

The Chronicler's Portrayal of Solomon as the King of Peace within the Context of the International Peace Discourses of the Persian Era

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ABSTRACT

It has become customary to emphasise the influence of Greek historiography on the Books of Chronicles. Knoppers (2003a), for example, has argued that one should not underestimate the influence of classical Greek writers on the Chronicler. Although he argues his point from the genealogical analogies between the first part of Chronicles and classical writers, he convincingly shows that one could imagine Greek influence in biblical writings far earlier than the enigmatic date of 332 B.C.E., which is normally seen as a threshold for Greek influence on Judah. Traditional scholarship tended to interpret Chronicles exclusively within the cultic-religious conditions of the late-Persian/early Hellenistic province of Yehud – the Jerusalem community, in particular. With the acknowledgement of a wider sphere of influence during this time, it would make sense, however, to interpret the Books of Chronicles against the background of the international arena of the time. This article will therefore attempt to show that our understanding of King Solomon, the King of Peace, can be enriched when we view his portrayal in Chronicles within the international arena of the late post-exilic era. The theme of peace, so closely related to Solomon, will be examined against the background of the relationship between Greece and Persia, and the conditions within the Persian Empire.¹

A INTRODUCTION

Although none of the recent critical commentaries on Chronicles includes an explicit discussion of the intended audience in its introduction to the book,² there is consensus among these scholars (becoming clear from their discussions on the ideology of Chronicles) that the book most probably had its origin among the literati in Jerusalem, and was most probably addressed to the cultic community (the cultic elites in particu-

¹ Paper delivered at the OTSSA Meeting, Windhoek, Namibia in September 2008.

² See, e.g., the introductions in Japhet (1993), Tuell (2001), Knoppers (2003b), McKenzie (2004), Dirksen (2005) and Klein (2006).

lar) in Yehud during the late Persian or early Hellenistic period (i. e. sometime in the fourth century B.C.E. or later). There are good arguments in support of this view, since the issues addressed by the Chronicler³ show clearly his interest in the processes of identity negotiation⁴ typical of the restoration in the post-exilic era.

This consensus has influenced *Chronicles* scholarship so strongly that the possible influence of the surrounding cultures has been largely neglected. Although a prominent scholar such as Sarah Japhet still argued in 1993 (in her discussion of the date of *Chronicles*) that almost no Greek or Persian influence can be detected in the book,⁵ a few scholarly voices have lately started to emphasise the possible influence of Greek historiography.⁶ Knoppers (2003a:628), the most recent and most sophisticated voice in this regard, argues:

The failure to explore comparisons with the conventions of classical historiography is unfortunate. Cross-cultural studies offer the benefits of comparing similar phenomena in a plurality of social settings, illuminating otherwise odd or inexplicable traits of certain literary works, exploring a set of problems in different societies, and calling attention to the unique features of a particular era or writing. Moreover, ancient Greece does offer national histories that may be compared with the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicler's History.

Knoppers (2003a:628-629) subsequently expresses his astonishment that, '(g)iven such precedents, it is surely ironic that the chronological boundary of 332 B.C.E. – Alexander's conquest of Palestine – has inhibited most scholars from making comparisons with the compositional techniques found in *Chronicles*.' He then continues to show how Greek historiographies can shed some light on the use of genealogical material in *Chronicles*.

In my opinion, this very obvious point made by Knoppers has not been explored enough in *Chronicles* scholarship.⁷ The Books of *Chronicles* are mostly treated in isolation, as if the international environment of their time of origin had no influence

³ Commentators show how the Chronicler's interest in the Davidic kingship, temple building, the Levites, written Torah (to mention but a few theological issues) reflect the religio-cultic conditions of second-temple Yehud. See the introductions to the commentaries mentioned in the previous footnote.

⁴ See my contributions in this regard where I have argued that *Chronicles* could be seen as 'reforming history', contributing to the processes of identity negotiation of the time. See Jonker (2003a, 2003b, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008 forthcoming, 2009 forthcoming).

⁵ See Japhet's discussion in her commentary (1993: 23-28).

⁶ See discussions in Hoglund (1997), Kalimi (1997) and most recently Knoppers (2003a).

⁷ In another contribution (Jonker 2006) I experimented with this view by reading the narrative of Asa in 2 *Chronicles* 14-16 against the background of the reputation of the Cushites in Greek historiography.

on the work. Many studies⁸ confirm the likelihood of Knoppers's view by indicating that one should assume a good system of communication between Greece, Egypt and Persia long before the advent of Hellenism. It seems reasonable to assume that the literati in Jerusalem would also have had access to international discourses and traditions from (particularly) Greek and Persian cultures (although not necessarily in written form).

My intention in this contribution is therefore to situate Chronicles in an international arena. It is certainly not to repudiate traditional inner-Yehudite interpretations of the book, but rather to create an awareness of the multidimensional nature of the communication that we witness in this literature. It spoke in more than one direction; it participated in more restricted but also in wider (international) discourses.

In order to investigate Chronicles within a wider international discourse, I shall focus on the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon against the background of Greek and Persian discourses on peace.

B SOLOMON, THE KING OF PEACE IN CHRONICLES

The narrative about Solomon can be found in 2 Chronicles 1-9. However, the significance of Solomon for the Chronicler already becomes clear in the portrayal of David's speeches in which he (David) indicates that he is preparing to build the temple in Jerusalem. Particularly important in this regard are the speeches reported in 1 Chronicles 22 and 28-29, since they are entirely part of the Chronicler's *Sondergut* (i. e. the Chronicler's own material)⁹ – an indication of the writer's deliberate reworking of the earlier traditions.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. e. g. the discussion in Kuhrt (2007: Ch 15). She states: 'The speed and efficiency of the Achaemenid communication service, with its relays of fast mounted messengers, were legendary' (2007:732). Cf. also Wiesehöfer (2005:115-119).

⁹ All the material from 1 Chr 22-29 is the Chronicler's own. Cf. Klein (2006:431): 'From here to the end of 1 Chronicles, there is no canonical *Vorlage* on which the Chronicler depends, though he clearly used the materials describing the transition from Moses to Joshua in Deuteronomy 31 and Joshua 1 in constructing the speeches in 1 Chronicles 22 and 28, and he also utilized 1 Kgs 5:17-19 (3-5) as well as other materials from the Deuteronomistic History.'

¹⁰ I am taking seriously the warning by Knoppers (2004) in the introduction to his *Chronicles* commentary not to over-interpret the Chronicler's differences from his *Vorlage*. One should take into account the possibility that the Chronicler worked with pre-stages, or other traditions, of the texts in Samuel-Kings than those we have available in the MT. Knoppers (2004:70) formulates the following rule of thumb: '(W)hen studying synoptic passages, the Chronicler's deviations from MT Kings may be more safely ascribed to his creativity than his deviations from MT Samuel may be.' Knoppers therefore emphasises the value of text-critical studies in the interpretation of Chronicles. He (2004:70-71) continues: 'Text-critical

Two speeches are reported in 1 Chronicles 22: in verses 6-16 David addresses Solomon, his son, and in verses 17-19 he issues a command to all the leaders of Israel. Although there is no *Vorlage* in Samuel-Kings for these speeches, scholars¹¹ have shown convincingly that the Chronicler has most probably fashioned them according to the material found in Deuteronomy 31 and Joshua 1, where the transition from Moses to Joshua is described. The same applies to the speeches reported in chapters 28-29. In 1 Chronicles 28:2-12 David addresses all the leaders of Israel, in 28:29-32 he addresses Solomon again, and in 29:1-3 the whole assembly. All these speeches show signs that they were deliberately fashioned according to the model of the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua.

However, our focus here will not be on this theologically significant characteristic of the Chronicler's version, namely the refashioning of the Moses-Joshua tradition.¹² We will rather focus on the specific portrayal of Solomon as 'a man of rest' and king of 'peace'. Let us consider the relevant texts now.

In David's speech to his son, Solomon, reported in chapter 22, we read the following:

7 David said to Solomon, 'My son, I had planned to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. 8 But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood in my sight on the earth. 9 See, a son shall be born to you; he shall be a man of rest¹³ (אִישׁ מִנְחָה). I will give him rest¹⁴ (נוֹחַ Hif'il) from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon (שְׁלֹמֹן), and I will give peace (שְׁלֹמָה) and

studies do not free us from speculation about the Chronicler's use of earlier biblical materials, but they do provide scholars with more precise tools with which to examine the respective textual traditions. On the one hand, caution is dictated in attributing tendentious intention to a Chronicles text whenever it differs from Genesis or Samuel, as the alleged change may be due either to the textual tradition represented by the Chronicler's *Vorlage* or to textual corruption. On the other hand, when neither of these two options seems likely, especially in dealing with the text of Kings, one can with confidence more clearly recognize those instances in which the Chronicler consciously made a change in his text. Employing the insights gained by text-critical studies of the Chronicler's sources affords scholars greater control over the available date and, hence, more precision and accuracy in determining the compositional technique and ideology of the Chronicler'.

¹¹ See the good summaries of studies on this aspect in Knoppers (2004: 783-788) and Klein (2006: 431-440).

¹² See the commentaries of Knoppers (2004) and Klein (2006) for good discussions of this aspect.

¹³ Here I deviate from the NRSV translation which has 'peace'.

¹⁴ See previous footnote.

quiet (תְּקַשֵּׁר)¹⁵ to Israel in his days. 10 He shall build a house for my name. He shall be a son to me, and I will be a father to him, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.”’ (NRSV, with deviations: 1 Chron 22:7-10)

It is clear that the Chronicler wanted to suggest a pun between the name of David's son (תָּמָרֵשׁ), and the theme of peace (תְּקַשֵּׁר). This association is unique in the Hebrew Bible. Solomon will be a king of peace to whom the Lord have granted rest and quietness all around from his enemies. The peace, rest and quietness stand in stark contrast to the ‘shedding of blood’ and ‘waging of wars’ of which David is accused in 22:8.¹⁶ Although David prepares the way for the building of the temple, he is disqualified for the actual task, and it remains the work of Solomon, the king of peace, to accomplish this task.

The theme of ‘rest’ is continued in David's speech to the leaders of Israel reported in 28:2-12, where the temple is called ‘a house of rest’ – a deliberate attempt by the Chronicler to associate the ‘house of rest’ with the ‘man of rest’:

2 Then King David rose to his feet and said: ‘Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had planned to build a house of rest (בֵּית מִנְיָה) for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building. 3 But God said to me, “You shall not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood.”’ (NRSV: 1 Chron 28:2-3)

The expressions ‘man of rest’ and ‘house of rest’ are unique in the Hebrew Bible. These combinations each occur only once, here in the *Sondergut* of the Chronicler.¹⁷ Many commentaries and studies have shown – with reference to these texts – that Solomon's kingship is presented to the audience of Chronicles as the kingpin around which the history of Israel revolved. Moreover, the temple as cultic institution is intricately involved with this portrayal of Solomon's kingship. Temple building un-

¹⁵ Although the noun תְּקַשֵּׁר occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible, the verb from the root תְּקַשֵּׁר occurs often, particularly in the book of Judges.

¹⁶ I am not going into this difficult interpretative issue here. See the studies of Dirksen (1996), Kelly (1998) and Murray (2001), where different arguments and positions are offered. Dirksen, in his commentary (2005:272), indicates that Murray's argument has convinced him to change his own position on this issue. Whereas Dirksen previously held the view that the ‘shedding of blood’ could not refer to warfare, Murray's study convinced him to consider that option.

¹⁷ According to a SESB search.

der Solomon appears to be a (the?) central theme of the Chronicler's construction of history.¹⁸

Klein (2006), following previous studies on this aspect,¹⁹ shows how the Chronicler reinterprets the promise to David (reported in 2 Samuel 7) to fit his own construction of history.²⁰ The Nathan oracle in 2 Samuel 7 is first picked up by the Chronicler in 1 Chronicles 17, which is then further interpreted in our text in 1 Chronicles 22. Klein (2006:437) describes the differences between these versions as follows:

In the books of Samuel, David himself had achieved the condition of rest, as we see in 2 Sam 7:1, 11. The first of these references indicating that Yahweh had given David rest is omitted altogether by the Chronicler in 1 Chr 17:1; the second is changed by him from 'I will give you rest from all your enemies' to 'I will *subdue* all your enemies.' In neither case, therefore, does David achieve rest according to the Chronicler. When the enemies are subdued in chap. 18, it is only through the military efforts of David. In the present verse (22:9 – L.C.J.) Yahweh promises to give Solomon rest without any military effort on Solomon's part. The reference to rest in this verse is the only complete use of the rest formula in Chronicles, and it moves beyond the promise to David that he would defeat all his enemies (1 Chr 17:8, 10) by adding to the rest formula connected with Solomon the expression 'round about'.

The fact that Solomon did not achieve rest and peace on his *own* account is confirmed by the Chronicler's reconstruction of Solomon's kingship in 2 Chronicles 1-9. According to the Chronicler, this king of peace is never involved in any battle or war.

Various studies have shown that the theme of rest, peace and quietness is not only characteristic of the Chronicler's version of Solomon's history, but forms a golden thread running throughout the Books of Chronicles. Let me give a short summary of two of the often-quoted books on this theme.

Ingeborg Gabriel's dissertation (published in 1990 under the title *Friede über Israel. Eine Untersuchung zur Friedenstheologie in Chronik I 10 – II 36*)²¹ shows that

¹⁸ See my studies where I have indicated that the Chronicler indicates (by means of a play on terminology) that the temple building was actually completed only after the Passover celebrations during Josiah's reign. Cf. Jonker (2002 and 2003a).

¹⁹ Cf. e. g. the comprehensive discussion in Knoppers (2004:775-777).

²⁰ Steins (2005: 155-163) also discusses 1 Chr 22 within the context of, as he sees it, the Chronicler's reinterpretation of Nathan's promise (2 Sam 7). According to Steins (2005:162), the reworking of Nathan's promise in Chronicles serves only one purpose: 'das Thema des Tempels als des Ruheortes der Lade zu akzentuieren'.

²¹ Gabriel (1990:2) formulates the aim of her study as follows: 'Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, die Grundlagen und Bedingungen für den Frieden in einem *bestimmten* Geschichtsentwurf, nämlich jenem der Chr, zu untersuchen. Es handelt sich dabei um eines der Spätwerke des

1 Chronicles 22:9, where Solomon is indicated to be a 'Friedensherrscher' (peace ruler, as Gabriel calls him), forms the climax of the so-called 'Ruhetheologie' (theology of rest) of the Chronicler.²² After Solomon, with the separation of the two kingdoms, the situation changes drastically. The Chronicler argues that peace cannot be realised in the period of the divided kingdom. According to Gabriel, 2 Chronicles 10-36 present paraenetic historical narratives ('lehrhaften Geschichtserzählungen') to illustrate the history of the rise and downfall of Judah after Solomon. In this regard the narratives of Asa and Jehoshaphat are particularly important. In these narratives it becomes clear that obedience to Yahweh leads to peace, while idolatry and alliances with foreign powers lead to war. Gabriel comes to the conclusion that the paradigmatic use of the theme of peace in Chronicles is an indication of the eschatological trend present in this work. As Thomas Willi²³ has indicated in his criticism of Gabriel's point of view, one does not necessarily have to go that far in the interpretation of Chronicles, but this is not the focus of the present discussion.

Another study dealing with the theme of peace/war in Chronicles is the dissertation of Andreas Ruffing (published in 1992 under the title *Jahwekrieg als Weltmetapher. Studien zu Jahwekriegstexten des chronistischen Sondergutes*). After analysing certain key texts in Chronicles, he comes to the conclusion that these nar-

AT. Sein Autor war sowohl mit den Werken der israelitischen Geschichtsschreibung als auch mit jenem der Propheten vertraut und wertet ihre Aussagen auf vielfältige Weise eklektisch für sein eigenes Werk aus. Die chr *relecture* der Geschichte Israels setzt sich dabei auch mit den Friedensentwürfen dieser früheren Bücher auseinander und versucht, sie für ihre eigene historische Sicht fruchtbar zu machen'.

²² Willi criticises Gabriel's study for not including an etymological-philological study of the terms under discussion. Willi is of the opinion that all three terms cannot merely be lumped together under the rubric 'Ruhetheologie'. Willi (2002: 93) adds: 'Wenn die Verfasserin hier feststellt, dass „die Chr ... die im Alten Orient (und nicht nur dort) gängige Vorstellung“ übernehme, „dass ... Friede mit den anderen Völkern auf der Ausdehnung der eigenen Machtssphäre basiert“, dann rächt sich die Vernachlässigung der etymologisch-philologischen Aspekte. Denn das gibt das hebräische מִשְׁׁמָרָה das immer den 'Ausgleich' eines gesellschaftlichen Gefälles anvisiert, nie her'.

²³ Willi (2002:93) bases his criticism mainly on two points: 'Ob man aus der Art, wie Chr vom Frieden spricht, auf die „Hoffnung auf ein goldenes Zeitalter“, ja gar „offene judäisch-nationale Königserwartung“ schließen darf, ist doch mehr als zweifelhaft, wenn man mit G. Konstatiert, dass „die Chr Friedensterminologie ... in Esra/Nehemia ... fehlt“ – wer Chr und Esr-Neh doch näher beisammen sieht, kann nur davon ausgehen, dass andere als zeitgenössisch-gegenwartsbezogene Motive dem Chr beim Thema „Frieden“ die Feder führen, etwa die Konzeption von „Frieden (als) Folge der Gerechtigkeit“. U.E. wird dem persischen Reich auch in Chr eine durchaus positive heilsgeschichtliche Rolle zuerkannt. Somit braucht die „vergangene Grösse Israels“ nicht in irgendeiner ungreifbaren Zukunft wiederhergestellt zu werden, sondern sie soll jetzt, und zwar nicht mehr durch einen einzelnen Davididen oder „Sohn Davids“, sondern durch das „Volk Davids“ ... im Rahmen des Achämenidenreichs realisiert werden.'

tives are not presented in a fashion that reflects contemporary (i. e. the time of the Judahite kings) political power interests. They rather form part of an anti-war polemic.²⁴

The following conclusions could be drawn from the studies by Gabriel and Ruffing with reference to the Chronicler's construction of Israel's history:

- Solomon's reign is seen as a paradigm of the rest, peace and quietness that Yahweh gives to Israel;
- This rest, peace and quietness could not be achieved by military means, but was the result of the Judahite king seeking Yahweh and relying on Him.

Terminological patterns in Chronicles confirm these conclusions. Particularly the narratives about Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash and Josiah prove to be important in this overall portrayal of the Chronicler.²⁵ These kings (perhaps also with the inclusion of Hezekiah) are good kings in the Chronicler's eyes.

The verb *תַּעֲשֶׂה* occurs 11 times²⁶ in Chronicles, of which eight instances (all with the meaning 'to give rest'²⁷) have Yahweh/God as subject. In the other three instances Solomon acts as subject, but then with the meaning 'to place, to put'. Apart from the association with Solomon, this verb is associated with only two other kings, namely Asa and Jehoshaphat. In the account of Asa's history the verb is used three times (14:5,6; 15:15), clearly serving a structuring function. The same applies in Jehoshaphat's narrative where the verb, so to speak, concludes the reign of the king (20:30).²⁸

²⁴ Cf. Ruffing (1992:359-360): „Bei den untersuchten Texten handelt es sich um paradigmatische Geschichten, die der Chronist mit einer deutlich paränetisch-didaktischen Zielsetzung erzählt: Jahwe – so die unüberhörbare Botschaft des Chronisten an seine Leser – hat in der Vergangenheit sein Volk gerettet, und er wird es wieder retten, wenn das Volk und seine Führer (die davidischen Könige!) in Treue zu ihm stehen. ... In den untersuchten Texten ist es jeweils Jahwe, der durch sein Eingreifen die entscheidende Wende im Geschehen bewirkt – und zwar er allein.“

²⁵ In another contribution I have focused on terminological usage in the Asa narrative. Cf. Jonker (2006). See also Jonker (2003a), where I have discussed the account of Josiah's narrative extensively.

²⁶ According to SESB: 1 Chr 16:21 (a quotation from Ps 105); 22:9,18; 23:25; 2 Chr 1:14; 4:8; 9:25; 14:5,6; 15:15; 20:30. The verb occurs 138 times in the Hebrew Bible, evenly spread over all parts.

²⁷ According to Swanson (1997), Koehler/Baumgartner/Richardson (2000) provides the description 'to secure repose, rest'.

²⁸ See also Dirksen's (2005:26-27) discussion of this term.

Another key term in the Chronicler's account is **טָבֵל** ('to be peaceful, quiet/to maintain a quiet attitude').²⁹ According to the *Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible* (2004) this verb occurs 41 times in the Hebrew Bible. Of the 31 times in the Qal six are in Chronicles.³⁰ It also occurs once in a substantive form, as **טָבֵל** in 1 Chronicles 22:9 as we have seen before, in combination with the noun **מִלְּוָא**. The verb **טָבֵל** shows a similar distribution in Chronicles to **מָלַךְ**: it is used three times in association with Asa's reign (13:23b; 14:4,5), once in Jehoshaphat's narrative (20:30), and then also once in the Joash narrative (23:21), where it is indicated that the city (Jerusalem) was quiet after Athaliah was killed.

The distribution of מִלְאָךְ in Chronicles also forms an interesting pattern. It occurs 12 times³¹ in Chronicles: five times in association with David³², once associated with Solomon³³, once in the Asa narrative³⁴, four times in connection with Jehoshaphat³⁵, and once in the Josiah narrative.³⁶

An analysis of Chronicles should certainly involve more aspects than just these terminological patterns. However, the very conspicuous distribution of these terms confirms the view that the association of Solomon with rest, peace and quietness in 1 Chronicles 22:9 forms a kingpin around which a prominent theological theme in Chronicles unfolds. The royal narratives of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash and Josiah that are terminologically linked to the promise to Solomon all form part of a literary network in Chronicles. The network emphasises that Yahweh is the Giver of peace, rest and quietness, and that access to this condition can only be achieved by seeking Yahweh and by relying on him.

Why would this be such a prominent theme in Chronicles? And why would the Chronicler have moulded Solomon as the man of rest and king of peace? The traditional scholarly answer to this question is that the Chronicler wanted to emphasise Solomon's close association with the temple building, and that the connection of this

²⁹ This is the meaning provided by Koehler/Baumgartner/Richardson (2000). Swanson (1997) indicates two semantic domains that could apply in all the instances in this text: (i) ‘be at rest, be at peace, i. e., be in a favourable circumstance, implying ease, security, and satisfaction, with lack of tumult or strife’ (also used in Jos 11:23); (ii) ‘be calm, i. e., cause an attitude or emotion of patience and lack of strife or anger in the midst of a provocation’ (also used in Ezek 16:42).

³⁰ Notably, this word does not occur in the Pentateuch at all. It occurs 9 times in the Deuteronomistic History, of which 6 times in the book of Judges.

³¹ Out of 237 occurrences, evenly distributed over all parts of the Hebrew Bible.

³² 1 Chr 12:18,19 (3X); 18:10.

³³ In the very prominent verse already discussed above, namely 1 Chr 22:9.

³⁴ 2 Chr 15:5.

³⁵ 2 Chr 18:16,26,27; 19:1.

³⁶ 2 Chr 34:18;

theme with some other prominent, good kings in Judah's history served the purpose of emphasising the role of the First Temple. The answer is thus primarily sought in the inner-Yehudite context of legitimating the Second Temple during the Persian era.

However, is it only the inner-Yehudite discourse that influenced the Chronicler's reconstruction of Solomon (and the other kings)? Could one not assume that the Chronicler also engaged in the international discourse of the time?

In the following section I will investigate the wider Persian and Greek contexts for possible clues to answering the following question: Were there any indications of a wider international discourse in the late fifth and early fourth centuries B.C.E. that could have formed the background to the new emphasis that we witness in the Chronicler's version of Solomon's history? In undertaking this investigation, I am not positioning myself against the traditional inner-Yehudite interpretations. However, I would like to situate Chronicles (and Solomon's portrayal by the Chronicler, in particular) within the wider international context in order to see whether there are any possible resonances of that context in the book.

C THE KING OF PEACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA OF THE ACHAEMENID EMPIRE

1 Introduction

The first part of Artaxerxes's reign³⁷ (after the murder on his father, Xerxes, and his brother, Darius) was characterised by many revolts. One example was the revolt of another son of Xerxes (who was satrap of Bactria). He revolted as soon as he heard that Artaxerxes (a younger son of Xerxes) had taken the throne. This revolt was, however, suppressed. Another example was the revolt of Egypt under the leadership of Inarus. In 460 B.C.E. Inarus managed to get Athenian support for the Egyptian attempt to free itself from Persian control. Without going into all the detail here, it is well accepted in classical and Iranian scholarship that 'Egypt was basically back in Persian hands by 454 B.C.E.' (Grabbe 2004: 291).

Syro-Palestine, being the land-bridge between Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, must have taken note of the increase in military activities during this time. But

³⁷ His reign is dated slightly differently by various scholars. Grabbe (2004:291) dates it 465-424 B.C.E., while Gerstenberger (2005:56) makes his reign two years shorter with a dating 464-425 B.C.E.. Wiesehöfer (2006:34) and Kuhrt (2007:314-330) date it 465-424/3 B.C.E.. Biblical scholars are very interested in this period in Persian history, since it was the period in which Ezra's and Nehemiah's missions most probably took place. Grabbe (2004:291) warns, however, that the narrative sources available to describe this period are not good: 'The reign of Artaxerxes has been of particular interest to biblical scholars, but we lack good narrative sources, even if Thucydides, Diodorus, and others refer to individual episodes and events at various points.'

the Syro-Palestinian area would also have taken note of the so-called 'Konsolidierungspolitik' of Artaxerxes during his reign. Wiesehöfer (2006:34) states the following about Artaxerxes: 'Außenpolitisch war der neue Herrscher überaus erfolgreich: Nicht nur wurden der von Athen unterstützte Inaros-Aufstand in Ägypten (460-454) nieder- und die athenischen Angriffe auf Zypern zurückgeschlagen, sondern es wurden auch die Levanteküste und Palästina militärisch gesichert. In diese Phase persischer Konsolidierungspolitik gehören wohl auch die Missionen Esras und Nehemias die für die Konstituierung der jüdischen Gemeinschaft und ihres Zentrums Jerusalem so bedeutsam werden sollten.'

2 The Peace of Callias and later developments

It is within this context that the so-called Peace of Callias is situated. According to a later classical source, namely Diodorus Siculus (12.4.4-6), the hostilities between Athens and Persia were brought to an end by an agreement that was made between these powers in 449 B.C.E.. The agreement was called after the Athenian officer who apparently negotiated the agreement with Artaxerxes. Although Herodotus does not specifically refer to the peace treaty, he writes about an Athenian embassy led by Callias at Artaxerxes's court.

Briant (2002:580), among other scholars, warns that one should not over-interpret the Peace of Callias, because the textual evidence is so scanty.³⁸ Grabbe (2004:291) is also sceptical when he states that 'most handbooks state that the "Peace of Callias" of 449 brought hostilities between Athens and Persia to an end. ... [I]t seems unlikely [however] that the Persian king gave up in any way his claims on the Ionian Greeks or was outmanoeuvred diplomatically, as events during the rest of Artaxerxes's reign indicate.'³⁹ Because of this scepticism about the existence of such a

³⁸ The Peace of Callias is only mentioned by Diodorus (who wrote in the first century B.C.E.), but not (as might be expected) by the earlier Thucydides. Herodotus only vaguely refers to it, as mentioned above. Cf. Briant (2002:580).

³⁹ Other authors at least assume that there was a treaty of some sort made between the Greeks and Persians in 449 B.C.E. (during the reign of Artaxerxes I). Cf. e. g. Gerstenberger (2004:60): 'Nach einem halben Jahrhundert voller Blutvergiessen einigten sich die Parteien im erwähnten, sogenannten „Kalliasfrieden“ des Jahres 449 auf die Erhaltung der Autonomie in allen griechischen Städten auf dem Festland und in Westkleinasien und den Verzicht Athens auf Besitzansprüche auf die Insel Zypern, sowie die Länder Syrien und Ägypten. Der Friede war allerdings nur vorläufig. Gegen Ende des 5. und durch das 4. Jh. v.Chr. hindurch mischte sich Persien immer wieder in die griechischen Angelegenheiten ein, teilweise durch Unterstützung Spartas gegen Athen. Aber es gelang dem riesigen Imperium nicht, dauerhaft auf die europäische Seite des ägäischen Meeres überzugreifen. Warum? Vielleicht hatte sich die Kraft der herrschenden Perser erschöpft, vielleicht waren die Gesellschaftssysteme doch zu verschieden, zu inkompatibel, vielleicht lagen die größeren Kraftreserven bei den Griechen, deren makedonischer Zweig dann am Ende des vierten Jh. im kurzen Siegeslauf des Alexander das Pendel der Geschichte umkehren ließ.'

treaty, one should definitely rule out the possibility of any kind of literary dependence, namely that the Chronicler had any written sources about this peace treaty available. However, in order for the Chronicler to engage in discourse with a tradition, the historicity of that tradition is not necessarily important. Let me explain this point further by referring to (in my opinion) a helpful perspective from the classical scholar, P J Rhodes.

Rhodes (2006) too is sceptical about whether a treaty was accepted by both Greeks and Persians in 449 B.C.E.. However, he notes (Rhodes 2006:47-8):

[F]rom the fourth century onwards [i.e. approximately 50 years after the supposed treaty – L.C.J.] everybody knew of a 'Peace of Callias' by which Athens bound the Persians to keep away from the Aegean and the west coast of Asia Minor... Most scholars have been sufficiently impressed by the later evidence to believe in a treaty. It is clear that the fears of the late 450s were no more and that Athens stopped prosecuting the war against Persia; there may even have been some kind of understanding with the Persian satraps in western Asia Minor; but the formal treaty was probably invented after 386, when the Greeks of Asia Minor had been handed back to Persia ... to illustrate how much more glorious the past had been than the shameful present.

The reason why Rhodes chooses 386 B.C.E. as a watershed date in this regard is the events leading up to the so-called King's Peace, or Peace of Antalcidas.⁴⁰ After a period of disagreement among the Greek city-states about whether Persia's claim on the Asiatic Greeks should be accepted, Antalcidas of Sparta made an alliance with Tiribazus (who was reinstated as Persian satrap in Sardis), and they defeated the Athenians and recovered control of the Hellespont. After these successes Antalcidas could reckon on the support of the other Greek city-states and he negotiated a peace treaty with the Persian satrap, Tiribazus, which was proclaimed in 386 B.C.E.. According to Rhodes (2006:193-194),

Persia at last gained the Asiatic Greeks, whom it had long been demanding: this was the price which the Greeks had to pay, but it was widely regarded as a betrayal.... This was to be a lasting "common peace" for all the Greeks ... and in that respect it differed from earlier treaties which simply made peace for a specified period between states which had been at war.

However, Rhodes then concedes that the matter was far more complicated. There is enough evidence to show that this peace treaty was often breached and renewed.

It is within this context of the post-386 B.C.E. era that, according to Rhodes, the Peace of Callias was 'invented'. The point that Rhodes is making is therefore that,

⁴⁰ Rhodes (2006) shows that there are enough classical Greek sources referring to this peace treaty not to doubt its existence.

although one cannot state for certain that a peace treaty between Athens and Persia was established in 449 B.C.E., one can be confident in stating that the *idea* of such a treaty, as a projection into the past, was a reality in the first half of the fourth century B.C.E. (which is also the most likely time when the Chronicler constructed his history). This point will be picked up again in my synthesis. But let me move first to another aspect of the international scene that could also be considered in this discussion.

3 **The *Pax Achaemenidica***

What was the situation like on the other side of the coin, namely in the Persian Empire? Josef Wiesehöfer gives prominence to the idea of a *Pax Achaemenidica* in his description of Persian rule (a term which he coined by analogy with the well-known *Pax Romanum* of a later era). He uses this term to refer to the royal ideology of the peace and harmony that were apparently striven for in the Achaemenid Empire. He (2006:50) defines *Pax Achaemenidica* as follows: 'der reichsweiten Friedensordnung, ein Abbild der kosmischen Ordnung Auramazdas.' Wiesehöfer finds textual confirmation of this ideology in the Achaemenid royal inscriptions as well as iconographic confirmation in the reliefs in residence buildings and on tombs. With reference to Persepolis, Wiesehöfer remarks that this city was more than just a residence and administrative centre. In all its inscriptions, reliefs and architecture it expressed the royal idea of a *pax Achaemenidica*.⁴¹

Wiesehöfer is, of course, well aware of the fact that this ideological account of the Achaemenid dispensation should not be accepted at face value as a true reflection of the imperial rule of the time. His awareness in this regard should be taken into consideration in our evaluation of the sources. There were two sides to the *Pax Achaemenidica*. Apart from the fact that Greek sources paint a different picture of the Per-

⁴¹ Cf. Wiesehöfer (2006:19-20): 'Parsa, wie sie altpersisch hieß, deren Bau um 515 v. Chr. von Dareios befohlen worden war und in dem sich vor allem Xerxes I. und sein Sohn Artaxerxes I. ein Denkmal setzen, war dabei nicht nur Residenz und Verwaltungszentrum, sondern auch ein Platz, an dem, in Inschriften, Reliefs und Architektur, in besonderer Weise die königliche Idee von der *pax Achaemenidica*, der göttlich geschenkten, von den Königen garantierten und den Untertanen gewünschten universellen Friedensordnung, zum Ausdruck kommt. Die in den Inschriften erwähnten und auf den Reliefs abgebildeten gabentragenden Völkerschaften, die sich zu Banketten versammelnden und auf herrscherlichen Gunsterweis hoffenden Würdenträger, die die Sicherheit des Königs und des Reichen garantierenden Leibwächter und Soldaten und nicht zuletzt der gerechte Herrscher „von Gottes Gnaden“ selbst – sie alle werden als Teilnehmer an Zeremonien vorgestellt, die das Zusammenwirken von König und Untertanen zu beiderseitigem Nutzen symbolisieren.'

sian Empire,⁴² there are also other perspectives on how this *pax* was established and maintained. Wiesehöfer (nd:8) puts it as follows:

It may be an indication of long periods of internal and external security and of the advantages of peace for the king's subjects. At the same time, however, it may be a kind of deathly quiet after the suppression of a rebellion. With a stick and a carrot, Persian kings dealt with their subjects and their neighbours; an astonishing amount of local autonomy and structural tolerance and a strong authority in and firm control from the centre are signs of the double-edged Persian policy.

Whatever the real-life manifestations of the royal ideology of a *Pax Achaemenidica* might have been, the *idea* of such a notion (and its physical manifestations in literature and architecture) can reasonably be assumed to have been known throughout the Achaemenid Empire of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., an empire of which Yehud was a small province.

D SYNTHESIS

Regarding the Chronicler's portrayal of Solomon, the king of peace, could one assume that the Chronicler engaged in a wider discourse with his particular version of the Judahite history? One can never know for sure. I am fully aware of the difficulties and risks involved in oversimplifying the literary relationships and thematic similarities between biblical literature and literature from the *Umwelt*. However, I am of the opinion that the following points should at least be taken into consideration in the future scholarship on Chronicles. The synthesis of my argument is offered here with the hope that it might stimulate serious discussion on an aspect in Chronicles scholarship that has in my opinion been neglected.

- 1 We have seen above that (at least) the second half of the fifth century BCE, as well as the first half of the fourth, was characterised by several discussions in Persia and Greece on the notion of peace and rest. Yet we know for sure that the discourse on peace often did not prevent the Greek and Persian nations from engaging in serious battles and wars with one another. We also know from our source that this discourse did not establish a world within which internal strife no longer prevailed. However, we have enough sources (literary and archaeological) to convince us that peace was an often-pursued notion during this era.
- 2 We have also indicated that there is enough evidence of a fairly widespread communication system which connected the different regions of the Medierra-

⁴² According to Wiesehöfer (nd: 8), 'most Greek sources focus on the lack of moral standing of the Great King and the provincial elites, the slavish subservience of the royal subjects and on recurrent rebellions of subject peoples or high functionaries.'

nean and Mesopotamian worlds with one another. One may therefore assume that this discourse on peace might have become known throughout the region.

- 3 It is commonly accepted in Chronicles scholarship nowadays that the book was written by Jerusalemite literati, who were knowledgeable about their wider socio-political context.
- 4 Although some Chronicles scholars would date the book well into the Hellenistic period, there is general agreement that the most likely time of origin should be sought in the final years of the Persian Empire, namely in the middle of the fourth century B.C.E.. This view therefore establishes the chronological proximity of Chronicles to the wider discourse on peace in the Greek and Persian spheres.
- 5 One can accept the general view in Chronicles scholarship that the book was primarily addressed to an inner-Yehudite audience, and that it contributed to an inner-Yehudite discourse. However, that does not exclude the possibility that resonances of the wider international context can be found in Chronicles.
- 6 It is possible to find an explanation for the Chronicler's adaptation of the Deuteronomistic History version of Solomon's narrative in the wider international context. It might well be that the Chronicler had the wider international discourse on peace in his mind when he transformed Solomon into the king of peace and the man of rest. In this way the Chronicler probably indicated that the king of peace should be sought in their own Judahite past and not in the wider international context. The house of rest was to be found in Jerusalem and not in Persepolis. Above all, the Giver of Peace is Yahweh of Judah, and not Ahuramazda of Persia.
- 7 This peace rhetoric as part of the Solomon narrative was in all likelihood included by the Chronicler also in some of the other royal narratives (as we have seen above) to indicate that there are numerous examples in their own Judahite history providing precedents that seeking Yahweh and relying on him bring peace, rest and quiet from the enemies all around.

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