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Anonymous Prophets and Archetypal Kings: Reading 1 Kings 13

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England

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Abstract

This thesis ultimately seeks to present a coherent reading of 1 Kings 13 that is attentive to literary, historical and theological concerns. I begin by summarising and evaluating the overtly theological exposition of the chapter by Karl Barth, as set out in his *Church Dogmatics*, and then considering how this was received and critiqued by his academic peers (Martin Klopfenstein in particular), whose questions, priorities and methods were very different to those of Barth. In this way, as well as exposing substantive material in the text for further investigation, a range of hermeneutical issues that sometimes undergird exegetical work unseen are brought into the foreground. I then bring a wider scope of opinion into the conversation by reviewing the work of other scholars as well, whose methods and priorities also diverge from those of Barth or Klopfenstein. At the same time, I categorise these studies so as to simultaneously assess different views on what 1 Kings 13 is *about*, and divergent views on how it is deemed best to *approach* this subject matter. After considering four additional readings of 1 Kings 13 in some depth, I present a more theoretical discussion about some perceived dichotomies in biblical studies that tend to surface regularly in methodological debates.

I then return to Barth's exposition via the work of David Bosworth, who aims to advocate and develop elements of Barth's proposal for wider acceptance. After evaluating his work, I conclude with my own reading of 1 Kings 13, drawing on many of the exegetical and methodological insights presented by scholars whose lines of inquiry are not always those I would myself have chosen. Ultimately, my proffered reading, which sees Josiah as a central figure in the narrative, leans on insights from Barth and one of his harshest critics, Martin Noth.

For my Katy

טוב אחרית דבר מראשיתו
טוב ארְך־רוח מגב־רוח

Eccl 7.8

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ACEBT	Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BAT	Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments
BETHL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BKAT	Biblisches Kommentar zum Alten Testament
BO	Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CBR	Currents in Biblical Research
CD	The Church Dogmatics
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DH	Deuteronomistic History
Dtr	(the) Deuteronomist
ExAud	Ex Auditu
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
Int	Interpretation
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JESOT	Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series
JTI	Journal of Theological Interpretation
KD	Die Kirchliche Dogmatik
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text

NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OUP	Oxford University Press
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SJOT	Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
TB	Tyndale Bulletin
Them	Themelios
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

INTRODUCTION

Over the past four years, when people have inquired about my chosen area of research for my PhD, I have been inclined to answer: ‘Well, have you heard the one about two prophets, a donkey and a lion?’ Although this became something of a joke among friends, it has also become clear over the course of writing my dissertation that there is a sense in which this may be just the right question to ask. For whatever the nature of one’s engagement with the strange story in 1 Kings 13, the question of whether one has really *heard* it, for all it has to say, is an important one.

Karl Barth is well-known for stressing the importance of hearing biblical texts. While he acknowledged that historical reconstructions of the world behind the text are of some merit, Barth urged interpreters to press beyond this ‘preparatory’ phase to one in which all the words and details of the received text may be properly heard in accordance with their *Sache*.¹ Indeed, one of the biggest challenges faced by interpreters of 1 Kings 13 is that of determining the story’s primary subject matter or *Sache*, since the only consensus scholars appear to have reached is that the story is ‘strange’² and ‘enigmatic’³ in character. Almost every detail concerning both the composition and the meaning of the narrative is contested.

Is 1 Kings 13 a ‘prophetic story,’ based on two distinct narratives (Würthwein) or just one (de Vries)? Is it illustrative of the prophetic office (Klopfenstein) or the inexorable word of God (Long)? Is it a prophetic legend that establishes the criteria (Dozeman), or lack thereof (Crenshaw), for discerning between true and false prophets? In terms of its literary value, is 1 Kings 13 ‘a fairly crass piece of anti-Samaritan religious propaganda constructed with little narrative skill or sensitivity

¹ On Barth’s emphasis on *hearing* as a Spirit-superintended activity, see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I.1: The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Translated by G.T. Thomson. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936. 183. Cf. Richard E. Burnett, *Karl Barth’s Theological Exegesis: The Hermeneutical Principles of the Römerbrief Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 62-4, 239.

² Gene Rice, *1 Kings: Nations Under God*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 110.

³ Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 167.

to religious and moral issues'⁴ (Van Seters), or, given its literary context, does this tale of two anonymous, prophetic figures from north and south provide a subtle and sophisticated commentary on the division of the kingdom (Barth)? Even these few questions show that there is considerable variance in the queries and priorities interpreters bring to 1 Kings 13. Consequently, as one might expect, studies of the narrative have produced wide-ranging results.

This dissertation seeks ultimately to present a coherent reading of 1 Kings 13 that is attentive to literary, historical and theological issues. On one hand, most obviously, this requires a detailed exegesis of the text and engagement with other scholars who have also sought to grasp the meaning(s) of this chapter of the Bible. But on the other hand, it is my intention that this study reflect a significant degree of self-consciousness regarding the methods, hermeneutical assumptions, and theological priorities that undergird and support various readings, including the one put forth here in chapter seven. Due to my own interests, then, this work is an interdisciplinary study that engages with the theology, hermeneutics and exegesis of Karl Barth, the Deuteronomistic History (hereafter the DH), contemporary hermeneutics, and theological interpretation.

Before summarising the contents of each chapter in this work, let us consider the narrative of 1 Kings 13 and its epilogue (2 Kgs 23.15-20) in brief outline:

In Bethel, King Jeroboam is about to make a sacrifice on an altar of his own making when suddenly a man of God from Judah appears 'by the word of the LORD.' The man of God prophesies not against the king, but directly against the altar, naming Josiah as a future Judean king who will sacrifice priests of the high places on the very same altar. Offended by the prophetic oracle, Jeroboam reaches his hand out towards the intruder and commands his men to 'seize him!' The hand of the king withers immediately. The man of God from Judah is then asked to intercede, which he does, and the king's hand is immediately restored to him. For whatever reason, the king then invites the man of God to eat with him, whereupon the man of God reveals that he is under a threefold, divine prohibition: 'For thus I was commanded by the word of the LORD: You shall not eat food, or drink water, or return by the way that you came' (v 9). The man of God leaves Bethel in obedience to the divine command, such that the first part of the story (vv 1-10) is more or less resolved.

The plot thickens in v 11 with the introduction of an old prophet in Bethel who hears of these events from his sons and sets his heart on tricking the man

⁴ John Van Seters, 'On Reading the Story of the Man of God from Judah in 1 Kings 13' in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Robert C. Culley *et al*; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 233.

of God into disobedience. (His motive for doing so is not made explicit.) He sets out in pursuit of the Judean man of God on his donkey and, upon finding him under 'the oak', offers the same invitation that King Jeroboam had done. The man of God initially responds just as he had to Jeroboam, holding fast to the divine decree, but the Bethelite prophet deceives him, claiming that an angel has more recently given a contrary word. The man of God is taken in by the ruse and he returns to the Bethelite prophet's house to eat and drink. It is there that the story takes an unexpected turn.

Having successfully duped the man of God, the Bethelite prophet receives a genuine word of prophecy: "Thus says the LORD: Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment that the LORD your God commanded you, but have come back and have eaten food and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, 'Eat no food, and drink no water,' your body shall not come to your ancestral tomb." (vv 21-22) The man of God leaves and is promptly killed by a lion, which consumes neither the dead man's corpse nor his donkey. What's more, the lion remains standing with the donkey near the dead man of God—a sight which captures the attention of passers-by (v 25). When news of the strange sight reaches the Bethel prophet, he offers up an explanation: 'It is the man of God who disobeyed the word of the LORD; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him according to the word that the LORD spoke to him' (v 26).

Once again, the prophet from Bethel sets out on a donkey (apparently he owned at least two of them) to find the man of God. Having done so, he returns to Bethel with the corpse of the Judean and buries him in his own grave. He mourns over the man of God and requests that he himself be buried alongside him in the course of time. The Bethel prophet then confirms the Judean's prophecy from the beginning of the story (regarding the destruction of the altar in Bethel), but adds to it 'all the high places of Samaria' as well (v 32).

The concluding verses return the focus to King Jeroboam who, in spite of 'this thing' [הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה]—whether the prophecy, the sign, or indeed, the entire saga between the two prophets—does not return from his evil way but goes on appointing priests from among the people. The narrator's final words in v 34 are conclusive in their judgment; 'This matter became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.'

~ ~ ~

Three hundred years later, after acquainting himself with the recently discovered Book of the Law, King Josiah proceeds to tear down numerous places of idolatry and false worship around Jerusalem before also heading north to Bethel. There he destroys the altar that was built by Jeroboam son of Nebat and burns bones from local tombs upon it in order to defile it. In doing so (and apparently without realising it), Josiah acts according to the word of the LORD spoken by the man of God from Judah.

Seeing the tomb in which the man of God was buried, Josiah asks of its significance (presumably, it had been marked in some way), and the inhabitants of Bethel explain to him, 'It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done against the altar at Bethel.' Josiah then gives a command

that the bones in this particular tomb be left alone, and consequently, the bones of both ‘the man of God who came from Judah’ (v 17) and ‘the prophet who came from Samaria’ (v 18) are left undisturbed.

From there, Josiah proceeds to ‘all the cities of Samaria’, doing to them as he had done in Bethel and thereby fulfilling the old Bethelite’s amplification of the prophecy (1 Kgs 13.32) as well as the man of God’s original decree against the altar. (1 Kgs 13.2) Josiah removes the high places, sacrifices the high priests upon their altars, and defiles them before returning to Jerusalem.

Arguably the best-known interpretation of 1 Kings 13 with a distinctively theological accent is the reading presented by Karl Barth in his *Church Dogmatics II.2*.⁵ Although Barth’s interpretation remains one of the most evocative, it was not well-received by his contemporaries, largely because his methodology and the critical questions that he brought to the text were deemed inappropriate to the interpretation of an ancient text. Our study begins in chapter two, then, with an examination and appraisal of Barth’s exegesis, first published (in German) in 1947.

Barth’s sophisticated analysis establishes and elucidates a pair of *doppelbildern* [double-pictures], through which he accentuates a reciprocal dynamic between the man of God and the Bethel prophet in 1 Kings 13 that is also reflected in the mutual interdependence of Judah (the elect) and Israel (the rejected) in the ensuing history. Like other dyads in the Old Testament (Abel and Cain; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and Esau; Leah and Rachel; David and Saul; Judah and Israel; etc), the anonymous prophets of 1 Kings 13 present a clear illustration of God’s differentiating election. Moreover, the division of the kingdom is perceived as the culmination of a series of moments and relationships in Israel’s history that stress the theme of distinction-within-unity, uniquely expounded ‘in title-form’ in 1 Kings 13. Thus, in Barth’s view, the two anonymous—and morally ambiguous—prophetic figures are ‘unmistakably meant to be taken together’⁶ as a witness to God’s desire for the undivided worship of his people. Paradoxically, Barth perceives the internal distinction in God’s people (between Israel and Judah) as a necessary step towards God’s eschatological will for the union of the elect and rejected, which is fully made known in Christ.

⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics II.2: The Doctrine of God*. (trans. G.W. Bromiley et al; T&T Clark, 1957), 393-410. Translated from *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik II; Die Lehre von Gott 2*. (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G., 1942), 424-53. References hereafter are to the English translation (*CD*), unless reference is made to the original German (*KD*).

⁶ Barth, *CD II.2*, 398.

For a proper understanding of Barth's exegesis, it is necessary not only to explore the doctrinal context (election) of Barth's treatment of this chapter, but also to understand certain hermeneutical conventions that characterise Barth's work; notably, intertextuality, synchrony and christology. Therefore, each of these is explored in chapter two with reference to Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 so as to give a comprehensive account of his method and contribution.

The first scholar to seriously engage with Barth's exegesis was Martin Klopfenstein, whose criticisms had long-lasting impact. Klopfenstein's lengthy engagement with Barth is therefore assessed in chapter three, where we explore the methodological divergence between Barth's overtly theological interpretation and Klopfenstein's historical-critical exegesis. Klopfenstein offers his own detailed exegetical treatment of 1 Kings 13, but he also clearly sets out his 'main question... namely, whether the text itself proves Barth right in understanding [1 Kgs 13] as a witness for God's electing and rejecting, rejecting and electing, and their peculiar juxtaposition.'⁷ Klopfenstein is especially critical of Barth's delineation of a series of (five) reversals in the story that are indicative of the interdependence of Israel and Judah within his theological schema. Rather, Klopfenstein insists—for purely *exegetical* reasons—that the narrative contains a single turning point (in v 20).⁸ The same concern, i.e. the introduction of external categories, lies behind Klopfenstein's disagreements with Barth's (*über*)interpretations of the lion and the shared grave as well. But while Klopfenstein is critical of Barth for imposing a dialectical scheme of thought into his interpretation, he ultimately agrees that election is an important theme for understanding the narrative, and he commends Barth for the theological accent of his exposition. In spite of these positive remarks, however, we find that the negative criticisms of Klopfenstein (and subsequently, of Noth) had a significant impact upon subsequent scholars sharing the methodological priorities of an historical-critical approach.

Chapter four reviews the past seventy years of scholarship, from Barth's exegesis (1947) through to the present (2016). In order to show that different readings emerge from distinct inquiries and their associated methodologies, I group scholars into four thematic categories and examine one example from each category in some

⁷ Klopfenstein, '1. Könige 13' in *ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ: K. Barth zum achtzigsten Geburtstag* (ed. E. Busch, J. Fangmeier, and M. Geiger; Zürich: EVZ-Verlag Zurich, 1966), 667.

⁸ Klopfenstein, 668.

depth. The categories are: (i) *the discernment of true and false prophecy* (Crenshaw); (ii) *the efficacious word of God* (Walsh); (iii) *anti-north polemic* (Van Seters); and (iv) *political allegory* (Boer).

James Crenshaw's reading of 1 Kings 13 addresses the issue of *prophetic discernment* within a larger work (*Prophetic Conflict*; 1971) that seeks to explain the decline and demise of prophecy in Israel. Crenshaw begins with a psychological consideration of the phenomenon of prophecy and argues for a particular sociological perspective regarding ancient Israel's deteriorating attitude towards prophecy. He uses selected phrases and elements of 1 Kings 13 to support his theses, though I argue that, in its entirety (i.e. when select phrases are not extracted to suit a particular purpose), 1 Kings 13 does not address the issue of prophetic discernment.

Jerome Walsh understands the narrative to promote *obedience to the inexorable word of God*, and his essays and books are of special interest for their attentiveness to hermeneutical questions. Walsh reads 1 Kings 13 within three different contexts—'as two self-contained narratives, as a component of the story of Jeroboam, and as an element in the Deuteronomistic History of the two kingdoms'⁹—to ascertain how shifting literary horizons impact upon meaning. The exercise is illuminating, as one might expect, and Walsh's narrative-critical insights are characteristically sharp, though I express concern that he leans rather heavily on the subjective identification of structural patterns that he considers 'fundamental to the text.'¹⁰

Van Seters treats 1 Kings 13 as an *anti-north polemic*, albeit one that is difficult to understand because its post-Dtr author is literarily incompetent. He identifies sixteen problematic elements in the story in an effort to show that 1 Kings 13 (and 2 Kings 23.15-20) 'is incoherent throughout.'¹¹ Moreover, because of this incoherence, Van Seters warns against drawing theological or moral lessons from 1 Kings 13. I address these sixteen problems and argue that they are less disconcerting than Van Seters suggests. In a second essay, he focuses on the redaction seams around 1 Kings 13 and addresses the purpose of redaction-criticism. At the same time, he endeavours to disprove Cross's double-redaction theory by arguing that 1 Kings 13 was composed in the exilic period and that Josiah's reforms never actually occurred in Bethel and Samaria. These issues are addressed further in chapter five.

⁹ Walsh, 'The Contexts of 1 Kings XIII' *VT* 39/3 (1989), 355-70.

¹⁰ Walsh, 'Contexts', 369.

¹¹ Van Seters, 'On Reading', 230.

Finally, Roland Boer reads 1 Kings 13 as a *political allegory*. He identifies tensions within the narrative as pointers to broader ideological concerns. Thus, within a framework that highlights the reliability of the divine word (i.e. 1 Kgs 11-14), 1 Kings 13 sows doubt with a contradictory word from a deceptive 'brother' so that the Dtr theme of prophecy-fulfilment is brought under fire. In addition, via the themes of hospitality and the threefold command, the narrative simultaneously legitimates the north and undermines divine favour upon the south. These elements of conflict in the narrative offer an imaginary resolution to the perplexing co-existence of North and South in Israel.¹² Overall, Boer's reading strategy is attentive to counter-intuitive insights and self-aware.

I conclude chapter four with some observations about how each of these interpreters utilises methods that are appropriate to the questions or issues being raised. In some ways, this is exactly what one might expect, but it is interesting nonetheless to see how this pattern unfolds. The survey of approaches and methods in chapter four paves the way for a more theoretical discussion in chapter five regarding some hermeneutical dichotomies that tend to surface regularly in disputes about biblical exegesis. These are: author- and text-hermeneutics; historical-critical and canonical approaches; and synchronic or diachronic priorities.

These three dichotomies are explored with reference to the scholarly works discussed in previous chapters. My purpose is not to polarise interpreters but rather to stress the importance of self-consciously locating one's work within a particular set of concerns or angle of enquiry. Many issues can be resolved in different ways, depending on what drives the project: a precise date may or may not impact upon one's interpretation of a text; redaction-criticism may be utilised to understand the text in its final form or as a means of retrieving a core work; what one reader sees as a narrative gap to be filled, another sees as evidence of disparate source materials; and so on. Hermeneutical issues such as these are discussed in an effort to show that the dichotomisation of differing approaches is, in most cases, neither helpful nor necessary. One's approach generally serves one's interpretive interests. Ultimately, I conclude by drawing on Richard Briggs' observation that many divisive issues

¹² Roland Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam* (Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 174.

might be resolved by learning to speak of ‘scripture *as...*’ rather than bluntly insisting on what ‘scripture *is*’.¹³

Having reviewed methodological differences and their implications for interpretation, we turn in chapter six to the work of David Bosworth, a recent interpreter who has sought to assimilate Barth’s reading within contemporary, mainstream scholarship. His project is evaluated in light of its goal: to advocate and support Barth’s exegesis. Bosworth’s reading is certainly interesting and worthwhile, albeit less consistent with Barth’s enterprise than he perhaps recognises. Bosworth leaves the theme of election aside and refrains from christological interpretation, and although he draws on Barth’s multiple reversals, he interprets them in a way that is more literary and chronological than theological. Bosworth’s angle of enquiry is thus quite original, and his understanding of 1 Kings 13 as a *mise-en-abyme* proves illuminating and provocative.

Finally, in chapter seven I offer my own interpretation of 1 Kings 13, drawing on certain key observations made by Barth while resisting other aspects of his interpretation. In response to Barth’s final question about 1 Kings 13—‘Where else is its fulfilment to be found if not in Jesus Christ?’—my answer is ‘Josiah’. That is to say, I conclude that the narrative’s function and meaning may be understood within an Old Testament (or more particularly, a Deuteronomistic) frame of reference rather than seeing Christ as the story’s only conceivable *telos*.

I find that reading 1 Kings 13 as a narrative analogy and through a Josianic lens not only makes sense of Dtr’s thematic priorities throughout the history of the kingdoms, but also untangles much of the complexity of 1 Kings 13 in particular. My literary-theological reading of 1 Kings 13 takes seriously the analogical dimension of the text, and interprets the chapter as a proleptic parable that anticipates Josiah of Judah as the ideological antithesis of Jeroboam I of Israel. Represented by two anonymous prophetic figures, these two archetypal kings are set against one another in the narrative in a way that accents the theological significance of their actions for the people of Israel. In this sense, 1 Kings 13 is found to have both a retrospective and a prospective function, not unlike Dtr’s speeches, as per Wellhausen and Noth. The reading proffered in chapter seven also contributes to current discussions of the Dtr’s theology by accentuating the hopeful

¹³ Richard S. Briggs, ‘Biblical Hermeneutics and Scriptural Responsibility’ in Stanley E. Porter and Matthew R. Malcolm (eds), *The Future of Biblical Interpretation: Responsible Plurality in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Milton Keynes, Paternoster: 2013), 36-52.

denouement of 1 Kings 13. Even the unjust death of the man of God from Judah (which preempts the tragic death of Josiah) leads to a hopeful portent of reunification as the Judean man of God and the Samarian prophet together await the fulfilment of their shared prophecy concerning the end of cultic malpractice and the coming of a Davidic scion.

What, then, is the value of this study? Broadly speaking, it presents a hermeneutical inquiry *vis-à-vis* OT narrative, using 1 Kings 13 as a case study. But many of the findings have wider application and will, I hope, prove useful for the articulation of reading strategies for Old Testament texts. The hermeneutical significance of this work is somewhat wide-ranging.

Although my interpretation of 1 Kings 13 borrows elements from Barth's overtly theological construal of the text, I have sought to remain within the literary world depicted by Dtr. The reading in chapter seven is thereby demonstrative of an interpretive method that sustains interest in theological motifs such as prophecy, covenant fidelity, and hope, without failing to also account for the author's historical frame of reference and the literary shape of the whole. To put it otherwise, this work shows that insights garnered from literary, historical and theological methodologies may be harnessed and brought together to expound a given text.

At the same time, I have focused on the literary *function* of 1 Kings 13 (as a narrative analogy) within the larger corpus rather than seeking to ascertain a particular moral to the story, as many scholars have done. My reading thereby opens the door for comparable texts to also be interpreted as narrative analogies; i.e. as seemingly independent stories that provide commentary on their wider literary contexts (e.g., Jdg 9; 1 Sam 25; 1 Kgs 20).

Related to this, my reading of 1 Kings 13 as an 'opening bookend' to the history of the divided kingdom has significance for synchronic studies of Dtr's historiographical and ideological peculiarities, as well as for diachronic studies of redaction theories pertaining to the DH. That is to say, the interpretation of 1 Kings 13 offered here is relevant both to students with an interest in literary-structural studies of the DH in its received form, and to those interested in the compositional history of these books. But we shall return to these observations in the final, eighth chapter of this work, where the implications of this study are spelt out in greater detail.

KARL BARTH'S EXEGESIS OF 1 KINGS 13

Introduction

Karl Barth, who describes 1 Kings 13 as 'the richest and most comprehensive prophetic story in the Old Testament,'¹ interprets the story as an 'illustration of the differentiating [*unterscheidende*] election of God.'² His exegesis of the passage appears in volume II.2 of his *Church Dogmatics* in concert with two other Old Testament texts that also illustrate the doctrine of election: the sacrificial animals in Lev 14 and 16, and Israel's elected and rejected kings, David and Saul. Significantly, Barth does not understand 1 Kings 13 to be about prophecy *per se*. Rather, in his judgment, the 'peculiar theme of the chapter is the manner in which the man of God and the prophet belong together, do not belong together, and eventually and finally do belong together; and how the same is true of Judah and Israel.'³ That is to say, the man of God and the Bethel prophet are perceived by Barth as representative figures for their respective kingdoms, and the primary subject of the narrative is the reciprocal nature of their relationship. Moreover, in light of its literary context—1 Kings 13 immediately follows the division of Israel as a divine response to Solomon's idolatry—Barth understood the self-contained narrative to illuminate the record of the divided kingdom that follows. Again, citing Barth: 'In view of the context of 1 K. 13, we are almost tempted to say . . . that the prophetic problem is raised only in order to illustrate the problem of the kingdoms, and therefore that it is only a background to that problem.'⁴

¹ Barth, *CD* II.2, 393-410, 409.

² *CD* II.2, 393. (*KD* II.2, §35, 434)

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

Although the majority of biblical scholars have largely ignored Barth's exegesis of this passage, a significant few have critically engaged with it,⁵ and some have even sought to develop his ideas.⁶ According to Brevard Childs,

major credit goes to Karl Barth, who in his exegesis . . . first opened up the real theological dimension of the biblical text. He observed at the outset the paradigmatic significance of the chapter's being placed at the division of the two kingdoms in order to function almost as a superscription for the remaining history of the divided kingdom. He also correctly noted that the story is not merely about two prophets, but relates to far larger theological issues.⁷

Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 first appeared in his *Kirchliche Dogmatik II.2* (1942)⁸ under the heading of election, and was published again as a stand-alone piece as volume 10 of *Biblische Studien* (1955), with an adulatory foreword by Hans-Joachim Kraus.⁹ The English translation of *Church Dogmatics II.2* was then published in 1957. In order to elucidate the substantive content of the passage, Barth begins by dividing the story into five sections and an epilogue. A taut summary of his analysis is offered here in order to highlight certain accents in his reading. We shall then give full consideration to his exegesis below.

vv 1-5: The Judean man of God comes to Bethel and denounces Jeroboam's false worship in the strongest terms. The king, who stands 'at the head of his unlawful priesthood' (394), seeks to arrest him and loses control of his hand.

vv 6-10: Jeroboam is surprised at this demonstration of power and asks to be restored, but when the man of God complies, Jeroboam thinks the healing of his withered hand to suggest 'a cancellation of the threat of judgment that had been pronounced' (394). In his

⁵ See the discussion of Klopfenstein in chapter three.

⁶ David Bosworth is the most notable exception in this regard; see chapter six.

⁷ Brevard Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 142. In spite of this endorsement, Childs does not develop Barth's notion of election as the 'real theological dimension' of 1 Kings 13. Rather, he understands the narrative to offer 'a theocentric perspective' concerning 'the fulfilment of God's word of judgment which will not tolerate any softening or compromise' (143).

⁸ Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik II; Die Lehre von Gott 2*. (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G., 1942), 424-53. All references from the Dogmatics hereon are to the ET: *Church Dogmatics*, vol. II, part 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957).

⁹ Barth, 'Exegese von 1. Könige 13' in *Biblische Studien, Heft 10*. ed. H-J. Kraus (Neukirchen, 1955), 12-56.

mind, 'amicable compromise' (394) becomes a real possibility. But the Judean man of God's commission explicitly forbids him fellowship with anyone at Bethel.

vv 11-19: 'The conflict itself emerges in the third section (vv.11-19)' (395), where the 'professional' prophet of Bethel, upon hearing about the altercation, takes up Jeroboam's cause. As Barth puts it, the Bethel prophet 'takes the place of the king in relation to the stranger's word' (395). His pursuit of the man of God suggests that 'he has perceived the importance of the refusal given to Jeroboam . . . and that he is determined to reverse it at any price' (395) because 'he has grasped the fact that for the greater Israel everything depends upon ending this emphatic refusal by Judah in the name of God, and upon bringing about the fellowship between Jerusalem and Bethel, the toleration and compromise, which had been the goal of Jeroboam's invitation.' (395) At the end of v.18, 'the whole issue now rests on a razor's edge' (395), for there are two purported words from the LORD, and obedience to either one necessitates infringement of the other.

vv 20-26: In the fourth section, the liar from Bethel becomes God's harbinger of truth, and the Judean man of God 'is put to death because he made a peace which God did not will and had not made . . . God did not intend peace between Jerusalem and Bethel' (397).¹⁰

vv 27-32: This reversal of roles is not the end, however. After fetching the Judean's body and making arrangements to buried with him, the Bethel prophet proceeds to affirm the very word spoken 'against himself and the cause which he represents' (397), explicitly reiterating the man of God's prophecy and including also the high places in Samaria (13.32). Barth suggests that he does so to secure his own preservation in his (shared) grave when the Judean's prophecy is fulfilled three centuries later.

vv 33-34: The 'provisional epilogue' links these events back to Jeroboam so that the strange sequence of events explains why Jeroboam's house was cut from from the face of the earth. But the 'real epilogue,' says Barth, is in 2 Kings 23.15-20, where Josiah fulfils the prophecy in detail (397).¹¹

The theological context of election for Barth's exegetical treatment of the passage is vital, and will be examined below. But first, let us consider Barth's analysis of the *form* and *content* of this perplexing story.

¹⁰ Similarly, Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings*, Berit Olam (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 203: 'The political separation of Judah and Israel is acceptable; religious schism of the two territories is not.'

¹¹ Despite Barth's reference to 2 Kgs 23.15-20 as 'the real epilogue' to 1 Kgs 13, he declines to offer an exegetical treatment of these verses.

Form

Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 sidesteps the priorities of historical-critical enquiry, as was his wont, and instead provocatively suggests that, together with a range of other Old Testament texts, the chapter serves to elucidate the theme of election. No claims are made regarding the authorship or origins of 1 Kings 13. Rather, Barth is content to offer his readers a few general remarks about the chapter's apparent redaction as 'a fragment of ancient tradition':

The passage appears to be drawn from another source than its context. This can hardly be the same, but it is perhaps similar to the Elisha-cycle at the beginning of 2 Kings . . . the parallels to the Book of Amos are so remarkable and distinctive that it is not impossible that what we have here—not in form, but in substance—is a fragment of ancient tradition concerning the nature of the Israelite prophet and the relationship between the two Israelite kingdoms.¹²

According to Barth, 1 Kings 13 appears to have been drawn from another source and inserted as a reflection on 'the nature of the Israelite prophet and the relationship between the two Israelite kingdoms.' But in spite of the fact that the story's main characters are both prophets, Barth avers that the narrative is not about prophecy *per se*. Nor is it about Jeroboam in particular, nor even the cult established at Bethel. Rather, one of Barth's most striking exegetical contributions is his suggestion that the northern prophet and the man of God from the south represent the kingdoms whence they come. Thus, while Barth interprets the narrative on its own terms and reads it with full, imaginative seriousness as a story about the interplay between two prophets, he consistently has in mind the implications of this reciprocity for the nations represented. He therefore posits that tensions in the narrative between the northern and southern prophets are mere reflections, or indicators, of the real issue: the nature of the relationship between Israel and Judah.

When we consider the complex nature of this story we may well ask, but cannot decide, what the real problem is. Is it the contrast between the real man of God and the man of the prophetic guild, or is it between the realms of Judah and Israel?—for both problems are so interwoven in the story that we obviously have to consider both in order to understand it. Unmistakeably, the prophetic problem is in the foreground. But the problem of the two kingdoms is

¹² *CD* II.2, 393. Klopfenstein notes that Barth leaves the question of dating open (641). Regarding Barth's introductory words cited above, Klopfenstein writes, 'In these two sentences, Barth obviously summarised what emerged to him as the result of studying academic commentaries.' (Klopfenstein, 640: my trans.)

undeniably more than merely accessory to it. In view of the context of 1 K. 13, we are almost tempted to say the opposite, that the prophetic problem is raised only in order to illustrate the problem of the kingdoms, and therefore that it is only a background to that problem.¹³

Barth says relatively little about the apparent conflict ‘between professional and original prophets’,¹⁴ since any tension relating to (true or false) prophecy is thought only to accentuate the primary issue of political distinction. In his view, it is *the nature of the relationship between north and south* that is in focus, as it appears in 1 Kings 13 ‘in title-form’ and then also in ‘the whole ensuing history of the two separated kingdoms of Israel’.¹⁵ This foundational aspect of Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13—that the text be read as what would now be called *narrative analogy*¹⁶—has been accepted and appropriated by subsequent biblical scholars to a much greater extent than his emphasis on election.¹⁷ However, for Barth, the issue of form is intrinsically linked to the question of *Sache*. For what Barth ultimately proposes is that the distinction made in the narrative between the Bethelite prophet of the north and the man of God from Judah intends not simply to identify one as illegitimate and the other as legitimate, but rather to illustrate the interdependence of both the Elect and Rejected as equally requisite parts of the one, true Israel. The representative function of these prophetic figures thereby segues directly into Barth’s profound theological argument concerning the nature of election. But we will come to that in due course.

Having established that the two prophets serve representative roles within the narrative, Barth proceeds to describe how the dynamics between the prophets in 1 Kings 13 are analogous to the dynamics between the nations in the history of the

¹³ CD II.2, 397-8.

¹⁴ Ibid, 404. In any case, Barth’s distinction ‘between professional and original’ is not well supported in Kings. In 1 Kings 13, the commissioned (authentic) man of God disobeys and the lying (professional) prophet in Bethel speaks a genuine word of prophecy. More broadly, in the history of the divided kingdoms, much attention is paid to the legitimacy of northern prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, and Micaiah, which calls into question Barth’s labelling of northern prophets as ‘professional’, ‘institutional’ and ‘false’. See chapter four under *Discernment of True and False Prophecy*.

¹⁵ Ibid, 403.

¹⁶ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (NY: Basic Books, 1981), speaks of ‘narrative analogy, through which one part of the text provides oblique commentary on another’ (21; cf. 180). See chapter seven under *Narrative Analogy in the DH*.

¹⁷ See esp. Peter Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2006); Walsh, *1 Kings*; David A. Bosworth, *The Story within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*. CBQMS 45 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008).

divided kingdom. In Barth's terms, 1 Kings 13 'constitutes a kind of heading'¹⁸ over the history of the kingdoms, highlighting numerous points of connection between 1 Kings 13 and the broader history that follows. The parallels are not set out as having a chronological correspondence with the history of the kingdoms, nor can they easily be tied to specific texts within the book of Kings. They are rather more general and theological in nature. Some of the more salient points are the following:

The Elected/Rejected status of the two prophets/nations

The first and most obvious feature of Barth's proposal is that each representative prophet shares his elected or rejected status with a kingly figure (mentioned by name) and a corresponding nation. As Barth pictures it, we see on the right 'the man of God from Judah, with the figure of Josiah at a distance behind him: authentic, divinely commissioned prophecy, as a representative of the authentic Davidic monarchy and kingdom'.¹⁹ In sum: man of God; Josiah; Judah. Conversely, on the left is the Bethel prophet, Jeroboam, and Israel—described by Barth as 'the people who have rejected God as their king'.²⁰ Moreover, Barth clarifies: 'it is the prophet of Bethel, and not the king, who is the real representative of this dark kingdom'.²¹

This stark dichotomy in Barth's interpretation applies not only to the particular kings and prophets mentioned in 1 Kings 13, but to the north and the south in a general sense as well. That is, the elected and rejected status of the prophets (together with their respective kings and nations) correlate with authentic or professional prophecy. The man of God represents not only the elect nation of Judah, but as we noted above, 'authentic, divinely commissioned prophecy'²². Conversely, the Bethel prophet is consistently labelled 'professional', 'institutional,' and even 'false,' in Barth's exegesis.²³ To be sure, he generalises about the falsehood of *all* northern prophets:

¹⁸ CD II.2, 403.

¹⁹ Ibid, 398.

²⁰ Ibid, 400.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 398.

²³ Ibid, 405, 409.

But confession is shown to be characteristic of the south, and profession of the north, and the light naturally falls upon the former, and the shadow upon the latter. The shadow which lies upon the professional *Nabi*-ism is... representative of the Israelite form of the Canaanite vitalism, the religion of blood and soil, which, according to the will of the God of Sinai and Jerusalem, is the very opposite of the life demanded of his people. It is thus no accident that this prophetic order has to the northern kingdom... the affinity which is proper to it in the story.²⁴

While there are perhaps good reasons for thinking that the Bethel prophet shares Jeroboam's agenda, it is nonetheless worth noting that the Bethel prophet is not explicitly identified with Jeroboam in the text. He resides in Bethel, where Jeroboam has built an altar and set up a golden calf, but no mention is made of a positive association between the old prophet and Israel's king. In fact, without Barth's dialectical framework, one might even argue the Bethelite's introduction in verse 11 as 'a certain older prophet' may be understood as an attempt to distance him and his credentials from the recently crowned King Jeroboam, whose arbitrary appointment of priests is decidedly unorthodox. One could draw a similar inference from the narrator's observation that it is the prophet's sons who attend Jeroboam's ceremony and not the Bethel prophet himself. The reason for the latter's absence from the ceremony is left open to conjecture. In any case, my point is simply that readers should be careful about assuming that the Bethel prophet is in league with Jeroboam just because he hails from Bethel. Barth's dichotomy between north and south is convincing in many respects, but it is not as self-evident as his exegesis implies. After all, in the immediate context of this narrative, God makes promises to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11) and then pronounces judgment upon him (1 Kgs 14) through a northern prophet, namely Ahijah the Shilonite. In any case, whether or not the text supports the notion, our purpose here is simply to note that Barth associates the man of God with authentic prophecy in Judah, and the Bethel prophet with professional prophetism in Israel. Although he recognises that kings more naturally lend themselves to representative roles in historical literature, in 1 Kings 13, the Bethel prophet is 'the real Satan of the story'.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid, 400.

²⁵ Ibid, 402.

Division of the kingdoms

A second clue regarding the symbolic, or parabolic, form of 1 Kings 13 pertains to the importance of the division of the kingdoms within God's overarching purposes. When Barth considers the relation between Judah and Israel, on his imagined right and left, he begins by stating that 'the very significant position... of 1 K. 13 in relation to the historical record of the Old Testament must not pass unobserved.'²⁶ Here Barth indicates that 1 Kings 13 is suggestive for the preceding narrative as well as for the history of the kingdoms that follows. He provocatively states that 1 Kings 13 'comes directly after the account of the disruption under Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and in some sense explains it.'²⁷ But how exactly does 1 Kings 13 explain the division of the kingdoms? To understand this, we must hear what he has to say about the history that follows.

Whatever sociological or historical explanation one gives to the dissolution of the Israelite amphictyony,²⁸ Barth suggests that the record of Israel's history offered in Kings posits a *theological* explanation for this political fracture. In summary, God wills a holy and unified people who will serve him, and he therefore wills this division in Israel for the sake of a better unity. Since 'the real subject of the whole ensuing history... is obviously the unity of the will of God for the whole people whom he led out of Egypt,' and since God also wills to sanctify this people by excluding and cutting off their sin, Barth asserts that 'the separation of the kingdom into David's kingdom and the national monarchy of Samaria' are the inevitable consequence of 'this distinction of the will of God itself.'²⁹ In Barth's view, it is precisely because of their deficiencies that the peoples, kings and prophets of Israel and Judah 'become completely authentic occasions for authentic revelations of God, and as such reveal the authentic meaning of the existence of Israel.'³⁰ These revelations of God are manifested in the interplay between the elect and the rejected (which is only possible because of the division between them), and as we shall see, the responsibility goes both ways.

²⁶ Ibid, 403.

²⁷ Ibid (emphasis added).

²⁸ Cf. Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (trans P.R. Ackroyd; London: A. & C. Black, 2nd ed., 1960), 85-109, esp. 90f.

²⁹ Ibid, 403.

³⁰ Ibid.

In light of this perceived theological dynamic, 1 Kings 13 posits an explanation for the disruption under Rehoboam and Jeroboam. God's will for an obedient and unified people is realised by the division of the kingdom that occurs in response to Solomon's idolatry, since the opposition that ensues between Rehoboam and Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12, and between Judah and Israel in 1 Kings 14ff., elucidates the theological motifs of election and rejection. In 1 Kings 13, at this critical juncture in the book, it is made clear that 'separation and opposition in Israel's course and destiny are necessary',³¹ and that 'because of the division there are now authentic relations in the history of Israel.'³² Barth's propensity for dialectical theology comes to the fore most clearly on this point, and not surprisingly, it is this overtly theological view of history that Klopfenstein is most uncomfortable with (see chapter three).

Prohibition of fellowship between north and south

A third point of correspondence between our story and the larger history is suggested by the threefold prohibition, under which the man of God has been sent. Barth interprets the man of God's prohibition from eating and drinking in Bethel, together with Jeroboam's invitation in v 7, to represent the divine prohibition of fellowship between north and south:³³

What Jeroboam would like is reconciliation, tolerance, amicable compromise between himself and the divinely commissioned bearer of the word from Judah. For his own part, he sees no reason why they could not shake hands, or why Jerusalem and Bethel could not settle down alongside one another. It is precisely that which the man of God from Judah refuses to concede by refusing the invitation. It is precisely that which God has forbidden him to do...³⁴

Barth understands the threefold prohibition to highlight the distinction between elect Judah and reprobate Israel. Judah and Jerusalem worship God rightly whereas Israel and Bethel do not. 'In Jeroboam it is immediately apparent why God says No

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Barth makes no particular comment about what the third command ('do not return by the way that you went') might mean.

³⁴ Ibid, 394.

to this altar and this throne, to this religion and this politics.³⁵ Moreover, since Israel's worship is false,

[God] does not will the worship paid Him in Bethel, or the whole nation which is assembled with its king about that altar, even although this people is called (with particular emphasis) "Israel," even although its king did not reach his throne apart from God and the call of a prophet of God. For their apostasy from the house of David is simply a concealed or flagrant apostasy from Himself. His people have ceased here to be His people. The man of God from Judah is the herald of this divine displeasure. So, too, is the whole being of Judah in its contrast to that of Israel.³⁶

The threefold prohibition thereby reinforces that the man of God and the nation of Judah stand for God's will, as surely as Jeroboam and Israel stand against it—both in 1 Kings 13 and in the history that follows. But the prohibition from fellowship (accepting Barth's understanding of the prohibition) is not the only relational dynamic between Israel and Judah,³⁷ for election entails not just abstaining from corruption, but also heeding the call to speak.

Genuine dialogue between between north and south

In spite of Judah's election and the prohibition from having fellowship with compromised Israel, Barth goes on to state: 'It is only by going to the north with this Word that the man of the south can confirm and justify his own election.'³⁸ That is to say, extending this principle to the kingdoms represented, 'the true Israel in the south has no right to an existence which is tranquil and settled in itself. It cannot possibly rejoice or boast in its election to the derogation of the false Israel in the north.'³⁹ The very purpose of the division, from Barth's perspective, is to clarify the two nations' respective roles as speaker and hearer,⁴⁰ not to be confused with a facile fellowship that blurs the need for any distinction in the first place. Again, Barth

³⁵ Ibid, 400.

³⁶ Ibid, 398.

³⁷ Barth makes no reference to other narratives about fellowship between north and south in the book of Kings, even in spite of the fact that such narratives nearly always lead directly to disaster in a way that would appear to strengthen his argument (e.g. 1 Kgs 22, 2 Kgs 3). We will return to this in chapter six.

³⁸ Ibid, 404.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

draws a parallel between the man of God in the story and Judah in the broader history; just as the man of God is commissioned to confront Jeroboam and yet to abstain from having fellowship in Bethel, so Judah must demonstrate her election not only by resisting compromise, but also by confronting her neighbour, Israel, with the truth:

The true Israel must converse with the false Israel just because it is not a stranger to the latter's guilt, because everything that separates Israel as a whole from God has simply been made explicit in the northern people, sundered from the house of David and the temple in Jerusalem. It is not from a secure elevation, but from the depths of the same distress, sustained by the unmerited grace of God alone, that Judah addresses and necessarily must address Israel by the mouth of its prophets, and must speak to it the one Word, i.e., the Word of God, which is its own support... The Word of God must be spoken and heard.⁴¹

Again, Barth's exegesis leans heavily toward theological conclusions; if there is to be fellowship between Israel and Judah, God wills that it take the shape of a prophetic voice, speaking truth in love.

The disobedience of the man of God and of Judah

The points of contact between this introductory narrative and the history of the kingdoms are further supplemented by a general alignment between the fates of the man of God and the nation of Judah. Barth draws a further analogy between the Bethel prophet's deception of the man of God and the manner in which Samaria lures Judah into sin:

And it is not only the genuine prophet who here becomes a traitor and denier, but in him and like him Jerusalem, the city of David and of God... All Jerusalem and Judah will do as this man of Judah has done. They will weigh the commission entrusted to them, and heard and clearly proclaimed by them, against the alleged commission of another. They will listen to supposed angelic voices from far and near. And their decision, too, will be false. They will become tolerant and then disobedient. They will eventually fall into every form of apostasy. They will become almost or altogether indistinguishable from the Northern Kingdom, at least in that which they desire and do . . . they will do that which displeases the Lord in monstrous contradiction of their commission, just as this man of God did in a first and hardly noticeable step.⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 399.

Barth not only observes that Judah follows Israel into sin and ultimately shares the same fate, buried in a foreign land, but he also highlights the fact that Judah is *deliberately* led astray. That is, the Bethel prophet's act of deceit 'smacks of truth although it is definitely a lie, so that the man of God yields to him (as Jerusalem and Judah were later to succumb to the temptation to tolerance, and eventually to end as Samaria ended.)'⁴³ Israel's culpability for Judah's downfall is thus accented by Barth as another element that features in both 1 Kings 13 and the ensuing history.

The exilic 'tomb' of the prophets and of the nations

Very briefly, although Barth does not use the word 'exile' to describe the shared tomb at the end of the story, this is what he has in mind when he speaks of a 'common grave':

Both here and in the whole sphere of the Old Testament history of kings and prophets there can be no visible consummation of the restored fellowship other than this common grave. It is Israel's grave into which Judah itself is first laid, and then Israel. The historical conclusion brings a reversal in the actual sequence of events. But either way, it is in this grave that the reunion of the separated brothers is completed.⁴⁴

Barth's comment about 'the historical conclusion' (Israel before Judah) being a reversal of what happens in 1 Kings 13 (Judah before Israel),⁴⁵ makes it clear that he perceives the Bethel prophet and the man of God as portents for the shared exilic demise of Israel and Judah. This is Barth's fifth and final point of analogy between 1 Kings 13 and its broader context: both nations share the same fate.

Content

Having established the way in which 1 Kings 13 functions within its wider context as a kind of focal lens, let us consider how Barth elucidates the theological substance of the story. In the main body of his exegetical argument, Barth paints a pair of complex 'double-pictures' [*Doppelbildern*] from the narrative. He uses this

⁴³ Ibid, 401.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 406.

⁴⁵ Barth appears to refrain from being explicit about 'exile' in order that the image of a grave may have yet another referent. He goes on to accent the manner in which this common grave—not just of the man of God and the Bethel prophet, but of every one of us—is answered in Christ (409).

term because each double-picture—Judah on the right and Israel on the left—refers to a kingdom, north or south, as well as a form of prophecy, false or true,⁴⁶ and because there is a positive and a negative aspect to each double-picture. All of these variables merge to form a comprehensive picture overall. We will examine each part in turn.

The Double-Picture on the Right

‘The double-picture on the right is that of the man of Judah, with the figure of Josiah at a distance behind him’.⁴⁷ The positive dimension of this portrait is that the man of God from Judah represents Davidic (divinely legitimated) kingship, heralding God’s displeasure at Israel’s apostasy under Jeroboam I. But more than this, the positive aspect of the double-picture pertaining to Judah also highlights the fundamental importance of Judah’s (com)mission to address Israel. For Judah ‘cannot possibly rejoice or boast in its election to the derogation of the false Israel in the north. Nor can it come to terms with it and accept it without at once addressing itself afresh to this Israel.’⁴⁸ On the contrary, Judah ‘is under obligation to Israel.’⁴⁹ The very election and *raison d’être* of the true Israel consists of this responsibility toward the false Israel. If Judah fails to appropriate this calling, Judah fails to be elect; ‘It has repulsed the grace which made it an elect and called people’.⁵⁰

The negative aspect of the Judean man of God consists of the fact that the Judean betrays his calling and shows his unworthiness when he is put to the test. He listens to the lie and betrays his God-given cause, even in spite of the tremendous clarity with which he reiterated the command to Jeroboam and the older prophet. Citing the words of Jesus from Luke 12, Barth says, ‘Much is required of him to whom much is given. Much was given to the man of Judah, infinitely more than to Jeroboam or the prophet of Bethel. Therefore nothing less than his life can now be required of him.’⁵¹

⁴⁶ Although I do not find Barth’s suggestion that the man of God be equated with genuine prophetism and the prophet with professional (i.e false) prophetism convincing, my purpose for the time being is simply to outline Barth’s reading as it stands.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 398.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 404.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 405.

⁵¹ Ibid.

However, even when he falls prey to the Bethel prophet's coercion and breaks God's command, Barth insists that the man of God's fate represents that of Judah in that he is killed by a lion (representing YHWH), but not devoured. 'The stock of David, hewn down to the ground, is preserved'⁵²—in spite of being buried in a foreign grave. Jerusalem is never forgotten entirely.

The Double-Picture on the Left

The negative aspect is more dominant in the left double-picture, where king and prophet stand together behind Jeroboam's 'new political and religious creation'.⁵³ Barth stresses, however, that the prophet of Bethel, representing the 'professional' prophetism that is characteristic of the North, comes off worse than the king.

It is because this man is a prophet that he is more aware than the king of the need for a theological justification of the North-Israelite Kingdom and cult which are challenged at the altar by the word of the man of God from Judah, and which would be rehabilitated by his eating and drinking at Bethel . . . Thus the professional prophet becomes that which is impossible for the king of Israel—the true and successful tempter and destroyer of the man of God . . . he is the real and the worse representative of the kingdom of darkness in this story. That is why what Jeroboam does looks only grey compared to what this professional does.⁵⁴

Barth later explains how the negative aspect of this double-picture leads quite naturally into the positive aspect:

But this fact—the fact that the false Israel becomes the tempter and destroyer of the true—is still far from being the end of the story. On the contrary, the story now moves on to its sequel, that the very tempter and destroyer must now take up the flag which the other had let fall. The fact that the false Israel had not ceased to be the Israel of God is now revealed, to the terrible shame but also to the supreme consolation, of the true Israel. For the Word of God cannot be silenced...⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid, 399-400.

⁵³ Ibid, 401.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 400-1.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 405.

The positive aspect of this left-hand (Israelite) picture is manifested most clearly when the old prophet 'takes over the office of the genuine man of God'.⁵⁶ We shall see below that this reversal of roles has enormous implications for Barth's understanding of the purpose and substantive content of the story. In fact, the overarching purpose of Barth's complex illustration is to show that the positive and negative aspects of the double-pictures converge within the narrative to highlight the interdependence of Judah and Israel as elect and rejected. It is precisely in this interplay between the rejected north and the elect south, and between the positive and negative aspects of these *Doppelbildern* that Barth's doctrine of election is elucidated. Put another way, the reciprocal dynamic of the story *is* the point.

But the other positive dimension of this left-hand picture is expressed in the story's resolution (if we may call it that). Barth concludes that there is a 'strange light which falls on the picture to the left,'⁵⁷ namely, the way in which 'the necessary punishment of the human trespass... does not fall on Jeroboam... [nor] on the prophet... It falls on the one who is here only the seduced.'⁵⁸ Surprisingly, the old Bethelite prophet, 'the most guilty, goes free. He is even preserved beyond his death'.⁵⁹

The Whole Picture: the Relation Between Judah and Israel

Having shown how each double-picture, right and left, has a positive and negative aspect, Barth proceeds to explain how both pictures merge to illustrate the relationship between Israel and Judah. 'They are indeed to be seen and understood together. The meaning of both consists precisely in the fact that they mutually complement and confirm one another in the positive as well as in the negative aspects peculiar to both.'⁶⁰ To explicate the whole picture, Barth refers to a dialectic movement within the story that is exhibited in a series of five 'reversals' that signal the interdependence of Israel and Judah:

⁵⁶ Ibid, 403.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 402-3.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 404.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 403.

- (i) The elect (Judah) initiates the dialectic momentum of the story by bringing word of God's judgment to the rejected (Israel) in Bethel.⁶¹
- (ii) When the man of God is deceived by the Bethelite prophet, 'the rejected acts on behalf of the elect when he takes over the latter's mission.'⁶²
- (iii) Consequently, 'the elect acts on behalf of the rejected when he suffers the latter's punishment.'⁶³ (When Barth speaks of the 'the necessary punishment of the human trespass in this story',⁶⁴ he stresses that Jeroboam and the Bethelite were more deserving of death than the man of God.)
- (iv) 'Similarly, at the end, the rejected acts for the elect by making his own grave a resting-place for the latter.'⁶⁵
- (v) Finally, 'the elect acts for the rejected in that the bones of the latter are kept and preserved for his sake, and together with his bones.'⁶⁶

Barth's sophisticated analysis thus places a heavy accent on *the reciprocal dynamic between the man of God and the Bethel prophet* as the central theme that is introduced in 1 Kings 13 which comes to expression throughout the history of the divided kingdom in *the mutual interdependence of Israel and Judah*. This dialectic movement in the story, which powerfully illuminates his doctrine of election, is critical to a proper understanding of Barth's theological interpretation of 1 Kings 13. At the same time, this very detail—the identification of multiple role reversals in 1 Kings 13—has been

⁶¹ Ibid, 404: The man of God's 'mission to Israel already attests that the true Israel in the south has no right to an existence which is tranquil and settled in itself... The true Israel must converse with the false Israel.'

⁶² Ibid, 406.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 402.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 406.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

a catalyst for further development,⁶⁷ as well as for severe criticism from subsequent scholars.⁶⁸

Given Barth's understanding of the story as something akin to a narrative analogy, the implications of this dynamic for the nations of Judah and Israel are threefold: (i) God wills the obedience and unity of his people; (ii) notwithstanding this ideal unity, God also wills an 'internal distinction' among his people as a means of cutting off their sin; (iii) in spite of this apparent paradox wherein God desires both unity and division among his people (points i and ii), 'the will of God—and this is the third fact which emerges in the later history—does not cease to be one and the same for all Israel'⁶⁹ (i.e. God remains faithful in his promises both to Judah and to Israel). So while Barth understands separation and opposition between Israel and Judah to play a part in God's unfolding purposes for his people, God's ultimate purpose for a unified and obedient people remains unchanged. In fact, the division within Israel ultimately serves this purpose, since it is in the relations between 'people, kings and prophets' of Israel and Judah that 'the authentic meaning of the existence of Israel' comes to light.⁷⁰ 'The man of Judah has not ceased to be the elect, nor has the prophet of Bethel ceased to be the rejected. But in their union as elect and rejected they form together the whole Israel from which the grace of God is not turned away.'⁷¹

The rich theological landscape against which Barth exegetes 1 Kings 13 permits us to grasp how 'the ways of the two prophets who occupy the foreground are so involved in their manifold intersections that they are unmistakably meant to be taken together.'⁷² The interconnection of Barth's two double-pictures thereby seeks to evoke a fuller understanding 'of that which makes divided Israel more than ever His people.'⁷³ Here we reach the heart of the matter: *As the relationship between Israel and Judah reveals God's will for a united people in the history of the kingdoms, so the relationship between the Bethelite and the Judean reflects this reality in 1 Kings 13.*

⁶⁷ So Bosworth; see chapter six.

⁶⁸ So Klopfenstein; see chapter three.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 403.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid, 406.

⁷² Ibid, 398.

⁷³ Ibid, 404.

Barth's exegesis thus takes one of the most problematic aspects of the narrative and shows how it may be understood as the hermeneutical crux. Numerous scholars have been troubled by the fact that no clear line is drawn between the two prophets in terms of legitimacy; the 'true' man of God breaks his God-given commands, just as the 'false' Bethelite receives a genuine word from the Lord.⁷⁴ But as Barth understands the passage, this blurred ethical line is pivotal to a proper understanding of the nature of the relationship between the two prophets/nations. He therefore describes the man of God as 'the seduced... who is struck by the lightning of divine wrath'⁷⁵ just as the Bethel prophet 'must now take up the flag that the other had let fall.'⁷⁶ The two anonymous figures are, to repeat, 'unmistakably meant to be taken together.'⁷⁷

In accordance with this, Barth points out that the opening scene (v 1-10) is precisely about how God's unified will for *all* his people is borne out in the conflict between north and south. It is worth quoting him at length:

The beginning of the story corresponds to this. That which the king and people of Israel have to hear through the man of God from Judah is their own rejection *a limine* in and with the threat against the Bethel altar. And the rejection is underlined by the strict refusal of the requested table fellowship; the most absolute intolerance. Yet even this event itself has its other side. We have already seen that precisely in this harsh form there is a resumption of contact between Jerusalem and sinful, separated Northern Israel, almost before the latter is aware of its separation. It is not indifference at all events, that encounters Israel from this quarter. At least in the form of judgment the grace of God is not removed from Israel the moment it sins. On the contrary, it has hardly left this kingdom before it returns. The guilt which lies up on it is the common guilt of all Israel. But the word of God which Judah has and Israel does not have is addressed to all Israel, and is, therefore, to be directed by hearing Judah to unhearing Israel. This twofold solidarity is the secret of the beginning of the story, which does not possess for nothing the character of a revelation of the patience of God even in His wrath, which already at the very outset—even though it is a dark and unsatisfactory, tragic beginning—does not

⁷⁴ E.g., Erhard Blum, 'Die Lüge des Propheten. Ein Lesevorschlag zu einer befremdlichen Geschichte (1 Kön 13)' in *Textgestalt und Komposition: Exegetische Beiträge zu Tora und Vordere Propheten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 319-20.

⁷⁵ *CD* II.2, 403.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 405.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 398.

... speak of an ending, but, on the contrary, of a genuine new beginning of God with His lost people.⁷⁸

We have seen that Barth considers the division within Israel to be necessary in order that there may be genuine dialogue and a sense of mutual accountability between the elect and the rejected. In accordance with this, Barth highlights how the opening scene, an episode of conflict between prophet and king (vv 1-10), introduces this issue of accountability or 'twofold solidarity' between elect Judah and rejected Israel. At first, the scene seems more or less to resolve itself, but then it segues into a second, related story (vv 11-32) that elaborates upon the reciprocal nature of the relationship between Judah and Israel. The tale of two prophets in the latter part of the chapter is thus perceived by Barth to be set against a theological background not just of election, but of divine grace. God's will for the obedient worship of Israel is expressed in a prophetic confrontation against 'every expectation of salvation from their own skill and power instead of from the fulfilment of [his] promise.'⁷⁹ The initial conflict between the man of God and Jeroboam signifies neither that God is for Judah nor against Israel, but rather that he is faithful to *both* Judah and Israel. The distinction that exists between them has been made for the sake of unity. 'Just because of the division there are now authentic relations in the history of Israel.'⁸⁰

It must be said, however, that in making these assertions, Barth fails to give any specific examples from the history of these 'authentic relations' between Judah and Israel. He boldly states that the relation between these two double-pictures speak 'of what in all its distinction is in itself the one will of God for Israel, of that which makes divided Israel more than ever His people,'⁸¹ but he does not allude to other narratives (in Kings or elsewhere) that shed light on the nature of the relations between the kingdoms or that signal their mutual accountability. We are left with

⁷⁸ Ibid, 407.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 403.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 403.

⁸¹ Ibid, 404. It is reasonable to assume that when Barth states that the relations between peoples, kings and prophets of north and south 'reveal the authentic meaning of the existence of Israel' (Ibid, 403), he refers, e.g., to those incidents of prophetic conflict so characteristic of the Elijah and Elisha cycles.

the provocative suggestion of a pattern, but without its detailed exposition.⁸² Indeed, this gap has fuelled at least one interpreter's efforts to develop and expand upon Barth's thesis (see chapter six). At this point, however, we turn to the interpretative contexts for Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13.

Context

Although Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 has been read as an independent exegetical piece,⁸³ his unique interpretation is further illuminated by two contextual frames of reference, one hermeneutical and the other doctrinal. This work by no means attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of Barth's hermeneutics or his *Dogmatics*, but a couple of brief, contextual 'detours' are necessary for a proper understanding and evaluation of Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13.

Barth's hermeneutical context

It is not easy to make any kind of programmatic or systematic analysis of Barth's hermeneutics, since Barth was reluctant—or indeed, altogether resistant—to offer up a hermeneutical manifesto himself.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, endeavours to come to grips with his hermeneutics have generally been approached in one of two ways. On one hand, scholars have sought to grasp Barth's hermeneutics by examining the details of his exegesis. McGlasson and Cunningham, for instance, are each convinced that the workings of Barth's exegesis are more telling than the comparably few theoretical statements he made about interpretation.⁸⁵ On the other hand, Richard

⁸² It is well-known, however, that the history of the kingdoms is recounted according to a fairly consistent, alternating pattern. Jerome Walsh, who is somewhat indebted to Barth's exegesis, writes: 'To tell the history of Judah and the history of Israel as separate histories would belie the unity of the people. To tell the history of Judah and the history of Israel as one history would belie the political separation Yahweh has decreed. In the narrator's view, Yahweh's people is one, but by God's will it lives under the rule of two kings. He arranges his material to do justice to both realities.' Walsh, *1 Kings*, 208.

⁸³ E.g., its publication as a stand-alone piece in Vol. 10 of *Biblischen Studien* (1955).

⁸⁴ Barth refused to engage in public debate about hermeneutics, since he assumed (wrongly, as it turned out) that the discipline of hermeneutics would be little more than a passing fad. Moreover, he was opposed to the notion of *anthropologising* theology, that is, of asking the question of God from the human standpoint or condition, as Schleiermacher proposed. Barth was convinced that no method *per se* could lead one to encounter God and therefore refused to focus on hermeneutics as a means of revealing God, since knowledge of God comes—*only*—from God. See Burnett, *Theological Exegesis*, 36-9.

⁸⁵ Paul McGlasson, *Jesus and Judas: Biblical Exegesis in Barth* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991); Mary Kathleen Cunningham, *What is Theological Exegesis? Interpretation and Use of Scripture in Barth's Doctrine of Election* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1995).

Burnett, in an excellent study of Barth's theological exegesis, examines six drafts of the preface to the first edition of Barth's *Römerbrief* (published in 1919) to show 'that Barth had clear, self-conscious hermeneutical convictions from the very beginning'.⁸⁶ For our purposes, both approaches enable us to see that certain basic principles are consistent throughout Barth's interpretive work. Given the constraints of time and space, however, I will focus on just three characteristics of Barth's hermeneutics that are particularly relevant to our text.

Intertextuality

In her concise and insightful study of theological exegesis, Mary K. Cunningham insists on beginning with Barth's exegesis when examining his methodology, since going from hermeneutics to exegesis 'does not honor the pattern of Barth's thinking... the unsystematic nature of his thought'.⁸⁷ Significantly, according to Cunningham, 'Barth's most crucial exegetical tactic'⁸⁸ is the juxtaposition of key texts, his penchant for what has since been labelled intertextuality.⁸⁹ Wallace, by the same token, observes that Barth reads the Bible 'as a complicated typological intertext',⁹⁰ and this is certainly reflected in Barth's delineation of election via the exegesis of Old and New Testament texts.

However, when Barth consecutively treats Leviticus 14 & 16, the narratives concerning David and Saul, and 1 Kings 13 in his discussion of OT texts pertaining to election, his purpose is not simply to align passages dealing with the same theme in order to strengthen their theological import. It is more than that; Barth interprets one text in light of what has been extrapolated from another. The patriarchal narratives in Genesis, Lev 14 & 16, and the David and Saul narratives precede 1

⁸⁶ Burnett, *Barth's Theological Exegesis*, 9. In Burnett's view, while the works of McGlasson and Cunningham are valuable for honouring Barth's own priorities—'exegesis, exegesis, and still more exegesis!'—they ultimately reveal little about his theological exegesis (6).

⁸⁷ Cunningham, *What is Theological Exegesis?*, 14. McGlasson expresses the same conviction: 'The fact is, the best way to come to grips with Barth's possible contribution to contemporary theological hermeneutics is to focus on his actual biblical exegesis, rather than the less clear contours of his few hermeneutical statements.' McGlasson, *Jesus and Judas*, 2.

⁸⁸ Cunningham is referring to Barth's juxtaposition of Jn 1.1-2 and Eph 1.4f. in establishing that Jesus Christ is both the subject and object of election. The same 'exegetical tactic' applies to his consideration of the three OT texts outlined below. See under *Barth's doctrinal context: Election*.

⁸⁹ The term was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966.

⁹⁰ Mark I. Wallace, *The Second Naiveté: Barth, Ricoeur, and the New Yale Theology* (Macon, GA: Mercer), 7, fn 20.

Kings 13 in *CD II.2* not just because they come first in the biblical canon, but because they pave the way and provide a foundation for his exegetical observations from 1 Kings 13 regarding Israel and Judah. In this sense, Barth's work resembles a musical composition, as John Webster has observed:

Commentators often note the musical structure of Barth's major writings: the announcement of a theme, and its further extension in a long series of developments and recapitulations, through which the reader is invited to consider the theme from a number of different angles and in a number of different relations. No one stage of the argument is definitive; rather, it is the whole which conveys the substance of what he has to say.⁹¹

Barth's interpretation of 1 Kings 13 is intended to be read as the culmination of a number of theological strands in the OT, and of the theme of election in particular. In this narrative, a pattern that has been present from the opening chapters of the Bible reaches something of a climax, at least as far as the Old Testament is concerned. Referring to the distinctions made in Genesis between 'Abel and Cain, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Leah and Rachel, and so on,' Barth avers: 'The ceremonies [in Lev 14, 16] are obviously a comment on the history of Israel as a history of the differing choices'.⁹² Like the stories of election throughout Genesis, the rituals involving two goats and two birds—where the animal pairs are the same in quality but distinct in purpose or calling—are actually about Israel's relationship with God. Similarly, regarding the somewhat puzzling rejection of Saul and the election of sinful David,⁹³ Barth stresses that these two kings, in their rejection and election, are representative of the people. This dynamic is developed in the books of Samuel until we eventually come to one of the clearest and most striking images that the Old Testament contains concerning the differentiating election of God: 1 Kings 13.⁹⁴ Barth's point is that the division of the kingdom in 1 Kings 11 does not come as a bolt from the blue. It ought rather to be 'heard' as a prominent Old Testament theme reaching its crescendo—in anticipation of the Christ event.

In the Old Testament's canonical arrangement, the division of the kingdom is presented as the culmination of a series of moments in Israel's history that stress the

⁹¹ Webster, John (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth* (Cambridge, CUP, 2000), 9.

⁹² *CD II.2*, 358.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 387.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 393.

theme of distinction-within-unity. For this reason, Barth's juxtaposition of these biblical passages is neither arbitrary nor an unconscious 'reading in'. Rather, his musical arrangement of these texts and their recapitulating theme is exegetically consistent with the Old Testament's own canonical presentation of narratives and rituals addressing the theme of election. Therefore, when the end of the Deuteronomistic History recounts a period in Israel's history when a divinely ordained 'internal distinction' in Israel makes it possible for God's elect people to also function as the rejected, what we are witnessing is the culmination of a prominent theological motif whose roots go right back to Genesis 4. When Barth describes the 'real subject'⁹⁵ of 1 Kings 13 as the way in which God's will for a unified people is expressed in the relationship between Israel as the rejected and Judah as the elect, he intends for us to hear the maturation of a dominant Old Testament theme *and* to apprehend the theme of election anew, from a fresh angle.

Barth reads intertextually because the Bible is the inspired Word of God about Jesus, and is intended to be read as a witness to Christ, in accordance with Jn 5.39.⁹⁶ He therefore 'reads in' according to a christological hermeneutic, since election is understood through Christ, and not vice versa. Others read intertextually for different reasons. For instance, Childs does so because of his conviction that the Bible's own historical process of transmission and redaction lends itself to being read that way.⁹⁷

Because of his intertextual exegesis, many of the themes Barth discusses in connection with 1 Kings 13 (e.g. double-pictures, role reversals, complementarity between elect and rejected) are identified and developed because of their relation to preceding texts. By juxtaposing passages of scripture like this, Barth departs from the exegetical practice of historical-critical scholars, who tend to limit the resources for interpreting a text to the parameters of its immediate, ancient context. (In the next chapter, we see this in Klopfenstein's critique of Barth's *Überinterpretation* of the lion in the story.) One key characteristic of Barth's hermeneutics, then, is this freedom to permit scripture to interpret scripture.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 403.

⁹⁶ 'You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf.'(NRSV)

⁹⁷ Childs' canonical approach is discussed further in chapter five; see under *Historical-critical and Canonical Approaches*.

Synchrony

A second important aspect of Barth's hermeneutics is his synchronic, rather than diachronic, approach to scripture. Barth is well-known for his resistance to modernity's emphasis on human subjectivity, manifested most notably in his attitude towards historicism. He was never opposed to historical-critical work *per se*, but only its failure to get beyond explaining (*Erklärung*) to understanding (*Verstehen*). In his (in)famous prefaces to the *Römerbrief*, Barth makes clear his desire to press beyond historical-critical analysis to a theological grasp of the Bible. To him, genuine biblical exposition goes beyond merely the recognition and elucidation of historical referents. Barth disliked the way historicism emphasises the world *behind* the text over and above the world *of* the text, as though biblical texts exist primarily to reveal something other than their own subject matter (*Sache*).⁹⁸ A consequence of this is that revelation becomes identified with facts outside or beyond the text, a situation that Barth lamented.

This is not to say that Barth was uninterested in questions pertaining to source materials or the formation of the canon. His opening remarks about 1 Kings 13 acknowledge that the story 'appears to have been drawn from another source than its context',⁹⁹ and in his discussion of David and Saul, he asks repeatedly why these texts were preserved among a kingless community during the post-exilic period.¹⁰⁰ The point is that Barth did not choose to avoid such questions altogether. Rather, he chose not to linger on them, but to say only what was necessary to clarify his point about the meaning of the text *as it now stands*. In addition, Barth was quite candid about his exegetical priorities being well-suited to his own theological agenda—though few of his critics found this acceptable.

Christology

Finally, at the heart of Barth's hermeneutic is the notion that all of Scripture serves in some way to make Christ known. This is a primary cause for criticism against Barth; that he interprets parts in light of an already-determined whole. (In the next chapter, we consider Klopfenstein's argument that the constituent parts of a narrative must be permitted to speak for themselves—via historical-critical analysis

⁹⁸ Cf. *CD* I.2, 494.

⁹⁹ *CD* II.2, 393.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 385-6.

—so that theological judgments are not presented as foregone conclusions.) But Barth's 'universal rule of interpretation' was that 'a text can be read and understood and expounded only with reference to and in light of its theme'.¹⁰¹ In his view, this is unavoidable. All interpreters must necessarily have some conception of a (theological) 'whole' in place when they come to consider the (textual or historical) parts. Since Barth presupposes that the Bible's central theme is the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, he is quite content to be labelled as someone who "reads in". As he put it in one of his preface drafts, 'Whoever does not continually "read in" because he participates in the subject matter [God], cannot "read out" either'.¹⁰² Behind Barth's reason for "reading in" is his conviction that the entire Bible is about Jesus, and that *participation* in Christ (the 'subject matter') is necessary for the interpretation of biblical texts.

To put the matter simply, Barth's identification of Election as the primary subject of 1 Kings 13 arises from his conviction that this text (like all biblical texts) reveals Christ in some way. Yet, this is precisely why Barth's reading of the story—as 'an illustration of the differentiating election of God'¹⁰³—has proven hard for subsequent scholars to swallow, be they historical-critical or literary-critical exegetes: it rests on a certain understanding of Scripture that appears to freely impose categories upon the text from 'beyond' or 'outside', as it were. Even so, while few scholars have affirmed or developed Barth's claim that 1 Kings 13 pertains to the doctrine of election, one can hardly accuse Barth of ignoring the story's literary and/or historical context. Indeed, it is 'in view of the context' that he ultimately considers 1 Kings 13 to be about the problem of the kingdoms, following immediately after the division of the kingdoms as it does, and from a literary-critical perspective it is hard to find fault with this observation.

Related to Barth's christological emphasis is his particular understanding of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. In *Church Dogmatics* I.2, where Barth sets out his approach to the Old Testament in christological terms, Barth describes many of

¹⁰¹ Burnett, *Barth's Theological Exegesis*, 86; cf. Cunningham, *What is Theological Exegesis?*, 70: 'Barth believes... that Scripture is one because Jesus Christ is One.' Cf. Barth, *CD* I.2, 483-5.

¹⁰² Preface Draft II, 284-5. Cited in Burnett, *Barth's Theological Exegesis*, 95-96, fn 3 (see Appendix 2, 591-2).

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 393.

the events in the OT as having multiple vantage points.¹⁰⁴ On one hand, Old Testament texts must be understood within their own historical contexts, but on the other, they must also be considered in light of their corresponding fulfillments in the course of time. He demonstrates this point with regards to a variety of themes including the people, the land, the temple, lordship, kingship, and so on, showing that each subject is understood in terms of a dialectic relationship between its originary particularity and its eschatological fulfilment.¹⁰⁵

This very dynamic is displayed in the way that Barth explores the twin themes of election and rejection in *CD* II.2. In his concluding comments on the three Old Testament texts we have mentioned, Barth perceives the Christ event as the story's real epilogue.

In his conclusion to the section about Lev 14,16, he states that these sacrificial rites point forward to Christ:

In the same way, the old exegesis was quite right to find in Lev. 14 the prediction of that which was fulfilled, according to Rom. 4²⁵, in the fact that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised up again for our justification."¹⁰⁶

Then, in his closing comments on Saul and David, he regards the Old Testament kings as types of Christ:

The fact that this king takes several forms—at least two, or more precisely four in this case too—and that these forms cannot be reduced to any common denominator, and are full of inner contradictions, characterises them as prophetic figures in distinction from the fulfilment actualised in the person of Jesus Christ... The King Jesus Christ is the true subject and hero of these stories of the kings.¹⁰⁷

Finally, as he concludes his treatment of 1 Kings 13, he again refers to the insufficiency of the OT witness:

But this story, too, does point to one real subject if Jesus Christ is also seen in it, if at the exact point where this story of the prophets breaks off a continuation is

¹⁰⁴ *CD* I.2, 95f.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 96-101.

¹⁰⁶ *CD* II.2, 365.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 389, 391.

found in the Easter story... In this one prophet the two prophets obviously live. And so, too, do the two Israels—the Israels which in our story can finally only die, only be buried, only persist for a time in their bones... What else is 1 K. 13 if it is not prophecy? Where else is its fulfilment to be found if not in Jesus Christ? These are the questions which must be answered by those for whom the suggested result of our investigation may for any reason be unacceptable.¹⁰⁸

According to Barth, the bones of the two prophets (i.e. of Judah and Israel) that end up in a shared grave at the conclusion of 1 Kings 13 foretell the promise of life for the elect and the rejected that is made possible in the resurrection of Christ.

Such statements have often been perceived as though Barth were ‘reading in’ anachronistically or disrespecting the integrity of the Old Testament’s discrete voice. Yet, Barth is careful not to import Christ into the OT in ways that violate a text’s plain sense. Far from seeing christophanies behind every stone and bush in OT narratives, Barth treats these passages within their historical and literary contexts. Only at the point where their witness appears incomplete does he introduce Christ as the true epilogue to the narrative. In his discussion of Saul and David, Barth says this in his own defence:

So far we have not mentioned His name in our investigation of these passages. We have remained within the Old Testament world and its possibilities. We have tried in this world to bring out and think through what is said there about the elect king, but we have been forced to the conclusion that the entity in question cannot be brought out or apprehended within the Old Testament world.¹⁰⁹

In an effort to describe this paradoxical character of Barth’s exegesis that seeks at once to honour the OT and to read Scripture christologically, Mark Gignilliat writes: ‘Barth allows the Old Testament’s voice to open up the possibilities for an apostolic exegesis that retrospectively makes sense of the incomplete nature of the Old Testament in light of Jesus Christ.’¹¹⁰ Regarding 1 Kings 13, we may note that Barth’s sensitivity to the multivalency of the story permits the narrative to have its own historical referentiality (regarding prophecy and the kingdoms) as well as being a

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 409.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 389.

¹¹⁰ Mark S. Gignilliat, *Karl Barth and the Fifth Gospel: Barth’s Theological Exegesis of Isaiah* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2009), 60.

witness to Christ.¹¹¹ The manner in which he refers to ‘the grave’ both as an image for the exilic deaths of Israel and Judah and as the place of ‘our last human possibility and expectation’ is a good example of this. Barth keeps his discussion nuanced in order that he may read the text on its own terms while also permitting the accent to ultimately fall on Christ:

The grave stands only too eloquently at the end of the story of these prophets... And in it the elect and the rejected, the worthy and the unworthy, the confessional and the professional prophet, Judah and Israel, Jerusalem and Samaria, in all their unity, diversity and relatedness, lie finally together in that corruption and decay which is our last human possibility and expectation...¹¹²

Barth’s exegetical treatment of 1 Kings 13 thus operates within the world of the Old Testament even while his interpretation concludes with reference to Christ: ‘But this story, too, does point to one real subject if Jesus Christ is also seen in it, if at the exact point where this story of the prophets breaks off a continuation is found in the Easter story.’¹¹³

In conclusion, one struggles to grasp Barth’s counter-intuitive and seemingly undisciplined hermeneutics unless one has understood that his interests are (unapologetically) christocentric. Barth understands Christ to be the true *Sache* of all Scripture—and he reads accordingly.¹¹⁴ It remains true, however, that one cannot fully account for Barth’s nuanced reading of 1 Kings 13 without considering the doctrinal context for his exegesis in the *Dogmatics*. To that dimension of his exegesis we now turn.

Barth’s doctrinal context: Election

Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13 informs a larger schema within his *Church Dogmatics* as one of three texts dealing with the doctrine of election. It is therefore

¹¹¹ Bosworth, somewhat surprisingly, remarks that ‘Barth’s interpretation of the Old Testament texts can not be characterized as christological. Christological statements are absent from the interpretation of 1 Kings 13.’ Bosworth, ‘Revisiting Karl Barth’s Exegesis of 1 Kings 13.’ *BibInt* 10 (2002), 372.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 409.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Although Barth was influenced greatly by Calvin, he criticised him for being insufficiently christological in his delineation of election and predestination. See *CD* II.2, 14ff.; cf. Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1976), 278.

imperative to consider how Barth's exegesis of this narrative supports a broader argument (§35, Vol. II.2) regarding the workings of election. The use of 1 Kings 13 to expound the doctrine of election is the main reason Barth's exegesis has evoked criticism, since many (with good reason) have perceived him to be bringing 'external' concerns to bear upon the narrative.¹¹⁵

As we have already seen, Barth offers exegetical treatments of three Old Testament texts pertaining to election, 1 Kings 13 being the last of these. In his view, each text pertains to the theme of election, and not surprisingly, each also witnesses to Christ. But there is yet a third common element that Barth draws out in his treatment of each of these passages, a dynamic which facilitates his argument about the elect and rejected Christ that is attested in them. The point Barth repeatedly makes is that the complex relationship that exists between the elect and the rejected is signalled by the interdependence and mutuality of the text's binary subject matter. Barth insists that the sacrificial rites described in Leviticus 14 & 16 be considered together;¹¹⁶ that 'the first two and mutually alternating Israelite kings, Saul and David' be understood in relation to one another;¹¹⁷ and in 1 Kings 13, that the series of role reversals and exchanges between the man of God and the old prophet manifest their *interdependence* as representatives of Judah and Israel.

Barth's doctrine of election begins with the statement that Jesus Christ is both promise and fulfilment, both elect and rejected. According to Barth's formulation of the doctrine, God elected himself for rejection from eternity, and then bore that election within history so that humanity could be elect in Christ.¹¹⁸ In Christ, God himself 'is rejected in order that we might not be rejected.'¹¹⁹

Central to a proper understanding of Barth's doctrine of election is this interdependence of the elect and rejected. Although the following citation precedes

¹¹⁵ The 'main question' for Klopfenstein is 'whether the text itself proves Barth right in understanding it as a witness for God's electing-and-rejecting, rejecting-and-electing action, and their peculiar juxtaposition'. Klopfenstein, '1 Kings 13', 667. Simon De Vries is more blunt, accusing Barth of bringing 'strange fire' to the altar. De Vries, *I Kings*. WBC 12 (2nd ed., Nashville: Nelson, 2003) 173.

¹¹⁶ 'We have to listen to two words in all the distinction which is peculiar to our two passages and their obviously conflicting standpoints.' *CD* II.2, 363.

¹¹⁷ *CD* II.2, 384, 392.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 167-168; see also p. 123.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 167.

his treatment of 1 Kings 13, it illuminates Barth's depiction of the relation between the Judean man of God and the Bethel prophet nonetheless:

We can no more consider and understand the elect apart from the rejected than we can consider the rejected apart from the elect... The elect are always those whose task it is to attest the positive decree, the *telos* of the divine will, the loving-kindness of God. And the rejected must always accompany them to attest the negative decree, that which God in his omnipotence and holiness and love does not will, and therefore his judgment. But it is always the one will of the one God which both attest. Both attest always the covenant which comprehends both, whose power is neither based upon the faithfulness of the elect, nor to be destroyed by the faithlessness of the rejected, whose fulfilment is indeed proclaimed by the blessing heaped upon the elect but also announced, and therefore not denied but made the subject of a new promise, by the curse heaped upon the rejected. It is for this reason that the relationship between faithfulness and faithlessness, blessing and curse, life and death, cannot be measured as if some were simply bearers of the first and others simply bearers of the second. It is for this reason that the functions and directions and ways of the complementary figures intersect, as do also the figures themselves. It is for this reason that in their own way the elect are to be censured, while in their own way the rejected are to be commended that the former are not free from the judgments of God, and the latter do not lack signs of His goodness and patience. It is for this reason that the elect and the rejected, in spite of the greatest dissimilarities, can see that in many respects they are only too similar. It is not merely that in spite of the variety of their functions they operate together. On the contrary, they can exchange their functions.¹²⁰

Barth's notion of election, wherein the old and new covenants are substantiated by both the elect and the rejected, does not polarise the faithful and the faithless but rather sees them operating together and even exchanging functions. In his lengthy treatment of Scripture texts that follows, Barth accentuates this dynamic. Beginning with Genesis 4, where the distinction between Cain and Abel rests solely and simply 'on a decision of God concerning them,' Barth notes that Cain's sacrifice is not accepted by God and yet he finds grace in the promise of life and protection. Conversely, Abel initially pleases God with his sacrifice, and yet his lot is 'a determination to death'.¹²¹ Their functions and roles are not straightforward, but are in a sense reversed. Similar observations are made about other figures in the patriarchal narratives, including Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48), Perez and Serah

¹²⁰ Ibid, 353-4.

¹²¹ Ibid, 355. For other theological readings of this text that resist rationalising Abel's election, see Moberly, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 92f.; Levenson, *Death and Resurrection*, 74-75.

(Gen 38), and more generally between Israel and neighbouring nations.¹²² To paraphrase Barth's argument on this point: sinful Israel attests God's character throughout the Old Testament via revelations that are made possible due to the reality of election and non-election. The theme arises as early as Genesis 4, and can be identified in Israel's sacrificial laws (Lev 14,16) and in the dynamics between her kings (Saul and David) and prophets (1 Kgs 13), but it is brought to its fullest expression (at least, as far as the Old Testament is concerned) in the relation between Judah and Israel. Moreover, this relationship between Israel and Judah is so important for a proper understanding of how the divine will is expressed in the Old Testament's historical books that it is uniquely introduced in 1 Kings 13. As Barth puts it: 'The fulness of these relations and occasions already emerges, in title-form, in 1 K. 13.'¹²³ But in order to fully appreciate the substance of 1 Kings 13, it will be helpful to approach that text as Barth does, via other Old Testament texts pertaining to the doctrine of election.

Leviticus 14,16

Barth's trilogy of OT texts begins with Lev 14 & 16. Lev 14.4-7 describes the ceremony (involving two birds) for cleansing a leper, and Lev 16.5f. describes the sacrificial rite (involving two goats) to be performed on the Great Day of Atonement.¹²⁴ About the animals, Barth says this: 'Two creatures which are exactly alike in species and value are dealt with in completely different ways. The selection of the one for this and of the other for that treatment, seems to be a matter for the priest in Lev. 14^{15f}, while lots are cast in Lev. 16⁸. In both cases it is obvious that the selection is inscrutable, and that it is really made by God himself.'¹²⁵ Barth perceives these rites as commentary on the election stories of Genesis,¹²⁶ and in characteristic style he affirms throughout that the sacrificial animals attest to the real *Sache* of the Old Testament; 'Jesus Christ is each of the four creatures in Lev. 14 and 16.'¹²⁷ But

¹²² Ibid, 355-6; also 343-4.

¹²³ Ibid, 403.

¹²⁴ For an analysis of Barth's hermeneutics in his exegesis of Lev 16, see Wallace, *The Second Naiveté*, 16-20.

¹²⁵ *CD* II.2, 257.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 358, 366.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 364.

these sacrificial rites that stress the stark divide between death and life whilst also affirming the unity of God's saving grace also have a deeper significance in that they reveal the operative principle of distinction-within-unity.

Saul and David

This Old Testament motif—Barth calls it 'the differentiating choice of God'—is next picked up 'in the opposition of the figures of Saul and David which constitutes the theme of the Books of Samuel.'¹²⁸ Barth notes the tension in the DH between a unified Israel and early 'indications of a division of this totality into Israelite kingdoms.'¹²⁹ However, the focus of Barth's exegesis here is his depiction of Israel's first kings, Saul and David. Saul is rejected in spite of being 'a choice young man' (1 Sam 9.2) who carries out 99% of the will of God¹³⁰ while David is elect in spite of his sin that is 'flagrant and crimson when compared with that of Saul.'¹³¹ Since the Old Testament is so candid about the gravity of David's sin and somewhat ambiguous about Saul's, Barth asks 'what is and is not to be understood by divine election in this tradition.'¹³² Clearly, in these narratives, election and /or rejection have no direct correspondence to the measure of one's sinfulness or faithfulness. On the contrary, 'in the Old Testament, the election of a man is that in spite of himself God makes this kind of man a witness to His will, the will of His grace.'¹³³ Thus, according to Barth, David's sin with Bathsheba is not contradictory to his elected status but is, in fact, 'absolutely indispensable to this presentation.'¹³⁴

In general terms, Barth describes the two books of Samuel as 'the story of the appointment and reign of the first *two and mutually alternating Israelite kings*, Saul and David, as rooted in the divine election.'¹³⁵ He thus identifies a similar dynamic

¹²⁸ Ibid, 366.

¹²⁹ CD II.2, 366-7; 'For according to Jud. 19-21 the tribe of Benjamin is isolated from all the others when it is threatened with total annihilation and then preserved. Later, of course, it is Judah (2 Sam. 21^f; 1 K. 11¹³, 12²⁰) which replaces it in this special situation.' Cf. James Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity* (JSOTSup 272; Sheffield, 1998), 114f.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 371.

¹³¹ Ibid, 371, 381.

¹³² Ibid, 383.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 384; emphasis added.

in Samuel to the one in Kings; the two prophets in 1 Kings 13 represent Israel and Judah in much the same way that the two kings, David and Saul, represent the people of Israel in the books of Samuel. But the question that vexes Barth most in his consideration of these kings concerns the unity of God's will. What can it really mean, he asks, for an Israelite king to be divinely elected if that king's life is marked by division and ambiguity?¹³⁶ Shouldn't election infer single-minded obedience? Would not the historical records of Saul and David have been more beneficial to the post-exilic community if they had been more straightforward in this regard? Barth's answer is that the open or unresolved character of these texts points to the fact that 'they are to be read and understood as prophecy' whose ultimate subject is Jesus Christ.¹³⁷ He puts this most clearly in the following statement:

If we look at this picture from the standpoint of Jesus Christ, i.e., of its proper subject, we immediately understand why the Old Testament record itself expressly brings out all these reservations and does not take any real offence at them; why its picture of the elect king accepts and indeed emphasises so strongly the negative aspect, not attempting to balance it with the positive, or to offer the reader a composite picture made up equally of light and shade. Just as the rejected king is always rejected in spite of all the light that falls upon him, so the elect king is always what he is...¹³⁸

Thus both Saul and David (and Barth includes Jeroboam and Solomon along with them) anticipate the kingship of Christ as *both* Rejected and Elect. Two statements undergird Barth's typological Christology: 'The king of Israel rejected by God, whether he be called Saul or Jeroboam, is the prototype and copy of Jesus Christ,'¹³⁹ and at the same time, 'Conversely, the king of Israel elected by God, David himself and David's son and in his own way every king of Jerusalem, is the prototype and copy of Jesus Christ.'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid, 387-8.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 388.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 391.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 390.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 391.

1 Kings 13

By the time Barth treats 1 Kings 13, the third Old Testament text in his exposition of election, a number of the key themes in 1 Kings 13 have already been introduced. Consequently, and in characteristic fashion, Barth draws theological principles from these other texts and applies them to 1 Kings 13. The notion of interchangeability between elect and rejected has been introduced, as well as the related notion that the elect and rejected function together within God's unified will for his people. The principle wherein one's election has no direct correlation to one's moral standing is also relevant. Moreover, as we have seen, Barth notes with all three passages that tensions are left unresolved in a manner that points directly to their fulfilment in Christ. This is so in the case of the Levitical sacrifices, the perplexing complementarity of Saul and David, and the two prophets whose burial together apparently anticipates Easter, when Israel's sole representative will rise from his grave. Having considered Barth's treatment of Lev 14,16 and of Saul and David, it is not difficult to see why the series of role reversals between the man of God and the Bethel prophet is so important to Barth's theological interpretation of 1 Kings 13.

Christ

Since each of the Old Testament texts we have reviewed is illustrative of the elect and rejected Christ, this section would be incomplete without reference to the finale of Barth's masterful composition. We have already seen that Barth perceives the open ending of 1 Kings 13 to direct us forward to Christ, and perhaps his exegesis of the story can only be fully understood if we consider the *telos* of his argument. As Barth puts it himself, 'What else is 1 K. 13 if it is not prophecy? Where else is its fulfilment to be found if not in Jesus Christ?'¹⁴¹

Barth insists that these Old Testament illustrations of God's differentiating election point to Christ, in whom the separation between the elect and the rejected is manifested, and equally, in whom the connection between 'these two peoples' is revealed.¹⁴² In Christ it is made known that any apparent opposition between the elect and the rejected 'can only be relative, because both are in the one absolute hand of God.'¹⁴³ This truth is not revealed through the interfacing of the elect and rejected

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 409. Cf. 94-145, 340-54.

¹⁴² Ibid, 351.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 350.

throughout Scripture, but only in the person of Jesus Christ, who is *the Elect* and *the Rejected*.¹⁴⁴ For Barth's conviction is that we do not understand Jesus better in the light of election or Israel or any other biblical theme, but rather that such themes and doctrines are always understood through Christ. For this reason, Barth's emphasis on the role reversals between the two prophets in 1 Kings 13 is illuminated by his christology. Of the elect and the rejected, Barth writes:

For all the great difference between them, both have their true existence solely in Him [i.e. Christ]. It is in Him, who originally is both the Elect and the Rejected that their mutual opposition finds its necessity. But it is not simply the relativity of their opposition which is established in Him, but also the fact that in all their opposition they are brothers, mutually related in their being and function, forming an inalienable and indissoluble unity. As the election of Jesus Christ finds its scope and completion in His representative rejection, and as conversely this very representative rejection confirms His election, so the elect and the rejected do not stand only against one another, but also alongside and for one another.¹⁴⁵

Barth rejects any talk of certain individuals being appointed or predestined as 'elect' to be blessed with faith and fulness of life while others are 'rejected' and consigned to a cursed existence of faithlessness.¹⁴⁶ Rather, he states—and this can clearly be seen to apply to the man of God and the old Bethelite—that 'the functions and directions and ways of the complementary figures intersect, as do also the figures themselves.'¹⁴⁷ The elect and rejected can only be understood together and in light of their reciprocity, and what they signify together is the 'twofold nature' of the love of God as it has been revealed in Christ. For God has purposed to establish a distinction and opposition between himself and all humanity and then to overcome that distinction through the rejection of Christ. 'God loves us as He makes this distinction. This is how He loves His only Son. This is how He loves us in Him.'¹⁴⁸

It is perhaps this ultimate emphasis upon Christ that has given historical-critical scholars cause to abandon Barth's theological interpretation in its entirety. Barth's notion that themes drawn from the exegesis of other texts, including even New

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 352-3.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 353.

¹⁴⁶ contra Calvin; see fn. 112 above.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 353-4.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 354.

Testament texts pertaining to Christ, are at work in 1 Kings 13, has given scholars reason to accuse Barth of flagrantly “reading in”. We shall return to interpretive issues such as these in chapters four and five.

Summary of Barth's contribution

Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 has not generally found favour with Old Testament scholars, and in the next chapter we will examine the nature of these disagreements in more detail. But whatever one's view on these issues of contention, there can be little doubt that Barth's theological exegesis of this narrative proffers a range of potential gains for biblical scholars, provided that they are open to a variety of methodological approaches, and to literary-theological as well as historical insights. We conclude this chapter, then, with a summary of Barth's more significant contributions to the interpretation of 1 Kings 13, each of which has been picked up and developed in varying degrees by other exegetes.

1 Kings 13 as Narrative Analogy

Barth's suggestion that the man of God from Judah and the Bethel prophet represent the nations whence they come seems a simple, perhaps even obvious, observation to make. 1 Kings 13 would surely seem out of place were it not for the fact that its literary context addresses the division and enmity between north and south. 1 Kings 12 outlines the division of the kingdoms under Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and the subsequent record of Israel's and Judah's kings (1 Kgs 14-2 Kgs 21) is carefully narrated so as to keep the record balanced. Even so, relatively few interpreters have adopted this insight for their own interpretive endeavours.

Barth's exegesis treats the entire story on its own narrative terms, but at the same time he proposes that 1 Kings 13 is presented as a kind of parable concerning the relational dynamic between Judah and Israel. This has significant implications for scholars interested in the story's original form and its redaction into the DH, but it also has significance for those interested in synchronic analysis. In its received form, does 1 Kings 13 function like the programmatic speeches identified by Wellhausen and Noth as theological markers in the history? We shall return to this question in chapter seven.

Reading 1 Kings 13 Synchronically

In many ways, Barth was ahead of his time. This can certainly be said of his preference for attending to the final form of 1 Kings 13 over reconstructions of its (hypothetical) pre-Deuteronomistic forms.¹⁴⁹ Barth's theological, oftentimes Christological, readings of texts have been considered too overtly religious by those who would prefer to keep biblical scholarship and matters of faith a safe distance from one another. Krister Stendahl, for instance, described Barth's method as one that dissolved the criteria distinguishing what a text *meant* from what it *means*, so that for Barth, 'what is intended as a commentary turns out to be a theological tractate'.¹⁵⁰

While his contemporaries were interested in the meaning and origins of this 'prophetic legend' prior to its (hypothetical) redaction into the DH, Barth makes it clear that what is at stake in his theological interpretation is the meaning of the text as it stands. Barth had a significant influence on Childs in this regard, and in some ways paved the way for the canonical approach.¹⁵¹ Similarly, while much of Barth's exegesis preceded the 'literary turn' of the late 1960s and early 1970s (he died in December, 1968), Barth's exegetical method has more in common with narratology than with the historical-critical method of many of his contemporaries. In particular, Barth pays close attention to characterisation, plot, dialogue, the narrator and so on in 1 Kings 13, and the observations he makes lie behind many of his most astute theological insights.

¹⁴⁹ E.g., Erik Eynikel, 'Prophecy and Fulfillment in the Deuteronomistic History: 1 Kgs 13; 2 Kgs 23, 16-18' in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies*. BETL 94 (eds. C. Brekelmans and J. Lust; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 227-237; Werner E. Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience: I Kings 13 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History,' *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God*. Festschrift for G.E. Wright (eds. F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke, and P.D. Miller, Jr.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 301-304; Thomas B. Dozeman, 'The Way of the Man of God from Judah: True and False Prophecy in the Pre-Deuteronomic Legend of 1 Kings 13,' *CBQ* 44/3 (1982), 379-93; Walter Gross, 'Lying Prophet and Disobedient Man of God in 1 Kings 13: Role Analysis as an Instrument of Theological Interpretation of an OT Narrative Text,' *Semeia* 15 (1979), 100-107. A PhD dissertation submitted in 2012 on Barth's reading of this passage is divided into three parts, the first of which assumes a pre-Deuteronomistic form of the story. See Mark Dwayne Allen, *The Man of God, the Old Prophet, and the Word of the LORD* (unpublished dissertation, submitted to the University of Notre Dame; May, 2012), 11-83.

¹⁵⁰ Krister Stendahl, 'Biblical Theology, Contemporary' in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 420. The remark was made regarding Barth's *Römerbrief*.

¹⁵¹ Childs recalls some interesting engagements with Barth in Basel in the early 1950s, and his writings credit Barth in numerous ways. See Daniel R. Driver, *Brevard Childs, Biblical Theologian: For the Church's One Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 90-1.

“das Problem der beiden Reiche”

Barth’s analysis addresses the way 1 Kings 13 attends to both ‘the prophetic problem’ as well as ‘the problem of the two kingdoms’.¹⁵² He is referring, of course, to the story’s dual focus, and yet this telling phrase—‘*das Problem der beiden Reiche*’—highlights a striking feature in Kings that is largely overlooked; namely, the historical feasibility of the odd relationship between the two kingdoms. For quite apart from questions of sources and the composition history of the DH, it seems historically unlikely that Jeroboam could actually have been expected to manage a kingdom *politically* distinct from Judah, yet *cultically* united to Jerusalem. (In this sense, Jeroboam’s musings in 1 Kgs 12.26-27 are simply pragmatic; ‘If this people continues to go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will turn again to their master, King Rehoboam of Judah.’) From a literary-theological point of view, the division of the kingdom is expressed as the divine response to Solomon’s sin. But it is difficult to imagine how Israel and Judah might really have been expected to worship together, especially when both Kings and Chronicles report frequent wars between them (1 Kgs 12.19; 14.30; 15.6-7, 16, 32; 1 Chron 12.15b). The tension here between the literary world *within* the text and the historical world *behind* it raises questions concerning the nature / genre of the material. Scholars interested in the world *behind* the text have debated whether the nation was *really* or only *ideally* divided as *two nations under God*, to borrow the title of Knoppers’ work, which addresses these questions to some extent.¹⁵³ But since Israel’s historical record of a divided kingdom begins and ends with an idyllic unity—Solomon’s golden age is restored by Josiah’s purging of false idols—it is likely that Kings purports to do more than simply provide regnal accounts for Judah and Israel. Thus, Barth’s conclusions concerning the literary function of 1 Kings 13 and the *raison d’être* of Israel¹⁵⁴ are especially important in light of more recent studies

¹⁵² ‘Aber das Problem der beiden Reiche ist ebenso unverkennbar mehr als Staffage.’ *KD* II.2, 440 [= *CD* II.2, 398].

¹⁵³ ‘In the deuteronomistic construction of history, both Judah and Israel share a common heritage and a common cultic obligation to the Jerusalem temple, but their separate polities are divinely ordained. For the Deuteronomist, the story of the kingdoms is a story of two nations under one God.’ Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations Under One God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies, vol. 1* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 55.

¹⁵⁴ I.e. that the relations between the peoples, kings and prophets of north and south ‘reveal the authentic meaning of the existence of Israel.’ *CD* II.2, 403.

that have also discerned the importance of the historiographical question, 'What is Israel?' for the book of Kings.¹⁵⁵

In addition to these particular contributions, Barth's distinctively theological reading has been recognised for exposing the 'essential substantive content' [*wesentlichen Aussagegehalt*]¹⁵⁶ of 1 Kings 13. Even Barth's most thorough critic concludes that he has succeeded in lifting precious treasure from 'the diversely vegetated field of this peculiarly strange chapter of the Old Testament.'¹⁵⁷ To that critic's analysis we now turn.

¹⁵⁵ J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology Genesis–Kings* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 151-67. Also see E. T. Mullen, *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (SemeiaSt24; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993) and Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings*, esp. 114-201.

¹⁵⁶ The phrase is used by Kraus in his foreword to Barth's exegesis (vol. 10 of *Biblische Studien*, p.9f.) and picked up again by Klopfenstein, who commends Barth but remains uncertain of what comprises this *wesentlichen Aussagegehalt* (Klopfenstein, 671: 'Es bleibt Karl Barths Verdienst, den kostbaren Schatz dieses Zeugnisses aus dem bunt bewachsenen Acker des seltsam fremden alt-testamentlichen Kapitels gehoben zu haben.').

¹⁵⁷ Klopfenstein, 672.

MARTIN A. KLOPFENSTEIN

Martin A. Klopfenstein

The previous chapter summarised Barth's exegesis and interpretation of 1 Kings 13. His understanding of the function and content of the story was outlined in light of his hermeneutical priorities and the doctrinal context for his exegesis (vol. II.2 of *Dogmatics*). But in spite of the fact that Barth's treatment of this text has been hailed as 'classic'¹ and 'justly famous',² very few scholars have proffered a thorough critical appraisal of his exegesis. Martin Klopfenstein is one of the few, and was the first, to do so. His assessment of Barth is of special interest for the present work, given our interest not only in the interpretation(s) of 1 Kings 13, but also in related hermeneutical and methodological issues. Klopfenstein's engagement with Barth covers much exegetical ground, as one might expect, but he also made it clear that his primary focus was Barth's exegetical method. In this chapter, we shall examine Klopfenstein's appraisal of Barth and consider the impact of his essay upon subsequent scholarship.

Klopfenstein's Evaluation of Barth's Exegesis (1966)

Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 was subjected to rigorous critique by Martin Klopfenstein in a *festschrift* celebrating Barth's eightieth birthday in 1966.³ Klopfenstein's opening comments acknowledge that Barth's exegeses of Old Testament texts typically raise stimulating hermeneutical questions, but at the same time he disapproves of Barth's overtly theological method—as the tripartite structure of his essay suggests.⁴ By way of introduction, he states: 'Am Beispiel von 1. Könige 13 soll Barths exegetische Arbeitsweise dargestellt, mit der historisch-

¹ James Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict: Its Effect Upon Israelite Religion* (Walter de Gruyter & Co.: Berlin, 1971), 40.

² Jerome Walsh, 'The Contexts of 1 Kings XIII.' *VT* 39 (1989), 368.

³ Klopfenstein, '1. Könige 13', 639-672.

⁴ Part I, *Barths Exegese von 1. Könige 13* (pp 639-46), is set in juxtaposition to part II, *Hauptzüge einer historisch-kritischen Exegese von 1. Könige 13* (646-66), leading into a brief synthesis in part III, *Konfrontation und Würdigung* (667-72).

kritischen Auslegung konfrontiert und gewürdigt werden.⁵ He thus clarifies from the outset that it is 'Barths exegetische Arbeitsweise' that is in focus; the details and conclusions of Barth's exegesis are assessed in order to evaluate his methodology. 'Vielmehr betrifft unsere kritische Anfrage mehr den Ansatz und die Methode der Auslegung Barths, die sich freilich gerade in bestimmten Details besonders deutlich manifestieren und darum zwar nicht nur, aber doch auch von ihnen aus beurteilt werden müssen.'⁶

In the first part of Klopfenstein's analysis, 'Barth's Exegesis of 1 Kings 13' (pp 639-46), he locates Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 within the broader scheme of the *Dogmatics*:

Die Stücke stehen im größeren Zusammenhang der Lehre von Gott, näher: von Gottes Gnadenwahl, näher: von der Erwählung des Einzelnen. Unter der direkten Überschrift «Der Erwählte und der Verworfenen» wird an ihnen das unablösliche Beieinander von Gottes Erwählen und Gottes Verwerfen, wie es dann in Christus (S. 452f.) letztgültig offenbarte Wirklichkeit geworden ist, exemplifiziert. 1. Könige 13 wird also unter dem Gesichtspunkt des erwählenden und verwerfenden Handelns Gottes befragt und als Zeugnis der Einheit und Unterschiedenheit dieses erwählenden und verwerfenden Handelns ausgelegt.⁷

Klopfenstein emphasises the fact that Barth's exegesis illuminates his doctrine of Election and, somewhat unfairly, assesses Barth from within an historical-critical paradigm. He does not acknowledge that Barth's intertextual and canonical hermeneutics lead him to draw motifs (e.g., election) and patterns (e.g., double pictures) from thematically related texts and apply them to 1 Kings 13, but rather implies from the outset that Barth's reading ought to build on the same foundations as most other biblical interpreters of his time. In any case, the first section of Klopfenstein's engagement with Barth summarises his colleague's reading of the text (as I have done in the previous chapter), making minor comments along the

⁵ Klopfenstein, 639. Klopfenstein's critique of Barth bears similarities to the criticisms of Walter Baumgartner. See the correspondence between Barth and Baumgartner (between 1940-1955) in Rudolf Smend, 'Karl Barth and Walter Baumgartner: Ein Briefwechsel über das Alte Testament,' in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Beiheft 6: Zur Theologie Karl Barths Beiträge aus Anlass seines 100. Geburtstags*, ed. Eberhard Jüngel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 240-71.

⁶ Ibid, 667.

⁷ Ibid, 640.

way. He follows Barth's divisions of the story and then outlines the two double-pictures and their relation to one another.

Zur Einzelexegese

In part two, 'The Main Features of an Historical-Critical Exegesis of 1 Kings 13' (pp 646-66), Klopfenstein briefly raises issues concerning the form, unity and origins of the story before presenting an historical-critical exegetical treatment of the narrative under the provocative heading, 'Zur Einzelexegese'.⁸ He stresses that he has no intention of providing a full exegetical treatment of the chapter. (For that, readers are referred to the 'recent' commentaries of John Gray and Johannes Fichtner, both published in 1964.⁹) His intention is different: 'Ich möchte hier nur den Gang der Erzählung mit ein paar Strichen nachzeichnen und auf einige Einzelheiten eintreten, die für die Konfrontation mit Karl Barth wichtig sind.'¹⁰

Klopfenstein's *Einzelexegese* commences with some speculation about the inevitability of Jeroboam's syncretistic cultus as an attempt to consolidate his independence,¹¹ and the nature of the distinction between a 'man of God' and a 'prophet' in the ancient world.¹² Klopfenstein's judgments on these matters anticipate key elements in his delineation of the story, which he reads as a pro-Bethel story defending the presence of truth-bearers in the north as well as in Judah.

Central to Klopfenstein's interpretation of 1 Kings 13 is his assertion that the old prophet commits an *intentional* act of deceit on behalf of his king because he understands the gravity of what has occurred in Bethel; the man of God has desecrated Jeroboam's sacrifice, and everything is now at stake. So this prophet from Bethel does what he is specially equipped to do because of his age,¹³ simultaneously achieving two ends through his act of deception. On one hand, the

⁸ Ibid, 652.

⁹ John Gray, *I & II Kings*, 1st ed., (S.C.M. Press; London: 1964); Joseph Fichtner, *Das erste Buch von den Königen* (BAT; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1964).

¹⁰ Klopfenstein, 652.

¹¹ Ibid, 653. Similarly, Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 73-5, argues that the sin of Jeroboam (historically) is not idolatry or false worship, but the eschewing of Jerusalem.

¹² Klopfenstein, 653-4, concurs with A. Jepsen, *Nabi: Soziologische Studien zur alttestamentlichen Literatur und Religionsgeschichte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1934), 182, who distinguishes between Yahwistic prophets of north and south.

¹³ I.e. only an aged and experienced prophet will succeed against this Judean opponent [*Gegner*] (657).

Judean's prophecy concerning Bethel 'by the word of the Lord' (v 2) is called into question since he has clearly—and publicly—revised the threefold command that was also received 'by the word of the Lord' (vv 9,17); on the other, his visit to the Bethel prophet's house constitutes an acknowledgement of Bethel's equality with Jerusalem, since their shared meal suggests 'community among equals' [*die Gemeinschaft unter Gleichberechtigten*].¹⁴ In effect, the old Bethel prophet aims to vindicate Jeroboam's cultus by upending the man of God's obedience to the word. 'Der Synkretismus Jerobeams war also kein Abfall, sondern eine legitime Form des Jahwedienstes. Der alte Nabi hatte die Sache Jerobeams gerettet.'¹⁵

In spite of this wilful deception, however, the old prophet who initially (and deliberately) represents the cultic concerns of his king adopts the role of the Judean and speaks a genuine word of prophecy. This twist in the plot is genuinely 'most dramatic and surprising' [*höchst dramatisch und überraschend*]¹⁶—an important point for Klopfenstein's critique of Barth, since the *schriller Dissonanz* of this moment does not conform to any preconceived dialectic pattern. Whatever false notion of community or equality that existed briefly between the two prophets is now shattered by the divine judgment that passes between them.¹⁶ Significantly, the new oracle is spoken by the northern prophet, who proclaims that the Judean will be killed by a lion because he has 'rebelled against the mouth of the LORD' (v 21).¹⁷ His oracle thereby verifies that the initial proclamation against Jeroboam's altar will be fulfilled in due course. 'Die Pointe dieses ganzen letzten Abschnittes vv 20b—32 liegt darin, deutlich zu machen: Es gibt kraft göttlicher Erwählung echte Jahweprophete auch im Nordreich, und als solche zeigt sie sich eben darin, daß sie das kultische Schisma und den kanaanäisch-jahwistischen Synkretismus ablehnt.'¹⁸ There is no doubt that Jeroboam's cult was sinful in God's eyes; that much is made clear by the fate of the Judean and by the reiteration of his prophecy in v 32: 'For the

¹⁴ Klopfenstein, 658.

¹⁵ Ibid. Incidentally, Crenshaw misunderstands the context of this statement in Klopfenstein's argument. He states in *Prophetic Conflict*, 44, that Klopfenstein 'goes so far as to argue that the syncretistic cult of Jeroboam was a legitimate form of Yahweh worship'. However, Klopfenstein is not presenting his own view, but rather commenting on the impact or effect of the old prophet's deception. Klopfenstein's view, quite to the contrary, rests entirely on the fact that Jeroboam's cult was *illegitimate*—and was condemned by both southern and northern prophets.

¹⁶ Klopfenstein, 658.

¹⁷ Following Gray, Klopfenstein understands the verb *מָרָד* to mean 'defy authority' (659).

¹⁸ Klopfenstein, 659.

saying that he proclaimed by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.’ But the greater goal [*Ziel*] of the narrative, in Klopfenstein’s understanding, is to communicate that there are true prophets in the north as well as the south, both of whom have proclaimed God’s irrefutable verdict against the cult of Jeroboam.¹⁹

1. Könige 13 ist dann ein recht drastisches Exempel, mit dem diese Kreise ihren den Kult Bethels billigenden Kollegen bedeuteten, was ein rechter nordisraelitischer Jahweprophet zu vertreten habe, und mit dem sie zugleich zu verstehen gaben, daß die Träger der Wahrheit in dieser Sache immerhin nicht nur in Juda, sondern auch im Nordreich zu finden seien.²⁰

Following this sequence of events in the narrative, Klopfenstein proceeds to discuss the significance of the lion. He devotes considerable time and space to expressing his disbelief at the hypotheses that are expressed with unmerited certitude. In contrast to various well-known scholars, Klopfenstein finds it difficult to detect any supposed ‘qualities’ [*Eigenschaften*] in the lion when the narrator speaks only of ‘seine Funktion, seine Rolle im Ablauf der Ereignisse.’²¹ Klopfenstein takes this opportunity (citing Barth, Vischer and others) to warn against interpretations that are over(t)ly moralistic or theological because they feel the need to overindulge keywords like ‘lion’ and search for something that simply isn’t there.²²

Since Barth understands the elect to suffer on behalf of the rejected, he refers to the lion who strikes the Judean as the ‘lion of Judah.’²³ That is to say, the lion represents God who strikes his own on behalf of sinful Israel. Klopfenstein considers this assessment to go well beyond the text; he insists, rather, that only two simple statements may be made about the lion, both of which express its dual

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, 655.

²¹ Ibid, 660. Klopfenstein notes with surprise that Duhm presumes to call the lion (and the donkey) ‘righteous’ while Gunkel describes it as a ‘really brave lion.’ But even worse, in Klopfenstein’s view, is Gressmann, who treats the entire story under the intolerable moralising heading: ‘the disobedient man of God and the obedient animal of God’ (!)

²² Ibid, 661-5.

²³ Barth, *CD* II.2, 407. Barth again interfaces the reference to the lion with other key texts; Gen 49.9; Am 1.2, 3.8 (cf. p 397).

purpose. First—and Klopfenstein stresses that this is intended *theologically*—the lion kills the Judean (vv 24, 26). As the old prophet puts it in verse 26, ‘The LORD has given him to the lion’. The lion’s first function, then, is quite simply ‘to be the punitive tool of Yahweh.’²⁴ The second assertion that can safely be made is that the lion stands beside the corpse without consuming it and refrains from harming the donkey (v 24,28). This much is clear from the narrative, but what is its meaning? In Klopfenstein’s view, the whole purpose of the lion’s action (or inaction) is that passers-by noticing the strange scene are compelled to spread the word concerning the fate of the Judean. Following from this, the bizarre spectacle creates an opportunity for the old prophet to propagate his understanding of events (v 26) and to confirm the prophecy that was uttered by the Judean at the beginning (vv 2,32).

The ‘grotesque conspicuousness’ [*groteske Augenfälligkeit*] of this scene involving a prophet’s corpse at the feet of a lion and a donkey also serves two purposes within the narrative, by Klopfenstein’s reckoning. First, it captures the attention of the old Bethel prophet (once again, via his sons), who immediately offers up an explanation for the strange turn of events (v 26). Since the divine judgment that was initially proclaimed by the man of God from Judah is now echoed by a second, more familiar (i.e. northern) voice, Jeroboam can no longer deny that his cultus has in fact been rejected by God. Indeed, as Klopfenstein expresses it, ‘der alte Nabi, vom kultischen Freund zum kultischen Gegner des Königs geworden war!’²⁵ Second, the lion’s *Abstinenz* simply cannot be seen as arbitrary, since the lion’s role in the story—as one who kills but does not consume—is critical for the corpse’s transport (in one piece) to Bethel upon the donkey. The lion’s inaction makes possible a sequence of events that captures Jeroboam’s attention and enables ‘the witnesses from vv 20a-32 to overcome the dissonance through a final, divinely willed consonance.’²⁶ That is to say, no one who has seen the spectacle (including the old Bethel prophet) can in the end harbour any doubt about the divine rejection of Jeroboam’s cultus.

Finally, regarding the question of why the old Bethel prophet wishes to have his bones laid beside those of the Judean,²⁷ Klopfenstein suggests that the Bethelite

²⁴ Klopfenstein, 660: ‘Das ist seine erste Funktion: Strafwerkzeug Jahwes zu sein.’

²⁵ Ibid, 661.

²⁶ Ibid: ‘für die vom Abschnitt vv 20a—32 bezeugte Überwindung der Dissonanz durch eine letzte gott gewollte Konsonanz.’

²⁷ Ibid, 665-6.

seeks neither protection nor atonement in his burial next to the man of God. Rather, he wishes to make a proclamation: 'Jedermann sollte sehen können, daß er wirklich Seite an Seite, ohne Distanz und ohne Vorbehalt, neben dem Judäer lag.'²⁸ This, in fact, is the message at the heart of Klopfenstein's *Einzelexegese*; that in 1 Kings 13, both the man of God from Judah and the old Bethel prophet give voice to the same proclamation against Bethel.

Konfrontation und Würdigung

In part three of his essay, 'Confrontation and Evaluation' (667-72), Klopfenstein turns from exegetical details to 'the main question... namely, whether the text itself proves Barth right in understanding it as a witness for God's electing and rejecting, rejecting and electing, and their peculiar juxtaposition'.²⁹ Klopfenstein seeks ultimately to assess whether Barth is interpreting the story through foreign categories that are not immediately present in the text.

Klopfenstein begins by comparing Barth's exegetical results with those of his own historical-critical analysis, and he notes a manifold compliance between the two outlines with regards to both historic and thematic details. However, where differences between Barth's exposition and Klopfenstein's historical-critical analysis remain, these are explained by Barth's propensity for imposing extraneous, critical questions upon the exegetical task.³⁰ Specifically, he is referring to Barth's penchant for dialectical modes of thought, a *modus operandi* that is evidenced in his explication of multiple role reversals between the elect man of God and the rejected Bethel prophet: 'Barth schildert den Verlauf der Ereignisse in unserer Erzählung als dialektische Bewegung.'³¹ Because this pattern is pivotal to Barth's understanding of the theological significance of 1 Kings 13 for the doctrine of election, Klopfenstein proceeds with a summary of Barth's reversals:

- (i) the elect presents God's word of judgement to the rejected at Bethel;
- (ii) the rejected takes over his mission when the elect succumbs to temptation;
- (iii) the elect suffers the penalty of death on behalf of the rejected;
- (iv) the rejected offers the elect his own grave as a resting place;

²⁸ Ibid, 666.

²⁹ Ibid, 667.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

(v) the elect preserves the bones of the rejected when he is laid beside him.³²

He then explains: ‘—und dieses Beieinander wird verstanden als Typus jenes Ineinanders von Erwähltem und Verworfenem in der Gestalt Jesu Christi, in der die Einheit Israels als eschatologische Größe ihre in Ewigkeit bleibende Verwirklichung findet.’³³ But Klopfenstein objects to the notion of multiple role reversals, and an undergirding dialectic pattern, on two grounds. The first is this:

Hier brechen zwei kritische Fragen auf. Zunächst ist rein *exegetisch* einzuwenden, daß von mehreren Rollenwechseln wohl nicht die Rede sein kann. Die *eine* wirkliche Zäsur in der Erzählung fällt deutlich auf v 20. Hier findet der *eine* überraschende Rollentausch statt. Das wird schon rein formal dadurch klar, daß nur hier Gott ausdrücklich in die Handlung eingreift und ihr eine neue Wendung gibt.³⁴

The only real turning point in the story occurs in v 20, where a genuine act of prophetic inspiration occurs and the mission of the man of God passes over to the Bethel prophet. Only here is it justifiable to speak of the unworthy Nabi crossing over into the sphere of election—where he remains, according to Klopfenstein.

Klopfenstein’s second objection follows from this: the point of the story’s reversal is that the two prophets, elect and rejected though they may be at the beginning of the story, are drawn together—and remain irrevocably together—in order to share the common mission of testifying against Bethel.³⁵ In other words, what Barth perceives as ‘reciprocal advocacy’ [*das wechselseitige Eintreten*] between the northern and southern prophets throughout vv 11-32, Klopfenstein sees as the ‘sustenance’ [*Durchhalten*] of the Bethel prophet’s newly acquired mission, following the story’s (single) plot reversal.³⁶ While Klopfenstein is prepared to acknowledge a degree of complementarity between the prophets from verse 20f., he denies any notion of repeated reversals: ‘Es soll nicht geleugnet werden, daß die übernommene Rolle, die der alte Nabi in den vv 11—32 zu spielen hat, ohne das eigentümliche

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 667-8.

³⁴ Ibid, 668 (original emphasis).

³⁵ Ibid, 668-9.

³⁶ Ibid.

Zusammensein mit dem Judäer nicht deutbar ist. Doch liegt in diesen Versen ein eigentlicher Rollentausch nicht mehr vor.³⁷

After the Bethel prophet receives a genuine word from the LORD in v 20, the next shift of roles according to Barth is the man of God's death on behalf of the rejected (see iii above). But since the idea of vicarious suffering is foreign [*fern*] to this narrative, so also is the notion of any further role exchange. Moreover, Klopfenstein sees nothing in the report of a common grave that suggests yet two additional role reversals (iv and v above). Rather, as he understands it, the story concludes with a series of encounters whereby the old prophet's acquired [*übernommene*] election is witnessed and affirmed by the Bethel public:

Daran, daß der Nabi die Leiche des Gottesmannes übernimmt, erweist er seine Rolle als eine übernommene, und eben darauf soll das öffentliche Bethel wieder und wieder gestoßen werden: erst durch jene Passanten, die von der grotesken Wegszene berichten, dann durch die Überführung der Leiche, dann durch die Bestattung des Judäers im Grab des Alten, endlich durch die Bestattung des Alten selbst an des Judäers Seite.³⁸

Klopfenstein's discussion of multiple role reversals being imposed upon the text brings him once again to the matter of the enigmatic lion. Barth's argument—that 'the lion of Judah' strikes the elect instead of the rejected—requires not only that the notion of substitution be imported from Isaiah 53 into 1 Kings 13,³⁹ but also that the man of God re-assumes his role as the elect after he breaks the commandment and departs from the Bethelite's home. But if Klopfenstein is right about a single turning point—and the old prophet maintains his assumed elect role until the end—then this identification of the lion must also be deemed foreign to the narrative. Klopfenstein therefore seeks to nullify Barth's *Überinterpretation* of the lion by establishing that this animal, in all its ambiguity, 'is quite simply the agent of Yahweh.'⁴⁰

Having argued that Barth imposes external issues (multiple role reversals and the 'lion of Judah') upon his interpretation of 1 Kings 13, Klopfenstein raises one, last critical question concerning Barth's exegetical method. He asks, 'Liegt nicht ein

³⁷ Ibid, 668.

³⁸ Ibid, 669.

³⁹ Ibid, 669-70.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 669.

dialektisches Denkschema, das seine aus ihm selber stammende Bewegung in dem auf eine letzte Synthese hindrängenden Widerspiel von These und Antithese findet, streckenweise wie ein fremder Zwang auf der im Ganzen sehr eindrucklichen Interpretation Barths?⁴¹

To illustrate Barth's penchant for dialectics, Klopfenstein then cites the following passage, which explains the theological significance of the division between Israel and Judah:

If the separation and opposition in Israel's ways and stories are necessary, they may and can exist only in such a way that they point beyond themselves. They must still witness to the unity of God's will, and therefore also to the unity of Israel; to the truth which is now eschatological, but which is all the more true for that very reason. And they must do so with a force which was impossible for the undivided kingdom, monarchy and prophecy. For the human division speaks much more loudly than any human solidarity could ever do of God Himself as the real basis of Israel, and not its own kings and prophets. Just because of the division there are now authentic relations in the history of Israel.⁴²

In response, Klopfenstein asks:

Ist hier nicht das Auseinanderbrechen der anfänglichen Einheit ein notwendiges Durchgangsstadium auf dem Weg zur besseren eschatologischen Einheit, also der Dualismus die denk- und geschichtsnotwendige *conditio sine qua non* eines besseren Monismus? Und ist nicht, was in der letzten besseren Einheit ankommen und reifen wird, alles schon jetzt in These und Antithese verborgen auf dem Weg und keimhaft angelegt? Ist aber in dieser Sicht noch Raum für neue Setzungen Gottes und zu verantwortende Entscheidungen des Menschen, für Erwählung und Verwerfung, für Treue und Sünde, kurz: für echte Geschichte?⁴³

Klopfenstein rightly perceives that Israel's division (as the culmination and expression of many other such divisions in the Old Testament) is considered by Barth to be *necessary* in order that God's unified and eschatological will—for the union of the elect and rejected in Christ—might be fully revealed.⁴⁴ But for Klopfenstein, such a view of history is rigid and preordained, precluding an

⁴¹ Ibid, 670.

⁴² Barth, *CD* II.2, 403; idem, *KD*, 446; Klopfenstein, 670.

⁴³ Klopfenstein, 670-1.

⁴⁴ Cf. Barth, *CD* I.2, §14. *The Time of Revelation*, 45-121.

authentic response from either people or God. As he puts it, Barth's schema leaves no room for 'genuine history' [*echte Geschichte*]. Klopfenstein therefore suggests an alternative:

Demgegenüber bezeugt 1. Könige 13 mit seiner *einen* Rollenvertauschung ein wirkliches Fortschreiten in der Geschichte zu neuen, überraschenden Stationen, die nicht nach irgend einem Gesetz geschichtlicher Bewegung zu erwarten sind. Und nur in ihrer Offenheit auf neue, überraschende Zukunft hin liegt die echte eschatologische Dimension der jeweils erreichten Stufe auf dem Weg Gottes mit seinem Volk. Was in allem bleibt, ist die Gewißheit, daß Jahwe sich auch durch menschlichen Ungehorsam von diesem Weg nicht abbringen läßt und daß sein richtendes und rettendes Wort das Licht auf diesem Weg bleibt.⁴⁵

In the final analysis, Klopfenstein is critical of Barth for reading external categories into the narrative both *structurally*, through his imposition of dialectical theology expressed in multiple reversals, and *exegetically*, in his interpretation of the lion, for instance. This is especially problematic since Barth's perception of the reciprocal relationship between the prophets is absolutely central to his presentation. If the heart of Barth's entire reading has been imposed upon the text, does this not compromise his interpretive endeavour altogether? We shall return to this question and reconsider the methodological divergence between Barth and Klopfenstein in chapter five, where hermeneutics and methodology are our primary concerns.

In spite of all Klopfenstein's criticisms, he is by no means dismissive of Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13. On the contrary, when he finally returns to his primary question—whether Barth is right to understand the text as a witness to election and rejection—Klopfenstein expresses an indebtedness to Barth for 'die wirklich sachgemäße Darlegung des theologischen Zeugnisses von 1. Könige 13.'⁴⁶ In fact, he goes further and acknowledges that there is truth to Barth's claim concerning the centrality of election. First, he recognises that Barth's notion of a 'double dispute' [*doppelte Auseinandersetzung*] in 1 Kings 13 (i.e. tensions between the northern and southern kingdoms and between true and false prophecy) is best understood against the theological background of election and rejection. But also, Klopfenstein affirms Barth's delineation of what it means in practical terms to be

⁴⁵ Klopfenstein, 671 (original emphasis).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

elect: that the purpose of election is only realised in the service of others, that it is only by staying true to this uncomfortable demand that the elect prove their status.⁴⁷

Klopfenstein concludes with three comments about belonging together [*gehören... zusammen*] that subtly pick up on Barth's summative claim that '[t]he peculiar theme of the chapter is the manner in which the man of God and the prophet belong together, do not belong together, and eventually and finally do belong together; and how the same is true of Judah and Israel.'⁴⁸ Klopfenstein makes no mention of 'not belonging together', since in his view the multiple reversals are problematic, and he also alters the subject. Instead of Judah and Israel, Klopfenstein speaks of Jerusalem and Bethel, who 'belong together' in danger and in hope, in their God-willed salvation and their utter dependence upon the divine summons to speak a prophetic word, and in their openness toward their future saviour.⁴⁹ With a few minor adjustments then, Klopfenstein accepts and affirms a version of Barth's theological exegesis. In spite of being subjected to rigorous criticism, Barth is in the end commended for his fruitful, theological reading of 1 Kings 13.

Klopfenstein's impact upon subsequent scholarship

Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 caused a stir among biblical scholars, renewing interest in this peculiar story and evoking a variety of responses.⁵⁰ Klopfenstein was the first to respond in print, and given the thorough and insightful nature of his analysis, it is hardly surprising that his essay had a lasting impact. However, it is unfortunate that the unfavourable aspects of Klopfenstein's analysis appear to have had a more enduring legacy among historical-critical scholars than his concluding positive endorsement. As a result, the primary elements of Barth's reading have been largely dismissed.⁵¹ Gunneweg could thus state about thirty-five years after its publication, that 'Barths Exegese fand in der alttestamentlichen Fachwissenschaft

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Barth, *CD* II.2, 393; cited in Klopfenstein, 641.

⁴⁹ Klopfenstein, 672.

⁵⁰ E.g., Alfred Jepsen, 'Gottesmann und Prophet: Anmerkungen zum Kapitel 1. Könige 13.' *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. HW Wolff; Munich: Kaiser, 1971), begins: 'Seit Karl Barth das Kapitel 1Könige 13 so ausführlich im Zusammenhang seiner Gotteslehre behandelt hat, ist es noch einige Male Gegenstand besonderer Besprechungen geworden.' (171)

⁵¹ See Bosworth's similar remarks in 'Revisiting', 373f.

auch kein positives Echo.⁵² Uriel Simon thought it ‘misleading’ to publish Barth’s exegesis independently of the *Dogmatics*, stating that his exposition ‘remains in the class of free theological discourse.’⁵³ Given the comprehensive nature of Klopfenstein’s critique, perhaps fewer scholars have seen the need to engage with Barth at length themselves.⁵⁴ Thus, Klopfenstein’s criticisms have been widely influential, and appear to have been adopted wholesale by those who share his interpretive and methodological priorities.

Similarly, the judgments of Martin Noth, a monumental biblical scholar of the twentieth century, have proven highly influential upon subsequent scholars. In his commentary on Kings (1968),⁵⁵ Noth cites Klopfenstein and then states categorically:

Wenn KBarth dann freilich in dem Handeln zwischen Gottesmann und Prophet das dialektische Spiel eines mehrfachen Rollenwechsels zwischen „dem Erwählten“ und „dem Verworfenen“ sieht, so geht er weit hinaus über das, was die Erzählung wirklich besagt oder besagen kann oder auch nur als hintergründigen Sinn zu verstehen gibt. Es entspricht überhaupt nicht der Intention der Erzählung, die Begriffe „Erwählung“ und „Verwerfung“ auf die beiden (anonymen) Haupthandelnden zu beziehen.⁵⁶

Noth adds that for God to proclaim his word through a prophet is not an act of election *per se*, since God is free to use whomever he wishes. Rather, following Klopfenstein, Noth asserts that the story concludes with *both* prophets recognising the rejection of Bethel and the election of Jerusalem.⁵⁷ Noth also understands the text in historical terms, as a rejection of Jeroboam’s cultus, and therefore rejects Barth’s

⁵² A.H.J. Gunneweg, “Die Prophetenlegende 1 Reg 13—Mißdeutung, Umdeutung, Bedeutung,” in *Prophet und Prophetenbuch: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 65. Geburtstag* (BZAW 185; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 75.

⁵³ Uriel Simon, ‘I Kings 13: A Prophetic Sign—Denial and Persistence’ *HUCA* 47 (1976), 82. Acknowledging (and echoing) Klopfenstein’s criticisms, Simon also states: ‘But since this theme [election] has no basis in the literal meaning of the biblical text, it cannot be derived therefrom without going back, for support, to symbolization and over-interpretation.’

⁵⁴ Barth’s exegesis is 17 pages in length; Klopfenstein’s critical evaluation is 24 pages.

⁵⁵ Noth, *1 Könige, 1* (BKAT 9; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968), 306-7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 306-7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 307.

identification of election and rejection as the central theme of the story.⁵⁸ A survey of more recent scholarship appears to indicate that Noth has proven especially influential on this point.⁵⁹

To summarise, both Klopfenstein and Noth perceive Barth to be reading the wider concerns of his Church Dogmatics into his exegesis of 1 Kings 13, especially his doctrine of election, and this criticism has had a significant impact on subsequent scholarship. Very few studies have recognised that Klopfenstein ultimately commends Barth for the theological accent of his exposition.⁶⁰ Van Winkle, as an exception, notes that ‘Klopfenstein accepts a modified form of Barth’s thesis.’⁶¹

In more recent years, commentators with literary-theological interests have responded more favourably to Barth’s reading of 1 Kings 13.⁶² We will attend to some of these works in the next chapter, where we survey the past seventy years of scholarship on 1 Kings 13, since the publication of *CD* II.2 (1942). In chapter five, we shall then return to the methodological divergence between Barth and Klopfenstein and reconsider some of the hermeneutical issues raised by the various approaches and interpretations outlined in chapter four. This will establish a hermeneutical basis for Bosworth’s reading in chapter six, which seeks to develop Barth’s notion of multiple reversals, and for my own interpretation in chapter seven, which seeks to apprehend the story with full, imaginative seriousness using a motif other than election.

⁵⁸ Like many other redaction critics who divide vv.1-10 from vv.11-32, Noth reads the story in two parts: the first part fits neatly with the concerns of 1 Kgs 12 and 14, within which Jeroboam’s kingdom is torn from him via the prophetic judgment of Ahijah; verses 11-32 are then viewed as a later addition to the narrative, expressing a distinct concern for the theme of prophetic conflict. On this division, see Bosworth, ‘Revisiting’, 365.

⁵⁹ Bosworth observes that Würthwein, ‘Die Erzählung vom Gottesmann aus Juda in Bethel: Zur Komposition von 1 Kön 13,’ in *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift für Karl Elliger zum 70. Geburtstag* (eds. H. Gese and H.P. Rügers; Kevelaar: Butzon & Bercker, 1973), 181-89; Simon, ‘A Prophetic Sign’ (1976); and Gross, ‘Lying Prophet’ (1979) each cite Noth in their (negative) evaluations of Barth’s exegesis. See Bosworth, ‘Revisiting’, 373-4.

⁶⁰ Simon De Vries, *I Kings*. WBC 12 (2nd ed., Nashville: Nelson, 2003), surely overstates his case when he writes: ‘Klopfenstein found no justification for numerous details in Barth’s exposition, and for the treatment as a whole’ (172).

⁶¹ D.W. Van Winkle, ‘1 Kings XIII: True and False Prophecy,’ *VT* 39/1 (1989), 32.

⁶² E.g., Lemke, ‘The Way of Obedience’; Walsh, *I Kings*; Bosworth, *Story*, ‘Revisiting’; Leithart, *I & 2 Kings*.

SEVENTY YEARS OF SCHOLARSHIP

Seventy years of scholarship

The past seventy years have seen significant shifts in the fields of Old Testament studies and hermeneutics. The hegemony of historical-critical analysis ended with the literary turn of the late 1970s, and methodological pluralism is now widely accepted.¹ In keeping with this, the following survey of interpretations not only covers a range of suggestions concerning the *Sache* of 1 Kings 13, but also a variety of interpretive methods. One significant gain from the increased interest in hermeneutics in recent years is a greater awareness of the impact an interpreter's choices have upon the meaning(s) found in any given text. The interpreter comes to the text with a particular question; the interpreter selects a method of inquiry appropriate to that question; the interpreter chooses to limit the inquiry in terms of literary context, reception history, and so on. In one sense, indeterminacy is inevitable. Nonetheless, I hope to show that there is yet much to be gained from exploring a range of interpretive possibilities whilst keeping our critical faculties attuned to the hermeneutical moves—and the choices—being made.²

Not all scholars show a willingness to engage with 1 Kings 13 in its received form, given its apparent lack of conceptual consistency and its seeming disregard for moral issues. Joseph Robinson, for instance, writes:

We must frankly say that the view of God's nature underlying this chapter is crude and insensitive, untouched by the spiritual awareness of the best of the Old Testament tradition. All this can be accounted for by understanding the origins of the narrative. It is Midrash, a story used in popular religious teaching.

¹ See, e.g., S. Porter and M. Malcolm (eds.), *The Future of Biblical Interpretation: Responsible Plurality in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013).

² Charles H. Cosgrove, 'Toward a Postmodern Hermeneutica Sacra: Guiding Considerations in Choosing between Competing Plausible Interpretations of Scripture' in *The Meanings We Choose: Hermeneutical Ethics, Indeterminacy and the Conflict of Interpretations* ed. Charles Cosgrove (London: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 39-61, similarly encourages greater interpretive awareness and hermeneutical scrutiny of 'extra-exegetical' interests, be they theological, moral, correlational or ecumenical.

Like all such literature it makes a single point with clarity and force but, in so doing, oversimplifies the issues and distorts truth.³

Although the majority of scholars agree on the importance of themes such as obedience and the efficacy of the divine word, Robinson is not alone in expressing doubts about the heuristic value of 1 Kings 13.⁴ Nor is he the first to defer to ‘the origins of the narrative’ for a solution.⁵ The seemingly amoral quality of the narrative has evoked numerous attempts to redeem it through recourse to hypothetical source material that is less troublesome.⁶ But this kind of approach does little to resolve the tensions as they stand in the received text.⁷ Therefore, given my own (theological and synchronic) line of enquiry, this chapter focuses on readings that endeavour to account for the narrative complexity of the entire story. My own convictions are contrary to Robinson’s view that 1 Kings 13 is ‘untouched by the spiritual awareness of the best of the Old Testament tradition’—but we will come to that in due course.

Current scholarly debate regarding the subject matter or ‘moral’ of 1 Kings 13 may be divided into four general categories.⁸ While Barth’s exegesis touches on each of these to some extent, his proposal resists any single category to the exclusion of the others. We shall consider these majority views in greater depth below by attending to a representative voice from each. Naturally, the categories could be defined in different terms to the ones put forward here, but in my view these

³ J. Robinson, *The First Book of Kings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972), 162. Robinson’s view concerning the ‘single point’ of 1 Kings 13 is ‘that coming to terms with Canaanite civilization, as they believed the northern kingdom had done, was spiritually dangerous.’

⁴ E.g. Hugo Gressmann writes, ‘Diese Legende ist, religiös und sittlich betrachtet, minderwertig.’ *Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israels (von Samuel bis Amos und Hosea)* in *SAT 2/1*, 2nd ed., (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1921), 247. Noth also remarks that the author has a penchant for the sensational. *I Könige*, 306. See also the views of Crenshaw and Van Seters below.

⁵ Thus the tendency among scholars to assume what Dozeman refers to as ‘the pre-Deuteronomic stage of the legend’. Dozeman, ‘The Way of the Man of God’, 379.

⁶ The same point is made by Ernest Blum, ‘Die Lüge des Propheten. Ein Lesevorschlag zu einer befremdlichen Geschichte (1 Reg 13),’ *Textgestalt und Komposition: exegetische Beiträge zu Tora und Vorderer Propheten*, herausgegeben von Wolfgang Oswald. (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2010 [orig. pub. 2000]), 319.

⁷ Gross, ‘Lying Prophet,’ 108-10, notes a variety of problems encountered by interpreters, not least the moral and religious verdicts that are often reached. He observes that Barth’s dialectic approach helpfully steers away from this moralising tendency.

⁸ James Mead, ‘Kings and Prophets, Donkeys and Lions: Dramatic Shape and Deuteronomistic Rhetoric in 1 Kings XIII’, *VT XLIX/2* (1999), 191-2, also adopts four categories to summarise scholarly approaches to 1 Kgs 13. There is some overlap between his categories and mine. Also see Knoppers’ summary of scholarly opinion regarding the ‘moral’ of 1 Kgs 13 in *Two Nations Under God*, vol. 2, 57-8.

represent a helpful cross-section of how scholars approach and understand 1 Kings 13. In addition, I have selected scholars whose disparate conclusions have been reached via different methods, including analyses that are psychological and sociological (Crenshaw), narratological and structural (Walsh), source- and redaction-critical (Van Seters), and political and allegorical (Boer). This serves our dual purpose of evaluating variant readings of 1 Kings 13 whilst also taking account of the relevant methodological and hermeneutical debates.

The Question of Genre

The determination of a text's subject matter naturally necessitates a discussion of genre, and it is hardly surprising that multiple views have been put forward regarding 1 Kings 13, including such terms as parable,⁹ prophetic legend(s),¹⁰ midrash,¹¹ prophetic authorization narrative,¹² and satire.¹³ As one might expect, correlations exist between certain terms and their associated methodologies so that 'prophetic legend' is a common answer to source-critical questions, whereas 'prophetic authorization narrative' or 'satire' constitute attempts to describe the literary purpose of the text—be that for an ancient or contemporary audience.

The adoption of a canonical approach that seeks to address both diachronic and synchronic questions may lead to a more complex conclusion regarding literary form. For instance, one might determine that the source material for 1 Kings 13 is best described as a prophetic legend, but that the narrative now appears to serve a parabolic function in its final form and context.¹⁴

⁹ Rofé, 'Classes in the Prophetic Stories: Didactic Legend and Parable' in *Studies on Prophecy* (VTSup 26; Leiden: Brill, 1974), 158; *The Prophetic Stories: The Narratives about the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible, Their Literary Types and History* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), 173; Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (London: New Haven, 1983), 304; fn. 49; Van Winkle, '1 Kings XIII', 42.

¹⁰ Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict*, 38; Gray, *I & II Kings*, 318; Eynikel, 'Prophecy and Fulfillment', 227-8; Gwilym H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*. NCBC, ed. Ronald E. Clements (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), vol.1, 261 ('two independent legends'); Burke O. Long, *I Kings with an Introduction to Historical Literature*. FOTL 9 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 150.

¹¹ Wellhausen, *Die kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 4th edn, 1963), 277; Klopfenstein, 639; Robinson, *The First Book of Kings*, 162; Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience', 303-4.

¹² DeVries, *I Kings*, 169; idem, *Prophet Against Prophet: The Role of the Micaiah Narrative (1 Kings 22) in the Development of Early Prophetic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 59-61.

¹³ David Marcus, 'Elements of Ridicule and Parody in the Story of the Lying Prophet from Bethel,' in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, June 22-29, 1993), 68.

¹⁴ This is essentially how Barth presents 1 Kings 13, in spite of the fact that his exegesis precedes Childs' formal delineation of a canonical approach. See Barth's opening comments in *CD II.2*, 393.

Variant Readings of 1 Kings 13

The first commonly held view regarding the *Sache* of 1 Kings 13 is that the story addresses *the discernment of true and false prophecy*. Barth touches on this theme when he distinguishes between the 'true' and 'original' prophets of Judah in contrast to the 'false' and 'professional' prophets of the north, though this is certainly not his primary emphasis.¹⁵ Advocates of this view include:

- James Crenshaw: 'this passage deals the death knell to every attempt to specify absolute criteria by which to differentiate the true from the false prophet'¹⁶
- Thomas Dozeman: 'Our thesis is that the unifying theme of the pre-deuteronomistic legend is true and false prophecy.'¹⁷
- Simon DeVries: 'this writer has argued that the major concern is for the authority, and hence authenticity, of the Judahite man of God.'¹⁸
- D.W. Van Winkle: '1 Kgs xiii is a parable which among other things advances a criterion for discerning the message of a prophet. This criterion is the conformity of the message to the commandment of Yahweh.'¹⁹
- Paul House: 'Basically, 1 Kings 13 continues the book's emphases on proper worship, the prophetic word, and the slow demise of the covenant people. It also begins to analyze the difference between true and false prophecy.'²⁰
- Roy Heller: 'The question which 1 Kgs 3 asks is "How can we know the word that YHWH has spoken?"'²¹

A second suggestion regarding the 'moral of the story' in 1 Kings 13—and the most common in contemporary scholarship—has to do with *the efficacious word of God*. Such a reading of 1 Kings 13 perceives God's word itself to be the driving force within the strange world of the narrative; the prophets remain secondary characters, as it were. Barth gives due emphasis to this theme in his conclusion: 'It may well be

¹⁵ Barth, *CD* II.2, 406f.

¹⁶ Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict*, 47.

¹⁷ Thomas B. Dozeman, 'The Way of the Man of God from Judah', 379.

¹⁸ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 169. De Vries does not explicitly discuss various criteria for prophetic discernment, but he classes the narrative as a 'prophetic authorisation narrative', emphasising that the preacher-prophet's radical obedience is the ultimate mark of authentic revelation.

¹⁹ Van Winkle, '1 Kings XIII', 42. Cf. idem, '1 Kings XII 25-XIII 34: Jeroboam's Cultic Innovations and the Man of God from Judah,' *VT* 46/1 (1996), 101-14.

²⁰ Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, NAC Vol. 8 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 188-9.

²¹ Roy Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy: The Character of Samuel and the Deuteronomistic Evaluation of Prophecy* (LHBOTS 440; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 37.

said that this is in fact the beginning and end, the sum and substance of 1 K. 13—that the Word of God endures through every human standing and falling . . .²² Scholars advocating this view are divided between those who accent the divine word’s innate propensity to achieve its purpose, and those who stress the requirement of obedience to such a word. Scholars who emphasise the divine word’s innate efficacy include the following:

- Terence Fretheim: ‘the story shows the *tenacity* of the word of God to work in and through deceptions, disobedience, and death—even of prophets—to accomplish God’s purposes.’²³
- Brevard Childs: ‘The emphasis falls completely on the objective nature of the word of God. . . The story has to do with the fulfilment of God’s word of judgment which will not tolerate any softening or compromise.’²⁴
- Uriel Simon: ‘From beginning to end, the story dwells on a single theme—the fulfilment of the word of the Lord in its due time, having transcended the weakness of its bearer and converted its violators into its confirmants.’²⁵
- Burke O. Long: ‘The divine word will win out, whatever the wayward actions of men, even prophets, may be!’²⁶
- Richard D. Nelson: ‘To avoid being swamped by this complexity, the reader must search out and stick with the main point of chapter 13, as set forth in the final resolution of the story (v. 32): the word against Bethel will come true. . . This is a story about the word’s power to get itself done.’²⁷
- Gary Knoppers: ‘If there is an overarching theme in 1 Kings 13 . . . it is the triumph of YHWH’s word over both its subjects and adversaries.’²⁸
- Iain W. Provan: ‘True prophecy will bring forth the judgment it promises; even prophets cannot escape if they are disobedient. And if prophets cannot escape, neither can kings.’²⁹

²² Barth, *CD* II.2, 410.

²³ Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1999), 81 (emphasis original).

²⁴ Brevard Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 143.

²⁵ Simon, ‘1 Kings 13: A Prophetic Sign’, 116.

²⁶ Burke Long, *1 Kings*, 148.

²⁷ Richard D. Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1987), 83, 89.

²⁸ Knoppers, *Two Nations*, Vol. 2 (1994), 58. Knoppers acknowledges an indebtedness to Simon (1976) and Long (1984) on this point.

²⁹ Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 115.

Mordechai Cogan: 'the lesson of 1 Kgs 13: the word of YHWH is trustworthy... Yet the word of YHWH... is self-fulfilling; even centuries later, it finds its object.'³⁰

Among those who stress the importance of *obedience* to the word of the LORD are:

Jerome T. Walsh: 'Since, as we shall see, both the prophet and the man of God are emblems of larger realities, and since the thrust of the tale is the inexorability of the divine word, the narrator centers our attention on the issues of obedience and disobedience to the word.'³¹

James Montgomery: 'The story has its moral in the theme of the disobedient prophet; cf. the Balaam story and that of Jonah.'³²

Werner Lemke: 'this story revolves around two dominant motifs: a polemic against the cultic establishment of Jeroboam [vv 1-10] and a discursive narrative about the importance of obedience to the divine word [vv 11-32].'³³

Gene Rice: 'There is no more ringing affirmation in the Bible of the importance of obedience, particularly in the "little things," than in the tragic fate of the man of God from Judah.'³⁴

Robert Culley: 'The punishment sequence is clear. Disobey Yahweh, it implies, and the consequences will be disastrous.'³⁵

Donald Wiseman: 'the story... illustrate[s] the historian's main argument that judgment will inevitably befall those who defy God's word.'³⁶

Choon-Leong Seow: 'The story of the man of God is... an illustration of what might happen when one does not obey the word of the Lord.'³⁷

Lissa Wray Beal: 'The narrator reveals the deception so the audience immediately knows the man of God faces an invitation to disobedience, which is

³⁰ Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 375.

³¹ Walsh, *1 Kings*, 185. Walsh's commentary reflects this view more than his article, 'Contexts'. Walsh considers obedience to God's word as a central theme, but he also highlights the parallels between the prophet/man of God and Israel/Judah; see the fourth category below.

³² James A. Montgomery [ed. Henry Snyder Gehman], *The Books of Kings*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), 261.

³³ Werner E. Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience', 306. Lemke 'cannot agree with those who see only one major theological theme in this story. This can only be done by subordinating drastically the one in favor of the other.' 320, fn. 32. I have therefore included him as a proponent of views two *and* three.

³⁴ Rice, *1 Kings*, 115.

³⁵ Robert Culley, *Themes and Variations: A Study of Action in Biblical Narrative* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 89.

³⁶ Donald J. Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings*, Tyndale OT Commentaries (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 146.

³⁷ Choon-Leong Seow, *The First and Second Books of Kings*, NIB 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 105.

- the point of the whole narrative... Obedience to YHWH's word is paramount, regardless of alternative versions others offer.'³⁸
- Walter Gross: 'The author chose this structure and these categories and used them effectively to realize his didactic purpose, the inculcation of the obligation of obedience to YHWH's word.'³⁹
- James Mead: 'the Deuteronomistic Historians wanted to ensure that readers would have no confusion over the inviolability of Yahweh's word.'⁴⁰
- Steven McKenzie: 'the story in 1 Kgs 13:11-32a likely derives from Northern prophetic legends... It may have served as instruction for young prophets regarding obedience to the divine word'⁴¹

A third interpretation sees condemnation of Bethel as the main thrust of the story. Again, this perspective is present in Barth's characterisation of Jeroboam and false prophecy in connection with the North:

But confession is shown to be characteristic of the south, and profession of the north, and the light naturally falls upon the former, and the shadow upon the latter. The shadow which lies upon the professional *Nabi*-ism is... representative of the Israelite form of the Canaanite vitalism, the religion of blood and soil, which, according to the will of the God of Sinai and Jerusalem, is the very opposite of the life demanded of his people. It is thus no accident that this prophetic order has to the northern kingdom... the affinity which is proper to it in the story.⁴²

Numerous scholars are convinced that this *anti-North polemic* is the main thrust of 1 Kings 13:

- Gwilym Jones: 'The present deuteronomistic version has transformed a prophetic aetiological narrative, with all its legendary accretions, into a true expression of the deuteronomistic view that Bethel was cursed and could only provide a grave for an unfaithful Judean prophet.'⁴³

³⁸ Lissa Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, Apollos OT Commentary 9 (Nottingham: Apollos, 2014), 193.

³⁹ Gross, 'Lying Prophet,' 125.

⁴⁰ Mead, 'Kings and Prophets', 205.

⁴¹ Stephen L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History* (VTSup 42; Leiden, 1991), says this call to obedience is aimed especially at young prophets (55).

⁴² Barth, *CD* II.2, 400.

⁴³ G. Jones, *1 & 2 Kings*, 262.

- Marvin Sweeney: 'The narrative . . . clearly serves the agenda of the DtrH, insofar as it condemns Jeroboam, the altar at Beth El, and even the city itself as the home of a lying prophet.'⁴⁴
- Walter Brueggemann: 'We may divide the narrative into five distinct units; all of them, however, seem fully focused on the theme of judgment against Bethel.'⁴⁵
- John Van Seters: 'the story is a vilification of the Bethel temple, which was still in use for some time in the exilic and post-exilic periods, and the Samaritan community.'⁴⁶
- Werner Lemke: 'this story revolves around two dominant motifs: a polemic against the cultic establishment of Jeroboam [vv 1-10] and a discursive narrative about the importance of obedience to the divine word [vv 11-32].'⁴⁷
- Martin Noth: 'Zu der 'Verwerfung' von Bethel (und der 'Erwählung' von Jerusalem) bekennen sich im Verlauf der bewegten Geschichte die beiden Haupthandelnden, Gottesmann und Prophet.'⁴⁸

The fourth perspective, directly derivative of Barth's exegesis, takes the view that this critical chapter functions in the books of Kings as an allegory or analogy, either for the political division of the kingdom or drawing parallels between Jeroboam and the man of God. These two scholars—each of whom acknowledges an indebtedness to Barth—note the political allegory between the prophets and the nations they represent:

- Roland Boer: '1 Kings 13 may then be described as an imaginary resolution to the contradictory situation of a North and South in the people of Israel.'⁴⁹
- David Bosworth: 'This prophetic story acts as a *mise-en-abyme* that emphasizes the theme of the relationship between Judah and Israel.'⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Marvin Sweeney, *I and II Kings*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 179.

⁴⁵ Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, 167.

⁴⁶ Van Seters, 'On Reading', 233. On Van Seters' reading, see below.

⁴⁷ Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience', 306. See fn. 33 above.

⁴⁸ M. Noth, *Könige I* (BKAT 9/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968), 307. Noth uses the terms 'election' and 'rejection' here because he is responding to Barth's analysis.

⁴⁹ Roland Boer, 'National Allegory in the Hebrew Bible', *JSOT* 74 (1997), 110. It is difficult to find a representative quote from Boer's work on 1 Kings 13 that encapsulates his view, in part because he is very self-aware about what he brings to the task of interpretation, and acknowledges repeatedly that other readings are also viable. His interpretation is discussed in further detail below.

⁵⁰ David Bosworth, *Story*, 156. See below for a definition of *mise-en-abyme* and the development of Bosworth's thesis.

The following scholars place the analogical accent on the linkage between the man of God and Jeroboam:

- Peter Leithart: 'The man of God's story offers a lesson for Jeroboam and also for all other kings of the north.'⁵¹
- Jesse Long: 'The events are parabolic, a lesson for Jeroboam, for Israel and Judah, and for an exilic audience.'⁵²
- Keith Bodner: 'The author uses the allegory as a means of enlisting the reader to ponder Jeroboam's career path, as the major ideological lineaments of his story are refracted through the steps of the man of God.'⁵³
- James Mead: 'The literary elements in the four scenes of 1 Kings xiii serve to highlight what is central for the narrator, namely the way in which the man of God becomes an example of the king himself'⁵⁴
- Robert Cohn: 'I see this tale as a kind of parable, a story within a story, that sets into relief the theological dynamics of the larger narrative... If the man of God, who is tricked into disobedience, pays the consequences, how much more so should Jeroboam who failed to walk in God's ways.'⁵⁵

Finally, a handful of scholars do not easily fit any of the categories listed here. David Marcus interprets the story as 'a satire representing a sardonic comment on the curious ways and petty concerns of some prophets'⁵⁶ while Alexander Rofé treats it as an anti-angelological parable whose moral stresses 'the fundamental difference between the prophet [one who negates the existence of heavenly angels] and other people'⁵⁷—which perhaps has affinities with the first category (prophetic discernment). A recent essay by Ellen Davis also resists categorisation; rather, she stresses four or five practical points of application for ministry, in keeping with the

⁵¹ Peter Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 100. Leithart's theological commentary leans on the insights of Barth's analysis.

⁵² Jesse C. Long, Jr., *1 & 2 Kings, College Press NIV Commentary* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2002), 177.

⁵³ Keith Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 117.

⁵⁴ Mead, 'Kings and Prophets', 197.

⁵⁵ Robert L. Cohn, 'Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative', *ZAW* 97 (1985), 33-34.

⁵⁶ David Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible* (Scholars Press: Atlanta, 1995), 73.

⁵⁷ Alexander Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories: the narratives about the prophets in the Hebrew Bible, their literary types and history* (trans. D. Levy; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 180-1.

series title, *Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church*.⁵⁸ Finally, in a psychological analysis of the story that focuses on the hidden motives and intentions of characters, Stuart Lasine concludes: 'The fact that Yahweh uses the lying prophet to relay his message of doom to the victim... should be construed as illustrating who is most likely to survive in this dangerous and deceptive story-world.'⁵⁹ Lasine's treatment is thought-provoking in its exploration of the many gaps in the narrative, though ultimately unhelpful for understanding 1 Kings 13 within its broader literary and canonical context.

Let us turn now to each of these themes in turn. First, the theme of prophetic discernment.

Discernment of True and False Prophecy: James Crenshaw (1971)

In his 1971 monograph entitled, *Prophetic Conflict*,⁶⁰ James Crenshaw examines the inherent difficulties in the nature of biblical prophecy that led to its decline and ultimately its demise. That Crenshaw's work has been widely cited and recently republished is testament to its continuing significance in biblical scholarship.

The prophetic legend, or midrash, found in 1 Kings 13 is a critical text for the articulation of Crenshaw's thesis, since it depicts the 'failure of all criteria for distinguishing the true from false prophet.'⁶¹ He stresses the importance of this chapter without reservation: 'The significance of 1 Kings 13 for a study of false prophecy has hitherto been overlooked as the decisive key to the understanding of prophetic aberrance.'⁶²

Crenshaw's analysis of the phenomenon of prophecy in the Old Testament begins with a psychological consideration of prophetic experience. He thereby links the prophetic conflict that arose between one prophet and another, or between a

⁵⁸ Ellen F. Davis, *Biblical Prophecy: Perspective for Christian Theology, Discipleship, and Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 179-84.

⁵⁹ Stuart Lasine, *Weighing Hearts: Character, Judgment, And The Ethics Of Reading The Bible* (The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies; 2012), 114.

⁶⁰ Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict*, 38. This monograph was republished by SBL in 2007, an indication of its long-standing influence.

⁶¹ Ibid, 38. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), is more optimistic, though for him the moral of the story is directed at prophets: 'The object of the story was to give this lesson: when a revelation that you have received is contradicted by the revelation of another prophet, you have to obey the divine voice that you have heard yourself. The revelation of another may be untrustworthy. It is not prudent to rely on it.' (64)

⁶² Crenshaw, *Conflict*, 46.

prophet and his or her community, with 'self-interrogation, a situation far more agonising than all the other battles. This inner struggle forced the prophet to ask whether the voice he "heard" was not the sound of thunder, the vision of a nightmare.'⁶³ From this perspective, 'prophetic conflict is inevitable, growing out of the nature of prophecy itself'⁶⁴ and, according to Crenshaw, it is near impossible to resolve, for whether one focuses on the man⁶⁵ or the message,⁶⁶ none of the criteria mentioned in various Old Testament texts is ultimately able to discern true from false prophecy.⁶⁷

He begins his inquiry by surveying a range of biblical prophecies pertaining to prophetic conflict in order to place the phenomenon of false prophecy in perspective. At the same time, he reconstructs the *vox populi* of the eighth century, which is apparently 'crucial to the understanding of false prophecy,'⁶⁸ and offers a sympathetic view of the 'positive aspects... of false prophets [and] of popular religion.'⁶⁹ Once it has been recognised that the religion of the people and of so-called false prophets was not unambiguously corrupt but in fact contained kernels of truth, Crenshaw posits that a re-examination of their theology may be illuminating for our grasp of what lay behind prophetic conflict.⁷⁰ However, his emphasis on the ecstatic and existential nature of prophecy in his survey of studies relating to prophetic discernment poses a methodological problem in that biblical

⁶³ Ibid, 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ I.e. cultic/royal office vs charismatic; im/moral conduct; commission (council of the LORD; cf. Jer 23). *Conflict*, 56-60.

⁶⁶ I.e. fulfilment or non-fulfilment; promise of weal or woe; revelatory form (i.e. ecstasy, dream, etc); allegiance to Baal or Yahweh. *Conflict*, 49-56.

⁶⁷ But see the valid criticism of Crenshaw in Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment*. Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16: 'the question of whether they [i.e. the criteria] might be combined synthetically in such a way that the whole might be greater than the sum of its parts is not addressed.'

⁶⁸ Ibid, 23.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 24; also 35f. The selected verses Crenshaw interprets as representational of 'the popular mind' seem questionable (Crenshaw, 25-34). Moreover, as they stand, surely the prophetic books suggest that Israel ultimately accepted and trusted the judgment of the Deuteronomist (that they Israel was deserving of judgment in exile). In any case, Israel's canonical record—the Hebrew Bible's own recounting of these events—relates the voice of Dtr justifying God's actions in punishing Israel, the prophets spelling out the implications to Israel (both in terms of immediate judgment and future hope), and the post-exilic community taking those prophetic warnings very seriously.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 38.

exegesis is used to support a sociological theory about ancient Israel's deteriorating attitude towards prophecy. The Old Testament record consistently affirms that certain men and women were authenticated by God to speak his words during particular periods of Israel's history—quite in spite of their reception in Israel! Therefore, whether Crenshaw is right or not in saying that 'the impact of prophecy upon Israelite society was negligible,'⁷¹ the idea that prophecy had to authenticate itself by a means acceptable to the masses runs contrary to the canonical witness of Scripture. Because of this, Crenshaw's thesis and his methodology do not seem as compatible as they might be, and it remains unclear whether the central issue that Crenshaw seeks to delineate and address is literary / canonical or historical / sociological in nature.

In any case, it is against this general background that Crenshaw turns to a detailed consideration of 1 Kings 13, a text which depicts 'the Achilles-heel of ancient prophecy, namely the absence of any validation for a prophetic word.'⁷² Crenshaw begins with an acknowledgement and brief summary of Barth's exegesis, which, in spite of its apparent brilliance, is 'only a pointer to the way, as Klopfenstein rightly perceives, for the narrative is not really concerned with election and rejection.'⁷³ Rather, because of the Bethel prophet's claim in verse 18—'I also am a prophet as you are'—Crenshaw understands the conflicting oracles between the two anonymous prophets as a matter for prophetic discernment. The man of God says he is under divine orders *not* to eat or drink, but the Bethel prophet tells him, allegedly on angelic authority, that he *may* eat and drink. 1 Kings 13 thus 'provides an example of two mutually exclusive words claiming divine origin . . . as well as one where no valid criterion between true and false prophecy exists.'⁷⁴ Crenshaw therefore makes this assertion: 'At the outset it must be declared that this passage deals the death knell to every attempt to specify absolute criteria by which to differentiate the true from the false prophet, for the ultimate criterion to which

⁷¹ Ibid, 103.

⁷² Ibid, 38.

⁷³ Ibid, 41. Crenshaw's brief summary of Barth's two double-pictures on p. 40 is not entirely accurate. Moreover, he misrepresents Klopfenstein, for as we noted above, Klopfenstein ultimately concurs with Barth that true and false prophecy are presented in the OT against the theological background of election and rejection. In fact, Klopfenstein concludes his essay by reformulating his own conclusions in precisely these terms. Klopfenstein, 671-2.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 48.

contemporary scholarship appeals (the charismatic intuition of a true prophet) fails in this instance.⁷⁵ A brief analysis of a comparable text will enable us to assess the validity of Crenshaw's claim.

As a story containing 'two mutually exclusive words claiming divine origin', the narrative lends itself to comparison with the story of Micaiah ben Imlah. Indeed, numerous commentators, including Crenshaw, make reference to 1 Kings 22.⁷⁶ However, there is a decisive difference between the two narratives, since the plot in 1 Kings 22 is explicitly driven by the issue of discernment; i.e. which prophet(s) can be trusted?

Kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat, of the northern and southern kingdoms, together seek a reliable word from the LORD regarding an imminent battle. Ahab's 450 prophets are saying 'Go!', but Jehoshaphat rightly suspects their authenticity and asks for a second opinion. At this point Micaiah is summoned to the scene, although his reputation precedes him as one who 'never prophesies anything good... but only bad'—which is, of course, a strong indication that he is authentic. The messenger who summons Micaiah to the royal court pleads with him to speak **כֹּחַ** and to make his prophetic word like that of the others. The report of this seemingly minor detail provides a second subtle indication to the reader concerning which prophet is true and which are false. Then, when urged to tell the truth, Micaiah recounts a troubling heavenly vision which reveals that Ahab's 450 'yes men' are under the influence of a lying spirit. Zedekiah, representing the majority, does not take this news well. He probes Micaiah with a question that goes to the heart of the issue: 'Which way did the spirit of the LORD go when he went from me to speak to you?' (1 Kgs 22.24) In other words, What makes you any different from the rest of us? Are you not inspired by the same spirit? Micaiah responds to Zedekiah with confidence: 'You will see...' [וְהִנֵּה רֹאֵהוּ] (v 25). His retort to King Ahab then brings the theology of the Deuteronomist to the fore: 'If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me' (v 28b; cf. Deut 18.22). The rest of the story makes the basic point that Ahab dies in battle, just as Micaiah prophesied, in spite of attempts to disguise himself. From beginning to end, 1 Kings 22 is presented as a story about prophetic discernment, and notably one in which a range of criteria provide critical clues for resolving the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Crenshaw, *Conflict*, *passim*, esp. 83-5. Also Lasine, *Weighing Hearts*, 93f.; Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 98; Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 114; Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 137; etc.

matter: the narrator's report; the morality (i.e. integrity) of the prophet; standing in the council of the LORD (cf. Jer 22.23); and the Deuteronomic notion of fulfilment.

While Crenshaw is right to notice a basic commonality between these episodes, the differences between 1 Kings 13 and 22 are considerable when one bears in mind that prophetic *conflict* and prophetic *discernment* are distinct issues. In my judgment, 1 Kings 13 contains neither and 1 Kings 22 contains both.

First, regarding *prophetic conflict*, the contradictory words from the Judean man of God and the old Bethel prophet in 1 Kings 13 are not *prophecies*, but rather antithetical claims about what God has prohibited the man of God from doing while he is visiting Bethel. The threefold commandment is for the man of God alone (and was apparently spoken directly to him); it hardly compares to the prophetic utterance that is made against Jeroboam's altar. And while the Bethelite claims to have received contrary instructions from an angelic messenger, his words do not constitute a prophetic oracle, either—especially since they are contrived! That the two anonymous figures are prophets does not mean that their disagreement constitutes a contest for prophetic authenticity. The story indeed contains 'two mutually exclusive words claiming divine origin,' as Crenshaw perceives, but the conflict is over God's commandment to an individual, not the prophecy spoken in Bethel. In addition, 1 Kings 13 hardly reflects a mood of dissent. There is deception, to be sure, but the stolid manner in which it occurs, as they are sitting together at a shared table, is yet another odd feature of the story. The cordial interaction between the anonymous prophets in 1 Kings 13 is a far cry from the prophetic conflict between Micaiah and the multitude in 1 Kings 22, which moves quickly to violence (cf. also Jer 28.10).

Second, regarding *prophetic discernment*, the context of the royal court in 1 Kings 22 makes it obvious that Micaiah and Ahab's 400 prophets have an audience for whom the outcome of their prophetic conflict will mean the difference between life and death. In 1 Kings 13, however, no one is reported to be looking on when the Bethel prophet intercepts the Judean under 'the oak' to challenge the threefold prohibition. Even if the Bethelite's purpose in inviting the Judean home is to test his prophetic authenticity (a point to which we shall return), what is at stake in their conflicting claims has no bearing on an immediate audience, but only on the man of God, who must choose whether to stay true to the original command or to believe

that it has been rescinded.⁷⁷ To the reader or hearer of the story the issue is still less complicated, for the narrator cups his hand toward the audience and speaks those two little words at the end of verse 18—לֹא—כִּי־שָׁמַעְתִּי—that resolve the entire matter in black and white terms. In 1 Kings 13, the question of truth versus falsehood is resolved almost immediately using one of the most valid criteria known to Bible readers, though it is not one that is covered in Crenshaw's survey; namely, the evaluative judgment of the omniscient narrator.⁷⁸ Clearly, then, the issue of discernment is not in focus. Within the world of the text, the matter is perfectly straightforward: one prophet lies and the other is duped. The narrative says nothing about the man of God's deliberation over whether or not to trust his older colleague. He questions neither the older prophet's motives nor whether Yahweh has, in fact, changed his mind (as per 1 Kgs 21.29). The man of God simply trusts and is led astray as a necessary development in the plot. At best, as Robert R. Wilson has pointed out, '[i]f the issue lying behind the episode is the question of false prophecy, then the message of the story was pertinent only to an audience of prophets, not to an audience of ordinary people.'⁷⁹

Although 1 Kings 13 reports contradictory claims from two prophets, we may also affirm that (a) their conflicting words are not prophetic oracles, and (b) no deliberation is given in the text to discern between their claims. Since 1 Kings 13 is neither about prophetic conflict nor prophetic discernment, then, Crenshaw's assertion 'that this passage deals the death knell to every attempt to specify absolute criteria by which to differentiate the true from the false prophet'⁸⁰ does not hold up.

⁷⁷ Moberly makes this point in connection with Jeremiah 28, mentioning Amos 7.10-17 and 1 Kings 13 as further examples: 'If a narrative of prophetic conflict were supposed to be about discernment, then a prime question should be: Who is supposed to be doing the discerning? The most natural candidates would presumably be third-party hearers/onlookers within the story who have to decide which of the prophets to believe.' Moberly, *Prophecy*, 105.

⁷⁸ Admittedly, Crenshaw's monograph was published just as the literary turn was taking place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, so it is perhaps understandable that his reading of 1 Kings 13 does not include a discussion of narratological devices. Since that time, however, it has been a matter of general consensus among narrative critics that the omniscient narrator's judgments represent the divine point of view. See, e.g., Alter, *Art*, 158; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 84f.; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*. (JSOTSup, 70; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 17f.; Jerome Walsh, *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 44-5. On the authoritative voice of the narrator in 1 Kgs 22, see my *Sharing God's Passion: Prophetic Spirituality* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012), 105-17, esp. 111-3.

⁷⁹ Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 191; fn.88. Similarly, McKenzie, *Trouble*, also notes that the story 'may have served as instruction for young prophets' (55).

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 47-8.

His argument turns out to be a circular one; 1 Kings 13 only appears to deny the existence of a valid criterion for prophetic discernment because of the prior assumption that it addresses such matters in the first place.⁸¹ But for reasons given above, it seems more likely that 1 Kings 13 leaves the issue of a valid criterion unresolved simply because prophetic discernment is not in its purview. 1 Kings 13 does not treat the same subject as 1 Kings 22, where the issue of discernment is pivotal to the story's outcome and meaning.

Nonetheless, because Crenshaw considers the story to be about discernment, he outlines the main criteria for validating a prophetic message (or man) in order to show that all these are inadequate, thereby affirming 'that the attempt to distinguish true from false prophecy in ancient Israel must be abandoned'.⁸² Crenshaw also draws the related conclusion that 'a degree of fluidity between the two [i.e. true and false] is inevitable', and that this assertion 'provides the stance from which K. Barth views 1 Kings 13.'⁸³ But Crenshaw's observation about fluidity between true and false prophecy, regardless of whether it is itself valid, ought not be associated with Barth's position. While Barth indeed argues that the two prophets must be understood together, he never speaks in terms of 'fluidity,' but rather of antithetical roles being *exchanged*—and these should not be confused!

Crenshaw's reading of 1 Kings 13 critically informs his overarching argument about the dwindling role of prophecy in ancient Israel. Prophecy went into decline in ancient Israel as a consequence of the exile, which for obvious reasons raised questions about God's justice, and in turn, this theological crisis paved the way for prophecy's partial displacement by wisdom and apocalyptic.⁸⁴ As Crenshaw understands 1 Kings 13, this prophetic legend supports his theory concerning the emergence of the phenomenon of false prophecy since it highlights the fine line

⁸¹ Roy Heller's monograph, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy* (2006), about the Deuteronomist's evaluation of prophecy contains a similar argument. Heller insists that 1 Kings has as its 'primary subject the nature of prophecy as an intermediary institution and the vexing question of the verifiability of true prophecy,' but in the end concedes that the story has nothing to offer on this point. He concludes: 'The question which 1 Kgs 13 asks is "How can we know the word that YHWH has spoken?" The Deuteronomists, having again provoked the reader to ask this question, refuse to provide an answer.' Heller, 37. While it is possible that the Deuteronomists posed a question that they then refused to answer, it seems more straightforward to ask whether the text serves other purposes altogether.

⁸² Crenshaw, *Conflict*, 61.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

between true and false prophecy and demonstrates the difficulty, or impossibility, of discerning between them. Over time, as one prophetic word contradicted another, tensions arose within prophetic circles due to inherent difficulties in receiving God's mysterious word and articulating it effectively. These difficulties left prophets exposed to life-and-death situations on a regular basis, and since no criterion of validation functioned within the moment of decision (this was not helped by prophecies that took centuries to be fulfilled, as in the cases of 1 Kgs 13 or Jer), the public eventually turned away from prophecy and toward wisdom and apocalyptic for spiritual direction.

The corollary of this was a shift from truth to falsehood in the prophet, undergirded by five causes, according to Crenshaw: the desire for success; compliance with the king; identification with popular theology; the extant power of past traditions; and the emergence of individualism.⁸⁵ These make up 'the human factor' in explaining false prophecy. But equally, Crenshaw avers, 'the dark side of God, the "demonic", must be taken into consideration, for the ultimate source of false prophecy is God himself!'⁸⁶ Referring again to the Micaiah narrative in 1 Kings 22, Crenshaw feels 'forced to conclude that prophetic tension cannot be explained solely in anthropological categories, for the likelihood of conflict within biblical prophecy was enhanced by the belief that Yahweh made use of men against their will or knowledge to accomplish his intentions, indeed on occasion sent deceptive visions to further the divine purpose for Israel.'⁸⁷ In relation to this, since the fraudulent Bethel prophet in 1 Kings 13 goes on to receive a genuine prophetic word by divine inspiration, Crenshaw states conclusively that '1 Kings 13 points to the divine causality as the explanation of the phenomenon known as false prophecy.'⁸⁸

My main objection to Crenshaw's reading of these texts is that he seeks to draw isolated points from prophetic narratives and oracles without considering how those details make sense within the wider world of the text. This is particularly evident in his reading of 1 Kings 13, which is at the heart of many, if not all, of the

⁸⁵ Ibid, 65-77.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 77.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 110. It is somewhat misleading to call Micaiah's vision 'deceptive' as Crenshaw does here. The vision itself is not 'deceptive', but rather contains evidence of a conspiracy against Ahab that involves deceit. The difference is quite significant.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 48.

book's theses. Crenshaw does not seek to understand the story in full, but rather draws on a few select details: the contrary words between two prophetic figures regarding the tripartite command; the phrase, 'I am a prophet as you are'; and the genuine word that comes to the false Bethelite. Like a literary surgeon, Crenshaw incises the text to extract certain 'points' from 1 Kings 13 that serve his purposes in a way that leaves the rest of the narrative quite lifeless. Moreover, he gives no consideration as to why this prophetic legend has been inserted at this point in the book of Kings (and the DH) and what significance this might have for interpretive questions. As narrative critics would be quick to point out, a story may not *have* a point; rather, a story, rightly understood, *is* the point, and treatments of texts that focus only upon those elements that are deemed useful for some other project may be considered suspect for good reason. At best, such readings fail to do justice to the text's integrity; at worst, they serve an alternative agenda as proof-texts.

The Efficacious Word of God: Jerome T. Walsh (1989, 1996)

Among scholars, the most popular construal of the message of 1 Kings 13 places the efficacious word of the LORD at the heart of the narrative. Whatever Jeroboam intends with his cultus, and however we interpret the details of the encounter between the prophets, it is the word of the LORD itself that emerges as the true hero of the story. Along such lines, the interpretive endeavours of Jerome Walsh are of particular interest for the present work, not just because he has written an important article on 1 Kings 13 and is responsible for an acclaimed commentary on 1 Kings, but also because of his interests in hermeneutical issues.

Walsh has written three essays examining issues of methodology and interpretation, using texts from Kings as case studies. In them, he poses interesting questions about the relationship between method and meaning, as well as the interpreter's role in determining these. He asks, for instance, 'What are the factors in the methods themselves that lead to such variety? Does each method retrieve only *part* of a text's meaning? Or does each method retrieve a more or less independent *whole* meaning that may or may not be compatible with other readings?'⁸⁹ 'The Contexts of 1 Kings XIII' (1989) was the first of these studies to be published. Here

⁸⁹ Walsh, 'Methods and Meanings: Multiple Studies of 1 Kings 21', *JBL* 111/2 (1992), 193 (original emphasis).

we examine this essay together with insights on 1 Kings 13 from his 1996 commentary on Kings.

'The Contexts of I Kings XIII' (1989)

Walsh begins his essay with the observation that among a reader's first interpretive decisions is that of choosing among 'different unifying horizons, whether those horizons be source documents, redactional levels, or narrative or poetic units.'⁹⁰ From the outset, the reader is brought to the fore in the interpretive process. Regarding his own approach to 1 Kings 13, Walsh is equally clear about hermeneutical decisions that undergird his study:

This essay is not historical, attempting to reconstruct events underlying our texts, nor is it historical-critical, in the sense of seeking to separate sources and redactional levels, even though some of its questions inhabit terrain usually claimed by redaction criticism. It is essentially a literary inquiry, and it will confine itself to the final form of the text... This essay will examine 1 Kgs xiii at three different contextual levels: as two self-contained narratives, as a component of the story of Jeroboam, and as an element in the Deuteronomistic History of the two kingdoms.⁹¹

From this foundation, Walsh outlines different elements that come to the fore when 1 Kings 13 is read in each of the three contexts.

First, as a self-contained narrative, '1 Kgs xiii falls clearly into three sections': vv. 1-10; vv.11-32; and vv.33-34.⁹² In the first two sub-sections, Walsh detects parallelism and interprets the text accordingly; 'The symmetrical structures underlying the two narratives in 1 Kgs xiii provide an entrée to themes and motifs central to the stories.'⁹³ The dominant concern of vv 1-10 is the rejection of the Bethel cult, which is stressed through the opposition of the man of God from the south and the Israelite king.⁹⁴ Then, in vv 11-32, the dominant concern is the reversal of fates between the two anonymous prophets: the Judean man of God 'moves from obedience through unwitting disobedience to death' while the Bethel prophet moves 'from narrow

⁹⁰ Walsh, 'Contexts', 355.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, 356.

⁹³ Ibid. 361.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 357.

patriotism through sacrilege to true prophetic mission'.⁹⁵ Walsh says almost nothing about the final two verses (33-34), save that they require 'the larger context of Jeroboam's cultic innovations to be understood.'⁹⁶

The second context is the Jeroboam narratives (i.e. 1 Kgs 11-14), within which Jeroboam's cultic innovations (1 Kgs 12.26-31) are perceived to be pivotal. This wider narrative frame serves to highlight certain shifts in the responses of northern and southern prophets toward Jeroboam. 'Ahijah's two oracles, one of election and one of rejection, frame Jeroboam's career. Similarly the approval voiced by Shemaiah of Jerusalem is balanced by the condemnation announced by the unnamed man of God from Judah.'⁹⁷ The turning point in both cases is Jeroboam's cult. Because of Jeroboam's cultic initiatives, 'the political disruption willed by Yahweh has begun to spread to the religious structures of the people.'⁹⁸ This is understood as one aspect of the sin of Jeroboam. In Walsh's view, the chiasmic repetition of words and phrases in 12.30-31 and 13.33-34 highlights the fact that Jeroboam's obduracy before Yahweh's prophets is as serious as the high places and their illegitimate priesthods. It is noteworthy that Walsh's results are again indebted to his interpretive method: 'the symmetrical structure of the literary unit provides the key to interpretation.'⁹⁹

Finally, the third context for understanding 1 Kings 13 is the broader history of the kingdoms. Rather than attempting a structural analysis or outline of 1-2 Kings in its entirety, Walsh points out 'ways in which individual elements of 1 Kgs xiii reappear elsewhere as significant motifs.'¹⁰⁰ He gives three examples, two specific and one general. First, the Deuteronomist's prophecy-fulfilment schema, famously identified by von Rad, links numerous details in the opening verses, including the foretelling of Josiah, the defiled altar, the burnt bones and so on, with the statement concerning their fulfilment in 2 Kings 23.17. Second, Walsh notes that the key phrase, 'the sin of Jeroboam' (12.30; 13.34), 'runs like a red thread through the history of the northern kingdom. It occurs in the condemnation of virtually every

⁹⁵ Ibid, 360.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 356. This is an odd statement in light of the fact that this first context supposedly takes 1 Kings 13 (in its entirety) as a self-contained narrative. Here he intimates that a wider context is needed to make sense of the chapter's final verses.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 363.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 364.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 361.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 366.

northern king and culminates in the epitaph of the northern kingdom in 2 Kgs xvii 21-3.¹⁰¹ Third, more generally, Walsh stresses Barth's point about the prophets and their respective kingdoms:

In the context of the history of the two kingdoms, the story of prophetic conflict is itself prophetic. The individuals mirror their kingdoms, and their tragedy portends the tragic destiny awaiting Israel and Judah. Israel has become unfaithful. Judah can still speak the word that Israel needs to hear; but if Judah, too, following Israel's lead, compromises its worship (as history shows it will), then both are doomed to overcome their separation only in death. Judah will be buried in an alien land, and Israel will be saved only so far as it is joined to Judah.¹⁰²

Walsh links these three observations with reading 1 Kings 13 as part of the history of the divided kingdoms.

He thereby shows that different accents and nuances of the story take precedence, depending upon the context in which they are set. In the first and second contexts, 'the sin of the house of Jeroboam' refers to the king's obduracy in the face of prophetic warnings (i.e. 'Even after this event, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way'; 13.33), but within the third, much wider context, its more natural referent is his cultic innovations, given the multiple repetitions of the phrase throughout the history of Israel's kings (i.e. 'he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he caused Israel to sin; 2 Kgs 14.24, *passim*).

Walsh concludes with three observations. First, as noted above, he points out that the choice of a literary context brings the reader to the fore in the process of determining meaning, since this choice in some sense predetermines interpretive possibilities by setting the parameters of the text under investigation. That is, the determination of literary context constitutes a decision, conscious or otherwise, about the relative importance of textual elements.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 368.

¹⁰² Ibid, 367-8. Walsh acknowledges his indebtedness to Barth on this point. Affirming that Barth's work 'remains a classic', he writes: 'The proleptic character of the narrative is fundamental to Barth's justly famous exposition of the chapter. My reading is similar to his.' (368, fn.25) The paragraph quoted above is also repeated (not quite verbatim) in Walsh's commentary on 1 Kgs 13, where Barth's influence is readily discernible. Walsh, *1 Kings*, 205.

¹⁰³ Walsh, 'Contexts', 369.

Secondly, he suggests that analysis of a text's surface structure can help to 'identify a basis in the text on which to build an interpretation of the unit and of its component parts.'¹⁰⁴ Given his stated goals, however, this observation is problematic since Walsh's use of structural analysis is a *methodological* decision that is not determined by the reader's choice of literary context.¹⁰⁵ Whether Walsh thinks that ancient authors/editors were intentional about such patterning, or whether he believes chiasms to be inevitably present in any purposive writing, he does not say. However, he does assert that the kinds of concentric structures he identifies are superior to 'the outlines commonly offered in commentaries.'¹⁰⁶ Moreover, it is readily apparent from even a cursory glance at Walsh's articles, books and commentaries that symmetrical chiasmic patterns abound in Hebrew narrative and that they apparently contribute much to determining a text's dominant motif. Not every biblical scholar will happily adopt Walsh's assumption that ancient authors arranged their compositions using such conventions, however. Indeed, symmetrical structures like these appear to be most obvious to those who believe they are there to be discovered. Ironically, given the hermeneutical focus of his work, Walsh seems unaware of his methodological preference to read with an eye for structural patterns in Hebrew narrative.

Walsh's third and final reflection pertains to the relation between literary analysis and historical-critical analysis. More specifically, he asks whether structural and literary observations can raise helpful questions about sources and redaction seams. But again, he assumes 'the identification of symmetrical structure'¹⁰⁷ in 1 Kings 12.32-33 to make his point.

1 Kings (1996)

Walsh's commentary on 1 Kings reflects the same foci as his articles, offering exegetical insights via structural and narratological analyses of the text; in fact, he

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Bosworth is generous in his appraisal of Walsh in this regard. He writes in summary that 'the context for reading may not only be a question of delimiting the block of text in which a story will be read, but also what methods may be used for the reading. Method and context are related considerations.' Bosworth, 'Revisiting Barth', 376. Bosworth is right, though in my view he makes the point more clearly than Walsh.

¹⁰⁶ Walsh, 'Contexts', 369: 'western analytical outlines are hard pressed to capture the type of symmetrical structure that is seen here as fundamental to the text. Commentators should use schematizations of the text that more accurately reflect its inherent articulation.'

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 370.

has published separate volumes on each of these methodologies.¹⁰⁸ His introduction to *Structural Issues* in the Kings commentary suggests that the concentric arrangement of a text's parts, resulting in chiasmic symmetry, is fully intended by the ancient authors and editors. This, as I mentioned above, is a questionable assumption, not least because two interpreters who identify two different chiasms in the same text will each wish to argue that their perceived chiasm is the author's way of making a certain point, and there are no failsafe criteria for choosing between them. In addition, one reader's proposed chiasm will inevitably fail to accentuate (or perhaps even draw attention away from) what the other reader's chiasm has identified as most significant in the text.¹⁰⁹

Methodological issues aside (for now), Walsh divides 1 Kings into four overarching narratives: the stories of Solomon (1-11); Jeroboam (11.26-14.20); Elijah (17-19); and Ahab (20.1-22.40).¹¹⁰ Here we will endeavour to take into consideration Walsh's treatment of the whole story of Jeroboam whilst maintaining a focus on 1 Kings 13. In his commentary, Walsh divides 1 Kings 13 in two, treating 1 Kgs 12.26-13.10 in one chapter of the commentary and 13.11-14.20 in the next. Moreover, he consistently speaks of 'the two stories in chapter 13'.¹¹¹ This judgment, which obviously determines the contexts for his analysis (cf. the discussion in his article above), is once again based on structural analysis.¹¹² Oddly, he treats the enveloping frame (12.30-31; 13.33-34) of 1 Kings 13 separately, stating that this 'adds another dimension to the unity of chapter 13.'¹¹³

Walsh is an attentive reader, making numerous insightful remarks throughout his treatment of 1 Kings 13.1-10. As one might expect, he treats narrative details in a very different manner to those whose primary interest is the story's compositional history. For instance, regardless of whether the prophecy in 13.2 is a *vaticinium ex eventu*, Walsh perceives the naming of Josiah as 'one end of a link that contributes to

¹⁰⁸ Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 2001); idem, *Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ This criticism holds regardless of whether Walsh is arguing for an authorial hermeneutic or a text hermeneutic; see chapter five.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Walsh, *Ahab: The Construction of a King* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006)

¹¹¹ Walsh, *1 Kings*, 190-1, *passim*.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 174-6, 182-3, 190.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 191f.

unifying all of 1-2 Kings... Perhaps the Davidic scion who will undo Jeroboam's religious deviations will also be able to repair the political division in which his reign began.¹¹⁴ But as well as identifying how certain aspects of the prophecy direct the reader's attention to a distant future, Walsh observes that the prophetic oracle —'he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who offer incense upon you' (13.2)—implicates Jeroboam in the present moment as well, since he is probably the only one to date who has undertaken the priestly function at the Bethel altar. 'In this way the oracle that pointedly ignores the king by addressing the altar nevertheless implicates him obliquely in the prophesied destruction.'¹¹⁵

Scholars are divided over whether the remarks about the altar in verses 3 and 5 are immediate or parenthetical, i.e. from a future perspective. For his part, Walsh firmly asserts the latter because of 'the Hebrew grammatical form and the unnecessary introductory words... In other words, this parenthetical sign is not part of the scene; we hear it but Jeroboam does not.'¹¹⁶ In addition, since the spilling of the ashes is tantamount to a desecration of the sacrifice, Walsh surmises that it cannot have happened earlier than Josiah's northern reforms, 'since in that case the altar would already be desecrated and unusable, and Josiah's actions would be pointless.'¹¹⁷

Following Barth, Walsh perceives that a meal with the king would signify solidarity and thus interprets the man of God's refusal as a rejection of Bethel: 'he will not eat "in this place." Jeroboam is not the problem—Bethel is... the "house" of the golden calf, with its altar and its priests, is irrevocably doomed.'¹¹⁸ Therefore, when the man of God not only declines the invitation but also reveals that he was commanded by the LORD to avoid any fraternisation with Bethel, his public obedience to the threefold prohibition gains gravitas as an enacted prophetic sign, indicating his rejection of false worship in the north as well as the irrevocable nature of his mission.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 177.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 178.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Walsh does not make it clear what he means by 'the Hebrew grammatical form' and it is not self-evident. He makes a similar statement about the man of God 'coming' to Bethel in 13.1 (*1 Kings*, 176). He states that it is a participle, but does not explain how he reaches this conclusion. Since the participial form and Qal (3ms) are identical—**סָבַר**—some word of explanation is necessary.

¹¹⁷ Walsh, *1 Kings*, 178. I shall address this further in chapter seven.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 180.

The second prophetic story (1 Kgs 13.11-32) about the betrayal of a southern prophet by his northern colleague, raises a number of questions—not just about the anonymous characters and their motives, but also about why this story is located here at all, since Jeroboam is never mentioned. According to Walsh, its structure is ‘developmental’:

- A. The prophet hears news of the man of God (13:11)
- B. He speaks in reaction to the news (13:12)
- C. He has his sons saddle his donkey (13:13)
- D. He journeys and finds the man of God (13:14-18)
- E. The man of God comes back and eats with him (13:19)
- F. The prophet speaks the word of Yahweh (13:20-22)
- G. The word is fulfilled (13:23-25)
- A'. The prophet hears news of the man of God (13:25)
- B'. He speaks in reaction to the news (13:26)
- C'. He has his sons saddle his donkey (13:27)
- D'. He journeys and finds the man of God's corpse (13:28)
- E'. He brings back the man of God, and honors him (13:29-30)
- F'. He confirms the word of Yahweh (13:31-32)
- G'. ... ¹¹⁹

Walsh states that this structure ‘focuses our attention on three dimensions of progression: from element to element (A to B to C, etc), from parallel element to parallel element (from A to A', etc), and from sequence to sequence (from A through G to A' through G').¹²⁰ But while Walsh's structural analysis brings certain repeated elements to the fore, it also (inevitably) fails to emphasise what a number of other scholars consider to be critically important. For instance, Klopfenstein perceives verse 20 to be pivotal in the narrative's plot, since that is where the story's *single* reversal takes place. But where a scholar holding Klopfenstein's view might appeal to the *petuchah* [⌌] in the middle of verse 20 (Masoretic punctuation, marking off a literary unit) as an indication that verse 20 contains a critical turning point in the narrative, Walsh emphasises instead the repetition in the narrative, claiming that the symmetrical structure he observes is ‘fundamental to the text.’¹²¹ Conversely, verse 20 comes under point F in Walsh's outline, which is neither structurally central nor of special significance. Thus, his summary of 1 Kings 13.20-22—‘The prophet speaks

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 182-3. (The ellipsis is cited from Walsh's commentary; see comments below.)

¹²⁰ Ibid, 183.

¹²¹ Walsh, ‘Contexts’, 369.

the word of Yahweh'—bypasses the strangeness of an event that Klopfenstein considers critical: a lying prophet now receives and speaks a genuine prophetic word! In addition to these matters, Walsh's structural analysis fails to account for G', where he simply inserts an ellipsis without explanation.

However one resolves these differences, the point is not that one interpreter has understood the story's structure correctly and the other has it wrong. Rather, as Peter Leithart rightly observes, 'multiple structure is virtually inescapable, especially in narratives and poetry.'¹²² Just as a reader's determination of contextual boundaries brings certain dimensions of the text into focus, so also a reader's decision concerning which structural elements to emphasise also highlights some aspects over others. Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by Walsh's strict adherence to chiasmic structures and his unusual decision (as a narrative critic) to divide the narrative in 1 Kings 13 into two parts, his exegesis contains a number of illuminating insights.

Anti-North Polemic: Van Seters (1999, 2000)

Van Seters is well-known for his critical literary analysis of biblical texts and for his work in ancient near eastern historiography. He has published two short essays on 1 Kings 13 from entirely different points of view, though they both present the story as a post-Dtr composition written to function as anti-Samaritan propaganda. Here we shall consider Van Seters as representative of those who see 1 Kings 13 as an anti-north polemic.

In the first of his two essays, 'On Reading the Story of the Man of God' (1999), Van Seters offers his views on the composition and purpose of 1 Kings 13; in the second, 'The Deuteronomistic History: Can it Avoid Death by Redaction?' (2000), he challenges the way 1 Kings 13 has come to function within the F.M. Cross school.¹²³ While both works focus primarily on 1 Kings 13, they represent very different approaches, though the latter work is more cogent in its argumentation and thus more persuasive. It will therefore be appropriate to assess each of them separately before considering the sum of Van Seters' contribution.

¹²² Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 143.

¹²³ This includes also the contributions of Cross's students, such as Stephen McKenzie, Werner Lemke, and Richard Nelson (Nelson was a student of Pat Miller, who studied under Cross).

'On Reading the Story of the Man of God' (1999)

'One of the most difficult stories in biblical prose narrative to read and interpret is this strange story of the man of God from Judah.'¹²⁴ So begins this essay by Van Seters, whose aim is neither to review nor add to the collection of interpretive options for this difficult text, but rather to suggest the incompetence of its author as the basic reason for its perplexity. A more recent essay repeats many of the so-called problems presented below and asserts once again that 1 Kings 13 comprises 'a pastiche of elements borrowed from many other narratives and put together in such a careless and confusing fashion that it is difficult to make out at any point in the story just what is actually going on.'¹²⁵

Van Seters observes that numerous studies of this text 'limit the interpretation of the story to whatever lies within 1 Kings 13:1-32 and assume that it was originally independent or that the redactional connections before and after are of little significance to its meaning.'¹²⁶ But, as he explains, the story has clear links with both the preceding narrative concerning Jeroboam as well as with the prophecy's fulfilment in 2 Kings 23, so that 1 Kings 13 is well integrated as part of the DH, strategically located between Jeroboam's cultus and Josiah's reforms. More than that, Van Seters asserts (for reasons given in his second essay) that 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23.15-20 are actually two parts of the same story. Together—and he also includes 2 Kings 17.24-34; 23.4b with them¹²⁷—these verses constitute a post-Dtr addition, composed for a specific purpose. Van Seters does not mean to say that these texts would make sense on their own if they were extracted, but rather that they were written in order to make sense within their present contexts.¹²⁸

Before arriving at his main point, Van Seters acknowledges that a more common explanation for the 'self-contained' character of this narrative is to posit a *pre*-Dtr source for 1 Kings 13 and to attribute anything un-Deuteronomistic or otherwise

¹²⁴ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 225.

¹²⁵ Van Seters, 'Prophecy as Prediction in Biblical Historiography' in *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography* (eds. Mark J. Boda and Lissa M. Wray Beal; IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 100.

¹²⁶ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 225.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹²⁸ Van Seters, 'The Deuteronomistic History: Can it Avoid Death by Redaction?' in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History*. ed. Thomas Römer (BETHL 147; Leuven: Leuven university Press, 2000), 216-7.

problematic in the story to the work of later redactors.¹²⁹ But even in spite of having great difficulty himself in understanding the text as it stands, Van Seters is reluctant to blame its incoherence on redactors, since that only relegates problems 'to another level where they are just as difficult to explain.'¹³⁰ (In the concluding comments of his second essay, he warns of the dangers of redaction criticism and articulates its proper place in biblical interpretation.) The bulk of Van Seters' essay argues that the best explanation for the story's proliferation of problems is really quite simple: they 'are the result of a lack of literary skill by the author.'¹³¹ Thus, Van Seters presents a list (which is not exhaustive) of sixteen problematic aspects of the story in 1 Kings 13. So as to be comprehensive, I shall respond to each of the sixteen problems briefly:

(1) *The man of God does not address Jeroboam, nor call him to account for his sin; he only addresses the altar. 'This is totally uncharacteristic of Dtr in his presentation of prophetic confrontation of evil rulers...'*¹³² While it is indeed unusual in the DH for a prophet to address an inanimate object rather than the person responsible for that object, the reader's task is not to rewrite the story by eradicating anomalous details, but in fact quite the opposite. Our task as readers is surely to understand why the author might have expressed things in the way he did (i.e. what is inferred by the utterance of this prophecy against an altar and not the king?) In any case, since Van Seters proposes that 1 Kings 13 was composed and inserted by a post-Dtr author, is it fair to criticise him for diverging from typically Deuteronomistic characteristics?

(2) *The text confuses a large altar that Jeroboam stands upon with the offering of incense, which is associated with a small altar/stand.* The Hebrew indeed suggests that Jeroboam is standing 'over' or 'upon' ('al) the altar. However, the *hiphil* form of the verb [*l^ehaqtir*] is not restricted to 'offering incense'. In fact, most scholars see no problem here, since the plainest meaning of the verb is 'to make a burnt offering'.¹³³

¹²⁹ This is more or less the approach adopted by Mark Dwayne Allen in his recent PhD dissertation, *The Man of God, the Old Prophet and the Word of the LORD: An Exegesis of 1 King 13* (May, 2012). Allen treats 1 Kings 13 in three contexts: 'first, in its pre-deuteronomistic form, second, in its setting within the Deuteronomistic History, and, finally, in its larger canonical context' (i). The existence of a pre-deuteronomistic form in part one is simply assumed.

¹³⁰ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 226. His example draws on Uriel Simon's essay in *Reading Prophetic Narratives* (1997).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 227.

¹³³ See, e.g., Gray, *I & II Kings*, 326.

(3) *The prophecy that Josiah will sacrifice 'the priests of the high places' (13.2) upon this altar is 'grotesque' and 'inappropriate for the righteous Josiah'. Moreover, 'there is no suggestion that the idolatrous priests in Judah were treated in this way.'*¹³⁴ Within the world of the text, 2 Kings 23.20 responds directly (i.e. fulfils) 1 Kings 13.2, regardless of how one conceives of Josiah's righteousness. An alternative solution to this difficulty is the intertextual one offered by Van Seters himself in a footnote: 'Is it influenced by the story of Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kgs 18:40? The latter episode could have been construed by the author of 1 Kings 13 as a sacrifice.'¹³⁵

(4) *The prophecy in v 2, especially the naming of Josiah, is 'quite meaningless' within 1 Kings 13, and 'not the least in the style of a Dtr editor,'¹³⁶ since nothing is said of Jeroboam's own household. The naming of Josiah provides an explicit link to 2 Kings 23 and can hardly be considered meaningless, especially if Josiah's reforms are to be understood as a reversal of the division that occurs in 1 Kings 11-14 (a point that Van Seters himself makes). It is certainly in keeping with 'the style of a Dtr editor' to accent the theme of prophecy and fulfilment, which is achieved by naming Josiah. Moreover, 1 Kings 14 deals in detail with the fate of Jeroboam's household, so there is no need to double up on that theme in 1 Kings 13.*

(5) *The splitting of the altar 'seems totally pointless in relation to the prediction.'¹³⁷ And if its point is to authenticate the man of God, why the second miracle as well? Also: 'The narration of the two miracles is certainly muddled.'* Van Seters resolves these problems himself when he states that the splitting of the altar is evidence 'that the one who speaks is a man of God,' and that the second miracle occurs because 'the king seems to react even before the miracle can take effect'. Exactly how the narration of the miracles is 'muddled', Van Seters does not say.

(6) *Regarding the king's response, 'the total lack of concern about the altar and the extension of friendship... seems entirely inappropriate.'¹³⁸ The king does not show a 'total lack of concern' at all. On the contrary, he is sufficiently offended about the altar to order the man of God's arrest (v 4), and regarding the invitation to fellowship (v 7),*

¹³⁴ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 227.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 227, fn. 5.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 227.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 228.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

it is very likely that the king would like to have the kind of power he has just witnessed—whether for good or ill—at his beck and call. Thus the invitation to fellowship. On these points, the logic of the narrative’s development is clear.

(7) *The threefold command ‘seems clear enough, if it means that the man of God is to refrain completely from association with the people of Bethel. This obvious sense, however, seems to be confused by the remark in v. 10 that he returned to Judah by a different route.’*¹³⁹ This is an issue that has caused confusion for some interpreters. Rofé is cited here for taking v 10 as an interpretive clue for the whole,¹⁴⁰ and Marcus also makes more of this detail than seems warranted.¹⁴¹ However, the majority of commentators do not see a problem, even those who acknowledge the possibility of ambiguity. The command is to not return (to Judah) by the way that he came (to Bethel), and this is precisely what v 10 specifies. We shall consider the significance of the command in due course.

(8) *If the terms ‘man of God’ and ‘prophet’ serve the purpose of distinguishing between these two anonymous figures, why must the author add ‘tedious’ qualifying clauses in addition? The author’s ‘tiresome repetition’ surely indicates ‘very limited narrative skills’ and not ‘literary artistry’.*¹⁴² I agree with Van Seters regarding the purpose of the two designations, though it is unclear what the additional, tedious, ‘qualifying clauses’ are. Presumably, he means ‘the man of God *who came from Judah*’, in which case I would imagine that this detail was important to the writer. In any case, repetition is arguably no more a ‘problematic aspect’ of 1 Kings 13 than it is of much Hebrew narrative!

(9) *The narrative only ever speaks of one ass at a time: ‘the ass’. The repetition of this ‘stereotyped phrase... creates serious contradiction in the text.’*¹⁴³ Presumably, this is problematic for Van Seters because it is unclear whether there is one ass or two. In my judgment, it is clear that there are two, and it is difficult to see how ‘only one ass mentioned at any one time, which is rendered with the definite article’ creates any kind of serious contradiction or interpretive problem. How many asses there are and

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories* (1988), 174-5.

¹⁴¹ Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, 78-82.

¹⁴² Van Seters, ‘On Reading,’ 228.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

who they belong to generally receives a passing comment at best from commentators.

(10) *How can a miracle-working prophet show such little discernment and be so easily duped by the Bethel prophet? 'The man of God is not disobedient; he is merely stupid.'*¹⁴⁴ This comment seems rather curious, since the entire story turns on the scene where the two prophets sit together at the table, the man of God is deceived, and the Bethel prophet receives a genuine word from the LORD. From another perspective, the man of God can hardly be labeled 'merely stupid' when other texts make it clear that God does, on occasion, change his mind about prophetic words given (e.g. 1 Kgs 21.29; Jer 18.7-10). Indeed, it is only the narrator's assertion in v 20b that enables readers to know whether or not the man of God ought to trust his hospitable, older colleague.¹⁴⁵

(11) *Why does the lying Bethel prophet receive the word of the LORD in v 20 rather than the man of God? 'This makes a total mockery of any distinction between true and false, or obedient and disobedient, prophets. The author contradicts all of the norms of prophecy but still wants us to take the prophetic oracles seriously.'*¹⁴⁶ *What lesson can we possibly learn from such a tale?* This turning point is indeed one of the most troublesome details of the story, but the fact that it surprises us and demands rigour in interpretation hardly means that its author is unskilled. Are the authors of Gen 22, Num 25, Jdg 11, and any other story containing an act of God that contradicts human expectations also unskilled? Van Seters is certainly right to note that the prophetic role reversal has a confounding effect on readers, but perhaps this text serves a function beyond being reduced to a moral lesson.

(12) *Why is nothing said about 'the second miracle' wherein the lion permits the Bethel prophet to remove the Judean's corpse without attacking him or his ass?* Hebrew narrative is terse, and gaps abound. In any case, the momentum and thrust of the story do not require any further reflection upon 'the second miracle.'

(13) *The 'sequel' or epilogue in 2 Kgs 23.15-20 is confusing. Are Jeroboam's altar and high place pulled down, burned, or crushed to dust? And how can this altar be used to burn human bones if it has been destroyed—whether during Josiah's reign or almost three*

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 229.

¹⁴⁵ As Lasine, *Weighing Hearts*, points out, another anonymous prophet in 1 Kings 20 is killed by a lion precisely because he does *not* do what a fellow prophet asks him to do (104-5).

¹⁴⁶ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 229.

hundred years earlier when it was torn down in 1 Kgs 13.5? While 2 Kgs 23.15 may appear to be an 'ill-constructed sentence' (Gray), the sense is obviously that these idolatrous objects were destroyed.¹⁴⁷ The manner of description perhaps intends to be reminiscent of Moses' actions toward the golden calf in Exod 32.20,¹⁴⁸ only here it is Josiah who is the subject of these powerful verbs of destruction. Regarding the destruction of the altar, two possibilities are present to the reader: either (a) 1 Kings 13.5 presents a later perspective and is, in fact, reporting the same event as 2 Kings 23.15 (i.e. the narrator is stating as an aside that this prophetic oracle would be fulfilled in due course); or (b) the rent altar of 1 Kings 13 was at some point rebuilt (due to its continuing usage), only to be torn down once again in Josiah's day.

(14) If the memory of the Judean (together with his prophetic oracle) was preserved by inhabitants of Bethel with a specially marked tomb, then 'why did they maintain the sanctuary as a place of worship?' It is unclear whether the sanctuary is still being used as a place of worship when Josiah visits; the point is rather that he is burning bones from the tombs upon the idolatrous altar, and that he spares the shared tomb because of the legend behind it.

(15) Similar to point 13 above regarding 2 Kgs 23.15-16; how can priests be slaughtered upon altars (v 20) when those high places have been destroyed (v 19)? Verses 19-20 do not appear to report sequential events but rather general details about Josiah's reforms. As Van Seters himself points out, the purpose of these recollections is to create a direct link back to the prophecies of 1 Kings 13. Given Van Seters' suggestion that a post-Dtr writer has composed these stories separately in order to insert them at these points, the details given are logically coherent and even what one might expect.

(16) 'The curious remark in 2 Kgs 23:4 that the king 'carried their ashes to Bethel' makes no sense in its context and seems entirely motivated by the presentation in vv. 15-20.'¹⁴⁹ From a redaction-critical perspective the phrase may appear as an addition,¹⁵⁰ but from a synchronic perspective it is certainly feasible that Josiah carried ashes from

¹⁴⁷ So Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 258.

¹⁴⁸ So J. Long, Jr, *I & 2 Kings*, 515.

¹⁴⁹ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 229.

¹⁵⁰ Gray, *I & II Kings*, 732.

the idolatrous artefacts of worship to Bethel in order to defile Jeroboam's high places.¹⁵¹

This list of problems leads Van Seters to the conclusion 'that the story of the man of God from Judah is incoherent throughout.'¹⁵² He therefore briefly explores three common strategies for making sense of the confusion.

The first strategy often adopted by scholars is to assume that the original story, prior to editorial interference, was probably more coherent, such that redactors may be blamed for any inconsistencies. But since Van Seters cannot discern a clear purpose behind the sixteen problems he has identified, he instead posits that the story's problems were inherent to the original version and places full culpability upon a hypothetical post-Dtr writer who composed the story in its entirety and inserted it untidily into the DH. Van Seters's best guess is that the author's *modus operandi* 'seems to have been the gleaning of motifs and elements from a body of earlier literature which included such late pieces as Jonah, the P Code and Chronicles. Such a collage of materials has created a very confusing text.'¹⁵³

A second means of explaining the anomalous quality of the story takes quite an opposite approach. Rather than dismissing problematic aspects of the story as erroneous, some interpreters assign particular significance to those very details by appealing to rhetorical devices such as irony or parody. David Marcus presents such an approach in his monograph, *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible*, within which he treats 1 Kings 13. However, Van Seters rightly points out that while elements in certain narratives, such as the Balaam and Jonah stories, do appear to contain greater doses of exaggeration and irony than other texts, it is difficult to see what the point of satirising prophecy in 1 Kings 13 might be. A parody of prophecy at this point in Kings would certainly undermine the seriousness of the man of God's oracle for Josiah's reforms in 2 Kings 23.

Yet a third method by which some scholars seek to make sense of the confusion is by reading 1 Kings 13 intertextually. As Van Seters puts it, 'the account may be enriched in its meaning by association with other texts with similar terminology and allusions to other stories. In this way also what is confusing and problematic may be

¹⁵¹ Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 447.

¹⁵² Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 230.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 233.

clarified by the comparison.¹⁵⁴ Van Seters considers five possible intertexts but ultimately concludes that an author who does not borrow skilfully from the materials at his disposal will inevitably compose an incoherent text, which is the most likely explanation for the problems in 1 Kings 13. In my judgment, however, the suggested texts put forward by Van Seters are limited in their heuristic value, and his means of analysis is rather unusual. In each instance, Van Seters highlights one parallel between 1 Kings 13 and the intertext, and then proceeds to show that the parallel is not sufficiently sustained to be convincing or clear. In so doing, he gives the impression that the purpose of an intertextual relationship is less about being suggestive through nuance than it is about precise imitation. Narratives that show signs of semblance with another text but then diverge along their own course, are therefore labelled 'clumsy', 'confused' and 'muddled'.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps it would be more accurate, however, to say that Van Seters does not suggest the most illuminating intertextual links.

In any case, none of these three methods satisfactorily resolve Van Seters' efforts to make sense of 1 Kings 13. In his words: 'This leads me to the conclusion that the difficulties in reading this text cannot be blamed on incompetent editors or redactors; nor can they be solved by intertextuality. They are the result of a lack of literary skill by the author. The incoherence resides in the original text...'¹⁵⁶ On this basis, he goes on to suggest: 'If the text is not coherent and consistent then perhaps one should be very cautious about trying to discover what it is about and especially from drawing theological and moral lessons from it.'¹⁵⁷ In other words, if he is correct in his assumption that the story's quandaries are the direct consequence of its author's incompetence, then one must be wary of interpreting those problematic details, lest meaning be found where none is present. In the end, Van Seters describes 1 Kings 13 in this way: 'It is a fairly crass piece of anti-Samaritan religious propaganda constructed with little narrative skill or sensitivity to religious and moral issues.'¹⁵⁸ (Indeed, it is entirely appropriate that his essay appears in a volume entitled, *The Labour of Reading!*) In addition, Van Seters maintains that it is highly

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 230.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 231-2.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 233.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

unlikely that there was ever a pre-Dtr account of Jeroboam's apostasy or Josiah's reform, and in the final paragraph he abruptly adds that 'the story is a vilification of the Bethel temple, which was still in use for some time in the exilic and post-exilic periods, and the Samaritan community.'¹⁵⁹ He provides no argumentation for this assertion, but promises that it is forthcoming (see below).

In my judgment, Van Seters' list of so-called 'problems' are much less disconcerting than he would have us think. His use of phrases like 'totally pointless', 'entirely inappropriate', 'tiresome repetition', 'limited narrative skills', 'serious contradictions', 'makes no sense', and 'incoherent throughout' ultimately do little more than expose Van Seters' exasperation with a text that is different to the one that he might prefer to have been written. It is certainly ironic that Van Seters is critical of Simon's reading—which apparently suggests 'a rather clumsy and repetitive Dtr redactor'—for being 'highly speculative' and failing to reckon with problems!¹⁶⁰

While Van Seters succeeds in identifying some of the challenges for interpreting this chapter, they are, generally speaking, the kinds of challenges posed by many Hebrew narratives. Those elements of the story that signify incompetence in his mind are generally labelled 'narrative gaps' according to synchronic approaches, and treated by narrative critics as important elements in the thickening and unfolding of a narrative's plot.

'The Deuteronomistic History: Can it Avoid Death by Redaction?' (2000)

In his second essay, as the title suggests, Van Seters seeks to defend Noth's thesis of a unified history (i.e. Deut—2 Kgs)¹⁶¹ by disproving the Cross school and questioning the gains of the Göttingen school. Because the prophecy in 1 Kings 13.2-3 and its fulfilment in 2 Kings 23.15-20 establish a frame for Dtr¹, 1 Kings 13 has come to function as a supporting text for the Cross school, which views 1 Kings 13—2 Kings 23 as the main body of a pre-exilic edition of the DH. Cross himself did little more than mention 1 Kings 13 in his well-known essay, but an important study by

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. On the probability that there was never a pre-Dtr version of 1 K 13, but that the exilic editor composed it for its present purpose, Van Seters cites Knoppers, *Nations Under God*, Vol. 2, 25-44; Eynikel, 'Prophecy and Fulfillment'; his own *In Search of History* (1983), 313-4, and his forthcoming essay, 'The Deuteronomistic History: Can it Avoid Death by Redaction?' (2000), on which see below.

¹⁶⁰ Van Seters, 'On Reading', 226.

¹⁶¹ For his defence of Noth's unified DH, see the second part of Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).

one of his students has argued convincingly ‘that 1 Kings 13 forms an integral part of the structure and theology of the Deuteronomistic History.’¹⁶² Van Seters argues to the contrary that 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23.15-20 (also 2 Kgs 17.24-34; 23.4b) are post-Dtr additions and cannot therefore have been part of a work of propaganda supporting Josiah’s reforms. Since ‘the whole of Cross’s thesis rests on Josiah’s northern campaign against the high places of Samaria,’ Van Seters concludes that ‘the primary reason for dating DtrH to the time of Josiah is invalid.’¹⁶³ In addition, he stresses that redaction criticism might be better utilised to recover Noth’s concept of a unified DH instead of dissolving it.¹⁶⁴

The logic of Van Seters’ argument for seeing 1 Kings 13 (and other selected verses) as a later text is as follows: 1 Kings 12.33-13.33 has been inserted into the DH via resumptive repetition, or *Wiederaufnahme*.¹⁶⁵ The majority of scholars who hold this position think Dtr to be responsible for incorporating 1 Kings 13 in its pre-Dtr form (generally as a prophetic legend) into the larger corpus,¹⁶⁶ but Van Seters differs: ‘The redactional seams are not part of Dtr’s effort to integrate into his work an older prophetic story but rather the work of the later writer of 1 Kings 13 to tie his story into the DtrH.’¹⁶⁷ Van Seters thus affirms that 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23.15-20 are intrinsically linked as prophecy and fulfilment and cannot be understood without one another. Just as 1 Kings 13 makes no explicit mention of

¹⁶² Lemke, ‘Way of Obedience’, 304. See also the more comprehensive defence of Cross’s position in Knoppers, *Two Nations Under God* (2 vols).

¹⁶³ Van Seters, ‘Death by Redaction?’, 220-1. This is perhaps overstated by Van Seters. Cross provides a range of supporting arguments for why he thinks the primary edition of the DH (Dtr¹) comes from the Josianic era; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 288-9.

¹⁶⁴ Van Seters, ‘Death by Redaction?’, 214, 222.

¹⁶⁵ I.e. ‘resumptive repetition’. The German word literally means ‘taking up again’. Where an interpolation has been made, the redactor uses a repeated phrase (or phrases) to draw the reader’s attention back to the main subject matter; a literary device that effectively says, ‘Now, where were we?’ The repetition of the phrase ‘and this thing became a sin’ thus forms an *inclusio* around the story of the two prophets, suggesting that 1 Kgs 12.30-13.33 is an interpolation, a conclusion numerous scholars have drawn. On the similarities between *Wiederaufnahme* and ordinary conversation, see R. F. Person, ‘A Reassessment of *Wiederaufnahme* from the Perspective of Conversation Analysis,’ *Biblische Zeitschrift* 43/2 (1999), 239-248. Also see Curt Kuhl, ‘Die „Wiederaufnahme“ — ein literarkritisches Prinzip?’ *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*. (Vol. 64/1, Nov 2009), 1–11. We shall discuss this device further in chapter seven.

¹⁶⁶ So Lemke, ‘Way of Obedience’, 320; fn. 31; Cohn, ‘Literary Technique’, 31; fn.15. Although McKenzie, *Trouble*, notes that the story has been inserted between references to the sin of Jeroboam (52-54), he nonetheless maintains that ‘this theme is not at work in the intervening story.’ (54) Rather, he suggests that ‘the story in 1 Kgs 13:11-32a likely derives from Northern prophetic legends like those of Elijah and Elisha and 1 Kings 20... and [was] inserted into Dtr’s account of Jeroboam at a late date.’ (55)

¹⁶⁷ Van Seters, ‘Death by Redaction?’, 216.

Jeroboam's apostasy but only makes sense within that assumed context, so the latter text has been composed and inserted into the record of Josiah's reform as one episode within it.¹⁶⁸ This explains why the altar mentioned in 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23.15-20 receives no mention outside of these two texts.

Van Seters cites the work of Alexander Rofé to support the notion that 1 Kings 13 is a late text due to its content and vocabulary.¹⁶⁹ In addition, he notes that certain characteristics of the story are very unlike Dtr: the phrase 'by the word of the LORD' [בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה]¹⁷⁰; a Yahwistic prophet interceding for an evil king; the absence of a pronouncement of judgment upon the evil king's dynasty; and the (anachronistic) mention of 'the cities of Samaria' in v 32.

Van Seters also considers 2 Kings 17.24-34 to be a late text, since 'the idea... that there were no priests of Yahweh and no Israelites left in the northern province of Samaria after the fall of Samaria is obviously unhistorical.'¹⁷¹ Moreover, he understands 2 Kings 17.24-34 to function in much the same way as 1 Kings 13: 'this is merely anti-Samaritan propaganda to discredit any association with the northern worshippers of Yahweh.'¹⁷² Van Seters agrees with Lemke concerning the close relation between 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 17, since both texts draw attention to Bethel and the failure of the north. But where Lemke wishes to show that they have been integrated by Dtr at critical junctures within the DH, Van Seters distinguishes these texts from the DH and asserts that they were written later and for a very different purpose. Presupposing a Judean author who wrote during the exilic period, Van Seters expresses the meaning, or moral, of 1 Kings 13 in this way:

The author is no longer concerned about the fate of the northern kingdom as in Dtr but about the continuing existence of cult places in Samaria and especially the important temple in Bethel. The message of the unit is twofold. First, the altar was completely desecrated by divine decree so it is no longer an appropriate place of worship and the priesthood is entirely illegitimate from the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 217.

¹⁶⁹ Alexander Rofé, *Classes in the Prophetic Stories*, 158-63. Knoppers, however, *Two Nations*, vol. 2, 51f., considers Rofé's arguments to be weak. On the problematic nature of dating texts according to content and/or vocabulary, see the discussion in chapter five under *Historical-critical and Canonical Approaches*.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Sam 3.21; 1 Kgs 13.1,2,5,9,17,18,32; 20.35. The typical Dtr formulation is 'according to the word of the LORD' [בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה].

¹⁷¹ Van Seters, 'Death by Redaction?', 220.

¹⁷² Ibid.

beginning. Secondly, one is to have no further communal association (to eat and drink) with anyone in Bethel, even those who worship Yahweh, as represented by the old prophet. This reflects the same kind of anti-Samaritan vilification that is represented by 2 Kings 17,24-34, and since it shares so much of the same terminology it could actually stem from the same hand.¹⁷³

Van Seters' argument that Josiah's reform never actually occurred in Bethel or the cities of Samaria¹⁷⁴ is dependent upon these texts (1 Kgs 13; 2 Kgs 17.24-34; 23.4b, 15-20) being bracketed out from the DH as later additions. Historically, he states that '[a]ny reform activity and cult centralization was entirely restricted to Judah "from Geba to Beersheba" [in accordance with 2 Kgs 23.8], and this was confirmed by the corresponding archaeological evidence.'¹⁷⁵ Van Seters thereby seeks to undermine the basic position of the Cross school, which understands these same texts to support Josiah's campaign in the north.¹⁷⁶

By way of summary, Van Seters asserts in these essays that the author of 1 Kings 13 was a post-Dtr writer whose moral insensitivity and literary incompetence are evidenced in his work. Moreover, the subject matter of the passages he composed and inserted into the DH are historically inaccurate regarding the reforms of Josiah. Whatever is made of these revisionist speculations, one is still left with the canonical record of Israel's history, which unambiguously upholds King Josiah—in both prophecy and fulfilment—as the one who rid the south and the north of the idolatrous activities that caused their division.¹⁷⁷ To my mind, if Van Seters is, in fact, right about a lack of historical precision in this record of Israel's past, the question why Israel recorded and preserved her past in this particular way becomes

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 233; idem, 'Death by Redaction?', 221.

¹⁷⁵ Van Seters, 'Death by Redaction?', 221. But see William G. Dever, 'The Silence of the Text: An Archaeological Commentary on 2 Kings 23,' in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (eds. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 143-4.

¹⁷⁶ Cross puts it thus: 'In fact, the juxtaposition of the two themes, of threat and promise, provide the platform of the Josianic reform. The Deuteronomistic history, insofar as these themes reflect its central concerns, may be described as a propaganda work of the Josianic reformation and imperial program. In particular, the document speaks to the North, calling Israel to return to Judah and to Yahweh's sole legitimate shrine in Jerusalem, asserting the claims of the ancient Davidic monarchy upon all of Israel. Even the destruction of Bethel and the cults of the high places was predicted by the prophets, pointing to the centrality of Josiah's role for northern Israel.' *Canaanite Myth*, 284.

¹⁷⁷ Note the divine promise made to Jeroboam via Ahijah in 1 Kgs 11.39: 'For this reason I will punish the descendants of David, but not forever.' Cross comments, 'In this statement we must understand that the oracle presumes an ultimate reunion of the two kingdoms under a Davidid.' *Canaanite Myth*, 279.

all the more urgent. To what end would Israel have preserved the memory of Josiah as an ideal monarch who reversed the sins of Jeroboam? As we noted at the end of chapter two regarding *das Problem der beiden Reiche*, when details in the narrative are difficult to reconcile with practical or historical realities, these only intensify questions about the literary record we have.

Political Allegory: Roland Boer (1996, 1997)

A fourth approach to 1 Kings 13 pays special attention to its literary placement within the Jeroboam narrative and judges on that basis that its significance reaches beyond what it might mean as a self-contained narrative. Robert Cohn thus perceives 1 Kings 13 within the Jeroboam story (1 Kgs 11-14) as ‘a kind of parable, a story within a story, that sets into relief the theological dynamics of the larger narrative.’¹⁷⁸ The term ‘story within a story’ has also been adopted by David Bosworth, although he places 1 Kings 13 within the much broader context of 1 Kings 13—2 Kings 23 (see chapter six). Keith Bodner similarly refers to 1 Kings 13 as a *play-within-a-play*,¹⁷⁹ while others use such terms as ‘parable’ (Rofé) and ‘political allegory’ (Boer). In spite of variations in terminology, however, what is being evoked and accented by these scholars is the nature of the story as one that utilises an unusual system of referentiality to illuminate broader national and political themes. Bodner and Cohn argue that the fate of the man of God reflects that of the king (Jeroboam), who in turn represents the nation of Israel.

Roland Boer offers a stimulating analysis of 1 Kings 13 as a political allegory. In his doctoral dissertation (1993), published as a monograph under the title, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, Boer seeks to explore how the writings of prominent Marxist literary critic Fredric Jameson relate to biblical studies. The work has three substantial chapters. In the first, Boer sets out Jameson’s twofold approach: ‘the use of metacommentary [i.e. the consideration of other methods and interpretations, of the pluralism of methods in contemporary criticism] in the specific and limited capacity of identifying major ways in which biblical texts have been interpreted; and then the use of this phase of the analysis as a basis for a Marxist reading’.¹⁸⁰ For our

¹⁷⁸ Cohn, ‘Literary Technique’, 33. For Cohn, ‘the larger narrative’ refers to 1 Kings 11-14.

¹⁷⁹ Bodner refers to the second part of the narrative (13.11-32) ‘as a “play-within-a-play,” a type of *political allegory* that functions as a subtle reflection on the fate of Jeroboam’s kingship.’ Bodner, *Jeroboam’s Royal Drama*, 97-8 (original emphasis).

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

purposes, however, it is the second chapter—‘Historical Determinism in 1 Kings 11-14’—that is of primary interest, wherein Boer explores how, in keeping with Marxist literary theory, the interpretation of the Jeroboam cycle reflects the ideological interests of the institution(s) from which the texts originated. He has selected these particular chapters from the DH because of their interest to theologians, literary / textual critics and historical critics; that is to say, these biblical texts are well suited to Boer’s approach via metacommentary because they are methodologically “thick”.¹⁸¹ In the second and third chapters of his work, then, Boer applies Jameson’s approach by considering the wide range of scholarly work done on 1 Kings 11-14 (and related texts¹⁸²) to determine which feature or features may be used as a basis for a Marxist reading. In the case of 1 Kings 11-14, he finds that ‘national allegory’ proves to be the dominant feature warranting further analysis. In what follows here, then, we shall examine the second chapter of *Jameson and Jeroboam* in conjunction with a related essay featuring 1 Kings 13 entitled, ‘National Allegory in the Hebrew Bible’ (1997).¹⁸³

Boer’s metacommentary begins with Barth, which he recognises as ‘[p]erhaps the most significant interpretation of this text (1 Kings 13)’.¹⁸⁴ He then proceeds to consider analyses that fall under the rubric of an historical-critical approach (source-, form- and redaction-criticism), literary studies of the text in its final form, and ideological or political (i.e. Marxist) approaches. Having established which elements might be useful for his project, Boer analyses the text according to the three levels of Jameson’s Marxist allegorical method.

The first horizon is concerned with dissonant structural elements in the text and how variant structural motifs vie for control. Thus, contradictions are pertinent to Jameson’s mode of political reading, be they formal, ideological or historical. Based on the work of source-critical scholarship, Boer distinguishes between ‘prophetic’ and ‘annalistic’ source materials.¹⁸⁵ He notes that it is somewhat ironic, however, that studies which seek to locate sources historically are of greater value (for Boer’s

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 101.

¹⁸² In chapter three, Boer compares his findings from chapter two (on 1 Kgs 13) with studies of two other texts that also deal with the succession to the throne after Solomon’s death; namely, 2 Chron 10-13 and 3 Kingdoms 11-14 (LXX).

¹⁸³ Boer, ‘National Allegory in the Hebrew Bible’, *JSOT* 74 (1997), 95-116.

¹⁸⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 102.

¹⁸⁵ On this distinction, see Montgomery, *Kings*, 38-9.

purposes, at least) when they are read in their final form, for 'only the more amorphous situation of the final redaction — the exile — meets the requirements of a social situation with a real contradiction which is reflected in the ideological antinomy [i.e. the reliability, or lack thereof, of the word of Yahweh] and for which our text is an imaginary and formal resolution.'¹⁸⁶ Although attempts to determine the text's compositional history are fraught with pitfalls, Boer is convinced that the tensions within the text point to broader ideological issues. The logic of his analysis is as follows.

In Boer's judgment, the narrative and its literary context (1 Kgs 11-14) highlight the theme of the divine word, of which three distinct types may be found. Boer points out that the *punishment* announced against Solomon in 11.11-13, 31-39 is fulfilled in 12.1-20, and that Shemaiah's *prohibition* to Rehoboam is also obeyed and remains in force (12.21-24). In light of these affirmations of the efficacy of the divine word, Boer posits that Jeroboam's cultic activities, which constitute a *breach of the covenant*, also anticipate ideological closure through a further affirmation of the reliability of the divine word. Because of this readerly expectation, what happens next comes as something of a surprise, for in 1 Kings 13 the reliability of the word of the LORD comes 'under severe ideological attack'¹⁸⁷ when the Bethel prophet also claims divine authority for a word that contradicts the prohibition articulated by the Judean. In addition, when the Judean trusts the Bethelite and breaks the prohibition, yet another fulfilled announcement plays out, resulting in the Judean's death as foretold by his deceiving 'brother'. These events thereby call into question the reliability of God's word: 'who bears the word? where may it be located? when is it genuine and when is it false? In the surrounding narrative the divine word seems to be in control, but in 1 Kings 13 this begins to disintegrate.'¹⁸⁸ Boer's reading seeks to show how the foundational Deuteronomistic theme of prophecy-fulfilment (cf. *the efficacious word of God* above) comes under fire in this text; 'in chapter 11, 12 and 14 the prophets act as media for a divine word which operates according to conventional patterns, all of which becomes problematical in the light of the uncertainties over the word of Yahweh in the intervening chapter.'¹⁸⁹ 1 Kings 13 thus

¹⁸⁶ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 146.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

places a question mark over the certainty of the divine word in a general sense. But it perhaps does this in a specific way as well.

The narrative is problematised by the last two words of v 18: כָּהֵשׁ לוֹ [he lied to him]. As the vast majority of commentators agree, the subject of the verb כָּהֵשׁ most likely refers to the old prophet. But if the verb's subject is taken to be the angel who allegedly brought the word of the LORD to the old prophet, then the notion of divine deception comes to the fore.

The questions are displaced from those of obedience and the veracity of prophecy to a more fundamental consideration of the workings of Yahweh. If Yahweh is the cause of the deception and subsequent destruction of the hapless man of God from Judah, then questions begin to arise concerning the reliability of the divine word in relationship to human activity. The sentence structure of 13:18 leaves open both possibilities, and both cause problems. But I would highlight the second option, that Yahweh is responsible, if for no other reason than that it has been neglected. The ambiguity is itself a sign of the difficult questions being entertained.¹⁹⁰

Regardless of whether one is willing to consider this alternative to the consensus reading, Boer shows how 1 Kings 13 may be understood as calling into question the reliability of the divine word.

Jameson's second horizon requires that this tension concerning the reliability of God's word, as depicted in 1 Kings 11-14, be examined further. In Boer's words, 'the major ideologeme of 1 Kgs 11-14 [is] historical determinism'¹⁹¹—i.e. 'the way in which the divine may be understood to be involved in human affairs'.¹⁹² The same concept is elsewhere referred to as 'dual causality', wherein historical outcomes are attributed to divine influence in spite of the focus being on free human decisions in the relevant narratives.¹⁹³ Within this broader context, Boer examines 1 Kings 13 as a national allegory that explores the tension between (human) voluntarism and (divine) determinism. He is particularly attentive to the oft-neglected divine prohibition against eating, drinking or returning by the same route since, in his view, this tripartite commandment 'contributes heavily to the narrative

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 141-2.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 149.

¹⁹² Ibid, 157.

¹⁹³ See, e.g., Yairah Amit, 'The Dual Causality Principle and its Effects on Biblical Literature,' *VT* 37/4 (1987), 387-90.

machinery.¹⁹⁴ Specifically, the ideologeme of hospitality is utilised to simultaneously affirm and deny legitimacy to the north. Boer recognises the contradictory nature of this claim, but sees the conflict as providing an important perspective on the duality of Israel; i.e. '1 Kings 13 may then be described as an imaginary resolution to the contradictory situation of a North and South in the people of Israel.'¹⁹⁵

In considering the third horizon according to Jameson's hermeneutic, it will serve our purposes to also treat Boer's article, which draws upon the second chapter of *Jameson and Jeroboam*, but focuses especially upon national allegory in 1 Kings 13. Boer begins his article with this definition:

By 'national allegory' I mean a genre in which characters play out complex relationships that interpret and highlight what are felt to be the significant features of the national situation in past and present and project possibilities for the future; thus, national allegory connects public and private, society and individual, where public and society are constituted by a 'nation'.¹⁹⁶

Drawing on the work of Joel Rosenberg,¹⁹⁷ who introduced the term 'political allegory' into the study of the Hebrew Bible, Boer affirms that allegories in the Hebrew Bible very often have political connotations.¹⁹⁸ He also draws on Jameson, who introduced 'national allegory' as a rhetorical device in contemporary literature, to stress that 'national allegory is concerned with the nexus between the individual and the national situation: the individual story functions, in different and sometimes contradictory ways, as the source of a range of allegories of the nation in question.'¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 172.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 174.

¹⁹⁶ Boer, 'National Allegory', 95.

¹⁹⁷ Joel Rosenberg, *King and Kin: Political Allegory in the Hebrew Bible*. Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986)

¹⁹⁸ Rosenberg defines 'political' as that which pertains to the state, *viz.* Israel. He defends the use of 'allegory' to biblical scholars, for whom 'parable' and '*mashal*' are more readily acceptable terms than 'allegory'. In Rosenberg's judgment, the reason for this anti-allegorical attitude is that '[t]he allegorical correspondences are generally understood as a one-for-one homology—rather than as a dynamic system of syllogistic and dialectical transformation, in which words and figures change meaning across time.' *King and Kin*, 21.

¹⁹⁹ Boer, 'National Allegory', 98.

Boer offers two examples of political allegory in the Hebrew Bible, 2 Samuel 12 as an obvious example, and 1 Kings 13 as a more nuanced one. From Nathan's parable of the poor man and his ewe, Boer 'tentatively suggest[s] that the repression of the political in political allegory is a signal feature of political allegory itself.'²⁰⁰ On this basis, he elucidates the allegorical function of other female figures (besides Bathsheba) in Judges and Samuel, informed by the works of David Jobling, Regina Schwartz and Mieke Bal.

Turning to 1 Kings 13, Boer notes that the first hint that we are dealing with a political allegory comes from the preceding chapter, where opposition is established between Rehoboam of the south and Jeroboam of the north.

In 1 Kings 13 there is a slippage in which the conflict between Jeroboam and Rehoboam is replaced by that between Jeroboam and the man of God from Judah (vv. 1-10); and then a further slippage replaces Jeroboam with the old prophet from Bethel (vv. 11-13), giving us the opposition: man of God/Rehoboam/Judah versus old prophet/Jeroboam/Israel.²⁰¹

As the representative or allegorical function of the anonymous prophets is established through this 'slippage', the narrative's primary interpretive clue is also accented when Jeroboam asks the man of God to stay for a meal.

It is precisely this prohibition against eating, drinking and travelling—an ideological unit or 'ideologeme'²⁰² relying on and informing the psychological, social, political, economic and spatial dimensions of hospitality—that provides the means of identifying the workings of political allegory in this text. It does so through a series of repetitions (11 in various forms) whose cumulative effect is to undermine the overt favouring of Judah by means of a slow separation of the unity between the man of God and Yahweh... and the subsequent condemnation of the former, providing thereby a much-desired legitimation of the north.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 103.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 107. Boer acknowledges Barth's influence on this point—although Barth highlights Josiah rather than Rehoboam in the first triplet.

²⁰² Boer defines 'the "ideologeme" as the "smallest intelligible unit [conceptual or belief system, abstract value, opinion or prejudice] of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes"... The ideologeme mediates between abstract concepts and specific narratives, providing raw materials for the elaboration of both.' Boer, 'National Allegory', 133.

²⁰³ Ibid, 108.

Boer thus perceives the presence of a different kind of reversal in the narrative; not one of prophetic legitimation, as per Barth and Klopfenstein (cf. the preceding chapters) but rather, a legitimation *crisis*. In the opening scene, the words and prophetic sign(s) of the man of God deny the northern cult any legitimation whatsoever, but as the same prohibition is picked up in the second story (vv 11-32), and Jeroboam's role of 'enticing the man of God into his home'²⁰⁴ is picked up by the Bethel prophet, the man of God's resistance to the north weakens and relents. Whatever his motive, the Bethel prophet's determination to see the man of God accept his hospitality wins out, and when it does, his successful deception brings an announcement of divine punishment that includes a triple reference (vv 22 -23) to the broken command. Boer comments:

The triplet marks a resolution of some sort, which I would suggest is the final breakage of identity between the man of God and God and the end of the opposition between the man of God and the prophet. This in turn leads to the gradual identification of the second pair which culminates in the anticipated burial of the northern prophet beside the bones of the man of God (the final dimension of the ideological unit of hospitality).²⁰⁵

Boer thus argues that 'the allegorical function of the prohibition and its transgression is to provide Bethel, and thus northern Israel, with the legitimacy sought in the preceding ch. 12.'²⁰⁶ That is to say, the man of God's initial condemnation of Bethel ultimately gives way to hospitality—at a shared table and then in a shared grave. Boer is aware that this dimension of the narrative, in its legitimation of the north, runs counterpoint to the announcement of Jeroboam's sin and impending doom in 13.33-34, but in his view this does not detract from his suggested political reading. On the contrary, as mentioned above, 1 Kings 13 is further established as a narrative that provides interpretive comment on the unusual co-existence and cultic independence of north and south in Israel.

The final step in Boer's interpretation of 1 Kings 13 pushes beyond the immediate political referents of the story (Israel and Judah) to the broader socio-economic clash between Judah and the empire in whose shadow it lived when these texts were composed; i.e. Babylon or Persia. Thus, the narrative includes a further 'slippage'

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 109.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 110.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

from *national* to *natural*; 'Nature, more particularly the animals, function in this text as a figuration of a larger entity'.²⁰⁷ Seen thus, the lion has a double allegorical reference, representing God as an agent of divine punishment, but also the Babylonian (or Persian) empire that 'exercises control by restraint.'²⁰⁸

Since this treatment of 1 Kings 13 is part of a broader project, utilizing Fredric Jameson's notion of national allegory to enhance Rosenberg's work on political allegories in the Hebrew Bible, Boer goes on to consider (under the rubric of Jameson's third horizon) 1 Kings 11-14 as an example of the Asiatic mode of production (AMP), whose primary features are religious in nature. His reflections on modes of production are less relevant to this study, however. It is Boer's reading of 1 Kings 13 that is primarily of interest here, most notably his understanding of the way the prohibition undercuts the reliability of the divine word within a broader context that affirms the authority and dependability of that same word.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, we have examined four readings which have utilised a range of methodologies and understood the form of 1 Kings 13 in a variety of ways. Naturally, these readings reflect a number of views concerning the *Sache* of 1 Kings 13. Regarding Barth and Klopfenstein, it is not difficult to see that the stark difference between their exegeses is a consequence not only of their distinct interpretive methods, but also of their divergent views on what Scripture *is*. This is an issue to which we shall return in the next chapter. We have also seen in our survey of the past sixty years of scholarship that the subject or moral of 1 Kings 13 is understood in terms directly related to the primary issue or question being brought to the text, and that in each case the methodology chosen for engaging with 1 Kings 13 has been appropriate to the questions raised. In theory, this is precisely what one might expect, but it is interesting to see how it plays out in practice.

In Crenshaw's monograph, 1 Kings 13 provides supporting evidence for his thesis concerning the decline of prophecy in ancient Israel. Thus, the story is taken to be about the issue of discernment—ostensibly demonstrating that no criteria for discernment exist. To make this point, Crenshaw adopts sociological and psychological approaches in order to establish his foundational premise that

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 111.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 112.

prophecy went into decline in ancient Israel because it became increasingly hard to know which words claiming divine inspiration were trustworthy. Granted, Crenshaw adopts other methods traditionally associated with literary/biblical studies, too. But in light of his main premise it is understandable that emphasis is placed on the sociological and psychological dimensions of prophecy in ancient Israel.

Walsh's essay and commentary make use of literary and structural analyses to make the point that certain kinds of chiasmic symmetry are preferable to 'the outlines commonly offered in commentaries'.²⁰⁹ (He does not state this as his primary goal, but it is certainly a very strong subtext!) While his analysis in the essay is presented as a methodological exploration, his findings all stress the importance of concentric symmetry for a fruitful reading of Scripture. His book, *Style and Structure in Hebrew Narrative* reinforces this theme more emphatically with more than thirty examples of structural patterns in the Bible. His use of literary and structural analysis are entirely suited to making this point.

In his essay, 'On Reading the Story of the Man of God' (1999), Van Seters wishes to highlight the incompetence of the author of 1 Kings 13, so he uses literary analysis to expose the narrative's inconsistencies, and consequently, the author's shortcomings. By highlighting sixteen apparent problems in the story, he intends to persuade his readers that the biblical author has drawn on source materials rather carelessly to compose a piece of religious propaganda in the post-exilic period. Van Seters makes numerous assumptions about what source materials were used and what the author's intentions were in composing the story found in 1 Kings 13 (together with its epilogue in 2 Kings 23), but a kind of narrative/plot analysis is the method best suited to making his point that the story has been poorly written.

Finally, Boer is the most explicitly self-conscious with regards to his methods and goals. He observes the text from numerous angles, including 'theology, text criticism, historical social scientific approaches, and literary and poststructural approaches' and in so doing, states with refreshing candour: 'In each case I am interested in insights that assist in my own interpretation of the text.'²¹⁰ Boer's

²⁰⁹ Walsh, 'Contexts', 369: 'western analytical outlines are hard pressed to capture the type of symmetrical structure that is seen here as fundamental to the text. Commentators should use schematizations of the text that more accurately reflect its inherent articulation.'

²¹⁰ Boer, *Jameson and Jeroboam*, 102.

overarching goal—‘to read the Bible in the light of Jameson’s textual theory’²¹¹—is thereby served by a political reading that is alert to dissonance (regarding the reliability of the divine word) within the logic of the story.

The methodological tensions between Barth and Klopfenstein in chapters two and three, and the wider range of interpretive possibilities that we have considered here, raise a number of important hermeneutical questions. Are synchronic and diachronic approaches reconcilable? Can Barth’s overtly theological reading be defended on the Deuteronomist’s own terms? What criteria are appropriate for adjudicating between divergent readings of this (or any) text? To what extent must we determine and/or define what Scripture *is* when interpreting biblical texts? Such questions are the subject of our next chapter.

²¹¹ Ibid, 193.

HERMENEUTICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Barth and Klopfenstein: Divergent Approaches to Scripture

The divergence between Barth and Klopfenstein is illustrative of the polarisation that can occur between literary-theological and historical-critical approaches. Whereas Barth reads election and rejection 'into' the text (and would readily admit to doing so) because his questions and his interpretive categories are informed by the entire counsel of Scripture, Klopfenstein objects to this interpretive stance since, in his view, importing external categories is what leads to Barth's *Überinterpretation* of elements such as the 'lion of Judah' and the shared grave.

In the previous chapter, we saw that various other scholars have also approached 1 Kings 13 from different (and sometimes multiple) angles of enquiry, including the psychological, sociological, structural, rhetorical, source-critical, redaction-critical, historical, theological, and so on. In order to address some of the issues at stake in evaluating these divergent approaches to Scripture, we shall in this chapter review some common hermeneutical dichotomies in biblical scholarship: between text-hermeneutics and author-hermeneutics; between synchronic and diachronic interests; and between canonical and historical priorities. Ultimately, we shall see that problems often stem from a failure to differentiate between the notions of 'scripture is' and 'scripture as'.

It is not my intention to polarise interpreters such as Barth and Klopfenstein, or the readings they proffer by placing them, or others, in stark opposition to one another. Rather, my intention is to build on the previous chapter's claim, using examples from the readings that have been examined, to show that the questions one brings to the text influence what method, or which end of a given spectrum, is best suited to the interpretive task.

Author-Hermeneutics and Text-Hermeneutics

One of the more obvious polarities in hermeneutics has to do with perceptions of objectivity and subjectivity, where the former is often represented by a commitment to determining authorial intent. Stendahl's famous distinction between 'what it

meant' and 'what it means' sought to distinguish between attempts to determine an author's original, intended meaning and what other significations a text may derive over centuries of use (i.e. its *sensus plenior*).¹ Biblical scholarship today continues to be divided on this issue.

One might think that attempts to ascertain authorial intention would necessarily be held lightly, given the paucity of evidence that is available concerning the identities of those in question. This is especially the case with 1 Kings 13, which is often referred to as a 'prophetic legend'—the point being, no one knows its origins. Nonetheless, we observed in the previous chapter that it remains possible to give a very particular answer to the question of authorship: he was an incompetent writer and religiously insensitive Judean who tried to write a piece of anti-Samaritan religious propaganda during the 6th century BC in an effort to discredit any association with worshippers of Yahweh in the north. This kind of assessment, which perceives a direct link between the author's identity and the meaning (or lack thereof) in the text, is a clear example of author-hermeneutics.

For a contemporary reader to make any judgment about the authorial intention behind a text composed in the distant past, it seems to me that a few things must be readily acknowledged: (a) the inevitable influence of conjecture and hypothesis from the reader, who reads with particular questions in mind and who plays a significant role in the interpretive process as the 'filter' or 'grid' through which meaning is determined; (b) the reality that even if the author was accessible to answer the question, *what did you mean by this?*, as Schökel notes, 'the author's psychology is far more complex than a scheme of intention in meaning'²; (c) readers often discover meanings in texts—e.g., through symbolic language and/or because of subsequent historical developments—that their original authors couldn't possibly have

¹ Stendahl, 'Biblical Theology, Contemporary'.

² 'The text is full of meaning that comes from desire, from fantasy, from the author's subconscious, and which is indeed part of the meaning of the text, but which does not pass through the reflective activity of the author's intellect.' Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hermeneutics*. The Biblical Seminar 54 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 35. Cf. Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting The New Testament As Sacred Scripture*. 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), 162-3.

intended. Indeed, as Chapman declares, ‘texts *always* mean something they never could have meant to their authors and (first) readers!’³

In contrast to Van Seters, Barth’s exegesis is informed very little by conjecture about the identity and intentions of the author. All that Barth offers about the story’s origins is that it appears to have come from a different source than its literary context, perhaps from something similar to the Elisha cycles at the beginning of 2 Kings.⁴ Barth makes no claim whatsoever about the historical author. What is determinative for him is the text itself, and he certainly abides by the principle that meanings can transcend authorial intention. It was for this very reason that Barth was criticised by Noth and others for using the text to elucidate the doctrine of election. In chapter two, I set out three primary elements—intertextuality, synchrony and christology—of Barth’s exegetical method. These do not need repeating here, except as a reminder that his exegesis utilises a text-hermeneutic. It will be clear by now that a key question—actually, *the* key question—for Barth in his approach to 1 Kings 13 (or any biblical text, for that matter) is, ‘how is Christ revealed in this text?’ In his Dogmatics, under the heading, *The Time of Expectation*,⁵ Barth describes the Old Testament as a witness to the revelation that is expected in Christ. ‘Revelation itself takes place from beyond the the peculiar context and content of the Old Testament.’⁶ From this perspective, he gives voice to a text-hermeneutic in the strongest language when he states that ‘Jesus Christ is manifest in the Old Testament as the expected One.’⁷ Does Barth see things in the text that were not intended by the author, such as a doctrine of election that is fully made known in Christ, who is both Elect and Rejected? Absolutely.

At the risk of repeating myself, my purpose here is not to evaluate or prioritise these different kinds of enquiry so much as to stress the importance of consciously locating one’s own work in one category or another. To grasp the importance of this,

³ Stephen B. Chapman, ‘Reclaiming Inspiration for the Bible’ in Bartholomew et al (eds) *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2006), 183. Chapman is responding to the following statement made in Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible the Bible for All its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981): ‘a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or his readers.’ (60, emphasis original).

⁴ Barth, *CD* II.2, 393.

⁵ *CD* I.2 §14, 71-101.

⁶ *CD* I.2, 71.

⁷ *CD* II.2, 72.

let us take an example from the previous chapter where the muddling of author- and text-hermeneutics leads to some confusion.

Walsh is a biblical scholar whose essays and books are filled with sharp narratological insights gleaned from close reading of the final form of the text. In the opening pages of his commentary, he states: 'Interpretation of texts in terms of the real author requires an independent access to the historical person that is difficult, if not impossible, in the case of 1 Kings.'⁸ From the outset, then, Walsh gives the impression that his work complies with the rubric of a text-hermeneutic approach. But as we saw in the previous chapter, Walsh sometimes intimates that his observations about concentric structures were in the mind of the author, or at least the implied author. This leaves his readers with the impression that he is not just making observations on a textual level, but that he wants to ascribe them to the mind of the author. For instance, Walsh offers the following categorical analysis of 1 Kings 13.1-10 in his commentary:

The narrator arranged the scene chiastically, although the NRSV's translation is misleading in places and obscures the structure.

- A. Introduction (13:1)
- B. Oracle (13:2)
 - C1. parenthesis: sign given (13:3)
 - C2. King's reaction and punishment (13:4)
 - C1'. Parenthesis: sign fulfilled (13:5)
 - C2'. King's reaction and healing (13:6)
- B'. Invitation and oracle (13:7-9)
- A'. Conclusion (13:10)

Grammatical forms in verses 3 and 5 mark those verses as parenthetical asides by the narrator to the reader.⁹

Here Walsh makes two broad observations and a judgment. He observes that 1 Kings 13.1-10 has a chiastic structure, and that verses 3 and 5 do not report events that occur within the flow of the narrative but are asides to the reader about future confirmations of the oracle. He also evaluates the NRSV translation, calling it 'misleading' because verse 1 is unfaithful to the the Hebrew word order and because

⁸ Walsh, *1 Kings*, xviii.

⁹ *Ibid*, 176.

verses 3 and 5 do not comply with Walsh's second observation. None of these points are without problems.

First, if one sees a chiasm here, it is certainly rather weak. There is no substantive correlation whatsoever between A and A', and the man of God's words in vv 8-9 (B') do not comprise an 'oracle' to match B. In addition to this, the purpose of the proposed chiasm is unclear; i.e. what is brought into focus for the reader?

Regarding his second observation, Walsh's comments about verses 3 and 5 being parenthetical statements represent only one possibility for interpretation and translation—a minority view among scholars—in spite of his dogmatic tone: 'Both the Hebrew grammatical form and the unnecessary introductory words show that we are not to read this statement as a continuation of the oracle in verse 2. Although the NRSV allows for this, its phrasing is not completely clear.'¹⁰ The *Berit Olam* series of commentaries is not overly technical, but Walsh does not offer even a footnote to explain what aspect of 'the Hebrew grammatical form' has led him to this conclusion.¹¹ It certainly is not obvious. In connection with this, it is somewhat confusing that Walsh ascribes structural and grammatical decisions to the narrator, even in spite of being quite clear (in theory) about the distinctions between narrator, implied author and author.¹²

A more problematic aspect of Walsh's analysis presents itself in his discussion of symmetry (e.g. chiasms, envelope structures, alternating repetition) and *asymmetry*. The difficulty is already evident in Walsh's definition: 'The author can create a symmetrical pattern *with a flaw*... not an absence of symmetry, but a flawed symmetry.'¹³ The problem is in the assumption that ancient readers were sufficiently familiar with chiasmic structures (a device that remains questionable in modern scholarship) to be able to recognise an author's use of skewed symmetry as 'a powerful device for manipulating a reader's response to the text.'¹⁴ A clear example of such asymmetry is where a subunit within a chiasmic structure has no counterpart so that, for instance, ABCD is followed by D'C'A' (i.e. No B' is found to reflect B.). In

¹⁰ Ibid, 178.

¹¹ Walsh does offer explanatory footnotes on linguistic and technical matters in other instances; e.g. 40, 248, 266, 316, etc. A few pages later, Walsh changes his tone somewhat and refers to his view about the later destruction of the altar as a 'surmise'. Ibid, 179.

¹² E.g., Walsh, *OT Narrative*, 9, 100-2.

¹³ Ibid, 117.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Walsh's analysis of 1 Kings 13.11-32, an example of 'forward symmetry' that follows a 'developmental structure' (see p 90 in ch. 4), Walsh lists points A to G and then A' to G', but simply inserts an ellipsis at G' since no counterpart to G is present (presumably this would be an excellent example of asymmetry?). Once again, my point is not that it is inconceivable for ancient authors to have ever used such devices, but rather that *since we have no way of knowing*, we must settle for attributing what structures we find to our own imaginations, accepting that many other structures and devices (some of which may conflict with our own) are also identifiable in the same texts. When Walsh directly addresses the subject of symmetrical forms in the Hebrew Bible in his book on *OT Narrative* (2010), he appears appropriately cautious. Regarding rhetorical devices in Hebrew narrative, he concedes that 'there is still much to be done in this area of study; and so we must be aware that, to this point, most results remain more or less tentative.'¹⁵ Nonetheless, in his essays and commentary, Walsh tends to express his opinions with greater certitude than this.

Walsh's commentary is one of the best examples of a narrative-critical approach to Kings available. However, his approach is undergirded by certain unstated assumptions, not least a strong correlation between structure and meaning. The most problematic aspect of Walsh's interpretive work, in my view, is the confusion of text- and author-hermeneutics. Referring to observed symmetries as 'fundamental to the text'¹⁶ does not sit easily with the more widely accepted view that in narrative especially, 'multiple structure is virtually inescapable'.¹⁷ In any case, the merits of Walsh's keen observations are not dependent upon any claims concerning authorial intent.

As a concluding word to this discussion, it is important to note that the move from author-hermeneutics to text-hermeneutics comprises a critical hermeneutical turn, but not one that ousts the significance of the author from the exegetical task. In Schökel's words, 'it is not correct to understand text-hermeneutics as an exact substitute for author-hermeneutics, where the primacy of the text would replace that of the author. Author, text, and others, are joint factors in an ample universe: they are correlative elements involved in a single whole, where other decisive

¹⁵ Ibid, 108.

¹⁶ Walsh, 'Contexts', 369.

¹⁷ Leithart, *Deep Exegesis*, 143.

factors coexist in literary interpretation.’¹⁸ Exegetical attempts to ascertain authorial intent via historical-critical methods therefore remain worthwhile and potentially informative, especially if one seeks to balance the multiple perspectives of author, text, and reader.¹⁹ The prioritisation of these factors depends, rather, on what the interpreter seeks to discover in her encounter with the text. Numerous lines of inquiry are available: ‘The author’s experience? The text as the author’s objectivation? My existence at a critical juncture?’²⁰ Again, a self-conscious statement from the interpreter locating his or her work on the spectrum between author- and text-hermeneutics is of prime importance.

Historical-critical and Canonical Approaches

Historical-critical approaches to interpretation tend not only to emphasise the importance of the author, but also to place significant weight on the date of a text’s composition for the determination of meaning. Again, my purpose here is not to set historical and canonical approaches against one another. (This would not be possible at any rate, since any theory of canon formation is of necessity an historical formulation.) Rather, my purpose is to highlight some of the pitfalls in attempting to date texts such as 1 Kings 13 with any degree of certainty, and to evaluate the historicist assumptions that undergird many such attempts. We shall then consider some of the hermeneutical implications of Childs’ theory of canon formation.

The authors reviewed in the previous chapter present a range of viewpoints on the most probable date of composition for our narrative. Walsh’s narrative-critical commentary notes the inaccessibility of the ‘real author’ and makes no attempt to date the composition of Kings. Rather, he begins his commentary by noting that the composition of Kings has its own history; ‘a series of creative author-editors selected, rearranged, combined, and sometimes thoroughly reshaped the source materials to produce, eventually, a continuous text. Later editors revised this text in light of the concerns of subsequent generations...’²¹ This summary has some clear affinities with Childs’ theory of canon formation, as we shall see shortly. Given the synchronic nature of his commentary, there is little need for Walsh to venture

¹⁸ Schökel, *Manual*, 28.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 34-9.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 28.

²¹ Walsh, *1 Kings*, xi.

beyond this general statement. Similarly, Boer offers a concise review of the three main views propagated since Noth, but does not push for a particular date. Of the search for a precise compositional history and context for the final form of the DH, he simply says:

Such specific locations in time and place, and the search for ever more redactions or the fine-tuning of existing ones, rely on evidence that is far too meager and which the nature of the biblical text itself shortcircuits... Yet the texts with their tantalizing hints of compositional layers keep inducing people to pursue such studies.²²

Boer, too, is content to identify the final shape of the DH with 'the more amorphous situation of the final redaction—the exile,'²³ a social situation that adds a certain poignancy to his study of national and political allegory. Crenshaw's reading of 1 Kings 13 supports a sociological theory about the decline of prophecy in ancient Israel, but he does not tie the authorship of Kings to a particular date. He suggests loosely that an oral tradition 'has been added by the Deuteronomic compiler (or perhaps a subsequent editor) after Josiah's reform.'²⁴

Van Seters is the most precise, as we have seen. He insists on an exilic date for the composition of the DH, but a post-exilic date for both the composition *and* redaction of 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23.15-20 (as well as 2 Kgs 17.24-34; 23.4b). Contrary to the Cross school, which sees 1 Kings 13 as a pre-existing text (*viz.* midrash or legend) that was redacted into Kings to support Josiah's reforms,²⁵ Van Seters argues that these texts were written in the post-exilic period to vilify the Bethel temple and the Samaritan community because of the continuing use of Jeroboam's places of worship. Since Van Seters is the most particular in dating the composition of 1 Kings 13, I shall engage primarily with his arguments before also reviewing some of the hermeneutical suppositions undergirding his method. Van Seters gives the following three reasons for asserting that 1 Kings 13 is a post-exilic *composition*:

(a) From a redaction-critical perspective, the repeated phrase, 'and this thing became a sin' (12.30; 13.34) indicates that the text between these references has been

²² Boer, *Jeroboam*, 145.

²³ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁴ Crenshaw, *Prophetic Conflict*, 43.

²⁵ Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 278-9. More explicit on this point is his student, Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience'.

inserted into the DH via *Wiederaufnahme*.²⁶ And since 2 Kgs 23.15-20 forms a natural epilogue to 1 Kings 13, Van Seters regards both texts to have been inserted at the same time. In addition, since 2 Kgs 17.24-34 uses similar terminology and expresses the same anti-Samaritan sentiment, he considers that text also to have come from the same hand and to have been inserted at a similar late date.

(b) Drawing on Rofé's work, Van Seters also argues for a late date on account of the content and vocabulary of these texts. Apparently, many of the phrases (e.g., *בְּעָרֵי שְׁמֶרֶן / בְּרֶבֶר יְהוּדָה*) and themes (e.g., a prophet interceding for an evil king rather than pronouncing judgment on him) are uncharacteristic of Dtr and thereby suggest a different author.

(c) Van Seters insists also that Josiah's reforms never actually took place in Bethel or the surrounding cities of Samaria. He cites archaeological evidence in support of the view that cult centralisation and other reforms were restricted to Judah (i.e. 'from Geba to Beersheba' in accordance with 2 Kgs 23.8) and that since Josiah's northern reforms were not an historical reality, these later interpolations must serve a purpose other than religio-political propaganda for Josianic reform.

Van Seters' arguments are internally coherent, and he is not the first to designate 1 Kings 13 as a secondary, post-Dtr interpolation.²⁷ But his reasoning is problematic. First, the identification of 1 Kings 13 as an instance of *Wiederaufnahme* is a neutral observation, which may be—and has been—used to argue for 1 Kings 13 as a pre-exilic or a post-exilic redaction.²⁸ Similarly, his second argument, citing a study of terminology that indicates post-exilic composition,²⁹ is debatable since the story's vocabulary has also been used to assign the final form of the redacted story to

²⁶ See fn. 167 in chapter four and the beginning of chapter seven.

²⁷ So Iain Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW, 172; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 81; McKenzie, *Trouble*, 55.

²⁸ If the framing verses, which apparently contain Dtr language, are included with the intervening story, then 1 Kings 12.30-13.34 may be seen as pre-exilic (i.e. Deuteronomistic). So Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience', 306f. However, if the editor is understood to have made an interpolation without editing the surrounding verses, then 1 Kings 13 (without 12.30-33 or 13.33-34) may be understood as a post-exilic redaction. So McKenzie, *Trouble*, 52-3. But scholars could also argue that a later editor, wishing to insert the story as smoothly as possible, copied the style of Dtr in the surrounding verses, resulting in an insertion that we hardly recognise as an insertion. Cf. the beginning of chapter seven on *Wiederaufnahme*.

²⁹ A. Rofé, 'Classes in the Prophetic Stories', 143-64.

Josiah's day.³⁰ As Wellhausen observed, it is often very difficult to distinguish between what he called pre-canonical [*vorkanonischer*] and post-canonical [*nachkanonischer*] redactions,³¹ and evidence can be garnered for either position. Thirdly, Van Seters cites archaeological evidence to deny that Josiah's reforms occurred, but archaeological evidence also exists in support of the opposite viewpoint.³²

In any case, the problem is less with the claim that 1 Kings 13 was written in the post-exilic period, than with a certain brand of historicism. The three arguments offered by Van Seters constitute an attempt to establish 1 Kings 13 as a post-exilic text *in order to locate its meaning within a particular time and place*. But as Benjamin Sommer has recently shown in a perceptive essay on the perils of pseudo-historicism,³³ it is a methodological fallacy to think 'that meaning must be correlated with a particular historical event, that history, and *only* history or at least *primarily* history, explains the theme of a literary text.'³⁴ This kind of approach binds texts to narrow historical windows and then reads them through thick (i.e. controlling) lenses.³⁵ Sommer points out a second, related assumption as well: 'when scholars claim that a text is obviously appropriate for a particular moment in history, they are often correct, but they fail to acknowledge that the idea or text is equally

³⁰ So Lemke, 'Way of Obedience', 303-4. Lemke's proposal for a Dtr redaction rests on the use of six phrases that he believes to be consistent with Dtr's theology and work: 'cities of Samaria'; 'priests of the high places'; 'shrines of the high places'; 'to rebel against the mouth of the LORD'; 'to keep the commandment'; and 'to turn [or return] from/by the way' (306-12). He thus argues that 1 Kings 13 has been redacted into a pre-exilic version of the DH (Cross's Dtr¹) in support of Josiah's northern reforms—the very position that Van Seters is seeking to undermine. Thus, some scholars use the style and vocabulary of 1 Kings 13 to assert an early date, while other use precisely the same means to insist that it is a late text.

³¹ Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (3rd ed.; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1899), 262: '...wie denn überhaupt zwischen vorkanonischer und nachkanonischer Diaskeue kaum eine Grenze zu ziehen ist.' Wellhausen was of the view that 1 Kgs 13 represents a late addition to the corpus of material we now call the DH. He perceives 13.33 as the continuation [*Fortsetzung*] of 12.31 so that 12.32—13.31 are the boundaries of the redacted story, a midrash which is most likely an attempt to explain the grave of a Judean in Bethel. *Die Composition*, 277-278.

³² E.g., Dever, 'The Silence of the Text', 143-58; Ibid, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know it?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 159-243. See also Jesse Long, *1 Kings* (2002), 508ff., and the references there.

³³ B. Sommer, 'Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism,' in (eds) T. Dozeman *et al*, *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 85-110.

³⁴ Ibid, 90-1.

³⁵ E.g., McKenzie acknowledges plainly, 'The question of the DH's purpose has always been treated in conjunction with its date.' *Trouble*, 149.

appropriate for some other moment as well.³⁶ The problematic implication with this kind of historicism (Sommer calls it *pseudo-historicism*) is that ideas are perceived to 'belong' to moments in time.³⁷ But the process of canonisation itself resists the historicist assumption that dating a text will *ipso facto* expose its true meaning when biblical texts have been preserved within the canon for the very purpose of resonating again—perhaps even more deeply—among future generations in contexts other than that in which they originated. Childs pinpoints the issue thus: 'Often the assumption that the theological point must be related to an original intention within a reconstructed historical context runs directly in the face of the literature's explicit statement of its function within the final form of the biblical text.'³⁸ Childs' statement is especially relevant to interpreters who, like Van Seters, historicise texts like 1 Kings 13, leaving one with the impression that it can signify nothing other than what the hypothesised author intended. But the divergence between Childs and Van Seters on where meaning resides (in the text itself or its author) stems from their different views regarding the purpose of redaction criticism.

As the title of Van Seters' essay suggests—'The Deuteronomistic History: Can it Avoid Death by Redaction?'—he wishes to address the dismantling of Noth's unified DH by those who identify redaction seams everywhere throughout the work (*viz.* the Göttingen school). In Van Seters' opinion, redaction criticism would be put to better use by identifying and bracketing out extraneous blocks of text that are non-Deuteronomistic in style and content (such as 1 Kings 13) in order to gain 'much greater clarity about the limits and nature of DtrH.'³⁹ He concludes his essay with this word of counsel:

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.

³⁶ Sommer, 'Dating Pentateuchal Texts,' 94. In addition: 'if we find a particular set of values in a text, does this mean that the text was written when those values were ascendant? Or does it mean that the text was written when those values were under attack — or even when they had been lost altogether?' (101)

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 98. Sommer also makes the related point that 'an eighth-century thinker may think a sixth-century thought.' (104)

³⁸ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 75.

³⁹ Van Seters, 'Death by Redaction?', 221. Similarly, McKenzie, *Trouble*, 147-50.

Redaction criticism need not be the death of 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.⁴⁰

Van Seters thus opposes the Göttingen school's tendency to fragment the text through recourse to DtrP, DtrN, DtrG, and so on.⁴¹ In support of Noth's thesis, he rightly reinforces Dtr's competence as an historian capable of literary sophistication and multiple points of view over and against the notion that complexity must necessarily be the result of multiple redactions.⁴² Van Seters' goal—'to identify the large amount of later additions and to retrieve the core work'—which he helpfully makes explicit, is entirely legitimate. But while he criticises the Cross school for bracketing out 2 Kings 23.21-25.30 from the DH, he himself brackets out 1 Kings 13; 2 Kings 17.24-34; 23.4b,15-20, and does so on the basis of equally 'dubious principles'.

I do not wish to question Van Seters' supposition that *the DH's unity and consistency of perspective will become apparent only through retrieval of the core work*. That may well be true—were such a retrieval possible. However, his statement concerning 'the first task of redaction criticism' suggests that he views the redacted, canonical text as a problem to be fixed in order to have its meaning restored, and it is important to recognise that not all biblical scholars share this view regarding the purpose of redaction criticism, since not all view the recovery of a hypothetical 'core work' as the goal. For those seeking to understand the text in its received form, as 'an artist's final composition which transcends the sketches,'⁴³ the goal is quite different. Certainly, this is true for Childs: 'The canonical approach is concerned to understand the nature of the theological shape of the text rather than to recover an original literary or aesthetic unity.'⁴⁴

Since Childs aims to understand the canonical text as mature, theological reflection, he perceives the purpose of redaction criticism in entirely different terms;

⁴⁰ Van Seters, 'Death by Redaction?', 222.

⁴¹ For a summary of views on the development of the DH, see Provan, *Hezekiah* (1988), 2-31.

⁴² See esp. Van Seters, *The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the "Editor" in Biblical Criticism* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 260ff; Cf. McConville, 'Narrative and Meaning in the Books of Kings' *Biblica* 70 (1989), 31-49.

⁴³ Moberly, 'The Canon of the OT From a Western Perspective: Some Historical and Hermeneutical Reflections from the Western Perspective', in *Das Alte Testament als christliche Bibel in orthodoxer und westlicher Sicht* (WUNT 174; ed. I. Z. Dimitrou et al., Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 250.

⁴⁴ Childs, *Introduction*, 74.

‘the canonical approach seeks to employ the tool of redaction criticism to the extent that it aids in a more precise hearing of the edited text, but at the same time seeking to understand the expressed intentionality of that interpreted text.’⁴⁵ Childs is less interested in working backwards, in an attempt to discover what shape 1 Kings 13—or the entire DH for that matter—might have once had, let alone the precise origins of its source material.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, he maintains that synchronic readings of texts can be enriched by paying attention to redaction seams and compositional process. The basic difference is that Childs uses redaction criticism to attain a better understanding of the text in its *final form* whereas Van Seters uses redaction criticism to retrieve a *core work* from ‘beneath’ it. At the risk of repeating myself, each of these lines of enquiry is legitimate; the point is that interpreters do well to be clear about their agenda and priorities when engaging with biblical texts.

Before concluding this section, it will be worthwhile to reflect for a moment on Childs’ understanding of the nexus between these historical-critical and canonical dimensions of biblical studies. It is well known that Childs did not develop a theory about the compositional history of the biblical canon out of historical interest only, but also because of its theological and hermeneutical implications.⁴⁷ His fundamental observation in this regard was that Israel not only shaped the canon for future generations, but was also shaped *by* the canon.⁴⁸ In Childs’ words, ‘the process of the canonization of the Hebrew Bible was closely related to the concern to render the sacred tradition in such a way as to serve future generations of Israel as authoritative Scripture.’⁴⁹ As redactions were made over time, however, the evidence (or lack thereof) would suggest that the editors sought not to make their identities known, preferring rather to keep future readers focused on the sacred writings themselves.⁵⁰ As Childs famously put it, ‘basic to the canonical process is

⁴⁵ Ibid, 300.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 301.

⁴⁷ See Ibid, 53-9; idem, ‘Analysis of a Canonical Formula: “It shall be recorded for a future generation”’ in *Hebräisch Bibel Und Ihre Zweifache Nachtgeschichte* (ed. E. Blum; Neukirchen - Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 358-64.

⁴⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 41. Also see idem, ‘A Study of the Formula “Until this Day”’, *JBL* 82 (1963), 279- 92, where he argues that what is at stake in surmising the nature of this canonical process is the very *definition* of canon. Cf. Chapman, ‘Reclaiming Inspiration’, 169; idem, *The Law and the Prophets: A Study in Old Testament Canon Formation*, FAT 27 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 45.

⁴⁹ Childs, ‘Analysis’, 358.

⁵⁰ Childs, *Introduction*, 59.

that those responsible for the actual editing of the text did their best to obscure their own identity. Thus the actual process by which the text was reworked lies in almost total obscurity.⁵¹ Rather than reconstructing the text's compositional history, then, as Wellhausen had done, Childs' canonical approach places the emphasis upon *Israel's construal of her own history*. Reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture therefore means resisting the historical-critical tendency to extract and de-canonise texts so as to place them in a particular historical context since that kind of exegetical work effectively reverses the very process that gave shape and focus to the texts we have.

More than that, given the implicit 'canon-consciousness' [*Kanonbewußtsein*] of the entire process, Childs stressed that the 'canonical process often assigned a function to the literature as a whole which transcended its parts. The collection acquired a theological role in instructing, admonishing, and edifying a community of faith, and that altered its original semantic level.'⁵² From this canonical frame of reference, then, theocentric interpretation of Scripture ought not be seen simply as fideistic, since it takes its cues from an *historical* premise; namely, that the development of Israel's canon was itself governed by a theocentric perspective.⁵³ An important, prevailing implication of Childs' work is that interpretations of texts may be evaluated according to how well they resonate with this canon-conscious hermeneutical trajectory that is intrinsic to the canonical process.⁵⁴ We may note, accordingly, that Childs endorses Barth's reading of 1 Kings 13 for accenting the

⁵¹ Ibid, 78. This kind of hypothesis bears similarities to Barton's notion of a 'disappearing redactor'. John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament. Method in Biblical Study* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), 56-8.

⁵² Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 22-23.

⁵³ In evangelical terms, the theocentric perspective governing the canonical process is attributed to the people of God under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Chapman, 'Reclaiming Inspiration', explores the implications of the process of editing and canonisation for a Christian doctrine of inspiration. 'A canonically oriented view of inspiration, one that is suggested and even warranted by the historical study of canon formation, retains room for the transcendent but sees the divine-human encounter as occurring over a lengthier period of time and as including more people than just one author alone.' (172)

⁵⁴ Childs, 'Analysis', 363; cf. Chapman, *Law and Prophets*, 47. One may object, as James Barr has, that texts do not have intentions, people do, such that Childs appears to downplay *authorial* intention but then grant *canonical* intention. In Chapman's monograph, he resolves this issue to some extent in his development of the hermeneutical significance of canon-consciousness for understanding the subcollections of Law and Prophets in the Hebrew Bible. Chapman emphasises tensions (i.e. the multiplicity of voices) over singular, ideological motifs, stressing that 'canons *subvert* ideals just as much as they enshrine them' by preserving alternative viewpoints (95). See esp. 71f.

story's 'paradigmatic significance', based on its literary placement within the canon.⁵⁵

Synchronic and Diachronic Priorities

Noth's landmark study of the Deuteronomistic History in 1943⁵⁶ was a diachronic work of *literarkritik* (not to be confused with the 'new' literary studies), focusing on 'stratum',⁵⁷ 'threads'⁵⁸ and 'source materials'⁵⁹ behind the editing and redaction of the DH. At the same time, however, Noth emphasised Dtr's 'carefully conceived plan'⁶⁰ for the entire history, so that in hindsight his monograph may be seen as an early sign of the shift that would later take place in Old Testament scholarship from diachronic to synchronic studies.⁶¹ The only element of Noth's thesis that was original to him (which is now the most disputed) was that the entire work was pieced together by a single Deuteronomist, who 'was not simply an editor but the author.'⁶² This focus on the homogeneity of the entire work paved the way for subsequent Deuteronomistic studies to focus less on the history's internal seams and more on overarching structural motifs, such as the speeches framework and certain *leitmotifs*. Indeed, the identification of such unifying concepts has been an important element in subsequent studies of the DH.⁶³ Noth's rather negative view of the DH as a theological rationale for exile has since been balanced by von Rad's emphasis on

⁵⁵ Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 142.

⁵⁶ Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (1943: DT/1981: ET); hereon, *The DH*.

⁵⁷ Noth, *The DH*, 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 8.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 10.

⁶¹ As early as 1938, von Rad lamented the apparent 'irreversibility' [*Nichtumkehrbarkeit*] of the 'process of disintegration' [*Auflösungsprozess*] that characterised Hexateuchal studies in his day, and the associated neglect of the text's 'final form' [*Letztgestalt*]. Von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938), 1. On the roles played by Gunkel, Noth and von Rad in the shift from internal textual issues to overarching structural motifs, see Rolf Rendtorff, 'The Paradigm is Changing: Hopes—and Fears', *Bib Int* 1.1 (1993), 34-53.

⁶² Noth, *The DH*, 10.

⁶³ See, e.g., Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

the promise-fulfilment schema,⁶⁴ Wolff's emphasis on the theme of repentance,⁶⁵ and Cross's observation that the promise to David and the sin of Jeroboam are twin themes throughout the history.⁶⁶

Barth's exegetical work in the 1940s and 1950s focused on texts in their received form, but as we have seen, his exegetical endeavours were not well-received by Old Testament scholars due to his perceived hermeneutical naivety and lack of interest in historical-critical issues. Nonetheless, in hindsight it is clear that he was ahead of his time. Indeed, it would have been interesting to see the nature of Barth's engagement with the literary turn that began in the 1970s if he had lived a decade longer. By the early 1980s, a renewed focus on the final form of the text had been established, not least in Robert Alter's highly influential work, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981), which was essentially a compilation of essays published between 1975 and 1980.⁶⁷ Jewish scholars, drawing on rabbinic exegesis which tends to emphasise the text's potential for imaginative linkage, have led the way in outlining a methodology for the new literary criticism.⁶⁸ But a certain sense of relief was expressed by a number of Old Testament scholars about the methodological shift taking place, since the historical-critical method was perceived in some circles as having failed to ascertain much about the world behind the text with any degree of certainty.⁶⁹ In an essay written at the end of the 20th century, entitled, 'The Paradigm is Changing: Hopes and Fears,' Rolf Rendtorff, a former student of von Rad, expressed his concerns about scholarship's ongoing obsession with dating texts and doing little that is innovative except perhaps finding new ways to get 'behind' the text:

I want to stress that taking a synchronic approach to the text in its given shape is a task Old Testament scholarship has neglected too long and too intentionally.

⁶⁴ von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (trans. David Stalker; London: SCM Press, 1953), 74-91.

⁶⁵ Hans Walter Wolff, 'The Kerygma of the Deuteronomical Historical Work.' in Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff, *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions* (2nd ed.; Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 83-100.

⁶⁶ Cross, *Canaanite Myth* (1973). But see Provan's insightful critique of these themes that undergird Cross's double-redaction hypothesis; *Hezekiah*, 28-9.

⁶⁷ See Alter, *Art*, x-xi.

⁶⁸ Alter, *Art*; Sternberg, *Poetics*; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond, 1983); Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*.

⁶⁹ See David M. Gunn, 'New Directions in the Study of Biblical Hebrew Narrative', *JSOT* 39 (1987), 65-75.

Scholars still seem to be proud of knowing things better than the final redactors or compilers. This is a kind of nineteenth-century hubris we should have left behind us. The last writers, whatever we want to call them, were, in any case, much closer to the original meaning of the text than we can ever be. From time to time we should remember what Franz Rosenzweig taught us: that the letter "R", as usually taken for the "redactor", actually should be read as "Rabbenu", "our master". For we receive the text from the hands of these last writers, and they are the ones whose voice and message we have to hear first.⁷⁰

The most radical shift with the transition from diachronic to synchronic analysis is what Sternberg describes as a change of focus from *genesis* to *poesis*. Regarding *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Sternberg states with confidence: 'this book will repeatedly show that what has been decomposed by geneticists makes a poetic and purposive composition.'⁷¹ His interpretive endeavours thus seek to elucidate a sophisticated scheme of poetics, i.e. how the text generates meaning (in a purposeful manner).

The distinction between these two modes of analysis is most evident when dealing with dissonance in the Hebrew Bible, since in many cases dissonance may be understood either in *diachronic* terms pertaining to its genesis (e.g., the redaction of conflicting sources), or in *synchronic* terms that illuminate the text's poetics (e.g., rhetorical devices whose significance readers can learn to identify and comprehend). To take one simple example from 1 Kings 13, the lack of any reference to King Jeroboam in vv 11-32 has led some diachronic interpreters to the understanding that vv 1-10 and vv 11-32 were originally two independent legends that have at some stage been amalgamated.⁷² Synchronic readers, on the other hand (without necessarily discounting the possibility of multiple sources), focus on the way the threefold prohibition is distributed throughout the chapter as a whole (vv 5, 9, 17) and the way in which the two parts of the story make little sense without one another.⁷³ We will consider a further example in greater detail—the widely recognised 'envelope' structure of 1 Kings 13—in the next chapter.

⁷⁰ Rolf Rendtorff, 'The Paradigm is Changing', 52. Driver notes the wide-reaching impact of this citation from Rosenzweig in *Brevard Childs, Biblical Theologian*, 132.

⁷¹ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 517, fn. 9.

⁷² So G. Jones, *I and II Kings*, Vol. 1, 261; McKenzie, *Trouble*, 54f.

⁷³ So De Vries, *I Kings*, 169-70.

Another key difference between synchronic and diachronic approaches pertains to the different ‘worlds’ they negotiate. Approaches dealing with the final form of the text focus on the world *within* the text, whereas diachronic methods are more interested in accessing the world *behind* the text. (Reader-response approaches, in turn, deal with the world *in front of* the text.) From this perspective, synchronic methods that engage the world within the text with full, imaginative seriousness necessarily place a significant degree of trust in the literary competence of the author or final editor, while diachronic analyses are more interested in reconstructing the historical world that gave rise to the text. Van Seters’ diachronic approach to 1 Kings 13 thus leads him to conclude that the difficulties one has in reading the story ‘are the result of a lack of literary skill by the author.’⁷⁴ Although he initially attempts to understand the text in its received form according to what he considers to be a reasonable *poetics*, Van Seters turns to a critical evaluation of its *genesis* when the text continues to perplex him. Seeking an explanation for his list of sixteen problems in 1 Kings 13, he offers three suggestions: (i) the author used a hodge-podge of sources (P, Chronicles, Jonah); (ii) the text is not regular historical narrative, but represents another genre (e.g., irony, parody, satire); (iii) the author tried his hand at intertextuality but lacked proficiency there, too. The point, in any case, is that Van Seters seeks to resolve the problematic nature of the text by recourse to the world behind it; *viz.*, to the author’s inability to write well. He evidently does not share Rendtorff’s sentiment about trusting “R”, that the final form of the text is a purposeful composition.⁷⁵

In contrast, while Sternberg concedes (in principle) that literary analysis ought to include a serious grappling with the prehistory of a text, he expresses great frustration with ‘geneticists’ who take incongruities in the text and come up with fantastical hypotheses: ‘Rarely has there been such a futile expense of spirit in a noble cause; rarely have such grandiose theories of origination been built and revised and pitted against one another on the evidential equivalent of the head of a pin; rarely have so many worked so long and so hard with so little to show for their

⁷⁴ Van Seters, ‘On Reading,’ 233.

⁷⁵ This is not to say that theological tensions and discrepancies between source materials were necessarily smoothed over. As Chapman argues in *The Law and the Prophets*, the biblical tradents made redactions according to a ‘theological grammar’ that allowed—or rather, *ensured*—the expression of ‘a range of ideals’ (96).

trouble.⁷⁶ Even the Deuteronomist, he says, leads only a speculative existence as a (widely accepted) construct of geneticism.⁷⁷

The narrative-critical approach championed by Sternberg, among others, seeks to grasp a sense of intentionality in a narrative's details, even when it is not immediately apparent. Readers thereby place greater trust in the narrator's voice, and by implication in the author's literary competence. When a text befuddles the reader, a degree of sophistication is assumed and the text is probed from various angles until an 'aha!' moment occurs. To put it otherwise, what Van Seters perceives as indicators of authorial incompetence, synchronic readers treat as 'narrative gaps', an aspect of Hebrew narrative that is considered crucial for engaging readers and thickening the plot. For most narratologists, this approach entails a high level of trust in the narrator, whom narrative critics consider 'omniscient'.⁷⁸ Sternberg, for his part, describes this 'absolutely and straightforwardly reliable'⁷⁹ narrator who is able to report from any character's point of view, as 'a textual reflex of the Israelite conception of unrestricted divine knowledge'.⁸⁰ From this vantage point, it is inconceivable that Sternberg would ask, as Van Seters does, 'Why is it that the word of Yahweh does not come directly to the man of God?'⁸¹—except as a rhetorical question. Synchronic interpreters tend not to challenge or question the narrator (much less the author behind the narrator) when the reader is met with difficulty. Sternberg assumes, rather, that filling narrative gaps is an important part of the reader's contribution to the task of discovering (or making) meaning. To question an unexpected detail in the plot is like asking why Rumpelstiltskin is able to weave straw into gold. If a child inquires about the story in this way, we are likely to say, 'That's just a necessary part of the story, but it's not the point. Keep listening...'

Sternberg's level of confidence in the narrator is not without problems, however, for even among advocates of a narratological approach, not all agree on the notion

⁷⁶ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 13.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁸ Walsh, *OT Narrative*, 44-45; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 17-23; Berlin, *Poetics*, 52; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 84f., 153f., *passim*.

⁷⁹ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 51.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸¹ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 229. Van Seters laments further: 'The author contradicts all of the norms of prophecy but still wants us to take the prophetic oracles seriously. How the story can teach any "lessons" about true and false prophets of obedience to the word of God is hard to imagine.'

of an omniscient narrator. While in theory, Sternberg emphasises the importance of the reader for *poesis*, he has been squarely challenged about whether his schema places too much faith in the narrator and also whether he denies readers permission to entertain readings that differ from Sternberg's own. In an essay entitled, 'Reading Right: Reliable and Omniscient Narrator, Omniscient God, and Foolproof Composition in the Hebrew Bible',⁸² David Gunn resists Sternberg's notion of 'foolproof composition, whereby the discourse strives to open and bring home its essentials to all readers.'⁸³ Gunn does not agree with the premise that narrators are 'absolutely and straightforwardly reliable' nor with the ramification that readers will therefore always be able to grasp 'the point of it all'.⁸⁴ Sternberg's claim, which effectively equates the narrator's point of view with the divine perspective, leaves very little room for texts that are inconsistent with one another and even less for the notion of an ironic narrator. His *poetics* thereby preclude from the outset a reading like that of David Marcus, who interprets 1 Kings 13 as parody.⁸⁵ Even so, there is a significant difference between Van Seters, whose questions press beneath or beyond the world of the text to the historical circumstances that gave rise to it, and Gunn, whose objection pertains to a proper understanding of the narrator's role within the world of the text.

Bernard Levinson also finds Sternberg's mode of synchronic interpretation problematic, though for different reasons to Gunn. In Levinson's view, insisting that all anomalies in texts can be explained as purposive, artistic *decisions* prevents the Bible's history of composition from having its own, distinct voice. As he puts it, 'the exclusive derivation of the text from a single author / narrator, even if only maintained for heuristic purposes, risks returning a modernizing scholarship to the pre-critical, midrashic method of the early rabbis who, for dogmatic reasons, were constrained to avoid the intimations of literary history within the Pentateuch.'⁸⁶

⁸² David Gunn, 'Reading Right: Reliable and Omniscient Narrator, Omniscient God, and Foolproof Composition in the Hebrew Bible' in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (eds. David J. A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl, and Stanley E. Porter; JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 85-101.

⁸³ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 50.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 51.

⁸⁵ David Marcus, 'Elements of Ridicule'.

⁸⁶ Bernard Levinson, 'The Right Chorale: From the Poetics to the Hermeneutics of the Hebrew Bible' in *"The Right Chorale": Studies in Biblical Law and Interpretation* (FAT 54. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 24.

Levinson therefore warns against using diachronic analysis only to illuminate the world *behind* the text, since such a view fails to attend to the development of the canon and its implications for reading the Bible in its received form.⁸⁷ Rather, diachronic and synchronic methods should both come into consideration even when interpreting the text on its own terms. Levinson's argument resonates in some sense with the canonical approach of Childs, for whom an exclusively synchronic approach risks detracting from 'the full history of revelation.'⁸⁸ As Childs famously put it: 'To work with the final stage of the text is not to lose the historical dimension, but it is rather to make a critical, theological judgment regarding the process. The depth dimension aids in understanding the interpreted text, and does not function independently of it.'⁸⁹ Levinson thus provides a helpful corrective to simplistic notions of the final form of the text as 'all that really matters', wherein the impact of the canonical process on the received form is effectively discounted. The critical issue here is that even if one gives a certain priority to the final form of the text because of its canonical status as the material with which every scholar must begin his or her program, problems arise when diachronic and synchronic approaches are seen to be mutually exclusive, or when the canonical text is rendered autonomous via excessive distancing from its origins.⁹⁰

Even if one exhibits a greater confidence in the author of 1 Kings 13 than Van Seters, he nonetheless raises the important question of how to read when an 'omniscient narrator' leaves such considerable gaps in the narrative that the story becomes exceedingly difficult to understand without some degree of psychologising or guesswork. Needless to say, 1 Kings 13 is exemplary in this regard!⁹¹ The making of meaning with regards to this story requires that numerous gaps in the plot be filled in by the reader; e.g., what motivates the Bethel prophet to act deceitfully toward the man of God?; why is the man of God killed for disobedience when he was responding obediently to a prophet's word? (After all, in 1 Kings 20, a prophet

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 73.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 76.

⁹⁰ On distancing, see Paul Ricoeur, 'The Hermeneutical Function of Distancing' in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*, eds. Paul Ricoeur and John B. Thompson (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 131-44.

⁹¹ For a recent interpretation that 'psychologises' both the man of God and the Bethel prophet, see Lasine, *Weighing Hearts*, 93-114.

is killed by a lion for *not* doing what a prophet tells him!⁹²) Where gaps appear too wide for readers to fill with confidence, interpretive possibilities are multiplied, and as Van Seters suggests, intertexts or inner biblical allusions comprise one possibility for filling such gaps.⁹³

It is evident from the preceding discussion that the divergence between synchronic and diachronic approaches is not a simple matter, but rather one that involves a range of factors. Nonetheless, since the divergence often arises because of dissonance between the world *within* the text and the world *behind* the text, it is important (once again) for the interpreter to be explicit about which of these takes priority for their project. Van Winkle exemplifies this clarity of intention when establishing a synchronic approach to 1 Kings 13:

If our focus is the final form of the text, we cannot allow hypotheses about the history of Israelite religion to influence the interpretation of the text so that we ignore material in the text or introduce information into the text that is contrary to the viewpoint of the narrator. Thus the theory that Israel's cult was centralized later than the time of Jeroboam should not lead us to ignore the narrator's view that Jeroboam violated the law of the central sanctuary. Knowledge of the archaeology of Syria and Palestine should not lead us to read into the story that Jeroboam merely made a place for Yahweh to dwell rather than making idols. While the cult may have been centralized later, and while Jeroboam may have made a throne for Yahweh rather than an idol, since the narrator does not introduce these elements, since our attention is on the final form of the text, and since these hypotheses are contrary to the author's perspective, we ought not allow these views to color our interpretation.⁹⁴

Van Winkle thus helpfully differentiates between questions pertaining to the world *within* and the world *behind* the text, and prioritises the narrator's assertions according to his purpose and interests. When interpreters lay their cards on the table like this, it certainly facilitates better understanding and dialogue among biblical scholars, even—or perhaps, *especially*—when their methodologies differ. As Moberly put it some years ago, 'the crucial question, which is prior to questions of method

⁹² Ibid, 104-5.

⁹³ Intertextuality is itself a major area of study within biblical studies. On the distinction between author-oriented and text-oriented intertexts, see Geoffrey Miller, 'Intertextuality in Old Testament Research,' *CBR* 9/3 (2011), 283-309; on the reasons for an author's use of intertexts, see Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Contraversions: Jews and Other Differences; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998). Note Sommer's assertion: 'The weighing of such evidence (and hence the identification of allusions) is an art, not a science.' (35)

⁹⁴ Van Winkle, '1 Kings XII 25-XIII 34' (1996), 101-2.

and sets the context for them, is that of purpose and goal. To put it simply, *how we use the Bible depends on why we use the Bible*. In practice, many of the disagreements about how are, in effect, disagreements about why, and failure to recognize this leads to endless confusion.⁹⁵

'Scripture is' and 'Scripture as'

We began this chapter with a brief review of the methodological divergence between Barth's literary-theological priorities and Klopfenstein's historical-critical approach. For Barth and Klopfenstein, as indeed for the interpreters we examined in the preceding chapter, the reasons for their differences have less to do with academic competence than they have to do with the questions and priorities of each interpreter. We have observed this both in the exegetical treatments of the preceding chapter and in our discussion of hermeneutics above.

Our present context of hermeneutical pluralism requires that biblical interpreters make evaluations and judgments regarding the multivalence and the competing construals of any given text. This is so because, as we have seen, there are a number of interpretive foci that must be held in tension: author- and text-hermeneutics; historical-critical and canonical approaches; synchronic and diachronic priorities. Addressing this state of affairs, Richard Briggs makes a simple but profoundly helpful suggestion. 'Rather than talking bluntly about what "scripture is"', he offers, 'we might better learn to speak of "scripture as" whenever we want to offer judgments or criteria regarding the responsible interpretation of scripture.'⁹⁶ If nothing else, this advice ensures that interpreters are on the same page, as it were, before engaging with one another's exegeses of biblical texts. For surely Briggs is correct to affirm that 'normative criteria with respect to hermeneutical engagement can only really exist, in anything but the broadest terms, when there is a goal or purpose in view for the reading.'⁹⁷

In practice, this would permit readers to move beyond Klopfenstein's provocative *Einzelexegese* to consider the variety of ways that Scripture (or the Bible,

⁹⁵ Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) (1992), 2.

⁹⁶ Richard Briggs, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', 41.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 37.

for those who would prefer a more neutral term) may legitimately be construed.⁹⁸ Different interpretations may then be weighed and measured against appropriate criteria, depending on the interpreter's agenda, with an eye towards collaboration rather than exclusion. As Briggs goes on to suggest, 'scriptural responsibility in the face of hermeneutical plurality is a responsibility to fostering dialogue between multiple competing construals of *'scripture as'*, arrayed across the domains of the theological, the literary, the historical, the cultural, the psychological, and so forth.'⁹⁹

In this light, it is clear that the divergence between Barth and Klopfenstein is due to markedly different approaches that reflect distinct conceptions of scripture. On one hand, Barth construes all Scripture, including 1 Kings 13, *as testimony concerning Jesus Christ*:

The Bible says all sort of things, certainly; but in all this multiplicity and variety, it says in truth only one thing—just this: the name of Jesus Christ concealed under the name Israel in the Old Testament, revealed under his own name in the New Testament, which therefore can be understood only as it has understood itself, as a commentary on the Old Testament. The Bible becomes clear when it is clear that it says this one thing: that it proclaims the name Jesus Christ and therefore proclaims God in his richness and mercy, and man in his need and helplessness... we can properly interpret the Bible, in whole or in part, only when we perceive and show that what it says is said from the point of view of that concealed and revealed name of Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁰

It is this conception of Scripture that leads Barth to interpret the parts (of 1 Kgs 13) in light of the whole, a hermeneutical move that others, including myself, find problematic, since his theological exegesis is ultimately in danger of losing an historical perspective. Barth's interpretive method and categories are thus fundamentally different from those of Klopfenstein, who construes 1 Kings 13 *as an historical record* that identifies these two prophetic figures as the responsible agents of the north-south division.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Briggs draws the line at construals which 'deliberately step outside of scripture's own self-presenting categories', e.g., 'amongst the angry who are determined only to show the incoherence of theistic claims; and amongst the would-be spiritual who feel that the Lord has spoken directly to them, in rather unmediated fashion, about how the text is to be construed today.' (40)

⁹⁹ Ibid, 48.

¹⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* I.2, 720.

¹⁰¹ Klopfenstein, 669: 'als einer Demonstration zuhanden der Vertreter einer kultischen Trennung zwischen Bethel und Jerusalem fest.'

The questions Klopfenstein brings to the text are typically historical: whence this story and why has it been preserved? For him, the use of intertexts or ‘external’ theological categories to inform the interpretation of a text lures interpreters away from the narrow path of *Einzelexegese* into unruly fields of *Überinterpretation*. By contrast, Barth’s exegesis concludes with three very different questions which, in his view, must be answered by any who find his exegesis implausible or unacceptable. Barth asks: ‘Where else do they [the two prophets and the two Israels] remain [if not in Christ]? What else is chapter 1 K. 13 if it is not prophecy? Where else is its fulfilment to be found if not in Jesus Christ?’¹⁰² These three questions are but variations on a theme, each one reinforcing his view of *scripture as* testimony to Jesus Christ. In both cases, however, for Barth and for Klopfenstein, the point is ‘that scripture is always scripture with a view; that hermeneutical approaches need to be measured against the overarching goals of why scripture is being read.’¹⁰³

In addition to the accents placed on the narrative by Barth and Klopfenstein—*scripture as* witness to Christ and *scripture as* historical record—one might treat 1 Kings 13 in other ways as well;¹⁰⁴ for instance, scripture as political propaganda (i.e., for Josiah),¹⁰⁵ or scripture as anti-prophetic satire.¹⁰⁶ In any case, Moberly’s insight holds true, ‘that the meaning of the Bible cannot be separated from the questions and concerns of its interpreters.’¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Barth, *CD* II.2, 409. On Barth’s discovery of God as the true subject (*Sache*) of the Bible, see Burnett, *Barth’s Theological Exegesis*, 74f.

¹⁰³ Briggs, ‘Biblical Hermeneutics and Scriptural Responsibility’, 42.

¹⁰⁴ Briggs refers to a spectrum of ways in which scripture is construed, from *scripture as text* and *as bearing of meaning* at one end, to *scripture as raw data for interpretive freeplay* at the other. Between these, *scripture as functional, communicative act* (which Briggs commends for remaining within scripture’s own self-presenting categories) can take various shapes: ‘divine address, historical document, record of the testimonies of the faithful, partisan ideological construct’, and so on. *Ibid*, 42.

¹⁰⁵ So Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 287.

¹⁰⁶ So David Marcus, ‘Elements of Ridicule’, *passim*.

¹⁰⁷ Moberly, *Old Testament*, 2; cf. Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, esp. 151-4.

BOSWORTH: REVISITING BARTH

David Bosworth: Revisiting Barth

In chapter three, we observed that Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 has been overlooked to a significant extent by historical-critical scholarship, in part due to the criticisms of Klopfenstein and Noth. The more recent proliferation of hermeneutical models and approaches, however, has seen a resurgence of Barth's influence, especially in more theological and literary analyses, thus raising the question of whether Barth's reading might now be integrated more thoroughly with contemporary, mainstream scholarship. This chapter evaluates one attempt to do just that.

Notwithstanding those who have credited Barth for stimulating certain aspects of their work on 1 Kings 13, David Bosworth is the only scholar, of whom I am aware, to take Barth's theological presentation of this narrative and seek to consciously develop it. It therefore seems appropriate to offer a summary and evaluation of Bosworth before we consider another way that Barth's insights might be assimilated with studies in the DH. In an article entitled, 'Revisiting Barth's Exegesis of 1 Kings 13' (2002), and then also in a chapter of his monograph, *The Story Within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (2008), Bosworth not only seeks to present Barth's interpretation as viable, but also to provide additional supporting material that he says 'Barth neglected to include.'¹

Bosworth rightly notes that most scholars have failed to seriously engage with Barth, even if some have shown positive regard for his theological reading of the story (esp. Lemke and Walsh). For instance, the vast majority of commentators continue to treat the story as an isolated legend and fail to recognise its function as *political commentary*, an insight that is central to Barth's contribution.² Bosworth notes some of the reasons why Barth's reception among biblical scholars has been tentative (e.g., Barth's so-called naivety and his apparent disregard for sources) and

¹ Bosworth, 'Revisiting', 382 (from the abstract).

² Ibid, 377. Bosworth observes that 'the strange story can only be explained by appeal to its context.' *Story*, 118.

then proceeds to assess and develop Barth's proposal in the hope of increasing its plausibility among scholars. In Bosworth's view, recent shifts in theological method suggest that 'biblical scholars are in a position to re-evaluate Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13.'³ Given Barth's emphasis on the relationship between the prophets as national representatives, Bosworth concludes his article with the proposal that further research be undertaken in an attempt to answer the question, *How does Kings present the relationship between Israel and Judah* (particularly in contrast to say, Chronicles, or a prophetic book such as Amos)?

The article takes up for further development the theme of 1 Kings 13 as it was articulated by Barth: 'the manner in which the man of God and the prophet belong together, do not belong together, and eventually and finally do belong together; and how the same is true of Judah and Israel.'⁴ Bosworth observes:

Although Barth sees the history of the divided kingdom played out in this story, he does not specifically spell out the relationship between 1 Kings 13 and the history of the divided monarchy in 1 and 2 Kings. Although some scholars have borrowed this central insight from Barth, none has developed it in detail. Barth's failure to elaborate the analogy makes his work more vulnerable to criticism from exegetes.⁵

For the remainder of the paper, Bosworth builds on Barth's insight by explaining how the relationship between the man of God (representing Judah) and the old prophet (representing Israel) may be mapped onto the history of the divided kingdoms by identifying elements in 1 Kings 13 that appear to have parallels in the subsequent record. His purpose is to clarify the details of the analogy to which Barth alluded. Bosworth is quite right in stating that 'Barth did not make this analogy clear by explaining how the kingdoms mirror the individuals in 1 Kings 13,'⁶ so he outlines these stages in order to indicate 'how Barth's claims concerning 1 Kings 13 may be supported by the evidence of the history of the divided kingdom as told in

³ Ibid, 378.

⁴ Barth, *CD* II.2, 393; cited in Bosworth, 'Revisiting', 367.

⁵ Bosworth, 'Revisiting', 372.

⁶ Ibid, 381.

Kings.⁷ In his article, Bosworth lists four distinct ‘stages’ in this relationship; in his book, he includes five.⁸ Here we review the table from his most recent work:⁹

	Man of God and Prophet	Judah and Israel
Mutual hostility	1 Kgs 13:11-18 The prophet seeks to undermine the judgment of the man of God (from 1 Kgs 13:1-2) by inviting the prophet to share a meal in Bethel and by lying about a divine revelation.	1 Kgs 11-21 Judah and Israel are mutually hostile and fight several border skirmishes
Friendship	1 Kgs 13:19 The two prophetic figures share a meal together against God’s command (vv. 16-17)	1 Kgs 22-2 Kgs 8 Judah (under Jehoshaphat) makes an alliance with Israel (under the Omride dynasty) which is evaluated negatively
Role-Reversal	1 Kgs 13:20-23 The prophet announces the judgment of God on the man of God	2 Kgs 9-11 Jehu’s coup initiates a reversal by which Baal worship is eliminated in Israel, but introduced in Judah (under Athaliah)
Resumption of Hostility	1 Kgs 13:24-34 The figures part company with the understanding that their shared meal was unfaithful to God and based on a lie. The old prophet buries the man of God in his own tomb, in fulfillment of the divine judgment	2 Kgs 12-17 Judah and Israel return to their mutual hostility, with their wars going beyond border skirmishing.
Southern Partner Saves Northern One	2 Kgs 23:15-20 Josiah does not disturb the bones of the old prophets because they share a tomb with the man of God who predicted Josiah’s reform of Bethel.	2 Kgs 22-23 Josiah’s reforms eliminate the causes of the division of Israel after Solomon [sic] death and create the conditions for a possible renewal of the united Monarchy.

Bosworth’s objective is worthwhile, even if Barth did not have the same kind of literary analogies in mind as the ones suggested by Bosworth, but we shall return to that issue below. In the first instance, however, let us turn to Bosworth’s delineation of this rhetorical device in Old Testament narrative wherein a shorter narrative illuminates a larger one of which it is a part.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The fourth stage, ‘resumption of hostility,’ has been added to the 2008 publication.

⁹ This table (a summary) has been copied in its entirety from Bosworth, *Story*, 132-3. See ‘Revisiting’, 379-81, and *Story*, 132-49, for detail on each of the stages.

1 Kings 13 as mise-en-abyme (2008)

In a monograph entitled, *The Story Within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (2008),¹⁰ Bosworth focuses on the literary device that featured in his previous article and develops it more fully under the appellation, *mise-en-abyme*—a phrase which literally means ‘placement in abyss’.¹¹ Although Bosworth recognises the device as ‘a specific kind of narrative analogy,’¹² a term that is more widely recognised by Old Testament scholars, key characteristics of a *mise-en-abyme* are set out in the opening section of the book, where Bosworth introduces the term via extra-biblical examples and even via ‘non-examples’ to ensure that the term is rightly understood. Nine criteria are briefly adumbrated to formulate ‘a description of the *mise-en-abyme* that is neither too broad nor too narrow.’¹³ Acknowledging some variance in the use of the term, Bosworth offers this definition: ‘In literary studies, a *mise-en-abyme* is a part of a literary work that duplicates pertinent aspects of the whole within which it is placed.’¹⁴

By Bosworth’s reckoning, the device is used only three times in the Hebrew Bible, one of them being 1 Kings 13.11-32 + 2 Kgs 23.15–20 within the history of the divided kingdom (1 Kgs 11—2Kgs 23).¹⁵ Here we shall consider what significance the identification of 1 Kings 13 as a *mise-en-abyme* has for Bosworth’s advocacy of Barth’s exegesis.

As mentioned above, Bosworth appeals to Barth’s observation that the story’s immediate, literary context—the division of the kingdom—is critical for a proper understanding of 1 Kings 13. However, Bosworth provides additional support for

¹⁰ Bosworth, *The Story Within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (CBQM 45: 2008), esp. 118-57.

¹¹ The term was introduced by French novelist and critic, André Gide, *Journals 1889-1949* (Trans. J. O’Brien; London: Penguin, 1984).

¹² Bosworth, *Story*, vii.

¹³ *Ibid*, 16. The nine criteria are totality, reflection, explicitness, isolatability, orientation, extent, distribution, general function and motivation. See *Story*, 11-16.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁵ The other instances are Genesis 38 within Genesis 37-50 and 1 Samuel 25 within 1 Samuel 13.12—2 Samuel 5.3. The main reason so few texts qualify as *mis-es-en-abyme* is that Bosworth considers ‘isolatability’ a critical criterion. On that basis, neither Nathan’s parable (2 Sam 12.1-6) nor Jotham’s fable (Jdg 9.7-15) qualify, because they cannot be read as independent narratives. ‘Allegory, exemplum, fable, and parable are literary devices that may be distinguished from the *mise-en-abyme* because they are typically not sufficiently isolatable from their contexts due to the explanatory function they serve.’ (Bosworth, *Story*, 19). I would argue, however, that the two above-mentioned parables make as much (or as little) sense as does 1 Kgs 13.11-32 + 2 Kgs 23.15-20 when isolated from their context.

this claim beyond simply noting that the two prophets hail from north and south. Scholarly efforts to establish a qualitative difference between ‘man of God’ and ‘prophet’ have been inconclusive, leaving the simplest explanation as the best one: the narrator consistently uses different terms in order to maintain a distinction between the two anonymous prophets. (On this point, Bosworth differs with Barth, who associated northern prophets with professionalism and falsehood.) That the prophets foreshadow their respective kingdoms is also indicated within the text by the fact that the two parts of the story (1 Kings 13.11-32 and 2 Kings 23.15-20) form an *inclusio* around the history and highlight its political thrust.¹⁶ The motif of prophecy-fulfilment is a well-known feature of the DH, and Bosworth suggests that in delimiting a major textual unit, 1 Kgs 13.11-32—2 Kgs 23.15-20 perhaps serves a function other than affirming Yahweh as Lord of history.¹⁷ This argument is further strengthened by the fact that almost every Israelite king (from 1 Kgs 13 to 2 Kgs 17) is evaluated with regards to the sin of Jeroboam, given that the Bethel cult and altar persist until Josiah’s reforms in 2 Kings 23. Bosworth also argues, drawing on the work of Nadav Na’aman,¹⁸ that prophetic and political narratives ought to be read in conjunction with one another, and that 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3 have special importance in this regard as stories of prophetic-royal conflict. ‘These narratives in which prophetic figures intersect with the histories of both nations parallel 1 Kings 13 and contribute to the articulation of the *mise-en-abyme*.’¹⁹ Moreover, Bosworth identifies a pattern in the distribution of prophetic stories throughout the History of the Divided Kingdom. In summary, most of the prophetic stories are set in the north, which in his view ‘indicates that Israel is the less faithful nation that stands in greater need of prophets.’²⁰ (This observation finds support in the opening verses of 1 Kgs 13, but Bosworth does not emphasise this, presumably because he doesn’t include 1 Kgs 13.1-10 in the *mise-en-abyme*.)

With these observations, Bosworth seeks to highlight—in ways Barth did not—that the ‘story of the prophetic figures in 1 Kgs 13:11-32 and 2 Kgs 23:15-20

¹⁶ Bosworth, *Story*, 122.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 129.

¹⁸ Nadav Na’aman, ‘Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides,’ *Biblica* 78/2 (1997), 153-73. For additional references, see Bosworth, *Story*, 127, fn 30.

¹⁹ Bosworth, *Story*, 128.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 129.

contributes to several key motifs in Kings, including the concern with cultic policy and the sin of Jeroboam, prophetic stories (including prophetic-royal conflict), and the prophecy-fulfillment schema.²¹ He thereby not only echoes Barth's concern for the reciprocal dynamic between north and south, but provides further support for it with the identification of various literary signposts throughout the History of the Divided Kingdom:

The parallel history of both kingdoms, connected by synchronistic chronological notices, indicates the narrator's interest in "all Israel," not only Judah (as in Chronicles). Furthermore, some of the stories involving prophets comment directly on the relationship between the two kingdoms (1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 3). Although scholars agree that the history represents a Judean perspective, Judah is not represented as blameless; the negative evaluation of the alliance and consequent reversal following Jehu's coup indicates a criticism of Judah and parallel praise of Israel.²²

Observations such as these establish for Bosworth that 1 Kings 13.11-32 + 2 Kings 23.15-20 comprises a *mise-en-abyme* that 'does not comment directly on the history, but creates an analogy within it. The analogy invites comparison between the two narratives such that the *mise-en-abyme* elucidates aspects of the larger history.'²³ The point is that 1 Kings 13.11-32 + 2 Kings 23.15-20 function as a kind of hermeneutical key for the history encapsulated by these two texts. When the story is read in isolation from its wider context, it is often assumed that a story about prophets must necessarily be about prophecy. But as Bosworth rightly observes:

Scholars have struggled to locate a didactic lesson in the seemingly unedifying story. Such efforts have not succeeded because the story has been read apart from its immediate context concerning the division of the kingdom and its larger context of the History of the Divided Kingdom. Those scholars who have interpreted the story within its political context have had less difficulty with the strangeness of the story.²⁴

By the same token, given the way in which a *mise-en-abyme* functions, difficulties and anomalies within the *mise-en-abyme* are also more easily understood when read

²¹ Ibid, 130.

²² Ibid, 152.

²³ Ibid, 152.

²⁴ Ibid, 155. Bosworth cites as examples Barth, Lemke, Walsh, Van Winkle, and Gunneweg (fn 80).

in light of their broader, literary (and political) context, since the *mise-en-abyme* duplicates important dynamics within the wider narrative. Here, I shall briefly outline some of Bosworth's more salient points concerning narrative details in 1 Kings 13 that become less perplexing when seen through that broader, historical-political lens.

(a) The Threefold Command

The divine prohibitions against eating, drinking, and returning by the same way are repeated three times in 1 Kings 13 (vv 9,17,22) and the entire story clearly revolves around them. However, it is not a simple matter to discern Jeroboam's motive for inviting the man of God to share a meal, or the old prophet's motive for tricking him into breaking the threefold command. Within Bosworth's proposal, these elements of the story are best understood as indicators of the mutual hostility between north and south in the wider narrative. After the division of the kingdom, there are ongoing 'border skirmishes' between Israel and Judah (1 Kgs 14.30; 15.6,16). 'This skirmishing conforms to the limited hostility between the prophetic figures in 1 Kgs 13:11-18.'²⁵

(b) The Man of God Reneges

In connection with the narrative gap regarding the old prophet's motive for deceiving the man of God, a related difficulty in 1 Kings 13 is the manner in which the Judean is so easily duped into reneging on the divine prohibition. Given the manner in which he forcefully reiterates the command in v 17, it is surprising that he breaks all three parts of it in v 19. Presumably, this is why Van Seters states with candour: 'The man of God is not disobedient; he is merely stupid.'²⁶ Bosworth focuses instead on the Bethel prophet's means of deception in v 18, through which he brings about a change in the man of God's disposition. By stating, 'I also am a prophet like you' (גַּם־אֲנִי נְבִיא כְמוֹךָ), the old prophet obfuscates the terminological distinction between them that the narrator has been careful to maintain. (Although at the end of v 18, the narrator intervenes to make it clear that the old prophet ought not be trusted.) But how are we to understand this shift from hostility (between the king and the man of God in the opening scene) to hospitality (between the old

²⁵ Ibid, 137.

²⁶ Van Seters, 'On Reading,' 229.

prophet and the man of God)? Are there any indicators present in the wider narrative that explain the Bethelite's (apparent) amicability?

For Bosworth, an understanding of the wider narrative again illuminates details in the *mise-en-abyme*. Following the border skirmishes between Israel and Judah in 1 Kings 11-21, Judah and Israel collaborate for two joint military expeditions (1 Kgs 22; 2 Kgs 3) during a period of unwarranted alliance:

Since Israel is the more powerful kingdom, it assumes the position of leadership in the alliance. Instead of drawing Israel away from the worship of Baal, the alliance leads Judah into it. Jehoshaphat's desire for unity is not necessarily wrong, but Judah can have no real friendship with Israel while Israel follows the sin of Jeroboam and also worships Baal. A precondition of real unity is the cultic centrality of Jerusalem and the political leadership of the house of David. The alliance, like the fellowship between the old prophet and the man of God, is based on a lie and cannot stand.²⁷

Regarding the joint military expedition in 1 Kings 22, Bosworth perceives Jehoshaphat's claim, 'I am as you are, my army as your army, my horse as your horses' (1 Kgs 22.4) as an echo of the northern prophet's statement, 'I also am a prophet like you.' Moreover, Bosworth seeks to show that in 1 Kings 22 and 2 Kings 3, the prophetic figures in the narrative are the ones who expose the distinction between north and south and thereby undermine the proposed alliance. 'As with 1 Kings 13, the prophetic conflict [in 1 Kgs 22] serves to illuminate the problem of the divided monarchy, not the problem of false prophecy.'²⁸

Bosworth's point is that the alliance between Judah and Israel is doomed to fail. It is discredited by Micaiah in 1 Kings 22 and then again by Elisha in 2 Kings 3, and neither military effort meets with success. Attempts to unite north and south are thus denied, shedding light on 1 Kings 13, where the shared meal also has disastrous consequences. Seen thus, the man of God's decision to renege on the divine command in 1 Kings 13 is due neither to disobedience nor stupidity, but because he foreshadows Judah's compromise within the History of the Divided Kingdom.

²⁷ Bosworth, *Story*, 139-40. Bosworth notes that the Chronicler negatively evaluates the north-south alliance more explicitly than Dtr (cf. 2 Chr 19.2).

²⁸ *Ibid*, 142.

(c) Role-reversal

Bosworth notes that a significant proportion of interpreters struggle with 1 Kings 13 because of its apparent immoral—or amoral—quality; at the heart of the narrative, the man of God is punished for being duped while the Bethel prophet who deceived him goes unpunished. To make matters worse, the lying prophet subsequently becomes God's vessel for the proclamation of judgment upon the man of God.

In this instance also, Bosworth draws on an analogous event in the history of the kingdoms to elucidate the significance of the odd reversal within the *mise-en-abyme*. Just as the prohibited, shared meal between the prophets is interrupted by a reversal (1 Kgs 13.20), so the alliance between north and south is interrupted and reversed by Jehu's rebellion in 2 Kings 9-10. Jehu ends the alliance and purifies Israel of Baal worship. Athaliah remains on the throne, however, so that Baal worship is sustained in Judah. By analogy: 'The man of God, like Judah, appears to be the more faithful follower of Yhwh until this reversal. After the reversal, the North becomes more faithful to Yhwh and executes Yhwh's judgment on the now disobedient south.'²⁹ The confusing reversal of 1 Kings 13.20 is seen in parallel to the dynamics of 2 Kings 9-11, so that what happens at the table of the Bethel prophet reflects how '[t]he roles of the two kingdoms are reversed in Jehu's coup.'³⁰

(d) The Lion

The same part of the history (2 Kgs 9-10) also explains the presence and behaviour of the enigmatic lion in 1 Kings 13. 'The lion prevents the man of God from returning safely home after he has dined in Israel. If he had returned to Judah, then his message against the altar would have been undermined by his communion with the North.'³¹ Bosworth suggests that it is best to understand the lion, which punishes the man of God for his disobedience to the threefold command, in light of Jehu's actions. Since Jehu proceeds after destroying the house of Ahab to destroy the house of Ahaziah of Judah, including forty-two of his relatives who are visiting Samaria, Bosworth avers that 'Jehu is like the lion that executes Yhwh's judgment

²⁹ Ibid, 143.

³⁰ Ibid, 145.

³¹ Ibid, 143.

concerning the man of God.³² These parallels do not account, however, for the unusual *restraint* of the lion, which is perhaps more perplexing than its function as an instrument of judgment.

(e) A Shared Grave

A final oddity in the narrative is the Bethel prophet's request to his sons, that upon his death his bones be laid beside the bones of the man of God (1 Kgs 13.31). What can he possibly hope to gain from such an arrangement? The plain sense of the narrative seems to be that he has recognised the authenticity of the man of God (not least because of his own prophetic word) and has therefore declared that the man of God's words shall indeed come to pass in due course. On that basis, he perhaps wishes to be identified with his 'brother' in death. But in light of 2 Kings 23, there is greater significance to his request. Bosworth explains:

The story of the two prophetic figures continues to mirror the history of the two kingdoms. This reflection may be seen in two different ways. First, just as the man of God saves the old prophet's bones from desecration, so the king of Judah saves the remnant of the North from the sin of Jeroboam. This incident shows that Israel can hope for salvation only through Judah. Second, the two prophetic figures sharing a common tomb may be likened to the two nations sharing a common exile in Mesopotamia.³³

Again, the perplexing detail in the *mise-en-abyme* is brought to light when juxtaposed with the history's climax in the reforms of Josiah.

We have seen in this brief summation that Bosworth is less concerned with making sense of 1 Kings 13 as an isolated story than about the (far more complex) matter of apprehending the obscure details of 1 Kings 13.11-32 and 2 Kings 23.15-20 in light of the larger history of which it is a part. And for the most part, his observations are insightful and he successfully offers a reading of the whole that makes sense of some obscure details.

Appraisal of Bosworth

Bosworth's intention, explicitly stated in his article but implicit also in his monograph, is to expand 'Barth's interpretation in directions not previously

³² Ibid, 144.

³³ Ibid, 147.

developed in an attempt to make his exegesis more plausible so that future research may explore its implications.³⁴ Since Barth did not elaborate upon the details of this analogy, Bosworth has sought to fill this gap by showing ‘how Barth’s claims concerning 1 Kings 13 may be supported by the evidence of the history of the divided kingdom as told in Kings.’³⁵

Bosworth is clear about his goal, and there is clearly much that is useful in his analysis. However, it is important to be clear about which aspects of Bosworth’s work are consistent with the trajectory of Barth’s exegesis in distinction to developments that are quite original to Bosworth. In my judgment, Bosworth’s development of Barth’s exegesis is interesting and significant in its own right, and it certainly complements Barth’s reading in important ways. Ultimately, though, Bosworth’s questions and methodology regarding 1 Kings 13 are quite distinct from those of Barth.

A Literary or Theological Analogy?

First, Bosworth’s understanding of 1 Kings 13 as a *mise-en-abyme* puts the focus on literary elements and their counterpoints rather than on a theological dialectic that undergirds the relational dynamic between north and south, which was surely what Barth sought to draw out. In his article, Bosworth rightly identifies Barth’s central insight: ‘that the man of God and the old prophet represent the kingdoms from which they come,’ and that the ‘interactions between these two characters prefigure the relationship between the two kingdoms.’³⁶ He then cites the following key sentence from the opening of Barth’s exegesis:

The peculiar theme of the chapter is the manner in which the man of God and the prophet belong together, do not belong together, and eventually and finally do belong together; and how the same is true of Judah and Israel.³⁷

But what Barth describes as a theological and relational dynamic within the text, Bosworth develops as a chronological sequence. It is entirely legitimate for

³⁴ Ibid, 360.

³⁵ Ibid, 381.

³⁶ Ibid, 367.

³⁷ Barth, *CD* II.2, 393; cited in Bosworth, ‘Revisiting’, xx.

Bosworth to make this move, but from his stated intention I suspect that Bosworth considers his reading to be more consistent with Barth than it is. By mapping five shifts in the *mise-en-abyme's* plot onto the history of the divided kingdom (cf. the table above), Bosworth does not bring us closer to the substance of Barth's reading, which highlights election, but in fact leads us away from it—in a more literary and less theological direction, one might say. To be clear, I do not wish to undermine Bosworth's fascinating study, but only to point out that he is doing something quite different—and to be sure, many readers will find his literary emphasis more persuasive than the theological accent of Barth's exposition.

Barth's point in the sentence cited above is not the identification of *sequential* or chronological shifts in the narrative: i.e. together, then not together, then together again. Rather, his point is that 'because of the division [between north and south] there are... authentic relations in the history of Israel'.³⁸ For Barth, the significance of the confrontations and exchanges between the representative figures in 1 Kings 13 is not that each reversal has its direct analogue in the history that follows, but rather that the reciprocal dynamic between the (elect and non-elect) prophets accentuates the same dynamic between the (elect and non-elect) nations in the OT historical books. *The purpose of the analogical relationship between prophets from north and south on the one hand, and Israel and Judah on the other, is to show that although the two ultimately belong together, it is the divinely-ordained division that in some sense makes their unity possible.* The story's role reversals are thereby an expression of the way in which division between true and false Israel is what makes genuine 'speech and hearing' (i.e. love) possible.³⁹ God wills that Israel and Judah be one, but distinguishes between them for the sake of this very will. According to Barth, within this framework the rejected and elect act on behalf of one another in numerous ways:

The man of Judah has not ceased to be the elect, nor has the prophet of Bethel ceased to be the rejected. But in their union as elect and rejected they form together the whole Israel from which the grace of God is not turned away. For the rejected acts on behalf of the elect when he takes over the latter's mission. And the elect acts on behalf of the rejected when he suffers the latter's punishment. Similarly, at the end, the rejected acts for the elect by making his

³⁸ Barth, *CD* II.2, 403.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 404.

own grave a resting-place for the latter. While again the elect acts for the rejected in that the bones of the latter are kept and preserved for his sake, and together with his own bones. *It is exactly the same with the distinction and mission of the true Israel.* It is betrayed in this way by itself, and yet also honoured in this way by God. What better thing can overtake the true Israel than this humiliation and this exaltation?⁴⁰

Within Barth's broader argument, the distinction between true and false within Israel coincides with the way in which David and Saul 'belong together, and together attest the one true king of Israel',⁴¹ and similarly with the way in which 'the creatures of the sacrificial liturgy, the two goats and two birds, certainly attest together the sacrifice and priestly ministry entrusted to Israel, and yet remain two figures'.⁴² But while the distinction between Israel and Judah in 1 Kings 13 is decisive, the story ends with their representative prophets together in a grave, sharing a common fate. For Barth, this is highly significant, for 'the exact point where this story of the prophets breaks off a continuation is found in the Easter story'.⁴³ That is, the bones that end up in a shared grave at the conclusion of 1 Kings 13 are said to represent the deaths of the two prophets and the two Israels, which are restored to life in the resurrection of Christ. 'In this one prophet the two prophets obviously live. And so, too, do the two Israels—the Israels which in our story can finally only die, only be buried, only persist for a time in their bones'.⁴⁴ Just as the prophets end up in a grave that points to Christ, so too, do the nations of Israel and Judah. In Barth's reading, their shared exilic grave is 'answered' and fulfilled in Jesus.

Although Bosworth sets out to make Barth's exegesis more plausible, he takes it in a different direction. Bosworth's study proceeds from the observation that 'Barth did not make this analogy clear by explaining *how* the kingdoms mirror the individuals in 1 Kings 13',⁴⁵ but the most likely reason Barth did not explain the analogies is because Barth did not consider each turn in the narrative to have a

⁴⁰ Ibid, 406 (emphasis added).

⁴¹ Ibid, 408.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid, 409.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Bosworth, 'Revisiting', 381 (emphasis added).

corresponding turn in the larger history. Had Barth understood 1 Kings 13 in this way, it is more than likely that he would have made this clear. At the risk of repeating myself, it is perfectly legitimate for Bosworth to take Barth's work as a catalyst for exploration and to proceed in an alternative direction, but it is important to recognise that Bosworth's agenda and priorities differ from those of Barth. In Barth's exegesis, the significance of the multiple reversals in the story is not that each turn in the plot has a distinct parallel in the history of the divided kingdom, but rather that this dynamic of repeated reversals elucidates the interdependent relationship between Judah and Israel, as the elect and the rejected.⁴⁶ Although Barth does describe 1 Kings 13 as a kind of introduction ('in title-form') to the history that follows, he consistently makes it clear that he is referring to the narrative's function according to his theological interpretation (i.e. regarding election and unity) rather than to a chronological sequence of events encoded into the history of Judah and Israel.

Christological Focus

Bosworth modifies Barth's proposal concerning the chapter's theme further again when he states: 'Barth's interpretation of the Old Testament texts can not be characterized as christological. Christological statements are absent from the interpretation of 1 Kings 13.'⁴⁷ In saying this, Bosworth probably hopes to defend Barth against the charge of "eisegesis"—though it is doubtful that Barth would have seen the need to defend himself thus.

It simply cannot be overlooked that in this section of the *Church Dogmatics* under Election, Barth's treatments of various Old Testament texts, culminating in 1 Kings 13, paves the way for a fuller understanding of Jesus Christ as the Elect and Rejected One. Indeed, Barth's theological—and christological—point is that 1 Kings 13, *as Christian Scripture*, points forward to a time when God's will for a unified Israel is fulfilled and achieved by the death and resurrection of the prophet, Jesus; 'the Elect of God who is also the bearer of the divine rejection'.⁴⁸ Moreover, Barth brings his lengthy treatment of 1 Kings 13 to a close with a series of explicit christological

⁴⁶ U. Simon also identifies 'multiple reversals' in 1 Kings 13, based on his unique structural analysis of the story. Simon, 'Prophetic Sign', 130, 146f. Cf. the tables on 137-9.

⁴⁷ Bosworth, 'Revisiting', 373.

⁴⁸ Barth, *CD* II.2, 409.

statements that show he understands the entire drama and all its constituent elements in the light of Christ. He is worth quoting at length:

[T]he problem of the reality and unity of what is attested by the story is also raised and left unresolved. But this story too, does point to one real subject if Jesus Christ is also seen in it, if at the exact point where this story of the prophets breaks off a continuation is found in the Easter story. The Word of God, which abides for ever, in our flesh; the man of God from Bethlehem in Judah who was also the prophet of Nazareth; the Son of God who was also the king of the lost and lawless people of the north; the Elect of God who is also the bearer of the lost and lawless people of the north; the Elect of God who is also the bearer of the divine rejection; the One who was slain for the sins of others, which He took upon Himself, yet to whom there arose a witness, many witnesses, from the midst of sinners; the One lifted upon in whose death all was lost, but who in His death was the consolation and refuge of all the lost—this One truly died and was buried, yet he was not forgotten and finished on the third day, but was raised from the dead by the power of God. In this one prophet the two prophets obviously live. And so, too, do the two Israels—the Israels which in our story can finally only die, only be buried, only persist for a time in their bones. They live in the reality and unity in which they never lived in the Old Testament, but could only be attested. They remain in Him, and in Him the Word of God proclaimed by them remains to all eternity.

Where else do they remain? What else is chapter 1 K. 13 if it is not prophecy? Where else is its fulfilment to be found if not in Jesus Christ? These are the questions which must be answered by those for whom the suggested result of our investigation may for any reason be unacceptable.⁴⁹

Given these concluding statements, it is unclear why Bosworth states that 'Christological statements are absent from the interpretation of 1 Kings 13', though I suspect it is related to his advocacy of Barth. In any case, there is no need to defend Barth against those who would accuse him of a christological hermeneutic. He certainly did not feel compelled to do so himself! By taking an aspect of Barth's interpretation that seems feasible to narrative-critical scholars (i.e. the multiple reversals in the story) and developing it, Bosworth has sought to make Barth's reading more widely accessible and less subject to criticism. But in so doing, I would argue that he has offered something substantially different by disregarding the theological (election) and eschatological (Christocentric) elements. Drawing on Walsh's study of contexts, we may affirm that Barth interprets 1 Kings 13 within a

⁴⁹ Ibid.

wider canonical context (i.e. both testaments) than does Bosworth (i.e. the History of the Divided Kingdoms).

While Bosworth expands upon Barth's interpretation, his literary / structural hermeneutic is markedly different from Barth's theological hermeneutic, and he therefore steers the discussion away from the doctrine of election and its consummation in Christ to a consideration of how the relationship between Israel and Judah is depicted in Kings. This is a legitimate move as far as it goes—Bosworth is entitled to develop Barth's work in a new direction—but it is doubtful that Bosworth ultimately makes *Barth's* exegesis more plausible, since he avoids the doctrinal emphases of Barth, namely, election and Christology. The problem is only that Bosworth gives the impression that his work is consistent with that of Barth, or as he describes it, that he is filling in some of the gaps left by Barth. My own view is that Bosworth does well to interpret 1 Kings 13 within an Old Testament frame of reference, rather than by deferring to Christ and the New Testament. In the next chapter, I also posit a negative response to Barth's suggestion that 1 Kings 13 can only be fulfilled in Christ.

Mise-en-abyme

Finally, a few words about Bosworth's designation of the narrative analogy as *mise-en-abyme* are in order. The identification of a rhetorical device like this raises the obvious question of its purpose. What does the identification of 1 Kings 13.11-32 + 2 Kgs 23.15-20 as a *mise-en-abyme* highlight for the reader? In Bosworth's judgment, the gains of identifying 1 Kings 13 as a 'story within a story' include these points:

(i) the *mise-en-abyme* indicates the importance of the relationship between the two kingdoms in the DH; i.e. Dtr's interest in 'all Israel,' as compared with the Chronicler's focus on Judah;⁵⁰

(ii) there is potential for improved diachronic treatments of the composition of Kings in light of what this synchronic study reveals about, e.g., the role of Josiah in the overall history;⁵¹

(iii) Dtr's particular perspective on the divided kingdoms may be better understood in contradistinction to how other OT books present the division of Israel

⁵⁰ Bosworth, *Story*, 152.

⁵¹ Ibid, 153. Bosworth states that the *mise-en-abyme* 'may indicate that the tale was part of a Josianic edition of the Deuteronomistic History.' Incidentally, my proposed reading of 1 Kgs 13 in ch. seven has an opposite diachronic implication, one that counters Cross's double-redaction hypothesis.

and Judah. Consequently, this may help to explain what is included and/or excluded from the account in Kings (e.g., the lack of an explicit association between the man of God and the prophet Amos, in spite of numerous links);⁵²

(iv) the development of the text as *mise-en-abyme* shows that prophetic and political strands of the DH are intertwined and not distinct;⁵³

(v) finally, as we have observed, many of the confusing details of 1 Kings 13.11-32 are explicable when it is treated as a *mise-en-abyme* that mirrors 1 Kgs 11—2 Kgs 23.

By way of criticism, three points may briefly be noted. First, in my view, Bosworth's delimits his proposal by restricting the *mise-en-abyme* to only the second part of the story in 1 Kings 13 (vv 11-32) and omitting the final verses (vv 33-34). 1 Kings 13.1-10 surely introduces the notion of *mutual hostility*, the first stage in Bosworth's schema (see table). Moreover, vv 1-10 and vv 11-32 are bound together by various motifs, including: the repetition of the threefold command (vv 9,17,22); the explanation of judgment in v 26 that hearkens back to the prophecy of v 2; and the reiteration of the original prophecy against Bethel in v 32.⁵⁴ By the same token, vv 33-34 surely provide a logical conclusion to the chapter (though they also refer to Jeroboam) and inform the overall schema (e.g., the destruction of Jeroboam's house in v 34 and its fulfilment in 2 Kgs 17.21-23).

A second problem is that large portions of the history do not fit easily within Bosworth's schema. For instance, the *resumption of hostility* (stage four) that occurs between Israel and Judah after Jehu's coup in 2 Kings 9-10 has no counterpart in the *mise-en-abyme*, as Bosworth acknowledges: 'This phase of the relationship as described in the History of the Divided Kingdom does not clearly correspond to anything in 1 Kgs 13 + 2 Kgs 23:15-20. This stretch of historiography (2 Kings 12-21) may lack a correspondence in 1 Kings 13 because it is not pertinent to the issue of the relationship between Israel and Judah.'⁵⁵ Or, from the opposite point of view, '[t]he *mise-en-abyme* duplicates pertinent aspects of the whole, and these wars seem not to be relevant to the presentation of the relations between the kingdoms because of their anomaly.'⁵⁶ Perhaps this is because Bosworth's proposal attempts to account

⁵² Ibid, 153-4.

⁵³ Ibid, 155.

⁵⁴ De Vries, *1 Kings*, 169-70.

⁵⁵ Bosworth, *Story*, 146.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

for everything in a chronological and schematised way. His suggestions make sense of a number of the story's anomalies, as we have seen. But to force a rigid template over 1 Kings 13.11-32 + 2 Kings 23.15-20 and the History of the Divided Kingdom does not result in a perfect fit, as Bosworth himself acknowledges with regards to the ten chapter block between 2 Kings 12-21. This is not to say that 1 Kings 13 fails to highlight features of the wider narrative, but the story perhaps does this in a less rigid way than is suggested by Bosworth.

Finally, I am not sure *mise-en-abyme* is the best term or most appropriate device. Bosworth defines this quite specifically in terms of 'isolatability' (cf. 'Revisiting'), but at the same time, one of his strongest arguments for this literary device is that 1 Kings 13 is only comprehensible as a political story with wider implications beyond itself.⁵⁷ Although Bosworth is clear that his intention is to fill a gap in biblical studies, his work is less accessible to other scholars because he uses a niche term that is not in wide circulation. In my view, the more widely recognised term, *narrative analogy*, meets all the criteria as an appropriate designation for an equally meaningful discussion of 1 Kings 13.

All in all, Bosworth's synchronic analysis of the *mise-en-abyme* and the history of the divided kingdom is illuminating. He is certainly right in saying that scholars who concern themselves only with reconstructing pre-Dtr sources behind the story tend to miss any connections it may have with its broader context.⁵⁸ As well as sparking a renewed interest in Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 (as he intended), Bosworth's suggestion that further research be undertaken regarding *the relationship between Israel and Judah in Kings* is well-placed, since recent studies suggest that this continues to be a fertile field in Old Testament scholarship.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See esp. his discussion of the moral dilemma at the heart of the story; *Ibid*, 155-6

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 120.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., G.N. Knoppers and J.G. McConville (eds.), *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies* (SBTS 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000) and de Pury et al (eds.), *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic History in Recent Research* (JSOTSup 306. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000). More specifically, regarding Israel's national identity as a kingdom divided, see Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings*; Mullen, *Narrative History*; McConville, *God and Earthly Power*.

**JOSIAH AS THE MAN OF GOD FROM JUDAH:
A LITERARY-THEOLOGICAL READING OF 1 KINGS 13**

In this chapter, I offer my own literary-theological reading of 1 Kings 13 that takes seriously the analogical dimension of the text. In summary, I read the chapter as a proleptic parable that anticipates King Josiah of Judah as the ideological antithesis of King Jeroboam I of Israel. Represented by two anonymous prophetic figures, these two archetypal kings are set against one another in the narrative in a way that accents the theological significance of their actions for the people of Israel. It is my intention to draw on a repertoire of methods as well as a range of insights from the work of other scholars, to assist in answering the questions I bring to the text. Moreover, in keeping with my submission in previous chapters, concerning the importance of being explicit about one's interpretive priorities and interests, I shall first seek to clarify my point of view regarding the historical, literary and theological dimensions of the narrative. In particular, by way of introduction, I shall consider the author's historical frame of reference and the literary function of 1 Kings 13 in order to establish a theological context for our reading.

Historical Frame of Reference

While the reading offered below operates on the level of a text-hermeneutic, it is informed by some historical suppositions about its composition. This is not to contradict my earlier warning about the dangers of historicising, but rather, more simply, to acknowledge the historical dimension of the text. It will become clear that my historical suppositions do not extend far beyond what is quite obvious at any rate.

Assumptions about Dtr and the DH

First, while I acknowledge that the books of Deuteronomy and Kings show evidence of being compiled from various sources and having numerous layers of redaction, I refer to their author(s) as 'Dtr'. Debates concerning the compositional

history of DH continue, and although a number of scholars currently tend to think of the DH as the product of at least a double redaction,¹ no consensus on these matters has yet been reached. It will become clear that I still find Noth's basic paradigm the most practical for dealing with these texts in their received form.²

Second, I assume a literary relationship between the books of Deuteronomy and Kings, not only in their shared common language, style and content,³ but also in terms of intertextuality. As Noth said of the writer, 'we call him the "Deuteronomistic" author because his language and way of thinking closely resemble those found in the Deuteronomistic Law,'⁴ the implication being that much of Kings is helpfully illuminated by an understanding of Deuteronomy—regardless even of which text was completed first.⁵

Third, the synchronic reading offered below does not depend on or require a particular view of the redaction of Kings since it is offered on the level of a text-hermeneutic and makes sense of the received text. At the same time, however, it is a reading that sits comfortably with an author-hermeneutic and presents a potential challenge to the notion of a Josianic redaction. That is to say, the notion that the man of God from Judah anticipates and mirrors King Josiah in many respects, may or may not have been in the mind of the author of 1 Kings 13.

Josiah in 1 Kings 13

The final form of Kings is a product of the exile, written with the end in mind. There is nothing particularly new or startling about this observation since, after all, Kings concludes with Jehoiachin living in exile. But this exilic point of view helps to

¹ E.g., Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 274-89; Richard Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*. JSOTSup 18 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981); idem, 'The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case is Still Compelling,' JSOT 29 (2005), 319-37.

² Issues concerning the identity and goals of Dtr (either as an individual or a movement) are increasingly complex, and beyond the aims of this study. Cf. L.S. Schering and S.L. McKenzie (eds), *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (JSOTSup 268; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999); de Pury et al (eds.), *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic History in Recent Research* (JSOTSup 306. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000); T. Römer (ed.), *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History*.

³ Noth, *The DH*, 4-5.

⁴ Ibid, 4. Similarly, von Rad: 'We call these histories Deuteronomistic because they take as normative for their judgement of the past certain standards laid down either exclusively or chiefly in Deuteronomy.' *Studies*, 75.

⁵ Levenson argues, contrary to Noth, that the Deuteronomistic code (Deut 12-26) postdates Kings and the rest of the DH. Levenson, 'Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?' *HTR* 68 (1975), 203-33.

explain why Josiah's emphasis on the centralisation of worship (cf. Deut 12.13ff.) had such a profound influence on Dtr's historiographical project. As Noth observes:

The historical role of the Deuteronomic law, in the period of Josiah has in fact determined the subsequent assessment of this law, especially as we see it in Dtr. Whenever Dtr. makes Moses, Joshua and others insist upon the "law", that is, the Deuteronomic law, and warn the people not to transgress it, and whenever he judges historical figures and events by the standard of the "law", he obviously means the legal ordinances concerning the worship of "other gods" and, in the case of the monarchical period especially, the legal prescription that there should be only one place of worship; he apparently ignores the rest of the law.⁶

In Noth's view, Josiah's historical response to the law in the late 7th century significantly influenced Dtr's 6th century record of events. Although Deuteronomy 17.14-20 does not consider it the duty of kings to maintain cultic obedience (on the contrary, it is the duty of the people to 'purge the evil from your midst'⁷), Josiah's revival of covenant loyalty through obedience to 'the book of the law of Moses' established an ideal in the memory of the people, an ideal that was written freely into the DH.⁸ Accordingly, Dtr came to regard Josiah's reforms as normative so that the prescriptions of the Deuteronomic Law⁹ were recounted throughout the DH as the responsibility of kings. A related observation by scholars is the depiction of Joshua as a Josianic figure who rids Canaan of any threats to the worship of Yahweh.¹⁰ Again, it is the recent memory of Josiah that impacts upon the recollection of more ancient memories in the life of Israel. An implication of this for the portrayal of kings in the DH is that Dtr 'completely departs from the intention of the law itself and transfers the responsibility for the maintenance of the relationship between God and his people, as envisaged by the law, to the monarchy. This is in fact the central

⁶ Noth, *The DH*, 81.

⁷ Deut 13.5; 17.7; 19.19; 21.9; 21.21; 22.21,24; 24.27. See Noth, *The DH*, 82.

⁸ Deut 31.11-12.; Jos 1.8; 8.31-34; 23.6; 24.26; 1 Kgs 2.3; 2 Kgs 10.31; 14.6; 17.13,34,37; 21.8; 22.8; 22.11; 23.24-25. See Noth, *The DH*, 81-2; von Rad, *Studies*, 75-6.

⁹ I.e. Deut 4.44-30.20 (Noth, *The DH*, 16, *passim*).

¹⁰ To note just one example, Joshua leads a covenant renewal ceremony in Josh 8.30-35. For further literature and argumentation, see Richard D. Nelson, 'Josiah in the Book of Joshua', *JBL* 100/4 (1981), 531-540; Lori L. Rowlett, *Joshua and the Rhetoric of Violence: A New Historicist Approach*, JSOTSup 226 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

idea of the monarchy.¹¹ By the same token, von Rad asks whether ‘objective justice was done to these kings’ inasmuch as ‘they were measured against a norm which did not in fact apply in their time.’¹² Again, the point is that Dtr recollected and recounted Israel’s history through what we might call a Josianic lens.¹³

The first detailed commandments within the Deuteronomistic Law after the introductory material (i.e. those concerning cult centralisation in Deut 12) receive a large amount of attention throughout the DH because, as Noth observes, they appear to have ‘had a disproportionate effect on the actions of Josiah.’¹⁴ From his exilic context, Dtr apparently saw Josiah as the king who came closest to realising the monarchic ideal of mediating—even *enforcing*—observance of the law in Israel.¹⁵ Dtr ‘finds evidence in the conduct of King Josiah that the monarchy, once it existed, was responsible, in a mediatorial role, for preserving the relationship between God and people and thus, in Dtr’s view, for observing the “law”, a duty which was initially assigned to the people collectively.’¹⁶ Looking back via Josiah’s cultic reforms, Dtr perceived and documented the history of Israel, from Moses’ mediatory role in promoting obedience to the law (Deut) through to Josiah’s mediatory role in doing the same (2 Kgs 22-23).¹⁷ Because of Josiah’s sudden and untimely death, however, these events ultimately had their impact through Dtr’s record of Israel’s history (i.e. the DH) rather than through Josiah’s reign itself.¹⁸ In the reading that follows, I suggest that when Josiah is seen to feature in both the prologue (1 Kgs 13) and the epilogue (2 Kgs 22-23) of the history of the divided kingdom, this not only makes sense of Dtr’s thematic priorities throughout the

¹¹ Noth, *The DH*, 82.

¹² von Rad, *Studies*, 76.

¹³ In this regard, since Dtr’s emphasis on regnal responsibility for the worship practices of the people obviously did not come from Deuteronomy, it is possible that Dtr’s view (especially in Kings) represents an attempt to synthesise Deuteronomistic perspectives and sources with royal Jerusalem perspectives and sources, such as those found in the classical prophets and royal psalms.

¹⁴ Noth, *The DH*, 81. Noth offers some speculation concerning the reasons for this.

¹⁵ On this point, Noth comments that Dtr’s viewpoint is ‘inaccurate because he claims that the monarchy was, while it existed, responsible for the observance of the law and therefore for the preservation of the relationship between God and people.’ Noth, *The DH*, 82.

¹⁶ Noth, *The DH*, 83.

¹⁷ Richard E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 22: Chico, CA, 1981), 8-10, argues that Moses as lawgiver and Josiah as law-enforcer form an *inclusio* around the first edition of the DH.

¹⁸ Noth, *The DH*, 80.

history of the kingdoms, but it also provides a hermeneutical strategy for understanding the complexity of 1 Kings 13 in particular. We shall see how this comes to expression further below, but let us first consider the literary placement and function of 1 Kings 13.

Literary Function

The structural importance of the Jeroboam cycle (1 Kgs 11-14) at the beginning of the history of the divided kingdoms is fairly self-evident, since the history hearkens back to 'the sin of Jeroboam' again and again in its evaluation of northern kings and in its explanation for the fall of the north (2 Kgs 17.21-22). Similarly, there is a general consensus among scholars about the structural significance of the Josiah narrative (2 Kgs 22-23) as a high point in the gloomy record of Israel's monarchy. These two figures, and the narratives about them, may therefore be seen as 'bookends' to the history of the divided kingdom. Note that each archetypal king is mentioned in the other's narrative (1 Kgs 13.2; 2 Kgs 23.16).

As well as this overarching structure, Noth observed in his commentary that the 'old prophetic story' in 1 Kings 13 shows that the northern cult was rejected by God from the very beginning while at the same time stressing the prophecy-fulfilment correspondence that determined Israel's history:

Für Dtr die alte Prophetengeschichte von dem Drohwort gegen den Altar von Bethel wichtig sein; denn sie zeigte, daß über dem Kult des Staates Israel von allem Anfang an das Wort der göttlichen Verwerfung stand. Zugleich machte sie besonders deutlich, daß der Verlauf der geschichte Israels bestimmt war durch die Entsprechung von "Vorhersage und Erfüllung". Das Drohwort des Gottesmannes am Anfang der Geschichte des Staates Israel hat sich in der Zerstörung des Altars von Bethel durch Josia genau erfüllt.¹⁹

In addition, a number of commentators have observed that the story stresses the Deuteronomic theme of obedience to the law.²⁰ What has not been recognised, however, is that the figure of Josiah (and the untimely manner of his death) sheds significant light on many of the confusing elements within the story.

¹⁹ Noth, *Könige I*, 305. Cf. Mullen, 'The Sins of Jeroboam: A Redactional Assessment', *CBQ* 49 (1987), 212-32.

²⁰ See under *The Efficacious Word of God* in ch. 4.

But although Josiah is recognised as a significant figure in Israel's history and within the structure of the book of Kings, his importance for understanding 1 Kings 13 has not been fully appreciated, perhaps because the mention of his name in that chapter is oftentimes glossed over simply as an anachronism. In the reading below, I suggest that Josiah functions as both central theological figure and hermeneutical key for 1 Kings 13 and the ensuing history.

I have sought to clarify in preceding chapters that an emphasis on the text's *poesis* does not imply disinterest in matters relating to its *genesis*. Therefore, while my objective is to offer a synchronic reading of 1 Kings 13, I by no means rule out the potential for diachronic studies to illuminate the text as we have it.

The question of context(s), as raised by Walsh,²¹ is suggestive for considering how a text's *function* (as well as its meaning) may change in accordance with the range and substance of its referents. In particular, when 1 Kings 13 is treated as a parabolic tale that introduces the history of the divided kingdoms and anticipates Josiah's cultic reforms, it functions less as a self-contained story with a moral than as an interpretive lens for the subsequent history. While every story has its own internal logic, the literary placement of an episode may also suggest that it has a hermeneutical function for a broader range of texts and ought therefore to be interpreted accordingly. Well-known in this regard is Wellhausen's list of programmatic speeches that simultaneously recollect the past while looking to the nation's future. The retrospective / prospective function of these texts, as described by Wellhausen and Noth, bears numerous similarities to the function that certain scholars, following Barth's suggestive proposal, have attributed to 1 Kings 13.

Speeches as a Structuring Device

Wellhausen first identified the use of speeches as a unifying structural device throughout the DH in his *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*:

The great period thus marked off and artificially divided into sub-periods, is surveyed and appraised at every important epoch in sermon-like discourses. These are much more frequent in Kings than in Judges and Samuel. It makes no difference whether the writer speaks in his own person, or by the mouth of another; in reviews of the past he speaks himself, 2 Kings xvii.; in anticipations

²¹ Walsh, 'Contexts'; see chapter four.

of the future he makes another speak (1Kings viii. ix.). A few examples must be cited to show what we mean.²²

Wellhausen goes on to cite from Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8, the prophecy of Ahijah²³ in 1 Kgs 11.31-35, and 2 Kings 17, before commenting thus: 'The water accumulates, so to speak, at these gathering places of the more important historical epochs; but from these reservoirs it finds its way in smaller channels on all sides.'²⁴ Sixty-five years later, Noth popularised this observation in his pivotal work, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (1943), in his discussion of speeches, prayers (Josh 1, 23; 1 Sam 12; and 1 Kgs 8) and direct commentary (Josh 12; Jdg 2.11ff.; 2 Kgs 17.7ff) inserted by Dtr throughout the history to evaluate Israel's progress or regress in relation to God.²⁵

In light of the strategic placement of these texts, scholars have noticed an unusual hiatus around 1 Kings 11-14, which narrates one of the worst political debacles in Israelite history. Plöger registers his surprise that 'in the presentation of the time extending from the dedication of the Temple to the Ephraimite catastrophe, no further summary homily from the pen of the Deuteronomist is to be found, although an event such as the so-called division of the kingdom under Solomon's successor, Rehoboam, would have been serious enough to warrant it.'²⁶ In an effort to justify or explain 'the absence of these introspective pieces' between 1 Kings 8 and 1 Kings 14, Plöger supposes that Dtr 'was probably satisfied with the prophetic proclamations . . . of the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh in 1 Kgs 11:29ff. and the man of God Shemaiah in 1 Kgs 12:22ff.'²⁷ Taking his cues from Wellhausen and Noth, Plöger

²² Wellhausen, *Prolegomena* (ET), 274.

²³ The text [ET] reads, 'a prophecy of Abijah to the first Jeroboam' (275), though it is clear that 'Ahijah' is intended. The same error occurs on p. 279, and in both cases, the German also erroneously reads 'Abijah'.

²⁴ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 277. Earlier, Wellhausen postulates that 'the author of the Book of Kings himself wrote the prayer of Solomon and the epitome [2 Kgs 17], at least, without borrowing from another source' (223). Similarly, he identifies Judges 2 and 1 Samuel 12 as the author's introductions to the periods of the judges and kings respectively (246-7).

²⁵ Noth, *The DH*, 5-6.

²⁶ Otto Plöger, 'Speech and Prayer in the Deuteronomistic and the Chronicler's Histories' in Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*. (Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns: 2000), 34.

²⁷ Plöger, 'Speech and Prayer', 34. Wellhausen, as cited above, also defers to Ahijah's speech in 1 Kgs 11.31-35, in spite of the fact that these verses do not 'anticipate and recapitulate' in characteristic fashion. Cf. Noth, *The DH*, 76.

is convinced 'that the contemplative homilies of the deuteronomistic historian are set forth [exclusively] in the form of speeches.'²⁸

Notwithstanding the value of this observation, such a view unnecessarily delimits Dtr to the use of speech forms. While Plöger is right in sensing something of a void in 1 Kings 11-14 as far as contemplative homilies are concerned, it is quite possible that Dtr has, in fact, inserted a reflection right at the heart of the Jeroboam cycle, although it has not generally been recognised as such due to its literary form and unusual content. To Plöger's concern regarding an apparent lack of theological commentary at a critical juncture in the DH, Lemke responds that 1 Kings 13

fills a vacuum which has been felt by many. It would be remarkable, to say the least, if as important an event in the history of Israel as the division of the kingdom, with its ensuing religious schism, and the establishment of those cultic practices which led to the eventual downfall of Israel should have received only passing attention from the Deuteronomistic Historian... If we are correct, however, 1 Kings 13 fulfills precisely the kind of function Plöger was looking for. To be sure, it is not a speech like 1 Sam. 12, nor a prayer like 1 Kings 8, nor a free commentary like II Kings 17:7-20. Rather, it is a narrative with considerable action, suspense and movement, but heavily interlaced with dialogue and speeches by its main characters. The particular vehicle chosen by the Deuteronomist to make his point was dictated, here as elsewhere, by his available sources.²⁹

While certain aspects of Lemke's arguments are less convincing,³⁰ I agree with his overall judgment 'that 1 Kings 13 forms an integral part of the structure and theology of the Deuteronomistic History.'³¹ Due to their structural significance and content, Steven McKenzie acknowledges the potential gains of adding 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Kings 13 'to the series of speeches and narratives in Deuteronomistic style

²⁸ Plöger, 'Speech and Prayer', 35. Plöger considers it strange for the narrator to offer direct commentary in 2 Kgs 17.7ff., when in 2 Kgs 18 the prophet Isaiah would have provided a perfectly suitable voice for such reflection (34).

²⁹ Lemke, 'The Way of Obedience', 325-6, fn 103.

³⁰ E.g., Lemke dates words and phrases in order to argue for a common author (but cf. Sommer above) and he assumes that 1 Kings 13 comes from source material whereas it seems just as plausible in my view that Dtr composed the story to suit his purposes.

³¹ Lemke, 'Way of Obedience', 304.

which provide structure for the DH'.³² It is important, therefore, to treat this chapter in light of its structural importance.

Narrative Analogy in the DH

In 1975, Robert Alter lamented the dominance of 'excavative scholarship' and the corresponding dearth of any 'serious literary analysis of the Hebrew Bible.'³³ Since that time, countless articles, books and commentaries have been written in this vein, some covering general questions of method and others offering close readings of Hebrew narratives. Alter's subsequent essays were so well-received that they were collated to form the substance of his now classic work, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, in which Alter describes a rhetorical device in Hebrew narrative known as 'narrative analogy, through which one part of the text provides oblique commentary on another'.³⁴

What Alter describes as *narrative analogy*, others have called *mise-en-abyme* (Bosworth³⁵), *narrative duplication* (Garsiel³⁶), *analogy* or *analogical patterning* (Sternberg³⁷), *metaphor plot* (Berman³⁸), and *double narratives* (Nahkola³⁹). Barth employed none of these technical terms since his exegesis preceded the kind of literary analysis that has burgeoned in the last thirty or forty years. Admittedly, he develops the ideas of 'double-pictures' [*doppelbildern*] and 'mirroring', but these are used to understand 1 Kings 13 as a 'self-contained chapter' rather than to elucidate any parallelism that exists between 1 Kings 13 and a related text. In any case, as Garsiel rightly observes, when studying comparative structures, analogies and parallels, '[t]here is no single research approach to the varied material . . . nor are

³² S. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* HSM 33 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 2. Dennis McCarthy, 'II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History,' *JBL* 84 (1965), 131-8, argues that 2 Sam 7 is such a text as well. Cf. F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 241-64.

³³ Alter, 'A Literary Approach to the Bible,' *Commentary* 60/6 (Dec, 1975), 70.

³⁴ Alter, *Art*, 21.

³⁵ Bosworth, *Story*, *passim*. This French term literally means 'placement in abyss'.

³⁶ Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: a literary study of comparative structures, analogies and parallels* (Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1985), 28.

³⁷ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 365, 479-80, 542-3.

³⁸ Joshua Berman, *Narrative Analogy in the Hebrew Bible: Battle Stories and their Equivalent Non-battle Narratives* (VTSup 103; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 6.

³⁹ Aulikki Nahkola, *Double Narratives in the Old Testament: the foundations of method in biblical criticism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), *passim*.

there clear cut methods for dealing with it.⁴⁰ Accordingly, 'each case must be taken on its own merits; it would be presumptuous to suggest that a master key can be furnished to every instance throughout the Bible.'⁴¹ The choice of terminology ultimately depends on what the interpreter wishes to emphasise in her treatment of repetition in Hebrew narrative.

Given the nature of my reading below, I would prefer a term like *proleptic parable*, to suggest that 1 Kings 13 is a symbolically rich narrative that anticipates Josiah. I perceive the relationship between 1 Kings 13 and the subsequent history of the kingdoms not as one of allegorical correspondence, but one in which the unified story of 1 Kings 13 serves a function not unlike the speeches mentioned above. However, I am somewhat reluctant to introduce yet another term into the discussion.

A number of readings of 1 Kings 13 in recent years have suggested a parallel between the man of God from Judah and Jeroboam,⁴² namely, that both Jeroboam and the man of God are disobedient and therefore subject to judgment. In my view, this is too general to be very helpful. Rather, I consider the strongest point of analogy to be those suggested by Barth's pair of double-pictures: on the right, 'the man of Judah, with the figure of Josiah at a distance behind him,'⁴³ representing Davidic kingship and true prophetic authority and responsibility; on the left, the old prophet ('the real Satan of the story'⁴⁴) and Jeroboam stand together as representatives of Israel and falsehood. While I do not consider Barth's correlation of north and south with false and true prophecy to find support within the text, I am convinced that the two prophets may be aligned as analogues for their respective kingdoms *and* their representative kings, who are identified by name in the first two verses of the narrative as Jeroboam and Josiah. As Barth suggests, the reader is presented with Israel, the Bethel prophet, and Jeroboam on one hand, and Judah, the man of God, and Josiah on the other.

⁴⁰ Garsiel, *Samuel*, 28.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 28.

⁴² Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama*, 117; Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, 115f., Mead, 'Kings and Prophets', 197; Cohn, 'Literary Technique', 35.

⁴³ Barth, *CD II.2*, 398.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 402.

My reading is attentive, then, to the ways in which the Judean man of God offers a proleptic portrait of King Josiah, an analogue has not been explored to the best of my knowledge, but one that illuminates elements in the narrative that typically cause confusion. When 1 Kings 13 is read with the ensuing history and with Josiah's reforms in view, to cite Alter, 'one part of the text provides oblique commentary on another'.⁴⁵ Within this framework, 1 Kings 13 presents an opening bookend to the history that stresses Jeroboam's responsibility for the sins of Israel and anticipates the manner in which Josiah will assume responsibility for a remedy three hundred years later.

Theological Context

Essential for the interpretation of any given text is the determination of context, as Walsh has helpfully pointed out with regards to the literary context(s) of 1 Kings 13. Walsh's conclusion—that the determination of literary context brings the reader to the fore in the interpretive process—applies also to the prioritisation of theological motifs. We have seen that Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13 is set under the heading of election in his *Dogmatics*, and that subsequent scholars have located their readings within other fields of interest, such as prophecy (Crenshaw), politics (Boer), structuralism (Walsh), and so on. A range of approaches and questions are available to interpreters so that what emerges from all this, in simplest terms, is the reality of hermeneutical pluralism. Each interpreter approaches the text with her own interests, which in turn inform methodological decisions and investigative outcomes. But are any or all such categories equally suited to the task of interpreting 1 Kings 13? Clearly this is not the general perception, since Barth's analysis has been sidelined, or indeed rejected outright, by much subsequent scholarship. How then, does one select an appropriate theological motif by which to apprehend the text?

While I do not agree wholeheartedly with Klopfenstein's evaluation of Barth's exegesis on this issue, he makes some fair criticisms. On one hand, it is unreasonable to criticise Barth for imposing critical questions upon his exegesis, since this is unavoidable. Yet, Klopfenstein is justified in asking 'ob der Text selber Barth das Recht gibt, ihn als Zeugnis für das erwählende und verwerfende, verwerfende und erwählende Handeln Gottes und ihr eigentümliches Beieinander zu verstehen.'⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Alter, *Art*, 21.

⁴⁶ Klopfenstein, 667.

For both Klopfenstein and Noth, the key issue in their criticism of Barth is 'der Text selber'. Both scholars are adamant about reading OT historical narratives on their own terms; i.e. without appropriating theological categories that are alien to the world of the text that is under scrutiny.

To illustrate the point, Barth's exegesis labels northern prophets as false (i.e. rejected) and southern prophets as true (i.e. elect), presumably because a dichotomy such as this helps to establish election as a theme in the narrative, which in turn informs his delineation of Christ as both the elect and rejected. However, it is telling that Barth is unable to develop the claim that northern prophets were 'professional' from the text itself.⁴⁷ This categorisation suits Barth's reading with all its polarities between north and south, false and true, Jeroboam and Josiah, rejected and elected. But since many northern prophets are presented as exemplary figures in Kings (e.g., Elijah and Elisha), and no discernible difference in meaning between 'prophet' and 'man of God' is apparent, Klopfenstein's criticism ultimately holds true: a dialectical scheme of thought, which insists on and moves toward a synthesis of thesis and antithesis, lies couched in Barth's interpretation.⁴⁸

In fairness, Barth says that he prefers in his exegesis to remain 'within the Old Testament world and its possibilities.'⁴⁹ But because the witness of 1 Kings 13 appears incomplete, Christ is necessarily introduced as the story's true epilogue: 'What else is 1 K. 13 if it is not prophecy? Where else is its fulfilment to be found if not in Jesus Christ?'⁵⁰ Scholars have fairly criticised Barth for applying a christological hermeneutic rather than interpreting this Old Testament text on its own terms, yet they have rarely succeeded in offering a more coherent and compelling reading of 1 Kings 13. Nonetheless, I agree that the issue of election lies outside of the story's inherent logic, just as the issue of prophetic discernment also does (cf. the discussion of Crenshaw in ch. 4). In my view, one can make sense of 1 Kings 13 within the literary world created by Dtr without deferring to theological

⁴⁷ To bolster his argument, Barth defers to parallels between the man of God from Judah and Amos, who also goes to the north under God's command to speak against false worship; cf. Amos 7.10-17. Of the parallels between 'the prophetic profession in contrast to the prophetic confession of the man of God from Judah,' Barth states: 'It is naturally no accident that the roles are allotted exactly as in Amos: on the one hand, the institution, the bare possibility; and on the other the reality of prophecy rooted in the freedom of God.' (400)

⁴⁸ Klopfenstein, 670.

⁴⁹ Barth, *CD* II.2, 389.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 409.

motifs that illuminate the story ‘from beyond’, as it were. Even if Christ is ultimately understood to offer an ‘answer’ to this text in some way (and I am not opposed to that in principle), it is neither because 1 Kings 13 is incomplete, nor because Kings lacks an ‘answer’ of its own. In my understanding, Josiah provides such an answer.

Josiah as Theological Figure

The claim that the figure of Josiah is somehow present in our narrative emerges not simply as ‘an interesting take on 1 Kings 13,’ but from historical considerations about the composition of Kings and from observations concerning the literary function and framing of the chapter, as discussed above. While many commentators have noted the dynamic of prophecy in 1 Kings 13, and its fulfilment in Josiah, more remains to be said about the tragic figure of the man of God, whose enigmatic presence in the narrative casts a shadow over the entire history of the divided kingdom.

Erich Auerbach’s exploration of *figura* is pertinent to our study, wherein he states that figural interpretation ‘establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfils the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension, the *intellectus spiritualis*, of their interdependence is a spiritual act.’⁵¹ This is precisely the dynamic we see at work in these texts; the man of God signifies Josiah, and Josiah—in his life and death—draws out the deeper significance (or fulfilment) of narrative elements foreshadowed by the man of God.

The ‘point’ or ‘moral’ of the story, if we may speak thus, is that Israel and Judah are both doomed before the history of division even begins, so deeply will the sins of Jeroboam infect the religious practices of north and south. The anonymous kingdom representatives within this parabolic story make this abundantly clear in that one proves to be disobedient and the other deceptive. As the narrative plot unfolds—both in 1 Kings 13 and in the subsequent history—it becomes clear that Israel and Judah are destined to share an exilic grave. From the exilic author’s point

⁵¹ Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953) [DT: 1946], 73. Auerbach means by this latter phrase that a figurative interpretation does not thereby indicate only metaphorical or abstract realities, but also literal and historical ones.

of view, i.e. with hindsight, the literary placement of 1 Kings 13 thus permits a schema of prophecy and fulfilment to envelope the entire history of the divided kingdom, casting a shadow upon it from its inception. The figures of Jeroboam and Josiah are ideally suited in that both kings influence their subjects with religio-political actions that are remembered forever as ‘the sins of Jeroboam’ and ‘the reforms of Josiah’. Thus, the narratives about these figures not only establish a prophecy-fulfilment schema that highlights the sovereignty of Yahweh as LORD of history,⁵² but that also stresses the Dtr principle that dynastic stability is dependent upon cultic centralisation.

But Josiah stands for more than ‘fulfilment’ or ‘cultic centralisation’. He is, like Moses, a paradigmatic figure in Israel’s history for obedience to the law. As Dtr makes the point in 2 Kings 23.25: ‘Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.’ And yet—just as the well-intentioned man of God in 1 Kings 13 is deceived and killed in an unexpected fashion, so Josiah dies an untimely death and Judah is not spared from the LORD’s wrath. In the man of God from Judah—and by analogy, in Josiah—we see the unavoidable consequences of Israel’s broken covenant with Yahweh. Like Israel’s act of adultery on her ‘wedding night’ at Sinai (the memory of which is evoked by the golden calves), the period of the monarchy commences with law-breaking and is therefore destined for ruin. In this sense, 1 Kings 13 has both a retrospective and a prospective function, not unlike Dtr’s speeches. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let us turn to the text itself.

A Literary-Theological Reading of 1 Kings 13

In the following section, I cite the NRSV. It is well-known that the DH presents the simplest Hebrew in the Hebrew Bible, and 1 Kings 13 is no exception. For the majority of these verses, then, my own translation differs very little from the NRSV, and there is no need to add yet another Bible translation to the proliferation of options already available. My purpose is not to offer a text-critical or philological analysis, but a theological reading that makes sense of the text as it stands. Nonetheless, I shall make it clear in my comments when an alternative translation of a word or phrase is preferred.

⁵² Cf. von Rad, *Studies*, 79.

The story's boundaries are more complex than I have perhaps indicated thus far by repeated references simply to '1 Kings 13'. The closure of the pericope in 13.33-34 is clear, and 14.1 certainly marks the beginning of a new unit. But where our story begins is less straightforward, since 13.1 commences with הִנֵּה! —But look!—which signifies a change in perspective but never the beginning of a new textual unit.⁵³ More specifically, הִנֵּה! is a *presentative exclamation* that serves 'as a bridge for a logical connection between [the] preceding clause and the clause it introduces.'⁵⁴ 1 Kings 12.33 appears to mark the beginning of a new section in that it repeats almost everything in verse 32, emphasizing that the festival, the date and the sacrifice are all of Jeroboam's design. It therefore seems appropriate to treat 12.33-13.34 as a textual unit.⁵⁵ While this adds only a single verse to 1 Kings 13, it is a sentence that provides הִנֵּה! with a preceding clause and places Jeroboam's actions within an interpretive frame of reference.

For our exegesis, it is equally important to gain a sense of the broader literary context into which the man of God suddenly arrives. The narrative about Rehoboam's intention to go to war concludes in 1 Kings 12.24, and the pericope beginning in 12.25 narrates Jeroboam's building projects in Shechem and Penuel, undertaken to fortify himself against a removal from power. The theme of Jeroboam's insecurity is thereby introduced in both geographic and cultic terms in the episode directly preceding 1 Kings 12.33-13.34 (i.e. 1 Kgs 12.25-32). These verses therefore require some consideration, since they set the scene for a proper understanding of our narrative, which commences in 12.33.⁵⁶

1 Kings 12.25-32

²⁵Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and resided there; he went out from there and built Penuel. ²⁶Then Jeroboam said to himself, "Now the kingdom may well revert to the house of David. ²⁷If this people continues to go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will turn again to their master, King Rehoboam of Judah; they will kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah."

⁵³ So Gross, 'Lying Prophet', 100.

⁵⁴ Waltke, §40.2.d (677). Cf. Ibid, §40.2 (674f.) on the functions of *hinne* as a 'presentative exclamation.'

⁵⁵ So Gray, *I & II Kings*, 318f.; DeVries, *I Kings*, 164f.; Cogan, *I Kings*, 365f.; B. Long, *I Kings*, 143f. et al.

⁵⁶ There are also numerous lexical reasons for treating 1 Kings 12.25-32 together with 1 Kings 12.33-13.34, for which see Van Winkle, '1 Kings XII 25-XIII 34' (1996); Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 172f.

²⁸So the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold. He said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” ²⁹He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one [at Bethel and before the other]⁵⁷ as far as Dan.

³¹He also made houses on high places, and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not Levites. ³²Jeroboam appointed a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the festival that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar; so he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.

After Rehoboam’s thwarted attempt to engage in civil war and thereby secure the kingdom for himself (1 Kgs 12.17-24), attention shifts to Jeroboam’s efforts to fortify his own position as king. Verse 25 tells of building projects at Shechem and Penuel, strategic for ruling the central hill country and for maintaining a presence both east and west of the Jordan.⁵⁸ Then in verses 26-29, cultic matters take the spotlight, though Jeroboam’s intentions remain the same. Fearing the loss of his position, he seeks to provide the Israelites with a more convenient access to God, in much the same way that Aaron did. ‘You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough!’ he declares, as he inaugurates new cultic centres in Bethel and Dan. The DH generally presupposes the authority of Deuteronomic law, but here Jeroboam entirely disregards the commandment in Deut 12.5 regarding ‘the place that the LORD your God will choose’. The narrator’s evaluation of these events in verse 30, therefore, is that ‘this thing became a sin’ precisely because of the information that follows: ‘for the people went to worship before the one at Bethel and before the other as far as Dan.’⁵⁹ As the history makes clear with its repeated use of אָחַז in the *hiphil*, Jeroboam’s terrible evil is that he *caused* the people of Israel to sin.⁶⁰ We shall have more to say about this below.

⁵⁷ The MT is awkward in v 30; literally, ‘and the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.’ Most modern translations follow Lucian’s recension of the Septuagint, which adds the phrase indicated [בְּיַהֲאֵל וְלִפְנֵי הָאֲחֵרִי], following the antecedent in v 29. Cf. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1902), 177.

⁵⁸ See Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 175-7, for geographical particulars.

⁵⁹ See fn 57.

⁶⁰ On twenty-one occasion (between 1 Kgs 14.16 and 2 Kgs 23.15) Jeroboam’s sin is reported with the adjoined reminder that he caused Israel to sin.

Framing the Narrative

The occurrence of the phrase *וַיְהִי הַדְּבָרִים הַהֵלֶּךְ לְתַשְׁבֵּאֵת* in 1 Kings 12.30 and its repetition in 1 Kings 13.34 is widely recognised as an instance of the rhetorical device known as *Wiederaufnahme*, as noted in chapter 4 (fn. 167).⁶¹ The German word means ‘resumptive repetition’ and is used by redaction critics to identify seams in the text around an interpolation that functions as an aside.⁶² (In classical rhetoric, the same device is known as *epanalepsis*.) But while the recurrence of this phrase in 1 Kings 12.30; 13.34 is widely recognised, the appellation used to describe (and interpret) it depends upon whether the scholar in question prioritises source-oriented or discourse-oriented analysis. Thus, for instance, McKenzie uses the term *Wiederaufnahme* for his diachronic assessment,⁶³ whereas Walsh describes it as an *inclusio* according to the rubric of a synchronic approach.⁶⁴

Even so, the *genesis-poesis* dichotomy does not necessarily rule out one interpretation in favour of another, since the purpose of resumptive repetition (*Wiederaufnahme*) cannot be limited to that of a source-critical tool. Since the device makes it apparent that a redaction has been made, this only intensifies the question of its rhetorical purpose.⁶⁵ Robert Cohn thus uses the term *Wiederaufnahme* to refer to the envelope structure around 1 Kings 13, but goes on to propose that a single author has used ‘purposeful repetition’ as a literary device to frame the story of the man of God with Jeroboam’s sin and its consequences.⁶⁶ In other words, whether

⁶¹ So McKenzie, *Trouble*, 51; Cogan, *1 Kings*, 367; Van Seters, *Death by Redaction?*, 216; Lemke, ‘Way of Obedience’, 320; fn. 31; Knoppers, *Two Nations* (vol. 2), 50-1; Van Winkle, ‘1 Kings XII 25- XIII 34’ (1996), 102-3; Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 153. The only difference between the two phrases is that in the second instance, *וַיְהִי הַדְּבָרִים* replaces *וַיְהִי הַדְּבָרִים*. But since the *ה* in 1 Kgs 13.34 is attested in LXX, Syriac, and the Targum(s), and the *ב* appears at the end of a chapter that contains multiple instances of *וַיְהִי הַדְּבָרִים* (on which see below), it seems likely that *וַיְהִי הַדְּבָרִים* in 1 Kgs 13.34 presents a scribal error.

⁶² This literary-critical device was first explained in detail by C. Kuhl, “Die ‘Wiederaufnahme’” (1952), though the term was already in use and had indeed been applied to 1 Kgs 13 by Hölscher, ‘Das Buch der Könige, sein Quellen und seine Redaktion,’ *Eucharisterion* (ed. H. Schmidt; FRLANT 36; Göttingen: 1923), 387-9. For parade examples, see B.O. Long, ‘Framing Repetitions in Biblical Historiography’, *JBL* 106/3 (1987), 385-39.

⁶³ McKenzie, *Trouble*, 53.

⁶⁴ Walsh, *OT Narrative*, 118.

⁶⁵ See Shemaryahu Talmon, ‘The Presentation of Synchronicity and Simultaneity in Biblical Narrative,’ in *Studies in Hebrew Narrative Art throughout the Ages* / edited on behalf of the Institute of Jewish Studies by Joseph Heinemann, Shmuel Werses. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1978), 9-26; Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 126; B. Long, ‘Framing Repetitions in Biblical Historiography’, *JBL* 106 (1987), 386.

⁶⁶ Cohn, ‘Literary Technique’, 31, fn 15.

one adopts a diachronic or synchronic perspective, the envelope structure sets the story within a particular theological context—referred to throughout the ensuing history as *the sins of Jeroboam*; the resumptive repetition infers more than simply that the story of the two prophets may have existed in pre-Dtr form.⁶⁷ An essay by Burke Long, which considers how a framing repetition may provide a commentarial excursus, is especially pertinent to our understanding of 1 Kings 13:

Certain examples of framing repetition surround a narrator's commentary on events within the primary narrative. In such cases, story time tends to come to an absolute halt, while the narrator-author addresses the reader directly. The commentary itself involves varied temporal relationships and in fact takes on a kind of omnitemporality unrestrained by the spatiotemporal boundaries of the main narrative. In biblical historiography, this kind of excursus typically offers a far-reaching didactic exposition.⁶⁸

As we have already seen with reference to Dtr's programmatic speeches, 1 Kings 13 appears strategically placed to provide 'oblique commentary' on its context. In addition, the phrase that brackets the story ['and this thing became a sin'] highlights the theme of Jeroboam's sin, which is subsequently referenced throughout the history of the kingdoms, with some variation, as 'the sin of Jeroboam, which he sinned and which he caused Israel to commit' (1 Kgs 14.16).⁶⁹

חֲטָאת יִרְבְּעָם אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְאֲשֶׁר הִחֲטִיא אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל

The framing repetition thereby not only establishes a theological context for understanding the strange events reported in 1 Kings 13, but it also introduces an

⁶⁷ Given what appear to be redaction seams, it is possible that 1 Kings 13 existed as pre-Dtr source material that was assimilated into the book of Kings. However, it is equally feasible to view it—as Van Seters suggests—as a story composed at a later date and interpolated to serve a particular purpose. Van Seters, 'Death by Redaction?', 216-7.

⁶⁸ B. Long, 'Framing Repetitions', 397.

⁶⁹ On the significance of this phrase and its variations, which appear repeatedly throughout the history, see Mullen, 'The Sins of Jeroboam', 213; fn. 3; Van Winkle, '1 Kings XII 25-XIII 34' (1996), 105. Regarding the world of the immediate narrative, there is no consensus on what is meant by *הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה* in 12.30 and 13.34. One could infer from 1 Kings 12.30b that the phrase refers to those Israelites who have begun to worship in Bethel and Dan, so that 'this thing' (as well as the 20+ references in Kings to 'the sin that Jeroboam caused Israel to commit') is understood as 'the eschewing of Jerusalem' (Bodner, *Royal Drama*, 93). Alternatively, in light of what is common to both contexts (12.30; 13.33), one could understand 'this thing' to refer to Jeroboam's *ad hoc* appointment of priests. However, other texts are less ambiguous about the precise nature of Jeroboam's sins. In 1 Kings 14, Ahijah speaks directly of idolatry: 'you have done evil above all those who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods, and cast images, provoking me to anger, and have thrust me behind your back' (1 Kgs 14.9). Along similar lines, in 2 Kings 10.29, 'the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he caused Israel to commit' are directly identified with 'the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan'. In these verses, the issue of centralisation is less in focus than that of false idols, though it may generally be affirmed that in either case, the issue pertains to right worship.

important link between 1 Kings 13 and the ensuing history. It is well known that Jeroboam sets the (low) standard against which subsequent northern kings are measured, but in addition the sins of Jeroboam are consistently reported in such a way as to highlight *the monarch's responsibility for the worship practices of the people*. Accordingly, both references to 'this thing' for which Jeroboam is condemned denote 'the people' [עַם] of Israel. In 1 Kings 12.30, 'the people' go to Dan and Bethel to worship at Jeroboam's behest, and in 1 Kings 12.31 and 13.33 Jeroboam sins by appointing anyone from among all 'the people' to the priesthood. The narrative in 1 Kings 13 is thereby not simply framed by twin references to Jeroboam's sin, but also in a way that denotes his influence over the populace. This motif of *monarchial responsibility* clearly resonates with both of the kings mentioned in the story, as well as being applied to almost every other king throughout the ensuing history.⁷⁰ In all of this, we see that the framing of 1 Kings 13 (as well as its content) establishes important motifs, such as cultic purity and regnal responsibility, for Dtr's ambitious historiographical work.

Finally, verses 31-32 stress the lengths to which Jeroboam has gone in breaking the Deuteronomic law. The context is thick with repetition in an attempt to make one thing clear; Jeroboam's cultic invention stands in sharp conflict with the law. His cultic improvisations are presented in a manner consistent with the Deuteronomic law's focus on preventing cultic distortions, rather than cultic observance.⁷¹ He makes high places, the sin for which Solomon lost the kingdom; he appoints non-Levitical priests as he sees fit; he inaugurates a new festival 'like the one in Judah'; and he officiates as priest-king, offering sacrifices 'to the calves he had made' (1 Kgs 12.32). With these details, the verses preceding 1 Kings 13 characterise Jeroboam as a self-serving king whose flagrant law-breaking leads his own people astray.

⁷⁰ For northern kings who walked in the way of Jeroboam (or failed to depart from the sin of Jeroboam), they are described as having 'caused Israel to sin' [*hatah* in the hiphil]. This applies to Nadab (1 Kgs 15.26), Baasha (1 Kgs 15.34), Omri (1 Kgs 16.26), Ahab (1 Kgs 21.22), Ahaziah (1 Kgs 22.52), Joram (2 Kgs 3.3), Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13.2,6), and Jehoash (2 Kgs 13.11). Similarly, when qualifying the more positive evaluations of southern kings, the narrator never simply makes the caveat that 'the high places were not removed', but always goes on to state *why* this is problematic; *viz.* 'the people [עַם] continued to sacrifice and make offerings at the high places.' This applies to Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22.43), Jehoash (2 Kgs 12.3), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14.4), Azariah (2 Kgs 15.4) and Jotham (2 Kgs 15.35). Hezekiah and Josiah are notable exceptions (2 Kgs 18,22-23).

⁷¹ Cf. Noth, *The DH*, 93.

1 Kings 12.33-13.5

³³He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he alone had devised; he appointed a festival for the people of Israel, and he went up to the altar to offer incense—

1 Kings 13 ¹But look!⁷²—a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to offer incense, ²and he proclaimed against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: ‘A son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who offer incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’” ³He gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: ‘The altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.’”

⁴When the king heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him!” But the hand that he stretched out against him withered so that he could not draw it back to himself. ⁵The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

The story opens with Jeroboam ascending [עלה] a cultic monument of his own design at what he perhaps expected to be a climactic point in his career. Within an overall schema that highlights the rise and fall of this northern king, Cohn notes that ‘the man of God attacks the centerpiece of Jeroboam’s achievement’.⁷³ At the very moment of imagined triumph for Jeroboam, the narrative is interrupted by a dramatic shift in perspective: ‘But look!—a man of God came out of Judah...’

The phrase often translated ‘by the word of the LORD’ [בְּדְבַר יְהוָה] is almost unique to 1 Kings 13, where it occurs seven times.⁷⁴ More typical in similar contexts is the phrase ‘according to the word...’ [כְּדְבַר יְהוָה] which appears 27x in the OT, and 15x in Kings, including the immediate context (e.g., 1 Kgs 14.18). Rofé seeks to explain the כּ by suggesting that it is late usage / vocabulary, but perhaps the phrase is suggestive of something else.⁷⁵ How is the כּ to be translated: by? in? through? with? NRSV and NIV translate it ‘by the word...’ JPS translates it less literally: ‘at the

⁷² It is unfortunate that the NRSV and NIV do not capture the perspectival shift. Both translations switch the order of the clauses in 13.1 for a smoother reading, though this surely counters the force of the Hebrew interjection. I have added to the NRSV the words ‘But look!’ [וְהִנֵּה] and added a pronoun at the beginning of verse 2 to reflect the narrative’s change of focus effected in v 1. For the same reason, I have reversed the two clauses of v 1 from the NRSV so that their order accurately reflects the Hebrew—which spotlights the man of God.

⁷³ Cohn, ‘Literary Technique’, 32.

⁷⁴ 1 Kgs 13.1,2,5,9,17,18,32. The exceptions are 1 Sam 3.21; 2 Chr 30.12; Ps 33.6.

⁷⁵ Rofé, ‘Classes in the Prophetic Stories’, 163.

command of the Lord'. If it is read as a *beth* of identity, or *beth essentiae*, it may be understood to mean that the man of God comes, *in the capacity of* the word, or even *servicing as* the word of the LORD.⁷⁶ Robert Alter best reflects the anomalous nature of the phrase by translating it in 13.1 (and 13.1 only⁷⁷) as, 'a man of God comes *through* the word of the Lord to Bethel', though he offers no textual note or explanation.⁷⁸

On its own, the phrase is somewhat perplexing. Together with other clues in these opening verses, however, it suggests that the anonymous prophetic figure coming from Judah to condemn and tear down Jeroboam's altar represents something greater, something *beyond* the concerns of the immediate story. He comes to Bethel not simply in accordance with (i.e. in obedience to) the word of the LORD, but *in* the word of the LORD, representing its characteristic authority and veracity, perhaps even its substance. Much of the Hebrew Bible could accurately be described as both historiography and literary artistry, and oftentimes the artistry elucidates the theological and political nuances of a narrative.⁷⁹ Here I suggest that the dramatic perspectival shift in verse 1 juxtaposes Jeroboam with the enigmatic man of God from Judah and prepares the reader to see Josiah in the narrative. Three further details in these opening verses prompt the reader in the same interpretive direction. The man of God condemns the altar (i.e. the cult) directly, speaks explicitly of King Josiah, and proceeds to do precisely that which Josiah will do again 300 years later. These details (in conjunction with more that follow) prompt the reader to see Josiah, Israel's paradigmatic law-keeping king, in the narrative.

The man of God's prophecy is as enigmatic as his presence in Bethel. He ignores the king and verbally assaults the altar itself, declaring that in due course, King Josiah of Judah will defile it with human bones and the corpses of illegitimate priests. The man of God's words constitute a divine *decree* against false worship. That is to say, the prophecy is not directed against Jeroboam because it is not delimited to his particular context; rather, it stands for all time.

⁷⁶ Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 198, §11.2.5e. Cf. W. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. (ed. E Kautzsch; trans. E. Kautzsch; 2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 119.

⁷⁷ Throughout the rest of the chapter, Alter translates the phrase, 'by the word of the LORD'.

⁷⁸ Robert Alter, *Ancient Israel: The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings* (NY: Norton & Co., 2013), 674.

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Jon D. Levenson, '1 Samuel 25 as Literature and History', *CBQ* 40 (1978), 11-28. Incidentally, Levenson concludes that 1 Samuel 25, a narrative analogy not unlike 1 Kings 13, offers 'a proleptic glimpse, within David's ascent, of his fall from grace.' (24)

The explicit reference to David in verse two carries a certain sting. According to Ahijah's prophecy in 1 Kings 11.38, Jeroboam's kingdom had the potential to rival that of the great King David, but according to the man of God who has come to Bethel, David continues to be favoured—over and against Jeroboam. In due course, a son 'born to the house of David' will remove Jeroboam's cultic perversions from Bethel. The names of both David and Josiah bring the theme of covenant obedience to the fore with considerable urgency and suggest the very reason for the man of God's presence in Bethel 'in the word of the LORD'.

The mention of Josiah 300 years before his reforms took place has typically been understood by scholars as a later redaction. As Cross famously put it, the man of God 'is made to give utterance to one of the most astonishing as well as rare instances of a *vaticinium post eventum* found in the Bible, obviously shaped by an overenthusiastic editor's hand.'⁸⁰ However, judgments of this kind fail to grasp the symbolic potency of these so-called 'Deuteronomic accretions.'⁸¹ The explicit reference to Josiah provides an early clue that this narrative's concerns extend beyond a couple of odd confrontations involving a king and some prophets. The apparent anachronism enables the reader to grasp what the editor may in fact be overenthusiastic about; namely, the intentional juxtaposition of one archetypal king with another, of Jeroboam's cultic deviations with Josiah's cultic reforms. (The other so-called anachronism in the chapter, the reference to 'the cities of Samaria' in 13.32, serves a related purpose; see below.⁸²) The meaning of the entire narrative is enriched when the man of God from Judah is understood to bespeak King Josiah in both word and deed.⁸³ The figural presentation of the man of God from Judah suggests that the interpretive tasks of understanding his actions in this narrative and of conceptualising Josiah's significance within the larger scheme are two sides of the same coin.

Verse 3 states that the man of God 'gave' or 'set' a sign [מופת] on that day (i.e. on the day that he stood before Jeroboam in Bethel): 'The altar shall be torn down, and

⁸⁰ Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 279.

⁸¹ Gray, *I & II Kings*, 321.

⁸² The same phrase [בְּעֵרֵי שִׁמְרוֹן] is found in 2 Kgs 17.24, 26; 2 Kgs 23.19.

⁸³ Nelson, 'Josiah in the Book of Joshua,' *JBL* 100, 531-40, makes a similar point about the presentation of Joshua: 'The Joshua of Dtr is in many ways a thinly disguised Josianic figure who acts out the events of Dtr's own day on the stage of the classical past.' (340)

the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.’ While the *מִרְפָּה* refers primarily to the altar’s destruction, the man of God’s presence in Bethel as a portent of Judah’s best king, enforcing *cultuseinheit* and *cultusreinheit*, is also an important element of the sign that is given.

There is some debate whether the destruction of the altar occurs immediately, i.e. then and there before Jeroboam, or whether verse 5 constitutes a report from the narrator’s exilic context, confirming that the sign was ultimately fulfilled in Josiah’s day. Some question whether the altar was immediately destroyed since it is evidently still standing in Bethel 300 years later in Josiah’s day (cf. 2 Kgs 23.15),⁸⁴ though it is reasonable to imagine that the destroyed altar was repaired or rebuilt over three centuries so that the report of Josiah’s actions in 2 Kings 23.15 is also true.⁸⁵ In other words, the altar could have been destroyed twice. Given Dtr’s concerns as we have outlined them, it is also feasible that verses 3 and 5 are deliberately ambiguous, since precise chronology is less important within this symbolic context, and may even detract from the point—that the man of God’s prophecy against Bethel is a true statement for all time. Thus, whether one views the history of the kingdoms from the beginning (1 Kgs 13) or the end (2 Kgs 23), Jeroboam’s cult—together with his household and the nation he leads into sin—is doomed to destruction. From Dtr’s exilic perspective, however, it is Josiah’s actions that make the destruction of the altar significant in both contexts.

Following the announcement of the altar’s destruction, King Jeroboam interjects and demands the man of God’s arrest. If the man of God stands for covenant fidelity in this opening scene (vv 1-10), Jeroboam models stubbornness and arrogance. Upon hearing the prophetic indictment, his first words in the story are antagonistic: ‘Seize him!’ But like Miriam, who dared to question the authority of the first prophet/man of God (Deut 18.15; 33.1), the king’s hand withers so that he is unable to control it. As is often the case in the DH, the confrontation between royal and prophetic authority moves swiftly to a resolution that undermines the king. Moreover, the

⁸⁴ This is one of Van Seters’ objections; cf. chapter four.

⁸⁵ So Burke O. Long, *1 Kings*, 147. Uriel Simon makes the judgment that ‘the two verses about the collapse of the altar (13:3 and 5) do not seem to belong to the original story (both linguistic and thematic arguments support their secondary provenance)’. He expands on these arguments in a footnote. Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 139-40. Walsh, for different reasons, argues that ‘this parenthetical sign is not part of the scene; we hear it but Jeroboam does not.’ Walsh, *1 Kings*, 178. Noth presents yet a third view: the announcement of the portent (v 3) is immediate and original, but its subsequent fulfilment (v 5) is a later redaction. Noth, *Könige*, 297.

story enforces a principle that Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel also demonstrates a few chapters later; that compromised worshippers are crippled by their duality (cf. 1 Kgs 18.21). The corollary of this is that the subsequent restoration of Jeroboam's hand establishes the man of God's authority and authenticity.

Like Josiah, the man of God crosses (or ignores) the boundary between north and south in an effort to rid the kingdoms of the cultic deviations that have caused their division, and like Josiah he tears down Jeroboam's altar. The man of God comes to Bethel under obligation to a threefold commandment just as Josiah also comes to Bethel compelled by the book of the Law. Moreover, the man of God's untimely death, in spite of his best intentions to keep the law, has obvious resonance with Josiah's sudden death, again in spite of his admirable intentions regarding the divine commands. In spite of his death, the man of God is vindicated as truth's ambassador, as is Josiah. And finally, the lion ensures that the man of God is buried 'in one piece' (quite literally) just as Huldah's prophecy to Josiah specifies that he will be buried בְּשֵׁלֶם (2 Kgs 22.20). Thus, in these opening verses (1-5), Jeroboam, whose desecration of the cultus will lead the nation into sin and ultimately destroy it from the face of the earth (Deut 6.15; 1 Kgs 13.34) is set against Josiah, whose obedience to the Torah will be long-remembered, although it comes too late to save him or his people from a fate that was sealed 300 years earlier. (It is Ahijah who first prophesies Israel's exile in 1 Kgs 14.15.) The sins of Jeroboam and the reforms of Josiah are herein established as interpretive clues for the unusual tale that follows.

1 Kings 13.6-10

⁶The king said to the man of God, "Entreat now the favour of the LORD your God, and pray for me, so that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the LORD; and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as it was before. ⁷Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and dine, and I will give you a gift." ⁸But the man of God said to the king, "If you give me half your kingdom, I will not go in with you; nor will I eat food or drink water in this place. ⁹For thus I was commanded by the word of the LORD: You shall not eat food, or drink water, or return by the way that you came." ¹⁰So he went another way, and did not return by the way that he had come to Bethel.

Unexpectedly, the same king who commanded the man of God's arrest now requests a prayer for healing. The ensuing prayer for restoration together with the favourable divine response perhaps indicates that this story follows the patterning

of Numbers 12,⁸⁶ but it is also possible that the hand of the king is healed to reinforce that the prophecy is not a personal matter against the king, but rather is directed against the illegitimate cultus. The narrative suggests, however, that the healing risks being misunderstood as a sign of divine favour or lenience when the man of God is invited to a meal. The king's thoughts are unstated, though it seems reasonable to assume (as most commentators do) that he would like to have this kind of power on his side. Perhaps the invitation is offered to appease the man of God after trying to arrest him, or to lower his defences via some old-fashioned wining and dining. We cannot be sure because the narrator withholds this information. The more important point is that the offer of table fellowship is rejected outright. While Jeroboam's motive is ambiguous, the man of God's response is not; no gift will be received, no bargain struck, and no alliance forged—not even for half the kingdom.

The merciful healing of the king's hand thus leads to a brief conversation between the man of God and the obstinate king that contains critical information for understanding the entire chapter. Having been offered a meal and a gift, the man of God reveals that he is under a divine prohibition not to eat bread, drink water or retrace his steps. In addition to the decree spoken against the altar and the immediate destruction of the same, the threefold command further strengthens the literary connection between the man of God and obedience to the law, retrospectively hearkening back to Moses whilst also anticipating Josiah's covenant fidelity. And within this opening sequence (vv 1-10), the man of God is faithful to all three commands. He resists any kind of fellowship with the north and sets off back to Judah by an alternative route (v 10).

As DeVries rightly points out, the threefold commandment is 'absolutely structural. It explains the king episode, it creates the point of tension in the Bethelite's hospitality episode, and it provides the hinge for the climactic oracle of judgement.'⁸⁷ There can be little doubt that the commandment is central to the story's structure and meaning. Yet, in terms of their specific content, De Vries goes on to call them 'strange prohibitions... [that] seemed trivial', 'a set of arbitrary and

⁸⁶ John E. Harvey, *Retelling the Torah: The Deuteronomistic Historian's Use of Tetrateuchal Narratives*, JSOTSup 403 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 2-3.

⁸⁷ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 173.

aimless rules.⁸⁸ On the contrary, I understand the particular details of the prohibitions to enrich the overall meaning of the narrative.

First, in a most general sense, and as I have already suggested, the three commands given to the Judean man of God signify the commandments given to God's redeemed people at Mt Sinai. In this regard, the man of God's declaration in verse 9 is of prime importance: 'For thus I was commanded [צוה] by the word of the LORD...' The urgency of the command highlights the man of God's decision for or against obedience. Many of the commentaries that stress the theme of obedience opt for this general understanding, though little, if anything, is said about what is actually signified by eating bread, drinking water or returning by the same route. In my view, there is more to say about the commands than that they simply call for obedience.

Do not eat bread or drink water

The eating and drinking are generally taken as a hendiadys, a pair of commands sharing a single purpose or message. Barth's suggestion that the prohibition from food and drink equates to a ban on fellowship with the north represents the consensus view among scholars.⁸⁹ From this perspective, the man of God's words against the altar are reinforced by his actions, as is often the case with the enacted parables of Old Testament prophets (cf. Hos 1; Isa 20; Jer 16.1-5; Eze 4-5).

However, when the prohibitions against food and water are read alongside the commandments concerning centralised worship in Deuteronomy, a different nuance comes to the fore. Regarding the LORD's choosing of the only right place of worship, Moses says, 'And you shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your households together, rejoicing in all the undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you' (Deut 12.7). In light of this intertext, the man of God's avoidance of food amounts to a symbolic rejection of Jeroboam's implicit claim that the LORD's presence resides in Bethel, making the point that Bethel is an inappropriate place for cultic festivities.

Yet a third possibility is to read the prohibition against food and water in the context of Deuteronomy 9, where Moses recounts his experience at Horeb after the

⁸⁸ Ibid, 174.

⁸⁹ Uriel Simon offers a helpful summary of interpretations of the prohibition against food and drink in a footnote. Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 302; fn 19.

people had worshipped the golden calf. 'Then I lay prostrate before the LORD as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin you had committed, provoking the LORD by doing what was evil in his sight' (Deut 9.18). Here, the intertextual resonance suggests that the man of God's fasting is an expression of grief and condemnation over the sin being committed in Bethel. What these references (i.e. Deut 9 and 12) have in common is that the prohibitions express prophetic condemnation upon the unsanctioned worship in Bethel by recalling the law under which all of Israel has been commissioned to stand.

Whichever nuance is stressed, it is safe to affirm that the man of God is prohibited from eating or drinking in Bethel because table fellowship would be taken to imply that this representative from the south condones Bethel as a place of worship.

Do not return by the way you went

Establishing what the third part of the command signifies is certainly less straightforward, and consequently, fewer scholars have sought to explain its significance. (Barth says nothing of the third command.) David Marcus interprets the command as stipulating that the man of God must not return *to Bethel* after delivering the prophetic word there.⁹⁰ That is, the man of God is not prohibited from returning to Judah by the same route, but from returning to Bethel after he has pronounced God's word there. Marcus' reading thereby supports an anti-Bethel polemic, but it is problematic in light of v 10, which states quite clearly that after his confrontation with Jeroboam, the man of God 'went by another way, and did not return by the way that he had come *there to Bethel*.'

וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אַחֵר וְלֹא-שָׁב בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בָּא בָּהּ אֶל-בֵּית-אֵל: פ (v 10)

In my view, Uriel Simon's contribution is most helpful on this point. He explains with support from a range of Dtr texts⁹¹ that 'just as returning to one's point of departure may be regarded as cancelling out the journey, retracing one's footsteps

⁹⁰ Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, 78-82. Bosworth lends his support to this reading and gives three reasons for doing so. *Story*, 135.

⁹¹ Deut 17.16, 28.68; Amos 1.5, 9.7; 1 Kgs 19.33; 1 Sam 25.12; 1 Sam 1.22-23.

can be regarded as negating one's mission and abandoning its goal.⁹² Simon cites other texts that use similar language, arguing that going back on one's way is an idiomatic expression for retreat, notably: Deut 17.16 (cf. Deut 28.68), where returning to Egypt means rejecting the LORD's deliverance from that place;⁹³ and 1 Sam 25.12, where David's men retrace their steps (i.e. retreat) when sent away by Nabal. Of particular interest are God's words concerning Sennacherib of Assyria in 1 Kings 19, spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

Because you have raged against me
 and your arrogance has come to my ears,
 I will put my hook in your nose
 and my bit in your mouth;
I will turn you back on the way / וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ בְּדַרְךְךָ
by which you came. / אֲשֶׁר-בָּאתָ בָּהּ (2 Kgs 19.28)

Divine judgment upon Sennacherib forces him to turn back upon the way he came, and the language of 2 Kings 19.33 bears striking similarities to that of 1 Kings 13.10:

By the way that he came, by the same he shall return; he shall not come into this city, says the LORD. (2 Kgs 19.33)	בְּדַרְךְךָ אֲשֶׁר-בָּאתָ בָּהּ יָשׁוּב וְאֶל-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לֹא יָבֹא וְנִאֲמַרְתֶּם:
So he went another way, and did not return by the way that he had come there to Bethel. (1 Kgs 13.10)	וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּדַרְךְךָ אַחֵר וְלֹא-שָׁב בְּדַרְךְךָ אֲשֶׁר בָּאתָ בָּהּ אֶל-בֵּית-אֵל: פ

Thus, in light of what appears to be idiomatic usage of the phrase in the DH, Simon seeks to show that the third commandment in 1 Kings 13.9 is not arbitrary, but quite emphatically a command that the man of God *not retrace his steps in a way that would symbolically negate his very reason for going to Bethel* (cf. 13.26 below). The third commandment therefore serves a double purpose. On one hand, 'the ban on returning by the same route gives tangible expression to the final and irrevocable nature of the decree . . . the entire populace saw that the word of the Lord, as spoken

⁹² Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 140.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 140.

by him, was inviolable.⁹⁴ On the other hand, the command serves as a warning to the man of God himself, who must be clear and direct in his coming and going, and in his proclamation against the altar, for he comes *in* the word of the LORD. His words must be as unrelenting as Deuteronomy's commandments against idolatry, and he can afford neither to linger nor wander in any way that might jeopardise the singularity of his message. The man of God's actions must mirror the black and white nature of the law itself.

In sum, the three commands are not arbitrary at all, but highly symbolic and important for a comprehensive understanding of the story. The prohibitions against consuming anything in Bethel testify against Jeroboam's false worship in numerous ways while the third command contains a dual warning. The prophet himself is warned not to retrace his steps lest he negate his mission, and his obedience to the command constitutes a public declaration that the indictment against Jeroboam's cultus is irrevocable. And so far, so good. At the conclusion of this opening scene, the word of the LORD remains sure. Jeroboam's offer is declined and the man of God 'did not return by the way that he had come to Bethel' (v 10).

1 Kings 13.11-19

¹¹Now there lived an old prophet in Bethel. One of his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words also that he had spoken to the king, they told to their father. ¹²Their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him the way that the man of God who came from Judah had gone. ¹³Then he said to his sons, "Saddle a donkey for me." So they saddled a donkey for him, and he mounted it. ¹⁴He went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak tree. He said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" He answered, "I am." ¹⁵Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat some food." ¹⁶But he said, "I cannot return with you, or go in with you; nor will I eat food or drink water with you in this place; ¹⁷for it was said to me by the word of the LORD: You shall not eat food or drink water there, or return by the way that you came." ¹⁸Then the other said to him, "I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD: Bring him back with you into your house so that he may eat food and drink water." But he was deceiving him.

¹⁹Then the man of God went back with him, and ate food and drank water in his house.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 141.

The transition from vv 1-10 to 11-32 is often understood to entail a shift in source material.⁹⁵ Verse 10 rounds off the first part of the story and could lead quite naturally into verse 33, where the narrator states that ‘even after this [thing], Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way.’ In other words, were vv 11-32 omitted, ‘this thing’ in v 33 could refer to the withering and subsequent healing of the king’s hand, giving the brief episode of conflict between prophet and king a tidy conclusion, complete with a moral (vv 33-34). But as many scholars have observed,⁹⁶ the two main parts of the story are difficult to separate without detriment to the overall sense of the narrative. Especially important are the repeated references to the threefold command (vv 9, 17, 22) that hold the entire narrative together.

Man of God and (Old) Prophet

The first apparent issue that is raised with the introduction of the old prophet in verse 11 pertains to the terminology used for the two anonymous figures in the story.⁹⁷ While some have sought to delineate a distinction between what constitutes a man of God and/or a prophet, no real advances have been made that impact upon the meaning of the story.⁹⁸ That neither term indicates prophetic authenticity is clear from the fact both the man of God and the old prophet fail in some respect and both also speak a genuine word of the LORD.⁹⁹ The narrative certainly does not differentiate between a ‘true’ and ‘false’ prophet.¹⁰⁰ And as Barth notes, neither one features more predominantly than the other. The simplest explanation seems the best; that the consistent use of different appellations throughout the story serves the simple purpose of avoiding confusion. Since the prophets are unnamed, it is only by their titles that a distinction between the two figures is sustained.

⁹⁵ E.g., in the first edition (1964) of Gray’s commentary, he treats vv 1-10 and vv 11-32 separately, but in the second, following Fichtner, Noth and Klopfenstein, he acknowledges vv 1-32 as a unity. See Gray (1970 [Rev.]), 320-1.

⁹⁶ E.g., Lemke, ‘Way of Obedience’, 306; Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 134-5; DeVries, *1 Kings*, 169-70.

⁹⁷ On these terms (as well as *ro’eh* and *hozeh*) and roles associated with them, see David L. Petersen, *The Roles of Israel’s Prophets* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981).

⁹⁸ But see Jay A. Holstein ‘The Case of “’iš hā’ēlōhīm” Reconsidered: Philological Analysis versus Historical Reconstruction’, *HUCA* 48 (1977), 69-81.

⁹⁹ Both terms are applied to the (northern) prophets, Elijah (1 Kgs 17.18; 18.22) and Elisha (1 Kgs 4.7; 9.1).

¹⁰⁰ Incidentally, Lucian’s recension of the Greek describes the Bethel prophet in v 11 as ‘another [ἄλλος] prophet’ rather than ‘a certain [εἷς] prophet’.

In addition to this, the terms associate the two anonymous prophets with their respective kingdoms and thereby reinforce their symbolic presentation of a divided kingdom. Each figure is introduced with reference to their place of origin: in verse 1, ‘a man of God came out of Judah’; in verse 11, ‘there lived an old prophet in Bethel’. This distinction is then upheld throughout the ensuing history as well. In the regnal accounts of 1 Kings 14-16 and 2 Kings 12-16,¹⁰¹ the editor goes to considerable lengths to ensure that neither Judah nor Israel comes to the fore as the predominant focus. Walsh notes, for instance, that the final editing of the materials ‘reveals a carefully balanced interest in the affairs of the two kingdoms. The kingdom of Judah is the subject of nineteen chapters... and the kingdom of Israel is the subject of nineteen chapters.’¹⁰² We are again reminded of Barth’s claim that 1 Kings 13 stands in title-form over the history of the divided kingdoms.

But while a philological study of the distinction between **אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים** and **נְבִיא** does not go very far towards explaining the story, a narratological consideration of the same detail points to a central issue in the plot. In light of the narrator’s consistent use of these terms, it is striking that the old prophet tricks the man of God precisely by confusing this distinction. When his invitation is declined in verse 15, the old prophet tries a second time to appeal to the Judean man of God, this time by pointing out their shared vocation, ‘I also am a prophet [**נְבִיא**] as you are’ (v 18a). This is the only verse in the story where the Judean is referred to as **נְבִיא** rather than **אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים** and the old prophet’s words are clearly intended to manipulate. The Bethelite wishes to give the impression that since he is a prophet of the same ilk and under the same divine authority, i.e. **בְּרֵךְ יְהוָה** (v 18), he is authorised to revise the commandment given to the man of God. And it is precisely here, as the old prophet blurs the careful distinction made by the narrator, that the real issue in the chapter is raised; namely, the old prophet’s motive for deceiving his ‘brother’.

Before we turn our attention to consider this question of motive, it is worth pausing, even if briefly, to consider the significance of the Bethelite’s old age [**זָקֵן**] that is specified when he is first mentioned in verse 11. Few commentators make anything of this detail, though a few inferences might be made. On one hand, as Klopfenstein suggests, the Bethel prophet’s age may be taken to signify that he is

¹⁰¹ More precisely, 1 Kgs 14.21-16.34; 22.41-53; 2 Kgs 12.1-16.20.

¹⁰² Walsh, *1 Kings*, 373.

pecially equipped to deceive a younger, less experienced, colleague.¹⁰³

Alternatively, and conversely, the implication may be that the Bethelite's prophetic authority and calling preceded the inauguration of Jeroboam's new, indiscriminate priesthood, thus suggesting that he is one of the only prophets left in the north who is genuine and trustworthy. In either case, it is impossible to know simply from the word יִקְרָא and it is surely unreasonable to assess his moral character and motives on account of his age alone.

It is also worth noting that the Old Testament contains numerous references to the LORD changing his mind [נָחַם] so that, within the world of the text, the notion of God relenting or altering his command may not have seemed impossible to the man of God. However, the theological principle set out in Jeremiah 18.7-10, with which many other texts are consistent, entails a divine response to human repentance,¹⁰⁴ which is entirely absent from the old prophet's speech under the oak tree near Bethel. He has not come to report that Jeroboam has seen the error of his ways. On this basis, one might argue that the man of God ought to have been more discerning about this alternate word of the LORD and held fast to the command he had been given. In addition, as Simon argues, the very meaning of the third commandment—*וְלֹא תָשׁוּב בְּדַרְךָ אֲשֶׁר הָלַכְתָּ*—suggests from the outset that the man of God must guard against anything that might cause him to retrace his steps and thereby negate his mission.¹⁰⁵

The Bethelite's Motive

In terms of plot analysis, the story's most confounding gap is the Bethelite's motive for deceiving the man of God. Why, upon hearing the report from his sons, does the old prophet immediately set out in pursuit of the man of God? And why, upon finding him, does he trick him into disobedience? What does he stand to gain from this deception?

In verse 11, the prophet's sons not only tell their father the events that occurred in Bethel that day, but also, quite emphatically, 'the words also that [the man of God] had spoken to the king, they told their father.'

¹⁰³ Klopfenstein, 657.

¹⁰⁴ E.g., Jonah 3.1-10; Eze 33.10-16; 1 Sam 2.27-30; 15.11,35; 1 Kgs 21.29. See the discussion in Moberly, *Prophecy and Discernment*, 48-55.

¹⁰⁵ Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 140-1.

Therefore, when the Bethel prophet asks his sons, ‘which way did he go?’ and proceeds to pursue the man of God on a donkey, he—like the reader—is already aware of the threefold commandment. That is to say, his invitation to the man of God, ‘Come home with me and eat some food’ (v 15) is not friendly and innocent, but rather a deliberate attempt to lure the man of God into breaking the commands.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the invitation itself, which is attributed to an angel, contradicts every part of the commandment: ‘Bring him back with you into your house so that he may eat food and drink water’ (v 18b). But the clearest indication of malicious intent comes at the end of the verse, where the narrator states bluntly that the old prophet has resorted to deception in order to achieve his goal.¹⁰⁷ (Unless God is understood to be the subject of the verb, as Boer suggests.¹⁰⁸)

In any case, these details merely establish that the old Bethel prophet has his heart set on causing the man of God to disobey the LORD’s commandment; they still do not directly address the issue of motive. So to this question we return: *what does the Bethel prophet hope to achieve by causing the man of God to break the threefold command?*

Certainly one of the more creative explanations of the man of God’s motive comes from Dutch scholar Jaap van Dorp,¹⁰⁹ whose work is explained and developed somewhat by Eynikel.¹¹⁰ Van Dorp is to be commended for engaging

¹⁰⁶ Contra Walsh, who thinks that the question of whether the old prophet is *for* Bethel, or simply *in* Bethel, is left open. Walsh, *1 Kings*, 183-4.

¹⁰⁷ C.F. Keil, *The Book of the Kings*, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. by J. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 206-7, argues that without the Bethel prophet’s intentional act of deceit, it is possible to see him in a much more positive light. But whether or not one follows Sanda in omitting the phrase ‘he lied to him’ does not necessarily make any real difference in one’s interpretation. As I have shown here, the tenor of the entire passage, even without *kihesh lo*, is one of deceit. Similarly, Klopfenstein understand the concluding phrase to refer to ‘all his goal-oriented behaviour’ in vv 11-20a, and not just his words. Klopfenstein also notes that the angel, in contrast to the Judean’s ‘word of the LORD’ is not even an ‘angel of Yahweh’ (658). See Klopfenstein, 658, and his 1964 article referenced in fn. 76; similarly, Van Winkle, ‘1 Kings XIII’ (1989), 35.

¹⁰⁸ See Boer’s reading in ch.4 under *Political Allegory* (107). The literary and substantive contexts problematise Boer’s suggestion, in my view. See the previous footnote.

¹⁰⁹ Jaap van Dorp, ‘Wat is die steenhoop daar? Het graf van de man Gods in 2 Koningen 23’ [What is that pile of stone there? The grave of the man of God in 2 Kings 23] in *Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie*, [i.e. ACEBT] 8 (ed. K.A. Deurloo et al; Kampen, 1987), 64-97.

¹¹⁰ E. Eynikel, ‘Prophecy and Fulfillment’, 227-237. Eynikel devotes about 5 pages of his article to Van Dorp’s essay. I do not have direct access to Van Dorp’s work (in Dutch), so am reliant upon Eynikel’s citations and explanation. Van Dorp seeks to reinforce the close connection between 1 Kgs 13.11-32 and 2 Kgs 23.16-20 (232f.) and to show that 1 Kgs 13 is an original unit.

with the story with full, imaginative seriousness, although some of his conjecture over-reaches a little. The logic of his argument is this: the Bethel prophet deliberately entraps the man of God because he learns from his sons that one day King Josiah will remove ‘human bones’ from the ground in order to desecrate illegal altars. ‘From their report he realises that his grave will be desecrated too, unless he finds some way to prevent it.’¹¹¹ He must therefore find a way to prevent the desecration of his own grave, and the only imaginable way to do so is to ensure that his bones are buried with a Judean of sufficient piety to ward off Josiah’s acts of purification. ‘The old prophet therefore can do only one thing: get the man of God killed.’¹¹² Since violence was useless against Jeroboam, the prophet resorts to a cunning trap whereby the man of God becomes ‘the victim of his own obedience’.¹¹³ Finally, Van Dorp affirms that the Bethel prophet commands that his own bones be placed with those of the Judean for self-preservation, since the Judean’s tomb will undoubtedly be respected when Josiah comes to fulfil the word of the LORD.

The strength of Van Dorp’s argument is that its impetus comes directly from the text. At the beginning of the story, the old man hears of the prophecy spoken in Bethel (v 11), and at the end of the story, he asks to be buried with the man of God *because* [כִּי] ‘the saying that he proclaimed by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel... shall surely come to pass’ (v 32). But for the Bethelite to have heard the report from his sons and immediately drawn the conclusion that someday his own bones would be included in Josiah’s defilement of the altar (which would only require a few bones at most) seems rather extreme—or paranoid. Moreover, the Bethelite is presumably willing to lead another man to his death in order to (possibly) preserve his own bones from defilement. The logic of Van Dorp’s argument thus leads to the characterisation of the Bethelite as a fearful and murderous old man, an evaluation that is not easy to justify from the text. Moreover, the Bethelite could not have known from the beginning that the man of God would die in a manner that kept his body intact. It is only *after* recovering the corpse that the Bethelite publicly declares the truth of the man of God’s prophecy (v 32). Thus,

¹¹¹ Eynikel, 234.

¹¹² Cited in Eynikel, 234. Similarly, Eynikel (who supports Van Dorp’s position) writes: ‘The simplest solution is to assume that the old prophet acted only to save his bones from desecration, because he was informed from the beginning (v. 11) what would happen with all the graves of Bethel.’ 234, n. 29.

¹¹³ Cited in Eynikel, 234.

readers remain in the dark concerning the motive for his act of deception. All things considered, van Dorp's gap-filling seems rather generous.

Keil argues for an opposite assertion; namely, that the old prophet (who speaks a genuine word in v 20) acts with good intentions.¹¹⁴ Following Hengstenberg, Keil argues that when Jeroboam inaugurated his cultus, the old prophet sinned by keeping silent and was then convicted of this sin when the man of God came from Judah to speak against the altar. In an effort to restore his honour (for himself and before others), the old prophet sought fellowship with 'this witness to the truth' and was even willing to lie to the man of God to attain it. In spite of the deception used to achieve the fellowship, however, Keil maintains that responsibility for breaking the threefold command rests entirely with the Judean, who 'allowed himself to be seduced to a transgression of the clear and definite prohibition of God simply by the sensual desire for bodily invigoration by meat and drink.'¹¹⁵ In brief, Keil maintains that the old prophet's motive was honourable, even in spite of his deception. But too much is left unexplained if the story is essentially about one prophet's attempt to befriend another.

A simpler and more common explanation of the Bethelite's motive is that the elder prophet wished to test his younger colleague's prophetic authenticity.¹¹⁶ If the man of God could be duped into disobedience and no consequences ensued for breaking the threefold commandment, then the man of God's prophecy against Bethel could readily be dismissed. From this perspective, the Bethel prophet is seen to be deliberately testing the man of God, since he was not an eye witness to the signs reported by his sons, to determine just how serious is the prophetic word of condemnation against Jeroboam's cultic initiatives. Having established that the Judean's prophetic mandate is indeed authentic (proven by his death!), the Bethel prophet fetches his body, mourns his death and requests that they eventually be buried together. He is thus able to offer an explanation for the death of his fellow prophet in verse 26 and to affirm the prophetic word spoken in Bethel in verse 32. This interpretation of the old prophet's motives and actions makes rational sense of

¹¹⁴ Keil, *Book of the Kings*, 207. Keil acknowledges, however, 'that Josephus and the Chald., and most of the Rabbins and of the earlier commentators both Catholic and Protestant, have regarded him as a false prophet, who tried to lay a trap for the prophet from Judah, in order to counteract the effect of his prophecy upon the king and the people.' (206).

¹¹⁵ Keil, *Book of the Kings*, 207.

¹¹⁶ So Gray, *I & II Kings*, 322; DeVries, *I Kings*, 173; Rice, *I Kings*, 113.

the world within the text to some extent, but it also seems *too* simple. Are we to think that the Bethel prophet did not trust what his sons had seen and reported ‘that day’? Or that the destruction of the altar and the withering of the king’s hand were insufficient evidence of the man of God’s authenticity?

I am inclined to think that the Bethel prophet’s pursuit of the man of God and his premeditated attempt to make him break the commands are intended not for selfish gain nor merely to test the younger prophet’s authenticity, but rather to *subvert* the prophecy in Bethel. In fact, this is a point upon which Barth and Klopfenstein are agreed, despite their divergent approaches. Barth remarks that the old prophet from Bethel is well aware that the theological justification for the northern kingdom’s cultus would be restored if only the man of God would eat and drink in Bethel.¹¹⁷ Similarly, Klopfenstein speaks of a ‘double victory’ [*doppelten Sieg*] in the deception. That is, while the Bethelite may perhaps be testing the man of God’s authenticity as many commentators suppose, his deliberate act of seduction also has a specific goal in mind. Since the Judean’s visit to the Bethelite’s home could not have been done in secret (Klopfenstein repeatedly—and in my judgment, rightly—stresses the public nature of all these events), their communion together would be perceived as confirmation that Jeroboam’s syncretism was a legitimate form of worship, perhaps even as evidence of a ‘transfer of religious rights from Jerusalem to Bethel’.¹¹⁸ For the man of God to visit the old prophet in his home would almost certainly give the impression that Bethel and Jerusalem (and their prophets) stand on common ground.¹¹⁹ In the public eye, the Judean’s earlier actions in profaning the cult could be disregarded, or at the very least, relativised significantly. While this interpretation of the Bethelite’s motives depicts him in a negative light and as someone loyal to Jeroboam’s cause, it certainly does not warrant or necessitate the view (espoused by Barth) that *all* northern prophets were ‘professional’ or ‘false’.

Perhaps Gross is correct in judging that ‘[t]he text remains impenetrable when it comes to the motivation of characters. It can, therefore, only lead to error if exegetes try to gain sense from the text by positing hypothetical intentions for the actors. If intentions of this sort were of decisive importance in 1 Kings 13, the text would

¹¹⁷ Barth, *CD* II.2, 400-1.

¹¹⁸ Klopfenstein, 657-8: ‘die Übertragung von Jerusalemer Kultrechten auf Bethel und damit die Gemeinschaft unter Gleichberechtigten.’

¹¹⁹ Klopfenstein, 658.

provide them or give explicit references.¹²⁰ This may be true, although I would argue that good exegesis requires serious, imaginative engagement with the world within the text, as each of the four proposals outlined above have done.

Ultimately, however, I agree with Gross that the old prophet's motive for deceiving the man of God from Judah is not necessarily a narrative gap that *must* be filled for the story's plot to make sense. For as I have argued, the story is set within a context of division and opposition between north and south (1 Kgs 12.19; 14.30) so that, in terms of the story's parabolic significance, it is surely to be expected that the Bethelite, a representative figure for Jeroboam and northern Israel, demonstrates loyalty to the north—for *whatever* reason. In its opening scene, the narrative has already led us to expect an alignment between the actions of Josiah and the man of God on one hand (representing right worship in God's chosen city of Jerusalem), and those of Jeroboam and the Bethel prophet on the other (representing false worship in the cities of Samaria). However the gap of motive is filled, this central tension between north and south is sustained in the unfolding of the narrative by virtue of the fact that the old Bethelite takes up Jeroboam's cause.

The Threefold Commandment

A motif in 1 Kings 13 with obvious significance for our reading pertains to the nature, and urgency, of the threefold commandment. In Bethel, the man of God vehemently rejects the king's invitation, stating that even for half the kingdom he would not eat and drink 'in this place [בְּמִקְוֹם הַזֶּה]' (v 8). Moreover, the reason given for his refusal is that he has been 'commanded [צִוִּיתָה] by the word of the LORD' (v 9). Thus, both his response and the reason for it are given in the strongest terms. In his encounter with the Bethel prophet, however, the man of God comes across somewhat less stringent. In contrast to the exchange with Jeroboam, he sounds almost disappointed in his response to the old prophet; 'I am not able [לֹא אֶחְזַק] to return with you and come with you...' (v 17). In addition, the verb used to relay the vital fact that this is a divine command is weakened considerably when he recalls, 'it

¹²⁰ Gross, 'Lying Prophet', 122. Approaching the text via role analysis, he argues: 'The roles are more important than the characters. For whatever reason, YHWH forbade the man of God to eat or drink in Bethel. Both the king and the nabi, again for whatever reasons, assume the role of opponent through their actions.' Gross's analysis of role structures leads him to the following conclusion: 'The lie [of the Bethelite] is only of interest because and to the degree that it is suited to move the plot forward. 1 Kings 13 is not about false prophecy... It is about obedience and disobedience.' (123)

was *said* [דִּבֶּר] to me by the word of the LORD...’ (v 17).¹²¹ In sum, a change in the man of God’s disposition is apparent in both the substance of his negative response and in the justification given for it. These clues hint at a shift in the man of God’s resolve *vis-a-vis* his commission so that even before the old prophet resorts to deception, the careful reader has an impression of the direction this encounter will take. Following the narratorial insight at the end of verse 18, revealing that the Bethelite ‘was deceiving him,’ verse 19 concludes this section of the story with a taut summary of the man of God’s tragic disobedience; he returns, eats, and drinks with his duplicitous host. This brings us to the main turning point in the story.

1 Kings 13.20-22

²⁰As they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; ²¹and he proclaimed to the man of God who came from Judah, “Thus says the LORD: Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment that the LORD your God commanded you, ²²but have come back and have eaten food and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, ‘Eat no food, and drink no water,’ your body shall not come to your ancestral tomb.”

As Klopfenstein has stressed (see ch. 3), the narrative’s single turning point occurs in v 20, where the two antithetical prophets sit at a shared table in Bethel. It is at this table of falsified fellowship¹²² that the word of the LORD comes once more, though this time to the deceptive prophet. Herein lies one of the most confounding turns in the story; God speaks a true word through a deceitful man. Perplexing as it is, however, this quandary has also been taken as a clue to the story’s meaning, since the reversal makes it clear that God’s word against Bethel shall be upheld even if its bearer turns out to be the very prophet who caused his ‘brother’ to sin. In other words, this twist in the narrative highlights the fact that neither the Bethelite nor the man of God emerges as the hero of the tale; rather, it is God’s word that triumphs.¹²³ The centrepiece of the story is thus understood to reinforce Dtr’s concern for the theme of prophecy and fulfilment; the prophetic word spoken at Bethel *must* be upheld, whether through the man of God *or* through the Bethel prophet.

¹²¹ Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, 193-4.

¹²² Klopfenstein calls it ‘selbstgemachte Gemeinschaft in der selbstgesetzten Gleichberechtigung’ [homemade community of self-imposed equal status]. (658)

¹²³ See *The Efficacious Word of God* in ch. four.

Within the world of the text, the turning point in the narrative has enormous significance for the Bethel prophet, who set out to defend Jeroboam's cultus and to willingly deceive the man of God in order to subvert his prophecy. For in verse 20, when the Bethel prophet receives a true word from the LORD, he is forced to recognise that his efforts to subvert the prophecy against Bethel have failed. From his own lips now comes an oracle confirming the true nature of the other's mission—and judging him for his failure to obey! It is indeed a 'most dramatic and surprising' twist, as Klopfenstein puts it.¹²⁴ In the same way that the man of God had cried out [קרא] against the altar, the old Bethelite now cries out [קרא] against the man of God, even using the same classic speech-formula: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (13.2,21). The rhetoric and Masoretic punctuation¹²⁵ indicate that the prophecy that follows is as authentic as the one spoken in Bethel.

Moreover, when the word of the LORD comes to the older prophet at the table, his (trustworthy) proclamation confirms that the threefold instruction was indeed a commandment [הַמְצַוָּה] from the mouth of the LORD, and nothing less (cf. vv 9,17; see above).¹²⁶ The man of God is told in black and white terms that he has disobeyed a commandment:

כִּי מָרִיתָ פִּי יְהוָה וְלֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־הַמְצַוָּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ : (v 21b)

The double use of the root צוה affirms a figural interpretation of the threefold commandment that is evocative of the Deuteronomic Law. Similarly, the opening phrase—literally, 'Because you have rebelled against the mouth of the LORD...'—is distinctly Deuteronomistic, recalling especially Moses' rebuke of the Israelites for their disobedience regarding entrance to the land.¹²⁷ In connection with this, Gross observes that this is an uncharacteristic use of the word מְצַוָּה in the DH, which always refers to the Decalogue or to the entire Deuteronomic Law, with only one other exception (1 Sam 13.13).¹²⁸ He therefore posits that the author has used this

¹²⁴ Klopfenstein, 658.

¹²⁵ The long spacing in the middle of verse 20 indicates that the statement to follow merits special attention. Montgomery, *Kings*, 264; Burney, *Notes*, 182.

¹²⁶ Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, 194.

¹²⁷ Deut 1.26,43; 9.23. Also, Josh 1.18; 1 Sam 12.14-15; 1 Kgs 13.21,26. See Lemke, 'Way of Obedience', 308-9.

¹²⁸ Gross, 'Lying Prophet', 104.

term ‘to refer both to the specific prohibition against eating and drinking addressed to the man of God and to the entire Deuteronomic law addressed to Israel.’¹²⁹

Thus, at this critical turning point in the narrative, the old prophet’s words carry significant weight both for the disobedient man of God *within* the world of the text and for Dtr’s exilic audience *behind* the world of the text. The unusual use of the word מִזְנָה in verse 21 also accents the Dtr theme of prophetic responsibility for promoting obedience to the Mosaic law.¹³⁰ Moses is the obvious foundation for this motif, though other thematically related texts in the DH where מִזְנָה also occurs include the narrator’s reflection on the fall of Israel in 2 Kings 17, where ‘the prophets’ are said to have been responsible for warning Israel and Judah to keep the LORD’s commandments:

שָׁבוּ מִדְרָכֵיכֶם הָרָעִים וְשִׁמְרוּ מִצְוֹתַי חֲקוּתַי כְּכֹל-הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶת-אַבְתֵּיכֶם
וְאֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֵיכֶם בְּיַד עֲבָדַי הַנְּבִיאִים: (v 13b)

Similarly, Josiah’s reforms in 2 Kings 22-23 hold the law and prophets together in an interesting way, not just with regards to Huldah’s interpretation of the law for that moment in history, but also, as Levenson notes, how ‘[t]he role which Josiah plays in 2 Kings 23 is one which Dtn would be more likely to assign to a prophet.’¹³¹ Each of these texts (including 1 Kgs 13) hold prophecy and obedience to the law together in ways that have heuristic value for communities of God’s people in any time and place, although the penalty for the man of God’s disobedience—‘your body shall not come to your ancestral tomb’ (v 22)—is especially apt for Dtr’s exilic setting.

1 Kings 13.23-25

²³After the man of God had eaten food and had drunk, they saddled for him a donkey belonging to the prophet who had brought him back. ²⁴Then as he went away, a lion met him on the road and killed him. His body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body. ²⁵People passed by and saw the body thrown in the road, with the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the town where the old prophet lived.

¹²⁹ Van Winkle, ‘1 Kings XIII’ (1989), 41. Van Winkle notes that this ambiguity is further supported by the usage of מְרִיבָה פִּי הָהָה (see fn 125 above). Cf. Van Winkle, ‘1 Kings XII 25-XIII 34’ (1996), 111f.

¹³⁰ See Van Winkle, ‘1 Kings XIII’ (1989), 42.

¹³¹ Levenson, ‘Who Inserted the Book’, 228. Note that Levenson refers to Dtn (the Deuteronomic corpus; i.e. Deut 4.44-28.68.) and not Dtr.

Verse 23 gives the impression that the man of God, having heard the prophetic oracle, takes the time to finish his meal before departing.¹³² Moreover, nothing is said in response to the Bethelite's prophecy, a silence that may be taken to imply shame and admission of guilt, or perhaps anger at being had. The narrator simply reports that following his meal, a donkey is prepared for his departure.

The old prophet's oracle did not stipulate that judgment would be immediate, but he did state that the man of God would not be buried in the tomb of his fathers. It was implicit, therefore, that he would never make it back to Judah. Verse 24, for all its surreal details, is narrated with a terseness that is characteristic of Hebrew narrative; 'as he went away, a lion met him on the road and killed him. His body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body.' Nonetheless, these few words paint a mesmerising picture. The classic wood etching by French artist Gustave Doré offers a striking depiction of the scene (though it unfortunately does not include the donkey upon which the man of God was riding).

The Lion's Restraint

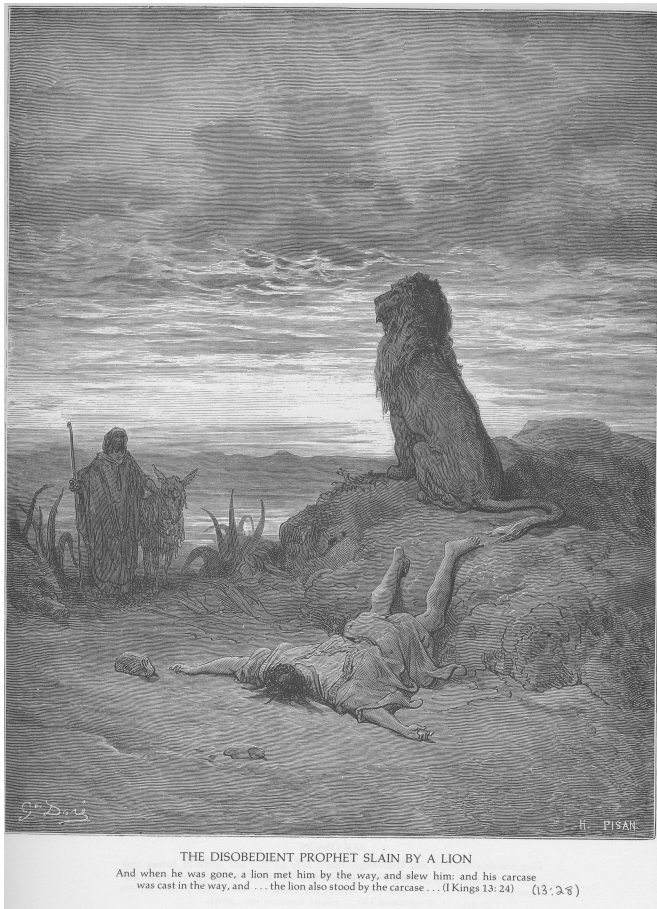
It is well-documented that lions were a problem in ancient Palestine,¹³³ so that the mere presence of a lion in the narrative need not raise questions of plausibility. More common among interpreters are questions concerning the lion's metaphorical or symbolic significance, beyond its role as a character in the story.

If we look at Kings more broadly, we may note that there are three stories involving lions (1 Kgs 13.24-27; 1 Kgs 20.36; 2 Kgs 17.25-26) that all have one thing in common; *the appearance of lions in all three texts coincides with a refusal to comply with the prophetic word*. At the very least, then, it seems reasonable to deduce that the lion in 1 Kings 13, like other lions in the Book of Kings, metes out divine judgment for disobedience to the prophetic word. If our focus is widened still further to include prophetic and poetic texts (esp. Amos), then we are faced with an additional array of texts that use the image of a lion to denote God. Such texts are the backbone for Barth's claim that the lion is, in fact, the lion of Judah. James Mead also claims that

¹³² Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 143-4.

¹³³ E.g., Montgomery, *Kings*, 261; Gray (1970), 331. Cf. Brent A. Strawn, *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*. *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 212. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 40-3.

the lion is to be equated with God, though his argument is based on the structure of 1 Kings 13.¹³⁴ While we do not have space to explore prophetic texts that speak of lions in this context, we note that Brent Strawn’s comprehensive study of leonine



imagery in the Hebrew Bible affirms that the imagery of God as lion in the prophets, as one who metes out prophetic justice, is consistent with the role of lions in the book of Kings.¹³⁵

However, there is one striking detail in 1 Kings 13 that makes this lion quite different from any others in Kings, as Doré’s etching shows. After killing the man of God, it is stated three times that this lion ‘stands by the body’ (vv 24,25,28). So while the notion of lions killing people is not particularly unusual, there is almost

certainly something more at stake than prophetic judgment when a lion appears under unusual circumstances to kill—and to refrain from eating its prey. The point is sharpened further by the fact that the lion attacks and kills the man of God but spares his donkey. Perhaps the more pertinent question for the interpreter is not, ‘why a lion?’ but rather, ‘why a lion that shows restraint?’ A lion who kills (selectively) but does not eat is an unnatural lion, or at least one under supernatural influence (cf. Dan 6), and this is surely the critical detail in 1 Kings 13, though there is certainly no consensus on its meaning.

Gressmann, among others, contrasts the disobedient man of God with the obedient animal of God, so that the lion’s restraint reflects what the man of God

¹³⁴ Mead, ‘Kings and Prophets’.

¹³⁵ Strawn, *What is Stronger?*, 64.

should have shown when invited to eat.¹³⁶ Bosworth, given his more allegorical approach, sees in these verses an allusion to 2 Kings 9-10, where King Jehu (who shows little restraint!) executes judgment on the house of David for taking the path of Ahab. He therefore draws a parallel between the lion and Jehu; 'Jehu is like the lion that executes Yhwh's judgment concerning the man of God.'¹³⁷ Boer, reading the story as political allegory, suggests that the lion is an allegorical manifestation of 'the Babylonian (or Persian) empire, or rather emperor... the lion exercises control by restraint; for at any moment the lion could attack and eat, in the same way that imperial control is exercised by the restraint of force.'¹³⁸ Sweeney perceives connections between the donkey [תַּמְזוּר] and Hamor the father of Shechem, who raped Dinah's daughter (Gen 34.2) on one hand, and the lion as the symbol for the tribe of Judah (e.g. Gen 49.9) on the other. He concludes:

These associations suggest that the image of the ass and the lion standing by the body of the man of G-d is an important element in the interpretation of this narrative. These symbols reinforce the point that the northern kingdom, with its capital in Shechem and its sanctuary in Beth El is a place of deception and lies. Jerusalem, Judah and the house of David, by contrast, are identified with YHWH, who will act against those corrupted by their association with Beth El and the north.¹³⁹

In Barth's more theological reading, wherein the elect (Judah) suffers on behalf of the rejected (Israel), the lion represents God who strikes his own on behalf of sinful Israel.¹⁴⁰ Klopfenstein, as we have seen, rejects the suggestion that the Judean man of God's death is on behalf of northern Israel, since the notion of vicarious suffering draws upon the theology of Isaiah 53, which Klopfenstein considers to be far removed from this text.¹⁴¹ In his view, the origin and background of the lion must be

¹³⁶ Gressmann, *Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung*, 243. Similarly, Simon, 'I Kings 13: A Prophetic Sign', 96; fn.37, and Wray Beal, *I & 2 Kings*, 194: 'The lion is an illustration of what the prophet should have done.' Cf. also Marcus, *From Balaam to Jonah*, 75-6, who mentions other animals in the OT that are also contrasted with disobedient people (Balaam, Jonah, Elisha's hecklers).

¹³⁷ Bosworth, *Story*, 144, observes that in 2 Kings 9-10, 'The North, like the old prophet, suddenly speaks the word of Yhwh, and Judah, much like the man of the God, suffers for disobedience.' (144) In my view, a better case can be made for a parallel between the lion that kills the man of God and Pharaoh Neco who kills Josiah at Megiddo (2 Kgs 23.29). See below.

¹³⁸ Boer, 'National Allegory', 111-2. Cf. Strawn, *What is Stronger?*, 60.

¹³⁹ Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 182.

¹⁴⁰ Barth, *CD II.2*, 407. Barth interfaces the reference to the lion with other key texts; Gen 49.9; Am 1.2, 3.8 (397).

¹⁴¹ Klopfenstein, 669.

left open, as indeed the text leaves them open. What the text is clear about, says Klopfenstein, are two functions for the lion. In verse 26, the Bethel prophet states that 'the LORD has given him to the lion', and in verses 24,25,28 the lion is said to be 'standing by the body.' That is to say, the lion kills the man of God as Yahweh's agent, and then draws attention to the scene by standing beside the body.¹⁴²

Klopfenstein perhaps does well to stay within the margins of the text, although the lion has one other function as well. The restraint of the lion permits the man of God's corpse to remain intact, and this is the critical detail that facilitates the link between 1 Kings 13 and its epilogue in 2 Kings 23. Were the man of God eaten or mauled, he could not have been taken and buried in the Bethelite's tomb. Only the lion's unusual behaviour makes this possible. In addition to all this, within our particular historical frame of reference, the unjust and sudden death of the man of God anticipates the untimely death of King Josiah.

In conclusion, we may affirm three observations about the lion in 1 Kings 13. First, like other lions in the Book of Kings (and beyond), this one enacts judgment for disobedience to the word of the LORD. Second, by standing passively beside the man of God's corpse, the lion draws—or demands—the attention of passers by, and this plays a key role in the story's development (see below). Third, within the larger plot, the lion's restraint from mauling or eating the corpse makes it possible for the burial to take place so that the man of God's tomb may one day be discovered by King Josiah.

In light of all this, it is clear that the entire purpose of verse 25 is to convey the impact of this 'very unlionlike lion'¹⁴³ upon passers by. People traveling to and from Bethel see the corpse of a man guarded by two silent sentinels—a lion and a donkey! It almost goes without saying that 'they came and told it in the town where the old prophet lived' (v 25), but this report from the narrator is crucial for spelling out the purpose served by the lion's restraint. The unusual lion makes the people of Bethel aware that the man of God who spoke publicly against Jeroboam's cult and was prohibited by God from having any fellowship in Bethel, but who was subsequently seen going home with a local prophet, has been killed. Klopfenstein's emphasis on

¹⁴² Klopfenstein, 660-61. (Klopfenstein discusses lions at length; 660-665.) Keil, *Book of the Kings*, also places the accent on this point: 'The lion... remained standing by the corpse and by the ass, that the slaying of the prophet might not be regarded as a misfortune that had befallen him by accident, but that the hand of the Lord might be manifest therein, so that passers-by saw this marvel and related it in Bethel.' (205-6)

¹⁴³ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 171.

the public nature of all these events is surely well placed, including what happens throughout the rest of the narrative with the mourning and burial (vv 29-30), the prophetic proclamation (vv 31-32), and in due course, the old prophet's own burial. All of these events are witnessed by the people of Bethel (as evidenced by the manner in which word reaches the old prophet on two separate occasions; vv 11,25-26) so that the man of God's demise testifies both to the authenticity of his word against Bethel and to his own failure to obey. Ironically, the deceit of the old prophet achieves its end but simultaneously seals the fate of the northern cultus. For the Bethelite, the battle is won but the war is lost, since after breaking the commandment, the man of God's demise only confirms the veracity of his oracle against Jeroboam's altar. Accordingly, in what follows, the old prophet takes it upon himself to proclaim the same message.

1 Kings 13.26-32

²⁶When the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who disobeyed the word of the LORD; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him according to the word that the LORD spoke to him."

²⁷Then he said to his sons, "Saddle a donkey for me." So they saddled one, ²⁸and he went and found the body thrown in the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside the body. The lion had not eaten the body or attacked the donkey.

²⁹The prophet took up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to the city, to mourn and to bury him. ³⁰He laid the body in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!"

³¹After he had buried him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. ³²For the saying that he proclaimed by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass."

Having heard about the lion and the corpse, the Bethel prophet offers up an explanation for the man of God's death,¹⁴⁴ perhaps to those who brought him news of the spectacle. At this point in the chapter, the narrator describes him not as the prophet from Bethel, but as **הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיבוּ מִן־הַדְּרֹךְ**. With these words, the reader is not only reminded of the Bethelite's treacherous role in what has transpired, but also alerted to the symbolic significance of keywords, **שׁוּב** and **דְּרֹךְ**. In verse 21, we noted the multivalence of **מִן־הָעוֹלָם** with regards to the world within the text and the

¹⁴⁴ The explanation in the latter part of v 26 ('therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him according to the word that the LORD spoke to him') is not in the LXX.

world behind it. Lemke notes a similar dynamic here: 'Quite conceivably the author of vs. 26 intended to play on the various nuances of the meaning of *sub* in conjunction with *derek*, leaving it purposely ambiguous in order to facilitate the transition from the literal sense (as in vss 9, 10, 17) to the metaphorical one (as in vs. 33).'¹⁴⁵ Thus, the narrator's comment refers not merely to the Judean's geographic path, but also to his moral path, to the way of obedience—from which he has been led astray. Lemke points out that the narrative thus leans toward its conclusion, where Jeroboam is condemned for failing to turn from his evil way (v 33). But in addition to this, the representative function of the prophetic characters comes again to the fore. As the man of God's untimely and unusual death anticipates the death of Josiah, so the negative influence of the Bethel prophet is aligned with Jeroboam's enduring legacy. The Bethelite is dubbed the prophet 'who caused him to turn [*hiphil* of שׁוּב] from the way' just as Jeroboam will forever be remembered as the king 'who caused Israel to sin [*hiphil* of חָטָא].'¹⁴⁶

The substance of the old prophet's proclamation also merits close attention. The distinctly Deuteronomistic phrase ('to rebel against the mouth of the LORD') has already been spoken by the Bethelite in his oracle against the man of God in verse 21, but what was said in the privacy of his home now becomes public. The Bethelite explains the unusual sequence of events: the corpse belongs to the disobedient man of God, whose death-by-lion should be understood as divine judgment in accordance with the word of the LORD. The last phrase in verse 26 [יְהוָה אֱשָׁר דִּבְרָה לִּי] [כִּדְבָר] is used throughout Kings to highlight the fulfilment of prophecy, and this occurrence is no exception. The Bethelite affirms that the man of God has perished according to the word that was given him; the LORD has given him over to be broken [שָׁבַר] by the lion just as he has broken the commandment.

Having made this declaration, the old prophet sets out to retrieve the Judean's corpse and finds the body 'thrown' [שָׁלַךְ] on the ground before passers by. One is reminded of the manner in which Moses threw down the stone tablets before the eyes of the Israelites as a sign of their broken covenant (the same verb appears in Deut 9.17). The intertextual resonance of these two scenes is especially illuminating since the man of God has come from Bethel 'in the word of the LORD' and under

¹⁴⁵ Lemke, 311; also independently, Dozeman, 386-7.

¹⁴⁶ 1 Kgs 22.52, *passim*.

obligation to a threefold commandment. That is to say, his broken body upon the road before the eyes of all the people serves a similar purpose within his context as did the broken tablets at Sinai; signifying Israel's flagrant disregard of her covenant with the LORD.¹⁴⁷

The prophet returns to Bethel with the corpse laid upon his donkey and proceeds to mourn the man of God's death. It is somewhat ironic that the Bethelite provides the means by which his own prophecy is fulfilled, but as he foretold in verse 22, the man of God is not buried in his father's tomb, but rather that belonging to the Bethelite. In my view, the old prophet does not honour the man of God now because he finally recognises his authenticity. Rather, he has recognised from the beginning that the man of God came from Judah in the word of the LORD, and his regard for the man of God is evidenced by his actions here.

In spite of his attempt to negate the man of God's mission, he honours the man of God in his death, even calling him 'my brother' (cf. Jer 22.18). In addition, he requests that he himself be buried alongside the man of God for the following reason: 'For the saying that he proclaimed by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass' (v 32). This prompts the question of how their joint interment is related to the prophecy in Bethel. Some scholars understand the Bethel prophet's request to be self-seeking, i.e. now that he is convinced of the man of God's authenticity, he wishes to preserve his bones from the defilement that was prophesied. But another possibility is suggested by Klopfenstein;¹⁴⁸ that the Bethelite wishes to be identified with the man of God in death as in life for their shared proclamation against Bethel. This seems more consistent with the way the Bethel prophet publicly affirms the cause of his 'brother' from Judah, even adding to his prophecy 'the cities of Samaria' and thereby acknowledging the condemnation of his own local sanctuary. His efforts to undo the man of God's prophecy have themselves come undone, and he has himself been inspired to speak the same word

¹⁴⁷ Cf. the discussion of Deut 9 on 187-8. There are further points of similarity between the man of God in our narrative and Moses, the archetypal man of God in Deut 9. In addition to a general shared context of golden calves and broken commandments, the verbs used of Moses' throwing [שָׁלַךְ] and breaking [שָׁבַר] the tablets are the same ones used of the man of God's body that is thrown and broken by the lion. Also, Moses declares twice that, because of the people's idolatry, he neither ate bread nor drank water upon the mountain:

לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתִּיתִי : (Deut 9.9,18)

¹⁴⁸ Klopfenstein, 666.

against Bethel. If the story teaches anything about prophetic discernment, it surely shifts the focus from attempts to discern the quality of the prophet (i.e. true or false) by various criteria (i.e. moral character, accuracy of prediction, calling, etc) to the reality that God's word always finds fulfilment, and will do so by any means necessary, including even ways that make a true prophet false or a false prophet true.¹⁴⁹

Anachronism and Ambiguity

The anachronistic reference to 'the cities of Samaria' in verse 32 has been attributed to 'carelessness' on the part of the author,¹⁵⁰ but as I stated earlier regarding the reference to Josiah in verse 2, these kinds of judgments miss the symbolic potency of the reference. The phrase links 1 Kings 13 to other key texts in the history (2 Kgs 17; 23) that also recount divine judgment for false worship practices.¹⁵¹ Equally, as the Judean's initial prophecy names Josiah as its referent in verse 2, so the Bethelite's affirmation of that same oracle adds a phrase that is picked up in 2 Kings 23.19 with regards to the cultic reforms of Josiah: 'Moreover, Josiah removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the towns of Samaria [שְׁמֶרֶן וְבְּעָרֵי] which kings of Israel had made, provoking the LORD to anger; he did to them just as he had done at Bethel.' So while the Bethelite's reference to 'the cities of Samaria' is relatively meaningless within the world of the text (since Samaria has yet to be established under the Omrides), it anticipates Josiah's coming as did the man of God's decree. Thus, the chapter's first prophetic utterance in verse 2 from the Judean man of God, and its reiteration in verse 32 from the old Bethelite prophet, both use so-called 'anachronisms' to establish a theological framework that points to Josiah as a hermeneutical key. This is in keeping with the way 1 Kings 13 presents a proleptic portrait of Josiah, by means of symbolism and textual allusion,

¹⁴⁹ I am indebted to Prof. Joel Kaminsky for this particular way of framing the issue (private correspondence). Also see the discussion in my *Sharing God's Passion* (2012), 115-7.

¹⁵⁰ DeVries, *1 Kings*, 169.

¹⁵¹ Lemke, 'Way of Obedience', 316, observes that 'the cities of Samaria,' is one of three phrases that occur only in 1 Kgs 13, 2 Kgs 17, and 2 Kgs 23. 'Cities of Samaria' occurs 3x: 1 Kgs 13.32; 2 Kgs 17.24-28; 2 Kgs 23.19; 'priests of the high places' occurs 7x: 1 Kgs 12.32;13.2,33; 2 Kgs 17.32; 2 Kgs 23.9,20; 'shrines of the high places' occurs 5x: 1 Kgs 12.31;13.32; 2 Kgs 17.29,32; 2 Kgs 23.19. Van Seters agrees on the similarities between these three texts, but argues that they are all post-Dtr redactions; 'Death by Redaction?', 216-21; 'On Reading', 226.

who will directly confront the evil way of Jeroboam—both in Judah and ‘in the cities of Samaria’.

1 Kings 13.33-34

³³Even after this [saying], Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people; any who wanted to be priests he consecrated for the high places. ³⁴This matter became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

We have already noted the very public nature of numerous events narrated in this chapter: the inauguration ceremony for Jeroboam’s cultus, attended (among others) by the Bethel prophet’s sons; the declined invitation of the king, followed by the man of God’s rationale for having to leave Bethel immediately; the table fellowship of the two prophets, which would have been difficult to keep secret, as Klopfenstein notes; the bizarre spectacle involving the lion and the donkey and the man of God’s corpse; the old prophet’s subsequent explanation of its significance; the Bethelite’s retrieval of the Judean’s body and his words at the the latter’s funeral; and ultimately, the Bethelite’s own burial alongside his ‘brother’.

Given the way in which the plot’s development presupposes a narrative world in which news travels fast (notably to the Bethel prophet; vv 11,25-26), it is reasonable to assume that the king was notified of these unusual happenings in Bethel. And while any of the incidents cited above might reasonably have demanded the king’s attention, the particular דבר of which Jeroboam ought to have taken heed, in my judgment, is the affirmation of the man of God’s word against Bethel by a local, elderly (and by implication, authoritative) prophet (v 2; 32). I would suggest, then, that הַדְבָר in v 33 is best translated as it is in the previous verse, to mean ‘this saying’ (NRSV) or ‘this message’ (NIV). That is, ‘even after this saying [a local prophet’s condemnation of the Bethel cultus], Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way...’ The prophecy against the altar in Bethel has now been proclaimed by two distinct, prophetic authorities—and yet Jeroboam remains obstinate.

Also ambiguous is Jeroboam’s ‘evil way’ in verse 33. Does this refer to the fabricated calves, the illegitimate altar, his appointment of false priests, the eschewing of Jerusalem, or all of the above? In my view, the most natural referent is again drawn from the preceding verse; Jeroboam is reported to ‘once again make priests of the high places from the ends/extremities of the people’ (i.e. from anyone at all). To anyone desiring it, Jeroboam ‘filled his hand’ [יָמָלֵא אֶת־יָדָיו] to be a priest of

the high places. The unusual idiom probably refers to a rite wherein something like a sceptre is placed in the hand of the appointee (cf. the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests in Exod 28.41). But the point is simply that Jeroboam's actions in 13.33-34 are no different to what they were at the end of 1 Kings 12. As Wray Beal puts it, 'Jeroboam continues to transgress the deuteronomic law of worship as he did in 12:26-33,'¹⁵² and he is for that reason destined for destruction.

Verse 34 again refers somewhat ambiguously to *הַיְהוָה בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ* and again, the most natural referent is probably found in the preceding verse: i.e. Jeroboam's false priesthood. As the story concludes, the narrator stresses the consequences of Jeroboam's sin, that Jeroboam's house would suffer the same fate that awaits all Israel—cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth.¹⁵³ The chapter's conclusion, its 'provisional epilogue,'¹⁵⁴ thus reinforces yet once more the devastating impact of Jeroboam's sin upon the nation.

Josiah as Hermeneutical Key

These events in 1 Kings 13 have tremendous import for the history of the kingdoms that ensues, before the closing 'bookend' of 2 Kings 23.15-20. Here we consider how the regnal accounts for the northern and southern kingdoms further establish a primary theme raised in 1 Kings 13; namely, how the actions of Jeroboam/Israel/the Bethel prophet impact upon Josiah/Judah/the man of God.

In 1 Kings 14, exile is prophesied by Ahijah for the first time in Kings: 'The LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; he will root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their ancestors, and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their sacred poles, provoking the LORD to anger. He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and which he caused Israel to commit' (1 Kgs 14.15-16). Only a few verses later, the narrator adds that in due course, Judah would also fall into the same sin: 'Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all that their ancestors had done' (1 Kgs 14.22). Similarly, in 2 Kings 17.21-23, where Israel's exile to Assyria is blamed on Jeroboam, the narrator

¹⁵² Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings*, 195.

¹⁵³ The same phrase appears in Zeph 1.3, which is attributed to the days of Josiah of Judah (see Zeph 1.1). See part II of Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, on prophetic literature in relation to Josiah's reign.

¹⁵⁴ Barth, *CD II.2*, 397.

also comments that 'Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced' (2 Kgs 17.19). The history of the kingdoms follows the pattern established in 1 Kings 13; Judah (the man of God) is led into sin by Israel (the Bethel prophet).

The manner in which the history of the kingdoms reflects the events of 1 Kings 13 is especially brought to light by a consideration of the exilic author's Josianic lens. It is widely recognised that Josiah's reign is presented as the climactic point in the history of the kingdoms. Not only does Josiah oversee the rediscovery of the book of the law, but his wholehearted obedience to the Torah is unprecedented and accords with Deuteronomy's expectation that Israel's monarchs turn neither to the right nor the left from its demands (Deut 17.20; 2 Kgs 22.2). In addition to his outstanding personal piety, Josiah is depicted as a king who demonstrates enormous concern for the obedience and worship practices of the populace as well. His reforms centralise worship in Jerusalem through the removal of illegitimate worship sites in both the south and the north, and he conducts a renewal ceremony in which he reads all the words from the book of the covenant before the people, who renew their covenant with the LORD (2 Kgs 23.2-3) and celebrate the Passover once again (2 Kgs 23.21-23). Fulfilling the prophecy in 1 Kings 13, Josiah unknowingly resolves many of the problems created by Jeroboam I whilst also raising the bar for Dtr's evaluation of northern and southern kings.¹⁵⁵

As noted above,¹⁵⁶ Dtr posits blame upon the kings of Israel and Judah for the sins of the people throughout the regnal accounts in Kings, in spite of the fact that Deuteronomy makes no such stipulation concerning the duties of the king.¹⁵⁷ As the northern kings are condemned for causing Israel to commit the sins of Jeroboam, the southern kings are also held responsible for Judah's sins because they fail to remove the high places that Solomon made for his wives. The narrator does not use נִזְרָה in the *hiphil* to evaluate southern kings as he characteristically does for the north, but he nonetheless makes it clear that Judah's kings are responsible for the sins of the

¹⁵⁵ On cultic reform as a structuring device for the DH, see Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung*, ATANT 66 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag), 1980; cf. Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 317-20.

¹⁵⁶ See under *Josiah in 1 Kings 13* at the beginning of this chapter.

¹⁵⁷ See above. On this tension, also see Gary Knoppers, 'Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings,' *CBQ* 63 (2001), 393-415; Levenson, 'Who Wrote the Torah?'; Bernard Levinson, 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah,' *VT* 51/4 (2001), 511-34.

populace by consistently adding the phrase, 'the people [העם] still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places' (1 Kgs 22.43; 2 Kgs 12.3; 14.4; 15.4,35).

In his account of Judah's exilic demise in the final chapters of Kings, however, the lion's share of the blame is placed squarely on Manasseh. In 2 Kings 21.11, the formula for condemning northern kings (סוף in *hiphil*) is applied to a southern king for the first and only time. In my view, the grave consequences of Manasseh's sins in Dtr's theology of history are best explained through recourse to the sudden and tragic demise of the righteous Josiah. On one hand, Dtr viewed Josiah from his exilic context as the best example of a king who mediated (or enforced) observance of the law in Israel. As Noth puts it, 'the belief attested in Dtr... [is] that Josiah's time saw the realisation of the ideal that should have been in force throughout the monarchical period.'¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, however, in light of the Deuteronomistic principle of just reward and punishment, the untimely death of Judah's most righteous king demanded some form of explanation.¹⁵⁹ And the account of Manasseh goes a long way to closing this theological gap by providing a rationale for the fall of Judah even in spite of Josiah's exemplary covenant fidelity (cf. 2 Kgs 23.26; 24.3).¹⁶⁰

By the same token, 1 Kings 13 strategically anticipates this theological conundrum in the DH by foreshadowing the historical reality that this promised son of David (1 Kgs 13.2) would be abruptly killed by a 'lion' (1 Kgs 13.24)—namely, Pharaoh Neco, in 2 Kings 23.29.¹⁶¹ In spite of the fact that Jeroboam I and Josiah represent antithetical ideals in Kings, the sins of one lead directly to the fall of the other.¹⁶² Thus, when the prophetess Huldah declares in 2 Kings 22 that the sickness runs so deep in Judah's veins (as exhibited by Manasseh) that her fate is sealed even

¹⁵⁸ Noth, *The DH*, 82. Noth observes that this belief (that the monarchy was responsible for regulating observance of the law) is 'inaccurate' but 'understandable' in light of Josiah's reign.

¹⁵⁹ On the apparent futility of Josiah's reforms, see, e.g., Stanley Brice Frost, 'The Death of Josiah: A Conspiracy of Silence,' *JBL* 87 (1968), 369-82. Note that the Chronicler's account hints that Josiah was perhaps responsible for his own death (see 2 Chron 35.21).

¹⁶⁰ On Manasseh in Dtr's theology of history, see also Baruch Halpern, 'Why Manasseh is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: the Evolution of a Biblical Tradition', *VT* 48/4 (1998), 473-514, and David Janzen, 'The Sins of Josiah and Hezekiah: A Synchronic Reading of the Final Chapters of Kings,' *JSOT* 37.3 (2013), 349-70, and the works cited there.

¹⁶¹ On the depiction of Egyptian monarchs as lions, see Strawn, *What is Stronger?*, 174f.

¹⁶² In Bosworth's schema, this 'spreading' from north to south occurs especially through Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, who perverts worship in Judah. Bosworth, *Story*, 145.

in spite of Josiah's contrite heart and national reforms, a familiar theme is reiterated; namely, that Judah follows in Israel's footsteps.

This pattern, introduced in 1 Kings 13, is further strengthened by the ways in which Huldah's message for Josiah hearkens back in some ways to Ahijah's judgment regarding Jeroboam. The purpose of Huldah's oracle is clearly not to pronounce judgment upon Josiah for unfaithfulness to the covenant—quite the opposite—yet the commonality between these prophetic announcements suggests that the penalty for Jeroboam's sins eventually impacts upon even the most righteous of Judah's kings. On a superficial level, both Ahijah and Huldah pronounce their unfavourable prophetic verdicts upon Jeroboam and Josiah via mediaries (Shaphan *et al* and Jeroboam's wife). But more significantly, their judgments share key vocabulary and content. At the heart of both oracles, the LORD proclaims, 'Behold, I will bring evil upon' [הִנְנִי מְבִיא רָעָה אֵלַי] the house of Jeroboam/this place for fabricating and worshipping 'other gods' [אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים] and thus 'provoking me to anger' [לְהַכְעִיבֵנִי].¹⁶³ Some commentators note that only three judgments in Kings (1 Kgs 14.10; 21.21; 2 Kgs 22.16-17) use the *hiphil* participle [בוֹאֵ] with the preposition אֵלַי, indicating that 'the word against Jerusalem is as certain of fulfilment as that given Jeroboam and Ahab'.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the phrases common to Ahijah's and Huldah's prophecies draw a connection between the cultic sins of Jeroboam and the cultic reforms of Josiah. The implication is that the ramifications of Jeroboam's evil way are so great as to bring even the mercies of Yahweh to a temporary standstill in Josiah's day—three centuries later! It is a message that Huldah's contemporary, Jeremiah, was well known for proclaiming in Jerusalem: the LORD would bring disaster upon his own people.¹⁶⁵

Huldah's prophecy is generally unfavourable, though it has a secondary, more positive element regarding the fate of Josiah: the king will go to the grave of his fathers in peace so that he is spared from witnessing the destruction of Jerusalem. Some commentators see a contradiction between this promise (2 Kgs 22.20) and the

¹⁶³ 1 Kgs 14.9-10; 2 Kgs 22.16-17.

¹⁶⁴ Wray Beal, *I Kings*, 504; similarly, Sweeney, *Josiah of Judah*, 49-50; idem, *I & II Kings*, 442. In addition, the parallels between the deaths of Ahab and Josiah (as recorded in 2 Chron 35) are remarkable: both kings repent and are shown mercy by God; both go out to war in disguise after being warned against it; both are shot by archers in their chariots; and both die as a result of their arrow wounds. Sweeney concludes from these observations that 'the house of David, including Josiah, is condemned to punishment by virtue of its identification with the house of Omri.' *I & II Kings*, 441.

¹⁶⁵ Jer 11.11, 17.18, 19.3, 23.12, 32.23, etc.

report of Josiah's death at Megiddo in 2 Kings 23.29.¹⁶⁶ The account of Josiah's death is terse and abrupt, to be sure, but his untimely death is in keeping with what Huldah foretells. As the narrator is careful to maintain, 'his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb' (2 Kgs 23.30a). No formula is present—i.e. 'This happened to fulfil what was spoken by the prophetess Huldah...'—but neither is it necessary, given the close proximity of prophecy and fulfilment. Moreover, there are two distinct elements in Huldah's prophecy: Josiah being 'gathered to his fathers' refers to his death, and being 'buried in peace' means that he will receive an honourable burial. It is unfortunate that the phrases are erroneously taken to refer to a single event when, in fact, two details are prophesied and both are fulfilled.¹⁶⁷ As Provan makes clear, 'what is being promised here is not that Josiah will die a natural death, but that he will be buried "in time of peace", before the events of which the prophecy speaks come to pass.'¹⁶⁸

While there are some discrepancies between Kings and Chronicles regarding the date of Josiah's reforms and the place of his death,¹⁶⁹ such questions are best answered through an exploration of the theological driving forces behind the disparity rather than by attempts to ascertain and assert 'what really happened.'¹⁷⁰ For instance, the discovery of the law *prior to* Josiah's reforms in Kings places the accent on obedience to the covenant, which is an important motif for Dtr. Similarly, the more sudden and enigmatic nature of Josiah's death, as it is depicted in 2 Kings

¹⁶⁶ E.g., Cogan, *1 Kings*, 284.

¹⁶⁷ Wray Beal, *1 Kings*, 505. Cf. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 149.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 149. Provan concludes: 'The evidence that the oracle of Huldah... ever had a pre-exilic form is therefore extremely weak.'

¹⁶⁹ In Chronicles, Josiah's reforms commence in his twelfth year, whereas in Kings it is his eighteenth year (2 Chron 34.3-7; 2 Kgs 22.3). Also, in Chronicles, the reforms occur *prior to* the discovery of the law. In Chronicles, Josiah is wounded in battle at Megiddo and returned to Jerusalem where he dies, while in Kings his death is reported to occur at Megiddo and he is then brought to Jerusalem to be buried (2 Chron 35.20-24; 2 Kgs 23.29-30).

¹⁷⁰ It is especially important to stress in this regard that my focus is literary and not historical. As Sweeney points out, the Josiah narrative 'provides the fundamental linchpin by which modern critical scholarship reconstructs the development of Israelite/Judean religion and the compositional history of much of biblical literature.' Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5. Problems presented by readings of the Josiah narrative that seek to reconstruct history (e.g., whether or not Josiah was successful in reestablishing the Davidic-Solomonic empire) cannot be addressed here. My interests and questions are literary and theological (and thus historiographical).

23, further strengthens the connection with the unexpected death of the man of God in 1 Kings 13.

Finally, it is apparent that details concerning Josiah's death and burial in 2 Kings 23 mirror the man of God's death in 1 Kings 13 in some important ways. Most obvious is the sudden and untimely nature of their deaths as fulfillments of prophecy (1 Kgs 13.21-22; 2 Kgs 22.20). But other minor details also suggest comparison. For instance, the verb used to depict the transport of Josiah's body to Jerusalem, *רָכַב* in the *hiphil*, means 'to [cause to] mount,' typically referring to a donkey [*הַמִּזְוֵה*]¹⁷¹ or chariot [*מִן־רֶכֶבָה*].¹⁷² The author's choice of words thereby suggests a further parallel in that the corpses of the man of God and the king are transported to their graves by similar means. Also, just as the lion ensures that the man of God's corpse remains in one piece in 1 Kings 13, so Huldah prophesies that Josiah's body will reach the grave 'in wholeness' [*בְּשִׁלְוִים*] (2 Kgs 22.20). Drawing on Boer's notion of political allegory, one might perceive an additional link between the lion in 1 Kings 13.24 and Pharaoh Neco in 2 Kings 23.29, given that lions often represented foreign, imperial powers in the ancient world.¹⁷³

While the abrupt death of Josiah has apparently raised considerable difficulties for biblical tradents and interpreters alike, a significant portion of this tension is set in relief when Josiah's death in 2 Kings 23 is read alongside 1 Kings 13 as a counterpoint. The numerous points of narrative analogy between the man of God in 1 Kings 13 and King Josiah in 2 Kings 22-23 illuminate each story or 'bookend' in important ways. But we are getting ahead of ourselves in speaking of Josiah's death. Let us turn now to a key passage describing Josiah's visit to Bethel, six verses that Barth described as 'the real epilogue' to 1 Kings 13.¹⁷⁴

2 Kings 23.15-20

¹⁵Moreover, the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin—he pulled down that altar along with the high place. He burned the high place, crushing it to dust; he also burned the sacred pole. ¹⁶As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs there on the mount; and he sent and took the bones out of the tombs, and burned them on the altar, and defiled it, according to

¹⁷¹ cf. Exod 4.20.

¹⁷² cf. Gen 41.43.

¹⁷³ See above. I am grateful to Prof. John Sawyer for pointing this out when I read a paper on 1 Kings 13 in the OT Seminar at Durham University on Feb 23, 2016.

¹⁷⁴ Barth, *CD* II.2, 397.

the word of the LORD that the man of God proclaimed, when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the festival; he turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God who had predicted these things. ¹⁷Then he said, “What is that monument that I see?” The people of the city told him, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done against the altar at Bethel.” ¹⁸He said, “Let him rest; let no one move his bones.” So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria. ¹⁹Moreover, Josiah removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the towns of Samaria, which kings of Israel had made, provoking the LORD to anger; he did to them just as he had done at Bethel. ²⁰He slaughtered on the altars all the priests of the high places who were there, and burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

2 Kings 23.1-14 narrates Josiah’s reforms in and around Jerusalem, with specific reference to the idolatrous sins of Manasseh and Solomon. The narrator then turns our attention to Bethel, and to Jeroboam’s altar in particular. The next five verses (vv 15-20) are considered by many scholars working with a diachronic approach to be a later redaction, attributed by some to DtrP (the hypothetical prophetic editor).¹⁷⁵ The links with 1 Kings 13 are obvious in any case, not just thematically but also in terms of vocabulary. As Brueggemann observes, ‘we can see a profound, self-conscious practice of intertextuality operative here... moreover, that the three references to Jerusalem (23:13-14), Samaria (23:19-20), and Bethel (23:15-18) are not simply happenstance references to earlier texts, but that the earlier texts have been placed as they are in order to create a context for the distinctive work of Josiah.’¹⁷⁶ Every detail in the short passage is clearly aimed at expressing the fulfilment of the man of God’s prophecy before its abrupt conclusion in verse 20: ‘Then he returned to Jerusalem.’

First, Jeroboam’s altar is broken down, burnt, crushed to dust (v 15). One might reasonably ask (as Van Seters does) how it is possible to break down, burn *and* crush an altar to dust, but the multiplicity of images is almost surely theologically driven. The breaking down of the altar recalls 1 Kings 13.3,5; the burning recalls stipulations given in Deuteronomy for the treatment of towns that have fallen into apostasy (Deut 13.16); and the crushing to dust is reminiscent of Moses’ way of dispensing with the golden calf in Exodus (32.20). A proper consideration of the account’s

¹⁷⁵ So G. Jones, *1 & 2 Kings* (vol. 2), 624. The tendency to attribute various passages to schools or editors with different interests is, in my view, simplistic. One of the main underlying assumptions is that ancient authors and editors were incapable of literary sophistication.

¹⁷⁶ Brueggemann, *Kings*, 556.

historiographical function mitigates against attempts to historicise its narrative details. The symbolic potency of the language in these verses is similar to that of 1 Kings 13.

Although Josiah's actions comply directly with the words (and actions) of the anonymous man of God who preceded him, the narrator makes doubly sure that the prophecy-fulfilment schema is not missed: 'he sent and took the bones out of the tombs, and burned them on the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the LORD that the man of God proclaimed, when Jeroboam stood by the altar at the festival' (v 16). It is noteworthy that the fulfilment of the man of God's prophecy in these verses is depicted as something that occurs quite by chance, and certainly not with Josiah's prior knowledge. That is to say, Josiah does not act as he does *in order to* fulfil an ancient prophecy. Rather, after tearing down the altar, Josiah notices a particular monument or signpost [יִזְבֵּחַ] that gives him pause to inquire about its significance (v 17). But while he is apparently ignorant of the significance of his actions, the impression given by the narrative is that 'the people of the city' are all too familiar with the prophecy concerning Jeroboam's altar. (Even three hundred years on, the public nature of the events that transpired in Bethel retains significance.) The inhabitants of Bethel explain the importance of the tomb and the ancient prophecy to the southern king, connecting the man of God's words from the past to the king's actions in the present. Upon learning that the tomb belongs to one who foretold his reforms, Josiah commands that the man of God's bones be permitted to rest, free from disturbance.

The narrator's report is careful to add that the bones of 'the prophet who came out of Samaria' are also left alone as a consequence (v 18). The reference to Samaria does not contradict the Bethelite's northern origin, as some commentators think,¹⁷⁷ but does appear to reflect an era when Samaria had become established as the name for the northern region as distinct from Judah (i.e. 7th c.).¹⁷⁸ More important is the way that the narrative associates the two prophetic figures with one another with parallel phrasing:

¹⁷⁷ Some commentators regard the mention of 'the prophet who came out of Samaria' in v 18 as a reference to the man of God from Judah, and thereby think this to reflect an error in the text. E.g., G. Jones, *1 & 2 Kings* (vol. 2), 625. But as with 1 Kings 13, the narrator continues to differentiate between 'the man of God who came from Judah' (v 17) and 'the prophet [יִזְבֵּחַ] who came out of Samaria' (v 18). BHS has a textual note, suggesting that 'from Samaria' may be read as 'from Bethel', presumably for greater clarity and consistency with 1 Kings 13.

¹⁷⁸ Cogan, *1 Kings*, 290.

אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־בָּא מִיְהוּדָה the man of God who came from Judah (v 17)
הַנָּבִיא אֲשֶׁר־בָּא מִשְׁמֶרֶזַן the prophet who came from Samaria (v 18)

In the same vein, the following verse confirms the fulfilment of the Bethelite's addition to the prophecy as well: 'Josiah removed all the shrines of the high places that were 'in the towns of Samaria' [בְּעָרֵי שְׁמֶרֶזַן], which kings of Israel had made, provoking the LORD to anger; he did to them just as he had done at Bethel' (v 19). The narrator hearkens back to the Bethelite/Samaritan prophet's expansion of the original prophecy to include 'all the cities of Samaria' (cf. 1 Kgs 13.32) to make it clear that Josiah fulfils the prophecies of both the man of God (v 15-16) and the Bethelite (v 19). So even while the authenticity and gravity of the decree against false worship in Bethel is underscored yet again in these verses, the 'real epilogue' to 1 Kings 13 gives the dissonance and perplexity of the whole story a surprisingly hopeful denouement.¹⁷⁹

These two anonymous prophets whose story began in a context of war and opposition, and whose deceit and disobedience set them in opposition to one another throughout the parabolic events of 1 Kings 13, are in the end unified. Even as their bones lie side by side in death, their prophecies are fulfilled in tandem beyond the walls of their shared tomb by a Davidic king whose long-awaited coming promises to uproot the evil way of Jeroboam and undo the very cause of their division. Indeed, the fulfilment of ancient prophecy and this portent of reunification call to mind another enacted parable and its message of hope for exilic Israel:

I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their GOD. (Eze 37.22-23)

Conclusion: Anonymous Prophets and Archetypal Kings

¹⁷⁹ On the centrality of the theme of hope in debates concerning redaction hypotheses and the theology of Dtr, see Noth, *The DH*, 79-80; von Rad, *Studies*, 74-9; Wolff, 'Kerygma'; and more recently, Nathan Lovell, 'The Shape of Hope in the Book of Kings: The Resolution of Davidic Blessing and Mosaic Curse', *JESOT* 3.1 (2014), 3-27.

Our consideration of Dtr's (exilic) historical frame of reference spotlights Josiah as a central figure for interpreting and understanding Israel's monarchic historiography. His cultic reforms and their impact upon the populace evidently had a critical impact on Dtr's theology of history and the shaping of 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 22-23 as 'bookends' to the history. In connection with this, 1 Kings 13 contains a range of literary cues that suggest that its function within the DH is not dissimilar to the programmatic speeches identified by Wellhausen and Noth. According to the rhetoric of narrative analogy, the man of God from Judah offers a proleptic portrait of King Josiah within a narrative that is rich with symbolism and theologically rich vocabulary. All of these factors lead the reader to view Josiah as a kind of theological lens through which to assimilate and interpret the odd complexities of 1 Kings 13.

Under this interpretive approach, numerous elements within 1 Kings 13 are illuminated. As well as the fact that literary parallels between the man of God from Judah and King Josiah proliferate, a sharp dichotomy is established between these archetypal kings of Israel and Judah. These two kings are starkly polarised ('the sins of Jeroboam' are set against the reforms of Josiah) even whilst it is made clear that the sins of Jeroboam ultimately pave the way for Josiah's death. Within the symbolism of the narrative, the old northern prophet leads his younger colleague to his demise, just as Israel's idolatry spreads from north to south in the subsequent account of the kingdoms. Similarly, Ahijah's devastating prophecy concerning the fate of Israel in 1 Kings 14 is closely followed by the narrator's report concerning Judah:

1 Kings 14.22-24

²²Judah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all that their ancestors had done. ²³For they also built for themselves high places, pillars, and sacred poles on every high hill and under every green tree; ²⁴there were also male temple prostitutes in the land. They committed all the abominations of the nations that the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

Encapsulating these themes, the two bookends (1 Kgs 12.33-13.34; 2 Kgs 23.15-20) establish a prophecy-fulfilment schema that places a significant accent upon YHWH's sovereignty over history. The structure of the whole indicates that the word of the LORD, spoken at the inception of the history of the divided kingdom, has enduring efficacy. That both Israel and Judah are doomed from the outset is manifested in 1 Kings 13, where the anonymous kingdom representatives (i.e. the

man of God and the old prophet), who prove to be disobedient and deceptive, die separate deaths but share a common grave. By the same token, Jeroboam and Josiah, within their own times and contexts, die in ways that bespeak the fates of their kingdoms, Israel and Judah. Between bookends that accentuate these two theological figures is an historical account wherein Israel and Judah also move steadily towards a shared, exilic grave under the rule of various wayward kings who lead their peoples into sin through cultic improprieties. The history consistently hearkens back to Jeroboam's failure (no less than twenty-six times) even as it anticipates its climax in Josiah, the incomparable son of David foretold in 1 Kings 13.2. But even as Dtr's account of the divided kingdoms nears the tragic end that was prophesied at its inception, a hopeful note is sounded—not just in the reign and reforms of Josiah, but also in the union of the two anonymous prophets who represent the nations whence they come.

In accordance with Cross's observation, that Dtr 'is fond of bracketing events and periods with an explicit theological framework,'¹⁸⁰ the anonymous prophets and archetypal kings featured in 1 Kings 13 present a stylised account of the history of Israel and Judah that simultaneously interprets the past and demands covenant-faithfulness of its future leaders for the sake of the people.

¹⁸⁰ Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 288.

CONCLUSION

Summary

In this work, I have sought to present a coherent reading of 1 Kings 13 that is attentive to literary, historical and theological issues. As noted in the introduction, my aims in doing so have been twofold: on one hand, to offer a detailed exegesis of 1 Kings 13 that engages with the work of other scholars, regardless of whether their approaches and interests are the same as my own; and on the other hand, to reflect on some of the (unavoidable) hermeneutical assumptions and theological priorities that influence interpreters in their work. By way of conclusion, then, I shall briefly summarise the ground covered in this dissertation and then indicate some of the implications this work may have for further study and research.

This study of 1 Kings 13 began with Karl Barth's exegesis of the passage, as it appears in his *Church Dogmatics*, not least because it remains one of the most fascinating, provocative, and original readings available. In chapter two, I offered a detailed summation of the form and content of his exegesis, followed by an assessment of his hermeneutical and doctrinal frames of reference. Some literary aspects of his reading were noted also for their ongoing impact upon narrative-critical readings and thematic studies in Kings.

In chapter three, Barth's reading was subjected to a strictly historical-critical evaluation, guided by the sharp insights and questions of Martin Klopfenstein. While there is significant overlap in the details of the two expositions, Klopfenstein took issue with Barth's tendencies to impose dialectic patterns upon the text and to read intertextually, both of which lead to *Überinterpretation*. Similarly, Noth's primary criticism was hermeneutical; in his view, the biblical theme of election is nowhere to be found in this particular text. These esteemed biblical scholars each had a significant, negative impact on the reception of Barth's exegesis in Old Testament scholarship.

The past seventy years of scholarship came under brief review in chapter four in order to assess the main ways in which the subject matter of 1 Kings 13 has been

understood. According to my analysis, the categories are: the discernment of true and false prophecy; the efficacious Word of God; an anti-north polemic; and political allegory. These themes were investigated in turn by engaging with works representing a variety of disciplines: James Crenshaw for a psychological/ sociological approach; Jerome Walsh for his literary/ structural analysis; John Van Seters for a redaction- and source-critical approach; and Roland Boer for a political and allegorical reading. These diverse approaches to the text presented a variety of insights and observations, though some interpretations were found to be more internally coherent and methodologically consistent than others. In any case, these four construals of 1 Kings 13 provided a range of examples and illustrative material for a more theoretical analysis of interpretive issues in chapter five.

Given the sheer size and scope of the discipline of hermeneutics, the inquiry in chapter five is limited to three perceived dichotomies in the field of hermeneutics that have the potential to polarise scholars and their work and lead to misunderstanding: author- and text-hermeneutics; canonical and historical-critical approaches; and synchronic and diachronic priorities. These were discussed as spectrums within which interpreters are encouraged to explicitly locate their projects so as to avoid confusion about the aims and means of inquiry. One way to foster dialogue where competing construals appear to be mutually exclusive, suggested by Richard Briggs, is to contextualise judgments by speaking of '*scripture as ...*' rather than arguing about what scripture *is*.

In chapter six, we returned again to Barth's exegesis, this time with a more favourable outlook from David Bosworth, who has sought to develop Barth's reading by filling in the gaps where Barth was suggestive but not forthcoming with detail. Although Bosworth's project is somewhat different to Barth's, his mapping of the multiple reversals in 1 Kings 13 onto the history of the divided kingdoms is a stimulating and worthwhile endeavour in its own right that complements Barth's work in important ways.

Finally, in chapter seven, I draw on two key observations from scholars with divergent priorities and methods to offer a fresh interpretation of 1 Kings 13; on one hand, Barth's observations about the allegorical dimension of the text, and on the other hand, Noth's conviction that Josiah's response to the law had a significant influence on Dtr's sixth century record of events. I thereby use the author's historical frame of reference and the literary function of 1 Kings 13 to establish a

theological context for interpretation. From that basis, I suggest that reading 1 Kings 13 as a narrative analogy and through a Josianic lens not only makes sense of Dtr's thematic priorities throughout the history of the kingdoms (e.g., in the evaluation of kings), but also untangles much of the complexity of 1 Kings 13 in particular. More precisely, I construe the chapter as a proleptic parable wherein the man of God from Judah anticipates King Josiah as the ideological antithesis of Jeroboam I of Israel. Represented by two anonymous prophetic figures, these two archetypal kings are set against one another in the narrative in a way that accents the theological significance of their actions for the people of Israel. In this sense, 1 Kings 13 is found to have both a retrospective and a prospective function, not unlike Dtr's speeches, as per Wellhausen and Noth.

Implications

A few implications of this work in general, and of the reading offered in the previous chapter in particular, are set out here. First, while I by no means claim to have broken new ground in hermeneutical theory, this work provides a case study in hermeneutical pluralism that takes as its focus one of the most perplexing narratives in the OT. This has heuristic value for weighing interpretations against one another, and for increasing scholarly self-awareness with regards to what we read *scripture as*. Accordingly, my own reading of 1 Kings 13 has not been offered in isolation from other readings, but has drawn on and built upon insights garnered from a range of hermeneutical methods, including redaction criticism (e.g., *Wiederaufnahme* and the literary framing of the chapter), theological interpretation (e.g., Barth's key insight concerning the prophets as representative figures for their kingdoms), literary criticism (e.g., analysis of characterisation and gaps, e.g., concerning the old prophet's motive), historical criticism (e.g., Klopfenstein's *einzelexegese*), canonical criticism (e.g., intertextual nuances regarding the lion, the threefold commandment, and the man of God), and so on. As a consequence, this study contributes to advancing the notion of what theological interpretation actually entails. As Briggs observes:

scriptural responsibility in the face of hermeneutical plurality is a responsibility to fostering dialogue between multiple competing construals of '*scripture as*', arrayed across the domains of the theological, the literary, the historical, the cultural, the psychological, and so forth. And furthermore, we might add, that

within this broad understanding, one might then define *theological interpretation* as any interpretation which will make sure that theological construals are among those explicitly considered. Note that this does not prejudge the extent to which other critical perspectives will or will not be brought into play; and neither, at this stage, does it clarify actual theological content in any particular construal.¹

Second, by beginning with Barth's exegesis of 1 Kings 13, but not being constrained by its accents and emphases, this work has sought to proffer a *theological* interpretation of 1 Kings 13 that remains within an Old Testament (and Dtr) frame of reference. It may be that this reading of 1 Kings 13 will be considered fruitful on the level of a text-hermeneutic only, or it may be that the literary-structural implications of this interpretation will convince readers that 1 Kings 13 was intentionally written and redacted to serve a particular hermeneutical function within the DH. In either case, the account of 1 Kings 13 presented in chapter seven has the potential to stimulate further studies on texts in the DH that are comparable in genre and style (e.g., Jdg 9; 1 Kgs 20).² Certainly, one of the greatest gains of reading 1 Kings 13 through a 'Josianic lens' is the insight concerning the *hermeneutical function* of 1 Kings 13 as an opening bookend to the history of the divided kingdoms. As I have sought to demonstrate, this aspect of my interpretation has implications for understanding the evaluations of kings throughout the history, the importance of cultic centralisation, Dtr's theology of history, and the hopeful denouement of the story in 2 Kings 23, among other things. The study of narrative analogy in the Hebrew Bible is no longer new, and it could certainly benefit from some standardisation of terminology and criteria,³ but it seems to me a very promising direction for further studies in the DH.

A third, related implication of this study is its potential import for the study of Dtr's ideology. Much time and effort has been spent on getting 'behind' the text on

¹ Briggs, 'Hermeneutical Plurality,' 47.

² The story in 1 Kgs 20 (esp. vv 35-43) is especially interesting for all its points of commonality with 1 Kgs 13.

³ See, e.g., Moshe Garsiel, *The First book of Samuel: a literary study of comparative structures, analogies and parallels* (Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1985); Joshua Berman, *Narrative Analogy in the Hebrew Bible: Battle Stories and their Equivalent Non-battle Narratives* (VTSup 103; Leiden: Brill, 2004); Aulikki Nahkola, *Double Narratives in the Old Testament: the foundations of method in biblical criticism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001); Peter Miscall, 'The Jacob and Joseph Stories as Analogies,' *JSOT* 6 (1978), 28-40; idem, *The Workings of Old Testament Narrative* (Semeia Studies; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983); James G. Williams, 'The Beautiful and the Barren: Conventions in Biblical Type-scenes,' *JSOT* 17 (1980), 107-119.

certain matters presented in Kings. But as we observed in chapter five, the dangers of historicism are that interpreters miss Dtr's point when the meaning of a text is perceived to be bound up with specific events at the time of writing. Dtr's depictions of Jeroboam and Josiah as flagrant lawbreaker and fervent lawkeeper are actually rather hard to miss, and oftentimes, tensions within the narrative can serve as indicators of Dtr's theology rather than as evidence of a fictionalised history. (For instance, Jeroboam is denigrated for acting as priest-king in 1 Kings 12.30-13.5, whereas Josiah is celebrated for doing so when he leads the Passover celebration in 2 Kings 23.21-23.) The point, in any case, is that 1 Kings 13 posits blame upon Jeroboam not for syncretism nor apostasy, but quite explicitly because he *caused* Israel to sin (1 Kgs 12.30; 13.33-34; 14.16, *passim*). Similarly, we have seen that Josiah is praised for public actions that impact directly upon the populace, such as normalising true (i.e. centralised) worship and reinstating the Passover. Given the way in which this kind of judgment is sustained and applied to subsequent kings throughout the history, it has been suggested that Dtr reconceptualises the relationship between leadership and the law because of Josiah, depicting Israel's *kings* as the ones responsible for the relationship between God and the people (contrary to the accent given in Deuteronomy). This point is made with particular force in 1 Kings 13, where Jeroboam provides a negative model and Josiah / the man of God a positive one, but throughout the record of the king(dom)s, Israel's and Judah's monarchs continue to be measured according to whether they *cause* the *people* to sin. As a synchronic study of these texts, this work has suggested that 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 22-23 may be read as bookends to an account of the divided kingdom that appears to set Jeroboam and Josiah against one another as antithetical archetypes. The possibilities for further study in connection with this are numerous.⁴

Finally, in connection with this broader, structural observation concerning the final shape of Kings and the DH, this reading of 1 Kings 13 suggests that Josiah is the highpoint, *but not the endpoint*, of this history. That is to say, in spite of his cultic reforms and renewal of Israel's covenant, Josiah's untimely death and the exile of

⁴ A recent book by Alison L. Joseph, entitled, *Portrait of the Kings: The Davidic Prototype in Deuteronomistic Poetics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015) proposes that Dtr uses 'a royal prototype strategy... to construct the portrait of his kings.' (55) Unfortunately, I received her book too late to engage substantively with her work, though it appears already to be moving in the direction I am suggesting here.

his people is clearly anticipated in 1 Kings 13. While I have not sought to offer a redactional assessment of 1 Kings 13 or 2 Kings 23.15-20, this reading of the text in its final form potentially impacts upon the viability of Cross's double-redaction hypothesis.⁵

In Cross's double-redaction theory, 1 Kings 13, together with 2 Kings 22-23, is considered to be part of Dtr¹, a piece of Josianic propaganda composed in the seventh century.⁶ His hypothesis rests on the identification of two major themes in Dtr¹—the sin of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 13.34) and the faithfulness of David (1 Kgs 13.2)—both of which are mentioned explicitly in 1 Kings 13. Moreover, Cross specifies that 'these themes must stem from a very specific setting having a specific social function... they belong properly to a Josianic edition of the Deuteronomistic history.'⁷ But the themes of Jeroboam's sin and the faithfulness of David (expressed through Josiah as per 1 Kgs 13.2) could have had social functions other than that of political propaganda for Josiah. Furthermore, it is a weakness of Cross's argument that he cites these verses from 1 Kings 13 without attending to the narrative development that occurs between them. The mention of Josiah in 13.2 surely requires an explanation that takes into account the story of which it is a part. Cross says almost nothing about what 1 Kings 13 might mean; he simply notes that the prophecy of an unidentified prophet from Judah anticipates Josiah's reform, 'preparing the reader's mind for the coming climax.'⁸ Cross is correct to see that 1 Kings 13 anticipates Josiah's reforms as a climactic point in the history, but he fails to note how the numerous parallels between the man of God and Josiah may have significance for a Josianic edition of the DH. The prophecy in 1 Kings 13.2 indeed points to Josiah as the one who will provide a remedy to Jeroboam's cultic trespasses, but this by no means requires that the Josiah narrative be the last word in the history.

If, as I have suggested, 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 22-23 provide bookends to the history of the kingdoms, wherein Josiah is presented as a climactic point in the history but not the end—since the exilic end is already in view in 1 Kings 13—then

⁵ Cf. Janzen, 'The Sins of Josiah and Hezekiah', which also challenges the double-redaction hypothesis on the basis of a synchronic reading.

⁶ Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 278-80.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 280, 283.

the history of the kingdoms interpreted thus could hardly have served as propaganda for Josiah's reforms. Rather, Josiah is presented as a key figure within an historical record that interprets and depicts events not only in light of his life, but also of his untimely death. Provan is surely justified in asking 'whether there is any compelling evidence that Josiah was the hero of a pre-exilic, rather than an exilic edition of the books.'⁹

In any case, these are questions and debates for another time and place. It is my hope that the survey of scholarship and the reading of 1 Kings 13 offered in this work will stimulate deeper and further engagement with the biblical text and with colleagues whose path we share.

⁹ Provan, *Hezekiah*, 147. In addition, the Manasseh passage remains problematic for the double redaction hypothesis since scholars are unable to remove 2 Kings 21 from the narrative (especially vv 10-15, which articulate the imminent destruction of Judah and Jerusalem as judgment for the sins of Manasseh), and ascribe it to Dtr², as per Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 285-7) without serious detriment to the meaning and message of the whole. Cf. Provan, *Hezekiah*, 145-7; Sweeney, *Josiah of Judah*, 10ff.

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