

The Relationship Between the Motif of Memory/ Remembrance and One of Its Aspects Concerning the Command to Exterminate the Canaanites in Deuteronomy 7

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Abstract: This article explores the specific features of the theological connection between the motif of memory/remembrance and one of its aspects, namely, the command to exterminate the seven nations of Canaan. It is argued that viewing the world through the lens of covenant doctrine, which defines the foundation and essence of the connection itself in the book of Deuteronomy, is imperative in nature. As a result, the study does not dispute the legitimacy of violence. Instead, it reasserts necessity for this practice in the context of God's evolving relationship with His people at specific border periods of the event-time continuum. That means that the violence mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy 7 is theologically vindicated. Also, for the first time in a discussion of this kind, the necessary negative and positive elements (destruction and freedom) that shaped the content and form of corporate memory generated by two fundamental events in the history of the people of Israel (Egypt and the conquest of Canaan) were identified. The text highlights both the theoretical and practical nuances of "remembrance," and the specifics of its worldview theological adversary – the motif of forgetting.

Keywords: covenant, Yahweh, holiness, violence, memory, Deuteronomy.

Introduction

From the perspective of the reaction of mortals, there is a vast spectrum of viewpoints on the existence of legitimate violence, i.e., inspired by the texts of our diverse religious continuum. These viewpoints range from totally negative to absolutely positive. Of course, the polemical agenda includes a stratum of biblical texts with a corresponding orientation, this layer has proven itself as the primary target of the "zone" of hermeneutical battles. The idea that there is a pattern that implies the consistency of God's character traits, such as love and justice, mediating themselves through the intri-

cate measures of *herem* is something that many people struggle to accept, not so much because it is difficult to comprehend but from a theoretical and practical standpoint.

Furthermore, the subject we have chosen for discussion is closely related to the ongoing debate on the humanistic and ethical facets of *herem* theology in the context of the multivalent theodicy, the theme of vengeance, and Yahweh's initiated cruelty in Scripture.¹ We acknowledge that we are discussing a particular type of war: holy war or Yahweh's war.² Some intellectuals in their efforts to understand the authentic meaning of the texts apply modern connotations of genocidal policy to biblical axiomatism, thereby projecting their own skeptical horizon of expectation.³ We recognize that this is what makes it difficult to define the precise range of meanings of *herem* theology. However, this does not imply that efforts to contour the theological intention of the *herem* should be discouraged or rejected. On the contrary, they should be accepted with a certain degree of enthusiasm and the highest possible degree of objectivity in the light of existing scholarly achievements. For example, David Jayaray has demonstrated the particularism of *herem* policy in Deut.7,⁴ and yet not everyone agrees with his reasoning for such a radical policy against idolaters (Deut.7:2–3). In our opinion, there are three features, the cumulative combination of which is not always considered in studies of a similar type. These features include the theme of election, the motif of holiness, and the idea of God's faithfulness to His own covenant.

Due to the format of this article, we will not discuss the spectrum of issues associated with the concept of *herem*. Instead, we will concentrate on determining and defining the theological nature of the relationship between the motif of memory and one of its aspects related to the command to exterminate. The analysis will proceed to Deuteronomy 7 after a brief review of the mainstream and popular publications (a sufficient minimum) in the field of the Old Testament and Deuteronomy. The interacting dialogue between the two will not be discussed.

¹ Daryl Neipp, "The dilemma of genocide in the Old Testament" (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2012); Mina Glick, "Herem in Biblical law and narrative" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2007); William Lyons, *A History of Modern Scholarship on the Biblical Word Herem: The Contributions of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter C. Craigie, and Tremper Longman, III* (Mellen Press, 2010); Philip Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (Brown Judaic Studies, 1991); Paul Copan, Matthew Flannagan, *Did God Really Command Genocide? Coming to Terms with the Justice of God* (Baker Books, 2014); Nathan Edwards, "The Judgment of God in MT Esther: Considering the Violence in Esther as a Case of HEREM" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023); Adi Ophir, *In the Beginning Was the State: Divine Violence in the Hebrew Bible* (Fordham University Press, 2022); Julia O'Brien, Chris Franke, *The Aesthetics of Violence in the Prophets* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010); Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford University Press, 1993); Cezary Korzec, ed., *Bible Caught in Violence* (Peter Lang, 2019).

² Milad Dagher, "Sacral War in Israel: Covenantal Synthesis of Ancient Israelite and Prophetic Traditions" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2013); Arie Versluis, *The Command to Exterminate the Canaanites: Deuteronomy 7* (Brill, 2017). The author criticizes the suitability of the expression "holy war" to biblical military conflicts and in particular to Deut.7, 59–61.

³ See the discussions in Heath Thomas, Jeremy Evans, and Paul Copan, eds., *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013), 152–175, 265–286; Christian Hofreiter, *Making Sense of Old Testament Genocide: Christian Interpretations of Herem*. *Passages* (Oxford University Press, 2018); Allan Bornapé, El problema del "... en el pentateuco y su dimensión ritual, *DavarLogos* 4.1 (2005): 1–16; Pekka Pitkänen, "War in Deuteronomy" in *The Oxford Handbook of Deuteronomy*, ed. Don Benjamin (Oxford University Press, 2025): 146–159.

⁴ David Jayaray, "The Nature and Function of the Concept of the Election of Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy: A Perspective from Nationhood" (PhD diss., University of Gloucestershire, 2010), 204.

The Motif Of Memory/Remembrance In Modern Old Testament Studies

The existing scholarly works in this area of interest can be divided into four types of approaches,⁵ which represent the current state of biblical studies in general: 1) a focus on lexical range; 2) an area of biblical historiography that considers memory as one of its elements; 3) thematic nuances where memory serves an organizing concept; and 4) the study of memory transmission.

Ronald Hendel, a well-known scholar focuses on the sacred past, which serves as a model for living and a source of the present.⁶ This theologian asserts that remembering the past is fundamental to the development of Israel's national identity, which is rooted in its religious and cultural heritage.⁷ Hendel's work demonstrates the interconnectedness of culture, memory, and history in the forming of a unique national identity. Another expert, Jacob Wright, employs intriguing interdisciplinary research, to demonstrate how memories of war, either real or imagined, allowed the biblical authors, as if architects of Israel's identity, to "construct" memory.⁸ We should give credit to Rüdiger Schmitt's insightful observations that address the issue of the cultural aspect of war memorialization.⁹

Continuing, I want to note that in the article by Joachim Schaper, we are introduced to the preconditions and environment of the formation of the "culture of memory" in ancient Israel, which marked the transition from oral tradition to written record.¹⁰ In a closely related topic, it is worth referring to the significant contributions to scholarship

⁵ The intermediate point is the stratum of materials from the intertestamental period, see: Timothy Langille, "Reshaping the Persistent Past: A Study of Collective Trauma and Memory in Second Temple Judaism" (PhD diss., University Toronto, 2014), 87–127; 163–190; Andrew Perrin, "Remembering the Past, Cultivating a Character: Memory and the Formation of Daniel in the Aramaic Pseudo-Daniel Texts (4Q243–244; 4Q245)," in *Vision, Narrative, and Wisdom in the Aramaic Texts from Qumran*, ed. Mette Bundvad, Kasper Siegmund (Brill, 2020): 6–30; Mira Balberg, "Unforgettable Forgotten Things: Transformations in the Laws of Forgotten Produce (shikhehah) in Early Rabbinic Literature," *Oqimta* 5 (2019): 1–33; Steven Fraade, "Memory and Loss in Early Rabbinic Text and Ritual" in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, ed. Tom Thatcher (SBL Press (2014), 113–130; Mira Balberg, "The Torah Is Bound to Be Forgotten: A History of an Ahistorical Trope," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 30 vol. 4 (2023): 440–462; Gregory Bradley, "The role of memory in the Wisdom of Solomon," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* Vol. 31,1 (2021): 49–61; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Stephen C. Barton, Benjamin G. Wold, eds. *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity* (Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

⁶ Ronald Hendel, *Remembering Abraham Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁷ Ronald Hendel, *Remembering Abraham Culture*, 7–9.

⁸ Jacob Wright, *War, Memory, and National Identity in the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 51–164.

⁹ Rüdiger Schmitt, "Yahweh's Wars in the Pentateuch and their Function for the Cultural Memory of Ancient Israel," in *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis*, eds. Pernille Carstens, Trine Hasselbalch (Gorgias Press, 2012), 229–243.

¹⁰ Joachim Schaper, *The Living Word Engraved in Stone: The Interrelationship of the Oral and the Written and the Culture of Memory in the Books of Deuteronomy and Joshua*, *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity*, 9–23. The author notes: "At the time when the Deuteronomistic History came into existence and writing became the object of self-reflective discourse, Judaeen society also witnessed the beginnings of a highly sophisticated textual hermeneutics that was to change Judaeen religion forever," 21. We do not agree with the existence of so-called Deuteronomistic history, as well as with Priestly tradition. It refers to a construct artificially created by the liberal-critical school to resolve non-existent or supposed textual problems.

of the monographs by Raymond Person¹¹ and Daniel Pioske.¹² In addition, the nature of the relationship between memorialization (the material side) and historical and theological memory from a diachronic perspective is thoroughly explored in Edward Anderson's dissertation.¹³ In short, according to his hypothesis, the historical events at Bathsheba, Bethel, and Gilgal served as commemorative mirrors for Israel. They played a similar role in shaping a theology of national memory as the four mentioned meaning-making and basic monuments: the Passover, the redemption of the firstborn, the giving of the Law at Sinai, and the crossing of the Jordan River. Regarding innovations, the work of Daniel Pioske is worth mentioning. He insists that historians must interpret the epistemological differences between the past, fixed by remembering and history, within a hermeneutical framework sensitive to the different epistemological foundations of memory.¹⁴

It is also important to point to two excellent collections dealing with the problematics of cultural perspectivism of biblical memory: the first, edited by Pernille Carstens, Trine Hasselbalch and Niels Lemche, offers a set of exegetical expositions and solutions to the cultural dimension of memory.¹⁵ This book aims to investigate memory inscribed and embodied in biblical culture and its setting. The editor of the second volume, Ida Fröhlich, guides the reader through the systematization and unification of all sources on King David, a key figure in ancient Israel.¹⁶ It is significant to emphasize that the essays in this publication challenge current research methods on issues of Christian origins, such as the emergence of early Christian literature, ritual, the historical Jesus, the history of the Gospel traditions, and ethics.

In a shared edition, Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher have assembled experts who skillfully display the material in the context of social and cultural memory.¹⁷ Sandra Huebenthal further pondered the sociological aspects of the topic.¹⁸ In addition, James Spencer addresses the theological perspective of the Sabbath in terms of the communal

¹¹ Raymond Person, *Scribal Memory and Word Selection: Text Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, (SBL, 2023).

¹² Daniel Pioske, *Memory in a Time of Prose: Studies in Epistemology, Hebrew Scribalism, and the Biblical Past* (Oxford University Press, 2018). This book examines the emergence of Hebrew prose writing through the lens of epistemology and the role of memory in the construction of historical narratives.

¹³ Edward Anderson, "City Names as Memorials in the Old Testament Theology" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2002). Also, Daniel Pioske, *David's Jerusalem: Between Memory and History* (Routledge, 2015) and his article "Memory and its Materiality: The Case of Early Iron Age Khirbet Qeiyafa and Jerusalem," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 127 (1): 78–95. Pioske notes the crucial role of physical remains in the constitution of cultural memory.

¹⁴ Daniel Pioske, "Retracing a Remembered Past Methodological Remarks on Memory, History, and the Hebrew Bible," *Biblical Interpretation* 23 (2015): 291–315. The theologian defends a postpositivist interpretive approach to the study of the identified area.

¹⁵ Pernille Carstens, Trine Hasselbalch, Niels Lemche, eds., *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis* (Gorgias Press, 2012), 31–52, 309–326.

¹⁶ Ida Fröhlich, ed., *David in Cultural Memory* (Peeters, 2019).

¹⁷ Alan Kirk and Tom Thatcher, eds., *Memory, Tradition, And Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity* (SBL, 2005).

¹⁸ Sandra Huebenthal, *Memory Theory in New Testament Studies: Exploring New Perspectives* (Brill, 2024). In her collection, professor Sandra Huebenthal turns to social memory theory for answers to many biblical questions.

mnemonic practice of holy time.¹⁹ He insists that the call to observe the Sabbath is theological (Creation) and only then humanitarian (Deut.5:15). Also, Megan Daffern and Marina Kok explore the linguistic²⁰ and thematic elements²¹ of this motif in the Book of Psalms. Moreover, Barat Ellman examines the interdependence of memory and covenant in the so-called (though mistakenly) Deuteronomistic and Priestly traditions of the Hebrew Bible.²² In order to fill a gap in academic understanding, she explores the application of mnemonic theory to the content of biblical texts. Professor Ellman delves into the distinctions between semantic and episodic conceptions of memory. She uses an analytical approach to fix how these two types of memory generate perceptions of covenants. To top it all off, Adriane Leveen reveals an unusual facet of memory in the Book of Numbers. She describes it as a kind of stabilizing force that brings the people together in a harmonious kinship with God under the guidance of priests.²³ The researcher focuses on the centrality of the theme of memory in Numbers 10–11, highlighting its interpretative role in constituting the modus of being of both the individual and the covenant community as a whole in light of the events related to the possession of the promised land.

To summarize the brief review, it is important to note that, despite the sometimes divergent and conflicting conclusions regarding the chosen subject of analysis, they demonstrate a shared interest in the topic and have potential cross-enrichment usefulness in this area of theology.

The Motif Of Memory/Remembrance In Theological Studies Of The Book Of Deuteronomy

In light of the aforementioned review, the document selected for consideration, could not be disregarded within the ambit of academic inquiry because of its crucial role in shaping covenant theology and the behavioral and ideological framework of all generations of Israelites.

¹⁹ James Spencer, "Remembering Sabbath: An Application of Sociological Method in the Exposition of the Old Testament" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1989). The scholar examines in detail the relationship between the ideas of Creation, the Exodus, the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness, and the way in which the Sabbath commandments affect their collective memory, 167–190.

²⁰ Megan Daffern, "The Semantic Field of 'Remembering' in the Psalms," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* v.41.1 (2016): 79–97. This essay focuses on the semantic field of the word 'remember' in the Psalms, applying the method developed by Jayme Barr and Samuel Balentin.

²¹ Marina Kok, "Remembered space: Memory and identity in Psalms 137–145" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2020). The lecturer focuses on the relationship between space, memory, and identity in Psalm 137–145. According to her argument, space, by linking people's collective memories and shared history, transforms their identities in light of changing circumstances.

²² Barat Ellman, "Memory and Covenant: the Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomic and Priestly Covenants" (PhD diss., Jewish Theological Seminary, 2011). We do not support Ellman's naming of the biblical group of texts.

²³ Adriane Leveen, "Variations on a Theme: Differing Conceptions of Memory in the Book of Numbers," *JSOT* 27.2 (2002): 201–221.

A collection of essays edited by Dianna Edelman and Johannes Ro examines the features of the organic relationship between collective memory and collective identity.²⁴ In his 2019 dissertation at Durham University, Stephen Campbell proposes a reconstruction of the interpretive framework of the parenesis of Deut.4:1–40 by combining the cultural memory theory of Egyptologist Jan Assmann with the canonical approach of theologian Brevard Childs.²⁵ In fact, according to the position he defends, the organic message of Deuteronomy is hermeneutically modernized, acquiring the status of an authoritative testimony about God for Christian communities. Katharina Deeley also focuses on the religious emphasis – the cross-cutting feature of the memory motif in the retrospective dimension of historical events in Deut.5–26.²⁶ Her work deals with the rhetorical function of memory as an instrument of conviction for any generation of the Israeli nation. Furthermore, Jerry Hwang posits that Moses' reference to the "fathers" in Deuteronomy is intended to revive the past and transform Israel's memories of God's favor toward the "fathers" by motivating fellow believers to place their blessed trust in Him. This approach differs from the typical methodologies that attribute diachronic significance to the discrepancies between the Deuteronomic concept of "fathers" and the anteceding narratives in Genesis-Numbers.²⁷

In his analysis of the relationship between the food factor and the memory motif, Nathan MacDonald, referring to David Sutton's work in anthropology, claims that the theme of food in Deuteronomy serves as a means for Israel to remember not only the Exodus and the wilderness period but also the era of conquest.²⁸ Brian Britt's discourse underscores the significance of memory in Moses's farewell speech, which integrates retrospective and prospective views on history, legal instructions, and directives concerning the ritual dynamics of Old Testament worship. The analysis reveals an interweaving of past, present, and future within this narrative framework, encapsulating God's commandment of remembrance, thereby conferring a dialogical coherence upon the book.²⁹

²⁴ Dianna Edelman, Johannes Ro, eds., *Collective Memory and Collective Identity: Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History in Their Context* (de Gruyter, 2021). The sixteen contributors to this volume, drawing on comparative analyses of biblical, ancient Near Eastern, and classical Greek materials, deal in detail with the contours of collective memory and collective identity that crystallize in the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy-4Kings).

²⁵ Stephen Campbell, "Remembering the Unexperienced: Cultural Memory, Canon Consciousness, and the Book of Deuteronomy" (PhD diss., Durham University, 2019). The specialist emphasizes the rhetorical features that influence the theological understanding of the text, foregrounding the communal and intergenerational nature of the covenant, grounded in commemorative pillars such as ritual practice and Scriptural texts that contribute to a correct perception of the events at Horeb.

²⁶ Katharine Deeley, "The Rhetoric of Memory: A Study of the Persuasive Function of the Memory Commands in Deuteronomy 5–26" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1989).

²⁷ Jerry Hwang, "The Rhetoric of Remembrance: A Investigation of the Fathers in Deuteronomy" (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2009). The rhetorical-critical approach used in the thesis, contrasted with the redaction criticism methods of Thomas Remer and John Seters, shows that references to 'the fathers' are a deliberately chosen literary device designed to ground and intensify a sense of corporate solidarity.

²⁸ Nathan MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone: The Uses of Food in the Old Testament* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 70–99.

²⁹ Brian Brit, "Remembering Narrative in Deuteronomy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. by Danna Fewell (Oxford University Press, 2016), 157–167.

The focus of Georg Braulik and Lucas Nascimento is slightly different. By relying on a limited range of lexical concepts, they deal with specific aspects of cultural memory in Deuteronomy,³⁰ considering the strategic need to sustain and preserve it³¹. In addition to this, Valdivino Ribeiro, Hébert Barros, and Rosemary Silva, in a brief article, address the issue of unity between the motif of memory and the ritual and liturgical level of the feasts,³² thereby resonating to a certain extent with Dariusz Kwiatkowski's thesis about Israel's liturgical calendar as a kind of anamnesis, i.e., the realization of God's soteriological activity within the historical dimension.³³

Textual Analyses

It is important to acknowledge that the concept of memory is first introduced in the Book of Genesis (Gen.8:1 "and God remembered," *wayyizkōr*) and that, from a linguistic perspective, the metaphorical aspect is characterized by the subjectification of God. In this way, the conceptual framework for further relations with God is determined, emphasizing the imperative to remember and avoid forgetting in both a broad sense (at the national or tribal level) and a narrow sense (at the individual level). That serves as a template reference point, a leitmotif that sets the boundaries of interaction between the mortal and the Immortal.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the initiative of remembrance comes from Yahweh. At the same time, the response of man, described in the categories of memory, positions him as the recipient rather than the initiator of the specified modus of inter-influence. The rational commonality of both is only possible in the state of remembering. Thus, the act of "remembering" serves as a nexus point where the two worlds intersect. However, if one of the participants in the dialogue refuses to remember in the manner of reciprocity, communication is immediately broken, and not without consequences for the man. A similar presentation of communication parameters may be found in the book of Deuteronomy, where the motif of remembrance has a cross orientation,³⁴ com-

³⁰ Georg Braulik, "Das Deuteronomium und die Gedächtniskultur Israels. Redaktionsgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zur Verwendung Noalmd," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel. Für Norbert Lohfink* (Herder, 1993), 9–31.

³¹ Lucas Nascimento, "Manutenção e Preservação Da Memória No Deuteronomio: Estudo De Dois Textos," *Revista Vértices* No. 15 (2013): 59–73.

³² Ribeiro Valdivino, "Hébert Vieira Barros, Rosemary Francisca Neves Silva, Memória, Resistência e Alegria no Deuteronomio," in *Fragmentos De Cultura, Goiânia*, v. 25, n. 3, (2015): 417–427.

³³ Dariusz Kwiatkowski, "IL Libro Del Deuteronomio Come Fonte Teologica Della Dimensione Anamnetica Dell'Anno Liturgico," *Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne* 38 (2021): 205–217.

³⁴ The statistics of the use of the verb *zkr* as a base lexeme in Deuteronomy are as follows: 5:15; 7:18[2]; 8:2,18; 9:7, 27; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9,18, 22; 25:17; 32:7. The term itself is rendered in the Septuagint by verb *μνησκόμαι*, but with one exception (Deut.7:18), where the two-verb construction *zākōr tizkōr* in the Septuagint is translated by a noun and a verb (*μνεία μνησθήση*). Hence it follows that there are not fifteen, but fourteen instances of reference in the Septuagint. The noun *zēker* occurs in Deut. 25:19 (noun *ὄνομα*) and Deut. 32:16 (noun *μνημόσυνον*). A detailed analysis of the verb forms *zkr* and the noun *zēker*, see. David Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew: Zayin-Teth*. V.3 (Sheffield, 1996), 105–109, 111; Leslie Allen, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. by Willem VanGemeren (Zondervan, 1997), 1100–1106; Андрей Графов, *Словарь библейского иврита* (Москва: «Текст», 2019), 138–139.

binning the ideology of election³⁵ with covenant theology.³⁶ This combination is vividly illustrated in Deut.7.

According to Jayaray, if we divide the content of the seventh chapter of the recognized locus classics of the doctrine of the election of the people into three parts (Deut.7:1–5; 6–16; 17–26),³⁷ then Deut.7:6 introduces the motivation, which is the concept of holiness that governs the resistance to the pagan threat.³⁸ On this basis, Israel resists the profane nations, as Norbert Lohfink has also stated.³⁹ It is in the midst of this confrontation that the appeal in Deut. 7:18 (*zāk ōr tizkōr* – “must surely be remembered”) is head. However, somewhat modified and inspired by the earlier formulae promises in Exodus 19:5–6. The nature of the threat itself is ambiguous, consisting of both external and internal components.

The first (external) component is linked to the seven nations subject to unconditional eradication, thus bringing together the notion of election and the idea of *herem*.⁴⁰ Based on this, Mina Glick concludes that the identity of Israelites as God’s chosen people obliges them to protect their status by demonstrating their loyalty to God through the execution of *herem*, which are preventive measures against the idolatry of the inhabitants of Canaan.⁴¹ This removes potential temptations to worship other gods, which were considered an abomination in the face of God (Deut.7:26).⁴² Such God-initiated violence, according to Caryn Reeder, effectively protected Israel’s fragile identity from external threats.⁴³ In addition, von Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger believes that fulfilling God’s

³⁵ Deut.4:37,7:6,10:13,14:2,18:5,33:21.

³⁶ Deut.4:13, 23,31; 5:2,3; 7:9, 12; 8:18; 9:9,11,15;10:8; 17:2; 29:1,9, 12, 14, 20, 21, 25; 31:9, 16, 20, 25; 33:9.

³⁷ We share the view of literary structure presented by Jeffrey Tigay in his commentary, *Deuteronomy* (Jewish Publication Society of America, 2003), XII. About other approaches to the literary structure, см: Jack Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Eerdmans, 2013), 73–92; Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Abingdon Press, 2001), 17; For a detailed discussion of the organization and composition of the book, see. Edward Woods, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary* (IVP Academic, 2011), 37–55.

³⁸ David Jayaray, “The Nature and Function,” 195. Also, Ellis Ray, *An Examination of the Covenant Promises of Exodus 19.5–6 and Their Theological Significance for Israel* (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 104–105; In dealing with other nations, holiness was not maintained through *herem*, even when defensive warfare was considered (Deut.21:10–17).

³⁹ Norbert Lohfink, The Destruction of the Seven Nations in Deuteronomy and the Mimetic Theory. *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* January, v. 2, n. 1 (1995): 104.

⁴⁰ For more detail, see David Jayaray, “The Nature and Function,” 196–209. A similar thought is found in Joel Lohr, “Chosen and Unchosen Conceptions of Election in the Pentateuch and Jewish-Christian Interpretation” (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2007), 81.

⁴¹ Mina Glick, “Herem in Biblical Law and Narrative” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2007), 113–114.

⁴² In the Pentateuch, *tô’ēbā* (abomination) describes a wide range of offences both in the religious sphere and on a socio-moral level: sexual perversions (Lev.18:22, 26, 27, 29, 30, etc.), idol worship (Deut.7:25–26; 20:18; 27:15; 32:16), burning of children (Deut.12:31), false prophets and dreamers, magicians and sorcerers (Deut.13:15, 18:9–12). The eating of unclean animals (Deut.14:13), the sacrifice of a defective animal (Deut.17:19–4), sex-change (Deut.22:5), payment for uncleanness (Deut.23:19), third marriage (Deut.24:4), unfaithful scales and honesty in trade (Deut.25:159–16). IWe are convinced of the theological and rhetorical regularity of this frequent use of the term in Deuteronomy in comparison with other books of the Pentateuch. For a detailed and exhaustive analysis of the use of the term in the document, see. Winston Pickett, *The meaning and function of ‘T’B/O’EVAH’ in the Hebrew Bible (Abomination, Old Testament)* (PhD diss., Union College, 1985), 157–189.

⁴³ Caryn Reeder, “Community Violence in Deuteronomy,” in *The Cambridge Companion To The Hebrew Bible And Ethics*, ed. C. L. Crouch (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 43.

plans contributed to the social distance and isolation between them and the Gentiles.⁴⁴ Without a shadow of a doubt, that *herem* was not merely a military campaign; it was a sacred act that was performed to ensure Israel's spiritual purity and devotion to God.⁴⁵

The second (internal) component refers to the people of Israel. If the chosen people refuse to adhere to the boundaries already established, i.e., if they form alliances with foreigners (Deut.7:3) or enter into marriages with them (Deut.7:3), and if, according to Cynthia Parker's understanding, they preserve marks that record the memory of the Canaanite idolatrous spatial structure (Deut.7:5),⁴⁶ then God Himself will wage war against them (Deut.7:4,10),⁴⁷ which means that Israel will become His worst enemy.⁴⁸ As observed by Juha Pakkala, separation from other nations goes in tandem with their isolation from an alien polytheistic worldview.⁴⁹ They must not forget that God's holiness is the foundation of their exclusivity and belonging to God, and that their behavior had to be brought into conformity with the high position bestowed upon them.⁵⁰ Hence, their deeds inspired by the ideology of the covenant and manifested in the eradication of paganism (Deut.7:22–26), serve as evidence of their obedience to the heavenly King.⁵¹ As Ellis Ray asserts, that the nature of Israel's responsibility as the chosen people derives from the prescriptiveness of the second promise (Deut.7:9–11).⁵² In addition, the nuances of the phrases that include the noun *sagullāh* suggest a potential threat to Israel's declared identity.⁵³ At the same time, the lexical sequence functioning as symbols cultivated in the people a sense of solidarity and unity of purpose in the context of the covenant with Yahweh.⁵⁴

This chapter depicts God as the covenant-keeper, as illustrated by the phrases "*hā'el hanne'ēmān šōmēr habbārīt*" ("He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant") and "*wāšamar 'ādōnāi 'ēlōhēkā lākā 'et-habbārīt*" ("the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant") (Deut.7:9,12). However, the context of Deut.7 illuminates the nature of the activity encompassed by the phrase "keep the covenant." It is noteworthy that the underlying motivation for such meticulous consideration of the people of

⁴⁴ Von Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, "JHWH, Israel und die Völker aus der Perspektive von Dtn 7," *Biblische Zeitschrift* Volume 40, Issue 2 (1996), 202, 204.

⁴⁵ Félix López, "Un peuple consacré" analyse critique de Deutéronome VII, *Vetus Testamentum* Vol. 32, Fasc. 4 (Oct., 1982), 456, 462.

⁴⁶ Cynthia Parker, "Deuteronomy's Place: An Analysis of the Placial Structure of Deuteronomy" (PhD diss., University of Gloucestershire, 2014), 154. For a detailed discussion of the meaning of Deut. 7:5 and its parallel Deuteronomy 12:3, see, Sven Petry, *Die Entgrenzung JHWHs: Monolatrie, Bilderverbot und Monotheismus im Deuteronomium, in Deuteriojesaja und im Ezechielbuch* (Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 47–51.

⁴⁷ David Jayaray, "The Nature and Function," 202.

⁴⁸ Caryn Reeder, *Community Violence in Deuteronomy*, 41.

⁴⁹ Juha Pakkala *Intolerant Monolatry in the Deuteronomistic History* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 98.

⁵⁰ David Jayaray, "The Nature and Function," 206.

⁵¹ Ellis Ray, *An Examination of the Covenant Promises of Exodus 19.5–6*, 106.

⁵² Ellis Ray, *An Examination of the Covenant Promises of Exodus 19.5–6*, 107.

⁵³ David Jayaray, "The Nature and Function," 207; Katharine Deeley, "The Rhetoric of Memory," 70. For a more detailed analysis of the first promise (Ex.19:5b), see in my dissertation, Volodymyr Lukin, "The transformation of the Old Testament concept of the priesthood in New Testament context" (PhD diss., Christian Humanitarian Economic Open University, 2014, [In Russian]), 88–94.

⁵⁴ David Jayaray, "The Nature and Function," 207.

Israel is attributed to God's love (Deut.7:7,8).⁵⁵ It was this love that prompted Yahweh to strike a blow against the pagan system of Egypt, which encouraged cruel treatment of His people (Deut.7:8).⁵⁶ In Deut.7:9, the phrase "*hā'el hanne'ēmān šōmēr habbārīt*" serves to summarize the aforementioned activity, which is inspired by the promise found in Gen.15:1, 3–18, but also focuses on the dynamic presence of Yahweh in the present (*ūmāšallēm*; Deut.7:10a) and anticipates the future (*yāšallem*; Deut.7:10b).

According to commentator Moshe Weinfeld, God emphasizes in this passage the recipients' accountability before Him, without mentioning their forefathers (Ex.20:5).⁵⁷ Jack Lundbom, a professor of Old Testament studies, sheds light on the probable implicit background to this requirement. He suggests that the people of Israel might have allowed themselves to believe that the oath given by Yahweh to the fathers relieved them of the obligation to obey the covenant's requirements.⁵⁸ The covenant people need to be made aware of the self-evident, that God's behavior, as described in categories of hatred (Deut.7:10) within the context of the covenant, implies a rejection of them as co-obedient to the vow (Deut.5:9; 9:28–29). Consequently, the radical alternatives, love (Deut.9) and hatred (Deut.10), leave no room either for syncretic principles of the middle ground or for half-measures.⁵⁹ They must not forget that the world is ambiguous from a religious perspective. If it is said that God will hate, it means that He will reject the covenant-keeping Israelites, leaving them alone with all-absorbing and consuming polytheism.

The content of Deuteronomy 7:12 reveals similar meanings: it is not the promise given to the patriarchs that guarantees God's faithfulness to the covenant ("*wāšāmar 'ādōnāi 'ēlōhēkā lākā 'et-habbārīt*"), which is shown in the blessings to their descendants, but rather the obedience of the latter to the demands of the covenant (Deut.7:12–13).⁶⁰ Jerry Hwang insists, saying that the blending of past, present and future horizons ("*habbārīt wā'et-haḥesed*") for parenthetical purposes prompts a specific conclusion: the 'fathers' identified with the patriarchs in Deut.7:7–12, who first heard the oath of Yahweh, are recognized as the "spiritual ancestors" of a generation whose lives contain elements of the Exodus to a certain extent and who, in fact, stand on the borderline between

⁵⁵ The book of Deuteronomy is a song of God's love, and the lexical marker for love, occurs more frequently in it than in other books of the Pentateuch.

⁵⁶ Jack Lundbom, "Yahweh's love for you and his keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers. Yahweh's choice of Israel had nothing to do with numbers, since she was the smallest of peoples (Deut. 4:38; 9:1; 11:23). It was rather because of Yahweh's love for Israel, and a determination to keep the promise to the fathers. Both were acts of pure grace. His love remains a mystery (Moran), a divine secret (G. E. Wright), known only to Yahweh," *Deuteronomy*, 337.

⁵⁷ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary: Anchor Bible 5*, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 371.

⁵⁸ Jack Lundbom, "statement about his nature, similar to the self-asseveration in Ex.34:6–7. Yahweh is long on steadfast love to those who love him and keep his commandments but short with those who hate him, where hatred is expressed most pointedly in disobedience to the covenant demands (cf. Ex. 20:5–6; Deut 5:9–10; Num 14:18; Jer 32:18–19)," *Deuteronomy*, 338.

⁵⁹ Edward Woods, *Deuteronomy*, 146.

⁶⁰ Duane Christensen writes: "If the people of Israel obey the commandments of YHWH, they will continue to experience his love and blessing, which is here described in traditional language of fertility," *Deuteronomy: 1–11 WBC v.6a* (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 164.

the promise and its fulfilment.⁶¹ Actions involving intervention in history, entailing the punishment of the unfaithful and blessing of those who have hope, can and should be considered as the interpretive key of the lexeme “keep the covenant” of God’s descriptive characterization, which brings to the forefront His care for and interest in Israel.⁶² According to theologians, the expression “*šōmēr habbārīt*” has substantially similar meanings in texts outside the Pentateuch (3 Sam.8:23; 2 Chron.6:14; Neh.1:5; Dan.9:4).⁶³

In light of the aforementioned, the appeal that is found in Deut.7:18 (*zākōr tizkōr* – “must surely be remembered”), framed by references to the manifestation of divine power during the Exodus from Egypt (Deut.7:15–17,19)⁶⁴ in combination with warnings about the dangers of idolatry (Deut.7:4), forms the basis of the practical aspect of “remembrance” during the period of Canaan’s expansion. This includes not only avoiding various deals with idolaters in the face of their military power, but also making every effort to seek their physical extermination. They must learn to trust God’s promises rather than their predictions and search for alternatives.⁶⁵ The only and real power is the strength of their Redeemer, and the miracles in Egypt basically confirm that. The very reference to a common past generates a cumulative cultural memory that unites the people.⁶⁶

Incidentally, Moses repeatedly exhorts his listeners to be mindful of slavery which implies that submission to God must be perceived as a response imbued with gratitude for freedom from slavery, regardless of the variability of life scenarios (Deut.5:15; 8:2; 15:15; 24:18). They are urged to learn a life lesson that success in warfare depends on scrupulous obedience to God’s instructions. This demonstrates their loyalty to God in the religious landscape of the time and is a prerequisite for receiving God’s help.⁶⁷ As we see, God’s people did not need any visual phenomena to stimulate their devotion to God: rather, their practicing of Torah was the sole and exclusive means by which they included themselves in the spiritual record.⁶⁸

⁶¹ Jerry Hwang, “The Rhetoric of Remembrance,” 329.

⁶² Barat Ellman, “Memory and Covenant,” 86.

⁶³ Simon Devries, *1 Kings* WBC v.12 (Dallas: Word Books, 1985), 125; John Goldingay, *Daniel* WBC v.30 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 240; N.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* WBC v.16: (Dallas: Word Books, 1985), 172. God always remains faithful to the covenant, and though its materialization varies according to the situation, the principle itself remains unchangingly constant.

⁶⁴ Franz Greifenhagen, believes that the high concentration of references to Egypt may indicate the negative connotations of this image in the book of Deuteronomy, *Egypt on the Pentateuch’s Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel’s Identity* (Sheffield, 2003), 185–189.

⁶⁵ Johannes Taschner notes, speaking of fears, mentioned in Deut.7:17, exactly corresponding to the concerns mentioned in Deut. 1:18–30 (the theme of spies and the multiplicity of nations). He notes: “It is no accident that Moses in Deut. 7:18 opposes these fears with a reference to the events of the Exodus, and calls Israel not to fear, but on the contrary: to remember what Yahweh ‘did to Pharaoh and all Egypt.’” This reminder of the Exodus is not just a hint. In Deut. 7:19, Moses again lists all the great ‘signs’ and ‘wonders.’ The ‘strong hand’ and the ‘outstretched arm’ are mentioned again, and the hearers are addressed as witnesses. The exile of the nations of the land is vividly directly equated with this action (Deut. 7:19),” [my translation]. *Die Mosereden Im Deuteronomium: Eine Kanonorientierte Untersuchung* (Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 133.

⁶⁶ Caryn Reeder, *Community Violence in Deuteronomy*, 41.

⁶⁷ Félix López, “‘Un peuple consacré’ analyse critique de Deutéronome,” 455.

⁶⁸ Barat Ellman, “Memory and Covenant,” 91.

Arie Versluis ultimately arrives at the following conclusion: Yahweh, who has cared for them in the past and protected them in the present, will undoubtedly continue to do the same in the future (Deut.7:18–19).⁶⁹ Israel must remember that the extermination of the Canaanites is not entirely her responsibility; rather, it is Yahweh's.⁷⁰ He views any threat, whether is artificial or natural, as an opportunity to manifest His power, or, as Baruch Schwartz, His commitment in the interests of the "kingdom of priests,"⁷¹ which is the sign of His faithfulness to His covenant. To sum up, we can say that cultural and historical memory, against the background of conquest, predetermines the horizon of future successes, correlating with the positive aspects of God's intervention, provided that the people are devoted to the requirements of the covenant. A bond of two is crucial for the accomplishment of the duties envisioned by the *herem* complex, even if the role of one (man) of them is diminished.

To ensure the comprehensiveness of our conclusions, we will briefly discuss the theological intent of the forgetting motif, the second statistically important motif in Deuteronomy.⁷² In addition to the standard set of initiatives, the importance of remembering, contains an emphasis on the need to avoid forgetfulness. The people must not forget the covenant they made with God (Deut.4:9–13; 23), which means that they must reject the value system generated by idolatry. The connection between forgetfulness and polytheism is explicitly presented in Deut.8:19 (also Deut.6:12–15), where God forbids people to follow other gods. Behavior involving the making of images (Deut.4:23) or idol worship (Deut.8:19) is defined in terms of "forgetfulness."⁷³ Furthermore, to break the covenant, i.e., to forget it, is to demonstrate a lack of diligence in remembering who God is in His demonstration of power for Israel. On this ground, idolatry is one of the first indicators of forgetfulness.

The second indicator of so-called forgetfulness relates directly to the subject of the land. Attributing the results of Divine mercy to one's efforts leads to a change of emphasis and is expressed in the violation of the commandments (Deut.8:10,11). In this case "forgetting the Lord" was inevitable. In order to avoid this, it is vital to remember the One whose power delivered from slavery (Deut.8:18) and who stands behind the acquired prosperity (Deut.8:18). Moreover, the informative components of Deut.8:20 at the explicit level appeal to three motifs from Deut.7: the extermination of the nations, the manifestation of God's power in Egypt (Deut.8:14) and the concept of memory (Deut.8:14). Although they are presented in a different cross-section, these motifs "sew"

⁶⁹ Arie Versluis, *The Command to Exterminate the Canaanites*, 108.

⁷⁰ Jacques van Ruiten, "The Canaanites in Deuteronomy 7 and the Book of Jubilees," in *Violence in the Hebrew Bible: Between Text and Reception*, ed. by Jacques van Ruiten, Koert van Bekkum (Brill, 2020), 144–145.

⁷¹ Baruch Schwartz, Reexamining the Fate of the "Canaaites" in *Torah Traditions, in Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical*, ed. by Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, Shalom Paul (Eisenbrauns, 2004), 159.

⁷² Deut. 4:9,23,31; 6:12; 8:11,14,19; 9:7; 24:19; 25:19; 26:13; 31:21; 32:18.

⁷³ Jonathan May, "Covenant Loyalty and the Goodness of God: A Study in the Theology of James" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2002), 76.

the two chapters into one praxeological picture of the existence of the Israelites.⁷⁴ The root cause of the required response from the nation (*Imitatio Dei*) is considered to be a feature of Divine behavior (זכר; Gen.8:1; 9:15,16; 19:29; Ex.6:5; Lev.26:42, 44, 45). If the people do not keep the commandments, it signifies they are forgetting the great works of God. As a result, Israel's position as a special nation becomes precarious, algorithmically likening it to other nations. And, according to Edesio Sánchez's observations, disobedience and unfaithfulness, i.e., forgetfulness, will lead to loss of covenant privileges, exclusion from these bonds, and ultimately, an identical future with polytheists.⁷⁵

Summary and Conclusion

The theological character of the relationship between the motif of remembrance (Deut.7:18) and one of its aspects, which is the command to exterminate of the seven nations (Deut.7:2, 23–24) is dictated by the requirements of covenant theology (Deut.7:6,9). The appeal to remembrance (Deut.7:18), placed in the setting of opposition to idolatry, excludes the attribution of the *herem* concept, perceptions and notions of the genocidal policy of today. We would like to note that the use of violence is extremely restricted in terms of both geographical localization and a limited list of nationalities. At the same time, the implementation of God's commands in the militarized plane (Deut.7:2,5,17,23) is recognized as an indicator of Israel's love for Yahweh – a fundamental maxim (Deut.7:9) that inspires synchronization with Him in this act (Deut. 7:8,13).

Along with this, it became apparent: negative and positive elements, such as the deliverance of the people from slavery and the destruction of the Egyptian religious and political system (Deut.7:19), which formed the memory, mentioned by the Lord in Deut.7:18, become its first and dominant content imperative. The second landmark moment in filling the “repositories” of Israel's theological-historical-cultural memory, with equivalent components as its antecedent, is the extermination of the peoples of Canaan (negative factor) as a result of supernatural intervention (positive factor, Deut.7:2,16,19). In this situation, the actions of the Israelites, closely intertwined with Yahweh's activity, are assigned normative properties, correcting and formatting memory for the benefit of future generations. And this is fundamentally different from the events in Egypt, where glory exclusively is attributed to God.

This means that the devastating events of the Exodus formed and organized the soteriological core of the collective memory of the people of God. For it to be preserved and stay on the horizon of historical fulfilment, serving as a lighthouse-source, all variants of commemoration were carried out through its appellative-communicative reproduction in circumstances requiring it (the conquest of Canaan and others). Generally speaking, memory conditioned by the legitimate violence of the inspired God is constructive for Israel but fatal for the Gentiles. This is one of the manifestations of God's

⁷⁴ Insightful insights into the relationship between the two chapters (Deut. 7:12 – 8:20) and the motifs circulating, of course, omitting redactional criticisms, см. Karin Finsterbusch, *Deuteronomium Eine Einführung* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 87–90.

⁷⁵ Edesio Sánchez, *Deuteronomio: Introducción y comentario* (Ediciones Kairos, 2002), 223.

love, and the multifaceted nature of this love can only be understood via participation in the covenant with God. Otherwise, the paganization of the nation of Israel was a natural process that gradually atomized it.

In a military context, the appeal to remember context had traces of additional connotations and was fundamentally paradigmatic: trust in the power of Holy Yahweh in the face of pagan might, with reference to the victorious past – the miracles in Egypt – scripts a triumphant present and a safe future. To synthesize, the retrospective and prescriptive perspectives of the relationship chronicled by the people of God merged into a single chord of responsibility to the Sovereign.

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Зв'язок між мотивом пам'яті / пам'ятування та одним із його аспектів, що стосується наказу винищити ханаанеян у Второзаконні 7

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Анотація: У статті досліджуються особливості богословського зв'язку між мотивом пам'яті / пам'ятування та одним із його аспектів, а саме наказом винищити сім ханаанських народів. Стверджується, що погляд на світ крізь призму доктрини заповіту, яка визначає основу і сутність самого зв'язку в книзі Повторення Закону, має імперативний характер. Як наслідок, дослідження не заперечує легітимність насильства. Навпаки, воно підтверджує необхідність цієї практики в контексті еволюції Божих стосунків зі Своім народом у певні прикордонні періоди подієво-часового континууму. Це означає, що насильство, згадане в книзі Повторення Закону 7, отримує богословське виправдання. Також вперше в дискусії такого роду визначено необхідні негативні і позитивні елементи (руйнування і свобода), які сформували зміст і форму корпоративної пам'яті, породженої двома фундаментальними подіями в історії ізраїльського народу (Єгипет і завоювання Ханаану). У тексті висвітлюються як теоретичні та практичні нюанси «пам'яті», так і специфіка її світоглядно-теологічного супротивника – мотиву забуття.

Ключові слова: завіт, Ягве, святість, насильство, пам'ять, Второзаконня.

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