Article

Playing with Peace: Solomon as the Man of Peace and Rest, and the Temple as the House of Rest

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Abstract: It is well-known that the notions of peace, rest and order belonged to the royal Achaemenid ideology, particularly from the time of Darius I onwards. This can be witnessed in Achaemenid architecture, iconography and royal inscriptions. However, although the relations between the Persian Empire and the Greek city-states were never completely peaceful, the diplomatic relations between Persia and particularly Sparta emphasised the value and importance of peace for international politics. How did this international discourse influence the literature formation in Yehud at the same time? In addition, can one read the Chronicler's portrayal of King Solomon of old as playful (and undermining) irony and polemic against the imperial masters? In this article, I revisit an earlier study in which I have started investigating the rhetorical locus of the Chronicler's portrayal of this king.

Keywords: peace; Artaxerxes II; King's Peace; King Solomon; Chronicles

1. Introduction

In earlier work, I have advanced the thesis that we should assume much more awareness and knowledge of Classical Greek literature and the international politics of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE among the literati in Jerusalem who produced literature such as Chronicles. The influence of Classical Greek traditions in Yehud was not generally accepted in 2006 and 2008 when I published my earlier work in this regard (See Jonker 2006, 2008). However, I was encouraged to investigate this possibility by the influential publication of Gary Knoppers in which he showed convincingly (inter alia, with reference to archaeological evidence) that Classical Greek historiographical traditions certainly had an influence in the Chronicler's construction of the nine chapters of genealogies at the beginning of the book (Knoppers 2003a).

Today, we know much more about the so-called long-distance connectivity that prevailed during Achaemenid imperial rule (Waters 2014, p. 98; Colburn 2017). Apart from the role of the standardized Aramaic language in creating some cohesion in the vast expanses of the Persian empire (See e.g., Schniedewind 2006; Dušek 2013; Gzella 2015; Tavernier 2017; Jonker 2021), the influence of an excellent road system and postal service, which are archaeologically well attested, is now acknowledged (Kuhrt 2013, chp. 15; Wiesehöfer 2016). With military and trade movements (over land and sea) between the imperial heartland and Egypt, as well as the Greek areas (mainly in Asia Minor), one may safely assume that the famous and extensive corpus of Greek literature, as well as the contents of the famous and impressive Persian royal inscriptions, would have travelled well through the Mediterranean world. The fact that an Aramaic translation of the Behistun inscription was found in Egypt supports such an assumption (Greenfield and Porten 1982).

I therefore want to re-read the Chronicler's Solomon narrative in this article. The fairly hesitant conclusion of my earlier study was the following:

It is possible to find an explanation for the Chronicler's adaptation of the Deuteronomistic History version of Solomon's narrative in the wider international context. It might well be that the Chronicler had the wider international discourse on peace in his mind when he transformed Solomon into the king of

peace and the man of rest. In this way the Chronicler probably indicated that the king of peace should be sought in their own Judahite past and not in the wider international context. The house of rest was to be found in Jerusalem and not in Persepolis. Above all, the Giver of Peace is Yahweh of Judah, and not Ahuramazda of Persia. (Jonker 2008, p. 667)

I argued my case there from two sources: first, from the international discourse on peace (as represented in the memory of a Peace of Kallias in 449 BCE but also the so-called King's Peace of 386 BCE) and, second, from the Persian royal ideology of peace, called the pax Achaemenidica by some scholars, that prevailed in the empire and that is witnessed in the reliefs and inscriptions from the main imperial centres of Persia. Within the context of the deliberations on "Constructions of Persian and Iranian Identity, Ethnicity, and Religion From Ancient Times to the Present", I want to revisit these arguments in order to strengthen them from more recent scholarship.

In the next section, I will therefore deal with recent studies on how war and peace are presented, respectively, in Persian texts, coinage, and iconography but also in Greek literary sources.

2. War and Peace in Persian and Greek Sources

The prominence of the so-called Pax Achaemenidica in Ancient Persia is generally acknowledged and accepted. This term (which was coined by Josef Wiesehöfer) refers to the empire-wide order of peace, which was seen as a reflection of the cosmic order established by the deity Ahuramazda (Wiesehöfer 2007, 2013). The connection between imperial peace and Ahuramazda's cosmic order is particularly expressed in some of the royal Achaemenid inscriptions. The first inscription on Darius' tomb at Naqš-i Ruštam (DNa) contains the following claim:

Proclaims Darius, the king: Auramazda, when he saw this earth in turmoil, after that he bestowed it upon me; me he made king; I am king. By the favour of Auramazda I put it in its proper place. What I have said to them, that they did, as was my desire. (DNa 31–36—translation of Schmitt 2000, vol. 2)

Another inscription attributed to King Darius the Great, found on the southern wall of the terrace at Persepolis (DPd), includes the following section:

Proclaims Darius, the king: May Auramazda bring me aid together with all the gods; and may Auramazda protect this country from the (enemy) army, from crop failure (and) from Falsehood! Upon this country may not come an (enemy) army, nor crop failure nor Falsehood! This I pray as a favour of Auramazda together with all the gods; this favour may Auramazda grant me together with all the gods. (DPd 12–24—translation of Schmitt 2000, vol. 2)

This does, however, not mean that the Achaemenid kings were weak or did not fight against anybody. However, any battle was interpreted as punishment to those who serve Falsehood and do harm to others. The second part of the inscription on Darius' tomb at Naqš-i Ruštam (DNb) is particularly clear on this point:

Proclaims Darius, the king: By the favour of Auramazda I am of such a kind that I am friendly to right, (but) I am not friendly to wrong. (It is) not my desire that the weak one might be treated wrongly for the strong one's sake, (and) that (is) not my desire that the strong one might be treated wrongly for the weak one's sake. What (is) right, that (is) my desire. To the man following Falsehood I am not friendly. I am not hot-tempered. Whatever occurs to me in a quarrel, I firmly hold back in my thinking; I am firmly in control of myself. The man who co-operates, for him, according to the co-operation, thus I care for him; who does harm, according to the harm done, thus I punish him. (It is) not my desire that a man should do harm; moreover that (is) not my desire: If he should do harm, he should not be punished. (DNb 5–21—translation of Schmitt 2000, vol. 2)

Battles, wars, or fighting are thus not seen as a contradiction to Auramazda's cosmic order but is rather seen as the means through which the deity uses the king to restore peace and order. Josef Wiesehöfer summarises this aspect aptly:

> [A]s he owes his kingship to the favor of Auramazda, the king is obliged to pro-tect the god's good creation. He is capable of doing so because the god has given him the ability to tell right from wrong and because he has special qualities which are conducive to the promotion of justice and the protection of order. Although an absolute monarch, he is capable of being impartial and self-controlled; he judges, rewards, and punishes not at his own discretion, but always on the basis of fairness; .... Order, not chaos, peace, not tension, good conduct of the sub-jects and royal generosity, not disloyalty and kingly misbehavior dominate the inscriptions and the imagery of the royal residences. ... Carrot and stick, guar-antee of well-being ... and graveyard peace after the quelling of rebellions were the two sides of the pax Achaemenidica at all times (Wiesehöfer 2007, p. 125).[1]

Another source witnessing this imperial ideology is the iconography forming part of the impressive architecture of the Achaemenid royal centres, such as Susa, Ecbatana and Persepolis. Although the porticos and outside walls of the apadanas often show peace-ful scenes of the Achaemenid king being carried on his throne by subjugated kings or of the nations of the Earth bringing tribute and presents to the Great King, there are also many reliefs and small art pieces, facing the inside of palaces or apadanas, that show bat-tle scenes or armed soldiers (such as on the inside of the staircase leading up to the Perse-polis apadana). The very impressive iconography accompanying the extensive trilingual inscriptions at Bisitun (DB) also shows the Great King, Darius I, subjugating those who rebelled against him, even with his foot trampling on the chest of his main contender, Gau-mata (who pretended to be Bardiya, the son of Cyrus II the Great, and a younger brother of Cambyses II) (Feldman 2007; Hyland 2014). The iconography of the Achaemenid empire thus confirms the "carrot and stick" understanding of peace, as indicated by Wiesehöfer (see above). It becomes very clear from these reliefs, as well as from the royal inscriptions, that the Persian interpretation of their reign was strongly influenced by their imperial ide-ology.

The same applies to the Greek sources, however.[2] A study and comparison of Greek sources show that the classical sources never intended to offer "wie es eigentlich gewe-sen war" (pure, objective history). All of them offer a Greek perspective on international relations, particularly with Persia.

What is clear, however, is that numerous Greek sources witnessed attempts to estab-lish peace in the Mediterranean world. Admittedly, even these accounts are mostly biased and ideological, but they offer at least a glimpse of the discourses of the past. The works of those classical historians who lived and wrote contemporaneous with the Achaemenid pe-riod (such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Ctesias, Xenophon, Ephorus, and Diodorus Siculus) are valuable resources for piecing together the impact of the Persian and Greeks worlds of the time. Although both sides strove for order and peace—with the Greeks organising their society according to democratic principles, while the Persians were striving towards the cosmic order of Auramazda—it seems from these classical sources that there was con-stant war. However, war is almost always seen as the way to establish peace.

The period concerning us here is particularly the end of the 5th and the 4th centuries BCE, because this is the most probable time of origin of the book Chronicles that we want to interpret in this contribution. Various Greek sources were witness to all the struggles in this period of Persia to keep control over Egypt, and to the many clashes between Greek city-states and the Persian forces. Control over Asia Minor was particularly contentious between the Greeks and Persians. The Greek sources were furthermore witness to the numerous revolts that the Persian rulers had to face—not only in Egypt, where Persia had control since the time of Cambyses, but also from provinces and satrapies along the Mediterranean coast.

The second half of the 5th century, and particularly due to the "Konsolidierungspolitik" (Wiesehöfer 2009, p. 34) of the Persian king Artaxerxes I (465/4–424/3 BCE), Persia could defend its rule in Egypt successfully against the so-called Inaros revolt (with Athenian support), as well as against Athenian attempts to capture Cyprus and other areas along the Levantine coastline. Some historians claim that the so-called Peace of Callias of 449 BCE—that is, during the reign of Artaxerxes I—brought an end to the hostility between the Greek city-states and Persia. The peace treaty gave the Greeks control over the Greek city states on the mainland, as well as over the Greek population in Asia Minor, while Athens offered to refrain from intervening in the Persian control of Egypt, Cyprus and Syria (Gerstenberger 2005, p. 60). Other historians warn, however, that the tradition of a Peace of Callias rests on very scanty evidence in the Greek sources, and is most likely an "invention" from a later period. Only Diodorus Siculus (who wrote in the 1st century BCE) writes about the Peace of Callias (12.7), while a vague reference in Herodotus (IV 151) is the only witness in earlier sources. Rhodes writes about it as follows:

> [F]rom the fourth century onwards [i.e., approximately 50 years after the supposed treaty—L.C.J.] everybody knew of a 'Peace of Callias' by which Athens bound the Persians to keep away from the Aegean and the west coast of Asia Minor . . . Most scholars have been sufficiently impressed by the later evidence to believe in a treaty. It is clear that the fears of the late 450s were no more and that Athens stopped prosecuting the war against Persia; there may even have been some kind of understanding with the Persian satraps in western Asia Minor; but the formal treaty was probably invented after 386, when the Greeks of Asia Minor had been handed back to Persia . . . to illustrate how much more glorious the past had been than the shameful present. (Rhodes 2006, pp. 47–48)

The evidence about the peace treaty of 386 BCE is much stronger. Several Greek texts (particularly in Xenophon and Isocrates) were witness to the so-called "King's Peace", or "Peace of Antalcidas", that was concluded in that year (Briant 2002, p. 649; Kuhrt 2013, p. 381). The run-up to this peace treaty was the so-called Corinthian War of 395–387 BCE. After the Peloponnesian War, Sparta had the upper hand among the Greek city-states. The peace that was concluded after this war lasted for about 30 years. Then, in 395 BCE, a coalition consisting of Corinth, Athens, Argos and Thebes attacked Sparta. Persia, who had earlier lost control of the Greeks in Asia Minor, supported the coalition against Sparta with military but especially financial means. Antalcidas, a soldier and politician from Sparta, contacted Tiribazus, the satrap in Ionia, situated in the western part of the Persian empire, to assist in the negotiation of an agreement among the Greek city states and Persia. Antalcidas, together with Tiribazus, obtained support for their plan from King Artaxerxes II in Susa. After involving diplomatic envoys from all the involved parties, the terms of the treaty were communicated. Xenophon describes these events as follows:

> When Tiribazus called a meeting of all who wished to hear the peace terms which the king had issued, everyone came swiftly to the meeting. When they were assembled, Tiribazus showed them the king's seal and then read out the text, which was as follows: "King Artaxerxes considers it just that the cities in Asia and, among the islands, Clazomenae and Cyprus should belong to him; the other Greek cities, both big and small, should be autonomous, except for Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros, which should belong to Athens, as in the past. And if either of the two parties refuses to accept this peace, I, together with those who do accept it, will make war on that party both by land and by sea, with ships and with money". (Hellenica V, 1.30–31—translation of Kuhrt 2013, p. 381)

The peace that emerged from these negotiations became commonly known as the "King's Peace", or the Peace of Antalcidas, depending on whether one is looking at it from the Persian or Greek perspective. That Artaxerxes II played a crucial role in this international political development cannot be denied. He even initiated renewals of the treaty in 375 and 371 BCE. There is no doubt that Artaxerxes II primarily served the interest of the

Persian empire in this diplomacy because the treaty freed Persia from Greek threats but also returned the Greeks of the western Asia Minor to the Persian fold.

Scholars hail this treaty as a major shift in the military history of the ancient Mediterranean and West Asian worlds. The King's Peace is considered the first successful attempt at establishing a κοινη εἰρ ͗́νη—a so-called "common peace". Victor Alonso, a military historian, describes this development as follows (clearly with a Greek bias):

> [A]fter the Corinthian War ... Greek diplomacy managed to create a new institution of international law that overcame the provisional nature of treaties in the form of *spondai*. This was the *koine eirene*. In 386 the "King's Peace" ... inaugurated a series of common peace treaties, ranging over 50 years, leading to the "League of Corinth" in 337 ..., and even inspiring the foundation of the Hellenic League under Antigonus and Demetrius in 303/2 .... Successively adapted and refined, these general peace treaties contain fundamental changes: the diplomatic instrument is designated as *eirene* and is now formally and properly a peace treaty; as in the modern law of nations, the peace treaty is concluded for an unlimited duration and therefore politically and legally terminates war. It is therefore not restricted to simply containing the conflict while leaving open the possibility of an eventual renewal of hostilities after the accord's expiration (as usually occurred with long-term *spondai*); the pact ceases to be bilateral, restricted to two parties, and becomes genuinely multilateral, extending to all Greek states (whether adherent to the pact or not); it consecrates as universal the principle of polis autonomy; and beginning with the common peace concluded at Athens in 371, the contracting parties also swear to a guarantee-clause which obliges all parties to ward off with arms any assault against these agreements of peace and independence. Politically and legally, this was, without doubt, the first great diplomatic movement in the history of Greece to organize peace on a general level. (Alonso 2007, p. 221)

Furthermore, Lawrence Tritle, another military historian, emphasizes the significance of this development as follows (equally from a Greek perspective):

> Such emphasis on "common peace" suggests that fifth century experiences, in particular the Peloponnesian War, had encouraged the Greeks to find a way not only to end conflict but preempt it, that is, to protect communities and establish a process by which conflicts might be resolved without recourse to war. The "common peace" was an effort to solve the very problem that had proved detrimental in 432 when there was no means to enact arbitration in the conflict between Athens and Sparta over Corinth and Corcyra. ... Try as they might, their efforts met with only modest success as ambitions for power and domination drove communities to give priority to their own needs and goals. Such conflicting ambitions resulted in war, and war's effects rippled through society like a stone tossed into a still pond. (Tritle 2007, pp. 180–81)

Pierre Briant, who highlights the Persian perspective on this peace treaty, gives much more credit to Artaxerxes II when he indicates that "[t]he Great King owed this victory not just to the internal weakening of the Greek cities ... ; he owed it first and foremost to the resoluteness and constancy of his policy and deeds" (Briant 2002, p. 649; See also Waters 2014).

This was the history between Persia and Greece in the first half of the fourth century BCE. The book of Chronicles, and this is still the consensus, was written shortly afterwards, that is, in the second half of the fourth century, towards the end of the Persian period and the beginning of the Hellenistic expansion under Alexander the Great of Macedonia.[3]

3. An Awareness of Peace (and War) Nearer to Home in Yehud

What would the perspective have been on these international developments among the literati in Jerusalem? What experiences of peace—and war—were they exposed to, and how did the peace negotiations between Persia and Greece affect them?

Persia's military activities must have been well-known to the Yehudites from long ago. Persia started losing control over Egypt already during the reign of Darius II, towards the end of the fifth century BCE. Although Artaxerxes II tried to re-establish Persian rule in Egypt, he was not successful. It is highly likely that Yehud was proclaimed a separate Persian province at this time, to serve as southern border of the Persian empire, together with Idumea. Archaeological evidence shows that a series of defensive fortresses were built along this southern line (Betlyon 2017, p. 92). Some scholars even suggest that the coastal plain of the Levant was probably the military training ground for Persian soldiers in preparation of another take-over of Egypt, which was never successful (Betlyon 2017, p. 96).

The literati in Jerusalem formed their perspective on the Persian empire within this context. On the one hand, there was the troubled relationship with Egypt where they lost control; on the other hand, there were all the royal talks of peace and order, as well as the peace negotiations with the Greek states. As mentioned above, the excellent Persian communication system, as well as the proximity of many of the military activities, make it highly likely that those in a remote province of the empire, such as Yehud, would have taken notice of all these developments.

However, what were the conditions nearer to home? Were the negotiations of a "common peace" between the Greek states and the Persian empire also impacting the conditions in societies of the Levant? In order to establish what the conditions were during this time after the conclusion of the "King's Peace", some scholars have started investigating the material remains in different parts of the Achaemenid empire—also in Yehud (see, e.g., Tuplin 2017; Betlyon 2017). Betlyon rightly indicates that it is much more difficult to show evidence of peace in the archaeological record than of war (Betlyon 2017). He states the problem as follows:

> Can we assume that years of peaceful occupation at a site may simply be attested by a lack of destruction layers, incidental finds of weaponry, or skeletal remains which show the trauma of close combat? Such conclusions are inexact and imprecise at best. Warfare need not result in a terrible conflagration for cities or towns. Armies may take heavy casualties in the field, with little or no damage done to towns in the rear area of operations. So how do we tell the difference archaeologically between periods of war and peace? Can this differentiation be made solely on the basis of artifactual remains? Or is it necessary to correlate artifacts with historical, textual evidence to support claims concerning war or peace?. (Betlyon 2017, p. 87)

He obviously answers the last-mentioned question in the positive: Archaeological evidence, including evidence from numismatics (see particularly Betlyon 1986, 2005; Root 2005), should be used in conjunction with textual sources to gain access to the circumstances of the ancient times, also of those in 4th century BCE Yehud.

A combination of sources tells us that there were all but peaceful conditions in the Levant during this period. A first situation that caused much trouble for the Persian empire, was the relationship with Evagoras, the king of one of the city-states on Cyprus. Matt Waters indicates that "[b]ecause of its strategic location off the Phoenician coast, control of Cyprus was the prerequisite for control of the eastern Mediterranean seaboard. This in turn was necessary to any successful Persian reconquest of Egypt, especially because the Egyptian rebels were primarily based in the Nile delta region" (Waters 2014, p. 188). According to sections in Ctesias' Persica, as well as in Diodorus' history, it seems that shortly after the conclusion of the King's Peace, Artaxerxes II immediately had to deal with this revolt in Cyprus. In the end, he gained control over Cyprus, but it seems that Evagoras was reinstated as king of Salamis, as tribute-paying subject. Furthermore, the troubled relation-

ship with Egypt continued to plague Artaxerxes II. It was only Artaxerxes III who could reconquer Egypt in 340 BCE. Although an isolated and biased Greek resource, Isocrates (Panegyricus IV, 140) mocks the Persians for not being able to gain control over Egypt again (Waters 2014, p. 190). As witnessed by other Greek sources, such as Diodorus and Plutarch, the Persian Great King failed repeatedly during the period 380–360 BCE to gain control over Egypt.

A further challenge to the Great King, Artaxerxes II, was the revolt of some satraps in Anatolia. A significant outcome of the King's Peace for Artaxerxes II was the renewed control over the Greeks of Anatolia. Ironically, from this same area came unrest and trouble. However, these revolts also circled out into the Levant. Betlyon writes:

> The fourth century in Phoenicia, and in the city states along the southern Levantine coast and inland, including Samaria and Yehud, was a time of change and rebellion. The literary sources document repeated military actions by discontented Persian vassals. Archaeological and numismatic evidence corroborates this situation. The introduction of the Attic weight standard in the coin series of Sidon, Tyre, and Yehud, can only have occurred in the context of rebellion against the Great King. ... Practically all the coastal peoples took part in this revolt, including the Syrians and Phoenicians, including, most likely, the people of Yehud, Samaria, and the coastal city-states (Betlyon 2017, p. 99).[4]

Betlyon thus relies not only on classical sources but also on evidence from numismatics. It is doubted that Yehud's coinage was indeed used to finance some military revolt against the Persian empire,[5] but even without that theory holding any truth, Betlyon's point is valid that the implementation of a new coinage system as such was a sign of greater independence from the Persian centre.

Still another challenge to the Persian king came from the so-called Tennes revolt of approximately the middle of the fourth century BCE. Diodorus Sicilus wrote that "Tennes, king of Sidon got four thousand Greek mercenary soldiers from the Egyptians, commanded by Mentor the Rhodian. With these and the citizen soldiers he engaged the satraps ... , defeated them, and threw the enemy [i.e., the Persians—LCJ] out of Phoenicia" (XVI, 42—Translation of Kuhrt 2013, p. 409). Diodorus even claims that the Persian king, that is, Artaxerxes II, was personally involved in the military campaign to squash this revolt. An older publication by Dan Barag argued that this revolt of Sidon had widespread influence when he states: "One may safely assume that the effects of the Tennes Rebellion were more serious than suggested by the description of Diodorus and that Phoenicia and Palestine had not recovered by the time of Alexander's invasion" (Barag 1966, p. 12). Grabbe refutes Barag's arguments, however, but nevertheless comes to the following conclusion on this matter:

> In sum, although the rebellion of Tennes was potentially serious, it seems to have collapsed suddenly without any major fighting (apart from a preliminary engagement in which the combined armies of the satraps Belesys and Mazeaus were defeated by the Phoenicians) .... The only city destroyed was Sidon, ... There is little evidence that other areas of Phoenicia suffered from fighting, much less Samaria or Judah or other areas of the Palestinian interior. (Grabbe 2004, pp. 348–49)

All these examples confirm the main point that I want to make here, namely, that there must have been an awareness that all the Persians' big talk about peace, and all their peace treaties, did not bring final peace to the Levant and the wider Mediterranean area. Even if the Greek sources would exaggerate the negative effects of the revolts on the Persian imperial centre, and even if there were not necessarily physical effects for Jerusalem and its environment, one may assume safely that the literati in Jerusalem must have been aware of all these developments in the last years of the Persian empire and in the run-up to the conquest of Alexander the Great.

4. Re-Reading the Chronicler's Solomon Narrative

It is against this background, I would argue, that the book of Chronicles should be read. One may safely assume that the intellectual and conceptual environments in the Levant of the time were fraught with impressions of the successes and failures of the Persian empire. Not only the international scene, that is, Persia's relationship with Egypt and Greece but also its relationship with subjugated areas would have contributed towards the position taken by the Jerusalem elite during this time.

In my previous study on the Solomon narrative in Chronicles against this background (Jonker 2008), my emphasis was on the fact that the narrative of a so-called Peace of Callias, as well as the royal Persian ideology of peace, created an environment in which the Chronicler would have formed Solomon into a king of peace as well. In the present contribution, I have offered even more and stronger evidence to this effect. The confluence of evidence from Persian royal inscriptions and iconography, from an abundance of Greek sources and from archaeology and numismatics enriches our understanding of the intellectual environment within which the Chronicler wrote his book. This enriched understanding will lead me to append my previous view with some further rhetorical assumptions.

The Chronicler's Solomon narrative is mainly told in 2 Chronicles 1–9, in a strongly edited version of the earlier Deuteronomistic version in 1 Kings. However, in some of the Chronicler's own material that concludes the David narrative, an interesting depiction of Solomon appears. In 1 Chronicles 22:6–16, King David addresses his son, Solomon. We read the following in verses 7–10:

> David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest (אִישׁ מְנוּחָה). I will give him rest (נוח in the Hiph'il) from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon (שְׁלֹמֹה), and I will give peace (שָׁלוֹם) and quiet (שֶׁקֶט) to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.'[6]

This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the name 'Solomon' is etymologised to relate it to the word שָׁלוֹם ("peace"). Here, it is clearly done to put Solomon in stark contrast to his father David who had shed too much blood and has therefore disqualified himself from building the temple (בַּיִת) in Jerusalem, or alternatively to build a dynasty (alternative translation of בַּיִת) for (the name of) Yahweh.[7] David therefore informs his son that "the word of Yahweh has come upon him" to announce that Solomon will be born and that he will indeed build a בַּיִת for Yahweh and that he will sit on the eternal throne that Yahweh would establish for him.

In another speech that the Chronicler puts in the mouth of David, in 1 Chronicles 28:2–3 (again part of the Chronicler's *Sondergut*), the leaders of Israel are addressed:

> Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest (בֵית מְנוּחָה) for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building. But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood.'[8]

Here, the theme of rest continues. A contrast is drawn here between David who waged too many wars, and the "house of rest" (בֵית מְנוּחָה) that had to be built as a resting place for the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. Here, there is no doubt that the expression indeed refers to the temple in Jerusalem that had to be a place where the ark of the covenant could rest. With terminological play, the Chronicler relates the בֵית מְנוּחָה to the אִישׁ מְנוּחָה. The rest of the Solomon narrative in 2 Chronicles 1–9 confirms this status of the king as the builder of the temple in Jerusalem, as well as the king that waged no wars and was highly successful.

The Chronicler's version of Solomon's reign differs in this respect from the source text in 2 Kings. Although the Chronicler's version also mentions some military preparations by Solomon (in 2 Chron. 1:14–17), these are rather offered as signs of the king's success and prosperity and not as indications of his military power. The version in Kings not only narrates how Solomon got rid of his opponents through violence (2 Kgs. 2:13–46) and how he conscripted forced labour for his building projects (2 Kgs. 9:15–22) but also of which nations were adversaries of this king (2 Kgs. 11:14–25). These negative examples from his reign are eliminated by the Chronicler.

Furthermore, the Chronicler's narratives about the Judahite kings take their cue from the Solomon narrative. Although battles and wars do occur in the further royal narratives, they always show an involvement of Yahweh. It is Yahweh who wins wars for the Judahites when the king relies on the deity, and it is Yahweh who punishes Judah through other nations (or the Israelite kingdom) when the king does not rely on Yahweh but rather becomes apostate. A prime example is the Asa narrative (2 Chron. 13:23–16:14), where Yahweh wins the war against the Cushites because the king relied on the deity. The text explicitly indicates that the people had peace and rest after this victory (15:19). However, when the king rather relies on a human agent in his illness instead of relying on Yahweh, the deity punishes him with death (See Jonker 2006).

Why this emphasis in Chronicles on Solomon as somebody who brings peace and rest? Postcolonial theory[9] tells us that this is typical of how colonial subjects would subtly undermine the imperial overlords by telling their own story. The Chronicler's history is another attempt to tell the story of Israel's past, but—differently from Samuel-Kings—this is done within the Persian imperial environment. One may safely assume that the Chronicler's version—particularly in its *Sondergut* passages—reflects the rhetoric which would have been directed to the own contemporary context.

Within the conditions of the returned community in Jerusalem, there was no rest or peace to celebrate; the physical environment and the struggle to renew the community were still witnessing strongly to the defeat against and deportation by the Babylonians. Even the first years of restoration did not bring back the grandeur of the past, and it suppressed any aspirations of resurrecting the Davidic kingdom. The imperial environment determined all levels of their existence (See Jonker 2016, chp. 3).

In addition, the imperial overlords were not far away in remote Susa or Ecbatana or Persepolis; their "eyes and ears" sat in Jerusalem, near the second temple.[10] We know that the Persians almost always appointed governors in provinces from the local population from the guild of loyal supporters of the Persian empire who have recently returned from their diaspora in Mesopotamia. These local governors would have taken note of the influential—and even authoritative—literature that was starting to emerge in this remote province. We have seen above that the intellectual environment of the time was furthermore infused with many talks of peace but also numerous instances of revolt and military activities. Although the Persian royal ideology strove towards peace and order as an expression of the cosmic order that Auramazda has created, the reality of the time ironically pointed into the opposite direction. All the attempts of establishing a koine eirene seemed to be doomed. It is therefore highly likely that the Chronicler (a collective of Levites, situated in the priesthood at the second temple in Jerusalem towards the end of the Persian period) subtly and playfully pointed out this irony but also established a polemic opposition between the Persian notion of peace and order and the peace and rest which their ideal king, Solomon, has established in the past. Although subjugated, the cultic community in Jerusalem argued that the real Giver of peace is not Auramazda or the Persian great kings but rather Yahweh, the Lord of the Man of Rest, who lives in the House of Rest in Jerusalem.

However, there might even have been a further audience to these passages. We may assume that communities in the Levant and Mesopotamia would have taken notice of Alexander of Macedonia who started emerging as a military leader in the Greek world. After 200 years of Persian domination in West Asia and the Mediterranean world, nobody

probably thought that this domination would ever come to an end. They have seen many Greek leaders coming and going, and Alexander would probably not have drawn too much attention. Could it be that the cultic leaders in Jerusalem also polemicized in the direction of the Greeks? They were—similarly to the Persians—also idealising peace during the fourth century BCE, but the experience on the ground showed another reality. The Chronicler's reference to Solomon as the real king of peace and rest could have been a two-pronged polemic, which playfully and subtly undermined the imperial aspirations of both the Persians and the Greeks.

5. Conclusions

Although it is often very difficult to establish who the exact audience was of some biblical literature, we obtain assistance from a wealth of extra-biblical information in the case of Chronicles. Although archaeological evidence does not help much to establish for sure the conditions of war and peace during the 4th century BCE, the information from numismatics corroborates the information in Greek sources about continued unrest—even after the conclusion of a *koine eirene* by the Great King, Artaxerxes II.

Chronicles should certainly be read for all its literary, historiographic, theological and hermeneutic value. However, this contribution tried to show that it should also be read as a powerful reception of Persia and the Persians towards the end of the existence of this remarkable empire. As a small voice from the imperial margins, the Chronicler's version of Solomon's narrative gives us a glimpse of a playful—but powerful—expression of contempt for those rulers who speak peace but do war. In addition, Chronicles offers the example of Solomon of old as an expression of real peace and rest, within the Persian empire. Through these rhetorical means, the Chronicler contributed significantly to the negotiation of a unique identity on behalf of the people of Yehud. Within the imperial and international environments of the late 4th century BCE, the Chronicler proclaimed that the House of Rest in Jerusalem, and the Man of Rest who sat on the throne of Ancient Israel, were the hallmarks of who they were. Their identity is not primarily determined by the Persian ideology of peace and order, or by the Greek military power, but rather by the fact that they are Yahweh's people, living in Jerusalem.

Notes

[1] Tuplin gives a similar description: "[B]oth war and peace do figure in Achaemenid imperial ideology, and war perhaps more than is sometimes suggested: indeed, methodologically speaking, it is quite striking that the Persian and Greek data-sets, radically different in content and character, turn out not to be that far apart in their depiction of an ideological environment in which military values played a larger role than is sometimes acknowledged but were less fundamental than one might have expected. The Persians' two greatest achievements in the fourth century were the recovery of Egypt and the recovery of Greek Anatolia. The former was eventually achieved straightforwardly by war. But the latter, though prepared by war (including a brief invasion of Greece in 393), was sealed by the so-called King's Peace" (Tuplin 2017, p. 51). See the discussion below of the "King's Peace."

[2] For an overview of Greek (and Latin) sources shedding light on the period in which Yehud existed as Achaemenid province, see Grabbe (2004, chp. 6); Kuhrt (2013).

[3] Although some scholars (e.g., Steins 1995; Finkelstein 2018) have challenged the consensus view on the date of origin of Chronicles, the majority of commentators still adhere to the late Achaemenid and/or early Hellenistic period. See, e.g., Willi (1972); Williamson (1982); Japhet (1993); Knoppers (2003b); McKenzie (2004); and Klein (2006). Particularly, Knoppers' commentary includes a very thorough discussion of different theories about the date and origin of Chronicles (Knoppers 2003b, pp. 101–17).

[4] About the archaeological and Greek sources, Betlyon writes as follows: "Archaeological evidence for these revolts is meagre at best. A few sites show evidence of destruction from the fourth century, although the ability to date pottery manufactured in this period is too imprecise to establish verifiable dates. Without literary/historical sources such as Diodorus, however reliable

or unreliable his writing may be, historians would have great difficulty reconstructing the history of the late fifth and fourth century Levant" (Betlyon 2017, p. 101).

5   Root, e.g., disagrees on numismatic grounds that the Jews from Yehud were using their new coinage system to fund a military rebellion: "Although the Jews are never listed as participants in either the Great Satrapal Revolt of 360 or the Tennes Revolt of the 340s, some believe that these coins were used to finance a rebel army. This hypothesis is unsound, since the Yehud coins are much too small to indicate military spending" (Root 2005, p. 134).

6   Adapted from ESV translation.

7   See the discussions of this section in Williamson (1982, pp. 153–57); Japhet (1993, pp. 395–98); Knoppers (2003b, pp. 771–76); and Klein (2006, pp. 435–39).

8   Adapted from ESV translation.

9   See in my methodological description in Jonker (2016, chp. 2.2.1) a further explanation of the assumptions of postcolonial theory.

10 Archaeological evidence (see Lipschits et al. 2017) shows that Ramat Rahel was no longer in use as administrative centre during the second half of the 4th century BCE. It is highly likely, however, that the Persian officials were based in Jerusalem itself, near the temple, which served as economic connection between Yehud and the imperial centre. I thank Yigal Levin for pointing this out to me.

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