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Studies on the Message and Influence of Deuteronomy in Honor of Daniel I. Block

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The Lasting Significance of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy and Ezekiel's Theology of Exile

JASON GILE

Exile and return occupy a fundamental place in Ezekiel's theology of judgment and restoration. For Ezekiel, Yahweh's expulsion of his people from their land represents divine punishment for their religious and social transgressions (36:19), which he saw as a failure to keep Yahweh's statutes and ordinances (5:6–7; 11:12; 20:13, 16, 21, 24). Accordingly, the prophet cites specific injunctions in the Holiness Code and Deuteronomy in order to accuse and condemn his fellow Israelites.[1] However, as a prophet whose ministry straddles the periods both before and after the judgment of 587 B.C.E., Ezekiel foresaw a renewed era when Yahweh would bring his people back to their land and display his gracious resolve to maintain his covenant with Israel by causing them to walk in his statutes (11:19–20, 36:27, 37:24).

One particular motif stands out as a dominant image for the prophet's warnings of exile and promises of return: the scattering and gathering of Israel among the nations. This essay will examine the first of these two related images—scattering as a motif for exile—and argue for Deuteronomy's influence on Ezekiel. In what follows I will first demonstrate the correspondences between Ezekiel's language and that of Deuteronomy and then explicitly treat the direction of dependence by arguing for the priority of Deuteronomy's scattering passages and Ezekiel's purposeful allusion to them. Then I will describe the influence of Deuteronomy on Ezekiel's theology more broadly. At the end of the essay, I will address the rhetorical function of Ezekiel's allusions to the pentateuchal language.

Author's Note: It is an honor to dedicate this essay to Daniel Block, a mentor and friend, whose exceptional work on the book of Ezekiel has paved the way for me and many others. An earlier version was presented in the Exile (Forced Migrations) in Biblical Literature Section at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago, 2012.

1. See M. A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code* (LHBOTS 507; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2009); J. Gile, *Deuteronomic Influence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Ph.D. diss., Wheaton College Graduate School, 2013).

1. The Motif

Ezekiel warns of exile or promises return more than 20 times using this distinctive motif.[2] The image of scattering or gathering Israel is present to a lesser degree elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, but nowhere is it more pronounced than in Ezekiel, where it occurs more often than any other book. In addition, as other scholars have noted, although the texts in Ezekiel display minor variations, they exhibit a remarkable consistency of expression not found in other books and thus warrant being called stereotyped formulae.[3]

The Holiness Code and Deuteronomy also contain the motif in variant forms, and the question naturally arises whether Ezekiel's language might derive from earlier traditions about exile. Indeed, there is reason within the book itself to suspect that Ezekiel may have known and drawn from traditional material for the scattering metaphor. In his depiction of the history of the wilderness period in chapter 20, the prophet cites Yahweh's threat to Israel: "I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the lands" (v. 23). Although Ezekiel's historiography in chapter 20 is highly stylized,[4] this text suggests that the prophet knew of a prior tradition that Yahweh threatened or committed to exile Israel in the wilderness period. Thus, we find in this passage a warrant to examine Ezekiel's relationship to the pentateuchal texts that speak of exile.[5] The following investigation will consider whether Ezekiel knows and draws from any of these texts, and if so, which one(s).

2. Ezekiel's Scattering Language and the Holiness Code

Before treating the affinities of Ezekiel's language to that of Deuteronomy, here I briefly note that Ezekiel draws from the one passage in

2. Ezek 5:2, 10, 12; 6:8; 11:16–17; 12:14–15; 20:23, 34, 41; 22:15; 28:25; 34:13; 36:19, 24; 37:21; 39:27–28; in metaphorical contexts: 22:19; 34:5, 6, 12; of Egypt: 29:12–13; 30:23; 30:26; of Babylon: 22:19.

3. On the gathering formula see, e.g., G. Widengreen, "Yahweh's Gathering of the Dispersed," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (ed. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer; JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 227–45; J. Lust, "'Gathering and Return' in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," in *Le Livre de Jérémie* (ed. P.-M. Bogaert; BETL 54; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 120–21.

4. See D. I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 613–15.

5. I use the adjective "pentateuchal" to describe the literary traditions underlying the Pentateuch. I do not assume that the Pentateuch was extant in its final form in Ezekiel's time.

the Holiness Code that speaks of exile.[6] In the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 Yahweh threatens to remove Israel from the land if they fail to keep his commandments: "I will scatter you among the nations and draw the sword after you (ואתכם אזרה בגוים והריקתי אחריכם חרב)" (v. 33). In three separate instances the prophet cites the language of Lev 26:33, which uses two phrases: אזרה בגוים 'to scatter among the nations' and והריקתי אחריכם חרב 'to draw the sword after you'.

Lev 26:33	ואתכם אזרה בגוים והריקתי אחריכם חרב	**I will scatter** you among the nations, and **I will draw the sword after you.**
Ezek 5:2	והשלשית תזרה לרוח וחרב אריק אחריהם	A third part **you shall scatter** to the wind, and **I will draw the sword after them.**
Ezek 5:12	והשלישית לכל־רוח אזרה וחרב אריק אחריהם	A third part **I will scatter** to all the winds and **I will draw the sword after them.**
Ezek 12:14	אזרה לכל־רוח וחרב אריק אחריהם	**I will scatter** (them) toward every wind, and **I will draw the sword after them.**

The signs of literary dependence in this case are unmistakable due to the verbal and syntactic correspondence between these texts.[7]

3. Ezekiel's Scattering Language and Deuteronomy

However, appealing to the Holiness Code as a basis for Ezekiel's language for exile does not fully account for the majority of instances of scattering in the book where we find a fixed formula for Yahweh's deportation of Israel: הפיץ בגוים וזרה בארצות 'to scatter among the nations and disperse among the lands'.[8]

6. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 118, 183.

7. Although Ezekiel does not use the full phrase אזרה בגוים, the verb זרה and the distinctive phrase חרב אריק אחריהם occur in parallel in both Lev 26:33 and the three instances in Ezekiel. Furthermore, the criterion of recurrence is especially significant here. In addition to Ezekiel's widespread use of the Holiness Code, Lev 26:33 in particular, which also mentions the desolation of the land and its cities, is one of the three most frequently cited verses from the Holiness Code in Ezekiel (Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 78). Finally, similar language of drawing the sword occurs in threats against the prince of Tyre and Egypt in Ezek 28:7 (והריקו חרבותם) and 30:11 (והריקו חרבותם על־מצרים) as well. In chapter 21 Ezekiel makes special use of the sword as an agent of Yahweh's judgment. There, however, the three occurrences of yielding the sword in vv. 8–10[3–5] use different wording (והוצאתי חרבי מתערה) and instead derive from Deuteronomy 32, as I argue elsewhere (J. Gile, "Ezekiel 16 and the Song of Moses: A Prophetic Transformation?" *JBL* 130 [2011] 104–5).

8. We may add a similar phrase that appears to be a modification of the fixed formula. In Ezek 11:16, Yahweh states, "I removed them far off among the nations and scattered them among the lands" (הרחקתים בגוים וכי הפיצותים בארצות). In this instance, the verb הרחיק appears in the first position, and הפיץ drops to the second position. The variation

Ezek 12:15	בהפיצי אותם בגוים וזריתי אותם בארצות
Ezek 20:23	להפיץ אתם בגוים ולזרות אותם בארצות
Ezek 22:15	והפיצותי אותך בגוים וזריתיך בארצות
Ezek 29:12	והפצתי את־מצרים בגוים וזריתים בארצות
Ezek 30:23	והפצותי את־מצרים בגוים וזריתם בארצות
Ezek 30:26	והפצותי את־מצרים בגוים וזריתי אותם בארצות
Ezek 36:19	ואפיץ אתם בגוים ויזרו בארצות

In this formula the verb זרה always occurs in combination with הפיץ, the term that is characteristic of the deuteronomic exile passages and never occurs in the Holiness Code.

The threat of deportation is more prominent in Deuteronomy than the Holiness Code, occurring in Deut 4:27–28; 28:36–37, 41, 64; 29:24–27[25–28] (cf. 30:1, 18). The scattering motif occurs in two of the three chapters. Deut 4:27 and 28:64 warn that "Yahweh will scatter you among [all] the peoples" (והפיץ יהוה אתכם בעמים and והפיצך יהוה בכל־העמים, respectively). Deut 30:3, which promises restoration, also uses the verb הפיץ to describe the places where Yahweh has sent his people. Thus, scattering is an important exile motif for Deuteronomy, occurring in all the passages that mention deportation except chapter 29. Furthermore, in all cases Deuteronomy consistently uses the verb הפיץ, in contrast to Lev 26:33, which uses זרה. Thus, הפיץ is thoroughly deuteronomic, even if it cannot be proven to be exclusively so in common parlance.

Therefore, we may conclude minimally that Ezekiel uses a typical deuteronomic term for his pronouncement of exile. Any further dependence on Deuteronomy is not immediately obvious, since Ezekiel never uses the full deuteronomic phrase הפיץ בעמים 'to scatter among the peoples'. Instead, he uses הפיץ בגוים, 'to scatter among the nations', coupled with זרה בארצות, 'to scatter among the lands'. However, I propose that Ezekiel's formula הפיץ בגוים וזרה בארצות is best explained as a combination of the deuteronomic and priestly locutions, הפיץ בעמים (Deut 4:27, 28:64) and זרה בגוים (Lev 26:33).

In what follows, I will offer several lines of argumentation. First, this hypothesis accords with Ezekiel's fusion of priestly and deuteronomic language and traditions elsewhere, as Risa Levitt Kohn has shown.

derives from the influence of the immediately preceding occurrence of the verbal root רחק in v. 15, where the inhabitants of Jerusalem declare, "Go far from Yahweh" (רחקו מעל יהוה). Other references to scattering appear in 6:8 (בגוים בהזרותיכם בארצות) and the numerous restoration passages where the Israelites are described as being gathered from the lands "where they have been scattered" (11:17; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 29:13).

Second, the way the prophet combines these phrases is consistent with Ezekiel's techniques of literary appropriation as outlined by Michael Lyons in his study of Ezekiel's use of the Holiness Code. Third, Ezekiel's awareness of the broader context of at least one of these deuteronomic passages corroborates his dependence on Deuteronomy's exile language. Finally, I will argue that internal evidence in the book of Ezekiel strongly points to one passage in particular known by the prophet. In what follows we will treat each point in turn.

3.1. The Fusion of Traditions in Ezekiel

First, Levitt Kohn has shown that Ezekiel regularly fuses priestly and deuteronomic traditions to create a unique synthesis. In her monograph, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, Exile and the Torah*, she catalogued Ezekiel's use of the language from these two traditions and found examples where he juxtaposes the priestly and deuteronomic material in the same passages.[9] Her premier example is the prophet's account of Israel's history in chapter 20, where he intersperses priestly and deuteronomic language throughout.[10] Other examples of combining locutions from the priestly and deuteronomic writings include his use of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 32 for the agents of death in Ezek 5:16–17,[11] and the combination of the priestly duties presented in Lev 10:10–11 and Deut 17:8, 9; 21:5 in Ezek 44:23–25.

3.2. Ezekiel's Technique of Literary Appropriation

Second, we find a precedent for the specific way that Ezekiel combines the terms. In his study of Ezekiel's use of the Holiness Code, Lyons argues that Ezekiel has a penchant for changing the exact form of expressions found in the Holiness Code and altering his source texts "in regular ways that allow us to speak of *techniques* of modification."[12] Based on an analysis of these techniques, Lyons offers a typology of modifications. Here we will deal with the two techniques relevant to the present discussion.

Lyons interprets Ezekiel's scattering formula as an example of splitting a locution and recombining its parts into parallel lines, a technique

9. R. Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOTSup 358; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002) 96–104.

10. Ibid., 98–103; idem, "With a Mighty Hand and an Outstretched Arm: The Prophet and the Torah in Ezekiel 20," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (ed. C. Patton and S. Cooke; SBLSymS 31; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004) 159–68.

11. Gile, "Ezekiel 16," 103–4.

12. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 88 (italics original).

of literary borrowing found widely in Ezekiel and, according to Benjamin Sommer, in Isaiah 40–66.[13] He writes, "When Ezekiel uses H's locution ואתכם אזרה בגוים ('And you I will scatter among the nations,' Lev 26:33), he splits the clause and redistributes the elements to create a new two-line parallel expression והפיצותי אותך בגוים וזריתיך בארצות ('I will disperse you among the nations and scatter you among the lands')."[14] Thus, Lyons sees Lev 26:33 as the sole influence on the Ezekielian scattering formula, and the introduction of הפיץ is simply the product of Ezekiel's creative recombination. He does not consider the possibility that Ezekiel might have drawn the term from another source.

The scattering formula more likely belongs to another of Lyons' categories of literary appropriation: combination and conflation.[15] In this technique the author does not split and reorder one clause but rather combines and conflates two separate clauses. The postulation of dependence on the deuteronomic phrase הפיץ בעמים carries much more explanatory power for understanding Ezekiel's scattering formula when one observes that the combination of the deuteronomic and priestly locutions resembles Ezekiel's use of other texts. For example, in Ezek 44:20 the prophet draws upon the priestly regulations found in Leviticus 21 and combines elements from verses 5 and 10.[16] We may also cite the recombination of locutions from Leviticus 26 in Ezek 25:7, which exhibits a striking formal similarity with Ezekiel's use of the priestly and deuteronomic phrases in the scattering formula. Like the scattering formula it involves parallel prepositional phrases with "peoples/lands/nations" in adjacent lines.[17]

Lev 26:22	A1 B1	והכריתה את־בהמתכם	It will cut off your livestock
Lev 26:38	A2 B2	ואבדתם בגוים	You will perish among the nations
Ezek 25:7	A1 (B2) A2 X	והכרתיך מן־העמים והאבדתיך מן־הארצות	I will cut you off from the peoples, and make you perish among the lands

Like the first category mentioned, splitting and recombination, it is typical that "Ezekiel does not simply juxtapose independent clauses from

13. Ibid., 92–93; B. D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) 68–69.

14. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 92.

15. Ibid., 95–97.

16. Ibid., 176.

17. Lyons lists this case as an example of splitting and recombining (ibid., 92).

[his sources], but merges them together to create a new statement."[18] Here the prophet combines and conflates two phrases, dropping one element from his sources ("B1") and introducing a new element (designated "X" above).

Ezekiel's use of Lev 26:33 and Deut 4:27 and/or 28:64 exhibits the identical pattern of recombination.

Deut 4:27, 28:64	A1 B1	הפיץ בעמים	He will scatter (you) among the peoples
Lev 26:33	A2 B2	אזרה בגוים	I will disperse (you) among the nations
Ezekiel's formula	A1 B2 A2 X	הפיץ בגוים וזרה בארצות	to scatter (you) among the nations and disperse (you) among the lands

Here Ezekiel combines the priestly and deuteronomic phrases for scattering, אזרה בגוים and הפיץ בעמים,[19] dropping one element (בעמים) and adding another (בארצות).

If this account of the scattering formula's literary background is correct, Ezekiel's source included not only the deuteronomic keyword הפיץ, but the entire deuteronomic phrase הפיץ בעמים. As Lyons observes, "literary borrowing involves a process of selection in which some words from the source text are not used."[20] The absence of Deuteronomy's בעמים in Ezekiel's formula is a result of the literary modification, which discards one element of its source. In summary, Ezekiel's introduction of הפיץ from Deuteronomy accords with his techniques of literary modification, and Ezek 25:7 in particular provides an impressive parallel for the exact modification found in the scattering formula. This observation reinforces the conclusion that Ezekiel's formula combines the priestly and deuteronomic language.

3.3. Ezekiel's Awareness of the Deuteronomic Exile Passages?

But does the prophet simply adopt a deuteronomic phrase that is well-known in contemporary religious parlance, or does he borrow from a particular text? This question is particularly significant given some scholars' tendency to regard the scattering passages in Deuteronomy as exilic additions (to which I will return below). First, based on the criterion of contextual awareness, I will argue that Ezekiel knows at least one of the exile passages in Deuteronomy. Specifically, his allusion

18. Ibid., 96.

19. So also S. W. Hahn and J. S. Bergsma, "What Laws Were 'Not Good'? A Canonical Approach to the Theological Problem of Ezekiel 20:25–26," *JBL* 123 (2004) 206.

20. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy*, 90.

to another distinctive idea in Deuteronomy's exile passages increases the probability that he is drawing from one of these texts. Among Deuteronomy's many references to idolatry, one stands out as especially relevant to Ezekiel and his audience in Babylonian exile. Deuteronomy threatens destruction and eventual exile for disloyalty to the covenant and identifies one particular image of idolatry with Israel's state after the punishment of deportation. In three of the four texts that threaten expulsion from the land, Deuteronomy declares that in exile the Israelites will worship עץ ואבן 'wood and stone'. This statement occurs in chapter 4 after Moses predicts that Israel will fall into idolatry and be scattered among the peoples (vv. 25–28) and twice in the warnings of exile in the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28 (vv. 36, 64).[21]

Deut 4:27–28	
והפיץ יהוה אתכם בעמים ונשׁארתם מתי מספר בגוים אשׁר ינהג יהוה אתכם שׁמה	And Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where Yahweh will drive you.
ועבדתם־שׁם אלהים מעשׂה ידי אדם עץ ואבן אשׁר לא־יראון ולא ישׁמעון ולא יאכלון ולא יריחן	There you will serve gods, the work of human hands—**wood and stone**—that neither see, nor hear, not eat, nor smell.
Deut 28:36	
יולך יהוה אתך ואת־מלכך אשׁר תקים עליך אל־גוי אשׁר לא־ידעת אתה ואבתיך ועבדת שׁם אלהים אחרים עץ ואבן	Yahweh will bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known. And there you shall serve other gods—**wood and stone**.
Deut 28:64	
והפיצך יהוה בכל־העמים מקצה הארץ ועד־קצה הארץ ועבדת שׁם אלהים אחרים אשׁר לא־ידעת אתה ואבתיך עץ ואבן	Yahweh will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods that neither you nor your fathers have known—**wood and stone**.

In these texts עץ ואבן functions as a fixed word pair. This is confirmed by its syntactical position in all three texts, namely, apposition: "the works of human hands—wood and stone" (4:28); "other gods—wood

21. Deut 29:16[17] also mentions "wood and stone," along with "silver and gold," in the context of the idols of Egypt (ותראו את־שׁקוציהם ואת גלליהם עץ ואבן).

and stone" (28:36); "other gods which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone" (28:64). In the context of exile, serving wood and stone amounts to worshiping the local gods.

The locution עץ ואבן appears at a key point in Ezekiel 20. The presence of this rare word pair[22] in the context of the prophet and the elders discussing their situation in exile indicates that its use in Ezekiel alludes to the deuteronomic association of worshiping wood and stone with being in exile. In the beginning of the chapter the elders of Israel approach Ezekiel to inquire of Yahweh. After an extended account of Israel's history of idolatry, Ezekiel says,

Ezek 20:32	
והעלה על־רוחכם היו לא תהיה אשׁר אתם אמרים נהיה כגוים כמשׁפחות הארצות לשׁרת עץ ואבן	What comes into your mind will not come about, when you say: "We will be like the nations, like the tribes of the lands, serving **wood and stone**."

Based on its rarity and distinctiveness, Ezekiel appears to borrow this word pair.[23] But the deuteronomic concept of worshiping עץ ואבן in exile functions more fundamentally in the dialogue between Ezekiel and the elders. Significantly, Ezekiel is the one who mentions עץ ואבן to describe the alleged thought of the elders in exile rather than the elders themselves.[24] The prophet appears to be familiar with Deuteronomy's association of worshipping the local gods in exile and interprets the elders' thought in these deuteronomic terms. Its mention in the present exilic context suggests the prophet is alluding to Deuteronomy's prediction that the people would serve idols in exile. Now in exile, Ezekiel and the elders consider whether it will come to pass in the current generation in Babylon. Ezekiel's apparent knowledge of and allusion to Deuteronomy's distinctive ideas about exile increase the likelihood that he did in fact know at least one of Deuteronomy's exile passages.

22. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible it only occurs in 2 Kgs 19:18 (= Isa 37:19). Cf. Jer 3:9 (ותנאף את־האבן ואת־העץ).

23. So also T. Ganzel, "The Transformation of Pentateuchal Descriptions of Idolatry in Ezekiel," in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel* (ed. M. A. Lyons and W. A. Tooman; Princeton Theological Monographs; Eugene, OR.: Pickwick, 2010), 41; Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart*, 92.

24. Contra D. Rom-Shiloni, who argues that v. 32 constitutes a quotation of the elders' inquiry ("Facing Destruction and Exile: Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," *ZAW* 117 [2005] 194). See Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (trans. C. Quin; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 277; Block, *Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24*, 648.

3.4. Ezekiel's Knowledge of an Exile Tradition Reflected in Ezek 20:23?

As noted earlier, internal evidence in the book of Ezekiel suggests the prophet alludes to an earlier tradition. He does not simply speak of the current exile in terms similar to those of the Holiness Code and Deuteronomy, but in one instance actually refers explicitly to an earlier threat from Yahweh to expel his people from the land. Long ago in the wilderness period Yahweh "raised his hand to scatter them among the nations and disperse them among the countries" (Ezek 20:23). In recent years, two scholars have claimed that the phrase "to lift one's hand" does not signify an oath, and therefore Ezek 20:23 does not express a threat or decision by Yahweh to exile Israel in the wilderness.[25] However, as I show elsewhere, their arguments are unconvincing.[26] So, it would seem that Ezekiel knows and is influenced by a tradition that Yahweh swore long ago to expel Israel from the land.

The idea that Yahweh took an oath in the wilderness to scatter Israel among the nations is stated explicitly in the Hebrew Bible only here and in Ps 106:26–27, a postexilic psalm that was clearly influenced by Ezekiel's account of history.[27] Thus, scholars often assert that Yahweh's oath to scatter Israel in the wilderness finds no parallel in biblical tradition that could serve as a basis for Ezekiel's statement. For example, Moshe Greenberg stated that the extant pentateuchal texts are silent about such an oath.[28] It is possible that this element of chapter 20 is simply the product of Ezekiel's theological (re-)interpretation of Israel's history and not a reference to anything we might find in the biblical texts. However, despite the prophet's tendency to shape history to serve his rhetorical purposes,[29] he appears to have a conceptual basis for most elements of his history. Some have pointed to Ezekiel's claim that the Israelites worshiped idols in Egypt as an example of creative historiography that has no basis in traditional materials (Ezek 20:7–8).[30] Yet,

25. J. Lust, "Ez., XX, 4–26: une parodie de l'histoire religieuse d'Israël," *ETL* 43 (1967) 488–527, esp. 517–24; C. A. Strine, "The Divine Oath and the Book of Ezekiel: An Analysis of How Ezekiel 20 Uses the 'As I Live' and 'Lifted Hand' Formulae" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, New Orleans, 2009).

26. See Gile, *Deuteronomic Influence*, ch. 5.

27. G. W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness: The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968) 224–31.

28. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 368.

29. Ibid., 383.

30. E.g., M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 385; C. Patton, "'I Myself Gave Them Laws That Were Not Good': Ezekiel 20 and the Exodus Traditions," *JSOT* 21 (1996) 76–77.

these verses find more of a basis in Israelite tradition than is generally acknowledged—in particular, Josh 24:14, which represents an earlier tradition that previous generations did in fact worship idols in Egypt.[31]

Rather than a new literary creation, the idea that Yahweh swore to scatter Israel in the wilderness may be based on some tradition, even if the prophet adjusts the details. Indeed, one particular text from Deuteronomy seems to be in view. First, Scott Hahn and John Bergsma have shown persuasively that when related to the pentateuchal account of Israel's exodus, sojourn at Sinai, and wilderness wandering, the narrative flow and literary structure of Ezekiel 20 point to a setting for Ezek 20:23 that coincides with Moses' exposition of the law across the Jordan—namely, Deuteronomy.[32] After Ezekiel says that Yahweh did not make a full end of the first generation, in verse 18 the narrative turns to "their children in the wilderness," that is, the second generation. The rebellion of the second generation in verse 21 would then appear to refer to the idolatry associated with Baal of Peor (Numbers 25).

Accordingly, in Ezekiel's history the time-frame for Yahweh's oath to scatter Israel in 20:23 is the second wilderness generation. If this statement alludes to any pentateuchal threat of exile, the narrative flow of the chapter aligns it with the second-generation legal material, namely, Deuteronomy. Indeed, the narrative context of the deuteronomic instruction names the second generation as Moses' audience (cf. Deut 2:14–16).[33] What then of Ezekiel's characterization of the oath as "in the wilderness"? There is good reason to believe that for Ezekiel the setting of Deuteronomy is outside the promised land, and therefore in the "wilderness." Indeed, the biblical text itself draws a close connection between Israel's sojourn in the wilderness and the setting of Deuteronomy. According to Deut 3:29 and 4:44–49, when Moses expounded the Sinai revelation the Israelites were camped near Beth-Peor, the site of the second generation's wilderness tryst with Baal of Peor (Hos 9:10, Num 25:1–9), to which Ezekiel likely alludes and just beforehand describes as "in the wilderness" (Ezek 20:21–22).[34]

31. Lust, "Ez., XX, 4–6: une parodie," 516. Deut 29:15–16[16–17] states that the Israelites saw Egypt's idols.

32. Hahn and Bergsma, "What Laws?" 203–6.

33. Ibid., 206: "The relation of Deuteronomy to the second generation and particularly to the apostasy at Beth-Peor is underscored by the fact that, according to the narrative of Deuteronomy, Israel has not moved from Beth-Peor when Moses imposes on them the Deuteronomic laws."

34. Ibid., 206; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 192.

Thus, the close correspondence between the structure of Ezekiel 20 and the pentateuchal narrative suggests that Yahweh's oath to scatter Israel in verse 23 refers to a threat of exile in the period of the second wilderness generation, that is, Deuteronomy. This thesis is reinforced by Ezekiel's constant use of the deuteronomic term הפיץ and, as we will argue below, the similarity between Ezekiel's theology of exile and that of Deuteronomy.

Which text(s) in Deuteronomy might Ezekiel be alluding to in Ezek 20:23? Hahn and Bergsma have hypothesized that the oath to scatter Israel refers to Yahweh's oath in Deut 32:40–41: "For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, 'As I live forever, if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.'"[35] However, a connection between Ezek 20:23 and Deut 32:40 is unconvincing, primarily because exile is not mentioned or implied anywhere in Deuteronomy 32.[36]

We must therefore look to the two passages in Deuteronomy that in fact describe the scattering of Israel as candidates for Ezekiel's source text: Deut 4:27 and 28:64. The first of these in particular uses language associated with an oath and therefore provides the more likely basis for the prophet's claim in Ezek 20:23.[37] In Deut 4:25–28 Moses says to the Israelites: "If (when) you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything . . . today I call heaven and earth to testify against you, that you will soon utterly perish from the land . . . and Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples." Though this passage lacks an explicit oath saying (חי־יהוה, נשבע, etc.), the act of calling witnesses to testify against the violating party is closely associated with covenant/treaty oaths. In the present case, the call for witnesses is found in the context of a covenant. Verses 25–28 present curses for not keeping "the covenant of Yahweh your God that he made with [Israel]" mentioned in the preceding verse 23. Thus, Moses calls witnesses that they may testify against Israel in the future if they violate the covenant.

The summons for witnesses is a common feature of ANE treaty oaths. Though Deut 4:25–28 does not mention "swearing," it is well known that an oath was an essential conclusion to a treaty or covenant to ensure that the terms agreed upon would be respected and observed. The connection between an oath and calling witnesses is explicit in Moses'

35. Hahn and Bergsma, "What Laws?" 205.

36. Ibid., 205 n. 16.

37. Suggested in passing by Levitt Kohn (*A New Heart*, 100 n. 32). Hahn and Bergsma mention it as another possibility ("What Laws?" 205 n. 18).

third address, which displays marked treaty features.[38] There his call for heaven and earth to witness against Israel (Deut 30:19) culminates what was earlier described as Israel entering into (עבר ב) a covenant and an oath (את־הברית הזאת ואת־האלה הזאת) (Deut 29:11[12], 13[14]).

In the process of making a covenant, an oath ratified the agreement and made it binding.[39] According to Yigael Ziegler, "The oath's power emanates from the fact that every oath contains a conditional curse, even if it is not explicitly delineated in the oath's formula."[40] When an oath to a treaty or covenant is taken, the speaker declares his intent to keep its terms with the full understanding that failure to do so will incur severe consequences.[41] What role did witnesses play? Usually the gods were called as witnesses. According to Donald Magnetti, an appeal to divine beings was the only effective means to guarantee observance of the treaty, since the gods were called to bear witness to the terms of the agreement and punish those who transgressed it.[42]

In Deut 4:25–28 Moses does not call on deities to guarantee the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, but rather heaven and earth, as in Deut 30:19 and 31:28 (העידתי בכם היום את־השׁמים ואת־הארץ). In contrast to summoning heaven and earth to hear (Deut 32:1, Isa 1:2; cf. Mic 1:2, Jer 6:19), Deut 4:26 calls on the heavens and the earth explicitly to bear witness to the covenant and testify against Israel if she violates it by worshiping idols. What will the witnesses testify to?—that Yahweh will scatter them among the peoples as he warned (Deut 4:26–28).

Thus, despite no explicit "swearing" statement in this passage, the mention of calling witnesses in the context of a covenant would have naturally been understood as an oath. Since Ezek 20:23 appears to align with an exile text from Deuteronomy, it seems likely that the prophet found in Deut 4:25–28 a basis for the idea of an oath that Yahweh would scatter Israel among the peoples if they transgressed the covenant.

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38. On the treaty features of Deuteronomy 29–30, see, for example, A. Rofé, "The Covenant in the Land of Moab (Deuteronomy 28:69–30:20): Historico-Literary, Comparative, and Formcritical Considerations," in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (ed. N. Lohfink; BETL 68; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985) 317.

39. R. Westbrook, "The Character of Ancient Near Eastern Law," in *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (ed. R. Westbrook; HdO 72; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 1:84.

40. Y. Ziegler, *Promises to Keep: The Oath in Biblical Narrative* (VTSup 120; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 4.

41. Ibid., 3. Cf. G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *BA* 17 (1954) 52: "The oath . . . is a conditional self-cursing, an appeal to the gods to punish the promiser if he defaults."

42. D. L. Magnetti, "The Function of the Oath in the Ancient Near Eastern International Treaty," *American Journal of International Law* 72 (1978) 815.

3.5. Ezekiel's Theology of Exile

The hypothesis of deuteronomic influence on Ezekiel's exile language is corroborated by the distinctive theology of exile that Deuteronomy and Ezekiel share. Unlike Lev 26:33, which only threatens exile after persistent rebellion,[43] the exile passages in Deuteronomy speak of future disobedience and subsequent dispossession of the land as inevitable. In chapters 4 and 29–31 the future apostasy of the people is described as a foregone conclusion. This idea is most explicit in Deut 31:16–20:

> The LORD said to Moses, "Soon you will lie down with your ancestors. Then this people will begin to prostitute themselves to the foreign gods in their midst, the gods of the land into which they are going; they will forsake me, breaking my covenant that I have made with them. My anger will be kindled against them in that day. I will forsake them and hide my face from them; they will become easy prey, and many terrible troubles will come upon them. . . . For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I promised on oath to their ancestors, and they have eaten their fill and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, despising me and breaking my covenant." (Deut 31:16–20 NRSV)

Later in the same chapter Moses expresses the same attitude directly to the people and makes a dire prediction:

> I know well how rebellious and stubborn you are. If you already have been so rebellious toward the LORD while I am still alive among you, how much more after my death! . . . For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, turning aside from the way that I have commanded you. In time to come trouble will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands. (Deut 31:27, 29 NRSV)

While this passage does not mention exile explicitly, Deut 29:21–27[22–28] describes a coming turn to idolatry that will result in exile:

> The next generation, your children who rise up after you . . . will see the devastation of that land and the afflictions with which the LORD has afflicted it . . . they and indeed all the nations will wonder, "Why has the

43. As Lyons explains, "the judgments in Lev 26 are presented as God's instruments to induce repentance. The author accomplishes this by listing the punishments in order of increasing intensity, and by separating them into groups with refrains that clearly state their restorative purpose," e.g., "if despite this you will not obey" in vv. 18, 21, 23, 27 (*From Law to Prophecy*, 117–18; cf. J. Krašovec, *Reward, Punishment, and Forgiveness: The Thinking and Beliefs of Ancient Israel in the Light of Greek and Modern Views* [VTSup 78; Leiden: Brill, 1999] 164–65). Exile is listed in the last group of curses.

> Lord done thus to this land? What caused this great display of anger?" They will conclude, "It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. They turned and served other gods . . . so the anger of the LORD was kindled against that land, bringing on it every curse written in this book. The LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as is now the case." (Deut 29:21–27[22–28] NRSV)

According to Gordon McConville, the end of the book "takes for granted that the people will indeed fail to be the true people of the covenant and that this will result in the full force of the curses of ch. 28 falling on them."[44]

Finally, Deut 4:25–28, to which the prophet alludes in Ezek 20:23, may reflect a similar outlook.[45] The interpretive crux is the initial particle כי in 4:25, which may be understood conditionally or temporally. If כי is translated as "when," as many commentators understand it,[46] then this passage also speaks of Israel's future disobedience and exile as inevitable: "when . . . you have grown old in the land and you act corruptly by making a carved image. . . ." Thus, the theology of exile reflected in these chapters describes an unavoidable loss of the land due to Israel's idolatry.[47]

Ezekiel concurs with this sentiment concerning Israel's prospects for obedience. Greenberg hypothesized that the deuteronomic theology of exile alone may have been the impetus for Ezekiel's oath in 20:23, observing that "it is but a step from Moses' prediction of apostasy and exile [in Deuteronomy] to Ezekiel's portrayal of God's oath to exile Israel . . . already taken in the wilderness."[48] Although we have identified a more concrete basis for Ezekiel's oath in Deut 4:25–28, like Deuteronomy, Ezekiel presents an exceedingly bleak picture of Israel's prospects for faithful devotion to Yahweh. Chapter 20 in particular describes Israel's history as one of perpetual rebellion, reaching all the way back to their residence in Egypt (20:8). The apostasy of Israel's first generations

44. J. G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) 135.

45. Hahn and Bergsma, "What Laws?" 205 and n. 19.

46. K. J. Turner, *The Death of Deaths in the Death of Israel: Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011) 113–16; see also idem, "Deuteronomy's Theology of Exile," in this volume; J. G. Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998) 164.

47. Turner observes that in Deuteronomy "the inevitability of exile is grounded in the pessimistic portrayal of Israel's heart and nature" (*Death of Deaths*, 248).

48. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 385.

after the exodus (20:13, 16, 21) and in more recent times (e.g., 8:1–18) suggests that in Ezekiel's mind the nation was predisposed to rebellion. Ezekiel casts Israel's history expressing a negative view of Israel's capacity to obey. In Jacqueline Lapsley's words, "Because no generation ever did choose to obey Yahweh, the people simply were predisposed to wickedness, and did not possess the capacity to choose otherwise."[49] In order to rectify the situation, like Deuteronomy, Ezekiel spoke of the need for a divine intervention to change Israel's heart (Deut 30:6; Ezek 11:19–20; 36:26–27).[50]

The oath to scatter Israel in Ezek 20:23 suggests that for Ezekiel exile was a certain consequence of Israel's idolatry. Yahweh did not simply threaten or warn that he would exile his people, but he swore to do so.[51] By alluding to Deut 4:25–28 and emphasizing Israel's religious failures from its earliest days, Ezekiel agrees not simply with Deuteronomy's view of Israel's religious aptitude, but also with Deuteronomy's view that the seeds of Israel's loss of the land were present from the very beginning.

4. The Direction of Influence

Having argued on literary grounds that Ezekiel's scattering formula is best explained as a confluence of priestly and deuteronomic language, we may now address more directly questions about the direction of influence. The scattering motif is normally uncontested as an authentic part of the prophet's message in Ezekielian *Literarkritik*, likely because—unlike the gathering motif—it occurs in judgment rather than restoration passages. In order for Ezekiel to draw from Deuteronomy's exile passages, these threats of exile must have been available to the prophet in the early sixth century. In the history of scholarship the threat of exile has sometimes been seen as de facto evidence that a passage derives from the period of the Babylonian exile.[52] According to Gerhard von Rad, "The explanation that Israel was condemned to

49. J. E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel* (BZAW 301; New York: de Gruyter, 2000) 93.

50. See P. Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 51; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989) 120–21.

51. E.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 411; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 368: "Since the people proved to be confirmed rebels, God sealed their fate even before they entered the promised land; it was only a question of time till that fate was realized."

52. See, for example, N. Lohfink, "Auslegung deuteronomischer Texte, IV," *Bibel und Leben* [*BibLeb*] 5 (1964) 250–53; G. von Rad, *Das fünfte Buch Mose: Deuteronomium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968) 131; H.-D. Preuss, *Deuteronomium* (EdF 164; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982) 72–73, 156–57; T. Römer, "Book of Deuteronomy," in *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth* (ed. S. L.

be scattered . . . gives a clue for dating the whole, since this preacher knows already of the exile of 587."[53] Similarly, Martin Noth asserted that in the threat of exile in Deut 4:25–28 "Dtr. puts into Moses' mouth the lessons learned from subsequent history with which he himself is familiar."[54]

However, scholars such as Delbert Hillers and Dennis McCarthy have compared the biblical curses with those of ANE treaty texts and argue that the biblical curses need not derive from the experiences of the Babylonian exile or any other period of disaster. Instead, a comparison with the treaty curses of the Near East reveals that the author(s) of the biblical covenant curses drew upon a long and extensive tradition.[55] The quantity and distinctiveness of parallels between the biblical and non-biblical texts led Hillers to conclude that "the existence of a tradition of curses over a thousand years old renders any attempt to relate individual curses [in the Hebrew Bible] to particular historical periods highly suspect."[56] This observation applies to references to exile as well. In ANE treaty documents, the threat of exile for failure to keep the terms of a treaty is well attested.[57] Regarding the implications of these data for the dating of biblical texts, McCarthy writes the following:

> The element of military disaster and its consequences, hunger, slavery, exile . . . is common in the [ANE] curse literature. Hence we cannot reject out of hand any reference to exile as a secondary addition. Why must Deuteronomy be denied the right to use it as a threat as did the composer of Esarhaddon's treaty and of the Sefire text, cases where there is no question of *vaticinium ex eventu*, but only knowledge of the probable result

McKenzie and M. P. Graham; JSOTS 182; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994) 178–212 (186, 200); E. Nielsen, *Deuteronomium* (HAT 1/6; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995) 11.

53. G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1966) 50.

54. M. Noth, *Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981) 34.

55. D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (2nd rewritten ed.; AnBib 21a; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978) 172–87; D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (BibOr 16; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) 35; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 116–29.

56. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses*, 35; also cited in D. L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2002) 99; cf. D. I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) 104–6.

57. See especially B. Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979) 41–42. Cf. also the lists of texts in McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant* (2nd ed.) 173–74; K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 292–93; Kenneth A. Kitchen and Paul J. N. Lawrence, *Treaty, Law and Covenant in the Ancient Near East* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012) 3:194–95.

> of ancient warfare? Hence a simple reference to exile like that of [Deut] 28:36–37 is hardly a sign that the passage is a later addition.[58]

In conjunction with Deuteronomy 28's dependence on a broader curse tradition, we may reasonably conclude that in the period before 587 the biblical authors could have threatened Israel with exile for religious transgressions.[59]

In addition to the tradition of curses that threatened exile, the biblical authors would have been aware that exile was a very real possibility in light of the actual practice of deportation carried out by suzerain states against disloyal vassals. Bustenay Oded has collected extensive evidence for deportations by Assyrian kings, from Ashur-dan II in the tenth century to Ashurbanipal in the seventh century. In particular, Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib practiced the most deportations, with the extant records attributing to them thirty-seven, thirty-eight, and twenty deportations, respectively.[60] The practice of deportation was by no means exclusive to the Assyrians, but was common to all ANE peoples, spanning different periods in history.[61] Kenneth A. Kitchen has compiled numerous examples from the broader Near East.[62]

Thus, in addition to the fact that the biblical authors drew from a curse tradition that included the threat of exile, the ancient historical records indicate that "the concept and practice of exile was a potential threat to the Hebrews and other politically 'small' groups for most of the second and first millennium B.C."[63] Nelson similarly observed that

58. D. J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (1st ed.; AnBib 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963), 124, quoted in Smith-Christopher, *Biblical Theology*, 99–100 (Cf. the reworked 1978 edition of McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, 180).

59. Also F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 287; D. L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (WBC 6A; Waco, TX: Word, 1991) 93; cf. J. D. Levenson, "Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?" *HTR* 68 (1975) 208 n. 18: "The mere threat and description of exile cannot be taken as a sure reflection of the events of 587. Exile was a threat before it was an historical reality [for Israel]"; R. D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981) 23. Nelson regards Deut 4:25–28 and its threat of deportation as preexilic (ibid., 93–94).

60. Oded, *Mass Deportations*, 19–20.

61. Ibid., 41.

62. K. A. Kitchen, "Ancient Orient, 'Deuteronism' [sic], and the Old Testament," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* (ed. J. Barton Payne; ETS Supplement Symposium Series 3; Waco, TX: Word, 1970) 5–7.

63. Ibid., 5. Despite taking some texts as exilic, Cross makes the same point, acknowledging that in principle the threat of exile "need not necessarily stem from an exilic editor.

Deuteronomy's threats of exile "do not necessarily presuppose an exilic date, but only an audience familiar with deportation as a feature of Assyrian imperial policy."[64] The ancient Israelites did not need an exile of their own before they could speak of such a phenomenon. Exile would naturally have been mentioned with other catastrophes simply because it was well known from ANE warfare.

Nevertheless, if one still seeks a historical event in ancient Israel to provide an impetus for such threats in the biblical literature, one need not look to the Babylonian exile of 587. The eighth-century Assyrian dispersion of the Northern Kingdom at the hand of Shalmaneser V (followed by Sargon II) provided a precedent for deportation and thus an impetus to warn Judah of a possible exile of its own,[65] especially given the theological interpretation of the fall of Samaria as divine judgment reflected in 2 Kgs 17:7–18.[66] 2 Kgs 17:6 describes Israelites carried away to Assyria and placed "in Halah, and on the river Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."[67] Records from Mesopotamia mention the capture of Samaria as well (Babylonian Chronicle 1:28).[68] Thus, it is valid to locate the scattering motif at least as early as the late eighth century in Israel.[69]

Captivity and exile were all too familiar fates in the Neo-Assyrian age. More important, the threat of exile or captivity was common in the curses of the Ancient Near Eastern treaties and came naturally into the curses attached to Israel's covenant" (*Canaanite Myth*, 287).

64. R. D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 68.

65. So also Hillers, *Treaty-Curses*, 33–34; G. A. Smith, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918) 69, 307; H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12* (Continental Commentary; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991) 274. Cf. A. R. Welch, *Deuteronomy: The Framework to the Code* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932) 136, who cites the siege of Samaria in relation to the curses in Deuteronomy 28 generally.

66. Even if the Deuteronomistic interpretation of the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 2 Kgs 17:7–18 was recorded and incorporated into the Deuteronomistic History after 587, we may expect the sentiment to have earlier precedents.

67. For a synthesis of the biblical and Assyrian sources, see B. Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical & Archaeological Study* (Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East 2; Leiden: Brill, 1992); B. Oded, "II Kings 17: Between History and Polemic," *Jewish History* 2 (1987) 37–50.

68. A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5; Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975) 73.

69. Cf. Nelson, *Deuteronomy*, 68: "What Moses foresees as a possible future (idolatry, national destruction, exile into pagan lands) would have been a concrete reality for even the earliest of Deuteronomy's readers, in the shape of the calamity suffered by the northern kingdom."

5. Conclusion

The rhetoric of Ezekiel's allusion to the pentateuchal threats of exile rests in the status of Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code as authoritative instruction for Israel. For Ezekiel they are Yahweh's statutes and ordinances given to Israel in the wilderness (Ezek 20:10–11). Just as Ezekiel viewed his people's sins as transgressions against the statutes contained in these documents and judged Israel according to their standard, he also interpreted the current situation in light of the pentateuchal threats that Yahweh would remove his people from their land if they failed to keep his statutes and ordinances. For Ezekiel the Babylonian exile was the fulfillment of what Yahweh had sworn long ago in the wilderness (20:23). His literary appropriation of these threats reveals that his interpretation of the exile as Yahweh's punishment on his unfaithful people derives in part from the influence of Deuteronomy.