

FROM JOSHUA TO SAMUEL:  
SOME REMARKS ON THE ORIGIN  
OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES\*

KLAAS SPRONK

1. *Introduction*

The basic problem or challenge a modern commentator on one of these historical books of the Old Testament faces is that he/she has to take a deliberate stand in the ongoing discussion on the Deuteronomistic history.<sup>1</sup> We are no longer in the enviable position of J. Alberto Soggin, who could write, almost thirty years ago, in the preface of his commentary on the book of Judges: “I think that the hypothesis of a Deuteronomistic redaction of the ‘former prophets’ has now been established.”<sup>2</sup> Today anyone stating something like that can be accused of not keeping up with recent research or of having a one-sided view ignoring many other exegetical positions. The refinement of and alternatives to Martin Noth’s theory has in the recent decades led to an “unsettling wide array of conflicting options that encourage skepticism of past attempts to sort out discrete redactional layers in the Dtr history.”<sup>3</sup>

It is tempting to conclude from this situation that the classic diachronic approach finds itself here in a cul-de-sac and we can simply ignore its arguments. However, one cannot easily flee into the assumption that the book can be studied as one coherent unit. A survey of the field of synchronic studies leads to a similar disturbing list of contradicting results

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey on the history of research on the book of Judges and its reception history, see: K. Spronk, “Het boek Richteren: Een overzicht van het recente onderzoek,” *ACEBT* 19 (2001) 1–36; C. Houtman and K. Spronk, *Ein Held des Glaubens? Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien zu den Simson-Erzählungen* (CBET 39; Leuven 2004); C. Houtman and K. Spronk, *Jefta und seine Tochter: Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studien zu Richter, 11, 29–40* (Altes Testament und Moderne 21; Münster 2007).

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; London 1981), xi.

<sup>3</sup> S.A. Meier, “Review of Raymond F. Person Jr., *The Deuteronomistic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature*,” *JBL* 122 (2003) 160–165 at 160.

with lots of recreated overall structures or assumed central themes.<sup>4</sup> Also with this approach the theories tend to get more complicated but less convincing.

In this article I hope to show that it is possible to profit from the arguments used in both the diachronic and the synchronic approach—they are often the same though interpreted differently—in an attempt to offer a plausible sketch of the origin of the book. There appear to be many good reasons to assume that the book of Judges in its present form can be explained as a bridge that was laid relatively late between the books of Joshua and Samuel. This has also consequences for the interpretation of the ending of the book of Joshua.

## 2. *The Problems of Judges 1*

In her recent monograph on Judges 1 Mareike Rake makes a new, impressive effort to explain the inconsistencies, contradictions, and unexpected repetitions the reader comes across in the transition from the book of Joshua to the book of Judges.<sup>5</sup> Most obvious are the different reports about Jerusalem (taken by Judah according to Judg 1:8, but left to the Jebusites by Benjamin according to 1:21) and the repeated mention of Joshua's death and burial (Josh 24:29–30 and Judg 2:8–9). In the line of among others Rudolph Smend, who supervised her doctoral thesis, Rake assumes that we are dealing here with the result of many redactional activities which can be unraveled by a precise literary analysis. She therefore starts with reconstructing the original text, which leaves about half of the Masoretic text. Then she compares the text to the parallel passages in the book of Joshua. She concludes that in some cases the texts in Joshua are dependent upon those in Judges 1, although she admits that things appear to be very complicated here: sometimes the dependence may also be the other way around, whereas one also has to reckon with the possibility that in a next stage the older text may have been edited on the basis of the later text. Originally, the transition would have been from Josh 24:28 (Joshua releasing the people) to Judg 2:7–9 (about Joshua's death).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. Andersson, *The Book and Its Narratives: A Critical Examination of Some Synchronic Studies of the Book of Judges* (Örebro 2001). Cf. also the response by G. Wong, "Narratives and Their Contexts: A Critique of Greger Andersson with Respect to Narrative Autonomy," *SJOT* 20 (2006) 216–230.

<sup>5</sup> M. Rake, "Juda wird aufsteigen!": *Untersuchungen zum ersten Kapitel des Richterbuches* (BZAW 367; Berlin 2006).

In a next phase 2:1–5 (the episode of the messenger of Yhwh at Bochim) would have been added.<sup>6</sup> The duplication of the report of Joshua's death at the end of the book of Joshua is attributed by Rake to a later redactor, whereas the present first chapter would have received its place between these two moments in the redaction history. The introduction in 1:1aα ("It happened after the death of Joshua") would mark together with the inclusion of the death of Joshua in Josh 24:29–30 a final phase, in connection with the separation of the two books.<sup>7</sup>

The problem with this theory is that it appears to be easier to cut the text into pieces than to reconstruct the process in which they reached their present unity. Rake has to admit that there are more ways to bring the pieces together, as could be derived already from the history of research, for instance, from the fact that Erhard Blum using the same method comes to different conclusions concerning the unraveling of this "compositional knot."<sup>8</sup> The suggestion that the report of Joshua's death in Judg 2:7–9 should be dated earlier than the version in Joshua 24 goes against the outcomes of many other redaction-critical studies.<sup>9</sup> It would be convincing when the reconstructed redactional layers were clearly coherent, but they are not. We have to imagine that at one stage Josh 24:28 was followed by Judg 2:1 and that within six verses the reference to Joshua releasing the people was repeated. Rake, who in her study is very strict with regard to tensions in the text, is less critical in this case when she simply states that this does not disturb the line of the story very much.<sup>10</sup> Also the suggestion that in a later stage Josh 24:28 was followed by Judg 1:1aβ ("and the people asked Yhwh: who shall go up first?"), without the reference to the death of Joshua, is not compelling.

Another problem is the relation between Judg 1:1–2:9 and the rest of the book. Rake completely ignores the results of synchronic studies describing the many relations within the book as indications of its

<sup>6</sup> Rake, "Juda," 127.

<sup>7</sup> Rake, "Juda," 131–132.

<sup>8</sup> E. Blum, "Der kompositionelle Knoten am Übergang von Josua zu Richter: Ein Entflechtungsvorschlag," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature: Festschrift C.H.W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; BEThL 133; Leiden 1997), 181–212.

<sup>9</sup> Cf., amongst others, E. Noort, "Josua 24,28–31, Richter 2,6–9 und das Josuagrab: Gedanken zu einem Straßenbild," in *Biblische Welten: Festschrift für Martin Metzger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (ed. W. Zwickel; OBO 123; Göttingen 1993), 109–130 at 113–115; H.N. Rösel, "Lässt sich eine nomistische Redaktion im Buch Josua feststellen," *ZAW* 119 (2007) 184–189.

<sup>10</sup> Rake, "Juda," 127: "stellt hier keine allzu große erzählerische Härte dar."

inner coherence.<sup>11</sup> Recently, Gregory Wong indicated the interaction between the introduction (1:1–2:5), central section (2:6–16:31) and epilogue (17:1–21:25) of the book.<sup>12</sup> He notes a number of clear thematic links, such as the Jebusite threat (1:21; 19:11–12), oracular consultations (1:2; 20:18), specific military action (1:17; 21:11), weeping at Bethel (2:4; 21:2), arranged marriages (1:12; 21:10–22). Wong also points to the shared dependence on the book of Joshua: allusions to the taking of Jericho and Ai (1:22–26; 20:29–48), sending out spies (18:2), dealing with potential transgressors (ch. 20). Rake only discusses—in a footnote<sup>13</sup>—the clear correspondence between 20:18 and 1:1–2. In both texts the people ask who shall go up first and then God answers that it must be Judah. She states that this reference to Judah in chapter 20 is inserted by a redactor after chapter 1 had been added to the book. According to Rake, originally the tribe of Judah played no part in the stories of the judges. This would be in line with the positive view on this tribe: it has nothing to do with the following negative period in the history of Israel. The added first chapter should be regarded then as a kind of bookmark emphasizing this difference between Judah and the other tribes.

Most interpreters of the book will share the idea of the positive view on Judah in the book of Judges, but Rake's arguments for restricting this to the first chapter and to a later edition of the book are not convincing. It is also possible to see this presentation of Judah as an element of a more general, well considered way of arranging and editing existing stories and traditions by one writer/editor, who had or gave himself the task to connect the already existing books of Joshua and Samuel. This possibility shall be worked out now.

### 3. *The Book of Judges as an Introduction to the Books of Samuel*

There is a tendency among modern scholars to look at the Former Prophets from a new angle: not—like Martin Noth—from the book of Deuteronomy looking forward, but looking back from the book of

<sup>11</sup> Good examples are the studies of B.G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOTSup 46; Sheffield 1987) and Y. Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (BIS 38; Leiden 1999).

<sup>12</sup> G. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges: An Inductive, Rhetorical Study* (VTSup 111; Leiden 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Rake, "Juda," 140–141 n. 440.

Kings.<sup>14</sup> According to A. Graeme Auld stories in the book of Judges contain “pre-playing elements of the royal story.”<sup>15</sup> The book of Judges would have been written with the books of Samuel and Kings in mind. Mark Brettler calls the judges “protokings.”<sup>16</sup> On the literary level this is clearly indicated by the repeated phrase “in these days there was no king in Israel” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1). This is generally acknowledged as a promonarchal refrain, using the horrible stories in the last chapters of the book of Judges as arguments in favor of the appointment of a king with the power to bring peace and justice.<sup>17</sup> Next to this there are a number of topographical correspondences between the books of Judges and Samuel. The story of the outrage in Gibeon foreshadows the controversy between Saul and David, because it takes place in towns related to these coming kings. The travelers wrongly pass by the later city of David, Jebus (19:10–12, with the hardly accidental remark that this is Jerusalem), to get into trouble in Gibeon, the home town of Saul. To this can be added that in 19:13 also Ramath is mentioned. Within the story there is no clear reason for this, so this also seems to have been meant to relate this story to coming events, namely the appearance of Samuel, who was born there (1 Sam 1:19; 2:11). The mentioning of Silo in 18:31; 21:12, 19 and 21 has a counterpart in 1 Samuel 1, where it is mentioned as the place of the temple. Within this framework it is also possible to assume that the location Mizpah as the place of the gathering of the tribes for the battle

<sup>14</sup> Cf. E. Würthwein, “Erwägungen zum sog. deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk,” in idem, *Studien zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (BZAW 227; Berlin 1994), 1–11; A.G. Auld, “The Deuteronomists and the Former Prophets: Or What Makes the Former Prophets Deuteronomistic,” in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. L.S. Schearing and S.L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 268; Sheffield 1999), 116–129 (reprinted in A.G. Auld, *Samuel at the Threshold: Selected Works* [SOTS Monographs; Ashgate 2004], 185–192); R.G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (Göttingen 2000), 160.

<sup>15</sup> A.G. Auld, “The Deuteronomist between History and Theology,” in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø; VTSup 80, Leiden 2000), 353–367 at 355; cf. also his “Samuel and Genesis: Some Questions of John Van Seter’s ‘Yahwist,’” in *Rethinking the Foundations: Essays in Honour of John Van Seters* (ed. S.L. McKenzie et al.; BZAW 294; Berlin 2000), 23–32 (reprinted in Auld, *Samuel*, 205–212), esp. 24–25.

<sup>16</sup> M.Z. Brettler, “The Book of Judges: Literature as Politics,” *JBL* 108 (1989) 395–418, esp. 407. Cf. also P.J. van Midden, “A Hidden Message? Judges as Foreword to the Book of Kings,” in *Unless Some One Guide Me ... Festschrift for Karel A. Deurloo* (ed. J.W. Dyk et al.; ACEBTSup 2; Maastricht 2002), 77–86.

<sup>17</sup> Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, 191–223, explains the refrain as a reference to the divine king, Yhwh. He has to go a long way to prove his case, piling up a lot of circumstantial evidence, like a farfetched comparison with 2 Chron 15:3, and is, therefore, hardly convincing.

against the Benjaminites (20:1, 3; 21:1, 5, 8) has something to do with the fact that in the same place the Israelites guided by Samuel defeated the Philistines (1 Sam 7:5–14).

Next to these topographical correspondences it does not seem too farfetched to see a relation between the extraordinary behavior of a man cutting his dead wife into twelve pieces sending them to all the tribes of Israel (Judg 19:29) with Saul's way of convoking the Israelites by sending them the pieces of his oxen (1 Sam 11:7). As what is told of the man in Judg 19 is the most uncommon, one may assume that it was modeled on the story of Saul.

Another interesting correspondence between the books of Samuel and the book of Judges is the use of the phrase **שאל באלהים**. Within the stories of Saul and David this way of asking the will of God can be regarded as a "Leitmotiv."<sup>18</sup> The downfall of Saul is connected with it, as becomes clear in the story of his attempt to make contact with the spirit of the dead Samuel, when it is no longer possible for him to make contact with Yhwh (1 Sam 28:6, 16). The rise to power of David on the other end is related to his successful attempts to get divine advice. Good examples of this can be found in 1 Sam 22:10, 13, and especially 2 Sam 2:1 (David asks Yhwh: "Shall I go up?"). The way it is described there has its closest parallel in the Old Testament in the scene in Judg 18:5–6, where the oracle is also given to people on their way.<sup>19</sup> In the book of Judges the expression also returns in the already mentioned repeated question asking God who shall go up first (1:1; 20:18). This too can be seen as an indication that the attested deliberate references to the next book in the final chapters of Judges are part of the overall design of the book. A closer look at the story of Samson will confirm this.

There are many parallels between 1 Samuel 1 and Judges 13. Both stories begin with presenting the problem of a woman having no children and introduce her husband with exactly the same words: "And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, and his name was Manoah" (Judg 13:2); "And there was a certain man of Ramathaim-Zophim, of the hill-country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah" (1 Sam 1:1). The introduction of a story with **ויהי איש אחד מן** may seem to be very common, but it is not. Within the Old Testament we only find it in precisely these two places.<sup>20</sup> In both stories the woman eventually gives

<sup>18</sup> H.-F. Fuhs, "שאל *šā'al*," *TWAT* 7:910–926 at 921.

<sup>19</sup> Fuhs, *TWAT* 7:920.

<sup>20</sup> It is used without **אחד** also in Gen 39:2; Judg 17:1; 19:1; 1 Sam 9:1; 2 Sam 21:20;

birth to a son who was promised by God under the condition of keeping to a number of prescriptions. In Judges 13 the messenger of Yhwh gives them to the unnamed woman: she is not allowed to drink wine or strong drink or eat something unclean and no razor shall come upon the head of her son, because he shall be a Nazirite for life. In 1 Sam 1:11 Hannah makes a vow herself: "I will give him unto Yhwh all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." After that, she has to declare to the priest misunderstanding her behavior that she had not drunk too much strong drink.

The best way to explain these parallels is that the author of the story of Samson was familiar with the story of the birth of Samuel.<sup>21</sup> The correspondences in form and content can hardly be coincidental or ascribed to a common pattern of miraculous birth stories. Compared to each other a number of elements seem to have been added in Judges 13, making the story more miraculous with a messenger of Yhwh taking the place of the priest. The element of non drinking is also more natural in the story of Hannah. Naming the son a Nazirite can also be regarded as a later, exaggerating and in fact an incorrect interpretation of the given prescriptions. The motive for relating Samson to Samuel can be found in the words of the messenger of Yhwh: "the child shall be a Nazirite of God from the womb. And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judg 13:5). When the woman repeats these words to her husband she changes the reference of the deliverance from the Philistines to a reference to Samson's death: "the child shall be a Nazirite of God from the womb to the day of his death" (13:7). This can be seen as references to the later battles against the Philistines by Samuel, Saul and David. During his lifetime Samson was not able to defeat these enemies. It was only under the reign of King David that the Philistines were defeated definitively.

All this can be interpreted as indications that in its present form the stories about Samson were meant as an introduction to the history as recounted in the books of Samuel. Once the reader is put on this track he

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and 1 Chron 20:6. See on the discussion about the repetition of this expression as an argument in redaction critical studies M. Leuchter, "Now There Was a [Certain] Man": Compositional Chronology in Judges—1 Samuel," *CBQ* 69 (2007) 429–439. He lists 1 Sam 9:1 among the texts using the expression with <sup>■non-matching quote</sup> **וְהָיָה** without indicating that this is found in only a minority of manuscripts. It is most likely that in these manuscripts the Hebrew text was adapted to 1 Sam 1:1.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. R. Bartelmus, *Heroentum in Israel und seiner Umwelt* (ATHANT 65; Zürich 1979), 85–86.

may notice more common elements: Samson being driven by the spirit of Yhwh like king Saul, Samson inventing unsolvable riddles and in this way showing to be wise like Salomon, Samson getting involved with foreign women, which reminds of the risky marriage policy of king Salomon and of king Ahab, Samson bound and blinded like the last king of Judah, Zedekiah. All these possible associations turn this at first sight rather banal stories about a violent hero into an ominous parable.

The relation with the books of Samuel is a common element of Judges 13–16 and 17–21. Next to this one can note the inner cohesion of these chapters.<sup>22</sup> The chapters 13 and 18 are connected by the reference to the tribe of Dan, indicated only here in 13:2 and 18:1, 11, 30 (next to 1 Chron 12:35) as **הדני**. What catches the eye is also that the number of eleven hundred silver peaces Delilah received from the Philistine lords is the same as the amount of stolen money mentioned in the beginning of chapter 17. We may also note the use of the verb **חלל** Hiphil, “to begin,” both in 13:5, 25; 16:19, 22; and in 20:31, 39, 40; and the use of the verb **ארב** “lie in ambush” in 16:2, 9, 12; and in 20:29, 33, 36, 37; 21:20. The writer/redactor who combined these stories as an introduction to the history of Samuel and the kings also left some traces of his work when he used the already mentioned simple, but within the Old Testament uncommon phrase **ויהי איש** not only in 13:2 but also in 17:1 and 19:1.<sup>23</sup>

With regard to the tendency to put Judah as the tribe of the coming David in a positive light there is also a clear connection with chapter 1. Judah is doing better than the other tribes in capturing the land and driving away the Canaanites. Instructed by God Judah goes first (1:1–2; cf. 20:18), just like David after the death of Saul (2 Sam 2:1; cf. also 5:19, 23).<sup>24</sup> Now the question comes up whether also a connection was made in the beginning of the book of Judges to the preceding book of Joshua and, if so, in a similar way as it is done at the end of the book with the books of Samuel.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. A.G. van Daalen, *Simson: Een onderzoek naar de plaats, de opbouw en de functie van het Simsonverhaal in het kader van de Oudtestamentische geschiedschrijving* (SSN 8; Assen 1966), 51–57.

<sup>23</sup> Leuchter, “Now There Was,” 439, states that the usage of this formula “represents a complex degree of intertextual and metatextual dynamics over a period of several centuries,” but this cannot be based convincingly on the repetition of these words alone.

<sup>24</sup> See on the relation between these verses also Rake, “Juda,” 100.

#### 4. *The Book of Judges as a Sequel to the Book of Joshua*

There can be no doubt about it that in the present form the book of Judges is presented as a sequel to the book of Joshua. Just like the book of Joshua it starts with the reference of the death of the primary figure in the preceding book: "It happened after the death of Joshua/Moses." According to the common opinion the first chapter of the book of Judges offers a very different picture of the conquest of the promised land compared to what one reads in the book of Joshua. Many attribute, in the line of Albrecht Alt, a greater historic value to it as a more original and reliable account of what happened in the confrontation between Israelites and Canaanites than the version we find in the book of Joshua. The differences between the books, however, are small when one takes into account that for a considerable part Judges 1 repeats the book of Joshua. The quotations contain positive information about Judah, taken from Josh 15:13–14 (cf. Judg 1:20), 15–19 (cf. Judg 1:11–15), and negative information about the other tribes, taken from Josh 15:63 (cf. Judg 1:21 with the Benjaminites instead of the Judahites), 16:10 (cf. Judg 1:29), and 17:11–13 (cf. Judg 1:27–28). To this is added new information, distributed in a similar way and therefore deepening the dichotomy: positive about Judah and negative about the other tribes.

In most cases it is likely that in the noted parallels Judges is dependent on Joshua.<sup>25</sup> Precisely where Judges 1 differs from Joshua, it concerns the obvious attempt to put Judah in a more favorable light than it appears in text in Joshua. This is what has happened in 1:21, where compared to the parallel in Josh 15:63 the name of the Judahites is replaced by the name of the Benjaminites as the ones who must be blamed for not driving out the Jebusites from Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> In 1:8 it is told that the Judahites conquered Jerusalem. Because there is no reference in 1:8 of the Jebusites, we can assume that in the eyes of the author it does not contradict 1:21. Conquering and burning a city is one thing, definitively driving away the inhabitants is something else. The same distinction is made in the verses 18–19: Judah subdued Gazah, Ashkelon, and Ekron, but at the same time it is remarked that it was not able to supplant the inhabitants of the Philistine coast, which is nothing else than the region

<sup>25</sup> Cf. K.L. Younger, Jr., "The Configuring of Judicial Preliminaries: Judges 1.1–2.5 and its Dependence of the Book of Joshua," *JSOT* 68 (1995) 75–92.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J.C. de Vos, *Das Los Judas: Über Entstehung und Ziele der Landbeschreibung in Josua 15* (VTSup 95; Leiden 2003), 166–167.

of the mentioned cities.<sup>27</sup> What is more important, however, that in this way, by the combination of 1:8 and 1:21, not only the negative picture of Judah in Josh 15:63 could be corrected, it also left room for the later report of David taking the city of Jerusalem and making it his capital (2 Sam 5:6–25). Note that in the story of David the Jebusites are explicitly mentioned: “the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land.”<sup>28</sup> The way in which the source text of Joshua is handled here and the way the connection is made to the book of Samuel can be regarded as typical for the motives and methods of the writer/redactor of the book of Judges. It also corroborates the suggestion that the book of Judges is related to the book of Joshua in the same way as it appears to be related to the books of Samuel.

The story of the messenger of Yhwh in Bochim (2:1–5) can (or perhaps: should) be read in relation to the book of Joshua as well. The connection is made by the reference to a common place name, so in the same way as Judges is related to Samuel. Apparently it is part of the style of the writer/redactor. In this case he used the name of Gilgal. This reminds of the passing through the river Jordan and the twelve stones placed there as a memory of what Yhwh had done for his people (Josh 4:19–20). When the messenger is said to have come from Gilgal this is more than topographical information. The place name Bochim is related to the weeping (בכה) of the Israelites. It also points forward to other moments of weeping in the book of Judges (11:37; 14:16; 20:23, 26; 21:2), as a refrain emphasizing the sadness of all these stories of disobedience to God and its consequences. Even more interesting is the possible relation with Josiah’s weeping according to 2 Kgs 22:19.<sup>29</sup> The parallel is strengthened by the fact that Josiah is reminded here, just as the people of Israel in Judg 2, of the broken covenant. Josiah acts correctly here, proving himself to be one of the few kings “walking in all the way of his father David” (2 Kgs 22:2).

The story of the messenger in Bochim is followed by the reports of Joshua releasing the people, of the people serving Yhwh during the life of Joshua, of Joshua’s death, and finally of the next generation forgetting Yhwh (2:6–10). Read together it reminds not only of Joshua’s death as described in Josh 24, but also of the preceding discussion between Joshua

<sup>27</sup> Cf. B. Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco 1988), 136.

<sup>28</sup> See on the relation between these texts also Rake, “*Juda*,” 40–41.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. K. Spronk, “A Story to Weep about: Some Remarks on Judges 1:1–5 and Its Context,” in *Unless Some One Guide me*, 87–94.

and the people.<sup>30</sup> Like the messenger of Yhwh, Joshua had referred to Yhwh's acts on behalf of his people in the past and to Israel's obligations within the covenant with Yhwh. The resolute answer of the people in Josh 24:24 is in glaring contrast with the outcome as established in Judg 2:2. They have not acted according to their solemn words. The repetition of the report of Joshua releasing the people and of Joshua's death and burial, already described in Josh 24:28–31, should be seen within the framework of the changing reactions of the people. In Josh 24:31 the positive attitude of the people is mentioned after the death of Joshua, in Judg 2:7 it is mentioned before the death of Joshua, whereas after his death the covenant is soon forgotten. So the emphasis is on the reaction of the people, which indicates that the repetition of the verses from Joshua 24 is deliberate and functional. The repeated reference to the death of Joshua and of his generation also mirrors the repeated remark in the final chapters of the book of Judges about the absence of a king. Israel is missing its leader. Joshua is dead and his successor is not yet in sight. The initiative of Judah—mentioned in chapter 1, before the remembrance of Joshua's death—was promising, but we have to wait for David until the promise is fulfilled.

Finally, there is a remarkable correspondence between the way the beginning of the book of Judges is related here to the book of Joshua and the way this was done at the end to the books of Samuel. As was noted above the function of the priest in the story of the birth of Samuel was taken over by the messenger of Yhwh in the announcement of the birth of Samson. In a similar way the role of Joshua in the story of the making of the covenant in Joshua 24 is now also played in the story about the broken covenant in Judges 2 by a messenger of Yhwh. The writer/editor of the book of Judges shows an inclination towards the supernatural.

##### 5. *The Book of Judges as a Late Construct within the Former Prophets*

Gradually the picture is taking shape of Judges as a book reacting to both the books of Joshua and Samuel from a pro-Judah/David perspective. It shows much coherence in message and style. In its present form it seems

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Halpern, *The First Historians*, 137, and A. van der Kooij, "‘And I Also Said’: A New Interpretation of Judges II 3," *VT* 45 (1995) 294–306, esp. 305–306, for the opinion that Judg 1:1–3:6 is a coherent introduction to the era of the judges.

to be relatively late, at least being written after Joshua and Samuel. It is nowadays commonly assumed that Judges 1 and Judges 17–21 were added in a late phase, coinciding with the separation of the story of ancient Israel into different books.<sup>31</sup> With regard to the origin and editing of the many stories in between there is much difference of opinion. There is no room here to enter into this discussion. What can be remarked is that the analysis thus far indicates that 2:1–10 and the chapters 13–16 are closely related to this framework.

Thomas Römer considers both 13–16 and 17–21 as post-Deuteronomistic pieces.<sup>32</sup> He points to the possible Hellenistic influences that can be traced not only in the Samson stories,<sup>33</sup> but also in the fable of Jotham (9:8–15)<sup>34</sup> and the story about the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter (11:30–40).<sup>35</sup> For Römer this is reason to assume that we are dealing there with "late interpolations." There are good reasons to go one step further. Parallels with Greek texts and ideas have also been found with regard to cutting off the prisoner's thumbs (1:6),<sup>36</sup> the names of Sisera and Jael (4:2, 17),<sup>37</sup> the three hundred soldiers of Gideon's army (7:6),<sup>38</sup> and the story about the rape of the virgins (21:19–23).<sup>39</sup> It is striking that these parallels are found throughout the book: in the stories about the judges and also in the prologue and epilogue.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher*, 216.

<sup>32</sup> T. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London 2005), 138.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. C. Nauerth, "Simsons Taten: Motivgeschichtliche Überlegungen," *DBAT* 21 (1985) 94–120.

<sup>34</sup> Römer refers to "a stunning parallel" found by C. Briffard, "Gammes sur l'acte de traduire," *Foi et Vie* 101 (2002) 12–18. It is more likely, however, that we are dealing here with the work of a Jewish or Christian editor of the fables of Aesopus. Especially the unexpected reference to the cedars of the Libanon points in this direction. This would also not be the only example of fables from other times and places being attributed to Aesopus (cf. J.F. Priest, "The Dog in the Manger: In Quest of a Fable," *The Classical Journal* 81 [1985] 49–58). A relation to, for instance, Aesopus' fables about the fir-tree and the bramble, or the pomegranate, apple-tree and the bramble about who is the best, is certainly possible here, but it cannot be based on the text quoted by Briffard.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. also T. Römer, "Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell about the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter?," *JSOT* 77 (1998) 27–38; B. Becking, "Iphigeneia in Gilead: Over het verstaan van Richteren 11," *Kerk en Theologie* 41 (1990) 192–205.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. G.F. Moore, *Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh 1895), 17.

<sup>37</sup> B.-J. Diebner, "Wann sang Deborah ihr Lied? Überlegungen zu zwei der ältesten Texte des TNK (Ri 4 und 5)," *ACEBT* 14 (1995) 106–130.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. J.P. Brown, *Israel and Hellas* (BZAW 276; Berlin 2000) 2:84.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Soggin, *Judges*, 304.

## SOME REMARKS ON THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES 149

This is an extra reason to assume that the book of Judges in its present form is the product of one writer/editor who filled in the gap between the books of Samuel and Joshua. He reused and reinterpreted material from Joshua and the book of Samuel and combined it with texts from other sources. Traces of these sources, which can be regarded as early versions of the book of Judges, are found in 1 Sam 12:8–11 (in a retrospect beginning with Jacob and ending with Samuel, referring to the struggle against the Philistines but not mentioning Samson) and the ancient Greek translation of Josh 24:33 (suggesting a transition from the end of the book directly to the story of Ehud).<sup>40</sup> The use of so many and so different sources led to a book which looks at first sight like a hotchpotch. A closer look, however, reveals a clear line running from Joshua to David, the honored king from the tribe of Judah. We also find it summarized in 1 Chron 2:5 (“Judah became more powerful than his brothers and a leader came from him”).<sup>41</sup>

We can only speculate about the identity of the author and his time. One thing that can be said on the basis of the conclusions of this study is that they correspond nicely with the picture sketched by Karel van der Toorn about the Hebrew Bible as a product of the scribal culture.<sup>42</sup> He makes a comparison with scribal activities like that of Berossus in Babylon and Manetho in Egypt as an effort to publish and preserve a national literature. Somewhere in the early Hellenistic age the Jewish scribes collected and edited the prophetic and poetic texts and published them as rounded off, authoritative text as the legacy of inspired men like David and Isaiah. They also wished to offer an authoritative version of the history of Israel, from the creation until restoration after the Babylonian exile. In this process, the book of Judges could very well have been their final masterpiece.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. A. Rofé, “The End of the Book of Joshua According to the Septuagint,” *Henoch* 4 (1982) 17–35; and the discussion by H.N. Rösel, “Die Überleitungen vom Josua—ins Richterbuch,” *VT* 30 (1980) 342–350, esp. 348–349; and M.N. van der Meer, *Formation & Reformulation: The Redaction of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Oldest Textual Witness* (VTSup 102; Leiden 2004), 60–62.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. M.Z. Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (London 2002), 111.

<sup>42</sup> K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge 2007), 259.

