

Krzysztof Kinowski

Bloodshed by King Manasseh, Assyrians and Priestly Scribes

Theological Meaning and
Historical-Cultural Contextualization
of 2 Kings 21:16, 24:3-4 in Relation
to the Fall of Judah



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Volume 8

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As I present this study to the reader, I hope that it will meet with a favorable reception.

Krzysztof Kinowski

Corpus Domini, June 8th, 2023.

Lublin

Abbreviations

Akk.	Akkadian
Ass.	Assyrian
cf.	confront
col.	column of the tablet
e./b.e.	edge/beyond the edge of the tablet
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> = for example
ed./eds.	editor/editors
et al.	<i>et alii</i> = and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> = and so forth
Gr.	Greek
Hebr.	Hebrew
Hrsg.	<i>Herausgeber</i> = redactor(s)
ibidem	in the same place
idem	ditto, the same
L	Lucianic (Antiochian) recension of the LXX
l./ll.	line/lines of the tablet
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic text
n.	note, footnote
no./nos.	number/numbers
obv.	obverse of the tablet
p./pp.	page/pages
pl./pls.	plate/plates
rev.	reverse of the tablet
s.	side of the tablet
v./vv.	verse/verses of the text

For other abbreviations, referring to dictionaries, grammars, book collections and some important works (e.g., *AHw*, *GAG*, *RINAP*, *SAA*, *ThDOT*), see Bibliographical Abbreviations.

The biblical Books are referred to according to the following abbreviations: Gen *Genesis*, Exod *Exodus*, Lev *Leviticus*, Num *Numbers*, Deut *Deuteronomy*, Josh *Joshua*, Judg *Judges*, 1–2Sam *1–2 Samuel*, 1–2Kgs *1–2 Kings*, 1–4Kgdms *1–4 Kingdoms* (LXX), Isa *Isaiah*, Jer *Jeremiah*, Ezek *Ezekiel*, Hos *Hosea*, Joel, Amos, Obad *Obadiah*, Jonah, Mic *Micah*, Nah *Nahum*, Hab *Habakkuk*, Zeph *Zephaniah*, Hag *Haggai*, Zech *Zechariah*, Mal *Malachi*, Ps *Psalms*, Job, Prov *Proverbs*, Ruth, Cant *Canticle*, Eccl *Ecclesiastes*, Lam

Lamentations, Esth *Esther*, Dan *Daniel*, Ezra, Neh *Nehemiah*, 1–2Chr *1–2 Chronicles*, 1–2Par *1–2 Paralipomena* (LXX), Matt *Matthew*, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Rom *Romans*, 1–2Cor *1–2 Corinthians*, Gal *Galatians*, Eph *Ephesians*, Phil *Philippians*, Col *Colossians*, 1–2Thess *1–2 Thessalonians*, 1–2Tim *1–2 Timothy*, Titus, Philem *Philemon*, Heb *Hebrews*, James, 1–2Pet *1–2 Peter*, 1–3John, Jude, Rev *Revelation*.

Bibliographical Abbreviations

- ABD** Freedman, David Noel, ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Volumes I–VI. Garden City: Doubleday, 1992.
- ABL** Harper, Robert Francis. *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters belonging to the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum*. Volumes I–XIV. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1892–1914.
- ADD** Johns, Claude Hermann Walter. *Assyrian Deeds and Documents Recording the Transfer of Property: Including the So-Called Private Contracts, Legal Decisions and Proclamations Preserved in the Kouyunjik Collections of the British Museum, Chiefly of the 7th Century B.C.* Volumes I–IV. Cambridge and London: Deighton and Bell, 1923–1924.
- AHw** von Soden, Wolfram. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. Bände I–III. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–1972.
- AS 7** Hallock, Richard Treadwell. *The Chicago Syllabary and the Louvre Syllabary AO7661*. Assyriological Studies 7. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940.
- ARM 3** Kupper, Jean Robert. *Correspondance de Kibri-Dagan, gouverneur de Terqa*. Archives royales de Mari 3. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950.
- BDB** Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver and Charles A. Briggs, eds. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. Eleventh Edition. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996 (Reprint 2007).
- BHS** Elliger, Karl and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Textum Masoreticum curavit H. P. Rüger, Masoram elaboravit G. E. Weil, quae antea cooperantibus A. Alt et al., ediderat R. Kittel, adjuvantibus H. Bardtke et al. Editio quinta emendata opera A. Schenker. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.
- BIWA** Borger, Riekele (Rykle). *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996.
- CAD** Gelb, Ignace J. et al., eds. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Volumes I–XXI. Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2010.
- CCT IV** Smith, Sidney. *Cuneiform Texts from Cappadocian Tablets in*

- the British Museum: Part IV*. London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1927.
- CDA Black, Jeremy, Andrew George and J. Nicholas Postgate, eds. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. Second Edition. Santag 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000.
- CT 18 Campbell Thompson, Reginald. *Lexical Texts*. Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 18. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1904.
- CT 31 Hancock, Percy S. P. *Omens from the Liver*. Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 31. London: Humphrey Milford and The Oxford University Press, 1911.
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- CT 54 Dietrich, Manfred. *Neo-Babylonian Letters from the Kouyunjik Collection*. Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum 54. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1979.
- DCH Clines, David J. A., ed. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Volumes I–IX. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–2016.
- GAG von Soden, Wolfram. *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*. Dritte ergänzte Auflage unter Mitarbeit von Werner R. Mayer. *Analecta Orientalia* 33. Roma: Edizioni Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995.
- GHG Kautzsch, Emil F., ed. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Second Edition. Mineola: Dover. 2006.
- GHw Gesenius, H. F. Wilhelm et al. *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*. Bände I–VI, Supplementband und Gesamtausgabe. Achtzehnte Auflage unter verantwortlicher Mitarbeit von Udo Rüterwörden, bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Rudolf Meyer und Herbert Donner. Berlin, Heidelberg, London, Paris, Tokyo, New York: Springer, 1987–2013.
- HALOT Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Volumes I–V. Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1994–2000.

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- J&M Joüon, Paul and Takamitsu Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Fifth Reprint of the Second Edition. Subsidia Biblica 27. Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2018.
- KAI Donner, Herbert und Wolfgang Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften mit einem Beitrag von O. Rössler*. Band I: Texte, Band II: Kommentar, Band III: Glossare und Indizes, Tafeln. Zweite durchgesehene und erweiterte Auflage. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969 (Band I: fünfte erweiterte und überarbeitete Auflage. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).
- KTH Lewy, Julius. *Die Kültepetexte aus der Sammlung Frida Hahn, Berlin*. Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1930.
- KTU₃ Dietrich, Manfred, Oswald Loretz and Joaquín Sanmartín. *Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten = The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*. Third Enlarged Edition. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 360/1. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013.
- LÄ Helck, Wolfgang und Eberhard Otto, Hrsg. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*. Bände I–VII. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972–1992.
- LKA Ebeling, Erich et al., Hrsg. *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur unter Mitarbeit von Franz Köcher und Liane Rost*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1953.
- OTG Brooke, Alan England, Norman McLean and Henry St. John Thackeray, eds. *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus, Supplemented from Other Uncial Manuscripts, with a Critical Apparatus Containing the Variants of the Chief Ancient Authorities for the Text of the Septuagint*. Volumes I–III. London: The Cambridge University Press, 1906–1940.
- PNAE Parpola, Simo et al., ed. *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Volumes I–IV. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998–2017.
- RIMA 1 Grayson, A. Kirk. *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia B.C. (to 1114 B.C.)*. The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Period 1. Toronto, Buffalo and London: The University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- RIMA 2 Grayson, A. Kirk. *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Mil-*

- lennium B.C. I (1114–859 B.C.)*. The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Assyrian Period 2. Toronto, Buffalo, London: The University of Toronto Press, 1991.
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- RIA Ebeling, Erich und Bruno Meissner. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie*. Bände I–XV. Berlin und New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1932–2018.
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Editorial remarks

On the manner of quoting Akkadian texts

The Arabic numeral given after the abbreviation of the book collection marks its volume number (e.g., SAA 6). The Arabic numeral which follows the volume number stands for the text's number in that volume; if necessary, a reference to the line(s) of the text is also given (e.g., SAA 6, no. 264, obv. 1–2).

The Roman numerals stand for the column of the text (e.g., the inscription L₄, col. II).

When the beginning of the text is broken, its first preserved line is marked as 1' and so the numbering of other lines continues (e.g., RINAP 4, no. 7, col. II, obv. 3'–6').

The Arabic or Roman numeral(s) standing after the collection volume number and separated from it by the comma sign, indicate(s) the page(s) number of that volume (e.g., SAA 3, 76; SAA 9, IL-LII).

On the transliteration of Akkadian words

The typical Akkadian phonemes are rendered as follows: *ḫ* stands for [*kh*], *š* for [*sh*], *ṣ* for [*ts*], *ṭ* for an emphatic [*t*]; the vowel length and contraction are also signaled (e.g., *ā* stands for a long [*a*], *â* stands for an [*a*] resulting from the vowel contraction).

In suffixed forms of genitive nouns, the short vowel morpheme [*i*] is stressed and therefore lengthened. Consequently, the general rule has been adopted in this study to mark it with a long [*ī*] in the transliteration, for example *ālīšunu*, “of their city,” or *bītātīšunu*, “of their houses.”

Introduction

King Manasseh of Judah is one of the most intriguing characters in the Bible and is crucial to the comprehension of the final destiny of the Southern Kingdom. He ruled for more than fifty years and was apparently a loyal Assyrian vassal, seen by some as a builder and renovator of Judah, but by others as its destroyer, who brought it to its downfall. The Second Book of Kings presents him as the wickedest of monarchs, unparalleled in having done what displeased God. Although many of his predecessors and successors were evil, the list of Manasseh's transgressions in 2Kgs 21:1–18 is unique. In 2Kgs 24:3–4, he is accused of having provoked God to destroy Judah. It is interesting, however, that the specific charge against Manasseh in this affair is that he shed innocent blood and filled Jerusalem with it. This accusation occurs also in 2Kgs 21:16. It is listed there, however, as one of his many other sins. Why is this transgression particularized in 2Kgs 24:4? Is it accidental or intentional? And if it is intentional, what theology underlies it, and with whom or with which biblical tradition can it be associated with? Consequently, what significance do 2Kgs 21:16 and 24:4 acquire in their respective narratives? And why is Manasseh specifically blamed for the destruction of Judah?

The question of king Manasseh's guilt for the fall of Judah in 1–2Kgs has already been raised by a number of scholars.¹ They propose various theories in an attempt to resolve the interpretative difficulties regarding the tragic

1 See, e.g., Klaas A. D. Smelik, *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography*, Oudtestamentische Studiën 28 (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1992); Stuart Lasine, "Manasseh as Villain and Scapegoat," in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, eds. J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 143 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 163–183; Percy S. F. van Keulen, *Manasseh through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists: The Manasseh Account (2 Kings 21:1–18) and the Final Chapters of the Deuteronomistic History*, Oudtestamentische studiën 38 (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Erik Eynikel, "The Portrait of Manasseh and the Deuteronomistic History," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Literature: Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans*, eds. Marc Vervenne and Johan Lust, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium 133 (Louvain: The Leuven University Press and Peeters, 1997), 233–261; Konrad Schmid, "Manasse und der Untergang Judas: 'Golaorientierte' Theologie in den Königsbüchern?," *Biblica* 78 (1997): 87–99; Baruch Halpern, "Why Manasseh Is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition," *Vetus Testamentum* 48 (1998): 473–514; Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice: Biblical Distortions of Historical Realities*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 338 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004); idem, "The Blackballing of Manasseh," in *Good Kings and Bad Kings*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, Library of Hebrew Bible: Old Testament Studies 393 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 248–263; Lester L. Grabbe, "The Kingdom of Judah

end of the Southern Kingdom. They pay little attention, however, to the fact that only one of Manasseh's numerous sins, the shedding of innocent blood, is explicitly linked with the destruction of that land. On the other hand, there are scholars who concern themselves with the status of blood(shed) in the Hebrew Bible and with blood's cultic significance.² Some of them put

from Sennacherib's Invasion to the Fall of Jerusalem: If We Had Only the Bible," in *Good Kings and Bad Kings*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, Library of Hebrew Bible: Old Testament Studies 393 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 78–122; Ernst Axel Knauf, "The Glorious Days of Manasseh," in *Good Kings and Bad Kings*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, Library of Hebrew Bible: Old Testament Studies 393 (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 164–188 [= Ernst Axel Knauf, *Data and Debates: Essays in the History and Culture of Israel and Its Neighbors in Antiquity – Daten und Debatten: Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte des antiken Israel und seiner Nachbarn*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 407 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013), 251–275; Jeremy Schipper, "Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Dynastic or Transgenerational Punishment," in *Soundings in Kings: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship*, eds. Mark Leuchter and Klaus-Peter Adam (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 81–105, 187–194; Erasmus Gaß, "Die kultischen Vergehen Manasses, die Königsbücher und das Deuteronomium," in *Kulte, Priester, Rituale: Beiträge zu Kult und Kultkritik im Alten Testament und Alten Orient, Festschrift für Theodor Seidl zum 65. Geburtstag*, Hrsg. Stephanie Ernst und Maria Häusl, Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 89 (St. Ottilien: EOS, 2010), 195–229; Gerrie F. Snyman, "Read as/with the Perpetrator: Manasseh's vulnerability in 2 Kings 21:1–18 and 2 Chronicles 33:1–20," *Scriptura* 116 (2017): 188–207; Dariusz Kucharek, "An Edition of the Story about King Manasseh 2 Ki. 21:1–18 (Polish)," *Wrocław Theological Review* 26, no. 2 (2018): 7–24; Koog-Pyoung Hong, "Ethics of Remembering: Scapegoating Manasseh after the Sewol Ferry Tragedy," in *Landscapes of Korean and Korean American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Ahn, International Voices in Biblical Studies 10 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 99–117; Peter Machinist, "Manasseh of Judah: A Case Study in Biblical Historiography," in *Stones, Tablets, and Scrolls. Periods of the Formation of the Bible*, eds. Peter Dubovský and Federico Giuntoli, Archaeology and Bible 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 183–226; Itzhaq Shai, "A Note on the Importance of the Name Manasseh as King of Judah," in *To Explore the Land of Canaan: Studies in Biblical Archaeology in Honor of Jeffrey R. Chadwick*, eds. Aren M. Maeir and George A. Pierce (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2022), 288–296.

- 2 See, among others, Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 166–176; idem, "Further Notes on the Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 205–210; idem, "Il simbolismo del sangue (timore reverenziale, vita, morte)," in *Atti della settimana (I): Sangue e antropologia biblica (Roma, 10–15 marzo 1980)*, cur. Francesco Vattioni, Centro Studi Sanguis Christi 1 (Roma: Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue, 1981), 19–35; J. Alberto Soggin, "Il sangue nel racconto biblico delle origini," in *Atti della settimana (II): Sangue e antropologia biblica (Roma, 10–15 marzo 1980)*, cur. Francesco Vattioni, Centro Studi Sanguis Christi 1 (Roma: Pia Unione Preziosissimo Sangue, 1981), 413–423; Stephen A. Geller, "Blood Cult: Toward a Literary Theology of the Priestly Work of the Pentateuch," *Prooftexts* 12 (1992): 97–124; Marc Vervenne, "'The Blood Is the Life and the Life Is the Blood: Blood As Symbol of Life and Death in Biblical Tradition (Gen 9,4)," in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the International Conference Organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 17th to the 20th April 1991*, ed. Jan Quaegebeur, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 55 (Louvain: Peeters and Departement Ori-

much emphasis on the blood's power of defiling the land,³ or on the relation between sacrifice and defilement;⁴ but they leave the significance of Manasseh's bloodshed in 1–2Kgs unmentioned. The novelty of the present study is in its combination of both approaches. It seeks to explain Manasseh's bloodshed against the conceptual dynamics underlying the attitude towards blood(shed) in the Hebrew Bible (the study of its meaning and significance), as well as against the biblical historiography of 1–2Kgs (the study of Manasseh's bloodshed in relation to Judah's destruction and the exile).

Biblical research on blood(shed) can be enriched by data deriving from Mesopotamia. They enable the distinctive characteristics of the biblical understanding of blood(shed) to be grasped against the background of the customs of the Levant peoples and other cultural milieus of the ancient Near East, specifically that of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Furthermore, the policies of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and its attitude towards bloody violence seem pertinent to the present research, given that Manasseh was a long-ruling Assyrian vassal. All this may provide some important arguments for the historical and cultural contextualization of Manasseh's transgression.

The results of such a comparative study on blood(shed) are expected to shed light on the case of king Manasseh. They will explain the specificity and significance of Manasseh's bloodshed for the theological interpretation

entalistiek, 1993) 451–470; Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Traditions- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift*, Zweite Aufgabe, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 55 (Neukirchen-Vlyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 2000); William K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Yitzhaq Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Context, and Meaning*, Writings From the Ancient World: Supplement Series 2 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011); Naphtali Meshel, "The Form and Function of a Biblical Blood Ritual," *Vetus Testamentum* 63 (2013): 276–289; Christophe Nihan, "The Templization of Israel in Leviticus: Some Remarks on Blood Disposal and *Kipper* in Leviticus 4," in *Text, Time and Temple: Literary, Historical and Ritual Studies in Leviticus*, eds. Francis Landy, Leigh M. Trevaskis and Bryan D. Bibb, Hebrew Bible Monographs 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 94–130; James W. Watts, "The Historical and Literary Contexts of the Sin and Guilt Offerings," in *Text, Time and Temple: Literary, Historical and Ritual Studies in Leviticus*, eds. Francis Landy, Leigh M. Trevaskis and Bryan D. Bibb, Hebrew Bible Monographs 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 85–93.

3 See Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Carol L. Meyers and Michael O'Connor, American School of Oriental Research: Special Volume Series 1 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 399–414.

4 See Jonathan Klawans, "Pure Violence: Sacrifice and Defilement in Ancient Israel," *Harvard Theological Review* 94, no. 2 (2001): 133–155; Csilla Saysell, "The Blood Manipulation of the Sin Offering and the Logic of Defilement," *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 13, no. 2 (2018): 61–70.