Chapter 1: Why Does the Tribe of Benjamin Matter? (Pages 1–10)

The first chapter establishes the rationale for a study of the history and memory of the tribe of Benjamin; surveys scholarly literature on Benjamin, the Babylonian and Persian periods in Yehud, and the book of Chronicles; and concisely outlines the premises and theses of the study.

In recent years a great deal of scholarly attention has been paid to the era of Persian hegemony in Yehud (Judea)—roughly mid-6th century to mid-4th century BCE—as the formative period for the Hebrew Bible. The destruction of the Jerusalem temple, deportations to Babylon, the beginnings of Jewish diaspora life, the building of a second temple (along with other Yahwistic cultic centers), and the negotiation of identity within the imperial context, are significant developments that led to the composition of new texts, as well as the compilation and supplementation of older traditions.

Prior to the publication of this monograph, numerous scholarly articles had focused on various aspects or instances of the identity 'Benjamin' in biblical texts, and the significance of this identity to communities in the pre-exilic kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and in the Babylonian and Persian periods (and beyond). This body of academic literature included historical and archaeological studies of the regions of Yehud that are identified in the biblical texts with the tribe of Benjamin, as well as literary/cultural memory studies of Benjamin and Benjaminite figures in the Hebrew Bible (and beyond). Yet despite aspirations expressed by several scholars (Davies 2007; Fleming 2012) to develop a book-length treatment of the phenomenon of Benjaminite identity, no such study had been published since 1963 (Schunck).

Even greater than the interest in Benjaminite identity has been the emergence in recent decades of scholarly focus on the book of Chronicles. While earlier generations of critical scholars had discounted Chronicles' value for reconstructing the pre-exilic history of Israel and Judah (which is the ostensible subject of the book), in the latter third of the 20th century attention shifted to what the Chronicler's work can reveal concerning his own context of composition: the late Persian period or early Hellenistic period. The book of Chronicles makes extensive use of earlier biblical

materials—shaping, supplementing, harmonizing, subtracting, and reworking these materials concerning his people's distant past, to speak into his own context. While other editors/redactors of biblical books did this as well, what makes Chronicles so fruitful is that his main sources for his narrative are preserved for us and regarded as part of the Hebrew canon: the books of Samuel and Kings, which are regarded by some as having formed at some stage a five-part serial work (with Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges) called the "Deuteronomistic History" (DtrH or DtrG).

Benjamin and Benjaminite characters are significant in both Chronicles and in its predecessor work, the DtrH. Benjaminite territory was situated between Judah to the south (the largest tribal identity) and the Josephite tribes to the north (the identities around which other tribes coalesced to form a polity larger than Judah: Northern "Israel"). Benjaminite territory and people at various times were claimed by either Judah or Northern Israel. Moreover, the first king of Greater Israel, Saul, was described as a Benjaminite; the book of Samuel recounts the relationship between this Benjaminite royal house and David, the Judahite who would eventually establish a dynasty. This conflict between Benjaminite and Judahite royal houses left its imprint on the historical memory of Israel, Benjamin, and Judah, was preserved in the so-called DtrH, and continued to be litigated in the Persian period as conflicts arose between Benjaminites and Judahites concerning political leadership and religious centralization. Scholars had hinted that the Chronicler's historical revisionism included a significant recasting of the past relationship between Benjamin and Judah; however, only article-length studies of specific passages within DtrH and Chronicles in relation to Benjamin had been published.

Thus, a full study of the Chronicler's portrait of Benjamin would illumine the Chronicler's aims and methods, and so shed light on the social context of Yehud in which the Hebrew Bible was formed. In examining the intersection of Chronicles and Benjamin in context, two concepts from the field of political economy are proposed as useful heuristics for modeling the Chronicler's rhetorical aims: *selectorate*, and *heresthetic*. Political economy therefore represents a third body of literature to which the study contributes, providing an example of successful integration of social science and historical study of religious texts.

The hypothesis is as follows: "Chronicles is a unique form of consensus-building literature. The Chronicler's portrayal of Benjamin in relation to Judah reflects an inclusive vision of "all Israel" that walks a fine line: simultaneously valuing Benjamin as an equal partner with Judah (as his "right hand"), yet still protecting the primacy of David as YHWH's chosen ruler, the Levites as the priestly tribe, and Jerusalem as the proper cultic center" (7).

Chapter 2: Laying the Groundwork: Historical-Critical and Social-Scientific Methods (Pages 13–46)

The second chapter articulates the methodology, and surveys key academic literatures that form the foundation for the study. The methodological considerations are roughly divided into historiography (14–25), texts and identities (25–37), and political economy (38–46).

§2.1 Historical Criticism and Literary Representation of History. Historical study entails methodological self-awareness for the modern historian of ancient history, and also thoughtful assessment of the ancient historian (the Chronicler) in context (14–15). The study builds on Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological approach toward the aim of a "just allotment of memory" (16–19); and biblical scholars such as Dobbs-Allsopp, Ska and Grabbe who represent a broader movement to navigate a *via media* between radical historicism and poststructuralism on the one hand and the objectivist determinism of unchastened modernism on the other (15–16, 20–23). The biblical texts contain true data about the past, but must be assessed critically with due consideration to the discernable aims of the author/editor (23). Yet we must not overestimate ancient historians' ability to fabricate or change facts, as communities of origin and reception would have provided constraints on the author/editor (24–25).

§2.2 Identities in Persian Yehud: Communities and Texts. The overall study proposes an interactive relationship between the text of Chronicles and community identity—each influencing the other. This section therefore surveys models for understanding identity in Persian Yehud, as well as the interaction between identities, community, and written text. After acknowledging seminal works on ethnicity (A.D. Smith, F. Barth) and social memory (Berger & Luckmann), the section evaluates the work of Berquist and Jonker focusing specifically on Yehudite identity in the Persian period. Berquist rightly problematizes the category of "ethnicity" applied to the ancient world, and the identity marker of "religion," given the plurality of religious practices and beliefs among Yehudians apparent from archaeological findings (27–29). Jonker highlights the reality of overlapping identities of an individual, defined in distinction to an "other." These identities existed on multiple dimensions: imperial (Yehudian over-against Persian hierarchy), regional (over-against Samarian), tribal (Levite vs. Benjaminite vs. Judahite), and even inner-Levitical (pro-priestly vs. pro-Levite) (29–31, 34–37). Both Berquist and Jonker emphasize the necessity of speaking not primarily of *identity* (a status) but rather *identity formation* (a process and its results) (30). Finally, following Levtow and Ben Zvi, the relationship between social memory, community, and written text is considered through the dynamics of C. Bell's conception of "ritualization," orality/literacy studies, and material culture (physical production and destruction of texts) (32–33, 36–37).

§2.3 Political Theories: Selectorate Theory and Heresthetics. A key innovation of the overall study is to present the Chronicler's rhetorical strategy in terms of political economy. This section outlines the concepts of *heresthetic* (W. Riker) and *selectorate* (Bueno de Mesquita et al.). Selectorate theory (38–41) suggests that political systems can be characterized by the relative size of four groups: the government leadership (individual or small group), the selectorate (group of individuals who have a say in choosing the leader), the winning coalition (the subset of the electorate whose support the leadership must have in order to maintain power), and the disenfranchised (the remaining members of society outside the selectorate). Leadership provides a combination of public goods (that benefit everyone in the system) and private goods (directed to the members of their winning coalition). Whereas *rhetoric* seeks to persuade, *heresthetic* is a technique or strategy "concerned with restructuring the process of collective decision-making so as to ensure a certain outcome" (41). Riker suggests three forms of heresthetic—recasting or recombining issues to permit previously untenable political alliances (forming a new winning coalition); controlling the order in which binary choices are offered to decide between three or more options (e.g., Condorcet's paradox); and (the most difficult form) seeking to add or subtract members of the selectorate itself through revolution or reformation of political structures (41–42). The relevance of these concepts to the negotiation of power, revenue, and influence within the Persian imperial context of Yehud is suggested in the conclusion of the chapter (42–46), to be reevaluated in chapter seven.

Chapter 3: Chronicles and the Persian Era (Pages 47–84)

The third chapter situates the overall study in relation to scholarly debates concerning the book of Chronicles.

§3.1 Chronicles: The Received Text. This section addresses fundamental matters, such as the relatively uncomplicated textual history of Chronicles (48–50). A mainstream position that places the date of Chronicles in the late Persian or perhaps early Hellenistic period is adopted (50–54), as is the consensus view concerning distinctiveness of Chronicles relative to the book of Ezra-Nehemiah—which were once thought to constitute a unified "Chronistic History" (54–55).

§3.2 Composition: Sources and Redaction. The Chronicler's creative and intentional reworking of earlier sources lies at the heart of the overall study (56). Having considered the provocative alternate view that Samuel–Kings and Chronicles developed separately from a common source (advocated by Auld, Person, and Ho among a few others), the study opts for the mainstream view that the Chronicler used as sources the books of Samuel and Kings in something close to their received form (58–62). This move is significant because it allows us to attribute absence in

Chronicles of certain Benjamin-related material (that is found in DtrH) to the Chronicler's editorial decision, rather than to a DtrH expansion upon a common source (61). Regarding redactional history of Chronicles, unity of composition is preferred, with unevenness in the material attributed to the use of sources and the Chronicler's overall attempts to blend traditions (such as D and P material from the Pentateuch) (62–63).

§3.3 Chronicles: Theological Historiography? Accepting the rather broad categorization of Chronicles as "theological historiography" (without any implication concerning the "reliability" of Chronicles by modern standards), this section mainly considers the potential relation of theological themes in Chronicles to the question of Benjamin–Judah relations (65–73). Theological themes particularly relevant to Benjamin are: monotheism with broad/universal appeal to outsiders; centralization of the cult in Jerusalem; Davidic monarchy (over-against Saulides); and the prominent "all Israel" ideology: "Though other tribal identities persisted, the Chronicler's Benjaminite audience formed the primary constituency of 'all Israel' beside the royal and priestly tribes of Judah and Levi in the Persian period. The Chronicler's presentation of Benjamin in relation to the royal tribe of Judah is an important 'test case' or manifestation of the Chronicler's vision of 'all Israel'" (73).

§3.4 Historical Setting of Chronicles: Persian Yehud. This section surveys recent developments in Achaemenid studies relevant to the study of the Hebrew Bible (73–84). Most significant are the competitive power dynamic in the Transeuphrates satrapy between Yehud and Samarina (with Benjaminite territory in between); the competition between regional temples as centers of power and revenue collection; and the low probability of imperial financial support for the Jerusalem temple. Such realities induced the leadership of the Jerusalem cult, of which the Chronicler was likely a member, to expand its sphere of influence.

Chapter 4: The Tribe of Benjamin in History and Literature (Pages 85–120)

In preparation for closer study of the rhetorical strategies of the DtrH and Chronicles with respect to Benjamin in chapters 5–7, this chapter delves into current research on the history of the Benjaminite region *behind* the biblical texts, and the portraits of Benjaminite identity in biblical literature other than DtrH and Chronicles.

§4.1 History of Benjamin. Three key findings by archaeologists establish the centrality of the historical 'Benjamin' to the so-called "quest for the historical 'Israel.'"

First: within the various hypotheses concerning the development of 'Israel' as an entity, there is agreement among archaeologists that such an identity first emerged in and south of the Ephraimite hill country, in what would come to be called 'Benjaminite' areas; that earliest texts of

reflect a perceived close-kinship relationship between the inhabitants of Josephite (Ephraim and Manasseh) and Benjaminite areas; and that a leader from the base of the hill country (Benjamin) that could unite the Josephites with 'Judahite' regions to the south is plausible, if not probable (86–88). Numerous cultic centers associated with emerging Israel are located within Benjamin or on the border with Ephraim: Nob, Bethel, Gibeon, Mizpah.

Second: once two separate polities are established (at least by the end of the 10th century)—Israel and Judah—Benjaminite territory encompasses most of the border fluctuations between the two polities. Benjaminites themselves were pulled between closer perceived kinship ties to the north and economic/political ties to the south (Judah). The construction of the Jerusalem temple on the border between Judah and Benjamin reflects this tie to the south, while the strengthening of the Bethel cultic site and the establishment of Samaria near Gerizim reflects Israelite attempts to draw Benjaminite loyalties northward. Benjamin became more closely associated with Judah and the Jerusalem monarchy after the subjugation of Israel by the Assyrians in the late 8th century (88–93).

Third: O. Lipschits and others have argued convincingly that in the wake of the Babylonian conquest of Judah (598–582 BCE), the Benjaminite regions suffered the least in terms of destruction, economic devastation, and deportations. This leads to a situation in Babylonian Yehud in which the Judahite (royal) and Levite (cultic) leadership had been deported and their lands devastated, while the Benjaminite Yehudian leadership apparently enjoyed the support of imperial overlords. These factors led to tribal conflicts of leadership in the early Persian period, between waves of predominantly Judah- and Levi-led returnees (the *golah* community), and predominantly Benjaminite established leadership in Yehud (the *she'erit* communities). The rebuilt Jerusalem temple also competed with Benjaminite cultic centers who had benefited from its destruction. Thus, the social, political, economic, and religious conflicts between these groups with roots in Yehud have significant tribal dimensions in the Persian period (93–99).

§4.2 Benjamin in the Hebrew Bible. This shorter section maps other references to Benjamin and Benjaminites (besides the Saulide dynasty) in the Hebrew Bible onto the history behind the text (99–105). Most notable are the tribal struggles embedded in the narratives of Benjamin's birth (Gen 35) and the Joseph Novella (Gen 37–50), whereby Judah and Joseph compete for closer ties to Benjamin;[1] and the significance of Benjaminite towns in the book of Jeremiah, the Levitical priest who owned territory in Benjamin and advocated capitulation to the Babylonians (102–103). The

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[1] This idea was later developed in Benjamin D. Giffone, "'Israel's' Only Son? The Complexity of Benjaminite Identity Between Judah and Joseph," *Old Testament Essays* 32.3 (2019): 956–972.

competing etymologies of the name "Benjamin" in Gen 35 reflect either Josephite ("Son of the South") or Judahite ("Son of the Right Hand") perspectives on Benjamin (100).

§4.3 Saul: Survey of Research. Saul, as the most prominent Benjaminite figure in the Hebrew Bible, has prompted many historical, literary, and reception-historical studies. Literary treatments of Saul have tended to present him as a tragic hero (of the Aristotelian type), and as a foil for David (105–107). Source- and redaction-critical studies have suggested an original pro-Saul source for the book of Samuel, which was then supplemented to present Saul as paling in comparison to David (106–109). Several earlier studies have suggested that a pro-David redaction of a previously pro-Saul tradition (in DtrH) could have served a polemical function in the Babylonian or early Persian periods, when Judahite or Benjaminite leaders (even royal houses) struggled for power (111–119). In contrast to the DtrH's varied and sometimes negative portrait of Benjaminites and Judah-Benjamin relations, the books of Esther and Chronicles take different approaches to polishing Benjamin's image. "The book of Esther rehabilitates the descendants of Saul: Esther and Mordecai are virtuous; the unfinished business with Amalek is concluded; and Israel did not lay hands on the spoil."[2] Chronicles re-starts and re-writes the history between the two tribes—other scholars have hinted at this, but this book presents a fresh, comprehensive treatment (particularly in chapter 6).

Chapter 5: The Tribe of Benjamin in the Deuteronomistic History (Pages 123–168)

Having focused mainly on historical matters in chapters 3–4, the book here shifts attention to two literary snapshots: the portraits of Benjamin and its relation to Judah and Josephite tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh) that are presented in the DtrH (ch. 5) and in Chronicles (ch. 6). The distance between these two portraits can then be evaluated as part of the Chronicler's rhetorical strategy regarding Benjamin. §5.1, "Goal and Method," recognizes the limits of our ability to determine which characters and places were in fact regarded as "Benjaminite" or otherwise. But all that must be determined is whether characters or places would have been regarded by the later readers of DtrH and Chronicles as "Benjaminite," regardless of the historical realities behind the text. The tribal allocation lists and place names of Num 32; 35; Deut 4:41–49; and Josh 13–21 are taken as a starting point for tribal identifications (123–124).

§5.2 The Book of Joshua, notably, contains earlier material which is then given a Deuteronomistic (so, Judah-interested) structure and frame (124–125). Nearly all of the "action" in Joshua 2–10, including both positive and negative material, is set within what would become

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[2] Yairah Amit, "The Saul Polemic in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 647–661 [654].

Benjaminite areas: Jericho, Ai, and Gibeon (130–132). Within the tribal allotments (Josh 13–21), an Ephraimite leader (Joshua) is presented positively as facilitating a fair distribution between Judah and Josephite tribes first, and then the rest of the tribes by lot—Benjamin receiving first lot, on the border between Judah and Ephraim (126–130). Jebus/Jerusalem forms the southern boundary with Judah, and Bethel forms the northern boundary with Ephraim—both significant cultic sites well into the Persian period. "The delicate tribal balance in Joshua results from the blending of Northern and Southern traditions. At this early point in the Deuteronomistic narrative, the beginnings of Judah's primacy are already evident in its size and assigned location" (132).

§5.3 The Book of Judges appears be comprised of (among other materials) rather old Northern Israelite hero traditions (Jdg 4–16); traditions reflecting an early alliance centered around Joseph and Benjamin (Jdg 4–5); and a pro-Judah, anti-Benjamin, anti-Saul framing at the opening and conclusion (Jdg 1–3; 19–21). Judah's right to primacy (ultimately kingship) among the tribes is affirmed at the opening and the close of the book (133–135). Ehud, the left-handed Benjaminite judge, is presented with irony, ambiguity, and indignity in contrast to Judahite Othniel, the ideal judge (135–139). Benjaminite left-handedness[3] and the contrast with Judah are echoed in the concluding narratives of the Outrage at Gibeah (Jdg 19) and resulting war against Benjamin led by Judah (Jdg 20–21). This anti-Saul polemic and comparisons to 1 Samuel have been well-established by earlier scholars (142–144). Benjaminite border towns Bethel and Mizpah feature prominently, as does the Levitical priest—yet Judah is not presented entirely positively, either.

§5.4 In the Book of Samuel, Judah-Benjamin relations are central. The narrative follows the rise and fall of a Benjaminite king and his Judahite's successor's relationships to the Benjaminite royal family (no fewer than eight key relationships between David and Saul's house). Moreover, the action is largely set within Benjaminite territory, broadly understood to include Jebus/Jerusalem on the border between Benjamin and Judah (145–146). It is speculated that a core of pro-Saul traditions has been reworked to introduce what is clearly in its received form an apology for the Davidide dynasty. The book presents a varied portrait of both Saul and David, while carefully extricating David from his very intimate connections to Saul's house. David himself is presented as behaving only faithfully in his dealings with Benjaminites, even while those connected to David (Philistines and David's generals) manage to kill off most of David's Saulide rivals (155–159). But

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[3] The irony of the "Son of the Right Hand" who is left-handed (lit. "right-hand-hindered") is well-known; the transformation of this stereotype to suit the Chronicler's message is developed further in Benjamin D. Giffone, "'Special Forces': A Stereotype of Benjaminite Soldiers in the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 30 (2016): 16–29.

in this form the book would no doubt have been viewed by Benjaminites as a record of Judahite mistreatment of Benjamin and as an indictment of David as a usurper (159).

§5.5 "Like Samuel, Kings contains quite a bit of material that could have elicited a negative response from Benjaminites in the Babylonian and early Persian periods." (167). The Benjaminite content in the book of Kings is of a different nature than in Samuel. Only a few minor Benjaminite characters are mentioned in Kings (160–161). More significant is the greater attention to Benjaminite places (especially Bethel) and "the three key instances of national/tribal realignment: the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12), the capture of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kgs 17), and the fall of Judah to Babylon (2 Kgs 24–25)" (159–160). Jerusalem—the border city between Benjamin and Judah—is presented as the seat of Davidide power and the proper cultic center. This characterization projects a sphere of power that includes not only Judah to the south and the priestly tribe of Levi (no single assigned region), but also the rest of "Israel" to the north— and Benjamin is the closest "Northern" tribe (161–163). Benjaminite/Ephraimite Bethel emerges as one of the main cultic competitors to Jerusalem during this period, the site of one of two golden calves built by the Ephraimite king Jeroboam of Northern Israel after the political schism. The Bethel cult becomes a symbol in Kings for illicit (i.e., non-Deuteronomistic) forms of YHWH worship (163–164). 1 Kings 12 leaves Benjamin's status in the twelve-tribe divorce precarious: "ten" tribes appoint an Ephraimite king, and only "one" tribe is left for David's house (165–166). In the wake of the conquest of Northern Israel (late 8th century), the Jerusalemite kingdom's influence extends further north as far as Bethel, to encompass nearly all of Benjamin (163). After the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, the province is governed from Benjaminite Mizpah (164).

§5.6 Summary and Analysis. The so-called Deuteronomistic History, among other things, defends the legitimacy of the Judahite royal house and Jerusalem as the proper Yahwistic cultic center. These books draw from Northern and Benjaminite materials, often transforming them for Southern/Judahite ends. The result is a grand narrative that includes "quite a bit of divisive material within this account of Israel's rise and fall. The DtrH presents the struggles of Israel's tribes in all their messiness—including facts or interpretations that a Benjaminite audience would dispute, or facts that could easily be incorporated into anti-Judah rhetoric" (168).

Chapter 6: The Tribe of Benjamin in Chronicles (Pages 169–206)

This chapter constitutes the empirical heart of the overall study: the methodical explication of the Chronicler's treatment of Benjamin, in comparison with the DtrH source. (The chapter is supplemented by the Appendix, "References to Benjamin in Chronicles," 236–246.) In §6.1 Criteria and Method, the following categories of material are distinguished: (1) Benjaminite materials

within sections of Chronicles that have no parallel in the DtrH; (2) Benjaminite material within sections of Chronicles that have been adopted from the DtrH; and (3) Significant sections omitted from the DtrH that contain Benjaminite material (170). In each case the Chronicler's editorial decision regarding Benjamin is mapped onto the Chronicler's key themes (explicated in chapter 3)—particularly king, cult, and the extent of the community ('all Israel'). In the case of the 'all Israel' theme, attention will be drawn to passages that distinguish Benjamin from other "Northern" tribes (170–171).

§6.2 is further broken down into references to "Benjamin" (172), Benjaminite persons (173–180), and Benjaminite places (181–185); and builds out more comprehensively from shorter studies by Jonker, Amit, and Knoppers. The detailed findings are summarized as follows:

"The references to Benjamin, Benjaminites, and Benjaminite places in Chronicles are consistent with the book's narrow focus on the public lives of Judahite kings and the religious activities and responsibilities of the Levitical families. Characters from tribes other than Judah and Levi—including Benjaminites—recede into the background. After the division of the kingdom, the Northern tribes collectively retreat from the Chronicler's purview—but Benjamin remains a relevant collective identity, as evidenced by the numerous references to 'Benjamin' and 'Benjaminites' in 2 Chronicles. Benjamin remains the primary constituent tribe of 'all Israel' beside Judah and Levi. Benjaminites are prominent in all sections of Chronicles, serving in important administrative and military positions. Uniquely Benjaminite locations receive less attention because they have no cultic significance for the Chronicler. It is implied that the Jerusalem temple belongs equally to Judah, Benjamin and Levi, being located on the border between the territories of the first two tribes and administered by the third" (185).

§6.3, Benjamin in the Sections of Chronicles, expounds the significant Benjaminite interest in each major section of the book. The well-recognized chiastic structure of the genealogies (1 Chr 1–9) places Benjamin on equal footing with Judah and Levi within 'all Israel,' while connecting all three tribes to the Persian period (186–189). In the reign of David (1 Chr 10–29): any negative conception of Benjamin is isolated on Saul and his house (here following Knoppers 2006); Benjaminites become David's earliest supporters among 'all Israel'; David's first act as king is to conquer Jebus/Jerusalem and establish his capital; and transformed census narrative (1 Chr 21) does not harm Benjamin or Levi but explicitly leads to the discovery of the temple site on the Judah-Benjamin border (this connection being merely implicit in 2 Sam 24) (189–193). In the reign of Solomon (2 Chr 1–9), Solomon's cultic actions at the tabernacle in Gibeon (of Benjamin) are

celebrated[4] prior to the temple dedication (194–195). In the account of the kings of Judah (2 Chr 10–36), the Chronicler emphasizes the unity and complementarity of Judah and Benjamin; variations of the phrase "Judah and Benjamin" occur eleven times, in contrast to a single occurrence in Kings' material covering the same period (195–197). Overall: "The Chronicler highlights the close relationship between Benjamin and Judah—almost certainly exaggerating the connection and oversimplifying historical complexities along the way. The Chronicler believes that his main emphases—the Davidic monarchy, Jerusalem cult, confession and repentance, the unity of 'all Israel'—should be embraced equally by Benjaminites as well as Judahites and Levites, whose interests are represented more explicitly in Chronicles" (197).

§6.4, Omissions from the Deuteronomistic History, explores the Benjaminite component of Chronicler's strategy in bypassing significant material from his sources. Some editorial exclusions appear to be the result of a conciliatory strategy toward Benjamin; in other cases the Chronicler's treatment of Benjamin is merely a byproduct of decisions made in service of other concerns.

One subsection (indebted to Knoppers, among others) explores the exclusion of virtually all material concerning Saul and his house, both positive and negative: legitimizing Saul's kingship over Israel; casting minimal aspersion upon Benjamin collectively by isolating (and minimizing) criticism of Saul's actions; and disentangling David from Saul's house (197–204). Thus, even some positive stories about David and Michal, Jonathan and Mephibosheth are excluded by the Chronicler (199–202).

A second subsection demonstrates how the Chronicler balanced the aim of presenting a history that extends from Adam to Cyrus with the concern to exclude controversial (and tribally-divisive) material from the period of the conquest and judges: "…A Benjaminite interest is partly responsible for the Chronicler's replacement of a narrative history rife with tribal conflict with a balanced genealogical survey that presumes, by its grouping of tribes and the persons mentioned, Israel's Joshua- and Judges-era presence in the land (Simeon with Judah, Transjordan tribes, Northern tribes, etc.). By including a genealogy rather than a narrative summary of Joshua–Judges, the Chronicler is able to bypass all the 'difficult' Benjamin material surveyed in the last two chapters: aetiologies of Benjaminite cultic sites; less-than-savory exploits of Benjaminite and Northern judges; and the civil war against Benjamin. The past is acknowledged, but the focus is the integrity of 'all Israel' and the connections of the past to the Chronicler's present day" (205).

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[4] This contrasts with the apparent embarrassment of the parallel Deuteronomistic account (1 Kgs 3), which I subsequently expounded in Benjamin D. Giffone, "According to Which 'Law of Moses'? Cult Centralization in Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles," *Vetus Testamentum* 67 (2017): 432–447.

A third subsection argues that the Chronicler's exclusion of Northern stories from 1 Kings 12:25 to 2 Kings 25 has the effect of "replacing one conception of Benjamin with another" (205–206). Benjaminite/Josephite "Bethel" is the site of the beginning and ending of Northern idolatry in Kings; seven varied references to Jericho in Kings are replaced with a single positive reference within 2 Chr 10–36 (28:15).

§6.5 Summary: "Chronicles consistently attempts to portray Benjamin positively from a Judah- and Levi-centered perspective. It is difficult to argue that a Benjamin-inclusive agenda is a primary concern of the Chronicler. However, we do find instances in which the Chronicler's editorial decisions become intelligible through the lens of a Benjamin-inclusive agenda—decisions that are difficult to explain in light of the more commonly understood themes of Chronicles" (206).

Chapter 7: The Chronicler's 'Benjamin' in Persian Yehud (Pages 207–228)

This chapter synthesizes the data from chapters 4–6, through the critical lenses outlined in chapter 2.

§7.1 Comparison: Benjamin in the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles. Both the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles represent fundamentally pro-Judah, pro-Levi, pro-Jerusalem-cult perspectives on Israel's history. From that baseline, both works present a somewhat balanced perspective on Benjamin—but for different reasons: DtrH by means of incorporation of pro-Northern and pro-Benjamin traditions into a Southern-oriented framework (balance in terms of overall attention to tribal locations and persons), and Chronicles by means of conscious construction of "a sort of limited parity between Judah and Benjamin, with Levi in the middle" (208). The Chronicler reworks the history to perform a sleight of hand: strengthening the association of Benjamin to Judah as part of 'all Israel,' to Jerusalem as the cultic center, and to the Davidides—while also coopting any possible Benjaminite alternatives (209–210). Selectorate theory (introduced in §2.3.1) is used to explain the different conceptions of monarchic power reflected in DtrH and Chronicles (210–212).

§7.2 The Chronicler, the Tribe of Benjamin, and Persian Yehud. Fleming (2012) has provided a fascinating study of the legacy of the identity and traditions of "Israel" in a Hebrew Bible that, in its final form, is pro-Judah and pro-Levi. Applying this line of inquiry to the unique identity of "Benjamin" in DtrH and Chronicles yields significant results for the study of the Persian context: "Benjamin is unique among the tribes that self-identified as descendants of ancient Israel. Benjaminites apparently enjoyed historic ties to Israel, especially the Josephite tribes, but also persisted as a subset of the polity of Judah/Yehud. 'Benjaminite' appears to be the most significant non-Judahite, non-Levite self-categorization in the second temple period, as the other tribal

identifications of Israel grew less prominent. The presence of Benjamin in Persian-era Hebrew scripture, then, is not only a 'legacy,' but also a statement about 'Israel' to the author's contemporaries" (213).

The Chronicler, likely a member of the Levite scribal and priestly elite in Jerusalem, directs his vision of 'all Israel' toward Benjamin in order to expand the Jerusalem temple's constituency—in competition with Benjaminite sites such as Bethel, Gibeon and Mizpah, and Josephite Gerizim (213–216). The legacy of early Persian intra-Yehud conflict between the largely Judahite/Levite returnees (*golah* community) and largely Benjaminite remainees (*she'erit* community), combined with the contested legacy of Judah-Benjamin relations in the Deuteronomistic traditions, was an obstacle that the Chronicler sought to overcome (214–216).

The Chronicler therefore employed a *heresthetic* strategy of irenic outreach to Benjamin (and to Northern-identifying Samarians), recasting key Israelite symbols and concepts to broaden Jerusalem's appeal (218–224). This crucial conclusion of the book warrants a lengthy quotation:

> One of the key aspects of heresthetic strategy is *dimensionality*, the addition of a new dimension that changes the content or order of questions/decisions, in order to manipulate the outcome (§2.3.3). Three important questions in Chronicles pertaining to the cult are:
>
> 1. Who should be part of the worship of YHWH?
> 2. Where should the cult be located?
> 3. Which group should oversee the YHWH cult?
>
> If the third question is asked first and the Chronicler provides the answer, "the Aaronides and the Levites, with the support of the Davidide kings," then he risks alienating Benjaminites who might dissociate themselves from "all Israel" (first question) and reject Jerusalem in favor of Benjaminite cultic locations (second question). In 1 Chr 21 and following, the Chronicler cleverly answers the questions in the order given above:
>
> 1. "All Israel" should worship YHWH, including Benjamin (21:6). Benjamin has "early and always" been an important connection between Judah and "all Israel" (1 Chr 8; 11–12).
> 2. YHWH should be worshiped in Jerusalem, and Benjamin has always been associated with Jerusalem and its cult (21:18–22:1).
> 3. Given the first two answers, Levi should administer the cult for the benefit of Benjamin and "all Israel," with the support of the Jerusalemite kings (1 Chr 22–26). (219–220)

While some scholars have proposed that Chronicles represents an attempt to reestablish a Davidide monarchy independent of the Persian empire, the Chronicler's rhetorical goals with respect to Benjaminite inclusion appear to have been more modest: "a degree of autonomy,

independence and security for a unified Israel, centered around the Jerusalem cult. If Benjamin, the most substantial 'other' tribe in the region, could be rallied to this goal, the Jerusalem cult stood the best chance of success—due both to YHWH's restored favor for unified Israel, and to the increase in economic activity in Jerusalem" (223).

It is not possible for us to know whether the Chronicler's outreach to Benjamin was successful in reality—perhaps the oversimplified history and coopted symbols would not have appealed to actual Benjaminites in late Persian (or early Hellenistic) Yehud. All that can be said for certain is that the identity "Benjaminite" was resilient and continued long into late antiquity—reflected, for example, in the figures of Esther and Mordecai in the book of Esther, and Saul of Tarsus (the Apostle Paul) in the New Testament, each of whom identified as both "Jew"/"Yehudian" (יהודים/Ἰουδαῖος) and as Benjaminite (224–226). This may constitute general evidence of a "truce" or reconciliation between Jews/Yehudians of various tribal identifications.

§7.3 Revisiting the Hypothesis. The key arguments and the hypothesis of the book laid out in the first chapter are restated, with key caveats concerning the vulnerability of the thesis to shifting archaeological and historical evidence concerning settlement patterns and sectarian conflicts (227).

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Ideas for Further Study (Pages 229–235)

The concluding chapter briefly reflects on the contributions of this book in relation to broader currents within biblical studies.

The book represents an attempt within the broader study of theology and biblical studies to draw out what P. Davies has called "the Benjaminite substratum" in the Hebrew Bible. Despite Benjamin's increasing importance to archaeology and biblical studies in the last two decades, this is the first monograph-length treatment of Benjamin since 1963. Further studies, both historical and textual, are needed—beginning with the Benjaminite presence in the Pentateuch and in prophetic books such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The book makes a contribution to understanding the theologies and contexts of the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles. Though a Benjamin-oriented message is not in every instance the primary feature of the authors'/editors' rhetorical strategy, Benjaminite content and themes lie close to (and sometimes constitute) the core of those strategies. The search for "Benjamin" significantly illumines "Judah's Bible."

The book also aims to aid the traditional fields of exegesis, biblical theology, and ancient history with insights from the social sciences, namely, political economy. "Economics" as a discipline has broadened to make contributions to many different fields of the humanities and the

social sciences. Empirical insights from the social sciences can contribute to our understanding of the origins of historical and religious texts.