

KING DAVID (ca. 1037–ca. 967 B.C.) AND DUKE WEN OF JIN (ca. 697–628 B.C.): TWO PARADIGMATIC RULERS FROM THE HEBREW DEUTERONOMISTIC AND EARLY CHINESE CONFUCIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

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The aim of this study is to compare the lives and works of two great rulers: King David from the Hebrew Bible and Duke Wen of Jin from the early Confucian historical work *Zuo zhuan* (*The Commentary of Zuo*) and point out the similarities and differences of these two examples of the oldest “narrative histories” in the world.

Key words: King David, Duke Wen of Jin, narrative history, sacred perspective, Deuteronomistic historiography, early Chinese Confucian historiography

King David is one of the most famous personalities in world history and therefore it is not necessary to present him to the Western readers in detail. He is known in China, too.

Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 was probably the most distinguished statesman of the Chunqiu 春秋 Spring and Autumn Period (ca. 770–481 B.C.). Where this period is concerned, the traditional Chinese historians mostly devoted more attention to another great personality of this period Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–644). He was one of the five hegemon *wu ba* (五霸), or *wu bo* (五伯), who were the most powerful men in China between 685 and 591, who after “the decline of the royal power (of the kings of the Zhou 周 Dynasty after 770 B.C.,

M. G.) had become marked”¹ exercised the hegemony over the Chinese states in the middle China in the territories of the contemporary provinces of Hebei, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Henan and Zhejiang. Greater respect to the Duke Huan of Qi was paid by the traditional historians mainly due to Confucius (551–479 B.C.) who characterized him in the following way: “Duke Wen of Chin was crafty and lacked integrity, Duke Huan of Qi, on the other hand, had integrity and was not crafty.” (*Lunyu*, 14:15).² It was mostly through the counsels of his exceptionally talented Prime Minister Guan Zhong 管仲 (?–before 645 B.C.) that Duke Huan of Qi became so famous.

Introductory Remarks

It may be strange to many who will hopefully come across this essay why I chose these two great representatives of Hebrew history between the second and first millennium B.C. and Chinese history of the first centuries of the Axial Age as the objects of my research. It was originally not my idea, but I read about them and their similarities in a booklet, now probably long forgotten, and certainly unknown among the Western Sinologists, written by Professor Su Xuelin 蘇雪林 (1899–1999) entitled: *Zhongguo chuantong wenhua yu Tianzhu gujiao* 中國傳統文化與天主古教 *Chinese Traditional Culture and Hebrew Religion*.³ Su Xuelin was a well-known Chinese writer and scholar interested in Chinese literature, especially in *Chuci* 楚辭 *The Songs of South*, traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340–278 B.C.), but only partly written by him. She was also one of the first to introduce knowledge of foreign mythologies to China. In this booklet she wrongly claims that the old Chinese of the pre-Christian era knew the Bible and one of her “proofs” for it was the story of Chong’er 重耳 (Double Ears), when he was forced to leave his fief, the City of Pu 蒲, granted to him by his father Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公 (r. 676–651), upon the initiative of his concubine Li Ji 驪姬, *alias* Lady Li, *femme fatale* of China of those years. According to Lady Li young Chong’er (later Duke Wen of Jin) should be murdered because he was allegedly involved in the attempt to poison his father. She wanted her much younger son Xi Qi 奚齊 to be appointed as heir. Old senile Duke Xian sent his soldiers led by eunuch Pi 披 to the City of Pu to

¹ FITZGERALD, C.P. *China: A Short Cultural History*, p. 57.

² LAU, D.C. *Confucius. The Analects (Lun yü)*, p. 137.

³ SU XUELIN *Chinese Traditional Culture and Hebrew Religion*, pp. 38–39.

kill him, but Chong'er succeeded in fleeing. The eunuch sliced off the cuff of his robe when Chong'er climbed over the wall and escaped.⁴

These last words describing the escape of Chong'er in the year 655 B.C. were used by Su Xuelin as a proof that the Chinese author of *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 or *Zuo shi zhuan* 左氏傳 *The Commentary of Zuo*, China's oldest narrative history, in reality the commentary to *Chun qiu* 春秋 *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, traditionally attributed to Confucius, knew about the episode described in *I Samuel*, 24:5–6 and 12.⁵ In spite of the persuasion of his soldiers to kill his persecutor King Saul (r. ca. 1012–1004 B.C.), young David spared his life: "Yahweh forbid," he told his men, "that I should do such a thing to my lord, to Yahweh's anointed, to raise my hand against him! For he is Yahweh's anointed."⁶ According to the biblical text: "David was conscience-stricken because he had cut off the skirt of [Saul's] robe." This happened in the "wilderness of En-gedi" on the Western shore of the Dead Sea. Su Xuelin was probably enthralled by the benevolence of David on one side and annoyed by the dissimulation and by the hate of Saul who wanted to kill him, and on the other side she admired the *xiao* 孝 "filial piety" of Chong'er and was shocked by cruelty of his father.

In *I Samuel*, 26:8–9 we read a similar story again. David meets Saul sleeping within the encampment with his troops around him. Abishai, brother of Joab, commander of David's "army", seeing Saul sleeping on the ground, with his spear at his head, was prepared to kill him. David said to Abishai: "Do not destroy him! For who can raise his hands against Yahweh's anointed and be innocent? As Yahweh lives," [he] went on, "it must be Yahweh himself who strikes him down, whether his time comes and he dies or he goes down into battle and is taken! Yahweh forbid that I should raise my hand against the anointed of Yahweh! Now then, take the spear that is at his head and the cruse of water, and let us go."

In both speeches by David, the first short one and the second longer one, we see the same assertions about Yahweh's anointed, Yahweh forbid, cutting of the shirt of Saul's robe, the inviolability of the King and Yahweh's decision over life and death. Repetitions are a very often used literary device in biblical

⁴ LI MENGSHENG 李夢生 (ed.): *Zuo zhuan yi zhu* 左傳譯注 *The Commentary of Mr. Zuo* (trans. and annotated), p. 201. All quotations from *Zuo zhuan* are from this source.

⁵ SU XUELIN, op. cit., p. 39.

⁶ With the exception of *Deuteronomy*, all the biblical translations are from *The Anchor Bible*.

writings.⁷ The same is possible to say about the parallelism, but this is more used in the poetry and in the proverbs and wisdom books of other authors.

Slicing off the cuff of Chong'er's robe is mentioned twice in *Zuo zhuan*, Xi gong, 5th year 僖公五年, 655 B.C. and Xi gong, 24th year, 636 B.C. The first time is mentioned above and the second time is when he returned from his "circular journey" through the neighbouring states and became Duke Wen of Jin. The eunuch Pi twice attempted to kill him, but without success. After the second attempt he dared to visit and asked for an audience. The Duke was not in mood to meet him, but later gave him a chance and reproached him about why he had done it and why he came to bother him. If Saul in his reply, maybe with regret and certainly guilefully, asked for forgiveness, the eunuch Pi answered as the Confucian ethics of the loyal subject during the chivalrous Spring and Autumn Period demanded from him: "When one is acting on orders from the ruler, there are no two ways to the matter. This is the rule from ancient times. To do away with anyone who threatens the ruler – that is all one works for! ... Duke Huan of Qi employed Guan Zhong as his prime minister, though earlier Guan Zhong had shot an arrow that struck the buckle of the duke's sash. If you intend to act differently from Duke Huan, then I will not trouble you to give the order, but will leave at once" (Xi gong, 24th year, 636 B.C.). Duke Wen reminded him both of his attempt to kill him in Pu and another at the Wei 渭 River while hunting on the territories of Di 狄 barbarians instigated by Wen's brother Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公 (his original name was Yiwu 夷吾) (r. 651–637 B.C.), and sent him away. Duke Wen preserved the robe with the sleeve cut off for more than 19 years. In the Bible this episode is not mentioned for the second time. But who knows? A piece of a robe was a substitute for a seal in the countries of the Near East in those times and might have been useful for establishing David as heir after Saul. His anointment by the Prophet Samuel (*I Samuel*, 15:35–16:13) was probably not known to many among the Israelites. If the style of the Bible is, as shown above, concise and repetitive, written mainly for easy remembering and recitation, the *Zuo zhuan* shows "extreme economy of style" which is not possible render in modern usage since there are "countless places where one or two characters in original" have to be expanded into larger linguistic units in order to be intelligible in modern languages.⁸

In the two stories above and in the speeches by the personages involved, we may see the reflections of two different, but also similar socio-political, socio-

⁷ ALTER, Robert *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, pp. 88–113 and STERNBERG, Meir *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative. Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, pp. 58–83 and especially pp. 365–440.

⁸ WATSON, Burton *The Tso chuan. Selections from China's Oldest Narrative History*, p. xxxv. In translations I follow mostly this book.

ethical, ideological and political codes: the Deuteronomistic Hebrew and early Confucian Chinese.

Much was similar, but also different we find between King David and Duke Wen of Jin. In the following we shall analyse their life and work from three different aspects: as fugitives in the foreign country or countries, as famous warriors and male companions of many women around them.

Fugitives

After quite a few attempts by King Saul to kill David (see *I Samuel*, 18:20–25; 19:8–10, 11–24, Chapter 20; 23:19–29; Chapter 24 and 26), David had no other choice: either to wait for Saul's men to catch him or to leave the territory of the Israelites. In *I Samuel*, 27:1 we read: "David said to himself, 'Any day now I might be taken by Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape to the land of Philistines. Then Saul will give up on me and no longer seek me throughout the territory of Israel, for I shall be safely out of his reach.'"

The "circular journey" of David was to some extent similar to that of Chong'er, but was much shorter, although rich enough in some nice but also troublesome experiences. On a chart from the *Anchor Bible, I Samuel*, pp. 352–353, we find nineteen different stations of David's flight from Saul's court in Ramah (*I Samuel*, 19:10) up to Ziklag in Philistine territory (*ibid.*, 27:6). After seeking and obtaining asylum at the court of Achish, Philistine King of Gath, "David and his men took up residence with Achish, each man and his household: with David were his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, widow of Nabal, of Carmel. When Saul was told that David fled to Gath, he sought him no longer" (*ibid.*, 3–4). It is necessary to mention that David took with him six hundred men that accompanied him in the services for Achish and formed the foundation of David's army. "Unlike elsewhere in the text (of the Bible, M. G.) where David's questionable decisions are explained away as ordered by Yahweh, here it is clear that David had gone over to the Philistines of his own choosing. David remained in the service of Achish of Gath for more than two years (in the Bible we read about one year and four months, *I Samuel*, 27:7, M. G.) during which time he undertook border raids against the nomadic (non-Israelite, M. G.) tribes."⁹ His soldiers were an "outlaw band of *apiru* who lived by robbery and pillage" (*loc. cit.*). In another book David is characterized as a "leader of a band of outlaws".¹⁰ With such a "band of desperadoes"¹¹ he could only use guerilla tactics, when fighting, or with their help make "raids against

⁹ GABRIEL, Richard A. *The Military History of Ancient Israel*, p. 234.

¹⁰ HERZOG, Chaim and GICHON, Mordechai *Battles of the Bible*, p. 97.

¹¹ HALPERN, Baruch *David's Secret Demons. Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King*, p. 20.

the Geshurites and Amalekites" (*I Samuel*, 27:8), or other small non-Israelite tribes in the wilderness of Negeb: "Negeb of Jerahmeel and Negeb of Kenizzites" (*ibid.*, 29:9). One of the biblical scholars Niels Peter Lemche in his study "David's Rise" asserts that "it would have been impossible for David to earn Achish's trust without at least some attacks against the Israelite settlements".¹² Be that as it may, we find nothing like that in the Bible. We know that David as a Philistine vassal after making strike in the land of these tribes, "would leave neither man nor woman alive; but he would take sheep, cattle, asses, camels and articles of clothing" (*I Samuel*, 27:9) and brought the booty to Achish who became confident of him and wanted that David would become his "servant always", a bondsman who "thereby surrendered his chance of freedom forever" (Anchor Bible: Notes to *I Samuel*, 27:1–28:2, p. 415). This was, of course, not David's goal. He was, just as Saul, "Jahweh's anointed" by the same Prophet Samuel (cf. *I Samuel*, 10:1 and 15:35–16:13). He did not want to remain a servant of a foreign king or anti-king in his country.

Chong'er left the City of Pu and the state of Jin for the territory of Di 狄 Northern Barbarians, who lived along the northern borders of the Chinese states. He fled to the country of his mother Hu Ji 狐姬, who came to Jin from a branch of barbarians called Li Rong 驪戎. Exile in the adjacent Chinese states, or adjacent barbarian territories was often the only possibility to save one's life for the sons of kings, dukes or the highest officials of states in the times when they were in danger, accused of treason, claiming to become heirs, and the like. The rulers of adjacent countries were often, of course, not always, prepared to receive them hoping that these fugitives could be useful for them in the future.¹³ Like David, Chong'er had his retinue at the City of Pu. His men wanted to fight the soldiers of his father. Chong'er insisted on non-resistance and told his followers: "Through the kind command of my father the ruler I have received a stipend to ensure my living, and in this way have gathered these men around me. If having acquired followers, I should use them to resist *jiao* 校 (the same as 較, Note 4, (M. G.) my father, I could be guilty of no greater crime! I shall better flee" (Xi gong, 23rd year, 637 B.C.) It was "filial piety", the basic principle of Confucian ethics, that was the main cause of Chong'er's decision, similar to David who should observe one of the Ten Commandments: "Honour your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may long endure, that you may fare well, in the land that the Lord your God is

¹² LEMCHE, Niels Peter David's Rise, In *Journal of the Study of the Old Testament*, 10, 1978, pp. 10–11.

¹³ KHAYUTINA, Maria Die Geschichte der Irrfahrt des Prinzen Chong'er und ihre Botschaft, In ROETZ, Heiner(ed.), *Kritik im alten und modernen China, Jahrbuch der Deutschen Vereinigung für Chinastudien* 2. Note 104, p. 46.

assigning to you" (*Deuteronomy*, 5; 16). Saul was not David's father, but was the father of his first wife Michal (*I Samuel*, 18:20–21a and 22–27). Saul even calls David "David, my son" (*I Samuel*, 24:17), or "my son David" (*ibid.*, 26:17 and 21), or simply "my son" (*ibid.*, 26:25).

David had with him "six hundred men" when he began to be a "champion" of Achish, the King of the Philistine town of Gath (*I Samuel*, 27:2). We do not know how numerous was the retinue of Chong'er at the time of his flight, but his companions for more than 20 years were outstanding commanders, diplomats and officials. Mentioned are Hu Yan 狐偃, who later after Chong'er became Duke Wen of Jin, served as one of the commanders of his *shang jun* 上軍 upper army, Zhao Cui 趙衰, his brother-in-law and later also his son-in-law, married to Duke Wen's daughter 趙姬, who was his counsellor and connoisseur of classical writings, Wei Wuzi 魏武子, later appointed as the attendant on the right of the Duke's war chariot, Dian Xie 顛頤, later put to death by the Duke because of revolt against him, and Ji Zi 季子, later under the name of Xu Chen 胥臣 deputy commander of the lower army. Maybe there were more,¹⁴ but they are not mentioned as fugitives in *Zuozhuan*, Xi gong, 23rd year, 637 B.C., p. 269. The first station in Chong'er's fugitive life in the year 637 B.C., was the territory of the northern Di barbarians. At that time in his forties, he found a friendly reception in the asylum country, and two girls, daughters of the leader of the Qiangjiuru branch 麇咎如 the Di tribes: Ji Wei 季隗 and Shu Wei 叔隗. He took younger Ji Wei for his wife and gave the older Shu Wei to Zhao Cui. He stayed there for twelve years. Probably because both countries were near each other, the barbarians were not enough strong and vulnerable, Chong'er did not feel himself to be safe there and he left the country and went with his retinue to the state of Wei 衛 where he did not get friendly treatment.

It was different in the eastern state where Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 gave him his daughter¹⁵ or a girl from a high aristocratic family¹⁶ and twenty carriages pulled by eighty horses. He seemed to be happy there. He stayed in the country for five years. Allegedly he had to leave because 懷與安，實敗名 much love and peaceful circumstances would ruin his good name.¹⁷

¹⁴ LI MENGUN 李孟存 and CHANG JINCANG 常金倉 *Jinguo shi gangyao* 晉國史綱要 *A Short History of Jin*, p. 40.

¹⁵ WATSON, Burton, p. 41.

¹⁶ THIEL, Josef Ch'ung-erh und sein Glück. Das Leben des Wen-kung von Jin (697–628), In *Sinologica*, 7, 2, p. 176.

¹⁷ Xi gong, 23rd year, 637 B.C., p. 270.

In his "circular journey" Chong'er proceeded further to the state of Cao 曹. Just as in Wei he was not received as a welcome guest. The Duke Gong of Cao 曹共公 was only curious about his *pian xie* 駢脅 double ribs grown together. The unnamed wife of Xi Fuji 僖負羈, minister of the state, admired Chong'er's followers and mainly him and according to her: "If they continue to assist him, he is bound in time to return to his own state. Once he returns to his state, he will be able to do as he pleases with the other feudal lords, and when he can do as he pleases, he will surely punish those who failed to show him the proper courtesy."¹⁸ When he returned, in 632 B.C., and attacked the state of Cao, he exempted the house and the members of Xi Fuji's family from persecution by the Chin soldiers. He even ordered the execution of Dian Xie, his former loyal officer, when Dian Xie did not follow his order and was one who set the house of Xi Fuji on fire.

The Duke Xiang of Song 宋襄公 presented him eighty horses as the Duke Huan of Qi, but it seems that Chong'er immediately left for the next state near the Huanghe 黃河 River. Duke Wen of Zheng 鄭文公 like Duke Gong of Cao did not receive him with *li* 禮 courtesy. In spite of the admonitions of one of his high officers, who drew the attention of Duke Wen of Zheng to *Tian* 天 Heaven wanting to make a ruler out of Chong'er. The duke did not listen to him.

In the Southern state of Chu 楚, the last but one of his stopping places, was again received in a very friendly way, and its ruler King Cheng 楚成王 during a banquet asked him how Chong'er would reward him, after he will become a ruler in his country. Chong'er replied that if in the future the armies of Jin and Chu meet, he will withdraw his forces for three days of march, but when the army of Chu will fight, he will take his whip and bow, his arrow case and bow case and struggle. King Cheng's minister Zi Yu 子玉, later in 633 B.C. a Commander-in-Chief during the Chengpu zhi zhan 城濮之戰 Battle of Chengpu, asked the ruler to put Chong'er to death, but King Cheng claimed the same as Xi Fuji's wife or the high officer of the Duke Gong of Cao: "*Tian jiang xing zhi* 天將興之 If Heaven is rising someone up, *shui neng fei zhi* 誰能廢之 who is able to prevent it?"¹⁹ And immediately further he said: "*Wei Tian bi you da jiu* 違天必有大咎 To disobey Heaven will certainly lead to grave disasters" (ibid.).

The state of Qin 秦 was the last asylum on Chong'er's "odyssey". Its ruler Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 knew better the political situation in Jin and was able to anticipate the political ambitions and qualities of the guest. In the year 637

¹⁸ Ibid. and WATSON, Burton, p. 42.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 271.

B.C. Chong'er's younger brother Yiwu, posthumously known as Duke Huei of Jin 晉惠公, died and his son Yu 圉, posthumously known as Duke Huai of Jin 晉懷公, who lived as a hostage in Qin, returned home. His wife Huai Ying 懷嬴, daughter of Duke Mu of Qin, remained at Qin, following the command of her father. Duke gave her as another wife to Chong'er together with four other girls.²⁰ According to Thiel, the four were her attendants.²¹ At the banquet, Duke Mu of Qin recited the poem from *Shijing* 詩經 Book of Songs: *Liu yue* 六月 "Sixth Month" alluding future help to the Zhou Xiang wang 周襄王 King Xiang of Zhou Dynasty (651–619 B.C.) and his future high position among the Chinese rulers, as well as his perfect understanding of the rulers of propriety and moral duty towards the *tianzi* 天子 Son of Heaven.

Duke Huai of Jin was the ruler of his country only for a short time. At the beginning of the next year 636 B.C. Chong'er with his retinue and the Qin army entered Jin territory. After becoming the commander of the army and ruler of the state he had his nephew Duke Huai of Jin executed. According to Li Mengcun 李孟存 and Chang Jincang 常金倉: *Jinguo shi gangyao* 晉國史綱要 *The Outline of the History of Jin*, he carried out some reforms "in the agriculture, trade and in craftsmanship"²² and especially in martial arts and strategy.

If we compare the fugitive life of both protagonists, we find that their escape into foreign lands was necessary in order to preserve their lives. Saul and his soldiers would probably have taken and killed David. The army of Duke Xian would certainly have defeated the retinue of Chong'er and likewise executed him. Two fathers, one natural, the other a father-in-law were prepared to transgress the "filial piety" of Confucian ethics and one of the Ten Commandments of Mosaic Law. David devoted himself to robbery and raiding against the non-Israelite tribes and helping thus both Philistines and Israelites. He slowly prepared his way to Hebron. After defeat of the army led by Saul and his sons by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, the elders of Judah came to Hebron "and anointed David king over the house of Judah" (*II Samuel*, 2:1), and later after assassinating all the Saulids except the crippled son of Jonathan, Saul's son and David's intimate friend, the elders of Israel came likewise to Hebron "and they anointed David king over Israel" (*II Samuel*, 5:3). According to the assertion in the verses 4 and 5 of this chapter, David was thirty years old when he became king, seven years and six months he ruled over Judah and thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. These numbers need not be accurate, but

²⁰ Ibid., p. 271.

²¹ THIEL, Josef, op. cit., p. 181.

²² LI MENG CUN and CHANG JIN CANG, op. cit., p. 43.

seem to be later additions.²³ According to the Deuteronomistic version of the Bible David lived seventy years. "The modern reader cannot be accused of unreasonable scepticism if he raises an eyebrow at such figures (mainly the length of the reign of David and his successor Solomon, M. G.)."²⁴ It is interesting to read in Baruch Halpern's, the most critical book about David, that David lived "reportedly" up to seventy.²⁵

According to the contemporary historian Zhang Yiren 张以仁: *Chunqiu shi lunji* 春秋史论集 *Studies in the Spring and Autumn Period*, Duke Wen of Jin died at the age of sixty nine.²⁶ In order to become a ruler in his own country he needed to live up to sixty two. He reigned over Jin and was a hegemon over the Chinese states only seven years. Nineteen different stopping places on David "circular journey" are only partly comparable to eight stopping places in seven different Chinese and one non-Chinese states. If David had a relatively friendly reception only from the Philistines, Chong'er could enjoy and to feel safe in half of them: Di, Qi, Song and Qin. The years of exile were for both periods of collecting new experiences and learning. It seems that they prepared them well for their future roles: one as a founder of a mighty kingdom in the Near East at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. and most famous among the kings of the land of Israel, and the second as probably the greatest personality of the Spring and Autumn Period in China.

Warriors

In the book by Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon *Battles of the Bible* is a chart presenting thirteen wars of David²⁷ (p. 9), later taken over by Richard A. Gabriel in *The Military History of Ancient Israel*.²⁸ Here we shall not enumerate them and not discuss the problems concerned with the organization of the armed forces, their great changes and development during David's reign. We shall devote our attention only to two of them (or maybe to say one of them fought in two stages): the Battles of the Valley of Rephaim, near Jerusalem. A short description of the first stage is given in *II Samuel*, 5:17–20). The Philistines were sure of themselves after the victory over Saul in the Battle of Mount of Gilboa and they proceeded without enough caution through this gorge

²³ Cf. NOTH, Martin *The Deuteronomistic History*, p. 55 and *II Samuel* 5, *Anchor Bible*, Note 4–5.

²⁴ *II Samuel* 5, *Anchor Bible*, Note 4.

²⁵ HALPERN, Baruch, op. cit., p. 242.

²⁶ ZHANG YIREN, op. cit., p. 305.

²⁷ HERZOG, Chaim and GICHON, Mordechai, op. cit., p. 9.

²⁸ GABRIEL, Richard A., op. cit., p. 232.

“with its steep slopes and defiles.”²⁹ The valley reminded me of the sceneries of Swiss Alps during my journey through it on 7 April 2009, although the battle was fought in the “lowlands of Rephaim.” They did not know that David would wait for them near the Adullam Caves in the south and attack them at the place called Baal-perazim. It was certainly the best place for the guerilla fighting David and his soldiers were accustomed to. We read about this first victory as follows: “David inquired of Yahweh. ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?’” “Go up!” Yahweh told (him). “For I shall indeed hand them over to you.” Nobody knows what tactics young David used in fighting them, but certainly let them march through the Elah Valleys and then the Valley of Rephaim which ends near Jerusalem. “David himself took up a covered position to the west of the Philistines,” suppose Herzog and Gichon, “and attacked them from their rear.”³⁰ The victory of the Israelites was perfect. The Philistines fled in such a hurry that they “left their gods there, and David and his men carried them off.” Baal-perazim (in translation: the lord of Perazim) remained an unidentified place.

The second battle was fought in the lowlands of Rephaim a bit further away from Jerusalem. David once again inquired of Yahweh. He was told: “Circle around them [...] Then when you hear the sound of the wind in the asheras of Bachaim, look sharp, for Yahweh will have marched out ahead of you to attack the Philistine camp!” Herzog and Gichon explained these words according to their modern understanding. Israelites approached Philistines through a wood in their rear or side. David made use of the weather. “Aware of the fact that the daily breeze from the sea reaches the Jerusalem area about noon, he timed his attack for this hour, so that the rustle of the trees would cover the steps of the stealthily approaching Israelites.”³¹ The surprise was successful. He won the battle.

David spoke with God with the help of the oracle, not directly. In that time there were two possibilities how to inquire of Yahweh: using the priestly ephod and casting a lot. The third was the dream (*I Samuel*, 28; 6). David used the first of them. The ephod was a special and expensive garment of the high priest with a breast-piece containing the so-called Urim and Thummin giving always positive or negative answers to the question.³² As we have seen in this case they were positive. As to dreams is necessary to say that the dreams were regarded as

²⁹ HERZOG, Chaim and GICHON, Mordechai, op. cit., p. 102.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

³¹ Ibid., p. 104.

³² See LINDBLOM, John *Lotcasting in the Old Testament*, pp. 164–178 and JEFFERS, Ann *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*, pp. 202–208.

one of the legitimate channels by which God revealed his will to individuals, for instance, to kings or prophets.³³

While the Battle(s) at Rephaim have been a kind of guerilla fight, the Battle of Chengpu led and to great extent planned by Duke Wen of Jin was certainly one of the greatest of its kind in China in the first half of the first millennium B.C. It took place in the state of Wei in 632 B.C. It was not an improvised enterprise as in the case of David, but a carefully prepared war between the two greatest political coalitions of the Chinese and semi-Chinese states in Northern and Central China. It seems that the initiative came from the state of Chu and its allies. The political and military situation in China needed some solution. The problem was that the state of Jin could win in the end because it had better military and political leaders and a better organized army. Duke Wen of Jin and his commanders prepared for this encounter for two years. He divided his army into three divisions which was a great advantage compared to the two divisions in the Chu army, because of the possibility of quick and unexpected maneuvering. He conducted the military drill. He appointed the commanders of his central, lower (right) and upper (left) army. We shall not enumerate all of them, but Hu Yan and Zhao Cui, his old companions from the fugitive years, were among them. Very interesting is the discussion about the appointment of the commander of the central army, who was the second to Duke Wen of Jin, the Commander-in-Chief. "Xi Ku 卻穀 would be good," said Zhao Cui, since he appreciated *li* 禮, here meaning good behaviour, propriety, etiquette, *quod dignum et iustum est* in Latin. He liked 樂 music and was well versed in the *Shijing* 詩經 *Book of Poetry* and *Shujing* 書經 *Book of Documents*, two books of the Confucian canon. Just propriety when everybody does what is expected from him and music are the prototypes of 德 virtue. And virtue together with *yì* 義 right conduct is the foundation of *li zhi ben* 利之本 gain in action.³⁴ Duke Wen of Jin, together with Hu Yan, his chief ideologue, were allegedly sure that *zhi yi* 知義 knowledge of right conduct and *zhi xin* 知信 preservation of mutual confidence, are the most important attributes of those who are prepared for war. The author of *Zuo zhuan* asserts that King Cheng of Chu was against the war with Jin. Apart from what we quoted above, he allegedly used a maxim from the text entitled *Jun zhi* 軍志 *Military Records* claiming: "You de bu ke di 有德不可敵 The man of virtue cannot be opposed."³⁵ According to the King Cheng of Chu the Duke of Jin was such a man.

³³ JEFFERS, Ann op. cit., pp. 125–143 and also MENDELSON, I. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1, p. 868.

³⁴ Xi gong, 27th year, 633 B.C., p. 296. Cf. WATSON, Burton, op. cit., p. 55.

³⁵ Xi gong, 28th year, 632 B.C., p. 302. WATSON, Burton, op. cit., p. 57.

Be that as it may, Chu and Jin had to meet on the battlefield. According to the *Zuo zhuan* it was Zi Yu, Commander-in-chief of the Chu army and the Minister, who asked to have Chong'er put to death during his visit of Chu in his fugitive years. Zi Yu was too eager to fight. Meanwhile two states Wei and Cao broke their alliance with Chu and Zi Yu decided to act immediately. But as promised by Chong'er to the King Cheng, Jin forces withdrew for three days of march. It may be true, but also an invention of the narrator: maybe, the Duke Wen of Jin searched for a better place for the military encounter between two big armies. Duke Wen was allegedly afraid about the outcome of this battle and in the night he dreamt that he was wrestling with the King Cheng, and not with Zi Yu. The Chu ruler overcame him and was sucking his brains. He told this *Alptraum* to Hu Yan who interpreted this symbolic dream to him in the following way: Duke Wen being on his back looked at the Heaven, but King Cheng kneeling over him was like a culprit punished for a crime. Sucking brains could be interpreted as a sign of weakness since brains were regarded in China of those times as having softening qualities.³⁶

After three days of retreat both armies were prepared for battle near Chengpu. It was in the summer. It was again Zi Yu who challenged the Jin army and its allies; Qi, Song and Qin to fight. Luan Zhi 欒枝, commander of the Jin lower army and responsible for its chariots, answered to this call to arms with a short speech addressed to the Chu soldiers and their allies that ended with the words: "We shall meet tomorrow morning."³⁷ The next day seven hundred chariots with three men on each of them and with 50,400 foot-soldiers behind them attacked their enemies.³⁸ The size of the Chu army was not indicated in the *Zuo zhuan*.

The battle started with the attack of the Jin lower army on the positions of the troops of Chen and Cai, the allies of Chu. These were weakest of all and soon began to flee. Luan Zhi with his chariots simulated the dust with brushwood under the hooves of his stallions. Hu Mao 狐毛, the commander of the Jin upper army, simulated a retreat. The Chu army pursued the retreating troops. The army centre with its elite units fell upon the Chu soldiers from their right side and Hu Mao's upper army (Hu Yan was the deputy commander) from the left side. The lower army attacked them from the left side when it rooted the troops of Chen and Cai. Zi Yu and his retinue of about six hundred men did not pursue Hu Mao's soldiers and in this was he saved his and their lives. There is no mention in the text of pursuing the remnants of Chu army, only that the Jin

³⁶ Xi gong, 28th year, 632 B.C., p. 303. WATSON, Burton, op. cit., pp. 59–60.

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 303 and WATSON, Burton, op. cit., p. 60.

³⁸ WATSON, Burton, op. cit., p. 51.

soldiers used the encampment of the enemy and enjoyed the consummation of its provisions for the next three days.

The description of the battle is very short. According to Frank A. Kierman, Jr. "a total of some 167 characters only".³⁹ The descriptions of the two encounters at Rephaim are also short. The most important for Zuo Qiuming and for the Deuteronomists were not the battles, but those who led them, those who won them with the help of Yahweh or Heaven, and partly also who lost them because they acted against the will of these supernatural powers. The authors of the book *Zhongguo lidai zhanzheng shi* 中國歷代戰爭史 *A History of Wars in China*, correct the words of the *Zuo zhuan* about the brushwood on the battlefield. According to them, it was the soil around the Yellow River that raised the clouds of dust between the end of spring and the beginning of summer due to the wild wind blowing from the north.⁴⁰ Herzog and Gichon similarly corrected the assertion of the Bible as shown above. If David during the battles at Rephaim had "perhaps no more than 2,000 men" at his disposal,⁴¹ this Taiwanese secondary source says about 80,000 to 90,000 men.⁴² If it is really true that the allied forces of Jin did not pursue the soldiers of the defeated Chu army, it was not the case of David. David followed Yahweh's instruction and after the battle he slaughtered the Philistines about 20 km from the towns of Gibeon to Gezer (*II Samuel*, 5:23).

Women

"In the Hebrew Bible women appear for the most part as minor or subordinate figures, yet they play an essential role in the record of Israel's fight and include some of the most remembered actors in the biblical story. The names of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah and Ruth are indispensable to the research of that story, as are Jezebel, Esther, and Eve. Behind these, however, stand thousands of unnamed, and unnoted women who have engaged the attention of recent biblical scholarship."⁴³ Since the images of women in the Bible were the literary products of the male authors, they are mostly distorted to some extent, since they are created according to certain theological and ideological schemes which were put into practice by the Deuteronomistic historians or later authors.

³⁹ KIERMAN, Frank A. Jr. *Phases and Modes of Combat in Early China*, p. 51.

⁴⁰ Op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 195.

⁴¹ GABRIEL, Richard, A., op. cit., p. 244.

⁴² *History of Wars in China*, Vol. 1, p. 186.

⁴³ *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, p. 951.

David had eight wives, we know by name, but also others, unknown to us, and concubines. No one of them is mentioned in the citation above, although at least Bathsheba, is up to now, one of the most well-known woman in the history of the ancient world.

The wives we know by name are as follows: Michal (*I Samuel*, 18:27), Anihom of Jezreel (*I Samuel*, 25:43), Abigail, widow of Nabal (*I Samuel*, 25:42), Maacah, daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur (*II Samuel*, 3:3), Haggith (*II Samuel*, 3:4), Abital (*II Samuel*, 3:4), Eglah (*II Samuel*, 3:5) and his most beloved Bathsheba (*II Samuel*, 11 and ff.). From the concubines only one is mentioned by name: Abishag (*I Kings*, 1:1-4).

The first was Michal, King's Saul younger daughter. She was given to David for a bride-price of a hundred Philistine foreskins (*I Samuel*, 18:25). She loved David, but for some reasons David did not love her. According to the Bible, Saul gave the promise that Michal "will be an enticement to him, and he will fall into the hands of the Philistines" (*I Samuel*, 18:20). But even if she helped David get away safely from the hands of Saul's soldiers, seeking him in her house, he did not care and was never nice to her. It seems that they parted from each other after David transferred the Ark of Covenant to Jerusalem (*II Samuel*, 6:1-19), and especially when she saw him dance before the ark "flaunting himself before the eyes of his servant's wenches like some dancer" (*II Samuel*, 6:20). After their estrangement Saul gave Michal to Paltiel. After Saul's death, David demanded her back (*II Samuel*, 3:4). Royal prerogative was clearly implied here. She came to him with the assistance of Abner, the Commander-in-chief of Saul's army. Love was not mentioned as the cause of his demand, but the bride-price. Unhappy Michal probably remained in David's harem up to the end of her life.

It is problematic how it was with Ahinoam of Jezreel, the second in David's harem "inventory". The harem played a great role in the succession history of David and his son Solomon with David's Bathsheba. David knew well that whoever possessed the women of the former king, had an easier access to the throne, if he did lose not the war, like Absalom, David's and Maccab's son. If we may believe the Deuteronomistic historian(s), even Yahweh through the words of prophet Nathan (*II Samuel*, 11:8) acknowledged the privilege to David: "I gave you your master's daughter and his wives lie down in your embrace." Acquiring the women from the royal harem and entering in it was possible, and Absalom made a full use of it during David's life (*II Samuel*, 16:21-22),⁴⁴ but nowhere is it written that David really used this "privilege" with Saul's women. Only recently Jon D. Levenson, and even more clearly the *enfant terrible* of biblical studies Baruch Halpern together with him, argued for the identity of

⁴⁴ LEVENSON, John D. *I Samuel 25 as Literature and as History*, pp. 27-28.

Saul's wife Ahinoam, a daughter of Ahimaaz, with Ahinoam of Jezreel, David's wife. But they also recognize that because of the "highly reconstructive nature of the endeavour (to prove his assertions, M. G.), the conclusions will, like those of the historical section of Levenson's study, be speculative, and quite possibly, incorrect".⁴⁵ If the arguments of these two scholars could be realized in practice, Ahinoam should become David's wife during his fugitive years, which is very improbable. Nathan's words addressed to David could be coincident with reality, but cannot be proved.

The third of David's wives Abigail of Carmel was not a daughter of a king, but a former wife of a rich man whose name was Nabal the Calebite. Calebites lived in Hebron, where David was later anointed as the King of Judah. The fugitive outlaw needed economic, not only political power. Nabal (which in Hebrew means a fool) was certainly not stupid, he knew well who David was and did not want to give his soldiers bread, wine and meat. David was prepared to kill him for his "greediness". At the end nothing happened, since his wife Abigail took with her servants enough to make them fully satisfied. David was enthralled by her beauty and "wisdom" and also by her vision. She saw in him the future king of Judah and Israel when saying: "Yahweh will surely make my lord a secure house, for my lord fights the wars of Yahweh, and through all your days no evil can be found in you." (*I Samuel*, 25:28). Ten days later Nabal died and Abigail became David's third wife. As a rich heir she helped the mighty but poor fugitive warrior a lot. As in the case of Ahinoam, it was probably Halpern who was not satisfied with the commonly accepted view that Abigail the Carmelite was Nabal's wife and alluded to another possibility. Halpern asserted that she was not only David's sister (*I Chronicles*, 2:16-17), but also his wife. He asked: "Why the histories should have suppressed the recollections of David's absconding with Saul's wife, or indeed, marrying his sister Abigail, is, at least intuitively, plain. Aside from placing David in the position of adulterer (an incestuous one at that), such reports would have deflated, or demythologized, David's royal designation."⁴⁶ Here Halpern is going too far.⁴⁷

Maacah, Haggith, Abital and Eglah did not play important roles in David's life and career. Bathsheba was the most beloved and influential among his wives. During the war against the Arameans and Ammonites,⁴⁸ David sent the army under Joab, his commander-in-chief, to lay siege to the Ammonite capital Rabbah (*II Samuel*, 11:1). David at that time was no longer a young outlaw as

⁴⁵ LEVENSON, John D. and HALPERN, Baruch *The Political Import of David's Marriages*, pp. 507-508.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴⁷ HALPERN, Baruch *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 5, 2007, pp. 448-449.

⁴⁸ GABRIEL, Richard A., op. cit., pp. 260-269.

during the Battles of Rephaim, but a sedentary king, who enjoyed the leisure of “constantly operating through the agency of others”.⁴⁹ He was staying in his palace, having the naps during the hot days, and one he peeped at a woman – a very beautiful one – bathing in the late afternoon (*II Samuel*, 11:2). During the time when Joab and his men were “besieging” Rabbah, David was “conquering” Bathsheba, a married woman showing him her charms on the roof of the house nearby. She was probably in the nude and David after a long nap overcome by the strong sexual desire, asked his servants to bring her to him and made love to her. When she later informed David that she was pregnant, and Uriah the Hittite, one of his “mighty men” could not be a father of the child since he was fighting under the walls of Rabbah, David tried to persuade him to visit his wife. Uriah, as a soldier in the army, was constrained by law, to abstain from sexual intercourse (cf. *I Samuel*, 21:4–5 and *II Samuel*, 11:11–15). He dared not cover David’s illicit relation with his wife, and was placed by David’s order to Joab “where there is hard fighting, then withdraw from him, so that he will be struck down and die” (*II Samuel*, 11:14). Uriah died in the battle. After his death and a period of mourning, David married Bathsheba and she bore him a son.

According to Moses’ law in the *Leviticus*, 20:10: “If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbour, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death,” and according to the *Deuteronomy*, 22:25: “...if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, the only the man who lay with her shall die.” In the same book one of the Ten Commandments says: “You shall not murder” (*Deuteronomy*, 5:17). David committed two crimes according to the Hebrew laws and prescriptions. But the Prophet Nathan came to him on behalf of Yahweh and told him: the God of Israel “has transferred your sin” and “You won’t die, but because you insulted Yahweh in this matter, the child who has born to you *shall* die” (*II Samuel*, 12:13). Because of the principle of repentance, this story became very famous, both in the Hebrew Bible as well as in the *New Testament*. David in his well-known *Psalms* 51:6 (if it is really his work) wrote the following: “Against You alone have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight, so You are just in Your sentence, and right in your judgment.” In the poem there is not one word that David “sinned” against Uriah and in reality “raped” Bathsheba.

Bathsheba was a passive personality up to David’s old age. At least it seems so according to the passages devoted her by the Deuteronomistic writer(s) of the Bible. She became active when she helped her son Solomon to become the heir

⁴⁹ ALTER, Robert, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*, p. 11.

of the throne. David, advanced in the years, was given a young and beautiful girl Abishag, the Shunammite, who lay in his bosom to warm him up. He was too old to "have the relations with her" (*I Kings*, 1:4). After the deaths of Amnon and Absalom, Adonijah, son of Haggith, the fifth among David's wives, and at that time the oldest among David's sons, through Bathsheba as a go-between, asked the King Solomon to give him Abishag as his wife. She promised him to do so, although she knew that such a claim meant to "request the kingship for him" (*I Kings*, 2:22). Solomon ordered that Adonijah be killed the same day.

We wrote about the *femme fatale*, or even better to say "*la dame sans merci*", Lady Li, the favourite wife of Duke Xian of Jin, Chong'er's father, who sent the soldiers to kill him in the City of Pu. It was connected with the ascension history of the state of Jin. Lady Li and her son Xi Qi did not succeed. All rivals of Chong'er for the Duke's office died before he returned back to his country with the exception of his nephew Yu, posthumously called Duke Huai of Jin, whom Chong'er had killed after he became the ruler of Jin. As we know already, Yu's wife was given to Chong'er as his spouse during his stay in the state of Qin. In his short article "Lun qi wei nuxing dui Jin Wengong Chong'er de yingxiang" 论七位女性对晋文公重耳的影响 (On the Impact of Seven Women on the Duke Wen of Jin), Zhang Liusen 张浏森,⁵⁰ apart from Lady Li, mentions Qi Jiang 齊姜, then the unnamed wife of Xi Fuji, minister of the State of Cao, Huai Ying, Zhao Ji 趙姬, Duke Wen of Jin's daughter, and the unnamed mother of Jie Zhitui 介之推, or Jie Zitui 介子推 (according to Zhuangzi 莊子, Watson, op. cit., p. 48). Jie Zhitui was a member of Chong'er's retinue during his fugitive years. Jie Zhitui's mother was a model woman, virtuous and wise according to the postulates of the early Confucian ethics. She encouraged her son to ask recompense from Duke Wen, but when Jie Zhitui declined to do so and went into hiding, she accompanied him. After her son's death, Duke Wen acknowledged that it was his fault. In reality, Jie Zhitui's mother has no direct connection to Duke Wen.⁵¹

Zhang Liusen devoted more place to Ji Wei, his barbarian wife, than to other women in Duke Wen's vicinity. She lived with him for 12 years, but he left her after he decided to proceed in his "circular journey". Since nothing is known about her except that she bore two sons: Bo Shu 伯鯨 and Shu Liu 叔劉, it is difficult to claim that Ji Wei "brought to him affection and courage for new life" as well as that "she satisfied his desires for love".⁵² She did not

⁵⁰ ZHANG LIUSEN, op. cit., pp. 86–87.

⁵¹ Xi gong, 24th year, 636 B.C., p. 277.

⁵² ZHANG LIUSEN, p. 86.

remarry and returned to him after he became the ruler of Jin. It is possible to say, that he was nicer to her than David was to Michal. We do not know exactly whether Chong'er took with him Qi Jiang when he left the state of Qi. Allegedly Duke Wen "welcomed Chiang of Ch'i as his wife" after he became the ruler of Jin.⁵³ She was allegedly sure that the life full of affection and comfort would do harm to his fame, as we mentioned earlier. Heaven entitled him to be more than a happy husband. Similar to Qi Jiang was the unnamed wife of Xi Fuji from the state of Cao, who "foresaw" in Chong'er the "hegemon" of the Chinese states, who would decide whom to highlight and whom to punish as the most powerful ruler in the Middle Kingdom. Both these two women, one his wife and the other the wife of a high official of the neighbouring state, are reminiscent of David's Abigail, who in the fugitive outlaw of Judah, saw the future King of Israel and Judah and the greatest of all the Israelite kings in the course of the Davidic dynasty. Su Xuelin in her book mentioned above pointed to the similarity between the vision of the wife of Xi Fuji and the David-Abigail story,⁵⁴ but somehow the similarity (and difference) between David-Abigail and Qi Jiang escaped her attention.

Huaiying, given to him as wife by her father Duke Mu of Qin, was very important for his life. She was his great hope. Without Duke Mu of Qin, it is very probable that Chong'er could not return to Jin and become its ruler. After Chong'er came to Qin, she helped him with the toilet and he splashed her face with the water from his hands. It was a custom at weddings for the bride to help her future husband at the wash basin.⁵⁵ She protested regarding it as a rude act between two high representatives of two *pi* 匹 friendly states. Maybe, that splashing was only a joke from his side when he met a young girl. He understood her feelings and he apologized himself. Afterwards the banquet or wedding ceremony was courtly and ceremonial. Zhao Cui, Chong'er's helping hand in the knowledge of the Classics and in the art of diplomacy politely greeted Huai Ying's father with a poem from the *Book of Songs* and the Duke Mu of Qin responded with another from the same collection.

Zhao Ji became well-known in Chinese history because as the mother of three sons Yuan Tong, 原同, Ping Kuo 屏括 and Lou Ying 樓嬰 by Zhao Cui, in the cause of accession or another promotion, she preferred to establish his son Dun 盾 by his wife Shu Wei as the legal heir, and to place her three sons below him, and to consider Shu Wei as Zhao Cui's first wife and herself as the second. Something like this would be hard to believe in the Deuteronomistic

⁵³ O'HARA, Albert Richard (trans.) *Lie nu zhuan 列女傳 The Biographies of Chinese Women*, p. 54.

⁵⁴ SU XUELIN, op. cit., p. 38.

⁵⁵ Xi gong, 23rd year, 637 B.C., p. 271.

history (as we have observed in the case of Bathsheba, Adonijah and Solomon) and it was “the exact opposite of that of most of the women described in *The Commentary of Zuo*”.⁵⁶ Even more than in Israel and Judah, the women of the time of the Spring and Autumn period are guilty of sexual misconduct, violation of the ritual propriety, challenging the fortune of states, their boundaries, legitimate succession, the relations between ruler and subject. Especially the most beautiful women were those who brought disaster upon men and society: “*Shen mei bi you shen e* 甚美必有甚惡 Extreme beauty must have in it extreme evil.”⁵⁷

Concluding Remarks

The wealth of documents from the Near Eastern world of antiquity made it possible to study the biblical texts of the Old Testament in the light of the writings of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Canaan, the Hittite Kingdom, and even early Greece.⁵⁸ The works of this kind are many and it is not within the scope of this paper to point to them. One of those who tried to analyse them was Edwin Yamanauchi and the team in the volume entitled: *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in its Near Eastern Context*, ed. by A.R. Millard *et alii*, where Yamanauchi in his paper: “The Current State of Old Testament Historiography” wrote the following: “Only a part of the Bible is ostensibly historical. That which is historical is selective and is based on a sacred perspective.”⁵⁹ The “selective” aspect is not much seen in the biblical history of King David or Solomon, but mainly in their successors. Especially the histories of the last kings of the Davidian dynasty are very short and the “sacred perspective” is very conspicuous in them. The most important consideration for the inclusion into or exclusion from the Deuteronomistic history (or rather short treatment of the last) was whether he did “what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (2 *Kings*, 22:1), as was written about Josiah (r. 641–610 B.C.). Or whether the King did “what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done” (2 *Kings*, 24:9), as was written about Jehoakim (r. 608–598 B.C.). If 48 verses of 2 *Kings* are devoted to Josiah, only 12 deal with Jehoakim. If in the first of them Josiah is always highlighted, in

⁵⁶ BURTON, Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁵⁷ LI WAI-YEE *Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, pp. 150–151 and 156–157.

⁵⁸ VAN SETERS, John *In Search of History. Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*, pp. 1–208. See also a review of this book by

HOFFMAN, H. D. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, p. 167.

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

those about Jehoakim, Josiah's son, he is always condemned. The Deuteronomistic author(s) admit, that there was much more material that could be used in the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (cf. for instance, 2 *Chronicles*, 15:11), or in the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (2 *Kings*, 24:5).

If we set aside the "selectiveness" as a characteristic trait of the Deuteronomistic history, then the "sacred perspective" is more important problem, and it is a cause of at least part of the distortion of the historical facts. The divinely ordained history based mainly on the "divine laws" from the book of the *Deuteronomy*, traditionally attributed to Moses, but composed not later than "in the latter half of the seventh century B.C.", and its main fruit the Deuteronomistic history "received its fixed form in the first half of the sixth century (B.C., M. G.)."⁶⁰ This history comprises the books: *Joshua*, *Judges*, *I and II Samuel*, *I and II Kings*. King Josiah was the Godfather of the *Deuteronomy* as known to us. The Deuteronomistic authors have done their job after the last years of the Davidic Kingdom during the Babylonian exile after 586 B.C.

Deuteronomy comes from the Greek *Deuteronomion*, and this again from the Hebrew *mishneh torah* which means "the second Book of Law", where the laws from the *Exodus*, *Leviticus* up to *Numbers* are recapitulated to some extent and put into the new situation of Josiah's time. *Deuteronomy* is in reality not a compilation of laws, but of sermons where these laws are explained, usually in a very rhetoric way. One of the biblical scholars says that it is not a "law-book" but rather "a collection of material for the public recital of the law".⁶¹ According to Moshe Weinfeld, one of the best experts on the *Deuteronomy*, it is not "the law itself, then, which is of primary concern to the author of *Deuteronomy* but its inherent religio-moral force, as he so amply elucidates".⁶²

There are a few basic theological tenets around which the deuteronomistic musings revolve. For our purposes probably two are the most important: the monotheistic creed and the concept of king according to the deuteronomistic theocracy.

From the beginning we find that the biblical God is anthropomorphic. "God created men in his own image" (*Genesis*, 1:27) is a good translation of the verse in the beginning of the Bible and to render it in a different way, as the image of God's heavenly suit is false.⁶³ The divine abode changed in the course of history. In the first books of the Bible he was treated similarly to other gods in the Near

⁶⁰ WEINFELD, Moshe *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, p. 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

East or in Egypt and food and drink were given to him in his tabernacle. In *Deuteronomy* and in the Deuteronomistic literature, even the temple was not the place of habitation of God. It served just as the house of worship for Israelites and pagans. Heaven was his dwelling place. God's anthropomorphic features include the face, mouth, arms, hands, feet, but also speech, reasoning, etc. Even if this corporeal representation of God was suppressed to some extent in the *Deuteronomy* that tried to argue against it in the name of a more abstract conception of a Deity infinitely more perfect than human beings, as in the verses: "Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only voice" (ibid., 4:12), or "Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female..." (ibid., 4:15–16). This God was the solely lawgiver, "a jealous God" but also "showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love" (ibid., 5:9–10) him and keep his Ten Commandments (ibid., 5:11–21). These Ten Commandments were formulated in a slightly different way in the book of *Exodus* (20:1–17) together with the *Covenant Code* (ibid., 20:22–23:33), but these laws "are largely neutral in regard to Israelite faith and presuppose a settled agricultural society",⁶⁴ and therefore they do not need to interest us here. They have not much to do with the Hebrew theocracy, since these were the laws reflecting "a situation after Israel's invasion of Canaan, when prevailing laws were borrowed and adapted to the covenant tradition".⁶⁵

China does not have its *Deuteronomy*, but it has got its Confucian and Taoist philosophers and moral writers. The ethical principles and norms followed and practiced during the time of the Spring and Autumn Period, were similar to those in Israel and Judah in Premonarchic and Monarchic times, as shown above. The "sacred perspective" we have just mentioned, was similar in China to that of Israel and Judah, as we have shown in another study entitled "Hebrew Deuteronomistic and Early Chinese Historiography: A Comparative Approach" to be published soon. In this study we call this phenomenon "sacred continuum" or "numinous consciousness". This "numinous consciousness" was a part of the social consciousness of all ancient societies, including also China as we may observe, among others in the works by Rudolf Otto (1869–1937),⁶⁶ Marcel Granet (1884–1940)⁶⁷ and especially in Mircea Eliade (1907–1983).⁶⁸

⁶⁴ *The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha. Revised Standard Version*, p. 93.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

⁶⁶ OTTO, Rudolf *The Idea of the Holy*, especially, pp. 66–67, 69, 73 and 201.

⁶⁷ GRANET, Marcel *The Religion of the Chinese People*, esp. pp. 57–72.

Both the biblical Deuteronomistic histories are similar as the so-called “narrative histories”, they have a similar attitude to the “historical truth”, to the narrative methods used in these works. The narrative methods up to now have been more carefully studied by the experts on the Bible. The Bible also uses much more rhetorical style, but otherwise, both these works, Hebrew and Chinese, use a vivid, simple, fluent and lucid means of expression. Both these works are products of patriarchal and monarchic ages. Therefore they are often didactic, even propagandistic.⁶⁹ Biblical works more than *The Commentary of Zuo*.

In spite of the last critical sentence, they are works of great historical and literary value and they belong among the most influential works in the West and in the Far East.

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⁶⁸ ELIADE, Mircea *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses*, vol. 1, the chapter concerned with the religions of the ancient China.

⁶⁹ On the early Hebrew historiography, see RÖMER, Thomas C. *The So-called Deuteronomistic History. A Sociological Historical and Literary Introduction*, p. 43.

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