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From the Foundations to the Crenellations

Essays on Temple Building
in the Ancient Near East
and Hebrew Bible

Edited by
Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny

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Temple Building in Haggai

Variations on a Theme

John Kessler, Toronto

When the community in Yehud undertook the reconstruction of the Jerusalemite temple in the late sixth century BCE it became a part of a long succession of ancient Near Eastern temple builders and restorers, spanning many centuries and various diverse geographical contexts.¹ The work of Richard Ellis which is being commemorated in this volume constituted a highly significant contribution to our understanding of the historical and ideological dimensions of foundation deposits.² Ellis' monograph was an important addition to the growing body of research investigating broader ancient Near Eastern traditions and practices regarding temple building and the echoes of such matters within the biblical text. The richness and ongoing vitality of this research is reflected in the essays in the present volume and the broader body of material from which they draw. While it is possible to detect both significant differences in thematic and ideological emphasis in the evidence from various sites, as well as historical and cultural developments, it is nevertheless possible to identify the central issues at play when construction of a new temple was undertaken or a damaged site was restored.³ These central themes include the obtaining of divine approval for temple building, the divine authorization of an individual or group as temple builder, knowledge of the specific timing for the initiation and subsequent steps in temple building, the ascertaining of the specific site upon which the new temple was to be built (or in cases of restoration, determining the precise foundation lines of the old temple), the ritual cleansing of the city including the settling of out-

¹ The present study follows the general scholarly consensus and view that the initial construction and dedication of the "Second Temple" in the reign of Darius I (reigned 520–486 BCE). For the view that the origins of the Second Temple are to be found at a later date compare L. Dequecker, "Darius the Persian and the Reconstruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4, 24)," in J. Quaegebur (ed.), *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (Leuven 1993) pp. 67–92; and D. V. Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London 2005). This study will primarily address matters relating to ideology and the recontextualization of religious traditions.

² R. S. Ellis, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia* (=Foundation Deposits; YNER 2; New Haven and London 1968).

³ The bibliography here is immense. See for some basic considerations, R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids 1997) pp. 274–330; A. S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," *Orientalia* NS 32 (1963) pp. 56–62; R. E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Oxford 1965); and V. (A.) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (=Exalted House; JSOTSup 115; Sheffield 1992).

standing disputes and contentious matters, the ritual purification of the building materials and the site, the ritual preparation of the “first brick” (or in cases of restoration, the placement of the “former brick”), the preparation and installation of foundation boxes including foundation deposits and foundation pegs, details concerning the funding of the construction, acts designed to induce the deity to take up residence in the new or rebuilt structure (including acts of consecration of the structure and the provision of gifts and furnishings for the comfort of the deity), and ceremonies marking the occupation of the new structure by its patron deity (including a festal banquet) and hopes for the future glorification of the temple and its role as a world center.

The purpose of the present essay is to reflect upon the distinctive reformulations of these motifs as they are found in the book of Haggai⁴ against the backdrop of both ancient Near Eastern and biblical tradition and practice. This being the objective, the question immediately arises as to how much knowledge of these themes may be posited with reference to Haggai. It would be ultimately impossible to demonstrate that either the prophet himself or the framer(s) of Haggai possessed a *detailed* knowledge of ancient Near Eastern temple building and rededication procedures. As such any suggestions regarding counterpoints or echoes in Haggai *vis-à-vis* other highly specific and distinctive ancient Near Eastern texts or traditions would be too speculative to be convincing. However it is legitimate to discern the presence of variations and reinterpretations of broadly distributed ancient Near Eastern themes (both chronologically and geographically) within Haggai. As Hurowitz suggests, the Persian Period biblical texts may be seen as reflecting an “indirect ... diluted Mesopotamian tradition of building accounts.”⁵ The Judahite community reflected in Haggai and responsible for the production of the book likely included both those who remained in the land and those who had returned from exile.⁶ For

⁴ I will henceforth refer to this text simply as Haggai. Where I specifically wish to designate the prophet himself, I will so indicate.

⁵ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* p. 26.

⁶ Much debate surrounds the perspective of the framer(s) of Haggai *vis-à-vis* the tensions believed to have existed between those who remained in the land and those who returned from exile. It has been suggested that Haggai himself was a non-exiled Judean and spokesperson for that community, whose words were subsequently redacted by a perspective favoring the Babylonian returnees, such as Zerubbabel and Joshua. For this approach compare W. A. M. Beuken, *Haggai–Sacharja 1–8: Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der frühnachexilischen Prophetie (=Haggai-Sacharja; Assen 1967)* p. 334. For a similar perspective, according to which the prophet Haggai spoke only to the non-deported Judean population, and a later redaction linked his words to Zerubbabel and Joshua, compare A. Sérandour, “Réflexions à propos d’un livre récent sur Aggée-Zacharie 1–8,” *Transeu 10* (1995) pp. 75–84. In my own view various considerations speak against approaches which attempt to draw far-reaching conclusions based upon distinctions between the oracles and editorial framework in Haggai. Linguistic differences between the two sections (as generally delimited by those who accept such a division) are likely due to subject matter and form. Ideological distinctions between the two are hard to sustain without an appeal to *a priori* considerations. What is more, there is a striking tendency for scholars increasingly to assign portions of the oracles to the editorial framework, based on ideological and historical judgments (thus Sérandour, *Transeu 10* *passim*; and A. Sérandour, “Les récits bibliques de la construction du second temple: leurs enjeux,” *Transeu 11* [1996] pp. 9–32). Thus it is more judicious to read the work as a

diverse reasons and from a variety of perspectives, both would have been aware of the broader ritual patterns and ideological underpinnings of temple construction and rededication. Such ideas were a part of the earlier religious traditions of the Israelite and Judean communities, as well as being a common element in the culture of Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean. This being the case, the distinctive re-configurations of such motifs which are manifested in Haggai can provide a point of entry into the broader theological perspective manifested in the text. The present study will therefore examine Haggai's treatment of the following themes: (1) divine authorization for building and its timing; (2) the temple builder(s); (3) matters concerning ritual purity and reconstruction; (4) motifs of fertility, wealth, and the temple's role as a world center; and (5) the return and residence of the deity in the temple.

Divine Authorization for Building and its Timing

Throughout the ancient Near East the decision to build a temple or rebuild a ruined one was not undertaken lightly, and was viewed as being fraught with danger.⁷ Proceeding without due authorization or at an inappropriate moment could bring curse and destruction.⁸ Hurowitz suggests three basic patterns for the initiation of temple building or reconstruction: (1) initiation of the project by a deity, followed by selection of a builder; (2) initiation of the project by an individual (usually a king) followed by the seeking and receiving of divine approval; and (3) initiation of the project by an individual, but divine approval is denied.⁹ In all of these patterns would-be builders took great pains to ascertain whether divine approval attended their project. This quest generally involved extispicy,¹⁰ divine revelation through dreams and

redacted whole, wherein the perspectives of the prophet as presented in the book stand in general continuity with those of the book's framers. On this compare the similar conclusion of M. H. Floyd who has carefully examined the relationship between source and redactional material in Haggai and concludes that "the kind of analysis that seeks to distinguish redactional material from source material ... should be abandoned, along with the historical speculation that has often been based on this practice" (M. H. Floyd, "The Nature of the Narrative and the Evidence of Redaction in Haggai," VT 45 [1995] pp. 470–490, especially p. 473). Compare also M. H. Floyd, *Minor Prophets, Part 2* (=Minor Prophets; FOTL 22; Grand Rapids 2000) pp. 259–260. If the "historical Haggai" held widely divergent views from the book's redactor, the latter has not allowed these to permeate the text. Furthermore, it is likely that the redaction of Haggai took place soon after the events it describes. The form of the dates in the book and their relationship to late sixth century scribal traditions, the lack of any mention of the rededication of the temple and the unattenuated expression of hope for Zerubabel in Hag 2:20–23 all speak in favor of this possibility. Thus I feel Haggai to be a text inclusive of the perspectives of the non-deported population and the returnees, framed in the late sixth century. For a fuller discussion of these and other related matters compare J. Kessler, *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud* (VTSup 91; Leiden 2002) pp. 31–57. Compare also Floyd, *Minor Prophets* pp. 259–260, and Floyd, VT 45 pp. 470–490. Even if one posits a later dating regarding the redactional history of Haggai, my conclusions in the present study are not affected.

⁷ See especially Ambos, above pp. 221–237.

⁸ Ambos, above pp. 221–234; and Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 154–167.

⁹ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* p. 137.

¹⁰ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 156–160.

their subsequent confirmation by an interpreter,¹¹ and other mantic and ritual practices. Furthermore, timing was extremely important. In the case of a ruined or destroyed shrine, the builders needed to be certain that the deity's anger (the most common explanation for the shrine's destruction) had abated and that rebuilding would not be a further offense or provocation.¹² Furthermore, great care was taken so as to build at auspicious moments.¹³

Questions regarding authorization to rebuild and the timing of such a project constitute a major component in Haggai. Indeed, such matters form the first element of the prophet's words to his community and launch the "drama" which unfolds over the course of the book.¹⁴ While logically separate, the matters of authorization and timing are so intertwined in Haggai that they must be discussed together.

As noted above, the words which open the book (Hag 1:2) center around the question of time. This theme is further developed in Hag 1:4–11, an oracle which consists of a prophetic denunciation of the community and its leaders¹⁵ regarding their neglect of the reconstruction of the temple. The prophet's opening salvo (Hag 1:2) takes the form of a citation of the people's words—words that the prophet will go on to ridicule and denounce. Haggai cites the people as saying *לֹא עָרַבְנָא עֲתֻרְבִּית יְהוָה לְהִבְנוֹת* (1:2). Scholars are divided regarding the import of these words. One line of argument translates the phrase "the time has not yet come, the time to rebuild Yahweh's house" and maintains that the people are expressing their reticence to undertake the temple's reconstruction, fearing they might incur further divine displeasure should their endeavor prove to be undertaken prematurely and without divine authorization. P. R. Bedford and H. Tadmor are eloquent proponents of this position, among other adherents.¹⁶ Bedford maintains that the population of Hag-

¹¹ Compare the examples in Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 143–149.

¹² For an excellent summary of this material, compare P. R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah* (=Temple Restoration; SJSJ 65; Leiden 2001) pp. 174–177; and Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 140–143.

¹³ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* p. 225.

¹⁴ I have argued that the form of Haggai is a hybrid of prophecy and narrative which I describe as "dramatized prophetic compilation." As such it contains a thematic development which unfolds as the dramatic events in the book are narrated, compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 243–246. See now T. Meadowcroft, *Haggai* (Readings; Sheffield 2006) p. 10 on the significance of narrative in Haggai. Meadowcroft deems narrative to be a highly distinctive element of the book.

¹⁵ In the present form of the book the prophet confronts the community's leaders (Hag 1:1) with a saying of the people (Hag 1:2) followed by a prophetic denunciation of that saying (Hag 1:4–11). This presentation implicates the civil and religious leaders in the attitude and choices of the community as a whole as it regards the rebuilding of the temple. On this, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 121–122; and D. L. Peterson, *Haggai and Zechariah 1–8* (OTL; London 1985) p. 47.

¹⁶ Bedford, *Temple Restoration* p. 161; Bedford, "Discerning the Time: Haggai, Zechariah and the 'Delay' in the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple," in S. W. Holloway and L. K. Handy (eds.), *The Pitcher is Broken, Memorial Essays for G. W. Ahlström* (JSOTSup 190; Sheffield 1995) pp. 71–94; and H. Tadmor, "'The Appointed Time Has Not Yet Arrived': The Historical Background of Haggai 1:2," in W. W. Hallo, L. H. Schiffman, and R. Chazan (eds.), *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine* (Winona Lake 1999) pp. 401–408. Compare also P. de Robert, "Pour ou contre le second temple," in M. Augustin and K. -D. Schunck (eds.), "Dort ziehen Schiffe dahin. . .":

gai's day understood the drought and poor economic conditions alluded to in Hag 1:3–11 as signs that the divinely appointed time had not yet come for the temple's reconstruction to be undertaken.¹⁷ Tadmor, taking a slightly different approach, suggests that the people and our prophet were in conflict over the start date for the calculation of Jeremiah's prophecy of a "seventy year" period before Babylon's judgment (Jer 25:11–12, compare Isa 23:15). Haggai deemed the time to be ripe at the time of the delivery of his oracles¹⁸ while the people hold what Tadmor considers to be the "orthodox" view and calculate the seventy years from 586.¹⁹ I have argued at length that such an understanding of the people's words *as represented in Haggai* reflects an incorrect reading of the *literary portrait* of the people being created in the text.²⁰ To be sure, given the socio-religious and ideological flux of the late sixth century, there could well have been much discussion of the appropriateness of temple reconstruction, and the correct time to do so. However, the portrait of the community in Hag 1:2–11 is not of a pious people wary of incurring the deity's ire and diligent to remain faithful *à la lettre* to the prophetic word. The image is rather of an obstinate and self-interested group who use sapiential reasoning to put off that which they clearly understood (or should have understood) to be their duty. The chief arguments in favor of such an understanding are as follows. First the correct translation of Hag 1:2b is not "the time has not come" but rather, "it is not the appropriate time to come."²¹ While it is certain that Haggai's restatement of the peo-

Collected Communications to the XIVth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament. Paris, 1992 (BEATAJ 28; Frankfurt am Main 1996) pp. 179–182.

¹⁷ Bedford (Temple Restoration pp. 171–172) states, "The people's lack of interest in rebuilding in Hag 1:2 arises not out of self-interest or any other supposed moral deficiency, rather ... they were unsure of the correct time to build" (p. 177). He adds, "It is not self-interest, but rather a lack of concern for the temple based on a misunderstanding of the deity's will, that has incurred Yahweh's ire" (p. 178). Bedford further suggests that Haggai's invective relates to the people's negative response to the prophet's recent call to rebuild. He also suggests that they may have been somewhat uninterested in it, due to its connection to the monarchy and former state, both of which no longer existed (pp. 179–180).

¹⁸ Tadmor (Ki Baruch Hu pp. 407–408) follows E. J. Bickerman ("En marge de l'écriture," RB 88 [1981] pp. 11–12) in seeing the second year of Darius as 521 BCE, when the rebellions following the accession of Darius were only recently quelled. I have argued against such an approach, compare J. Kessler, "The Second Year of Darius and the Prophet Haggai," *Transeu* 5 (1992) pp. 63–84; and Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 80–85.

¹⁹ Tadmor (Ki Baruch Hu p. 405) states: "Haggai does not mention the period of divine wrath, but its binding force is implicit in the popular slogan [the time has not come]. This slogan reflected the 'orthodox' interpretation. Its adherents, sons and grandsons of those who had witnessed the destruction, in accordance with Jeremiah's prophecies of doom, insisted on taking literally Jeremiah's other prophecy: only when the seventy years, beginning with the destruction of 586, have come to a close should the rebuilding of the temple begin."

²⁰ J. Kessler, "'t (le temps) en Aggée I 2–4: Conflit théologique ou 'sagesse mondaine'?" VT 48 (1998) pp. 555–559; J. Kessler, "Building the Second Temple: Questions of Time, Text, and History in Haggai 1.1–15," JSOT 27 (2002) pp. 243–256; and Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 103 and 124–127.

²¹ Kessler, JSOT 27 pp. 243–249; and Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 103–104. This approach is also that of D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. Tome 3 Ezéchiel, Daniel et les 12 prophètes* (OBO 50/3; Fribourg and Göttingen 1992) p. 923. It has been fol-

ple's words does indeed echo vocabulary regarding questions of the arrival of the appointed time (for example Jer 27:6–7²² or Ps 102:14 [Engl. 13])²³ Haggai steadfastly refuses to attribute such motives to the people. Rather, in Haggai's presentation of the people's words the issue under discussion thus becomes the question of whether a given task should be undertaken at a specific moment in light of certain circumstances,²⁴ a common sapiential theme.²⁵ Second, in form and content Haggai's response would be totally inappropriate had the question under discussion been essentially one regarding the proper time for an agreed-upon action. The form of the prophetic invective in Hag 1:3–11²⁶ is one that is generally employed with reference to a stubborn population, living in open defiance of the divine will. Furthermore the content of Haggai's argument, that of the incongruity of living in adequate homes while Yahweh's house lay in ruins, would have had *absolutely no purchase* if the debate concerned discerning the appropriate time. How could Yahweh fault them for living in their own homes if permission for rebuilding his house had been withheld?²⁷ Third, the central theme of the book of Haggai is the success of the prophet and the ongoing validity of the prophetic office in the restoration period.²⁸ As such Haggai is portrayed as a "classical" prophet who denounces disobedience and calls his hearers to repentance and renewal. Theoretical debates over "times and seasons" are alien to the portrait of the prophet drawn in the book. Fourth, the framer(s) of Haggai minimize (but clearly do not eliminate) many of the burning issues of his day, so as to concentrate on the success of the prophet, the response of his hearers, and the bright future which awaited the newly responsive community. As such the decisiveness and catastrophic nature of the destructions described in 2 Kings 24–

lowed recently by C. Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus (=Torah to Pentateuch; FAT 2/25; Tübingen 2007)* p. 392.

²² עד בא־עת אָרְצוֹ גְּמִירוֹא ("until the time of his own land comes," NRSV)

²³ אַתָּה תִּקְוֶה תִּרְחַם צִיּוֹן כִּי־עַת לְהַנְבִּיאַ כִּי־בָא מוֹעֵד ("you will arise and have compassion on Zion for it is time to favor it; the appointed time has come," NRSV).

²⁴ Hurowitz (*Exalted House* pp. 225–226) notes the great attention paid to undertaking temple construction at auspicious or propitious times. Something of this may lie behind the people's words, but this is a very different matter than divine authorization, and one which Haggai's words can be clearly understood as addressing.

²⁵ See the discussion in Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 125–126; and Kessler, *JSOT* 27 pp. 243–250. See also C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8 (=Haggai, Zechariah; AB 25B; Garden City 1987)* p. 21, who note that Haggai's prophecy coincided with the time of harvest, a labor-intensive moment, concluding "The people may have meant quite literally that it was not the ideal time to add to their burden of labor."

²⁶ It is generally seen as some kind of prophetic reproach. Beuken (*Haggai–Sacharja* p. 189) sees the section as consisting of a *Scheltwort*, v. 4; *Mahnwort*, vv. 5–6; *Auftrag* and *Heilswort*, vv. 7–8; *Disputationswort*, v. 9; *Spruch/Entfaltung*, v. 10; and *Eingreifen Gottes*, v. 11. O. Steck "Zu Haggai 1, 2–11," *ZAW* 83 (1971) p. 367 sees it as a *Diskussionswort* followed by a promise of salvation.

²⁷ As noted *supra* Bedford senses the force of this line of reasoning and thus posits a recent prophetic word authorizing the rebuilding, which the people have ignored (Bedford, *Temple Restoration* pp. 179–180). But to admit this is, it seems to me, to shift the discussion away from issues of timing and into the realm of obedience to the prophetic word.

²⁸ Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 144–153 and 275–279.

25²⁹ and reflected in Ezekiel and Zechariah 1–8 is diminished and the conflict portrayed in Haggai is presented more like one further crisis and resolution in the ongoing relationship between Yahweh and his covenant partner.³⁰ Furthermore, the Sinai covenant is seen as a functioning basis for the divine-human relationship.³¹

The logic of the prophet's reproach and the *literary* portrait of the situation thus rest on his assumption that divine authorization had already been given for the rebuilding project, and that the people were aware of such,³² and yet had chosen not to undertake the project, deeming that it was not an appropriate time to do so. As noted above, this is not to deny that some real discussion of whether or not the time to rebuild the temple had come may have existed among the population.³³ Indeed as Nihan has recently maintained, the prophet may be deliberately taking up the words of the people.³⁴ However this assertion must be qualified in that in taking up the people's words, the prophet (or his editors) actually reframe them into an expression of self-indulgent laziness, requiring not some assurance that their fears regarding rebuilding were unwarranted, but rather swift denunciation.³⁵

This rather simple summary of the prophet's logic and the people's behavior raises the question as to how the framer(s) of Haggai understood Yahweh's authorization for the rebuilding of the temple to have been given, and consequently, how the community would have known this to be the case. It is highly striking that no allusion to any such authorization may be found in Haggai. One might argue that some knowledge of the "Edict of Cyrus" (Ezra 1:1–3; 6:2–5; and 2 Chr 36:22–23) is being presupposed. This however, is far from certain. It only figures in Ezra and Chronicles, works produced later than Haggai, and reflecting far different ideological commitments.³⁶ Sérandour suggests that the book views the accession of Cyrus

²⁹ The literary-critical issues related to the Deuteronomistic History cannot be discussed here. Suffice it to say that these chapters portray a radical disruption of the community's relationship with Yahweh.

³⁰ On this *tendenz* in Haggai, see J. Kessler, "Tradition, Continuity, and Covenant in the Book of Haggai: An Alternative Voice from Early Persian Yehud," in M. J. Boda and M. H. Floyd (eds.), *Tradition in Transition* (=Tradition; LHB/OT 475; London 2008) pp. 1–39.

³¹ Kessler, *Tradition* pp. 14–24, especially 22–24.

³² T. Chary, *Aggée-Zacharie, Malachie* (=Aggée; SB; Paris 1969) p. 19, appropriately comments, "By repeatedly objecting 'it is not the right time to rebuild the temple' the people were admitting they understood its necessity, but were paralyzed by a lukewarm attitude" (translation mine).

³³ Clearly the question of the "seventy year desolation" mentioned in Jer 25:11–12; and 29:10; Zech 1:12 and 7:5 would indicate this was a lively issue at the time. Compare Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* p. 20; and Tadmor, *Ki Baruch Hu passim*.

³⁴ Nihan, *Torah to Pentateuch* p. 392.

³⁵ I would be glad to admit that the people's words as portrayed in Haggai were an expression of a genuine concern with the rightness of the time for rebuilding, if I could see anything in Haggai's response which addressed that need. How could reproaching the people for their self-preoccupation possibly overcome their belief that the drought and economic difficulties experienced by the community were an *omen not to rebuild*?

³⁶ On the historical issues regarding the edict, compare E. J. Bickerman, "The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1," *JBL* 65 (1946) pp. 249–275; J. Briand, "L'édit de Cyrus et sa valeur historique," *Transeu* 11 (1996) pp. 33–44; H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco 1985) pp. 3–15; and the expanded discussion in Bedford, *Temple Restoration* pp. 111–132. On the

and the defeat of Babylon as symbolic of the victory of Yahweh and thus constitutes the ground for the reconstruction of the temple.³⁷ However Haggai makes no mention of this motif. As noted, Bedford roots the authorization in a prophetic word recently given, yet unreported in Haggai (compare Zech 1:16).³⁸ Amsler argues that the turbulent events surrounding the defeat of Cambyses and the accession of Darius³⁹ served, in the prophet's estimation, as a sign that the new era of Yahweh's reign was imminent, and that, furthermore, the lack of a reconstituted temple was inhibiting the full manifestation of that era.⁴⁰ Meyers and Meyers suggest that Haggai calculated Jeremiah's seventy-year period from the fall of the temple in 586 BCE and was urging the people to prepare for the land's coming independence.⁴¹

All of these suggestions, however, remain hypothetical attempts to fill an obvious "gap" in Haggai's logic. While one cannot deny that some of these factors may have played a role, it is indisputable that the reconstruction of a damaged temple could not have been undertaken without specific imperial authorization. Why then is there no allusion to some form of Persian decree as authorization for rebuilding? Two factors may be significant here. First, Haggai's willingness *provisionally* to embrace Persian authority and its benefits (seen in the willingness to view Darius as the מלך ("king") and Zerubbabel as the פחה ("governor") did not imply an acceptance of the *Pax Persica* as an enduring and ultimate authority (as evidenced in the hopes for the coming rule of Yahweh in Hag 2:6–9 and 21–23).⁴² Thus there may have been some degree of reticence to ground authorization for rebuilding in the decree of a foreign ruler.⁴³ More important, however, is the ideological and theological *tendenz* in Haggai to obscure the disruptions caused by the Babylonian conquest and to present the prophet in the "typical" role of a classical prophet of the monarchic period,⁴⁴ and to portray the prophet's activity more in the guise of calling the people (in Haggai's case successfully) to remedy a current and existential problem in their relationship with Yahweh.⁴⁵ One further consideration is the fact that in Haggai the temple's reconstruction is presented as a covenantal duty. This is remarkable given the fact that such an obligation appears nowhere else in the deuteronomistic traditions with which Hag 1:4–11 is saturated.⁴⁶ Thus a further reason for the lack of any definitive indication of an authorization to build is that the text wishes to imply that temple building is an inherent co-requisite of a proper relationship with Yahweh, despite the fact that this is far from a unanimous conclusion within Israelite traditions. Furthermore, Haggai conceives of the temple as one sin-

historical issues and scope of Cyrus' policy, see A. Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and the Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *JSOT* 25 (1983) pp. 83–97.

³⁷ Sérandour, *Transeau* 11 pp. 14–15.

³⁸ Bedford, *Temple Restoration* p. 168.

³⁹ On the chronological issues involved here, see Kessler, *Transeau* 5 pp. 69–75.

⁴⁰ S. Amsler, A. Lacoque, and R. Vuilleumeier, *Aggée-Zacharie 1–8, Zacharie 9–14, Malachi (=Aggée-Zacharie; CommAT 11c; Genève 1988)* p. 15.

⁴¹ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* p. 20.

⁴² On this, see my fuller discussion in Kessler, *Transeau* 5 p. 84.

⁴³ Compare also the comments of Bickerman, *JBL* 65 p. 267.

⁴⁴ Compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 255–257 and 275–279.

⁴⁵ See my fuller discussion in *Tradition*.

⁴⁶ As noted by, among others, D. L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 (=Haggai and Zechariah, OTL; London 1985)* p. 54.

gle entity, having had a glorious past and awaiting an even more glorious future (Hag 2:6–9).⁴⁷ This being the case it may be assumed that the authorization, once given, can be seen to perdure, and that the *possibility* of rebuilding the temple constituted the *obligation* to do so. In sum then, in Haggai the temple's reconstruction is understood to be a covenantal duty. As such, the *starting point* of Haggai's invective is that the temple's rebuilding was a duty well understood by the community, and in complete dereliction of its duty the community failed to act.

It is evident that this presentation in Haggai stands in radical contrast to the typical ancient Near Eastern motif of temple (re)building. As noted *supra*, typically temple building narratives begin either with a deity who desires such a project, or with an individual, generally the ruler, who, after a great victory, or preoccupied with the lack of a temple (or the reality of a ruined temple), seeks divine authorization to rebuild. However in Haggai, Zerubbabel the civil ruler, Joshua the religious chief, and the people as a whole are presented as neglecting a responsibility they clearly know to be their own, and as consequently suffering ruinous economic conditions.⁴⁸ Thus the traditional ancient Near Eastern motif of unauthorized rebuilding bringing ruinous consequences is inverted, and *failure to rebuild in light of approval already given* leads to distress. In sum, then, lack of any clear mention of an authorization to rebuild, but rather the assumption that the community and its leaders are aware of such a duty and have neglected it, is a distinctive element of Haggai (especially when compared to Jeremiah and Zechariah 1–8). The absence of such is likely due to the book's redactional intention of presenting Haggai in the guise of a "classical" prophet and temple rebuilding as a known covenantal responsibility.

The Builder

As is commonly noted, temple building was, virtually without exception, the prerogative of kings⁴⁹ and the theme of royal victory frequently played a role in the timing and ritual of temple construction.⁵⁰ One common motif features a king who is informed in a dream that the divine will for him involves the building of a temple. The king then subjects this vision to a series of ongoing confirmatory tests. During

⁴⁷ Note especially Hag 2:9: גְּדוֹל יְהִיָּה כְבוֹד הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה הָאֶחָד מִן־הָרִאשֹׁן ("The future splendor of this house will far exceed its former magnificence"). Here it is clear that in Haggai there are not two temples (i.e. a first and second) but one.

⁴⁸ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 148–149, posits an interesting exception to the general ancient Near Eastern pattern. He notes the experience of ominous and threatening dreams mentioned in the letter of Ili-Ipsara to Ilya of Dilanum. Hurowitz interprets these as divine chastisements sent to the king due to his lack of initiative in restoring a damaged temple. He then concludes, "We may cautiously compare this with Haggai's complaint that the people are facing drought and agricultural failure because they are running to their own homes while letting God's temple lie in ruins (Hag 1:3–10)."

⁴⁹ Compare Sérandour (*Transeu* 10 p. 76, with bibliography) who underlines this point and stresses the uniqueness of the inclusion of priestly and popular participation in temple building in Haggai. H. Schaudig (above p. 142) comments, "In the ancient Near East, temple building has always been considered a royal task and prerogative, to which there are only a few exceptions, mostly in times when kingship was weak or in trouble."

⁵⁰ B. Halpern, "Ritual Background of Zechariah's Temple Song," *CBQ* 40 (1978) pp. 167–190, especially pp. 183–185.

this process the ongoing plans for the building are revealed, and the builder's mission is reconfirmed. Temple building may also be related to specific events in the life of the king and his kingdom.⁵¹ Its initiation may coincide with a recent conquest and thus be undertaken to celebrate that conquest, and display his power and authority over subject populations.⁵² Sometimes pious or economic motives may have played a role.⁵³ Not infrequently the king is rewarded by the god(s) with a special blessing for his activity in temple building—this at times involved a promise regarding the endurance of his dynasty or kingdom.⁵⁴

The perspective in Haggai is once again quite distinctive. As we have just seen, the text is laconic regarding any command or authorization to build. Rather, such an authorization is assumed to have existed and the community is portrayed as neglecting its known duty. Rather than being focused in a single royal figure, the responsibility for reconstruction is said to lie with the community as a whole. Its civil and religious leaders are singled out for specific reproach due to their failure to insist that the community fulfill its obligations to Yahweh.⁵⁵ It is worth noting in passing that this distribution of responsibility is characteristic of certain aspects of the deuteronomistic literature. The severe limitations placed on the monarch in the so-called deuteronomistic “law of the king” and the appointment of the king by the population are seen as examples of this phenomenon.⁵⁶ The implications of this phenomenon in Haggai will be examined further *infra*. The text's opening reproach, as we have seen, attributes the decision to defer the reconstruction to the people (Hag 1:2) while at the same time deeming the civil and religious authorities to be complicit in the same attitude. The indictment of the people and leaders in Hag 1:4–11 is to be contrasted with the description of their positive response to the words of the prophet in Hag 1:12–14. Thus in Hag 1:12 Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the remnant of the people (ובל שאריה העם)⁵⁷ obey Yahweh their God (בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם) ... וישמעו, a

⁵¹ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 137–160.

⁵² M. Fitzgerald, above pp. 43–44.

⁵³ M. Fitzgerald, above pp. 43–45.

⁵⁴ Compare 2 Samuel 7. On the various bases of royal legitimization in the ancient Near East, see T. Ishida, *Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel* (=Dynasties; BZAW 142; Berlin and New York 1977) pp. 6–24.

⁵⁵ Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 108–109 and 121–122; Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah* p. 47; and Floyd, *Minor Prophets* pp. 269–271.

⁵⁶ On this see G. N. Knoppers, “The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomistic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship,” *ZAW* 108 (1996) pp. 329–346; and G. N. Knoppers, “Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The Case of Kings,” *CBQ* 63 (2001) pp. 393–415. Sérandour (*Transeu* 10 passim, especially p. 83) maintains that such the “distribution of powers” in evidence in Haggai definitively sets the redaction of the book in the mid-fifth century. However, reflection on the redistribution of religious and civil authority need not be excluded in the context of the political and socio-religious flux of the late fifth century. Compare Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* pp. xxxlvii–xliv.

⁵⁷ The use of remnant here is not to be read as a technical term referring to either the non-deported population (*pace* S. Japhet, “The Concept of the ‘Remnant’ in the Restoration Period: On the Vocabulary of Self-Definition,” in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah* [Winona Lake 2006] pp. 432–449) or the returnees (*pace* H. W. Wolff, *Haggai: A Commentary* [Minneapolis 1988] p. 52, and many others). Rather, since it is reserved for use

classic deuteronomistic formulation)⁵⁸ as communicated through the words of Haggai, whom Yahweh had sent. These ones fear Yahweh (v. 13) and, roused by Yahweh through the preaching of Haggai, come (אָיָב compare v. 2) and do the needed work on the house of Yahweh.⁵⁹ Thus the community as a whole—leaders and people—is responsible for the reconstruction and, through the stirring of Yahweh via the preaching of the prophet, is moved to fulfill it. In Haggai, therefore, temple reconstruction is both the responsibility and the accomplishment of the civil and religious leadership and the people. This distribution of both responsibility and credit for temple rebuilding, highly distinctive of Haggai, doubtlessly reflects the emerging and largely unexpected and unforeseen political and socio-religious context of Persian Yehud.⁶⁰

Despite this “decentralization” of responsibility for temple building, however, special attention is given to Zerubbabel in Hag 2:21–23. There he is designated as Yahweh’s servant, and promised that in Yahweh’s imminent and dramatic intervention in history he would be taken as Yahweh’s signet ring (clearly reversing the judgment pronounced on Jehoiachin in Jer 22:24–30) and exalted to a lofty (though largely unspecified) role.⁶¹ Most significant for our purposes here is the fact that the text is reticent to disclose precisely *why* these promises are given to Zerubbabel. Most specifically, can any parallel be drawn between promises of dynastic perpetuity, which were sometimes given by deities to successful royal temple builders in ancient Near Eastern literature, and this promise to Zerubbabel?⁶² Sérandour has strongly affirmed this to be the case. He maintains that a thoroughgoing redaction of the Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi material occurred around 450 BCE⁶³ In his view, the *oracle to Zerubbabel in Hag 2:21–23 reaffirms the ongoing validity of an eternal*

after the people’s positive response, it carries the more theological nuance of a renewed and purified people, and is likely used for the community as a whole—returnees and remainees. On this see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 141–142; and J. E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zechariah 1–8* (JSOTSup 150; Sheffield 1993) p. 54.

⁵⁸ On this see further Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 142–147.

⁵⁹ On the numerous exegetical decisions involved in this understanding of Hag 1:12–14, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 140–157.

⁶⁰ On this see also J. Kessler, “Persia’s Loyal Yahwists: Power, Identity and Ethnicity in Achaemenid Yehud,” in O. Lipschits and M. Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake 2006) pp. 91–121; and J. Kessler, “Reconstructing Haggai’s Jerusalem: Demographic and Sociological Considerations and the Quest for an Adequate Methodological Point of Departure,” in L. L. Grabbe and R. D. Haak (eds.), *‘Every City Shall Be Forsaken’: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East* (JSOTSup 330; Sheffield 2001) pp. 137–158.

⁶¹ Hag 2:20–23 is a dense and evocative passage (Chary, *Aggée* p. 34 deems it to be composed of numerous *clichés traditionnels*). It furthermore raises various significant historical questions, which cannot be discussed here. On the many issues involved in this verse, see J. Kessler, “Haggai, Zerubbabel and the Political Status of Yehud: The Signet Ring in Haggai 2:23,” in M. H. Floyd and R. D. Haak (eds.), *Prophets, Prophecy and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism (=Prophets, Prophecy; LHB/OT 427; New York and London 2006)* pp. 102–119.

⁶² Compare Kapelrud, *Orientalia NS* 32 pp. 52–62, especially p. 61; Sérandour, *Transeau 11 passim* especially pp. 12–13. See also Ishida, *Dynasties* pp. 81–122.

⁶³ Sérandour, *Transeau* 10 p. 83.

Davidic covenant.⁶⁴ This reaffirmation stands in tandem with Zechariah 3, a text which establishes an eternal priestly covenant with Joshua.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Sérandour suggests that the beginnings of the dual messianism of Qumran can be found here.⁶⁶ Thus for Sérandour the oracle to Zerubbabel in Hag 2:23 is part of a larger schema designed to anchor the community's diarchic leadership (which evolved around 450 BCE) in an eternal priestly and royal covenant, represented by the co-participation of Joshua and Zerubbabel in the refounding of the temple.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to evaluate his proposal.⁶⁷ Nevertheless Sérandour is certainly right to highlight the link between Zerubbabel's position as governor, his Davidic ancestry, his role in the temple's restoration, and the oracle addressed to him in Hag 2:23. In the flow of the narrative development within Haggai it is highly likely that, having described the ultimate glorification of the temple in Hag 2:6–9, the book's attention turns to the fate of its allied institution, the Davidic line.⁶⁸ Such a linkage is entirely plausible given the close association of temple and monarchy in the ancient Near East. Thus Haggai announces that the rejection of the Davidic line pronounced in Jer 22:24–30⁶⁹ has been overturned, and that Yahweh now desires to express his approbation for Zerubbabel for his role in the temple's reconstruction, and through it his renewed favor toward the Davidic line.⁷⁰ As

⁶⁴ Sérandour, *Transeu* 11 p. 17.

⁶⁵ Sérandour, *Transeu* 10 pp. 76–77.

⁶⁶ Sérandour, *Transeu* 10 p. 83.

⁶⁷ Significant questions may be raised regarding his assertion (1) that Haggai-Zechariah-Malachi must be read as a triptych, and elements from the latter two texts are essential for the interpretation of Haggai; (2) his expanded view of the editorial framework of Haggai to include Hag 2:6–9 and 21–23; and (3) his judgment that any diarchic forms of leadership could not have emerged before the mid-fifth century.

⁶⁸ So Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* p. 82. Compare also Kessler, *Book of Haggai* p. 222.

⁶⁹ The pivotal point linking Hag 2:23 and Jer 22:24–30 is not the image of the signet *per se* but the larger metaphor in which it is embedded—that of Yahweh, on the one hand discarding his precious signet, and on the other, taking it up again. On this, compare Kessler, *Prophets, Prophecy* pp. 115–116.

⁷⁰ *Pace* K. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: History and Significance for Messianism* (=Davidic Dynasty; SBLEJL 7; Atlanta 1995) pp. 45–53. Pomykala's purpose is to refute the assertion that Hag 2:23 is evidence for the expectation of an imminent restoration of the Davidic dynasty. To do so he suggests that in Haggai there is no indication of Zerubbabel's Davidic origins and that the language in Hag 2:23 is quite general and not specifically evocative of the Davidic promises. I do concur with Pomykala that Hag 2:23 should not be read as any attempt to politically resurrect the Davidic dynasty in the late fifth century. In Haggai, Zerubbabel's exaltation is seen to be the work of Yahweh, subject to a dramatic intervention, and is put off into the indefinite future (Hag 2:6–9 and 21–23). Yet given the Persian's general policy of reinstating formerly deposed royal houses (on which see F. Bianchi, "Le rôle de Zorobabel et la dynastie davidique en Judée du VI^e siècle au VI^e siècle av. J. -C.," *Transeu* 7 [1994] pp. 156–157; P. Briant, "Contrainte militaire, dépendance rurale et exploitation des territoires en Asie achéménide," in *Rois, tributs et paysans. Etudes sur les formations tributaires du Moyen-Orient ancien* [Paris 1982] pp. 199–225; and A. Lemaire, "Zorobabel et la Judée à la lumière de l'épigraphie [fin du VI^e s. av. J. -C.]," *RB* 103 [1996] p. 44), Pomykala's skepticism regarding Zerubbabel's Davidic origins seems overdrawn. Furthermore, Hag 2:23 is not merely a collection of evocative terms, but a deliberate

such Hag 2:23 employs a series of highly significant terms with reference to Zerubbabel.⁷¹ These terms express Yahweh's approbation of Zerubbabel and the future exaltation he will experience.⁷²

Critical to this change is the one term applied to the *then present status* of Zerubbabel: he is described as Yahweh's servant (עֶבֶד).⁷³ This term is one that is extensively used in a variety of Israelite traditions for those who have chosen to ally themselves with Yahweh and his purposes. The list includes Abraham (Gen 26:24), Isaac and Jacob (Exod 32:13), Moses (Num 12:7–8; Deut 34:5, Josh 1: and 7 and many times in the Deuteronomistic History), Joshua (Judg 2:8), Job (Job 1:8 and 2:3), and especially David (2 Sam 7:5, 8; 1 Kgs 11:13; 14:8; and 2 Kgs 19:34). However, as has been frequently noted, it is not used for other Davidic rulers, with the exception of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:16 and the future Davidic scion in Ezek 34:23 and 37:24–25.⁷⁴ Meyers and Meyers further note that in Deuteronomistic History the term is not used with reference to Solomon (except for limited self designations in the prayers attributed to him in passages such as 1 Kgs 3:7–9 and 8:28–32).⁷⁵ On this basis they conclude that the term conveys Zerubbabel's "subservient relationship to Yahweh" and his instrumental role in Yahweh's future world intervention.⁷⁶ While such an inference is possible, it is likely that there is a more central implication in Haggai's use of the term with reference to Zerubbabel. As noted above, in the Deuteronomistic History the term is almost exclusively used with reference to David to the virtual exclusion of all other Davidides.

Close investigation of the distribution of its usage in the Deuteronomistic History reveals further details of its use. In the early section of the David-Saul narratives in 1 Samuel the term is one which primarily designates David's fealty and un-

re-reading and reversal of the Jeremianic tradition of the rejection of Jehoiachin the davidide in Jer 22:24–30. As such, issues of the future of the Davidic line cannot be extirpated from the discussion. This is especially so since the promises to David had become so profoundly connected to the Deuteronomistic traditions (as evidenced in the Deuteronomistic History) so much in evidence in Haggai. However, this being said, Pomykala is right to observe that any allusion to Zerubbabel as a davidide is minimized in Haggai. This is likely done in order to *dampen* any populist hopes of immediate political action in defiance of Persian authority that might have arisen after Zerubbabel's appointment. In point of fact Hag 2:21–23 serves to maintain Davidic hope while at the same time urging accommodation to the status quo under Persian rule and deferring any concrete political manifestation of Davidic rule until *after* the cataclysmic intervention of Yahweh in Hag 2:6–9 and 21–22. On this, see Kessler, *Transeu* 5 p. 84.

⁷¹ For a fuller discussion of these terms, compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 226–239; and Kessler, *Prophets, Prophecy* pp. 113–117.

⁷² On the deliberately veiled description of Zerubbabel's future, compare Kessler, *Prophets, Prophecy* pp. 113–119.

⁷³ עֶבֶד ("servant") stands in apposition to the name "Zerubbabel" and constitutes Yahweh's direct address to him at the then present moment.

⁷⁴ W. H. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (JSOTSup 304; Sheffield 2000) pp. 211–212; and Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah* p. 103.

⁷⁵ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* p. 68.

⁷⁶ Meyers and Meyers suggest that, unlike Zechariah who eschatologizes the future Davidic ruler, "Haggai's expectations emerged from the historical present, which involved the rebuilding of the temple and the immediate potential for a monarchic state under the rule of a Davidide who in all likelihood would be Zerubbabel" (*Haggai, Zechariah* p. 69).

wavering submission to Saul (1 Sam 17:32, 34; and 19:4). At 1 Sam 23:10, however, a new dimension is introduced as David, in a prayer, refers to himself as Yahweh's servant. The term is then referred back to David by Yahweh in 2 Sam 3:18 where in a prophetic oracle, David is named as the one who will deliver Israel from the Philistines. This theme culminates in the well-known passage in 2 Samuel 7 where, after his transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, David expresses his desire to build a house for Yahweh. This in turn elicits an oracle from Nathan promising David that he will be the founder of a perpetual monarchy.⁷⁷ In this context the designation of David as Yahweh's servant occurs twelve times in twenty-nine verses—a density far greater than previously encountered in 1–2 Samuel.⁷⁸ It occurs in Yahweh's speech to David via Nathan (2 Sam 7:5 and 8) and in David's speech back to Yahweh (2 Sam 7:20 and 26). What is most significant is that after 2 Samuel 7 it virtually disappears from the David narratives, returning only at 2 Sam 24:10 in David's prayer. After David's demise, however, the term occurs frequently, and becomes virtually a fixed formula of designation when referring to David. It is found in this way on the lips of Solomon (1 Kgs 3:6; 8:24, 25 and 26), of the narrator (1 Kgs 8:66 and 2 Kgs 8:19), and of Yahweh (1 Kgs 11:13, 32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; 2 Kgs 19:34; and 20:6). It finds similar expression in Isa 37:35; Jer 30:9; 33:21, 22, 26; Ezek 34:23, 23; 37:24, 25; Ps 78:70; 89:4 [Engl. 3], 21 [Engl. 20]; 132:10; 144:10, the titles of Psalms 18 and 36, and widely in Chronicles (1 Chr 17:4, 7, 18, 24; 21:8; 2 Chr 6:15, 16, 17, and 42). Second Samuel 7 thus appears to be a critical and defining "moment" (narratively speaking) for the usage of the term. David's victory over the Philistines, his bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, his desire for the honor of Yahweh, and the latter's promise of dynastic perpetuity appear to have coalesced to attribute a special significance to the designation of עֶבֶד ("servant") one that came to be a distinctive titular designation of David. Indeed, as Ishida notes, the term is one that commonly denotes not only a vassal-suzerain relationship, but also "the relationship between a tutelary deity and his dynasty."⁷⁹

The book of Haggai, as has been widely noticed, is profoundly influenced by deuteronomistic thought and idioms.⁸⁰ The traditions reflected in the Deuteronomistic History would therefore have likely been influential for the deuteronomistic circles involved in the redaction of Haggai, whether through those who remained in the land, or those who returned from the East.⁸¹ In this context, then, the use of this term

⁷⁷ On 2 Samuel 7 compare Ishida, *Dynasties* pp. 63–122. On the role of 2 Samuel 7 in the Deuteronomistic History, compare D. J. McCarthy, "II Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," *JBL* 84 (1965) pp. 131–138; and F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge 1973) pp. 249–260. On the "unconditional" nature of the dynastic promises to David, compare G. N. Knoppers, "David's Relation to Moses: The Contexts, Content and Conditions of the Davidic Promises," in J. Day (ed.), *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (JSOTSup 270; Sheffield 1998) pp. 91–118.

⁷⁸ As also noted by Ishida, *Dynasties* pp. 112–113.

⁷⁹ Ishida, *Dynasties* p. 113.

⁸⁰ R. A. Mason, "Purpose of the 'Editorial Framework' of the book of Haggai," *VT* (1977) pp. 413–421; Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 153–157; and Sérandour, *Transeau* 10 p. 81.

⁸¹ The literature on the redaction of the Deuteronomistic History is immense. For a survey and recent proposal, see O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Jerusalem under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake 2005) pp. 272–312.

for Zerubbabel carries with it more than a simple designation of Zerubbabel's subservience to Yahweh. Given its almost exclusive designation of David or some future Davidide, in Hag 2:23 it could not but evoke the highly decisive role that Zerubbabel, like David, has played *vis-à-vis* Jerusalem, its temple, and the nation at a critical moment in Israelite history. Zerubbabel, like David, in his support of the rebuilding program, has shown a desire for the honor of Yahweh through the glorification of Yahweh's house (compare 2 Sam 7:1–3).⁸² Similarly, like David, he is not so much a grand builder (in the image of Solomon) but a *founder both of a temple and a dynasty*. Furthermore, David and Zerubbabel both support and endorse the construction of a temple whose glory will come later (1 Kings 5–7 and Hag 2:6–9), and through the prophet Haggai, as he had done through Nathan before him, Yahweh declares both David and Zerubbabel to be his servants. The likely implication of the use of עבד ("servant") is then that Zerubbabel, in Haggai, is a kind of new David—one who has demonstrated concern for Yahweh and his house and thus receives great promises for the present and future.

This being said, it appears to me that, distinct from the customary ancient Near Eastern rewarding of kings who serve as patrons to specific deities, the oracle to Zerubbabel in Hag 2:23 should not be understood purely as a recompense for his role as a temple builder, although to a certain extent his obedience to Yahweh (in contrast to Jehoiachin's failure, compare Jer 22:24–30) is in view. Rather, Yahweh's words to Zerubbabel are best seen as a reaffirmation of the role of the Davidic dynasty in the context of the newly reconstructed temple and Yahweh's future intervention in the world. And like David himself, who has manifested his piety and dedication to Yahweh via concern for the construction of a house of worship, Zerubbabel, who has manifested a similar concern, will be exalted and honored. This balancing of royal prerogative with a more democratized vision of temple building (with significant influence of Zion and Priestly theology) likely reflects the socio-religious and political context of early Persian Yehud.⁸³

Ritual Purity and Reconstruction

As noted above, in ancient Near Eastern temple building or restoration there were acts that were fraught with danger. Inappropriate disturbing of a ritual site, failure to carry out the appropriate apotropaic rituals, or failure to rebuild a ruined site precisely on its former foundations were likely to bring dire consequences.⁸⁴ Similarly the building materials, the site itself, and the population had to be appropriately purified to prevent misfortune during the building process.⁸⁵ Haggai presents a sharp contrast to this elaborate attention to the prevention of misfortune during the restora-

⁸² Hurowitz, *Exalted House*, pp. 324–325, also notes the contrast between the people who have neglected Yahweh's house and taken care of their own homes, and David who has shown concern for the house of Yahweh. The use of עבד ("servant") in Hag 2:23 sets Zerubbabel and David together in this concern.

⁸³ Knoppers has persuasively argued that the deuteronomistic vision of kingship was far more powerful and authoritarian than that of earlier deuteronomism; see Knoppers, *ZAW* 108 pp. 329–346.

⁸⁴ Compare Ambos, above pp. 221–237.

⁸⁵ Averbeck, above pp. 20 and 31.

tion process. Apart from the ritual matters raised in Hag 2:14 (to be discussed *infra*), there is little attention to any of the kind of ritual detail described above. No attention is given to ascertaining the precise foundations, dimensions or contours of the earlier site. No special, ritually pure materials are required, nor is the ritual cleansing of the workforce needed. All that is required is that the people go up to “the mountain, get wood, and build my house” (Hag 1:8).⁸⁶ Even in the command to “get wood” (Hag 1:8), the ritual dimension is greatly diminished when compared to the various ancient Near Eastern texts where the wood that was used was ritually sacred,⁸⁷ brought from afar, and of great quality.⁸⁸

Questions of purity do, however, figure in a significant way in Hag 2:10–19. Here a series of questions posed to “the priests” together with their responses constitutes a prophetic-symbolic act which serves as a vehicle for the prophetic denunciation of the people and their offerings as “impure” in Hag 2:14.⁸⁹ Verses 14–19 have long troubled exegetes due to the numerous questions this section raises for understanding the present form of the book. These questions concern how Haggai, having reassured the leaders and people of Yahweh’s presence with them in Hag 1:13, and further encouraging them in their efforts in Hag 2:1–9, could subsequently reproach them again, and declare them unclean (Hag 2:14). An earlier response to the problem was to view Hag 1:15a + 2:15–19 as the remnant of an oracle proclaimed on the twenty-first of the seventh month, just after the rebuilding began,⁹⁰ and to understand the people who are deemed to be unclean not as the Yehudite community, but as the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom who have sought to join in the project (compare Ezra 4:2).⁹¹ However, most recent commentators have abandoned this approach⁹² and, following Koch, have viewed Hag 2:10–19 as a unit and sought to make sense of it as such.⁹³

⁸⁶ A certain degree of uncertainty surrounds the prophet’s command here. On the location of the mountain and the matter of why wood, and why only wood is mentioned (especially in light of the massive destruction suffered by the temple at the hands of the Babylonians) compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 213–214).

⁸⁷ Hurowitz (*Exalted House* pp. 210 and 215) notes that at times the king was presented as having cut the wood himself, and that such wood was considered sacred and fit for temple building.

⁸⁸ On these motifs compare, see Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 212–220.

⁸⁹ כִּן הָעַם־הַזֶּה וְכִן־הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה לִפְנֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְכִן כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיבוּ שָׁם טָמֵא הוּא (“so [i.e. unclean] is this people and so is this nation before me—oracle of Yahweh—and so is all the work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.”).

⁹⁰ Thus Amsler, Lacoque, and Vuilleumeier, *Aggée-Zacharie* p. 10, following Beuken *Haggai–Sacharja* p. 208 and J. W. Rothstein, *Juden und Samaritaner: Die grundlegende Scheidung von Judentum und Heidentum: Eine Kritische Studie zum Buche Haggai und zur jüdische Geschichte im ersten nachexilischen Jahrhundert* (BWANT 3; Leipzig 1908) pp. 53–73.

⁹¹ Thus Beuken, *Haggai–Sacharja* pp. 67–70; Rothstein, *Juden und Samaritaner*; and Wolff, *Haggai* pp. 26–30.

⁹² Floyd, *Minor Prophets*; Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah*; and Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah in loco*.

⁹³ K. Koch, “Haggais unreines Volk,” *ZAW* 79 (1967) pp. 52–66.

Various approaches have been suggested regarding the question of why the prophet declares the people, their sacrifices at the Jerusalem altar,⁹⁴ and the work of their hands (Hag 2:14) to be unclean.⁹⁵ With Meyers and Meyers, Petersen, Amsler, and Floyd, I have argued that the conflict here is essentially cultic in nature.⁹⁶ Yet, having declared the people unclean, the prophet announces that from a precise moment, the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month of the second year of Darius' reign (Hag 2:10 and 18), their fortunes would radically change. This day is described in Hag 2:18 as the day when the temple of Yahweh was refounded.⁹⁷ Furthermore, in Hag 2:15 allusion is made to the day when "stone was placed upon stone in the temple of Yahweh" (שׁוֹנֵם אֶבֶן אֶל-אֶבֶן בְּהִיכַל יְהוָה). To what does this phrase refer? As noted *supra*, those who view Hag 2:15–19 as displaced from its original position after 1:15a see this as a reference to the *initiation* of the reconstruction.⁹⁸ However given the unity of Hag 2:10–19,⁹⁹ for the framer(s) of Haggai in its present form this must refer to something other than the initiation of reconstruction. Meyers and Meyers suggest that it refers to masonry work.¹⁰⁰ However, in light of the fact that this single act, is deemed to be so radically important to the shift in the people's fortunes from woe to weal, it is more probable that Hag 2:10, 15, and 18 are all allusions to a single, decisive event, ritual in nature, due to its ability to immediately purify and restore the community. Thus the refounding of the temple (Hag 2:18) or the "laying of stone upon stone" (Hag 2:15) likely reflects a ritual activity undertaken well after the initiation of the reconstruction, but before its completion. This ritual activity was likely an Israelite echo of the placement of the "first" or "former"

⁹⁴ Various proposals have been advanced which identify the defiled altar as one other than that of the Jerusalem temple. Compare P. R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (London 1968) p. 168 n. 73; J. Blenkinsopp, *History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville 1996) p. 201; and T. Chary, *Les prophètes et culte à partir de l'exil* (Paris 1955) p. 137. For a critique, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 214–215.

⁹⁵ For a fuller survey of the various proposals, with critique and bibliography, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 206–218.

⁹⁶ Compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 211–213, with bibliography. This position stands in contrast to those who would maintain that the impurity in question in Hag 2:10–19 is due to "Samaritan" participation in the reconstruction or to ethical breaches on the part of the people. On the former, see Rothstein, *Judean und Samaritaner* *passim*; for the latter see, for example, D. R. Hildebrand, "Temple Ritual: A Paradigm for Moral Holiness in Haggai II 10–19," *VT* 18 (1989) pp. 154–168; and R. Mason, "The Prophets of the Restoration," in R. Coggins, A. Philipps, and M. Knibb (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd* (Cambridge 1982) pp. 137–153.

⁹⁷ I take יסד here to mean refounding, as in 2 Chr 24:27 and 31:7. This sense is philologically justifiable and fits the present context.

⁹⁸ Amsler, Lacoque, and Vuilleumeier, *Aggée-Zacharie* p. 27. It seems to me entirely possible that Hag 2:15–19 was originally an oracle of salvation delivered to the people after the initiation of work on the temple. Yet in light of Koch's persuasive arguments, whatever the oracle's prehistory, one must read Hag 2:10–19 as a unit. As such, in its new setting the oracle must refer to blessing to follow some step undertaken by the community after the work had begun.

⁹⁹ Thus Koch, *ZAW* 79 *passim*.

¹⁰⁰ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* p. 59.

brick or *kalû*-rite widely practiced in the ancient Near East.¹⁰¹ Such ritual activities served to link the destroyed temple with the newly refitted one,¹⁰² as well as serving purificatory functions.¹⁰³ The ritual impurity which infected the altar, temple, and people was likely due to the accrued faults of leaders and community, reflected in both priestly and deuteronomistic traditions, from which cleansing was needed.¹⁰⁴ Thus this pericope concerns the radical transformation of the people's fortunes which were to follow upon the temple refoundation ceremony (compare Zech 4:6–7, 8–10, and 8:9).¹⁰⁵ The prophet declares that the agricultural and economic frustrations which have plagued the community will soon give way to abundance and fruitfulness.¹⁰⁶

Haggai thus reflects both continuity and discontinuity with reference to more common ancient Near Eastern conceptions. Like its cultural environment, Haggai is concerned with purity and impurity, and proper care for sacred space. As well, agricultural fruitfulness is associated with a duly rebuilt and reconsecrated temple. However, unlike its environment, and in line with a monotheistic and deuteronomistic covenantal ideology, Haggai presents a more circumscribed view of ritual matters. There appears to be no concern for building on especially auspicious days. The dates in Haggai do not appear to correspond to particularly auspicious moments.¹⁰⁷ Rather the dates which structure the book serve to underline the rapidity with which the project proceeded.¹⁰⁸ No special ritual purification is prescribed for the site, builders, or building materials. No apotropaic rituals are set forth for protection of the builders and site. Rather, the ritual dimensions of temple reconstruction are focused in the ceremony of refoundation of the temple, and the placement of "stone upon stone" (Hag 2:15 and 18). By means of this ritual, the accumulated defilements of the past are seen as having been remedied, and all hindrances to proper worship removed. As such, the purification and consecration effected by placing "stone upon stone" stands as a "priestly" theological parallel to the relational repara-

¹⁰¹ On this, see the pioneering work of Ellis, *Foundation Deposits*. Compare the discussion in Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 264–269; and Averbeck, above pp. 22–23.

¹⁰² Hurowitz, *Exalted House* p. 265.

¹⁰³ Ellis, *Foundation Deposits* p. 20; Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah* p. 93; and Petersen, "Zerubbabel and Jerusalem Temple Reconstruction," *CBQ* 36 (1974) pp. 368–369.

¹⁰⁴ For a fuller discussion, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 215–216.

¹⁰⁵ On this text, see Halpern, *CBQ* 40 pp. 167–190; Koch, *ZAW* 79 pp. 52–66; Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah* pp. 63–64; Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah* pp. 88–96; Petersen, *CBQ* 36 pp. 366–372; and A. Petitjean, *Les Oracles du Proto-Zacharie: Un programme de restauration pour la communauté juive après l'exil* (EBib; Paris and Louvain 1969) pp. 241–251.

¹⁰⁶ J. A. Bewer, "Ancient Babylonian Parallels to the Prophecies of Haggai," *AJSL* 35 (1919) pp. 128–133, notes the association between temple re-foundation and agricultural prosperity. Bewer's position will be discussed further *infra*.

¹⁰⁷ On the difference between the identification of specific times as auspicious for temple building in Mesopotamian accounts, and the biblical date formulae, see Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 227–233.

¹⁰⁸ Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 226–227, notes the ideological function of the dates in the Solomonic building narrative.

tion effected by the covenantal obedience, couched in the deuteronomic, covenantal language of Hag 1:12–15.¹⁰⁹

Fertility, Wealth, and the Temple's Role as a World Center

The notion of fertility is frequently associated with temple building in both biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts. At times, fertility of land and beasts constitutes a sign to the temple builder that divine approval attends the project, as well as providing material means for the financing of the project.¹¹⁰ Conversely, infertility would indicate that the deity was not pleased, and that the project should be halted.¹¹¹ In other ancient Near Eastern motifs the completed temple constitutes a conduit to the realm of the divine from which fertility and abundance emanate.¹¹² In traditions associated with "Zion Theology" the temple is frequently described as a world pilgrimage center to which tribute and offerings flow.¹¹³ Haggai utilizes these motifs in a distinctive way. The concepts of fertility and wealth are the reverse of much of the received ancient Near Eastern tradition. In the Deuteronomic conceptualization, famine, infertility, drought and the like were to be understood as indicating divine displeasure (Amos 4 and Deuteronomy 28).¹¹⁴ Haggai, in line with this tradition, sees in the misfortunes which have beset the community in Yehud divine displeasure specifically associated with the neglect of rebuilding and purifying the ruined temple (Hag 1:2–11 and 2:10–19). The restoration of the fertility of the land is an expression of the removal of the divine displeasure, rather than any means of provision for the temple or confirmation of the legitimacy of the project. Furthermore, the fertility and blessing promised, again in line with deuteronomic tradition, are not the paradisaical and overwhelming effects of the divine presence (as in, for example, Ezekiel 40–48) but rather the more "normal" and "temporal" blessings of rich and abundant harvests in the course of the regular cycle of sowing and reaping (Hag

¹⁰⁹ On the ability of ritual to effect reparation, see Ambos, above p. 231, who draws attention to the remedial power of ritual in the divine-human relationship. He views ritual texts as "describing the ritual expert's task to mend the endangered relationship between the gods and humanity."

¹¹⁰ Averbek in present volume, above pp. 15–16.

¹¹¹ Compare Ambos, above p. 231. Note how this is symmetrically opposite to the perspective in Haggai where Yahweh sends natural calamities to indicate his displeasure that the temple has *not* been rebuilt.

¹¹² On this motif, see J. D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis 1985) pp. 111–137.

¹¹³ M. Weinfeld, "Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital: Ideology and Utopia," in R. E. Friedman (ed.), *The Poet and the Historian* (HSS; Chico 1983) pp. 75–113.

¹¹⁴ On the re-use of deuteronomic "curse" formulae in Haggai, with specific references, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 153–157. A similar ideology is found in certain priestly texts such as Leviticus 26.

2:19).¹¹⁵ As Bewer noted nearly a century ago, this motif in Haggai finds a counterpart in Gudea Cylinder A.¹¹⁶

The perspective of regular, ongoing blessing in the course of the agricultural cycle as a removal of divine displeasure stands in tension with the motif of the enrichment of the temple through the “treasures of the nations” in Hag 2:6–9. This distinction between, on the one hand, agricultural blessing in the annual cycle, linked to the community’s obedience in rebuilding of the temple, and, on the other, the future glorification of the temple (and exaltation of Zerubbabel) tied to the spectacular theophanic manifestation of Yahweh in the cosmos, is an important one in Haggai, and one which is frequently overlooked.¹¹⁷ In the latter of these two “fertility” motifs we enter the realm, not of the regular course of history,¹¹⁸ but of that of a renewed world, one that has experienced a decisive intervention of Yahweh and the “shaking of the nations.”¹¹⁹ Drawing on the rich traditions of Zion theology¹²⁰ as well as more general ancient Near Eastern motifs,¹²¹ our prophet, albeit in highly veiled and generalized language,¹²² envisages a time when Yahweh will manifest his presence, sending the elements of the universe into convulsion, and terrifying the inhabitants of the earth.¹²³ As a result, in a manner deliberately veiled by the prophet, the treasures of the nations will fill the temple with a splendor (כְּבוֹד) surpassing anything the temple had known before (Hag 2:9). In this motif, the temple is not a guarantor of fertility, but the one place on earth where the Supreme Deity may be worshipped and glorified (compare Isa 4:1–5; Mic 2:1–5; Isaiah 60; and Zechariah 14). One current in the interpretation of Haggai has consistently maintained that our prophet viewed the reconstruction of the temple as a kind of talisman

¹¹⁵ On the complex questions related to this verse, see D. J. Clark “Problems in Haggai 2:15–19,” *BT* 34 (1983) pp. 432–439; and Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 209–210. It is best to see this as a promise of blessing for the community’s future agricultural pursuits.

¹¹⁶ Bewer, *AJSL* 35 pp. 128–133. Hurowitz, *Exalted House* pp. 322–323, notes that while Bewer’s suggestion of a drought in the Gudea text was inaccurate, the motif of fertility after the temple’s construction still obtains.

¹¹⁷ It has been noticed by A. Caquot, “Le Judaïsme depuis la captivité de Babylone jusqu’à la révolte de Bar-Kokheba,” in *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade. Histoire des Religions* 2 (Paris 1972) pp. 114–132, especially p. 130; and W. O. McCready, “The ‘Day of Small Things’ vs the Latter Days: Historical Fulfillment or Eschatological Hope?” in A. Gileadi (ed.), *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (Grand Rapids 1988) pp. 223–236.

¹¹⁸ This coming age is marked off from the regular course of history by the expression עוֹד אֶחָד מִעַתָּה הֵיאָ (‘‘one more time, and it will happen soon’’) in Hag 2:6 and בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא (‘‘on that day’’) in Hag. 2:23. On the former expression, see Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 160 and 173–175.

¹¹⁹ On the meaning of this colorful expression, compare J. Kessler, “The Shaking of the Nations: An Eschatological View,” *JETS* 30 (1987) pp. 159–166; and Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 175–178.

¹²⁰ Compare G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Volume 2* (Edinburgh and London 1965) pp. 292–297.

¹²¹ Compare Weinfeld, *The Poet and the Historian* passim.

¹²² On the use of such generalized language in Haggai, and its rhetorical purpose, compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 190–191 and 272.

¹²³ Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 177–178

or guarantor of weal and fertility in the age to come.¹²⁴ In a similar vein, others have affirmed that the reconstruction of the temple was a necessary prerequisite for the coming age.¹²⁵ However a closer reading of Haggai reveals that that book's perspective concerning the future does not sustain either of these affirmations. The temple is glorified *after* the acknowledgement of the supremacy of Yahweh through his spectacular interventions in the cosmos. What is more, the glorification of the temple does not come through the abundant fertility of the land due to the presence of the temple, but through the wealth of the nations which comes in to the temple and serves as a testimony of the surpassing greatness of Yahweh, whose house it is. This motif is one that features significantly in both Zion (Isaiah 60 and Zechariah 14) and deuteronomistic traditions (1 Kgs 8:41–43 and 10:1–10),¹²⁶ both of which are well-represented in Haggai. Thus, while motifs of fertility and enrichment of the temple are both present in Haggai, the two are held in tension and set within the framework of deuteronomistic and Zion theology.

Temple Restoration and Divine “Return”

It was commonly assumed in the ancient Near East that when a temple fell into ruin through destruction in war or material deterioration, its patron deity would leave the temple and reside elsewhere until such time as the temple was restored. A prime example is the Gudea Cylinder which describes the departure and return of Ningirsu and Baba and their installation in the new temple with all the attendant pomp and circumstance attached to such an event.¹²⁷ Motifs of divine departure and return are also reflected in certain biblical texts, such as Ezekiel 1–11. Once again, Haggai's presentation of Yahweh's response to the restoration of the temple stands in tension with broader ancient Near Eastern tradition and certain biblical representations. In 1:8 Yahweh declares his response to the people's obedience in rebuilding the temple, saying: *וְאָרְצָהּ בְּנֹ וְאָמַרְתִּי בְּבָבֶל*. Various textual, syntactical and translational options are in evidence in these words.¹²⁸ In my view, this phrase is best construed as a promise, and translated “then I will delight in it (that is, the temple) and I will allow myself to be glorified.”¹²⁹ This extremely brief statement regarding Yahweh's response to the rebuilt temple demonstrates that in Haggai the theme of the return of the deity to the temple is modified in two distinct ways, reflecting the broader ideological underpinnings of the book.

First, while there is some sense that in Haggai the relationship between Yahweh and his people has been stressed by the lamentable state of the temple, and that the

¹²⁴ So for example F. James, “Thoughts on Haggai and Zechariah,” *JBL* 3 (1934) pp. 229–234; and R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York 1941) p. 602.

¹²⁵ Thus recently, Pomykala, *Davidic Dynasty* p. 49.

¹²⁶ On this motif, see Weinfeld, *The Poet and the Historian* passim and W. J. Dumbrell, “Kingship and Temple in the Post-Exilic Period,” *RTR* 37 (1978) pp. 33–42; and W. J. Dumbrell, “Some Observations on the Political Origins of Israel's Eschatology,” *RTR* 36 (1971) pp. 33–41.

¹²⁷ Compare Averbeck, above pp. 29–33.

¹²⁸ For a discussion of the various lexical, textual, and syntactical issues involved, compare Kessler, *Book of Haggai* pp. 133–136.

¹²⁹ Thus Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* p. 160.

temple as it stood was an unfit residence for Yahweh, there is no explicit statement to the effect that Yahweh had departed from it. The text is quite subtle here. Even in its sorry state the temple is still declared to be “my house” (בֵּיתִי) in Hag 1:9. What is more, in Hag 1:4 Yahweh complains that the people live in “paneled houses” while “this house” lies abandoned (תָּרַב). The implication is left unclear: is Yahweh living in a dilapidated house, or has he no earthly dwelling place?¹³⁰ In line with its broader purposes, Haggai does not stress the departure or absence of Yahweh from the temple. Accordingly the renewed relationship between Yahweh and his people as a result of their rebuilding activity is not presented as a “return” of Yahweh to Jerusalem and its temple (compare Zech 1:16 and 8:3). Rather, Yahweh declares (Hag 1:8) that if the temple is rebuilt he will take pleasure (רִצָּה) in it and will accept the worship that is offered to him there (*niphal* of כִּבֵּד).¹³¹

Second, in contrast to broader ancient Near Eastern tradition where the deity had to be induced to return to the sanctuary, and such return was far from certain,¹³² here Yahweh’s acceptance of the rebuilt temple is assured. Furthermore, all that is required is the effort of rebuilding. No elaborate ritual procedures are required to exorcise any foreign presence,¹³³ no ceremonial inauguration is prescribed,¹³⁴ no special furnishings are demanded and no fresh manifestation of the divine presence (such as a recapitulation of the filling of the temple with glory in 1 Kgs 8:10–11) is promised or described. Thus whereas in the more common ancient Near Eastern traditions wherein the return of the god to the temple is never a foregone conclusion and therefore requires elaborate preparation, and when it does occur, is described in great detail, Haggai promises that when the people fulfill their covenantal duty toward Yahweh by refurbishing the temple, he will be pleased with their efforts and accept their worship. The directness and simplicity of the community’s responsibilities in rebuilding the temple and the certainty of Yahweh’s pleasure and acceptance of their efforts are clear reflections of the book’s presentation of Haggai as a “classical” prophet in the deuteronomistic tradition.

¹³⁰ This ambiguity raises many interesting issues. How does Haggai’s perspective here relate to the priestly “glory” theology, and deuteronomistic “name” theology? Compare here Sérandour, *Transeu* 10 p. 81, who notes the confluence of the two perspectives in Haggai. Clearly Yahweh cannot have taken temporary lodging in the shrine of another deity, as in certain polytheistic texts. Are we to infer here that the presence of Yahweh has returned with the exiles (compare the departure of his glory to the north with the exiles in Ezekiel 1–11) but lacks an abode? Or are we to suppose that the dwelling parallelism of Hag 1:4 is meant to be read as the people dwelling in adequate houses and Yahweh dwelling in a hovel? It is quite likely that some form of worship continued at the site of the ruined temple during the period of its destruction. Compare D. R. Jones, “The Cessation of Sacrifice after the Destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.,” *JTS NS* 14 (1963) pp. 12–31; and J. Middlemas, *The Troubles of Templeless Judah* (OTM; Oxford 2005) pp. 1–71. How would our prophet’s words here relate to the religious sensibilities of the non-deported population? Note also the contrast here between the perspective in Haggai and certain ancient Near Eastern traditions in which the temple virtually incarnated the deity (compare Schaudig, above p. 151).

¹³¹ Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* p. 160.

¹³² Averbek, above pp. 29–33.

¹³³ As in the cleansing of the spirits of the workers in certain texts, compare Ambos, above pp. 234–235.

¹³⁴ Compare 1 Kings 8.

Conclusions

Haggai therefore presents the reader with a unique recontextualization of several motifs found in the broader context of the ancient Near Eastern and biblical traditions regarding temple building. In line with the theological traditions represented among the Jerusalemite community of the time, temple building is framed in terms of Deuteronomistic, Priestly and Zion traditions, and in line with the book's desire to promote the significance of the prophetic office in the restoration period, Haggai is presented as a "classical" prophet who successfully brings the people to the fulfillment of their covenantal obligations before Yahweh. This desire thus leads to the presentation of the dramatic movement in the book as the restoration of a damaged covenant rather than the renewal of a broken one. This in turn influences the highly distinctive "variations" on broader ancient Near Eastern themes regarding temple building and rededication which appear in Haggai.