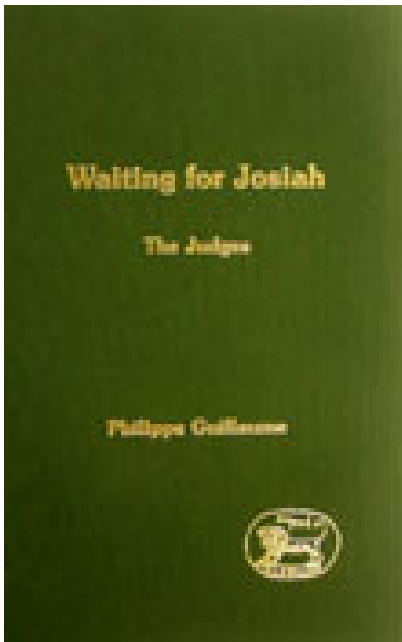


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Waiting for Josiah: The Judges

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This doctoral thesis was submitted in Geneva and especially reflects the influence of Ernst Axel Knauf (Bern). Guillaume develops a redaction-historical hypothesis for the book of Judges, his premise being that Martin Noth's concept about the Deuteronomistic History has been superseded and that a new viewpoint is therefore required. The book of Judges is understood as an independent literary unit that was only interpolated into the sequence of the Former Prophets approximately 200 B.C.E.

Noth's hypothesis is written off as a "dogma." The writer overlooks the fact that Noth was not a dogmatist but an astute critic who communicated what he observed. It is Guillaume who is in danger of proclaiming a dogma, for he offers no basis for his premises but follows the present-day trend. The plausibility rests largely speaking not on exegesis but on a weighing-up of scholarly opinions, a limited number of possibilities being discussed, in spite of the extensive bibliography. Apart from improbabilities in detail, the study shows above all the difficulties that result from the assumption of a separate literary history for the book of Judges.

According to Guillaume, the book of Judges developed in seven steps. (1) Following Knauf, he assumes that a "Book of Saviours" came into being in Bethel around 720,

immediately after the end of the northern kingdom of Israel; this Book of Saviours comprised the basic stock of Judg 3–9, including the redactional frame. The hypothesis is reminiscent of Wolfgang Richter, but the historical coordinates are different. According to Guillaume, this collection of heroic tales was pro-Assyrian in tenor and aimed to win Israelite acceptance for assimilation into the Assyrian provincial system. The conquest of Samaria counts as Yahweh's saving act, which freed Israel from the deviations of the institution of kingship, for which Abimelech (Judg 9) acts as a warning example. By pointing to Yahweh's acts in history, the Book of Saviours aims to provide a new foundation for Israel's nonstate identity after the end of the monarchy. Israel does not require kings because in time of need Yahweh sends his savior.

(2) In the period following 701, this Book of Saviours served in Judah as a program designed to defend Manasseh's policy of subjection to Assyria against the authorities in Judah. For this purpose a preamble was added in 1:4ff. that attributes precedence to Judah in the conquest of the land. The Othniel episode, 3:7–11 (which in spite of the identical formula language Guillaume does not assign to the oldest Book of Saviours), describes the repulse of an "Assyro-kushite coalition." This is intended to make cooperation with Assyria plausible for the Judeans.

(3) The decline of Assyria in the last third of the seventh century made it possible for Judah to expand to the north. The incomplete conquest of the country was denounced as sin (2:1–5). A clear departure from the Assyrian religion was demanded (2:11–19; 6:7–10). By way of the "minor judges" (10:1–5; 12:8–15) the "savior" episodes were relativized. The notion of a "period of the judges" developed so that the kingless Assyrian epoch could be characterized as an interregnum. The narrative about the wandering of the Danites in Judg 17–18 shows, on the one hand, the chances for Judean expansion opened up by the withdrawal of the Assyrians, while, on the other hand, it makes plain the necessity of a king for the country's welfare: "Waiting for Josiah."

(4) After the downfall of Jerusalem, Bethel once more became the cultic center. At this time the stories about Jephthah and Samson were added (Judg 10–16). They describe two heroes and their failure. This is directed against Babylonian mythology: behind Jephthah stands a Judean reaction to the Tammuz myth. The picture of Samson is determined by the Ninurta tradition.

(5) After Jerusalem had again become the capital of Judah, by way of the returnees from Babylonian exile, a struggle for precedence once more developed with Bethel. In order to relativize Jerusalem's dominance (1:9) in Bethel's favor, the episode about the conquest of Bethel was interpolated in 1:22–26. At the same time, in a countermovement, the

narratives in Judg 19–21 were added, in which Jerusalem wins the upper hand over the land of Benjamin.

(6) Round about 200 B.C.E. the book of Judges in the expanded form into which it had thus developed was incorporated into the Former Prophets. The entity that scholars have hitherto seen as the Deuteronomistic History, and have viewed as a grappling with the downfall in the sixth century, is in fact a history of the Jews for the Hellenistic world. For this, the book is given a new beginning (1:1–3), and the death of Joshua is repeated in 2:6–10. References to 1 Sam 7 linked the concept of a period of the judges with the rise of the monarchy.

(7) Around 150 B.C.E. the book received its final additions. The military training mentioned in 2:20–3:6 has to do with the wars of the Hasmoneans, and Jephthah's speech in 11:12–28 is intended to justify the annexation of Perea.

What in detail may read like a caricature follows a methodical program. Guillaume attacks the “excesses of diachronic exegesis” (2). True, he does not fundamentally dispute a growth in the tradition-history sense, but he replaces differentiated analysis by hypothetical historical reconstruction. “For each literary development of the text one should look for a precise historical context” (3). It is only out of the particular historical circumstances, he maintains, that the literary growth becomes plausible, and in order to ascertain these circumstances nonbiblical evidence (texts as well as archaeological findings) must play the decisive part. Here the programmatic influence of Knauf is obvious. The way this is brought to bear does justice neither to biblical tradition-history nor to the extrabiblical evidence. The application depends less on hard facts than on suppositions, which rest on an astonishingly conservative view of the history. Anyone who assumes that at the end of the eighth century a view of history prevailed that was fundamentally critical of the monarchy (and, quite improbably, pro-Assyrian) must be able to present a political alternative. What follows is the tacit assumption that the Mosaic theocracy must have been a return to the self-understanding of the ancient people of God and was not a reflection of the postexilic period. Comparable objections can be made to other coordinates. We in fact know almost nothing about the inner political consequences of Manasseh's vassalage. There is no definite evidence for Josiah's expansion to the north. The importance of the returnees from the exile for the revival of Jerusalem follows the traditional biblical picture of the history, which can be shown to have no support in history as it really was. When in considering the strata of the book of Judges Guillaume leaps immediately from 515 to 200, as if nothing had happened in these three centuries, he makes himself dependent on the fortuity of the state of biblical tradition, without considering the difference from the course of historical events that was really possible.

Guillaume thereby unintentionally shows that the biblical texts are and remain the most important source for the historical reconstruction as well. The dating of the biblical evidence is, in its turn, dependent on biblical evidence: we cannot escape this methodological circle. In the individual case the external evidence is much too slight and in itself far too much in need of interpretation. We can therefore arrive at somewhat firmer historical ground only through a tradition-history text analysis that elucidates the relative chronology of the textual structure, as well as the innerbiblical warp and weft of the textual relationships. It is the greatest deficiency of the present investigation that in the case of many details it dispenses with textual analysis. The author is familiar with the analyses of Wolfgang Richter, Uwe Becker, and Barnabas Lindars, but he does not draw on them in detail, evidently because they fall under the absurd verdict of “excesses of diachronic exegesis.” The earlier analyses of George F. Moore (1895), Karl Budde (1897), and Charles F. Burney (1918), which are indispensable for any exegesis of the book of Judges, are not even considered.

The lack of exegesis does not merely affect marginalia but strikes at the heart of the investigation. The hypothesis that the book of Judges was for the longest period an independent literary entity depends on the way the relationship of Josh 24 to Judg 1–2 is defined, and without a precise synoptic comparison of Josh 24:29–31 with Judg 2:7–10 we can form no judgment about this. This comparison is missing (see 234). Instead, Guillaume refers to Konrad Schmid, *Erzväter und Exodus* (Neukirchen, 1999), which deals with these texts almost in passing, in the framework of his exegesis of Exod 1, drawing on his concept of “book shaping” (*Buchgestalten*, 225ff.). It is highly improbable that the note about Joshua’s death has been repeated in order, at a secondary stage, to turn the formerly separate books of Joshua and Judges into a single continuous account of history. The opposite is much more likely: that the death of Joshua was repeated in order to *divide* books that had previously belonged together as a single historical work so that the book of Joshua (and perhaps the Hexateuch) could be given a logical conclusion. Guillaume also maintains that 1:1 depends on 20:18 (and not vice versa, as most exegetes rightly judge) without offering a single argument in favor of his thesis (228). The basic assumption that the book of Judges had a redaction history of its own until about 200 B.C.E. stands on shaky ground.

For the beginnings of the independent book of Judges, Guillaume casts back to Wolfgang Richter’s hypothesis about a Book of Saviours (*Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch* [Bonn, 1966]), but he believes that he can explain these beginnings much more simply by way of Walter Beyerlin’s observation (“Gattung und Herkunft des Rahmens im Richterbuch,” in *Tradition und Situation: Festschrift A. Weiser* [Göttingen, 1963], 1–29) that there is a clear distinction between the frame of the savior episodes and the prologue 2:11ff. (9–11). The fact as such is certainly indisputable, but it does not

permit us to split off the frame of the savior narratives from the Deuteronomism, catapulting it into the eighth century. None of the scholars who have disputed the common authorship of the frames in Judges and the books of Kings has up to now ventured such a violent leap in tradition history. That Deuteronomism is a phenomenon with many strata is common knowledge. The difference between the prologue and the frame in the book of Judges can be explained much more simply in that light. Guillaume does not discuss this possibility.

The suggestion that the outline of a premonarchical period can be interpreted as a program for the reintroduction of the monarchy (“Waiting for Josiah”) is certainly worth serious consideration. But it is not the first proposal along these lines. Timo Veijola (*Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der deuteronomistischen Historiographie* [Helsinki, 1977]) also suggested this, seeing it as a reaction to the downfall of Judah. One might head Veijola’s investigation *Waiting for (the new) David*. Guillaume does not mention this alternative.

The phases in which Guillaume assumes the book of Judges developed are largely based not on textual observation but on his (fairly conservative) view of the course of history. Thus he follows Knauf in his early dating of the song of Deborah in Judg 5, which he assigns to the “post-Amarna period” of Iron Age I. The prose version in Judg 4, he believes, is dependent on the song and derives from the author of the Book of Saviours (ca. 720). His sole new argument for the priority of Judg 5 is that the statement that Sisera flees on foot into Jael’s tent is not supported in 4:17, while it is explained in 5:4, 20–21 by the circumstance that the brook Kishon had burst its banks (32–33). However, this must admittedly be read between the lines in Judg 5 also. The scenic parataxis between the battle at the Tabor and the Jael scene, which can easily be explained by the episodic narrative mode, is even more abrupt in 5:24 than in 4:17. On his own showing, Guillaume does not attempt an exact investigation of Judg 4–5 but looks only at the main phases of the text’s development, “using the history of Israel as guideline” (37)—knowledge of which must accordingly emerge from somewhere or other, but not from the biblical sources. This goes so far that the hammer (*maqbebet*) that Jael uses as murder weapon in 4:21 is an addition from the Maccabean period (41, 238). Jephthah’s speech in 11:12–28 is related to the expansion of the Hasmoneans east of Jordan (238, 240). The Septuagint shows that at this time the text was already in existence, a fact that Guillaume notes but has difficulties in explaining. Judges 11 then becomes a kind of prophecy that before the Greek translation already anticipates events of the second half of the second century.

If an outline of this kind is supposed to be an alternative to Noth’s hypothesis, that hypothesis can look forward to a long life.