was expounded by the Josianic editor of DH (Dtr^1) (Peckham 1985:73; McKenzie 1991:16). P confronted the sources used by J and introduced the exclusive attitudes characteristic of all later literature, while E dealt with regional differences and the complexity of the nation. The culmination of this project was a thorough rewriting of this material by Dtr^2, the exilic editor, that proved the coincidence of national and theocratic ideals, and that was complete and coherent in nature (Peckham 1985:73).

Working on the historiography of Herodotus and parallels from the ancient Near East (Holloway 1992:73), John van Seters have elaborated on and added concrete reinforcement to Noth's reference to parallels between his hypothesis and the work of Hellenistic and Roman historians (Noth 1981:2-3), thereby showing how DH could simultaneously be an editorial product and a creative and imaginative work, and that the distinction between the Deuteronomist as author and as editor need not be made. For him the Deuteronomist was the first to forge the sources together into a running historical account, and despite his obvious dependence on various sources, he exercised great freedom in their arrangement and

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[24]   A weak point of the work is that Hoffmann never addresses the apparent inconsistency that his DH climaxes with Josiah, but that he still dates it as exilic or post-exilic (McKenzie 1991:15).

expansion (McKenzie 1991:17). Although he agrees with Noth on the exilic date of DH, he also detects, as did Noth, a large number of lengthy post-deuteronomistic additions (McKenzie 1991:17).

Although McKenzie proposed a pre-exilic date for the work of a single Deuteronomist, this was a significantly shorter work than what Noth had imagined, to which most of the prophetic material had not yet been added. He remained convinced, as was Noth, that the everlasting promise to the house of David required that the composition of the history (at least then Samuel – Kings), belonged before the final deportation (Auld 1998:63). As Noth, he found more secondary additions.[25]

A newer radical move has been to take DH as the foundation for the study of the Torah. Erhard Blum and John van Seters both see the non-Priestly portions of Genesis-Numbers as based on themes and stories in Deuteronomy and the following narratives. Blum conceives a D-work as a fresh preface to DH, but Van Seters maintains "Yahwist" as the name of the primary author of Genesis – Numbers, although this Yahwist is understood by him to be post-deuteronomistic (Auld 1998:67). Such an approach has already been briefly suggested by Mayes (1983:139-149), and he concluded that, in this way, one would return to something like von Rad's historical credo as the basis of the Hexateuch, in the sense that the tetrateuch originated on the basis of a conception of the history of Israel deriving from the Deuteronomic/deuteronomistic context. Auld (1998:67) joins in and argues that one should begin much nearer to the end and move successively earlier, since it is 'clear that early postbiblical tradition greatly elaborated the previously unexplored "lives" of early figures such as Adam, Enoch and Noah. Hence, the idea that the history of Israel was gradually written backward from Kings via Deuteronomy to Genesis may not be so strange after all.'

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[25]   'It is not my intention to multiply redactors behind the DH. Indeed, I have agreed with Noth's premise that the DH was an original unit. However, Noth recognized that Dtr's original History had frequently been supplemented by later additions. Yet Noth made no attempt to group those additions by author; he did not see them as the work of successive redactional levels. Again, I believe that Noth was on the right track. The quantity and disparate nature of the secondary additions to the book of Kings have not been adequately explained by the redactional theories that have been offered for the composition of the DH; the situation is more complex. In a work the length of the DH, passed on for generations, it is hardly surprising to find many different secondary additions' (McKenzie 1991:145).

'There is no such thing'

Although O'Brien does not discard the theory of DH,[26] and although his subsequent examination of all relevant texts from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings 25 leads to another redaction hypothesis,[27] it is striking that he states the following early in his work that was already published in 1989:[28]

> It is clear from the preceding discussion that the hypothesis is in need of reassessment. The developments which have taken place indicate that the very existence of DtrH and its status as a new and unique piece of literature in Israelite tradition needs to be reexamined. In conjunction with this there is a need to reassess the nature and extent of characteristic dtr language, the nature and extent of pre-dtr sources, and DTR's creativity in assembling these sources to forge a new and unified work. Either there is a carefully planned and unified history in which the parts can be shown to have an integral relationship to the whole, or our understanding of the historical books has to be drastically revised (1989:15).

This illustrates the point that was made by Holloway in 1992, that the 'burgeoning diversity of conjectures regarding sources and dating does not inspire confidence in the historical reliability of source- and redaction-critical efforts in Kings. One detects a current readiness on the part of many scholars to isolate pre-deuteronomistic redaction (= sources) in Kings; there is, at the same, an impressive scholarly constituency arguing for a postexilic dating for much of the Former Prophets (1992:73).

Is there, after all, a DH? It seems, from the above, that this debate in contemporary scholarship had been a long time coming. This part of the chapter will attempt to provide a synopsis of the problems indicated in recent research, although, given the scope and purpose of this study, the subject cannot be treated in depth. The chapter will conclude with a personal stance taken in this debate with regard to the subject treated in this study.

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[26] 'The reassessment has shown that DtrH was composed principally as a story of Israel's leaders, from Moses to DTR's contemporary Josiah… The story of Israel in each of these periods was composed with the aid of extensive sources. Key aspects of the theology of each of the sources were remolded to meet the requirements of DTR's own theological enterprises' (O'Brien 1989:288).

[27] Although different to that of the Smend school, there is nevertheless a correlation between O'Brien's three redactional stages and the Smend school's DtrH, DtrP and DtrN (O'Brien 1989:284). Cf. also his summary and conclusion (1989:288-292).

[28] Already in 1983, Mayes also wrote regarding to Noth's hypothesis that, though '… written over forty years ago that study retains its significance, and, like so much of Noth's work, presents a case which, despite the many and serious questions which may be directed to it, continues to resist attempts to construct a satisfactory alternative. However, the wide following it has enjoyed, and the confirmatory studies it has inspired, have in more recent years come to be outweighed by the numerous critical studies which have weakened its very foundations' (1983:vii-viii).

In his essay, Knoppers (2000:120-124) groups the objections to the DH hypothesis according to four broad categories. First is the book model of composition (Claus Westermann, Gordon McConville), which concerns the limits and the unity of DH. Westermann disagrees with Noth's understanding of Deuteronomy as the beginning of DH, and argues that the pre-deuteronomistic narrative originally began with an exodus account, since various texts in the Former Prophets point back to this event. He also holds that the books of the Former Prophets do not constitute a connected history, but that each was composed and edited distinctively. Westermann retains the idea of a Deuteronomist, but for him it is an editor, whose editing within specific books was fairly light (Knoppers 2000:121).

Second, it is especially Ernst Axel Knauf who, like the above group, advocates a concentration on disparate, separately authored books, and goes further by regarding them as resulting from a series of unconnected exilic and post-exilic redactions (Knoppers 2000:122). On the topic of DH and the Pentateuch, he noted that the presupposition of the content of many of the prophetic books by the compilers of the Pentateuch does not imply the completion of any prophetic book before that of the Torah. 'If the evolution of the Pentateuch contains neither the classical pre-Dtr Yahwist, edited and continued by the deuteronomistic authors, nor the post-Dtr Yahwist of Van Seters and others (presupposing DtrH), it is DtrH that remains in suspense' (Knauf 2000:393). Of all these separate books, he sees only Kings being left as part of DH, and he understands it as an opening of a history that continues in the prophetic books, rather than as the conclusion to the historical books (Knauf 2000:397). He also argues that the Former Prophets cannot be referred to as historiography,[29] and therefore there essentially remains nothing of DH: it is neither deuteronomistic, and nor is it history (Knoppers 2000:122).

The third challenge listed by Knoppers comes from scholars who advocate the block model of composition for Deuteronomy through Kings.[30] Erik Eynikel prefers to speak of a variety of blocks[31] that were written independently, and that incorporate the separately authored books

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[29] 'On questions of historical interest, the reader is referred to these annals by the redactor(s) of 1 and 2 Kings, which offer, not a historiographic work, but rather a philosophy of history: factual history is presupposed in these books, but is not recounted' (Knauf 2000:392). Also, 'If there are already inadequate reasons for thinking that the "Dtr" is found in "DtrH", there is less satisfactory reason for assuming the existence of a "Dtr historical work"' (Knauf 2000:329).

[30] It must be noted that not all scholars who adopt this approach argue against the hypothesis of DH (Knoppers 2000:123).

[31] Joshua through 1 Samuel 12, 1 Samuel 13 through 2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1-2, and 1 Kings 3 through 2 Kings 23 (Knoppers 2000:123).

of Westermann, McConville and Knauf, rather than about DH. These different blocks were only unified at a rather late date in the editorial process (Knoppers 2000:122-123).

Fourth and last, Knoppers notes that in 'some recent scholarship on the Deuteronomistic History, so many narrative complexes and deuteronomistic editions are postulated[32] that one wonders whether it makes sense to speak any longer of a unified work' (Knoppers 2000:124). Also, after investigating the motifs of the sin of Israel, the (emotional) reaction of God, the punishment of God and future salvation, Rösel concludes that there exists no comprehensive *Leitmotiv* in the Former Prophets, but that central motifs appear in different and sometimes contradictory formulations. Based on his assumption that a single author would have introduced such a basic explanation or principle in order to emphasise the homogeneity of the work (2000:195), he ends his essay by stating that this 'is one reason for concluding that one should abandon the theory of a single and uniform deuteronomistic History' (2000:211).

What about the earlier stages of the deuteronomistic movement and the identity of the Deuteronomist?[33] Deuteronomy, and thus DH, has been thought by many scholars to have a northern orientation, most likely[34] the work of a group of Levitical priests who fled to Judah after the disaster of 722 B.C.E. Scholars saw them as coming from the area of Shechem, between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, or from the shrine at Shiloh (although it remains a possibility that the two priesthoods there were related, since the two locations were only sixteen kilometres apart) (Doorly 1979:25). Freedman (1976:227) saw the Israelite bias of the work most evident in the anti-monarchic polemic[35] (Deut 17:14-20), and the immediate Judahite origin in the recognition of Jerusalem as sole central place of worship (Deut 12:1-14). This view lost some of its attraction when Weinfeld suggested that the first

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[32] 'For a long time the only real problem concerning the Deuteronomistic History was the choice between two alternatives: an original Josianic or a exilic edition. But in the last decade things have become more complicated. The adherents of the Göttingen school are multiplying redactional layers in the Deuteronomistic History, … This approach makes it more and more difficult to see a coherent ideology in the Deuteronomistic History as did martin Noth' (Römer 2000:vii-viii).

[33] Albertz (2000:2) notes that Noth's characterisation of the Deuteronomist as 'a reliable historian who dissociated himself from all other groups and was not obliged to anybody, cannot explain why he had such influence on the literary history of the Bible'.

[34] They have also been understood to be heirs to the prophetic tradition, or as associated with the wisdom schools (Coggins 1999:27).

[35] Doorly (1979:32) saw this possibility of origin to be related to the 'sin of Jeroboam' that is so condemned in DH. He believes it probable that the setting up of the shrines at Bethel and Dan was Jeroboam's first break with Shechem (a traditional shrine in the north), their priests (whose descendents were to become the Deuteronomists), and their social agenda. Jeroboam's actions also caused a rift between him and Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh. It is possible this circle continued at Shechem without official sanction, producing anti-monarchical material of the kind we find in 1 Samuel 8:10-22.

Deuteronomists were courtiers in Jerusalem who had begun their activities in the reign of Hezekiah (Römer & De Pury 2000:104). Albertz, in turn, has proposed a sort of deuteronomistic coalition that included Jerusalemite priests, prophets and high-ranking officials, who, after the exile, accepted the judgment but maintained simultaneously a certain 'nationalist' theology (Römer & de Pury 2000:104-105). We should mention here the idea of a deuteronomistic 'school,'[36] which, for Coggins (1999:27), has proved itself as another 'potent source of confusion' that often refer to little more than a 'school of thought', 'a particular mode of expression, a particular theological stance, which is widely found and then described as "Deuteronomistic"'. He also mentions the dangers of the concept as it is described by J.R. Porter, namely its increasing vagueness, and the peril of becoming ignorant of the richness of wide religious expression in Judah in the period from Josiah until after the exile when most of the literary activity is attributed to such a movement' (1999:33). He responds, however, that this richness must be balanced by the recognition of ideological pressures to impose an official interpretation of the events in Israel's past, and that it remains convenient to have a term at hand by which to refer to this ideological movement, even if the term 'deuteronomistic' must be substituted for one less open to confusion (1999:34). Albertz (2000:10-11) stated in his essay on the identity of the Deuteronomists that Deuteronomism should not be understood as a school or movement, but rather as a theological current of the time that was typical of the 6th century B.C.E. He makes the valid point that common rhetorics and similar theological topics do not necessarily imply a single movement, but that Deuteronomism really comprised of different groups[37] (Cf. also Römer & De Pury 2000:99).

But Coggins points out that the earlier stages of the movement remain uncertain, since previous reconstructions on Israel's history, such as the northern orientation mentioned above, or the Josianic reform, can no longer be assumed to stand so firmly. Even if deuteronomistic evidence can be detected, can there be any agreement on their identity if critical scholarship presents dates ranging from the eighth to the third centuries as the suggested period in which deuteronomistic influence reached its zenith (1999:26)? Therefore the recent tendency has

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[36] This idea appeared in scholarship shortly after Noth, and it 'enabled Smend and his pupils to give enough time for several literary dtr. layers to develop in DtrG, which they believed to be distinguishable in contrast to Noth. Illuminating is a quotation from Smend's introduction: "The dtr. school – however one may imagine it more exactly – surely existed over generations" (Albertz 2000:3; cf. also O'Brien 1989:292). Although Albertz expresses appreciation for the attempt to create a social basis that accords with the literary phenomenon, he regrets that 'the hypothesis of a dtr. school or movement meant that the historical pinpointing, which was still Martin Noth's interest, was largely given up' (Albertz 2000:3).

[37] This he illustrates by referring to differences between the 'Jeremiah-Deuteronomists' and the 'Deuteronomists of the historical work' (Albertz 2000:11-17).

been to avoid the historical pinpointing of the Deuteronomists, and rather to take them on their own terms (1999:27).

So who *was* the Deuteronomist? Wilson's answer (1999:67-82) illustrates the problem: 'who was *not* the Deuteronomist?' It seems to him that the scholarly world has entered an era of pan-Deuteronomism (cf. also Albertz 2000:1), where the hands of the Deuteronomists, working somewhere in the exile or early post-exilic period, are detected in the Torah, the Psalms and especially the prophetic books.[38] What is further alarming to him, is that the consensus on Deuteronomic editing of much of the biblical material as we know it, does not imply consensus on the criteria for what makes a particular passage deuteronomistic (1999:78; cf. also Lohfink 1999:40-41). Adding to the inconsistency, scholars seem to provide no coherent account of Deuteronomism as a social, political or religious movement (1999:81). How could such inconsistency among scholars be taken to be representative of a specific group with specific interests, working in a specific time and place?

There are also those who have not discarded the hypothesis. Although he does not in any way downplay the significance of the critical questions that are being posed, Knoppers offers what he calls a 'moderate defence' to the four categories that he listed and that was referred to above (Knoppers 2000:129-134). He makes clear that the Deuteronomist, although more than merely an editor, was no 'grand inventor' who created his work out of whole cloth (2000:133-134). He makes equally clear, however, that the DH is more than a catalogue of sources, books or blocks, as some of the critical scholars argue, but that it has been shaped by 'concepts of causality and chronology and written with a view to certain standards' (2000:133).

In his essay on deuteronomistic ideology, Rose recognises DH as a literary work, and offers to provide an explanation for the thematic, literary and stylistic heterogeneity that characterise it. Firstly, the many sources that were faithfully reproduced explains the tension between tradition and interpretation. Secondly, the lack of a deuteronomistic style should be

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[38] '… we can ask whether the circle that edited the DH did not likewise produce a first "canon" of prophetic books, with the objective of supporting its theological program not only on the presentation of the history of Israel but also in the publication of the preaching of the great prophets' (Römer & De Pury 2000:82).

understood as the result of redaction reshaping, i.e., tension between the concept employed by the deuteronomistic author[39] and the concepts of a further redaction (Rose 2000:438).

In their extensive summary of the research history of DH, Römer & De Pury (2000:24-141), after discussing the challenges posed by contemporary scholarship, still see the Deuteronomist located prior to or behind the present text. Their criticism of Würthwein and Eynikel is, however, questioned by Auld (1999:120), who asks whether it is legitimate to talk about a *history* if there are only separate books, or about *Deuteronomistic* authors in Joshua to Kings if the relationship of Deuteronomy with these books is not made plain.[40]

After his study of 1 Samuel 8-12, McKenzie also still holds that DH was written shortly after the assassination of Gedaliah in 586 B.C.E., but no later than the exile of 582 B.C.E., therefore keeping very close to Noth. He feels that such a date may shed light on the Deuteronomist's ambivalent view of monarchy, who may have been able to maintain hope in the Davidic promise so soon after the destruction of Jerusalem (McKenzie 2000:313-314).

Problems regarding DH have evidently become more complicated, as the summary above shows. The debate also seems far from establishing a scholarly consensus, and the playfield of Old Testament Studies appear in need of new findings that will be the result of painstaking analyses from various methods and approaches (cf. Römer & De Pury 2000:140), of which redaction criticism will naturally need to occupy major space.[41] Perhaps the debate have not moved into a particular direction because a satisfactory alternative to that of DH have not been proposed.[42] A conclusion, drawn as narrowly as is presently possible, given the above,

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[39] Rose argues that this author must be looked for among the Judaeans of the first deportation of 589 B.C.E. (2000:455).

[40] Or if the influence is seen to be flowing *from* the narrative books *to* Deuteronomy, as is his own increasing preference; cf. Auld (1999:122-123).

[41] 'The first task of redaction criticism of the DtrH is not to continue to split it up into small fragments on the basis of rather dubious principles, but to identify the large amount of later additions and to retrieve the core work. It is only in this way that its unity and consistency of perspective will become apparent. Redaction criticism need not be the death of the DtrH as Noth understood it. On the contrary, it can be the means by which to revive this important thesis to new life and vitality' (Van Seters 2000:222).

'If it should come about that, with the help of comparisons among different textual witnesses, to ascertain the existence of several stages of Dtr (or post-Dtr) redaction could be ascertained, the historico-critical study of DH could free itself a little more from part of the subjectivity inevitably inherent in all stylistic analysis and would have surely acquired a tool for renewed work' (Römer & De Pury 2000:93).

[42] 'If we imagine, for example, the process of the formation of the historical books and of Deuteronomy as a single process of gathering together, starting from the book of Kings, how in that case can we explain the presence of a system of Deuteronomistic cross-references that subdivides the history of Israel differently than the present books? These interrelations really exist and if we want to leave aside the DH hypothesis, it is in that case necessary to find another explanatory model' (Römer & De Pury 2000:139).

might be that, if 'Israel was able to construct its history and through that to think of and choose its identity, it owes it to a great extent to the Deuteronomists' (Römer & De Pury 2000:141).

2.3.   DEUTERONOMISTIC IDEOLOGY

'Deuteronomistic ideology/theology' is a scholarly abstraction, just as much as 'Deuteronomistic History' is an hypothesis and intellectual construct, and 'it represents the construct of scholars theorizing about the corporate views of the original authors of Deuteronomy – Kings (the Deuteronomistic "circle" or "school"), rather than the theology of any particular book in the "Deuteronomistic History" taken as a whole in its present form – even the book of Deuteronomy itself…' (Provan 1997:94).

Martin Noth held an utterly pessimistic view, understanding it to have been designed only to show that God's punishment of Israel had been just, therefore to explain the present by a certain perspective on the past, but with very little view of the future (Fretheim 1983:19). He noted a remarkable lack of positive interest in the cult, that had been substituted by a relationship of obedience to law, within election and covenant as context (Mayes 1983:6). Von Rad was more balanced in his understanding of the materials as an account of the word of God functioning in the ongoing life of Israel (Fretheim 1983:19). Against the threats of Deuteronomy and judgment of the prophets, Von Rad is able to see the true theme of DH as messianic, as he emphasises the content of the Nathan oracle, which still stood to be fulfilled[43] (Von Rad 1948:63-64; Wolff 1975:85). Wolff also held that DH was a word addressed to the present. Illustrating the verb שׁוּב to be a central theme,[44] he sees the Deuteronomist as summoning Israel to renewal and repentance, affirming the possibility of being God's covenant people after 587 B.C.E. (Brueggemann 1968:388). Brueggemann (1968:388) takes the approach of Wolff further by providing a background for the 'repentance' motif, which motivates Israel to repent, and offers promises that will be Israel's if she repents. For him this

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[43]   'He contends that II Kings 25:27-30, the last paragraph in Dtr, is not simply an historical note, but is a carefully framed affirmation that the promise of Yahweh toward David's house is still valid and functioning, so that Israel has a future under the promise' (Brueggemann 1968:388).

[44]   Cf. Wolff 1975:91. Also, 'There are yet two other passages within the DtrH where the question of what to do in the exile is raised. Both passages provide the same answer – return to Yahweh, your God! – and both appear within the Moses speeches in Deuteronomy. This may mean that DtrH wanted Israel to read his whole work from its beginning as a summons to return in the midst of judgment' (Wolff 1975:93). The two passages to which he refers is Deuteronomy 30:1-10 and 4:29-31.

is expressed in the word טוֹב, which discerns the graciousness of Yahweh, the foundation of deuteronomistic theology, in support of the call for repentance.[45]

From this point onward, the historical development, i.e. the implication of redaction on any discussion of deuteronomistic ideology, became increasingly important.[46] In other words, how ideology of DH is characterised is dependent on diachronic options (Römer & De Pury 2000:134):

> If we accept the existence of a first edition of DH in the period of Josiah, that work very likely displays a 'triumphalist' vision prompted by a promising international situation and the political energy of this monarch. If we consider on the contrary that the first editon (*sic*) of DH dates from the exilic period, the work should then be considered a theodicy.'[47]

In the view of the almost endless hypotheses that have been suggested for the historical development of DH, and the almost endless number of *Sitze im Leben* that this would therefore reflect, I will limit myself here to an overview of certain themes found in the traditionally accepted literary unit of DH,[48] the theoretical nature of which must be constantly kept in mind. Römer and De Pury's observation that knowing whether the message is hope (Josianic) or despair (exilic) is not the main determinant of DH's understanding of the future, is worthy of mention. They mean that the more important issue is to take the measure of the *kairos* (providential moment) or *kairoi* of DH. 'Whether the beginning of the work is situated

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[45] 'The Moses motif is expressed in the Deuteronomic idea that covenant violation is punished with covenant curse. Out of this tradition comes the call to change and repentance which figures so largely in the theology of Dtr. The David tradition comes to expression in the motif of "good," the affirmation that Yahweh's good word can be trusted when the land is lost. Both are held together in Dtr, not always without tension. But it is also true that finally Dtr follows the Davidic line of tradition, not settling for cheap grace, but affirming that grace is free for those who will trust (Brueggemann 1968:402).

[46] 'These three coryphaei of German exegesis (Noth, von Rad and Wolff) have only touched on criteria of content in determining the central message of this historiography. However, must not things be nuanced, if a *literary* analysis made with the help of *literary*, linguistic and formal criteria tends to undermine the hypothesis of the *unity* of this work and emphasizes instead its literary heterogeneity? Is it not necessary to think of several 'kerygmata', if DH is composed of *several* literary levels? The *theological* assertions should be controlled by rigorous exegetical work, and the observations about the *content* by *formal* criteria such as language, style, stereotypical formulas, and so on' (Rose 2000:431).

[47] Of course, both these possibilities are held true by the Harvard double redaction theory. Cf. for example Nelson (1981:199-128).

[48] 'It seems to me important to emphasize that we have no way to approach the question of Dtr ideology other than on the basis of a *literary* work. We do not have any other information at our disposal on this milieu that we call "Dtr"; for example, neither on its authors, nor on their life, their formation and their eventual professional activity' (Rose 2000:425). Also, 'If we assume several literary layers in DH, it also becomes necessary to qualify each time the definition of Dtr ideology. But the author and the redactor being quite close in time and in theological thinking, I will limit myself in the following … to just one evaluation process, while adding however occasional remarks on the modifications occurring in the redactional process (Rose 2000:438). Finally, 'Does DtH, in fact, have a unity, or is it merely a collection of disparate elements? …; on it depends whether there is such a thing at all, or whether we are dealing with a cluster of loosely related "theologies"' (McConville 1993:73).

in the Josianic period or not, quite obviously the fateful hour (*Sternstunde*) of the DH is found in the span of time covering the collapse of the kingdom of Judah, the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Judeans. These are the events from which the history must be contemplated, interpreted, "constructed"' (2000:133-134). This will be the approach for the remainder of the study where applications of the Elijah Cycle to DH ideology is made.

The exile, then, can be regarded as pivotal for anything said about the ideology of DH, for it is here that a new identity emerged from the description of the nation's origin.[49] Not only 'what is being said?', but also, maybe more importantly, 'for what purposes is it being said?', should therefore remain continuous questions. The ideology of DH can in no way be severed from a framework of social and political relationships, 'concerned with the promotion of a world view which translates itself into political attitudes, and not simply as the expression of the particular interests of a single social or religious group' (Mayes 2000:464).

Freedman (1967:227) detected four basic ideas in DH. These were the graciousness of the covenant of Yahweh, the evils of idolatry and a non-centralised cult and the inevitability of punishment and reward. Rose (2000:436) added the interest in history, the central role fulfilled by the prophets, and the importance of the law. Against the larger background formed by these, we will now consider some specific matters important to DH ideology, especially those who will be relevant to our later look at the Elijah Cycle.

Deuteronomy makes it clear that Yahweh is the only God (Deut 6:4), but it is a oneness that is always perceived of in relational terms, i.e. in relation to Israel, and Israel in relation to Yahweh (McConville 1993:124). For Deuteronomy (32:8), Yahweh is supreme and is not limited in his authority to the borders of his people's land. In the context of this study it is important to note the degree to which the powers of the king is limited and always submitted to the commandments of Yahweh (Deut 17:14-20) (McConville 1993:125).

O'Brien (1989:27) schematised the structure of DH and organised the history into three different periods, each marked by a different form of leadership (Moses/Joshua,

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[49] 'Deuteronomistic theology is, then, an explicit ideology developed in response to the conditions of late-seventh-century and early-sixth-century Judah, as a means by which the newly emerging Israel, the people of Yahweh, might identify itself, both for itself and for others, articulating its goals and justifying them through an account of how it related to others and how it overcame its own internal conflicts' (Mayes 2000:472).

Judges/Monarchy, Prophets/Kings), from which he gathered that DH was composed as a history of its leaders.[50] Furthermore, the integration of the reign of David (the ideal king) into the history took place via three criteria that for him captured the essence of the deuteronomistic program, namely fidelity to the exclusive worship of Yahweh, fidelity to centralised worship and fidelity to the prophet/king relationship (1989:35). These criteria from there on also apply to the evaluation of other kings[51]: those who were not faithful to Yahweh according to the three criteria were met with trouble that was announced by a prophet, with a reference following that marked its fulfilment, so that the 'prophecy-fulfilment schema was thus allied with the reward-retribution schema' that O'Brien had observed in Deuteronomy 1-3 (1989:36). Jeroboam's failure to heed the prophetic word and his consequent unfaithfulness to the exclusive centralised worship of Yahweh through his establishment of the shrines at Bethel and Dan, leads not only to his own condemnation, but the influence of his infidelity becomes the paradigm of interpretation for all subsequent northern kings (1989:39-40). 'Hence the report of the exile in 2 Kgs 17:1-6, 20-23 contains a fulfilment notice which verifies the condemnation of "all his servants the prophets", and at the same time extends it to cover the fate of northern Israel itself' (O'Brien 1989:41).

Within the movement of a focus on Israel's leaders to a process of religious democratisation, Mayes, however, makes the vital distinction between the different stages of DH that he perceives. According to him, DH moves progressively toward a 'democratisation' in religion (2000:476-477):

> The deuteronomistic perception of the nature of Israel and its relationship with Yahweh developed between the first and second editions of the history: the first edition perceives Israel as a royal state, with the king as successor to Moses in the role of lawgiver and mediator between Israel and Yahweh; the revision, introducing theological commentary such as 2 Kgs 17, 7-23 and 34b-41, effected a change of interest from the king to Israel as a whole: it is on the people and not on the king that responsibility for the welfare of Israel rests. The revision of the deuteronomic law aims at

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[50] Gerbrandt's dissertation on *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History* (1980), has shown a binary role assigned to the king by DH: 'On the one hand, the Deuteronomist considered the king to be the official within Israel who was responsible for insuring adherence to the covenant within Israel. Practically he became the covenant administrator. Since Israel's existence as a nation on the land was dependent upon her obeying the covenant, the king did not have direct responsibility for the defense of the nation. This was then the other side of his role. In time of military crisis his responsibility was to trust Yahweh; … An Israelite king insured the well-being of his people through fulfilling his resposibility (*sic*) as covenant administrator, and then trusting Yahweh to protect and bless them' (1980:265).

[51] 'This is evident in a number of the prophetic speeches and judgment formulas in the books of Kings. It is also evident in the way the four-part pattern was applied to Hezekiah and Josiah, the only two kings who, according to their respective judgment formulas, were like David in all that they did' (O'Brien 1989:37). Interestingly, Botha's social-scientific analysis of Hezekiah and Josiah comes to the same basic conclusions, even though they follow such different approaches (Botha 2000:36-49).

a sharper definition of this new perception of Israel. This code now presents "the divinely authorized social order that Israel must implement to secure its collective political existence as the people of God";[52] it is a comprehensive social charter that sets political objectives and in particular safeguards each individual as a person possessing a sphere of genuine autonomy' (Mayes 2000:476-477).

An alternative way of viewing the situation is to understand the portrayal of Israel's kings, the 'good' and the 'evil' ones, as DH's appeal on the people of Israel to choose a new way for the future, one that will not lead to destruction.

Interwoven with the above is the vision of an 'order' that encompasses all life, being summarily expressed by the relation between righteousness and blessing, unrighteousness and curse (McConville 1993:131). The election and covenant of Yahweh with Israel expresses this (cf. Dt. 28) in the need for mutual commitment in space and time. Although Deuteronomy (7:6-8; 9:4-6) indicates that his choice of Israel is not based on their qualification, the promise of God has its counterpart in command (McConville 1993:132-133). Brueggemann reflects on this in his essay on the Kerygma of DH, and investigates the motif of 'good', that is used primarily for the gracious actions of Yahweh, not for the action of Israel. It is an inclusive term, a synonym for שלום in its widest sense, even as a synonym for 'life' (Dt. 30:15). It points to the meaningfulness and unity of existence, and also means 'prosperity', including cattle, children, produce and rain, living in the land, length of days and life (Dt. 28:11f.). The counterpart in the curse recital is to be destroyed, ruined or driven from the land, meaning the end of secure existence and death (Brueggemann 1968:390-391). In DH, the nation fails to live in covenant faithfulness[53] and experiences ultimate destruction and shame: death in the sense of the loss of land and everything that constructed their identity as people of God.[54] Of this many kings become a living prophecy, as we will see to be the case with Ahaziah of Israel in 2 Kings 1 (cf. chapters 3 and 4).

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[52] S.D. McBride, as cited by Mayes (2000:477).

[53] 'Herein lies all the irony that we have found to be one of the pervading features of DtH – an irony born of an understanding of Israel as profoundly incapable of covenant faithfulness. Here, if anywhere, is a feature of the OT's understanding of history that distinguishes it from others in the ancient world, a self-consciousness … that is essentially critical… The alternatives placed before the people both at 11:26-32 and in ch. 28 seem to be mocked by a theology that claims Israel is constitutionally incapable of choosing the way of life. If ch. 28 were the end of the book, it would be a gloomy picture indeed' (McConville 1993:133-134).

[54] 'The second element of response employed by the author to develop the idea of identity is that of the possession of a national land: the identity must be guaranteed by attachment to a *country*' (Rose 2000:445).

The 'word of Yahweh' takes an important place in DH, as already implied by the above mention to prophecy and fulfilment[55]. In Deuteronomy it was Moses who spoke the word of Yahweh to the people, thereafter prophets continue to confront both king and citizen (McConville 1993:127). So Elijah's theophany experience on Horeb mirrors Moses' own hearing of the word there. Von Rad has explored the role of the 'word of Yahweh' in the DH, holding that, when all had been lost to the exiles, the word of Yahweh became that which still endured (Von Rad 1948:52-64). In his words (1948:55),

> Die Vorstellung des Dtr. ist offenkundig die: Jahwe hat Israel seine Gebote geoffenbart; er hat im Falle des Ungehorsams mit schweren Strafen, ja mit dem Gerict der Vernichtung gedroht. Das war nun tatsächlich eingetreten. Jahwes Worte hatten sich in der Geschichte "erfüllt", sie waren – wie Dtr. ebenfalls gerne sagt – nicht "hingefallen". So besteht also ein Korrespondenzverhältnis von Jahwes Wort und der Geschichte in dem Sinne, daβ Jahwes einmal gesprochenes Wort kraft der ihm eigenen Mächtigkeit unter allen Umständen in der Geschichte zu seinem Ziele kommt. Doch läβt sich diese Vorstellung aus dem Werk des Dtr. noch wesentlich deutlicher rekonstruieren. Wir meinen jenes System von prophetischen Weissagungen und genau vermerkten Erfüllungen, das über das Werk des Dtr. ausgebreitet ist. Man kann hier von einem theologischen Schema reden, nicht minder wie bei dem "Rahmen-Schema", wenn es auch, der Eigenart des Gegenstandes entsprechend, freier und elastischer gehandhabt ist.

If the word of Yahweh, the promise spoken in the distant past, is all that the exiles have to hold on to, it is understandable that they would emphasise the word of Yahweh in the literature that they produce. The importance of 'the word of Yahweh' in the mouth of his prophet will be returned to when we focus upon its key significance in the two narratives that will be studied.

It must of course be kept in mind that the exclusive language of Yahweh reflected in Deuteronomy does not reflect the historical circumstances in pre-exilic Israel. Recent scholarship understand monotheism as evolving in a revolutionary process, and place it much later in Israel's history than previously suggested, namely in the exile and beyond (Gnuse 1997:226, 228). This concurs with Pakkala's literary and redaction critical approach, which has shown that intolerant monolatry is a late development in DH, introduced by the nomists (Pakkala works in the Smend tradition, which places DH in exilic times: DtrH – DtrP – DtrN). DH shows a shift in attitude toward other gods, and Pakkala assumes that this reflects main developments and currents in Israel's history and religion during the time of writing.

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[55] Note Miscall's opinion that prophecy and fulfillment is not a set pattern that orders the text and serves as a firm anchor for interpretation, but are only one entrance among many into understanding (1989:82).

Therefore, the command to worship Yahweh exclusively are late ideas that first appeared during the exile (1999:239).

In the editors' pursuit of an identity for post-conquest/exilic Israel, Rose mentions the application of the key theme of common religion,[56] meaning that the one nation Israel was to worship the one God Yahweh at the one legitimate sanctuary of Jerusalem, but then notes that this view differed from the historical religious situation of pre-exilic Israel, which was marked by great religious diversity in the Yahwist tradition (Rose 2000:445). However, (2000:445-446),

> … for this Dtr author, the quest for *identity* is much more important than a neutral description of history. If the multi-religious situation in the land of Babylon (in this "supermarket of religions") is kept in mind, we can see how it was essential for the survival of the Yahwist religion to develop a religious identity in the sense of a *unity* of the faith in YHWH.

In the exile is formed, then, an ideology of radical separation, in which Rose (2000:450) sees the attempt by a hopeless minority to find security in the construction of identity gained by demarcation.[57] All bad influences are seen as coming from outside, from other peoples and cultures and religions and gods, but Stuhlman (in Mayes 2000:478) has noted that the 'outsiders' and 'foreigners' against whom Israel is warned are in reality groups within the community itself, those involved in religious or social practices which, for DH, are not true to the community and must be purged. As Albertz believes, DH is then an ideological reinterpretation of the Josianic reform, adapted to the particular needs of the exile, so to provide for the Judaean contemporaries the way out of their crisis. It was not to be found in worship of native or imported deities, as was formerly accommodated in pre-exilic Yahwism, but rather in the exclusive worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem, as established in Josiah's reform[58] (Mayes 2000:467).

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[56] 'In order to safeguard the purity of the cult, its centralization and the destruction of the high places, pillars and Asherim were required by the Deuteronomist (cf. Deut. 12:1-3, 29-31) … Besides the high places, the N shrines were especially denounced by the author as being contrary to the will of the Lord.   …   The preservation of these N pilgrim shrines is constantly referred to as the "way of Jeroboam" or the "sin which he committed, making Israel to sin" (cf. 1 Kings 15:26, 34; 16:19) (Szikszai 1962:30). Also, 'Some of the kings were further denounced because of the worship of foreign gods, which is variably designated as either the "way of the kings of Israel (II Kings 16:3), or the "way of the house of Ahab" (II Kings 8:27). … In all these instances, the convictions of the Deuteronomic school can be discovered' (Szikszai 1962:31).

[57] 'The background of the nomistic intolerance is the exilic situation in which Israel's old religion and society had collapsed and the Israelites' whole existence as a people was threatened. To protect Israel's identity, the nomists wanted to make a clear separation between the Israelites and the other nations. They had a new definition of what is an Israelite. Exclusive devotion to Yahwe and the rejection of other gods was an essential criterion in this definition' (Pakkala 1999:239).

[58] The cult centralisation facilitated the later intolerance of other gods, and laid the basis for the idea that Israel's religion was defined by religious authorities. It centralised the religious authority in the hands of a

It is one of the great functions of Kings, then, to serve as persuasive discourse in the exilic transition to monotheism. Soggins goes so far as to say that the setting for Kings is 'the great struggle between the faith of Israel and the religion of Canaan' (Soggin 1980:205), or then, between polytheistic Yahwism and monolatrous/monotheistic Yahwism.[59] This is also illustrated from the judgment formulas against the kings, which are based not on political or economic, but theological criteria, made up, as stated above, from the standards raised by the reform of Josiah, namely centralised worship and the rejection of Canaanite religious practise. This tells us precisely how Israel judged its past during the exile, but it tells us very little of the historical reality (Soggin 1980:200-201). For DH, the emphasis is on the matter of faith and unfaith, rather than obedience and disobedience. Unfaith is ultimately disloyalty to God, and always has to do with the service of other gods (Fretheim 1983:21-22). 'Hence, the fundamental call to the people, when the latter has occurred, is not that they should obey individual commandments, but to put away other gods and return to the Lord' (Fretheim 1983: 24).

2.4.   REDACTION HISTORY OF THE ELIJAH CYCLE

The purpose of this section of the study is not to provide an own account of the redaction history of the Elijah Cycle, but rather to create an awareness of the literary development of the text and the subsequent development of meaning, especially as far as it is needed for the purposes of this study. The focus will be on the two texts under investigation (1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 22:52 - 2 Kings 1), rather than on the Elijah Cycle as a whole.

It is commonly suggested that the historical members of the prophetic communities active in the northern Kingdom[60] around the middle of the ninth century are exclusively portrayed in

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few Jerusalemites, and so local forms of religion would have had less chance of developing in an independent direction: therefore, 'the possible cult centralization under Josiah, conscious or unconscious, contributed to the later development of intolerant monolatry' (Pakkala 1999:233).

[59]   'This reveals a special feature of Israel's monarchic religion. *It was not structured to favor a multitude of divinities, although it did not systematically rule them out. The symbolic system of Israel's pre-exilic religion functioned better with one divinity than most religions of the ANE*. It was typical in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Ugarit that the divine was construed in many gods who together formed the symbolic system of the divine. Yahweh was an absolute monarch, without equals. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to assume that His worship had been exclusive in the sense that other gods had been prohibited in Israel. The only exclusivity that should be assumed is His position as Israel's main God (Pakkala 1999:227).

[60]   'The Elijah, Elisha, and Ahab sources have in common a definite interest in the destiny of the Northern Kingdom and in the prophetic traditions of the N, and this is indicative of the N origin of these sources' (Szikszai 1962:33).

the Elisha Cycle, which were for a large part transmitted and arranged in their midst. The same goes for at least a part of the Elijah Cycle, although it should be noticed that Elijah is thought to have been a singular prophet over against the prophetic groups, and was only made the master of their leader, Elisha, and so their spiritual father,[61] at a later stage. This explains the literary influence of the Elisha Cycle on the Elijah Cycle and the inclusion of secondary narratives such as 2 Kings 1:9-16 (Thiel 1990:359-360; cf. also Heaton 1961:43).

Winfried Thiel's inquiry into commonalities in northern prophetic traditions has convinced him of a transmission-historical continuum, a common tradition among the circles of the prophetic groups in the northern Kingdom. He sees 2 Kings 1:9-16 (among other) as a secondary text originating at some distance from its basic transmission in these same circles rather than through literary creation centuries later. Yet it is possible that the linguistic features and content pattern may have been introduced to the ground text by later editors, but this is to be shown by source criticism, since the evidence left by speech alone is insufficient (Thiel 1990:374).

2 Kings 1:9-16 is a secondary text that was introduced into the original Elijah tradition. Thiel sees in this text, where groups of fifty men are consumed by 'fire from heaven', the same intention as in 2 Kings 2:23f., where a couple of young boys are punished for mocking Elijah and eaten by wild animals.[62] The same goes for 1 Kings 17:17-24, where Elijah raises the son of the widow from Zarephat, as the parallel text for Elisha in 2 Kings 4:8-37 (Thiel 1991:154).

Noth did not detect much Deuteronomistic editing in the Elijah Cycle (Thiel 1991:148). He stated (Noth 1981:71) that in

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'The traditions gathered around Elijah the prophet and his successor Elisha belonged to the northern kingdom. Thus the sagas had the same background as Deuteronomy. This fact may account for the inclusion of such an extensive group of prophetic traditions in the Deuteronomistic books of Kings. The compilers of the books of Kings were interested in the Elijah-Elisha sagas because they gave weight to the Deuteronomistic thesis of a Mosaic prophetic tradition' (Carroll 1969:403).

[61] 'Die Tradenten haben sich auch davor gehütet, den Charakter Elijas als Einzelpropheten zu verwischen und ihn etwa in ihre Gruppen einzubeschreiben. Es dürfte historisch korrekt sein, daß die Prophetenkreise erst in der Zeit Elischas zur Wirkung kamen. Daß sie in der sonstigen Überlieferung kaum noch vorkommen, ist besonders verwunderlich, denn sie dürften mindestens noch ein Jahrhundert bestanden haben, wie Am7,14 bezeugt' (Thiel 1990:360).

[62] 'Die Überlieferung will mit der drastischen Strafe davor warnen, den Propheten – wohl nicht nur ihrem Meister – unehrerbietig zu begegnen oder sie sogar zu verspotten, wozu sie anscheinend Anlaß boten (Thiel 1990:362).
'Diese Aussage führt zurück zu 1 Kön 13. … Aber die Lehre ist dieselbe wie in 2 Kön 1,9-16' (Thiel 1990:363).

the section on Ahab (16:29ff.) the stereotyped introductory sentence and a few pieces of information from the "Books of the Chronicles" are appropriately followed by the first of the Elijah stories, in their traditional wording (1 Kings 17-19). However, Dtr. has put the Elijah-story of Naboth's vineyard together with the prophecy of Ahab's death (chapter 21) immediately before chapter 22, and hence has isolated chapter 20, placing it between the Elijah stories. In chapter 21 Dtr. adds to the prophecy of Ahab's death (v. 19) a passage of his own (vv. 21-22, 24-26) which looks beyond Ahab's personal fate to the fate of his dynasty and speaks of it in terms similar to those in 16:4, using expressions taken from the Ahijah story in 14:10-11 and, finally (vv. 25-26), presenting Ahab as a symptom of the continually intensifying moral degeneration. … After continuing the Judaean succession with the section on Jehoshaphat (22:41-51), Dtr. returns to the Israelite succession. Here he had to accommodate the rest of the Elijah-Elisha story. 2 Kings 1:2-17a[a], originally handed down without the name of a king, was applied by Dtr. to Ahab's successor Ahaziah, since, coming as it did after 1 Kings 22, it could not refer to Ahab, and it provides most of the content of the section on this king (1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1:18).

Winfried Thiel's 1991 study on the Deuteronomistic redactional activity in the Elijah Cycle provides an overview of research[63] that has been done on the topic since the time of Noth (1991:148-171). In the light of that research history and his own work, we can emphasise the following as being important to note regarding the development of the Elijah Cycle for the purposes of this study:

The narratives are all pre-exilic[64] (McConville 1993:68), and have been incorporated into their current literary context[65] (cf. Dietrich 2000:64), but 2 Kings 1 were incorporated at a later time than the unit of 1 Kings 17-19.[66] The text itself had not been edited by the redactors.[67] Both narratives originally consisted of two separate ones. 1 Kings 17 is the result

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[63] Another extensive overview and discussion of the topic has been done by McKenzie (1991:81-100).

[64] 1 Kings 17: 'So bedingt bereits die Lesung als Apologie und Deutung der klassischen Gerichtsprophetie eine relative Verortung des Testes: zumindest nach den Propheten des 8.Jh.s und nach der catastrophe Samarias. Dazu fügen sich weitere Daten: Der Text setzt nicht nur die *Zeit* von Elischa, Hasael und Jehu voraus (aus gehöriger geschichtlicher Distanz, vgl. xix 15ff.!), sondern auch die *Erzählungen* zu Jehu und die Existenz einer literarischen Elischa-Komposition (s.o.) (Blum 1997:290).

Pakkala (1999:163) is not certain of the time of origin for 2 Kings 1:2, 5-8, noting that the 'question may have to be left open, but seems possible that the passage was already in the history writer's text.'

[65] 'In the Elijah and Elisha material, there is in general much less evidence of such reworking, though it is not entirely absent. For the most part the reinterpretation of those narratives depends on their context, their being fitted into the framework so that they become comments on the reigns of particular rulers, while retaining much of their earlier form (Ackroyd 1976:518).

'Following Noth, the accounts about Elijah and Elisha in particular were considered to be traditional material integrated by the Deuteronomist into his work' (Römer & De Pury 2000:132).

[66] 'Die Eliageschichte in 1 Reg. xvii 1-xix 18 präsentiert sich al seine episodisch gegliederte Groβerzählung mit einem übergreifenden und geschlossenen Handlungsbogen' (Blum 1997:277).

[67] 'The redactional elements from Dtr are very sparse: almost the only appearance is in 19.10, 14' (Soggin 1980:203).

of the joint narratives of the drought and the raising of the widow's son (the second of which is grounded on the Elisha tradition[68] (McKenzie 1991:82; Gese 1997:131)), and 2 Kings 1 is the result of the joint narratives of the divine oracles and the fire from heaven on the soldiers (the second of which is again grounded on the Elisha tradition.)[69] The deuteronomistic mark left in the narratives consists mainly of the function of the word of Yahweh, which is fulfilled in every narrative. This will become clear in our subsequent literary and social-scientific analyses. Of special importance to our study is Thiel's final paragraph (1991:171),

> Die Untersuchung hat noch ein weiteres Ergebnis erbracht: Sie hat gezeigt, daβ die Deuteronomisten in ihren Vorstellungen und Formulierungen schon in den älteren Prophetengeschichten Vorbilder fanden. Das verweist nicht nur auf die Kontinuität zwischen der Redaktion und ihren Überlieferungen, sondern auch auf die tiefen Wurzeln, die die so scharfkonturierte und auf ihre Situation bezogene dtr. Theologie in der ihr vorgegebenen Tradition besitzt.

2.5.   CONCLUSION: A PERSONAL POSITION

If this study asks the question of the relation between DH and the Elijah Cycle in its current literary form, then how is it to be understood against the variety of interpretations and contentions of what DH 'is' or 'is not'? In a study of this size and scope, where it remains impossible to enter into meaningful and constructive debate, I have attempted rather to provide the reader with a bird's eye view of the important matters in the current debate. At this point I will now preliminarily position myself and this study within its literary context as it should be understood here. It must be stressed that this study does not have as its purpose the advancement of another historical critical reconstruction that will confirm, alter or disprove Noth's thesis. Rather the discussion of the theory of DH has been to provide a context for the research carried out on the Elijah Cycle in its present literary context and to sensitise the reader for the long process of which it forms part, speaking from a literary perspective.

When speaking here of deuteronomistic, it is meant as suggesting something more complex than a single author, even group, who worked at a specific time and place and who was

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[68] 'Schon länger hat man gesehen, daβ sich die substantiellen Parallelen zwischen der Augerweckungsgeschichte in xvii 17-24 und der Elischa-Erzählung in 2 Reg. iv 8ff. mit einer Abhgigkeit der Eliaepisode von der Elischaüberlieferung erklären lassen' (Blum 1997:279).

[69] 'The story in II Kings 1 is unlike the rest of the Elijah stories and shows a measure of affinity with the Elisha cycle of legends' (Szikszai 1962:32).

guided by a single rationale. One might therefore refer to this position as one of pan-Deuteronomism. There has not been established among scholars an alternative term that encompasses the meaning required, and therefore I retain 'deuteronomistic', despite its potency for misunderstanding and confusion,[70] and rather specify its content in this study.

I work in exploration of the possibility of wide-ranging deuteronomistic phenomena (not necessarily 'movement'), more diverse and active over a longer period of time than commonly supposed (Wilson 1999:82), and imposing some radical shifts of perception (Coggins 1999:31.)[71] As far as the literary work is concerned, what does seem clear from the above, is that, regardless of the number of redactions and author-editors imagined, the Elijah Cycle seems to have been an exilic/post-exilic addition to its present context. I suspect this as taking place within a deuteronomistic context, at a later time when it may have been necessary to legitimise the turn to monotheistic Yahwism by reinterpreting ancient traditions in this light.[72] This may well have been, in my opinion, the social context that lay behind the redaction of the Elijah Cycle in its present form. Of course this calls for much further research. Therefore I would suggest that future research investigate the relationship between the emergence of monotheistic Yahwism and the late deuteronomistic redaction of texts. I anticipate that the marriage of redaction criticism with research on the development of monotheistic Yahwism, might provide an historical setting and socio-religious motivation for late deuteronomistic redaction since both are seen as taking place mainly in an exilic/post-exilic context.

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[70] 'Recent research may in fact have demonstrated, unwittingly, that the concept of Deuteronomism has become so amorphous that it no longer has any analytical precision and so ought to be abandoned' (Wilson 1999:82).

[71] In this context, I wonder whether Coggins' questions regarding 'Deuteronomistic' (1999:31) must be an either/or formulation. Could it not be that, due to 'a particular group of people, identifiable in principle as "Deuteronomists", who successfully imposed this radical shift of perception', there emerged 'the spiritual and intellectual climate of the period of early Judaism, when the search for identity and for the causes of the transformation which had affected the community could broadly be described as "Deuteronomistic"'?

[72] Cf. the excellent study on the development of Yahwism by Dever (2005). Dever argues that the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the religious crisis brought about by the destruction of the temple to a large extend brought pre-exilic folk religion in disrepute. He states: '… true montheism emerged only in the period of the exile in Babylon in the 6th century B.C., as the canon of the Hebrew Bible was taking shape.'

CHAPTER 3

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF 1 KINGS 17 AND 1 KINGS 22:52 – 2 KINGS 1[73]

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will study the two narratives of the widow of Zarephat and her son and the reign of king Ahaziah and compare them to one another. The hypothesis is that these two narratives, and the irony which is achieved through the contrasts between them, support and develop Deuteronomistic ideology, functioning as polemic material against Baal worship, and that their current positions in the Elijah cycle further contribute to this end.

For the purposes of this chapter and the next, the form of the narratives chosen for investigation will be the final ones, which were chosen by the editor to convey meaning.[74] This is not to deny the literary development of the text, but simply to concentrate here on the text as provided by the last editor. Therefore it will investigate 'the way in which language, structure, and motifs…' can contribute to the meaning of a story, adding 'other dimensions to the understanding of the biblical text. By focusing on the text as an artistic composition, we can begin to understand the purposes of the final author, himself a creative artist, and the ways in which the work has functioned for countless generations of readers' (Cohn 1982:333).

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[73] A shortened version of this chapter has been published in *Old Testament Essays* 17/4 (2004), 646-658.

[74] What Cohn (1982:334) says about the literary unit 17-19, can in my opinion be applied to the entire Elijah Cycle: '… many of its episodes may originally have circulated independently; the signs of multiple authorship and redaction are clear. Yet, at the same time, the narrative as a whole has been carefully shaped both thematically and structurally.' Also, 'The subordination of individual episodes, some of which may have circulated independently, into the present narrative context has created a whole greater than the sum of its parts' (1982:349). Finally, '… however stunning these scenes are in isolation, their meaning is truncated when they are lifted from their contexts into which the biblical author has placed them. Their placement within the narrative as a whole determines the perspective in which the author meant them to be viewed' (1982:349).

'It is more and more difficult, in the light of the evidence, to view the authors of the biblical narrative texts as victims either of their sources or of their own incompetence. It is correspondingly easier to adopt the general hypothesis that, whether they used sources or not, they have presented to us the material which they wished to present, ordered and crafted in the way they wished to do it; that they have produced texts intended to make sense as they are read cumulatively from beginning to end, each part being seen in the context of the whole' (Provan 1997:36; cf. also pp. 40-41).

3.2.   THE STORIES

1 Kings 17: Yahweh as provider and sustainer of the heathen

The announcement of the coming drought, which opens the Elijah cycle, has no parallels in prophetic literature. Elijah appears on the scene abruptly and unannounced, lacking an introduction of any kind. His words take the form of an oath in the name of Yahweh that no rain will fall until the prophet announces it. The next scene, however, deals with Yahweh's provision for his prophet at the wadi Kerith. While the whole land is in anguish, Yahweh provides for Elijah water from the wadi, and even meat and bread by the ravens. When the wadi does dry up, Yahweh continues to provide for him through the jar and cruse of the widow. The verb כול is used in both instances, as Yahweh undertakes to 'command' the ravens in the first case, and the widow in the second. Elijah finds the widow and her family staring death in the face, but as the woman believes the oracle of Yahweh that their provisions will not be depleted until Yahweh again gives rain on the earth, they are saved from their hopeless situation.

The situation changes, however, as the widow's son falls seriously ill and eventually dies. In response to the woman's accusation that he had come there only to bring calamity on her, Elijah carries the boy to the upper room, where he prays to Yahweh who miraculously revives the lad. Upon bringing him down and presenting him to the widow, she declares Elijah to be a man of God, having the word of Yahweh in his mouth.

2 Kings 1: Yahweh as judge of the king

The account of the reign of Ahaziah, son of Ahab, begins in 1 Kings 22:52 with a negative theological evaluation of the king. He worshipped Baal, followed in the way of his ancestors, and so provoked Yahweh to anger. It is then abruptly noted that Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab,[75] serving to illustrate the absence of Yahweh's blessing over the kingdom.

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[75]   Moab, a neighbour of Israel to the east of the Jordan, was made their vassal by Omri. In 2 Kings 3, which gives more details of the revolt, it is said to have taken place during the reign of Jehoram, both brother and successor of Ahaziah. The revolt probably began after the death of Ahab, continuing for some years (Robinson 1976:17-18). 'The present verse may be designed to specify that the revolt actually broke out in the reign of Ahaziah, one incident of whose short and inglorious reign is then described' (Gray 1964:410).

When Ahaziah is seriously injured by his fall from his upper room, he sends messengers who are to enquire an oracle form Baal-Zebub, the god of the Philistine city Ekron, who is to reveal to Ahaziah whether he will recover from his injury. Elijah meets them on their way, however, and sends them back to Ahaziah with a word from Yahweh, stating that he will indeed not recover from the fall, but that he will surely die. Ahaziah sends three commanders out to summon Elijah to the court, each time with fifty men. The first two of these, with their men, are consumed by fire as Elijah refuses to respond to their call to come down from the mountain where he stays. The third commander humbles himself and escapes the fate of the first two, while an angel of Yahweh urges Elijah to go down with him to the king. Upon his arrival, he repeats the oracle of Yahweh, which proves to be true when Ahaziah dies, 'according to the word of Yahweh, as spoken by Elijah.' The narrative concludes as it commenced, with an editorial note concerning Ahaziah and his successor.

3.3.   A COMPARISON JUSTIFIED?

This chapter argues that, when the above narratives of the Elijah cycle are read in comparison to one another, they contribute to the ideology of the deuteronomistic editor in a very specific way. But is such a comparison justified? Are there any indicators in the text which lead towards such a reading, and if so, what are they?

A number of words are repeated in the two narratives, often in a significant manner. The table below gives a summary of these words and their appearance throughout the Elijah cycle:

	1 Kgs 17	1 Kgs 18	1 Kgs 19	1 Kgs 21	22:52–2 K 1	2 K 2:1-18
עלה	1	11			9	2
ירד	1	2		3	12	1
מִטָּה	1			1	3	
חלה	2				1	
חֳלִי	1				1	
כה אמר יהוה	1			2	3	
מות	3	9	3	8	8	
הֵי / חָיָה	4	3	1		1	2
עֲלִיָּה	2				1	

It is clear that many of these words appear just as frequently, if not more frequently, in the other narratives that constitute the Elijah cycle. Nevertheless, what makes their appearance in 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 1 significant, is the context wherein they appear. These two narratives, for example, are the only ones where both עלה (to ascend) and ירד (to descend) are used in connection with מִטָּה, the bed of either Elijah or Ahazia.

In *1 Kings 17*, the child falls ill (חלה) and dies, upon which the widow challenges Elijah's intentions and asks if he had come there to expose her sins and to kill (מות) her son. Elijah takes him up (עלה) to the upper room (עֲלִיָּה), lays him on his bed (מִטָּה), and prays twice to Yahweh, after which the boy revives (חיה). Elijah then takes him back down (ירד) from the upper room (עֲלִיָּה) into the house, and presents him to his mother alive (חַי).

In *2 Kings 1*, however, Ahaziah falls from his upper room (עֲלִיָּה) and is injured (חלה). He sends messengers to inquire from Baal Zebub whether he will recover (חיה) from his injury. They return with the oracle of Yahweh, however, which states that he will not come down (ירד) from the bed (מִטָּה) to which he had gone up (עלה), but that he will surely die (מות). It seems, then, that it is not so much the mere occurence of these words that is important. More significant is that they reappear in the same context in 2 Kings 1 as they did in 1 Kings 17.

Furthermore, it appears on close syntactic examination that both the narrative of the reviving of the widow's son and that of Ahaziah's illness, are constructed in concentric patterns:[76]

1 Kings 17:17-24:

A   The lad falls ill and dies.
         The widow challenges Elijah's intentions.

B   Elijah takes the lad from his mother, carries him to the upper room and lays him on the bed.

C   Elijah prays to Yahweh, stretches himself out over the lad three times, and prays to Yahweh again.

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[76] Van Seters, as mentioned in chapter 1, has followed up on Noth's reference to Mediterranean parallels of history writing, and included that of the ancient Near East in his study. McKenzie (1991:148) notes that the parallel method of composition used by Greek historians and detailed by Van Seters, 'has important implications for various issues that have arisen in the study of the DH. This kind of history writing involved the organization of narratives by parataxis and ring composition.'

Yahweh hears his prayer, and the lad revives.

B'   Elijah takes the lad from the bed, carries him down from the upper room and presents him to his mother alive.

A'   The widow declares that Elijah is a man of God with the true word of Yahweh in his mouth.

In 1 Kings 17[77], the prayer of Elijah and Yahweh's response to that prayer is emphasized, as can be seen from the central position of C. Yahweh has aided the hopeless. Similarly, it illustrates the transformation of the woman (A') that have been brought about by the grace of Yahweh shown to her.

1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1:1-18:[78]

A   Editorial note and theological judgement of Ahaziah.

B   Ahaziah falls from the upper room and is injured.

C   Ahaziah sends messengers to inquire an oracle from Baal-Zebub.

An *angel of Yahweh* sends Elijah to meet them and give them the *oracle of Yahweh*.

They return to Ahaziah and tell him the *oracle of Yahweh*.

Ahaziah interrogates them, establishing that it was Elijah who gave them the oracle.

D   Ahaziah sends a commander with fifty men to summon Elijah to court.

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[77]   Cohn (1982:336-337) has discovered a similar concentric pattern in the narrative (he calls it chiastic): 'The inner core of the chiasmus is the miraculous resuscitation which demonstrates Elijah's control and his intimate relationship with Yahweh. Here in the "upper room" (*'aliyyāh*), Elijah is alone with Yahweh whom he twice addresses (D, D'), first accusing him of the boy's death and, second, praying for his intercession. Elijah's ritual resuscitation (E) anticipates Yahweh's actual resuscitation (E') of the boy. The chiasmus thus functions to center Elijah's intercession with Yahweh and to dramatize the moral urgency of his appeal. Too, the author balances the twice repeated verb "to slay" (*lĕhāmît*, vv 18, 20) before the miracle with the twice repeated verb "to live" (*h□ây*, vv 22, 23) after it to underscore the transformation. Moreover, he carefully ephasizes (*sic*) the name Elijah in the second half of the chiasmus (vv 22, 23, 24) in contrast to the usage of the pronominal suffix "he" (vv 19, 20, 21) in the first half. The repetition of the name stresses the personal victory of Elijah as agent of life over death.'

[78]   As seen in chapter 1, vv. 9-16 is held by many scholars to be an insertion into the account of an anonomous king's death. Cf. McKenzie (1991:93): 'The story in 2 Kings 1:2-8 + 17aα draws on a genre which Trebolle … identifies in 1 Kings 14 as a "consultation in a case of illness." Another example of the genre occurs in 2 Kings 8:7-15. In all cases, an injury/illness is reported … and an emissary is sent to inquire whether the afflicted person will recover … In the cases outside of 2 Kings 1 … the emissary bears a gift… But in 2 Kings 1:3-4 Elijah intercepts the emissary with the message that Ahaziah will die. Two of the examples end with the report that the illness proved fatal as predicted by the prophet (14:17-18; 1: 17aα)… The form is obviously flexible enough to accommodate certain variation: … But there are also elements of the stories that go beyond the flexibility of the form to indicate redactional activity. There is no place in the form for the extended story in 2 Kgs 1:9-16. This suggests, not that vv 9-16 are an insertion by a later editor but that they contain an originally independent account which a single author has incorporated into the story of Ahaziah's consultation.'

Fire falls from heaven and consumes them.

D Ahaziah sends a second commander with fifty men to summon Elijah to court.

    Fire falls from heaven and consumes them.

C' Ahaziah sends a third commander with fifty men, who humbles himself before Elijah and begs for mercy.

    An *angel of Yahweh* urges Elijah to go down with the commander.

    Elijah gives the *oracle of Yahweh* to Ahazia.

B' Ahaziah dies according to the word of Yahweh, spoken by Elijah.

A' Editorial note

In contrast with the previous narrative in 1 Kings 17, it is not the mercy and kindness of Yahweh that is here emphasized, but Yahweh's judgment of the king and his officials, as can be seen from the central position of D.

Smelik (1990:241) also made mention to the similarities between 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 1 in his essay on the literary function of 1 Kings 17:8-24. He compared[79] the widow of Zarephath with queen Jezebel, since they are both Phoenician, both widows (even if Jezebel will become one only later in Kings), and since both of their sons undergo determining communication with Elijah: 'This difference between the two stories featuring the son of a Sidonian woman and a roof-chamber elucidates the contrast between the two women: the widow who believes in Elijah and his God, and the queen who tries to murder all the prophets of the Lord' (Smelik 1990:241). His argument is convincing, yet based more on content analysis than on syntactical and morphological grounds, as that of the present study. It remains significant that Jezebel is never a character – in fact is not even referred to – in any of the narratives in question. Therefore I compare the characters of the widow and the king as they interact with Elijah in the two narratives respectively.

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[79] Another convincing comparison has been made by Brodie (1999:16-18), between king Ahaziah and the prophet Elijah, focussing on their very different ways of departing from life, which is also characterised by contrasts in vertical movement: 'The essence of the two panels is that they show two complementary faces of death. Ahaziah's fate shows death as a descent: a banal accident leaves him in bed critically ill and, having placed his faith in false gods, his destiny is to stay in bed and die. Elijah's passing, however, is a mystery-filled ascent' (1999:18). Brodie takes the much larger Elijah-Elisha narrative for his study, however, seeing them as consisting of two dramas, each with four diptychs. Thus he sees an elaborate structure in this meta-narrative. The focus of the present study is different, however.

3.4.   A NOTE ON THE BAAL OF THE PASSAGES

Before the discovery of the Ras Shamra texts, the various compound place names in the Old Testament involving Baal, gave rise to the idea that the term Baal was primarily an appellative which signified various and seperate deities. The discoveries made at Ras Shamra made it clear, however, that Baal was a cosmic lord, the great storm- and fertility deity Baal-Hadad, and not a mere local deity. The older consensus made way for the suspicion that a southern Canaanite form of this deity probably lay behind the Baal who rivalled with Yahweh for the allegiance of Israel (Dearman 1993:173). This does not mean that all such compound names testify to specialised forms of this cosmic deity. Dearman makes his point that some of them may still point to distinct deities, even to Yahweh. Most of them, however, indicate local representations of the great deity, who was Yahweh's chief rival in pre-exilic Israel (Dearman 1993:176).

Omri of Israel, although hardly mentioned in DH apart from his negative editorial evaluation, was a statesman of stature, who advanced an administrative model based on that of the old city-states. He attacked Moab and so gained control of the northern part of the kingdom. Wanting to increase control of commerce and improve relations between the Phoenicians and the Aramaeans, he established trading alliances with Phoenicia, a consequence of which was the marriage between his own son, Ahab, and Jezebel, daughter of Itto-baal, king of Tyre (Farisani 2005:48, 50; cf. 1 Kings 16:31). According to the narratives in Kings, Jezebel was determined to advance her home cult in Israel. Ahab built a temple to Baal in Samaria, as an official sanctuary, implying the official recognition of Baal in Israel (Mulder 1962:28; Farisani 2005:51). He also made an Asherah, according to 1 Kings 16, 31-33.

Given Ahab's political and economical involvement with Phoenicia, and since Baal Melqart[80] was the patron deity of Tyre, it has ussually been supposed that it would be this deity whose cult Ahab would accommodate in Samaria (Mulder 1962:28; Day 2000:73; Cf. Day's discussion for the arguments usually forwarded in supporting this view, 2000:74). Recently, however, Day has argued (2000:73-77) that the Phoenician form of Baal that was promoted by Jezebel and opposed by Elijah was Baal-Shamem, 'Baal of the heavens'. He pointed to the

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[80]   'The god is simply called Baal in 1 Kings 18. However, a majority of scholars tend to suppose that this is not the familiar Baal known from elsewhere in the Old Testament, but rather Melqart, spoken of by modern schoars as the Baal of Tyre and the chief god of Tyre (Day 2000:73).

fact that the title 'Baal of Tyre' is only attested of Melqart much later, in the 2nd century, and that classical sources regularly equate Melqart with Heracles and not Zeus, who was the Greek equivalent of Baal. 'Melqart' does also not occur in any of the names of the kings of Tyre, but the theophoric element, which most naturally refer to Baal-Shamem, is frequently found. Judging from Baal-Shamem as the first deity referred to in the treaty between Baal, king of Tyre and Esarhaddon, he was probably the most important Tyrian god from this period. Also, the god of Carmel, the setting of the challenge of 1 Kings 18, was always equated with Zeus, who in turn was associated with Baal-Shamem. Since the local Baal would have been simply a local form of the universal Baal, there is for Day no need to believe the Baal of 1 Kings 18 to be simply the local Baal of Mt Carmel. Finally, Ahab would have met much resistence if he had chosen to advance a deity so foreign to the Israelites as Melqart.

Who is Baal-Zebub?

The name of this deity has been the source of much speculation. The name occurs only four times in the Old Testament, all of which are in 2 Kings 1, the present passage. Ekron was one of the five Philistine cities, but that does not indicate Baal-Zebub to be of non-Semitic origin. He should rather be considered as taken over by the Philistine Ekronites and incorporated into their local cult (Herrmann 1999:154). With their arrival in Palestine, the Philistines integrated local deities into their cult, as is evident from the Biblical examples of Astarte and Dagon, and they even gradually took over the entire Canaanite pantheon (Mulder 1962:140). The Semitic name of the deity also points to its Canaanite origin (Brongers 1982:10).

As for the meaning of this name, however, there is no agreement. זְבוּב (Zebub) occurs in the Old Testament also in Isaiah 7:18 and Ecclesiastes 10:1, where it means 'fly', and so the compound name has been translated 'Lord of the flies.' According to Brongers (1982:10), this should be understood to mean 'the destroyer of flies.' Greek parallels exist for this interpretation in the name of the deity *Zeus Apomuios*, who drove flies from Olympus, as well as in Josephus' translation of Baal-Zebub as *Baal muioon*. It would then imply that this deity was associated with flies as bearers of disease (Gray 1964:413).

Although the consonants זבוב are well attested, being supported by the Peshitta, the LXX and the Vulgate, very few scholars believe that the expression is correct as it stands, and most

suggest that it rests on a revision of the text which deformed the name of the deity due to the editors' abhorrence of Baal (Tangberg 1992:293). Tangberg argues, however, that when the symbolic value of the flies is taken into account, the text makes complete sense as it is. By referring to the significance of flies in the ancient cultures and mythologies of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the West-Semitic area, he holds that the name refers to a local Baal figure with a fly ornament which signifies the healing attributes of the deity.

From those who regard the text as corrupted, many different theories have come forth. According to Fensham (in Hobbs 1985:8), who appeals to the Ras Shamra texts, the synonymn *dbb* for *išt* (fire), which occurs in Anat II, 42-43, should aid us in the interpretation of זְבוּב, thus adducing the fire motif in the Elijah narratives (Hobbs 1985:8). Brongers (1982:11) names three reasons for his rejection of this theory. Firstly, the deity referred to in the relevant text is not Baal, but Anat, daughter of El. Secondly, it is not Baal-Zebub that should be identified with the Baal of 1 Kings 18, but Melqart. Lastly, it is unclear why Ahaziah would expect aid for his illness from a fire god. According to him, the context clearly shows that Baal-Zebub was much rather an oracle than a fire god.

Mulder (1962:143) makes another appeal to Ugaritic by referring to the noun *zbln* 'illness'. This implies that Baal, apart from being a god of fertility and vegetation, may also have been specialised in Ekron to fulfill the social function of healer or counsellor in the case of illness. Herrmann (1999:156) rejects this on the basis that the root for the Ugaritic word is *zbln* and not *zbl*.

The most popular suggestion is that זְבוּב is that it is a derogatory deformation[81] of *zbl* "prince", which is a title of honour for Baal, Yareah☐ and Yam in the Ugaritic literature, and closely related to the Hebrew noun זְבוּל which means 'abode'. This suggestion is affirmed by the βεελζεβούλ forms of the New Testament, which refer to a chief demon in Jewish mythology (Tangberg 1992:294). It is argued, then, that the masoretic זְבוּב should be emended to זְבוּל, 'Baal the prince.' According to Herrmann, the meaning of this god in the Syrian-Palestinian area would probably be essentially the same than what is deduced from the Ras Shamra texts (1999:155).

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[81] The distortion of this name to Baal-Zebub corresponds with other examples of the distortion of the names of Canaanite deities in the Old Testament, e.g. *bōšet*, 'shame', for Baal and Ashtoreth (with the vowels of *bōšet*) for Ashtart (Day 2000:80).

The precise meaning of the name Baal-Zebub may elude scholars until further evidence is discovered. Handy (1994:141) is probably right when he points out that it is impossible to explain the status of Baal-Zebub in his own pantheon in the city of Ekron, or his relationship with other deities, due to the lack of evidence. What does seem clear, is that he dealt in a speciality and a renowned skill, which caused even rulers from beyond his domain to consult him (Handy 1994:141). In his bureaucracy of the Canaanite deities, Handy then classifies Baal-Zebub as an artisan god. The identity of Baal-Zebub should not, however, be severed from the cosmic Baal figure referred to above. The deuteronomistic note at the end of 1 Kings states that Ahaziah followed in the way of his father and mother, and worshiped Baal. The narrative concerning Baal-Zebub then follows, and so it does not make sense to conclude that Baal-Zebub is meant (in the narrative at least) to have been an entirely different deity than the Tyrian Baal worshiped by Ahab.

3.5.   IRONY AS INSTRUMENT IN THE HANDS OF THE EDITOR

The irony that is achieved by the juxtapositioning of these two narratives deserve our attention, for it is exactly that which the editor uses to amplify his ideology. This irony is achieved through contrast on various levels, which mainly include the contrasting of Baal with Yahweh, as well as the widow and her son with Ahaziah.

The authentication of Elijah

The opening lines of the Elijah Cycle lack the expected introduction. Elijah is simply described as the Tishbite. The name of his father is not given. It is not even stated that he was a prophet of Yahweh. The end of the narrative, however, contains the authentication expected at the beginning, but from the mouth of a poor widow in pagan Phoenicia (Olley 1998:30). She calls him איש האלהים, "man of God", who has the true word of Yahweh in his mouth. Thus his authenticity as man of God is verified by a daughter of that very people he opposed (Rice 1990:145). This forms a stark contrast with the captains of fifty men, who also (albeit sneeringly) address Elijah as איש האלהים, but who are consumed by fire from heaven for their lack of respect.

Vertical movement

Another contrast that should be noted is that between the vertical movement involved with the illnesses of the widow's son and Ahaziah. When Elijah takes the boy from his mother, carries him up (עלה) to the upper room (עֲלִיָּה), and lays him down on the bed (מִטָּה), it marks the beginning of his revival (חיה). He prays, stretches himself out over the child, and prays again.[82] After his recovery, he brings him back down (ירד) from the upper room, and presents him to his mother alive (חַי). For the lad and his mother, the upper room is the environment of hope and healing, 'while the reversal of physical direction highlights the transformation from death to life' (Cohn 1982:336). For Ahaziah, however, his upper room is the beginning of the end, when he falls down from it and is fatally injured. His plan to find out from Baal-Zebub if he will recover is flaunted when the messengers return with an oracle of Yahweh, which is repeated three times in the narrative. As Elijah had stretched himself out over the lad three times, so also is the oracle of Yahweh related to Ahaziah three times, but for him it holds no promise of salvation. His three attempts to make void the oracle of Yahweh had failed. He had disregarded the God of Israel, and so he will not come down (ירד) from the bed (מִטָּה) to which he had gone up (עלה). Whereas the life of the boy had returned to his body so that he revived (חיה), Ahaziah will "surely die" (מות). He will not share in the fortune of the widow's son, and the repeated references to vertical movement emphasize this point.

A striking matter for further research is the parallel with Hosea 5-6 and 13-14, that John Day has suggested refers to Israel's death and resurrection, with imagery that he claims may well have derived from Baal (2000:118-127). For him (2000:120), Hosea 13:1, 'Ephraim … incurred guilt through Baal and died', implies ironically that, for Hosea, it is not Baal who dies and rises, but

> Israel who dies through worshipping Baal, followed, if repentant, by resurrection. In keeping with this Hos. 6.3 associates Israel's resurrection with the rain ('he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth'), and Hos. 14.6 (ET 5) likewise mentions the dew as bringing about renewed fertility in Israel (I will be as the dew to Israel...'). This is striking, since in the Ugaritic Baal myth we read that Baal took the rain and two of the dew goddesses with him when he went into the underworld, and it is implied that they reappeared when he rose again.

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[82] The bodily contact is apparently to infuse the vitality of the prophet into the lifeless corpse (Rice 1990:144).

Could it be that we find an echo of this imagery in the Elijah Cycle, once again in the context of Baal, and that it wants to inspire its readers to turn from polytheism (in particular the worship of Baal) and worship Yahweh as the only God of Israel?

A storm and fertility god?

The opening lines of the Elijah Cycle should be understood as a direct challenge to the authority and ability of Baal,[83] who was believed to be the storm and fertility god who bestowed the blessings of fecundity. This opening prophecy places both the narrative of the widow and the following events on mount Carmel within the context of the challenge to Baal's ability to provide for and protect his followers.[84] If Elijah's prophetic word proved to be true, it would not only prove him to be a true prophet of Yahweh, but it would also portray Baal as powerless, and his abilities as of no effect against the mastering qualities of Yahweh. Although the plot of the drought reaches its climax in the contest of Carmel and the on-setting rains, which prove Yahweh as the God who controls the elements usually credited to Baal, the events described in Chapter 17 is also very significant for the development of this plot, and for the developing contrast between Baal and Yahweh.

While the land suffers in the anguish of the drought, the prophet of Yahweh has no need. This contrasts with the widow in Zarephat. She lives about seven miles south of Sidon, in the territory of Baal, the provider of fecundity itself, and yet Elijah finds her as she is making preparations for her own death and that of her son. The provision for this heathen woman, in the territory of Baal, ironically comes not from the Canaanite deity of fertility, but from the God of Israel. This further demonstrates that the power of Yahweh is not limited to the region

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[83]   Cf. Farisani (2005:52): 'Elijah was a prophet of doom. His first confrontation was with Ahab. The two confronted each other, both accusing the other of being a "troublemaker of Israel" (1 Ki 18:4, 17-18). Elijah appeared before Ahab to tell him that there would be a three year drought in Israel. The point was that Baal, whose worshippers claimed he could bring rain, was to be challenged at his own game …'
         It is true that 1 Kings 17-19 form a literary unit with an integrated narrative plot. However, because Cohn (1982:334) sees only this unit and not the larger structure of the Elijah Cycle as pointed out and discussed here, he is mistaken when he says that 'only 1 Kings 17-19 within the Elijah cycle has as its central theme the battle for the establishment of the exclusive worship of Yahweh in Israel against the forces of Baal. Thus its placement and theme justify the considerations of it as a separable literary composition.'
[84]   Smelik's (1990:240-241) argument against such an interpretation on the grounds that the first readers would need a fair knowledge of Canaanite mythology is not convincing. Chapter 5 will illustrate that there really wasn't as much difference between early Israelite and Canaanite religion as had been previously thought, and also that the narratives were edited into their current form at a time when Baal worship was in fact very common.

of Israel (Brongers 1979:169; Cohn 1982:335). When her son does fall ill and dies, she again finds her salvation in Yahweh, who aids the helpless.

A second level of contrast lies in the fact that Yahweh, through his prophet, provides for the non-Israelites so that they 'ate for many days', while the land of Israel itself, where the people of Yahweh live, struggles for mere survival. Deuteronomy 8:7-10 (NKJV) serves as an illustration of this irony:

> *For the Lord our God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.*

Not only is this not the case for the people of Yahweh living in Israel, but, much worse, the widow in the land of Baal itself is well provided for! The editor uses this irony to emphasise the apostacy of the nation as reason for the lack of Yahweh's blessing on the land, reminding the reader by means of a narrative that Israel has no claim on the land: 'it is an act of sheer graciousness and Israel is completely beholden to Yahweh' (cf. Deut 6:10, 18; Brueggemann 1968:395). The narrative, and its contrasting elements, all confirm deuteronomistic ideology, (Deut 11:16-17):

> *Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.*

The oracle of Yahweh

This irony is further developed when compared with Ahaziah's illness in 2 Kings 1. The widow undisputingly trusted in the oracle of Yahweh (כה אמר יהוה), a God foreign to her state cult, that her provisions would not be depleted. Blum (1997:281-282) has pointed out the way that this episode in Zarephat has been constructed around the theme of the prophetic or word motif, and that it is here about

> …das Vertrauen in das von Elia verkündete JHWH-Wort. Um dies mit der nötigen Deutlichkeit herauszustellen, wird der Witwe – sie hatte zuvor schon beim Gott Elias geschworen (*v*. 12) – eine harte Glaubensprobe zugemutet und diese mit dem Gotteswort begründet (*vv*. 13-14). Dem korrespondiert schlieβlich der ausführliche Erfüllungsvermerk in *vv*. 15-16. Wesentlich ist darüber

hinaus die Verortung in Sarepta, "das zu Sidon gehört" (*v.* 9): Nicht nur wird damit evident, daβ auch im Land des Baal die Dürre herrscht und daβ (allein) JHWH Abhilfe schaffen kann, - die sidonische Witwe wird met ihrem JHWH-Glauben geradezu zur Gegenfigur zur Sidonierin Isebel (xvi 31). Von daher gelangt Elias Aufenthalt in Phönizien erst mit der Erkenntnisaussage der Witwe in xvii 24 an seinen Zielpunkt: "Nun weiβ ich, daβ du ein Gottesmann bist und das Wort JHWHs in deinem Munde verläβlich ('mt) ist".

In contrast to the believing (heathen) widow, the King of Israel seems quite eager to disregard the oracle of Yahweh. He does so firstly by seeking a prophecy not of Yahweh, the God of Israel, but of Baal-Zebub, a god who, as deuteronomistic ideology would have it, should be foreign to the state cult of Israel. The narrative revolves around the rhetorical question 'Is there no God in Israel?', which is repeated three times in 2 Kings 1. Ahaziah is criticised for his lack of trust in his own God and his running after the foreign deity of fertility. Ironically, the messengers return with the oracle of Yahweh, which is rather arrogantly ignored by the king. He does not repent,[85] as one might expect. He does not sit in ashes and he does not beg for mercy. He sends three commanders with fifty men each to capture but one man. The first two and their companies are consumed by fire from heaven, and yet he sends the third. This last commander, like the first messengers, seem to be more in touch with the authority of Yahweh than their king, and he is spared when he humbles himself before Elijah. He also returns, like the first messengers, with the oracle of Yahweh, this time in the mouth of the man of God himself. Ahaziah could disregard and ignore the word of Yahweh, but he could not escape it. At the end of the narrative, it is then also stated quite plainly that Ahaziah died according to the word of Yahweh, as spoken by Elijah. Thiel has stated clearly (1991:157):

> Die Propheten-Geschichte schloβ mit der Feststellung: "Da starb er (Ahasja) gemäβ dem Wort Jahwes, das Elia gesprochen hatte" (17aα). Der Satz konstatiert das Eintreffen des im Jahwewort (V. 3, 5, in der zweiten Schicht auch V. 17) Angekündigten. Derartige Erfüllungsvermerke sind innerhalb des DtrG. besonders in den Kön.-Büchern häufig und drücken das dtr. Theologumenon von der Übereinstimmung von Gotteswort und Geschichte aus: Was Jahwe durch seine Propheten ankündgt, das geschieht auch.

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[85] Wolff's (1975:83-100) treatment of the verb שׁוּב 'to turn, repent' in terms of the role it plays in the kerygma of DH, urging the nation of Israel to repent and turn back to Yahweh with their whole hearts, points to a great irony. It is the same verb used when Ahaziah sends the second and third captains with their fifty men, in this context meaning 'to do something again, to repeat'. Stubbornheartedly, he continues on his idolatrous path, even after he had been rebuked by Elijah.

Ahab, who humbled himself (1 Kings 21:17) after the judgment delivered by Elijah, was spared during his lifetime, as was Jeroboam and Baasha. All of their dynasties were swept away during their son's reigns (Miscall 1989:76).

For the widow, the end was life and blessing. For the King, the end is death and condemnation. Both was the result of the word of Yahweh.[86]

Social class

This irony, which is achieved through the contrasting of the widow and Ahaziah, is even further developed by the difference in social station. The socially disadvantaged, economically underprivileged and cultically foreign is favoured by Yahweh, while the very King of Israel is despised for his idolatry. Yahweh returned the life of the boy, and so gave him back to his mother. Yet the editorial note in 2 Kings 1:17 abruptly states that Jehoram succeeded Ahaziah, since the latter had no sons. His lineage would not be continued.

3.6.   THE CURRENT POSITIONS OF THE NARRATIVES IN THE ELIJAH CYCLE

The narratives of Elijah's flight to the wadi Kerith and then to the widow of Zarephat, open the Elijah cycle. The narrative of the ascension of Elijah has more in common with the Elisha Cycle which follows than with the Elijah Cycle itself, and so many commentators include that narrative in the Elisha Cycle.[87] That means that the narrative of the oracle delivered by Elijah to Ahaziah closes the Elijah Cycle. If a comparative reading of these two narratives are justified, as had been argued, then this fact becomes structurally very significant. The irony which the editor achieved through these two narratives now envelopes the entire Elijah Cycle and amplifies its kerygma in the context of DH, which is simply to proclaim that 'Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one.' This reveals the polemic nature of the Elijah cycle.

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[86]   In his portrayal of the Elijah-Elisha narratives as an interpretive synthesis of the primary history and a literary model for the gospels, Brodie notes with regard to 1 Kings 16:29 – 2 Kings 2:25, and 2 Kings 3-13, which he regards as two dramas of the Elijah-Elisha Cycles, that the 'core of the two dramas deals with life and death. The beginning, despite its story of a drought, shows God's word as the Creator-like source of life. The subsequent acts portray the way the word engages life and, increasingly, death. During the first drama (1 Kgs 16:29-2 Kgs 2:25) the emphasis on death seems to increase, until it is turned back by Elijah's assumption into heaven. In the second drama, with the entrance of Jehu and Athaliah, death becomes almost overwhelming. But again, at the end, it is turned back. The word has accomplished its purpose' (Brodie 1999:8).

[87]   Cf. Gray (1964:416-417); Brongers (1982:18); Hobbs (1985:18-19); McKenzie 1991:81). Robinson (1976:23) also notes that the 'main point of the story for the editors of Kings is clearly the commissioning of Elisha,' and not to show that 'Elijah was so close to God in spirit that he was taken to heaven without passing through the experience of death,' thus making him, together with the patriarch Enoch (Gen. 5:24), a foreshadowing of the ascension of Jesus.

3.7.   CONCLUSION

The comparative study of the two narratives of Elijah's stay at the widow of Zarephat and the injury of King Ahaziah, has shown that their juxtapositioning serves the purpose of the deuteronomistic editor. The various contrasts which become evident from such a comparative reading, support and develop the ideology of the deuteronomistic editor. The positions that were allocated to these narratives at the beginning and end of the Elijah Cycle result in the enveloping of the Cycle in stark contrast, thus defining it as a polemic writing against polytheistic Yahwism, and against Baalism in particular. It is unlikely that the Elijah stories are first and formost prophet authorisation narratives, as is argued by De Vries (1985:208). Although this end is certainly also achieved, the issue at stake is not the authority of the prophet, but the authority of his God. The Elijah Cycle has a certain kerygmatic agenda which it wishes to fulfill. Elijah acts as representative of Yahweh, but the primary focus of the Elijah Cycle is not on the prophet, but on his God. The narratives proclaim an understanding of who Yahweh is and how He should be served. He is Yahweh God, and He will tolerate no other gods before him.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF A COMPARATIVE READING OF 1 KINGS 17 AND 1 KINGS 22:52 – 2 KINGS 1[88]

4.1.   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the Elijah Cycle from the perspective of a comparative reading of the narratives that form its edges. It argued, in summary, that the kerygma of the deuteronomistic editor is emphasised through the ironies that are established by the differences between the events surrounding the widow of Zarephat (1 Kings 17) on the one hand, and king Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1) on the other. This chapter moves beyond the literary analysis of the previous by investigating the contribution that social scientific criticism stands to make to such a reading of the Elijah Cycle. It recognises the links that exist between literature and its social and cultural context (Stone 1996), and takes as its hypothesis that the dynamics of the texts are determined to such an extent by the social values of the ancient Mediterranean World, that the role played by the narratives within their larger deuteronomistic context may be easily underestimated if these social values are overlooked.

4.2.   SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM AND BIBLICAL TEXTS[89]

Social scientific exegesis supplements other methods of critical interpretation in that its primary focus is the interpretation of Biblical texts (Elliott 1993:33). Insights from the social sciences contribute to the studying of the text as an 'encodement of information concerning the social system, as containing a message that is both ideational and pragmatic in nature, and as a medium of social interaction' (Elliott 1993:33). The text therefore has encoded within

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[88]   A shortened version of this chapter has been published in *Old Testament Essays* 18/3 (2005), (forthcoming).

[89]   The application of research results from the field of the social sciences to texts from the West-Semitic world has been illustrated by the work of various scholars. Cf. for instance to Bergant, Simkins and Stansell in Semeia 68 and various publications by Botha, cited here: (2000:36-49).

    Also, 'The anthropological literature on honor and shame in the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East has become relatively well known among biblical scholars... The issues raised in these discussions have already impacted the interpretation of ancient literature, from classical texts … to the New Testament … and from the literature of the Hebrew Bible … to such early Jewish texts as Ben Sira … Anthropologists have themselves made explicit links between the honor/shame complex, as it manifests itself in the cultures which they have studied, and certain ideological values that seem to underlie such ancient texts as the Homeric epics …' (Stone 1996:42). 'The anthropological literature on honour and shame deals with the northern and the southern shore of the Mediterranean, and a significant portion is based on societies in Middle Eastern areas' (Stone 1996:42).

itself both a reflection of the social reality wherein the text developed, as well as an appeal by which the writer means to influence and impact the readers.

For such communication to be possible, however, there must exist between the writer (or in this case redactor) and the readers, a sharing of social and cultural patterns of thought and behaviour (Elliott 1993:37). There has been a growing awareness of a 'comprehensive strangeness', a radical difference in character between biblical and contemporary Western societies (Hollenbach 1987:50). It is the social and cultural differences between Western readers of the Bible on the one hand and that of the redactor and his readers on the other, that necessitate the consideration of differences between the social location of the interpreter and that of the authors and objects to be interpreted (Elliott 1993:37), so to reduce distortion in communication.

Tracing the development of the Elijah Cycle, and keeping in mind the reworking of the previous separate stories and fragments of a tradition (Long 1984:175) to its final form and as part of a coherent literary context which aims at conveying a certain theological message (Botha 2000:36), it becomes increasingly important for the reader to remain sensitive to ancient social values crucial to the interpretation of the narrative, that may be encoded in the text and that may be easily overlooked in exegesis, to the detriment of the message of the literary whole.[90]

This comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle, then, directs particular attention on the one hand to the compositional-rhetorical strategy of the text (Chapter 3), and on the other hand, its social situation (Chapter 4). Therefore it aims at a comprehensive understanding of the strategy of the Elijah Cycle as a composition which is designed, in its totality of form and content, as well as in its embodiment of the aims, self-interests, and ideology of the deuteronomistic editor (Chapter 5), to have a specific impact upon the hearers, thereby serving as persuasive discourse and a medium of social interaction (Elliott 1993:55). In this undertaking, social scientific criticism makes a decided contribution in providing a methodological means for examining the social and cultural system outside the text which in turn shaped the features of the text itself (Elliott 1993:69).

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[90] 'Sometimes the norm is clearly formulated within the work itself, but at other times it is left to the reader to draw upon his or her knowledge of sexual, social, political and religious customs to consider whether a certain action should be seen as positive or negative' (Botha 2000:36).

Pivotal Social Values of the Ancient Mediterranean World

'Every culture has a central cluster of values that control all aspects of life in that culture. A value is a broad principle or guide to behaviour which is transmitted from generation to generation, often for thousands of years without change and which directs the daily life of all of society's members. Values provide patterns for living, criteria for making decisions, and yardsticks by which to evaluate oneself and others. This central cluster of values comprises the "core" values of a society' (Pilch 1991:49). Life and human existence in the ancient Mediterranean were regulated by the pivotal values of *honour* and *shame*[91](Matthews & Benjamin 1994:7, 11), which ensured that members of society would stay within the boundaries of what was considered to be proper behaviour. Since gender, power and religion were the most significant lines bisecting society (Malina 1993:30-31), those would be honourable who knew how to behave socially correctly within these boundaries (Botha 2000:38). He or she who violated the duties, rights and taboo's connected with these boundaries, was shameful. In this sense honour is a claim to worth that is publicly acknowledged, while being shamed would imply that it is publicly denied (Plevnik 1998:106-107). Since being shamed involves a decrease of honour, it is always negative (cf. also Matthews & Benjamin 1994:13). To 'have shame', on the other hand, is always positive, since it implies a concern for one's honour (Plevnik 1998:107). To 'be shameless' is shameful, since it indicates a lack of concern for one's honour and an insensitivity to the opinion of others (Moxnes 1996:22). The public nature of honour and shame is important. Since the group determines the identity of the individual, honour and shame is a public matter. Recognition by the group confirms honour and results in a new social status, from which follows the expectation of honourable behaviour (Moxnes 1996:20).

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[91]   Differences exist between the various local versions, as made clear by cross-cultural comparisons. 'If differences due to geographical separation can be found, then differences due to temporal separation can be assumed to exist as well. Thus, one must be cautious in using this anthropological material to interpret ancient texts, and such interpretations need to be based on literary analysis as well as cross-cultural comparison' (Stone 1996:42).

'Just as the concepts themselves differ in meaning and nuance from one place to another, anthropologists have sought to explicate them in various ways. Cultural, psychological, symbolic, ecological, economic, political, and social structural interpretations have been offered, and a consensus on the fundamentals has been no easier to reach than it has been on anything else that anthropologists study' (Chance 1994:140).

Honour and shame reflects the Mediterranean separation between the sexes and the power structures of ancient Mediterranean society[92] (Moxnes 1996:21). Men, who held the dominant public position, embodied honour and competed among themselves to defend their masculinity as well as the chastity of women under their authority (Moxnes 1996:21). This points out the difference between 'ascribed' honour, which one is born with and which is rather passive, and 'acquired' honour, which can be earned or achieved (Mayes 2000:478), most often through a social game called 'challenge and response' (Pilch 1991:53). The ancient Mediterranean perception of '*limited good*' implied that an increase of one person's honour implied a decrease of another's, therefore an increase in shame. With such a high emphasis on honour as the highest value, public humiliation is a serious matter, a 'fate worse than death' (Plevnik 1996:108).

Women, who occupied the private or domestic sphere, embodied (positive) shame, understood as virtues such as modesty and shyness, that enabled her to preserve her chastity and obedience to the male head of her family (Moxnes 1996:21). Such shame is never won or claimed, but rather presupposed and maintained by the privacy and purity of the female person.

A basic understanding of the dynamics surrounding honour and shame is vital to the understanding of the two narratives under question within their larger literary context: that of the Elijah Cycle on the one hand, and that of DH on the other: a point that will be illustrated in this chapter and the one that is to follow.

Naturally there can be no perfect coherence and correlation between the ancient culture of Israel and that of other cultures explicated by anthropologists[93] (Stone 1996:33; cf. Chance 1994:141 on the danger of generalisations of honour and shame), and this point must armour the exegete with a constant caution and sensitivity toward the text as an entity that, although it

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[92] This is true to such an extent that the specific relationship between an honour-and-shame code and male and female roles has been put forward as distinctive for the Mediterranean region (Moxnes 1996:33). Cf. also Stone (1996:42-46).

[93] 'As a result of the observation, analysis, and interpretation of various cultures carried out by anthropologists over the years, there is now a large body of scholarship devoted to exploring the sorts of conventional assumptions and "implicit meanings" (Douglas …) which circulate or have circulated in a vast number of cultures and subcultures across time and space. This body of scholarship helps us to recognize some of the ways in which human societies construe the significance of certain social relationships and processes. Such recognition serves a heuristic function to the extent that we are able to formulate questions and hypotheses about the significance of social relationships and processes recounted in ancient texts' (Stone 1996:33).

does reflect its ancient context, is still an imperfect source of ethnographic data, offering rather 'glimpses of the sort of world which was deemed possible, or in some cases desirable, by those individuals and groups among whom the biblical texts originated' (Stone 1996:34). What anthropological concepts can do is to help us construct and continually reasses the reading frames that we use in our interpretations, sensitising us to the cultural and sociological differences between the societies that meet each other in the reading process (Stone 1996:36).

The problem for many is the question of coherence between the cultural premises postulated on the basis of anthropological evidence and textual elements (Cf. for example Chance 1994:141-143). Yet, as Stone states (1996:36),

> (T)his question can only be answered after an attempt at anthropological interpretation has actually been carried out. An anthropological reading must finally be judged, at that point, in the same way that other readings are judged: on the basis of its plausibility in the light of information brought forward by the scholar for consideration by the wider scholarly community.

Hence, it is in moving back and forth between the anthropological data gathered and the ancient text itself that the body of knowledge is continually tested and refined. This acknowledgement aids the scholarly community to keep in mind that the knowledge created, whether by the anthropologist or by the exegete, is always preliminary and hypothetical in nature.

4.3.   THE ACTORS OF THE NARRATIVE

The dialogue through which the characters interact contributes to lively narratives with dramatic action. It is through the explicit and implicit characters that the narrator brings the desired message across, and therefore they contain important information as to the interpretation of the texts. In her socio-cultural analysis of the Elijah and Elisha stories, Rentería (1992:96-97) has argued that, in those stories in the two cycles which lack broad political awareness, an analysis of the relationship between the prophet and the other main character of each story provides access to its meaning, as well as to the broader social significance of the stories. In these stories the characters[94] would convey more meaning than

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[94]   Since she provides a socio-cultural analysis of the Elijah and Elisha Cycles, it is an important part of her methodology to understand the individuals as 'generic characters, representatives of sub-groups of people within Omrid society who suffered similar hardships and found solutions through a relationship to the prophet' (Rentería 1992:97).

the miraculous acts involved, since it is the interaction between the prophet and the people in need of powers that provide their means of life (Rentería 1992:97).

I have argued that the two narratives in question are related and positioned in such a way as to present the case of Yahwism over against Baalism (Steenkamp 2004:646-658). The relationship between the two narratives as it is established through the interaction of the characters in them, can be interpreted in particular as a struggle for honour between Yahweh and Baal, so facilitating an ideological quarrel, determining which gods and which ethical-political system should govern Israel, and enabling the deuteronomistic editor to portray his ideology in narrative. Against this background, Elijah acts as mediator[95] in effecting actions (Todd 1992:12). He bears the message of Yahweh to human ears (Holloway 1992:77) and his acts of redemption or condemnation to their bodies. In this regard, it is interesting how Elijah is presented as affiliated with Yahweh by the narrative structure of 1 Kings 17. *Dyadism* in the ancient Mediterranean World entailed that people existed, and were always portrayed in terms of their relationship to someone else (Neyrey 1998:51). Yet Elijah appears on the scene unexpectedly and without warning, simply as 'Elijah the Tishbite,' with no mention of his father's name, or even that he is a prophet of Yahweh. But at the end of the narrative, which proves repeatedly that Elijah spoke the truth, the widow (of Zarephat) declares him to be a איש האלהים, who has the true word of Yahweh in his mouth. As such the authenticity and honour of Elijah is continually checked and affirmed in terms of his dyad, Yahweh. In this case the redactor may have chosen to exclude a genealogy of Elijah for the purpose of portraying him as affiliated with Yahweh above all others.[96] It is from this position that

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[95] Hill's (1992:37-73) interpretation of Elijah and Elisha in comparison with the 'local hero' agrees with these notions, since it is someone who has been recognised as 'holy' in conjunction with shifting balances in social forces, with 'holy' being defined as 'having privileged access to power (generally meaning God) beyond the reach of other people. Such "privileged power" often comes in the guise of claims of truth, but it may also be manifested as wonder-working or the ability to overturn a power group' (Hill 1992:39). Significantly, he points out that the local hero stands between the centre and the periphery of power (1992:52). 'At the least, followers must see their leader as an alternative, or the local hero will not be recognizably distinct from the institutional structures… (1992:53). This highlights the social context of the historical Elijah, which was reinterpreted and put into a new literary context by the deuteronomistic editor, where he became an agent in the ultimate struggle for monotheism. Hill is right in interpreting the rise of the local hero, as should be done with the rise of Elijah, as a 'matter of interaction between communities to which they are related,' and focussing less on the individual as a personality. His attempts at historical reconstruction of the historical Elijah (1992:65) on the basis of his comparative work is, however, problematic due to its speculative nature in reconstructing in rather great detail a world which lies far behind the text. This is not to imply that the Elijah and Elisha Cycles cannot serve as rich sources for such historical reconstruction. The question is whether such an amount of detail can be deducted from a comparative study such as that of Hill.

[96] Cf. Hanson (1998:67-69) for the significance of biblical genealogies as social constructs conveying key information to the reader.

Elijah's honour is acquired, not from the normal claim to status, rank, office or inheritance which genealogies conveyed.

The point to be emphasised regarding the characters and events of the two narratives, then, is that it serves as context for another drama: the struggle between Yahweh and Baal[97] (Farisani 2005:51). This can be schematised as follows:
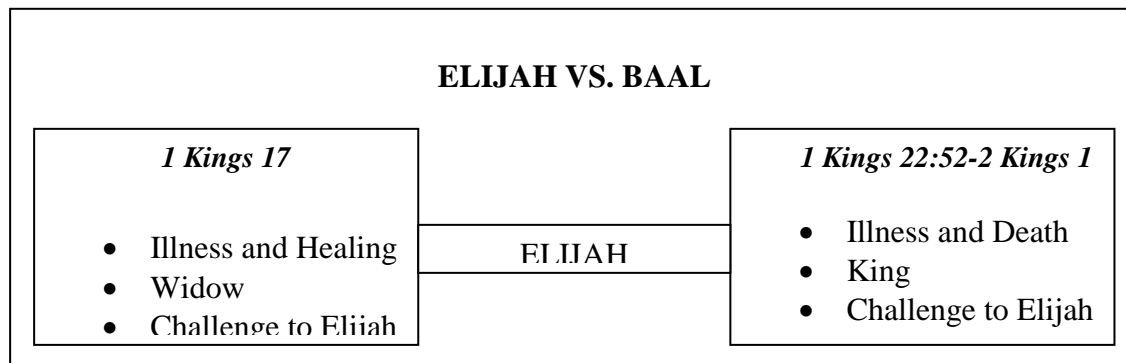
4.4. ILLNESS AND HEALING, ILLNESS AND DEATH

Illness, as a personal and social reality, and its treatment, are inextricably bound to language and signification, so that it can be conceived as 'a coherent syndrome of meaning and experience that is linked to society's deep semantic and value structure' (Pilch 1988:61). For the Western, biomedical or empiricist model, it describes abnormalities in the structure or function of organ systems, which is cured by scientific interventions by specialists (Pilch 1998[a]:103). Yet a cultural or hermeneutical model understands illness to reflect a social and cultural view of socially disvalued states, thus including much more than what the previous model would qualify as disease (Pilch 1998[a]:103). For Pilch (1988:63), such an approach rests on two assumptions: Firstly, that all illness realities are fundamentally semantic, implying that the illness realities will differ from between individuals and between societies, cultures, or ethnic groups. Secondly, that all healing is a fundamentally hermeneutic or

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[97] This is really true for most of the Elijah Cycle: 'One of the motifs peculiar to chapters 17-18 is their polemic against Baalism… The drought story enclosing the materials in chapters 17-18 illustrates Yahweh's control of the storm and the fertility it brings. It is Yahweh who has power over life and death (17:17-24). Elijah's decisive victory at Carmel in chapter 18 is, of course, Yahweh's defeat of Baal. Yahweh's refusal to reveal himself in traditional storm theophany (19:11-20) is a subtle repudiation of the use of storm god imagery for Yahweh because ot its association with Baal. It is noteworthy, then, that this theme is completely missing from 1 Kings 21. The Naboth story deals with Israelite law and social justice. It has no mention of Baal or anything connected with Canaanite religion' (McKenzie 1999:83; cf. also Cohn 1982:334). Note however, that both these authors mean only the literary unit 1 Kings 17-19, but it really emphasised even more by the comparative reading of 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 1).

interpretive activity, implying that 'the patient's symptoms and identified illness represent personal and group values and conceptualizations and are not simply mere biological reality' (Pilch 1988:63). The cultural or hermeneutic model is thus aimed at understanding the meaning that the illness episode would have for the patient (Pilch 1988:64). It is therefore with sensitivity for the differences (cf. also Elliott 1993:39) between the reigning model of contemporary Western society and the cultural or hermeneutical model that Pilch proposes, that we proceed towards an understanding of what the illnesses of the widow's son and of king Ahaziah might convey to the reader.

Human well-being is a means value, allowing a person participation in cultural activities, which may be employed to the maintenance of honour (Pilch 1998[a]:102). Lack of human well-being is a shameful situation, therefore one who is restored to well-being, is restored to honour (Pilch 1998[a]:102). The concept of 'life' often carries the notions of prosperity, blessing, health and strength (Knibb 1989:399), therefore honour. At the foundation of Old Testament thought regarding life and death, health and illness, is the belief that Yahweh has power over both life and death (Knibb 1989:395), and it is he who sustains and preserves life (Knibb 1989:396). *Healing* is perceived as the work of Yahweh and his divinely empowered agents in all three sections of the Old Testament, and especially in the Prophets (Kee 1992:659). It displays the conviction that God gives or restores health to the faithful and sends sickness to the disobedient (Kee 1992:660). 'Guilt' is not understood in the Old Testament as an emotion of remorse or regret, but rather legalistically as having come about due to sin committed. Psalm 32 illustrates how such guilt can result in mental anguish and bodily illness (vv. 3-4), illustrating that the psalmist has been cut off from the steadfast love of Yahweh (Pilch 1991:67-68).

For the Israelite, death was considered to be especially shameful under three circumstances: precocious death, the lack of descendants or at least a son and unscrupulous administering of funeral rites (Martin-Achard 1992:680). The deuteronomistic context deserves mentioning. In Deuteronomy[98] the attainment of life depends on obedience to the commandments, with life itself often being associated with possession of the land and such concepts as well-being and long life (Knibb 1989:400).

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[98]   Cf. e.g. Deut 4:1; 5:33; 8:1 and 30:15-20. Cf. also Lev 18:5 and Neh 9:29.

The widow's son falls seriously ill and dies. The nature of the illness is not disclosed, since it would not change the meaning of his death. For the Israelite, Sheol is the land of no return,[99] and so there is no hope for the lad who had died a shameful and premature death. When Elijah, as agent of YAHWEH, restores the boy to life, he simultaneously restores his honour and grants him the prospects of life with the notions of blessing and prosperity that is associated with it.

King Ahaziah finds himself in a similarly shameful position when he is fatally injured in the fall from his upper room. He wishes for recovery and sends his messengers to Baal-Zebub to hopefully add an oracle to his hopes. When his messengers return with the condemnation of Elijah, however, his reaction adds to his shame. In ancient Mediterranean culture, human experience was believed to be exactly as God ordered it, so that nothing happened in the world apart from God's will. Any suffering or misfortune should therefore be met with resignation, positively understood as *patience*, which is an expression of humility and a recognition of the honour of God. The alternative attitude is viewed by the Old Testament as rebellion and pride,[100] which are despised since they represent the rejection of God and an arrogant attempt to assume his place (McVann 1998[b]:149-150). Ahaziah's commissioning of the captain and his fifty men, three consecutive times, is a shameful rebellion against the will of Yahweh as spoken by his agent. Yet Ahaziah's attempt to reverse the oracle of Yahweh can be understood when viewed from the perspective of his own concern for his honour. He had no sons, and dying without an heir would be shameful. He feels threatened by the oracle, since he believes the words to be dynamic, bringing about that which they speak of[101] (Ford 1998:46). The deuteronomistic editor, however, judges him severely for his rebellious and arrogant challenge to Yahweh's will. The oracle foretelling his death is repeated three times, with an endnote stating that he did die according to the word of Yahweh as spoken by Elijah.

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[99] Cf. e.g. 2 Sam 12:23; Job 7:9-10, 10:21-22, 16:22. Cf. 1 Sam 2:6, however, for a different perspective, illustrating Yahweh's power over the grave.

[100] Cf. e.g. 1 Sam 12:13-15; Ezra 4:12-22; Job 5:2, 24:13; Prov 8:32-36, 17:11; Ezek 20:38; Ps 78:8.

[101] 'Further, Israelites believed in the power of words, and especially that blessings and curses, once uttered, set in motion a train of events that could not be reversed' (Rogerson 1989:18).

     'In the Hebrew Scriptures, the term *dabar* can mean what is said as well as what is done; it can refer to speech, action, and things. For example, in chronicles one reads of "the 'acts' (*dbr*) of David," yet the very book is called "the 'words' (*dbr*) of the times"; words-acts are equal to chronicled history. God's word is powerful: by just saying "Let there be…" God caused action to occur, and the world was made (Gen 1). Of the word which goes forth from God's mouth, Isaiah says: "It accomplishes that which I purpose" (Isa 55:11). God's word must come true; history unfolds "according to the word of the Lord" (1 Kgs 13:26). Just by God's speaking, action must follow' (Neyrey 1998:66).

And at a premature age with no lineage to continue his name, his death was twice as shameful.

4.5.   WIDOW AND KING

In a single paragraph of chapter 3 (p. 57) concerning social class, I stated that 'this irony which is achieved through the contrasting of the widow and Ahaziah, is even further developed by the difference in social station. The socially disadvantaged, economically underprivileged and cultically foreign, is favoured by Yahweh, while the very King of Israel is despised for his idolatry'. This part of the paper will now develop this statement further by inquiring as to the differences between the widow and king Ahaziah in social, economic and cultic spheres.

Socially disadvantaged

Women in the ancient Mediterranean World[102] existed only as defined by their relation (sister, daughter, wife, mother, aunt) to the men of their family, who (in their roles as either father, brother, husband or [older] son), were expected to guard their women[103] (Harris 1992:948 on Mesopotamian women; Pilch 1991:53-54). Status[104] and role[105] therefore play a central role in the Bible's assessment of men and women (Pilch 1991:117). Upon the death of her husband[106], the widow[107] is left unrepresented and unspoken for. With the subsequent death of her son, this situation becomes even worse. The bond between a mother and her oldest son

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[102] 'Despite geographical and chronological differences there existed a basic uniformity in the status of women and attitudes toward them in the societies of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor. They were all patriarchally structured and, therefore, the woman was under the care and domination of her father before marriage and of her husband after marriage' (Harris 1976:960).

[103] 'Gender is itself a prestige structure to the extent that prestige is allotted differently to men and women by virtue of their gender. Moreover, men often have more access than women to the roles to which prestige generally accrues' (Stone 1996:38).

[104] 'Status refers to a *position* in a social system which is evaluated in terms of what *others* perceive that position to be. Essentially, status defines *who* a person is: man, woman, farmer, shepherd, artisan, carpenter, etc. The evaluation of a status is based on: a. ascribed characteristics: e.g., sex or gender, age, birth, genealogy, physical features b. achievement: e.g., marriage, occupation' (Pilch 1991:126).

[105] 'Roles are defined by kinship… Thus, … the Bible actually says very little about "men" or "women" in general. The reflections are always targeted at a specific kind of man or woman, often in some relationship to other persons' (Pilch 1991:131).

[106] 'More than one-half of all families in agrarian societies were broken during the child-bearing and child-rearing years by the death of one or both parents' (Rohrbaugh 1998:6).

[107] 'The vulnerability and plight of widows (and orphans) are proverbial in the literature of the ANE. Nevertheless, widowhood for the well-to-do might offer the only opportunity for true independence. Even in Assyria, notorious, perhaps fallaciously so, for its mistreatment of women, the widow (*almattu*), without a male guardian, without father-in-law or sons, was given the right to "go wherever she pleases" (Saporetti 1979). There is even the rare occurrence of a widow having the primary right of inheritance of her husband's estate, even to the exclusion of her children' (Harris 1992:949).

is considered the strongest emotional bond in Middle Eastern kinship groups[108] (Pilch 1991:133; cf. also Bird 1992:954). The widow is now left also without the hope of future economic and social security. Elijah restores her motherhood to her, placing her once again within a role in society. His relationship with her is transactional: he provides her with a new role as patroness of a prophet of Yahweh (Rentería 1992:116). In 1 Kings 17, Yahweh comes to the aid of the widow, the fatherless, and the sojourner, three groups of people who are particularly helpless, considered unable to defend their own honour, and therefore under the protection of Yahweh [109] (Malina 1993:44; Todd 1992:14).

The king of Israel, contrary to the widow, has the most honourable position within the nation. Understood to be elected by God, the king filled the role of mediator between God and his people (Cazelles 1992:865). 'The king's place in the cosmic and social order was reflected in the way in which his functions mirror those of Yahweh in his heavenly role' (Whitelam 1989:129). *Prominence* is a value that serves to establish or to confirm honour. It is used in acclaiming a person to be of social worth and therefore worthy of priority (Seeman 1998:166). The irony is that Ahaziah's being shamed lies in the very fact that Yahweh seems ignorant of his social status. This denial by Yahweh of Ahaziah's prominence and honour, places Ahaziah in a deviant position within the literary contexts that lie before the reader, and the negative evaluation of the kingship tradition by the deuteronomistic editor becomes clear.

Economically underprivileged

The widow in the narrative appears to be a peasant[110] (Rentería 1992:93). The fact that Elijah meets her at the outskirts of the city collecting her own sticks, already indicates that she is not wealthy (Rentería 1992:101). The fact that she shares the meal provided by Yahweh through his prophet implies on the one hand an acceptance of the power and authority of Yahweh, and on the other her being joined to him (Feeley-Harnik 1981:72). The fact that the land starves

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[108] Cf. also Malina's extensive treatment of the subject (1990:54-64).
[109] 'The widow is under the special care of God, who provides her with food and clothing (Deut 10:18)' (Baab 1962:842).
[110] 'The term "peasant society" refers to a set of villages socially bound up with preindustrial cities in which the overwhelming portion of the population lives in the villages and makes a living from the land. Villages were small and usually related to a preindustrial city which functioned as both an administrative center and a central place of worship. These preindustrial cities lived off the crops of agricultural people in the surround' (Rohrbaugh 1998:155).

while the widow and Elijah is provided for, illustrates the power[111] and therefore honour of Yahweh over against Baal.

When the widow's son dies, her economic situation deteriorates even further. 'Rooted in the economic needs of subsistence agriculture and social need for perpetuation of the lineage, the demand for childbearing was rewarded with security[112] and prestige' (Bird 1992:953), both of which was lost by the widow upon her son's death, and restored upon his revival.

King Ahaziah could be described as 'wealthy' or, in contrast with the widow, economically privileged. The Old Testament attitude toward wealth is largely determined by religious understanding. Yahweh blesses individuals with wealth for their enjoyment (Young 1962:818). However, they must not forget that Yahweh is the source of their wealth and take the credit for themselves (cf. Deut 8:17). 'Israel's overlooking her resources as the sign of her dependence on God is inextricably related to her breaking the covenant and going after other gods' (Young 1962:818). This is also the path walked by Ahaziah, and as for Israel, the deuteronomistic editor pointed out that it ended in utter shame. Keeping in mind Hollenbach's definition of Rich and Poor[113] in the light of social scientific criticism, it is ironic that the widow has become enriched, while Ahaziah's end is the grave. There is a complete reversal of status.

Cultically foreign

The great concern of the Old Testament for ritual purity/impurity, cleanness/uncleanness and holy/profane, replicate the more dominant cultural norm of a 'holy people' that is separated from the Gentiles and consecrated to God (Neyrey 1996:174). Resulting from the *family-centeredness* of the ancient Mediterranean World was exclusiveness and suspicion of outsiders, and this formed the basis of the view of the nation of Israel as a family (McVann 1998[a]:76). King Ahaziah forms part of this chosen, holy people, and yet he is condemned. 'Adherence to the tradition is an extremely important aspect of family-centeredness since tradition itself is derived from the central importance of family in the culture' (McVann

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[111] 'The Lord's power is manifested in his ability to control food: to feed is to bless, to confer life; to feed bad food or to starve is to judge or punish, to confer death' (Feeley-Harnik 1981:72).

[112] 'Children were expected to honor their mother. If she were widowed, her sons were obligated to provide her with food and clothing; if they failed to fulfill this obligation they might be disinherited' (Harris 1976:961).

[113] 'Hence, the poor encompass the peasantry as a whole who have fallen into morally, i.e., convenantally, unjustified economic conditions. The term "poor" refers not merely to the general class of unfortunate people, but especially to the economic side of the whole peasantry in their total socio-political oppressed state' (Hollenbach 1987:60).

1998:77), and therefore it is Ahaziah's disregard to the religious tradition that leads to his downfall. The widow is not only not of Israel, but of the very region from which Baalism, the great enemy of the deuteronomistic editor, has penetrated the northern Kingdom. The irony therefore lies in the fact that she is accepted and restored by Yahweh, while Ahaziah, king of the covenant people, is rejected.

The principle that Mayes (2000:479) identifies in his essay on deuteronomistic ideology is applicable here, namely that there exists an important distinction between deuteronomistic and pentateuchal perceptions of communities.

> For the deuteronomistic history, status in society is achieved; one becomes a member of the Yahwistic community by commitment to belief, and not through genealogical descent. Correspondingly, it is from within that evil has to be rooted out and abolished.

This becomes most clear in the rejection of the covenant king and the embracing of the heathen widow.

4.6. ELIJAH CHALLENGED

Severe competition characterise interaction between people in Mediterranean societies, resulting from a continuous need to defend individual or group honour (Moxnes 1996:20). In such interaction, the boundary lines that would define a person would also include that which the person holds worthwhile and worthy, so that an individual would share in a collective or corporate honour[114] (Malina 1993:43). Consequently, one person could be challenged by what Malina refers to as 'corporate affront', entailing that the challenger would affront someone whose honour is intertwined with that of the challenged (Malina 1993:44). This happens in the narratives under investigation, as will be illustrated shortly, as well as in the Elijah Cycle as a whole.

Social interaction concerned with the maintenance and/or acquisition of honour in the ancient Mediterranean world often took the form of *challenge and riposte* (Moxnes 1996:20), which Botha (2000:40, building on Malina) defines as 'a type of social communication aimed at dislodging the addressee from is position of honour', consisting of the three phases, namely

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[114] 'Included within the bounds of personal honor are all those worthies who control a person's existence, that is, patrons, king, and God – all whom one holds vertically sacred. Also included is one's family – the horizontally sacred. The reason for this is that like individuals, social groups possess a collective honor' (Malina 1993:43-44).

'(1) the challenge on the part of the challenger; (2) the perception of the message by the addressee and the public at large; and (3) the reaction of the receiving individual and the evaluation of that reaction by the public'. Styles of challenging are diverse, and can range from direct to indirect challenges (Malina 1993:42), consisting of verbal formulations, but also of symbolic gestures and even the use of physical force (Moxnes 1996:20). By failing to make a riposte upon being challenged in this way would result in defeat, which always meant being shamed. 'Thus, to be defeated is to be dishonored, to be reduced to shame, to become a nonentity, and therefore to be in the condition of life most despicable in the eyes of the vast majority of Mediterranean peoples' (Ford 1998:45).

There are two important conditions under which this kind of exchange is to take place, the first of which is the public element.[115] In the ancient Mediterranean World, people tended not to make claims about their identity so much as to listen to the opinion of others about them (Neyrey 1998:55). Ultimately, it is the community who casts its vote in favour of the challenger or the challenged. In these two narratives of the Elijah Cycle, this role is fulfilled on the one hand by the bystanders of each episode where challenges are made. But it is especially the hearers of the narratives that the deuteronomistic editor aims to appoint as jurors, since it is ultimately them whom he wants to influence to choose Yahweh above all others.

Secondly, a proper challenge can only take place between people who are equal or almost equal in honour (Moxnes 1996:20). Consequently, actors such as a highly placed patron, the king or God, are socially barred from responding to challenges to their honour, because of their unequal, superior and exalted status, and 'a person may take up the challenge to one's king or God because they are intertwined in one's own honor' (Malina 1993:44). Therefore Elijah has become the agent of Yahweh in the Elijah Cycle, with the result that their honour have become intertwined. The ultimate quest for honour is between Baal and Yahweh, but Elijah has become involved in this quest as standing against such agents of Baal as his prophets and his worshippers, and especially those in official positions.

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[115] 'Thus, dyadism, or an other-directed orientation, is a value which serves as a means of learning about and pursuing one's honor. Since honor is a public claim to worth *and* a public acknowledgment of that claim by others, the opinions of others hold central importance in this culture' (Neyrey 1998:55).

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah is challenged by the widow of Zarephat when she accuses him of entering her life only to kill her son. The value of *hospitality* entails the process of receiving outsiders and their subsequent change from strangers to guests, and functions as a means value for attaining and preserving honour (Malina 1998[a]:115). As the outsider progresses from the position of a stranger who has to be tested to the role of guest, he or she is required to abide by certain rules of hospitality. Elijah enters the life and house of the widow when she finds herself in despair. He provides for her and her son and is accepted by them into the house, and given the upper room to live in. The narrative states that they ate together for many days, illustrating that Elijah was no longer a potentially hostile stranger. This changes with the death of the widow's son, when the widow looses faith in Elijah and suspects that her son may have died due to his presence in her house. The rules of hospitality entailed that the guest had to refrain from insulting the host and from any show of hostility or rivalry, and that the guest had to honour the host at all times (Malina 1998[a]:116). When the widow accuses Elijah and addresses him as איש האלהים, she involves also his position as agent of Yahweh, and not only his person. In fact, she may have very well suspected that Elijah's affiliation with a god strange to that of her own could have been the exact cause of her son's death. Elijah does not condemn the woman in her hopeless state, even when she challenges his authority. As a sojourner abiding in her house, he is himself bound by social regulations. He appeals to Yahweh instead, whom he represents, and who also reacts accordingly and revives the widow's son, avoiding a loss of honour for both himself and his prophet. This is illustrated by the fact that the widow declares Elijah to be a man of God, with the true words of God in his mouth. It remains beautifully ironic that Yahweh shows compassion to a widow of a foreign people while discarding the king of his own people, especially since *compassion*[116] in the ancient Mediterranean was a value 'rooted primarily in kinship obligations, whether natural or fictive' (Pilch 1998[b]:30).

The second narrative (2 Kings 1) relates twice how Elijah is commanded by the captains of fifty men to descend from the mountain, and how they are subsequently consumed by fire falling from heaven. The third captain, however, begs for mercy from Elijah, upon which Elijah accompanies him to Ahaziah, where the oracle of Yahweh is repeated for the last time before the account of the kings death. When read from the perspective of ancient social

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[116] '… compassion is a peripheral value, that is, it is specific to given interactions, namely those guided and governed by kinship considerations. Compassion would thus be defined as the caring concern that ought to be felt and acted upon between real or fictive kin, specifically between brothers since the basic connotation of *rhm* was brotherhood or brotherly feeling' (Pilch 1998[b]:30).

values, an interesting picture emerge. The captains and their men are sent to Elijah as representatives of king Ahaziah, who had a few scenes before disregarded the God of Israel when he required an oracle from Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron. Although they address Elijah as איש האלהים, their actions pay him no respect, but rather give the impression of sneer and taunt. At the same time, however, this very way of addressing him involves Yahweh in the insult, since Yahweh's honour is intertwined with that of his agent.[117] This is why Elijah answers in a way that sounds so foreign to the Western ear, saying that, if he really is a man of God, fire should fall from heaven and consume the soldiers. The lightning that strike the offenders is to be understood as Yahweh's reaction to the challengers of his and his prophet's honour. Elijah's belligerence in responding to their challenge should be noted. *Assertiveness* in the ancient Mediterranean world related to boldness, openness, frankness and self-confidence in speaking, and functioned as a means value that assisted or helped a person to maintain and preserve honour (Reese 1998:10). The fact that Yahweh gives the fire from heaven in concurrence with Elijah's word, confirms Elijah's authority as a true man of God. The third captain, begging for mercy, is spared the fate of the first two. *Humility* as a value of the ancient Mediterranean world, directed people 'to stay within their inherited social status… Humble persons do not threaten or challenge another's rights, nor do they claim more for themselves than has been duly allotted them in life. They even stay a step below or behind their rightful status' (Malina 1998[b]:118). By humbling himself before Elijah, acknowledging what happened to the first two captains and calling himself Elijah's 'servant', the captain has recognised the honour of Yahweh and Elijah as his prophet. The actions of the captain is rewarded by Elijah and Yahweh, who exalts the humble. In the words of Thiel (1990:363),

> Das Ziel der Szene ist das Verhalten des dritten Offiziers: Er fällt auf die Knie, fleht Elija an, wie man sonst oft Gott anfleht, und bittet ihn um Verschonung (13f.). Damit soll offensichtlich eine Lehre erteilt werden: Einen Propheten kann man nicht einfach mit den Machtmitteln des Staates verhaften. Man darf ihm nicht mit Gewalt entgegentreten, denn hinter ihm steht die Macht Gottes. Man hat ihn daher fast wie Gott selbst zu respektieren und muß ihm ehrerbietig, ja sogar ehrfürchtig begegnen, um nicht die Strafe Gottes herauszufordern.

4.7. CONCLUSION

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[117] Carrol was, therefore, essentially correct: 'We assume that Elijah's reaction to the soldiers was due to an affront to his dignity and a challenging of his authority as a prophet of Yahweh, rather than an act of pique, or a caprice' (Carrol 1969:412 footnote).

This chapter has attempted to contribute to the understanding of the two narratives under question within their present literary context. It has done so by exploring the role that social scientific criticism stands to play in a comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle. It has illustrated that the dynamics of the texts are determined to such an extent by the social values of the ancient Mediterranean World, that the role played by the narratives within their larger deuteronomistic context may be easily underestimated if these social values are overlooked. Social scientific criticism provides a methodological means for examining the social and cultural system outside the text which in turn shaped the features of the text itself (Elliott 1993:69). The Elijah Cycle, as part of DH, can now be understood as a composition which is designed, in its totality of form and content, as well as the embodiment of the aims, self-interests, and ideology of the deuteronomistic editor, to have a specific impact upon the hearers, thereby serving as persuasive discourse and a medium of social interaction (Elliott 1993:55).

CHAPTER 5
A COMPARATIVE READING OF THE ELIJAH CYCLE AND DEUTERONOMISTIC IDEOLOGY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Within the inner unity and constant ideology which the book of Kings reveal (Soggin 1980:199), the Elijah Cycle plays the significant role of supporting this ideology through its magnificent tales which sweep the hearer along on the path of the Covenant. The main characters in this narrative of Kings are Yahweh, various kings and prophets, as well as some significant foreigners (Provan 1997:27), and within different dynamics, the Elijah Cycle has been artistically and sourcefully inserted. At the end of the study, some themes rising from the comparative reading deserve mentioning.

5.2. MOSES REDIVIVUS

A matter which deserves attention is the parallelism which is established between the ministries of Elijah and Moses. This parallelism has been noted by many scholars (Freedman 1976:227; McKenzie 1991:83-84; Holloway 1992:78), and is very significant, given the importance of the Mosaic covenant in deuteronomistic ideology. In DH, the prosperity of the nation is understood as the result of obedience to the law that was given there to Moses,[118] who was the divinely appointed leader of Israel, the intermediary between the nation and her God.

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[118] 'The later deuteronomistic editor made explicit the implication of the work of the deuteronomistic historian, in that now the law of Moses has become the law of a covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel, given her not solely as the authoritative guide for life but as the fundamental conditions of the covenant relationship between Israel and her God, a relationship which has as its primary demand Israel's exclusive allegiance to Yahweh (Mayes 1983:134).

'Elijah is the greatest exponent of inflexible Yahwistic monotheism in Kings; both the lone figures of Moses and Elijah stalwartly represent the true faith in defiance of the overwhelming might of pagan nations, pharaonic Egypt and Omride Israel (Holloway 1992:78).

Elijah typified a primitive Mosaic tradition still alive in Israel[119] (Bright 1972:243), and allusions to the stories of the exodus pervade the entire Elijah Cycle. In the comparative reading of the above narratives, another aspect of this parallelism has come to light which will be addressed here. In the Exodus story, Moses flees before the Pharaoh to outside the borders of Egypt. He later returns, though this time to perform Yahweh's wonders and be the instrument of judgement against the son of the king before whom he had previously fled. This pattern is repeated with Elijah, who flees from Ahab to outside the borders of northern Israel. He flees first eastward, and then lodges with a family, just as Moses had done. Upon his return, the magnificent events on Carmel parallel the wonders in Egypt. The second narrative sees more of these wonderous events in Elijah's interaction with the captains and their men, and then he delivers the judgement of Yahweh against Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, before whom he had fled. For Moses, the purpose was to deliver the people of Israel from the bondage of slavery. For Elijah, it was to free the people of Yahweh from polytheism and persecution.

Elijah is presented as a 'Moses *redivivus*': 'With Moses began the long line of YHWH's intermediaries in Israel; in Elijah that line produces its quintessential hero' (Walsh 1992:465). Brongers means that 'Het is ongetwijfeld de bedoeling Elia bij de grote gebeurtenissen in het verleden te bepalen. Terecht merkt Herngreen in zijn mooie boekje echter op dat het hier niet gaat om het verleden zonder meer. 'In het verleden heeft God daden gesteld, die volkomen vernieuwing beloven: het nieuwste der mensen is daarbij vergeleken al oud: het oude is erdoor geoordeeld. Elia [at the mountain of Horeb] keert terug tot Gods *openbaring* in het verleden, die boven het verleden uitrijst en levend *heden* wordt' (Brongers 1979:199-200).

5.3.   WHAT NOW WITH THE MONARCHY?

In agreement with his double-redaction approach to DH, Nelson (1981:100) emphasised the importance of the ideology of retribution as the guiding principle of history in DH. This was

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[119]   Carrol (1969:400-415) is of the opinion that what was envisaged by the Deuteronomists in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 in their sketch of the prophet like Moses, was not that of making a prediction with a single fulfilment in a future eschatological figure, but rather 'a succession of prophets of which Moses was the prototype. The institution of prophecy was to be a continuous and permanent office constantly supplying the people of Israel with a covenant mediator who would recreate the role of Moses for the nation' (1969:401). Also, 'Hence the essential point in Deuteronomy's regulations for the prophet was the demand that the authenticity of any prophet arising in Israel should be proved by his functioning as the mouthpiece for the words of Yahweh. In so far as the prophet declared the word of Yahweh he was a true Mosaic prophet' (1969:402-403).

seen especially with Jeroboam's sin[120] of the shrines set up at Bethel and Dan, which transcended his generation and became the besetting sin of the northern Kingdom in which each of the successors participates (Gerbrandt 1980:251). As we also have in the case of Ahaziah, each founder of a dynasty after Jeroboam was condemned by a prophet, his dynasty ultimately destroyed, and this event followed by an appropriate fulfillment notice,[121] so that the pervasive nature of the sin of Jeroboam gives a strong sense of unity to the story of these dynasties (O'Brien 1989:40).

O'Brien (1989:194) has found a similar redactional procedure for the House of Ahab (Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram) than for the dynasties of Jeroboam and Baasha, namely a unified interpretation of the dynasy within a larger course of the general interpretation of the northern kings that is based on the interrelationship, once again,between the judgment formulas and prophecy. The judgment formula for Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:53-54) illustrates this point. In relation to the larger trajectory, it shares the elements of doing evil (1), walking in the way of Jeroboam (2), who made Israel sin (3). As for the House of Ahab in particular, Ahaziah is accused of walking in the way of his father and mother, and of worshipping Baal[122] (O'Brien 1989:197).

Gerbrandt has referred to the significance of deuteronomistic ideology regarding kingship in this regard. According to him, for DH, the king was responsible for guaranteeing covenant law with its emphasis on the centralisation and purity of the cult (1980:251). Jeroboam and the three dynasties mentioned above, and their failure to live up to this standard, is the context against which the harsh judgment against them should be interpreted.[123]

In a comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle, DH's critical judgement of the northern Kingdom becomes especially clear when held against the favour shown by Yahweh to the

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[120]   'Clearly, for seventh-century Deuteronomists, Jeroboam's establishment was damned on two grounds: (1) it was not in Jerusalem, and (2) the worship of the golden calves was at least idolatry, probably apostasy' (Campbell 2004:188-189). Note, however, that, if such an early date as the seventh century is accepted, that the golden calves would probably not have been seen as either idolatry or apostacy (Cf. Day 2000:34-41).

[121]   Cf. 1 Kings 16:12 for Baasha and 2 Kings 10:10, 17 for Ahab.

[122]   'Ahaziah is the only other member of the dynasty besides Ahab about whom there was information in DTR's source that he followed Baal. This is provided by the story of his consultation of Baal-Zebub in 2 Kings 1. It is reasonable to see the accusation about Baal-worship as an allussion to this story. However the accusation of provoking Yahweh to anger in 1 Kgs 22:54b (RSB v 53b) is probably an addition' (O'Brien 1989:197).

[123]   'Jeroboam and all his successors had failed in this, and were thus ultimately responsible for the sin of the North, and then its demise' (Gerbrandt 1980:251).

widow. Yahweh would rather show mercy to a simple but believing heathen widow than to the king of his own people, who had transgressed his covenant regulations and sought council from the rival deity, Baal. As bold representative of Yahweh, Elijah denounces both Ahab and Ahaziah. They permitted the worship of Yahweh and Baal. They compromised, tolerated and syncretised, and all of these are incompatible with DH's demand for exclusive allegiance to Yahweh (Szikszai 1962[a]:89).

5.4.   THE LOWLY, THE EXALTED AND THE UNEXPECTED

The Elijah-Elisha narratives show a tendency to portray the relatively poor or powerless as most sensitive to the word. One may think of 2 Kings 4:1-4, 2 Kings 5:2-3, and 2 Kings 5:13, the accounts of the widow, slave girl and servants (Brodie 1999:75). In the narratives studied here, we have emphasised this point from various angles in the social-scientific analysis (Chapter four). Elijah encounters the widow as she gathers sticks in anticipation of death. He leaves her as she declares the truth of God's word in celebration of returned life. Yet he seems unimpressed by the person and power of the king of Israel. He meets his emissaries on their way to confirm his hope for life, he sends them back with the message of death. The unexpected has happened, the roles have been reversed.

This reminds of another passage in DH, where a helpless woman experiences the unexpected. Her subsequent prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10 NKJV) sounds like a mirror that condences the images that we have encountered in the comparative of what we encounter in a comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle:

> *And Hannah prayed and said:*
> *My heart rejoices in the LORD;*
> *My horn is exalted in the LORD.*
> *I smile at my enemies,*
> *Because I rejoice in your salvation.*
>
> *No one is holy like the LORD,*
> *For there is none besides You,*
> *For is there any rock like our God.*
>
> *Talk no more so very proudly;*
> *Let no arrogance come from your mouth,*
> *For the LORD is the God of knowledge;*

And by Him actions are weighed.

The bows of the mighty men are broken,

And those who stumbled are girded with strength.

Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,

And the hungry have ceased to be hunger.

Even the barren has borne seven,

And she who has many children has become feeble.

The LORD kills and makes alive;

He brings down to the grave and brings up.

The LORD makes poor and makes rich;

He brings low and lifts up.

He raises the poor from the dust

And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,

To set them among princes

And make them inherit the throne of glory.

For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,

And He has set the world upon them.

He will guard the feet of His saints,

But the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

For by strength no man shall prevail.

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces;

From heaven He will thunder against them.

The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

He will give strength to his king,

And exalt the horn of his anointed.

This text once again gives weight to the irony that 'his king' has become the cursed one, while Yahweh has shown his mercy to a foreign heathen woman.

5.5.   THE WORD OF YAHWEH

In Kings, Yahweh communicates through the written word only once, with the discovery of the book of the covenant (2 Kings 22, 23), and exceptionally, through dreams (1 Kings 3, 9). For the rest, his prophets carry his word where it needs to be heard (Holloway 1992:77).

The importance of the oracle of Yahweh in a comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle has been clearly illustrated in both the literary and social-scientific analyses. O'Brien (1989:35; cf. also Holloway 1992:77) discerns in each of the stories in DH concerning the relationship between prophets and kings a concern to illustrate the realisation of prophecies in history: 'The schema of prophecy and fulfillment is in fact a basic organisational and interpretative component in DTR's construction of this period of the history' of Israel under the prophets and kings (cf. also Freedman 1976:227). This holds very true for the narratives that have been under focus in this study.

It is often the judgments of Yahweh delivered by his prophets that is emphasised in studies on DH or Kings, and yet Brodie (1999:71) has noted an interesting connection between God's word and healing in the Elijah-Elisha narratives. Healing is emphasised in these narratives more than in any other extended Hebrew narrative. In the comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle, healing is available to the trusting, death is forced upon the apostate. These narratives call upon its hearers to believe, as the widow did, and live.

5.6.   THE QUESTION OF (ANOTHER) GOD IN ISRAEL

Mayes (1983:137), noted that further study was required on post-deuteronomistic passages that would shed light on their background and authorship, and also that the setting within which the work of the deuteronomistic school in gereral took place, should become a significant area for future research. Pakkala's doctoral dissertation (1999), *Intolerant monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History*, is an example of such a focus, and it represents an approach that I regard as fertile ground for further research on DH. This approach would marry research on emergent monotheistic Yahwism in Israel with insight in redactional phases in DH and other biblical texts. In studying passages that reflected an intolerant attitude towards the worship of other gods, Pakkala found that intolerant monolatry was a late development in DH,[124] and that the history writer was hardly interested in the other gods, while the later editors (for him nomists), were preoccupied with the matter, being the first ones in DH to prohibit the worship of other Gods (Pakkala 1999:239).

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[124]   'Major speeches and dramatic confrontations in Kings, such as Solomon's dedicatory prayer (1 Kgs 8:23-60), the *ex eventu* prophecy against Jeroboam (1 Kgs 13:1-10), Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:20-40), the fall of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:7-18) and the Rabshakeh's address to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:19-25; 27-35), center on the opposition between the stringent demands of monotheistic Yahwism and competing religious traditions' (Holloway 1992:77).

This corresponds with Gnuse's publication on emergent monotheism in Israel, where he summarises the emerging consensus among scholars who 'sense an evolutionary process which moves through various stages of monolatrous or henotheistic intensity in the pre-exilic era to a form of pure monotheism which arises in the exilic era' (1997:105). Accordingly, the deuteronomistic ideology projected the values of the Yahwism of their own age into the past, the Yahwism they had begun to create by their own reforms, so that DH is much rather a description of 'religious history as it should have been, or from the perspective of a small monotheistic minority. The mass of Israelites, from court member to commoner, were essentially polytheistic Yahwists' (1997:73).

The distinction between 'Israelite' and 'Canaanite' religion is no longer a simple matter, and DH is understood as supressing a complicated historical reality in their portrayal in their account. Corresponding with Pakkala's late dating of intolerant passages in DH (cf. above), Provan (1997:70) sees this scholarly tendency as flowing from the contemporary late dating of many Old Testament texts, particularly Deuteronomy, which is now regarded by some as 'the reform programme of the post-exilic Jerusalem priesthood.'

We have seen in Chapter 2 that the separate narratives that constitute the Elijah Cycle were pre-exilic, but that they were inserted into their current contexts at a later stage. Could the ideology which they portray provide us with information regarding the period during which such editing may have taken place?

Yahweh's challenge to Baal, which had commenced in the opening words of Elijah, is further developed by the two narratives. In this way it contributes to the polemic nature of the Elijah cycle against Baal worship. The struggle between Yahwism and Baalism supplies dramatic unity to the events recounted in the Elijah narratives (Walsh 1992:464). The editor of the stories of Elijah was well acquainted with the circulating Baal myths. According to these, Baal was the giver of fertility, corn, oil and wine. Lightning, fire and rain proceeded from him. He healed the sick, and could even revive the dead. In the involved narratives, every single one of these attributes are credited to Yahweh, and so the author wishes to correct the people in their beliefs. By concrete examples and real-life incidents he attempts to show that those powers attributed to Baal by Ugaritic mythology, were really the attributes of the one true God, Yahweh of Israel (Bronner 1968:54).

Employing a comparison between the widow and the king of Israel and their opposite fates, the deuteronomistic editor has managed to place Baal and Yahweh over against each other in an ultimate battle for honour. The follower of Baal is shamed continually and in a variety of ways, while Yahweh repeatedly comes to the aid of the widow of Zarephat, who has chosen to believe and act upon the words of Yahweh's prophet, and restores her social and economic standing. In this way the deuteronomistic editor does not only explain the end of the northern kingdom as a result of their breaking the covenant through their idolatry. He also addresses them in the imperative, so to speak, reminding them that Yahweh is still the gracious God who protects the helpless. They need but to turn back to him to experience anew his saving presence. The ideology displayed here is therefore not only one of judgment, although the judgment over those who worship Baal is harsh indeed. It is also a kerygma of repentance, which could herald a completely new phase with wholly new enactments for Yahweh's people (Wolff 1975:89-90).

If the Elijah Cycle is literature that would wish to pursuade its hearers to transform their nation's religion to become restrictive of other gods, then we must assume a setting where the presence of other gods (especially Baal) in the cult must have been perceived as a threat. In this regard, Pakkala (1999:229) explains the threatening increase of Baal's importance in exilic times due to foreign influence:

> The threat of Baal may have been especially acute in Palestine, while the exiles in Mesopotamia were more successful in protecting their separate identity. From the exilic perspective, Baal would have appeared to be commonly worshipped in Palestine and was therefore seen as a threat to Yahwe. It was not important whether Baal had been worshipped in pre-exilic Israel or not. The nomists felt he was a real threat to Yahwe in their own historical context. In other words, the importance of Baal may be a projection of a later, exilic situation onto the pre-exilic period. The problem may have become very acute when the exiles were planning a return but saw in the land a population that did not shun Baal-worship.

Things must be set in context. As far as the Elijah Cycle is concerned, we cannot yet speak of pure monotheism. Unlike Elijah, Ahab clearly did not see his promulgation of Baal as being incompatible with Yahweh worship (Day 2000:71; against Carrol 1969:410 and Gese 1997:130: it is rather a reflection of an evolutionary process than syncretism).[125] The battle between Baal and Yahweh that has been illustrated in this study should be seen as jealousy for

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[125] It may, in my view, even be possible that the motivation behind the prophets and the monarchy was political and economic in nature, the religious battle being projected onto the prophetic narratives at a later time when they were inserted into their current contexts, which would forever let them be seen in this context.

Yahweh's position as the main God of Israel. Yahweh may not be replaced with a foreign god ('Is there no other god in Israel?').[126] The intolerance in the Cycle relates to Yahweh primacy, not to the denial of all other gods (Pakkala 1999:160-162). In Kings, it seems for Pakkala the the history writer criticised Baal worship in the northern Kingdom: interestingly all these passages criticise Ahab's family for substituting or replacing Yahweh, the national God of Israel, with Baal and allowing Phoenician influence in Samaria (Pakkala 1999:169). Therefore, (1999:229-230):

> Another explanation for Baal's importance in the final DH is a development inside the composition. The few passages in the books of 1-2 Kings that refer to Baal and his cult in the Northern Kingdom may have been the root of later Baal criticism. The later writers or editors, particularly the nomists, would have noticed these references and developed them into an all out attack against Baal. The polemics would gradually have grown so that in the end Baal receives attention that is quite unrealistic in view of other, particularly archaeological, evidence. A brief period of Baal's influence in the Norhtern Kingdom during Ahab's reign would have been exaggerated into a constant influence from Moses (Dt 4:3) to Josiah (2K 23:4) in both kingdoms.

This must have been important to the editor, if the concentric structure[127] noted by Holloway (1992:76) of leading themes is taken into account, where the literary pivot of the work covers the House of Ahab and the cult of Baal in Israel and Judah: 'roughly forty years of history, one-tenth of the total covered in Kings, occupies over one-third of the chapters in 1-2 Kings.

5.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to synthesise the results of the different parts of the study. It has illustrated that a comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle have implications for deuteronomistic ideology on various levels. It should therefore be clear that there exists a definite relation between the Elijah Cycle and its current literary context, in that it serves the religious and political agenda of the deuteronomistic editors.

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[126] 'Die Überlieferung selbst handelt über die rebellion Moabs in I 1. Die Überlieferung selbst handelt über eine Thematik, die für die Deuteronomisten zentrale Bedeutung hatte: eine Orakelanfrage des israelitischen Königs an Baal-Sebub (Sebul) von Ekron, durch die die Anerkennung Jahwes als einziger für Israel zuständiger Gott in Frage gestellt war' (Thiel 1989:156).

[127] Of Savran, cited in Holloway (1992:76)

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

6.1.   INTRODUCTION

This study has proceeded from the assumption that a one-sided approach would result in a reduction in the interpretation process. Therefore it has made use of a combination of intra-, inter- and extra-textual information in the interpretation process. This resulted in different readings of the text itself, as well as the consideration of the current literary context for the Elijah Cycle, or DH.

6.2.   RESEARCH PROBLEM

The prophetic narratives, of which the Elijah Cycle is an example, are one of many literary genres contained in DH. The Elijah/Elisha Cycles (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 10) are found in the middle of Kings and are set in the northern Kingdom, historically during the period of the house of Omri. Auld (1998:55) has pointed to the struggle between the divine protagonists of the main characters, Yahweh and Baal, as the greater theme of these narratives. The importance of the Elijah/Elisha Cycles as independent literary units or as within the canons of both Judaism and Christianity (e.g. Brodie 2000) make their continued research and interpretation as relevant and significant as ever.

The focus of this study was on the Elijah Cycle, and the research question revolved around the relationship between this Cycle and the religious and political agenda of the deuteronomistic editors, in other words the relationship between the text itself and its literary and socio-historical contexts. It wanted to investigate whether the Cycle has been so structured, edited and placed that it both develops and supports the ideology of its literary context. Its focus was on the significance of the two narratives of the Elijah Cycle that has been seen to form its borders, namely 1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1, and on the possibility that these narratives might fulfill a specific function when read in comparison.

6.3.   HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of the study held that a comparative reading of the two narratives mentioned above, based on their literary features and contents, reveals specific contrasts between them, serving to create irony that advances and develops deuteronomistic ideology.

6.4.   METHOD

Consistently aiming to avoid a one-dimensional approach to the texts under discussion, the study has engaged information from within the texts (intra-textual), from its relations with other texts (inter-textual), as well as information from outside the text (extra-textual) to ascertain meaning from the text within its literary, historical and socio-cultural contexts.

This implied the consideration of the diachronic development of the text, even if the emphasis has been on the texts in their final literary forms. Despite the reading of texts as literary objects that make sense and convey meaning in their present form, that has been advocated by newer literary approaches (Fretheim 1983:36), ignorance of evidence of diachronic development in DH may, according to Knoppers (2000:125), result in shallow or forced arguments for synchronic unity. Therefore the study intended to be inclusive in its methodology, integrating historical and literary approaches as far as the scope of the study allowed.

The importance given in the study to the significance of the nature of social life and cultural processes reflects another significant development in literary and semiotic theory, namely the increased attention paid to the reading process, where meaning is understood as the interaction between the reader, text and reading conventions, that takes place within a social context, rather as residing within the text itself (Stone 1996:30). To address the problem of the differences between the contexts and expectations of the current reader and ancient editor, the texts were read also from a social-scientific perspective, stressing once again the multi-dimensional approach of the study.

The research fell into four stages, each of which were represented by a chapter in the study. The methods used and the results achieved in each of the chapters will now be briefly summarised.

6.5. RESULTS

Chapter 2 summarised the research history of the theory of DH, tracing its development from the time of Martin Noth to the challenges posed by recent scholarship to its unity or existence. It introduced the reader to contemporary ideas regarding deuteronomistic ideology, and also provided a short overview of research regarding the literary history of the Elijah Cycle. The purpose of the chapter was to set the study in a context within current scholarly debate, and not to provide an extensive history or propose a new redaction hypothesis regarding DH. It was stated that 'deuteronomistic' is retained in the study, but that it should be understood as referring to a process that was more complex than the actions of a single author or group, working in a particular historical setting and being guided by a single rationale. The study understands the term to point to wide-ranging and diverse deuteronomistic phenomena, taking place over a longer period than normally supposed (Wilson 1999:82). A suggestion for future research regarding the redaction of the Former Prophets entailed the marriage of redaction criticism with research on the development of monotheistic Yahwism, since both the emergence of the last and the redaction of DH are seen as taking place mainly in an exilic/post-exilic context. Therefore a context of the propagation of monotheistic Yahwism might provide an historical setting and socio-religious motivation for late deuteronomistic redaction.

Chapter 3 consisted of a literary analysis of 1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1, identifying stratagems and patterns in the text that were interpreted to justify a comparative reading of the two texts. The chapter listed and discussed several important themes arising from the narratives, and illustrated that the contrasts between the narratives create functional irony that serve a literary and didactic purpose in DH. It has therefore shown that the juxtapositioning of the narratives of Elijah's stay at the widow of Zarephat and the injury of King Ahaziah serves the purpose of the deuteronomistic editor. The positions that were allocated to the narratives at the borders of the Elijah Cycle envelops the Cycle in stark contrast, defining it as a polemic writing against polytheistic Yahwism, particularly against Baalism. Even though the Elijah Cycle also authorises Elijah as the prophet of Yahweh, the

emphasis falls on the authority of Yahweh rather than on that of his prophet (against De Vries 1985:208). The kerygmatic agenda that the Elijah Cycle wishes to fulfill is to promote an understanding of who Yahweh is and how He should be served.

Chapter 4 proceeded from and elaborated on the findings of the literary analysis by analysing the comparative reading of the two narratives from a social-scientific point of view. It discussed certain pivotal values of the ancient Mediterranean World, and provided a motivation for the social-scientific analysis of texts from the west-semitic world. Where appropriate, it applied ancient social values to the narratives and found that it enhanced the results of the literary analysis.

The final chapter (5) synthesised the results obtained by the different stages of the study and returned to the main question of the study, namely the relationship between the Elijah Cycle and the agenda of the deuteronomistic editors. It illustrated that a comparative reading of the Elijah Cycle have implications for deuteronomistic ideology on various levels. It has therefore become clear that there exists a definite relation between the Elijah Cycle and its current literary context, in that it serves the religious and political agenda of the deuteronomistic editors.

6.6. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

This study has accepted a multi-dimentional approach in its inquiry as to the relationship between the Elijah Cycle as such, and the religious and political agenda of DH. It has argued, on the basis of literary features and contents of the first and last narratives, that the Cycle has been structured so as to support and develop deuteronomistic ideology through a comparative reading of 1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 22:52 – 2 Kings 1.

Such a comparative reading has been shown to create contrasts between the two narratives, and in turn these contrasts have been shown to advance and develop DH ideology. The social-scientific analysis of Chapter 4 has confirmed and strengthened these results, showing that an understanding of the socio-cultural world behind the texts increases the dynamics of the contrasts and ironies that are recognised in a comparative reading.

Chapter 5 has synthesised the information and results of the various approaches that has been taken to the texts. It has portrayed the Elijah Cycle as dynamic literature that want to impact its hearers and make an appeal on them to conform to a certain religious norm. Ideological themes such as the (Mosaic) prophet Elijah, the condemnation of the idolatrous monarchy, the reversal of status and the word of Yahweh have been seen as taking its place in the battle for religious identity.

The Elijah Cycle polemicises against Baal worship. Yahweh is portrayed as the God who heals the believer, but slays the apostate.

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