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The Shifting Frontier:
The Achaemenid Empire's Treatment of Western Colonies

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Until recently, most formulations of ancient Israel's history within the biblical time-frame separated the time-line into four broad segments: pre-monarchic (also called patriarchal), monarchic, exilic, and postexilic. This outline allowed the construction of many major interpretations, based upon presumed differences between these periods. Newer presentations of that history, however, have called into question many parts of this reconstruction. Other terms are more descriptive than the appellation "postexilic," which has two chief drawbacks. The first is that it is open-ended; the last 25 centuries have been after the exile, and so will the centuries. The second is that "postexilic" defines the period in terms of its predecessor, and it is not surprising

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that much scholarship of this period has been reductionistic.

One of the other terms is "the Second Temple Period," indicating the time from 515 B.C.E. to c. 70 C.E., during which time a temple stood in Jerusalem that was distinct from the former, Solomonic temple of the monarchy. Others have preferred to speak more specifically of the "Persian period," thinking of the time from 539 B.C.E. to 333 B.C.E. when the Achaemenid dynasty ruled a Persian Empire that included Jerusalem and its surrounding environs (Boardman et al. 1988; Dandamaev 1989; Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989; Davies and Finkelstein 1984; Grabbe 1992; Olmstead 1948; Sancisi-Weerdenburg et al. 1987-1994). This term, which accurately delineates the period under my consideration today, is useful for comparisons with Jerusalem's Hellenistic and Roman periods (though dating those eras is more tricky). But a more suggestive term includes the time of Jerusalem's life under those three larger political institutions: the "colonial" period (Ahlstrom 1993:812-906; Berquist 1995; Gottwald 1985:409-439).

To think of "colonial" Jerusalem conjures many images, some of which are helpful. Of course, it also leads to misapprehensions, often stemming from unsophisticated comparisons with other colonialisms, such as "colonial

America." But at its best, the term "colonial" forces the social historian to expand the frame of reference from Jerusalem as an autonomous unit to Jerusalem as an interdependent part of a larger, imperial whole. In other words, Jerusalem was not an isolated city on a hill; it was thoroughly enmeshed with the full range of social realities that made up the Persian Empire. In fact, Jerusalem and its surrounding area was given a colonial name for the benefit of its imperial administration: Yehud, derived from the name of the old monarchy, Yehudah or Judah.

But the reality is even one step further away from the uncomplicated picture of an insular temple community. Jerusalem at times was more intimately connected with its closer neighbors such as the Greek city-states, who were outside the sphere of direct Persian influence. The Achaemenid Empire's control over Yehud was not consistent over these two centuries. Another way to say this alters the image from the diachronic to the geographic: the imperial boundary shifted, leaving Jerusalem sometimes on the inside, and sometimes on the outside -- and very often a little of both. I suggest that this is what it means to talk about Jerusalem as a frontier during the Achaemenid Empire.

This presents a problem, however, when it comes to the social

analysis of frontier Jerusalem. The theories designed to describe colonial activity only go so far in interpreting Yehud, since those theories assume constant imperial development. The interpreter needs to develop a strategy that allows for colonial behavior as well as for aberrations from it. I wish to begin by examining relevant theories of colonial activity to see where these succeed in describing Yehud, and then to look for other influences within the colony's development.

THEORIES OF COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT: EMPIRE AND COLONY

Perhaps the best place to start a social-historical discussion of empires is with Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt's extensive and generalized perspective on the historical processes of institution building. Humans construct boundaries to social systems, using ideology, power, and material resources. Since such systems and boundaries are always fragile, their construction requires regulative mechanisms, such as bureaucracy, rituals, and law (Badie and Birnbaum 1983; Eisenstadt 1978, 1985; Eisenstadt and Curelaru 1976). A boundary mechanism, such as religious ritual, may begin as an impromptu attempt to legitimate a specific social action, but as societal complexity grows and such boundary

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mechanisms become increasingly autonomous. Thus, the religious ritual may well develop into an organized priesthood that discerns and enforces official distinctions between the holy and profane. In other words, the presence of self-sufficient institutions often points to a prior boundary.

Eisenstadt's emphasis on historical empires bears special relevance to the situation of the Persian colony, Yehud. The society's elites struggle for control of resources, perhaps using ideology and rhetoric. In such ways, the elites exercise control of the society through organizations as well as through coercion. The differential control of resources results in heterogeneity and conflict, requiring further attempts by the elites to maintain control and to enforce boundaries (Eisenstadt 1985: 19-23; cp. Eisenstadt 1978 and Linz 1978). According to Eisenstadt, the social complexity of empires requires high societal differentiation, resulting in a political elite (note 1). Imperial political elites possess new, broader goals, capable of harnessing the enhanced resources available to them by increasing societal differentiation. This growth of the elite class also results in a more clearly delineated center and periphery, along with the growth of multiple autonomous centers. The

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growing split between the center and the periphery creates the central contradiction of any empire (Eisenstadt 1969, 1985).

In Eisenstadt's theoretical framework, both material causes and ideological factors have their place as possible loci of free-floating resources. These resources create the potential, and the power of the elites shape that potential into imperial institutions (Trigger 1985).

Within Eisenstadt's view of imperial development, the key factor is the elite's appropriation of free-floating resources through institutionalized centralization. The empire develops a core and a periphery. Of course, the core may encompass much more than just a capital city or province, and the periphery will be quite heterogeneous in its nature. Still, such a view of empires emphasizes the collection of resources within the center, placing relatively little emphasis on the periphery as part of the empire.

Donald V. Kurtz and Margaret Showman (1981) have argued that the periphery often consists of inchoate states. These colonial states lack sufficient authority or ability to govern themselves and their populations; the functions of truly autonomous government reside within the imperial

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center. Such peripheries still maintain some local control, however. Though the colony's internal power may be less tangible, it is no less real. For example, imperial control may depend upon food production or military might, whereas the selection of local leaders may be more sensitive to principles of religion. Such local leaders, lacking the basis for true government, turn to more symbolic forms of legitimation in order to support their own functions within the governmental apparatus. Thus, colonies and colonial administration do not necessarily derive all of their power from the empire; instead, the periphery possesses different kinds of authority.

SECONDARY STATE DEVELOPMENT

These peripheries, therefore, are states of a sort, even though they are less formed. This is not surprising, since not all states develop as pristine states, that is, as states with no significant external influences. As such, colonies are a special case of state formation (Claessen, van de Velde, and Smith 1985; Cohen and Service 1983; Fried 1967; Lewellen 1983;). Colonies are one example of state development under intrusive circumstances, and such secondary states develop in patterns of their own (Apter 1966; Dube

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1966; Gailey and Patterson 1988; Riggs 1966; Seligman 1966; Shils 1966a; Shils 1966b; Smelser 1966).

Barbara J. Price (1978) has explained secondary state development in terms of economic intrusion and exploitation. According to her, secondary states occur when other states expand by "the capture by a foreign elite of the capital and labor--the surplus energy of an impacted population" (Price 1978: 171). The resultant centralization follows the application of military force necessary to mobilize the society into a nonbeneficial project. In other words, an empire conquers an area and organizes it in order to maximize the empire's extraction of resources. In the ancient world, the resources in question are usually agricultural, but can include a wide range of other resources and skills, as long as these are hierarchicalized (Gunawardana 1981). The intrusive empire would desire the maintenance of order; thus the empire would allow the growth of limited power bases in the colony for the purpose of increased control. The imperial state encourages economic intensification if it is practical to increase the flow of resources from the secondary state. In general, the empire will take all cost-effective steps to exploit the colony to the fullest degree made possible by the presence of resources (Price 1978). Many empires thoroughly reconstruct their colonies' social

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relations at every level to maximize the extraction of resources from the periphery to the core. The Inca are often offered as an example.

Romila Thapar (1981) offers a divergent view, noticing that many imperial states do not maximize exploitation. Instead, the intrusion and subsequent restructure occurs only to the degree necessary to establish hegemony over the resources in question. Though the imperial center dominates this newly annexed colony, a complete redistribution of resources is not likely (Carneiro 1978; Ekholm and Friedman 1979; Pershitz 1979; Thapar 1981:411-412, 425; Seneviratne 1981). In Thapar's view, the impoverishment of a colony is not as likely as the limited domination. Aztec culture provides an example. This limited domination may leave untouched almost every cultural aspect, as long as tribute continues to flow to the core.

Together, Price and Thapar offer an important analysis of the development of a secondary state. (Ronald Cohen provides a different yet related discussion in Cohen 1981.) Both agree that the flow of wealth will be from the colony to the empire, and that the imperial state will organize the colony politically and economically for imperial rather than local benefit. A key variable will be the extent of the economic

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exploitation, as well as the political reorganization and military enforcement required to attain the empire's goals. Certainly, the presence of an imperial state causes patterned changes in the development of the secondary region, creating the conditions in which its evolution will continue (Haas 1982).

CORE AND PERIPHERY

Empires, then, exist as a mixed entity. Whereas simpler forms of state organization make possible a homogeneity, empires assume difference between areas, classes, and other sorts of groupings. The core identifies the locations of power and privilege, whether measured in terms of politics, economy, military, or ideology (Allahar 1989; Eisenstadt 1979; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981). Usually, these various spheres of power coalesce into a clearly defined core. In the periphery, trade was scarce, taxation meant the removal of local resources rather than the accumulation of them, there was no control over military might, and the temple's demands often required movement from the periphery to the core (Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt 1990; Bilde et al. 1993). In reality, however, peripheries are not completely impoverished. Many ancient peripheries involve extensive

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peasant classes, who may (nor may not) be decently fed and

moderately comfortable (Redfield 1956; Wolf 1966). The core and the periphery involve different ways of life, as well as different roles within the society as a whole (note 2).

YEHUD AS A COLONY

To what extent does Yehud fit these theoretical descriptions of colonies, secondary states, and peripheries? Certainly, Yehud was a colony in that it had local political structures that were completely subsumed within the larger imperial administration. Persian bureaucrats appointed the local governors within Jerusalem and even exercised significant influence in Jerusalem's temple religion, including permissions, funding, and the appointment of priests and other temple officials. The Persian Empire used military power to control areas along the eastern Mediterranean and to suppress revolts by Yehud's neighbors, though there is no evidence of Persian attacks against Jerusalem itself. A variety of the biblical texts from the early Persian period express dismay about the local economy, consistent with the assumed flow of funds and goods from the colonial periphery to the imperial core around the Persian throne. In at least these ways, Yehud can be accurately described as a colony

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during the Persian period.

Clearly, Yehud also developed its own cultural traditions and social practices. Its institutions were not identical to those existing in other parts of the empire. Even though there is great disagreement about the degree of consistency within the Achaemenid imperial administration, the governor-temple relationships (or at least the religious rhetoric about it) seems unusually if not unique among Persia's colonies. Thus, Yehud forms an example of a secondary state, in that it has its own institutions within their own history and custom, but these institutions were not the only reality within the society. Imperial authority and local control mixed in a variety of ways that may have seemed as unpredictable to those living in it as it does to later analysts. Despite some local control, the empire dominated Yehud and drained resources from it to the imperial core, though the amount and mode were not unchanging.

Persian control often played one local group against another. Often, this meant imperial favor for priests whose power had previously been limited by local politicians. Persian rulers shifted power to such priests with the expectation that they would oppose local politicians in favor of their imperial benefactors. This pattern seems to be typical of Persian

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administration (Cook 1983: 41). When Persia granted authority to one group while denying it to another, local

institutions were destroyed, even if some of the same people stayed in power. Imperial division of local authority, however, was not the cause of the growth of Yehud's religion, even though a few noted religious officials were supported by Persia early in the Achaemenid period.

Perhaps the best documented example of Persia's treatment of a western colony was Egypt. Egypt experienced Persian intrusion and withdrawal frequently, as did Yehud. But Egypt was much more economically and politically self-reliant, in large part due to its geographic isolation from neighbors and its much more ample economic base. When Persia withdrew from its west for a decade or more, Egypt would reestablish its old monarchic traditions, refuse the payment of taxes to the Persian imperium, raise its old army, and make arrangement for mutual defense (and sometimes aggression) with other nation-states. Egypt alternated between being its own core and experiencing a role as the Persian Empire's periphery. Yehud, on the other hand, did not establish itself as an independent power at any time during the Persian reign. There is no evidence that Yehud ever revolted or ever refused to pay its taxes to Persia; the community's

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leaders expressed symbolic power without resorting to economic or military means. Instead, Yehud alternated between a status as Persia's small, peripheral colony, and another status that was still weak and at least somewhat subservient. However, there were times when there was much less Persian intrusion into Yehudite affairs, and these period of relative withdrawal left Yehud open to other cultural and social influences.

NON-COLONIAL INFLUENCES

Images of colonies and peripheries explain many of the features of Persian-dominated Yehud, but not everything fits into this picture. As a colony, Yehud experienced both forces and external forces that resulted from its participation in the processes of the Persian Empire. As powerful as these explanations are for understanding the nature of Yehud's society, there are indications of other factors. These hints are vague and rare, however, because of the extent of the Persian domination and its ability to control the records of Yehud, even (perhaps especially) those records so well preserved that they are still extant. However, there are still clues to other influences. Consider, for example, the following passage from Nehemiah:

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"Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives

against their Jewish kin. For there were those who said, 'With our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive.' There were also those who said, 'We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine.' And there were those who said, 'We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others.'

I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, 'You are all taking interest from your own people.' And I called a great assembly to deal with them, and said to them, 'As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish kindred who had been sold to other nations; but now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!' They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said, 'The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you

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not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.'

Then they said, 'We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say.' And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised." (Nehemiah 5:1-12, NRSV)

The passage starts with unsurprising information: some residents of the colony of Yehud were poor. In these poor ones' second statement, they mention that they must acquire debt in order to survive famines. Though this indicates a more specialized and pernicious form of poverty, it would not have been without parallel in Israel's former history. Such debt drove an increasing class differentiation within the society. The next statement, though, pushes the point to a new level. Here the financial difficulty is the king's tax, and the results are most severe. These Yehudites have no financial recourse short of selling off children into

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slavery, apparently for money to pay the creditors who hold the mortgage on the land. Ethnicity enters the argument; the

poor complain that their flesh is the same as the flesh of the wealthy Yehudites, but still they must sell their children. Though the exact nature of this financial arrangement is unclear, it seems likely that these poor Yehudites had been mortgaging land to the wealthier Yehudites, who then demanded payments that the poor could not meet, and so the poor sold some of their children to persons of other ethnic background. The problem is not only the attack upon family structures, but more specifically upon the dissolution of community ethnic boundaries. Indebtedness to other Yehudites was only a minor problem, an economic matter to be dealt with in certain ways; this speaks of violations of ethnic boundaries that were shocking to the community well beyond the scope of the actual economic effects (note 3). The result is that the wealthy landowners reduce their interest charges, since they would have the responsibility of buying back these children sold into foreign slavery.

Behind all of this economic turmoil is an influence on Yehudite society that goes unnamed. Some anonymous outsiders are purchasing slaves from Yehud's poorest classes. Thus, this small Persian colony trades with foreigners, with those outside the colonial boundary. There is no indication that

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these slave-buyers are other members of the Persian Empire; in fact, the community rejection of this trade and the ethnic issues involved argue that the purchasers are not politically affiliated with the Persian-dominated ruling class that sponsors the Yehudite elites. Was this small colony trading with non-imperial sources? Was there an outside economic influence that was extracting labor from Yehud through slave trade, just as the Persian Empire extracted wealth through taxes?

Two elements combine to suggest a possible locus for these purchasers. Some scholars have argued for a substantial olive oil trade in Yehud of the middle and late Persian period (Kippenberg 1982; Kreissig 1973). This would have created an economy of extraction; in effect, another economic power would have been behaving toward Yehud as empires typically do. In the fifth century B.C.E., the primary olive oil trade was conducted by Greece, and they seem the most likely candidate for the purchase of Yehudite slaves. Not only is this reasonable from historical data, but it also reflects the animosity against Greece shown in some texts that may date from the late Persian period, such as Zechariah 9:13. This combination of historical and textual evidence suggests a strong (and negative) Greek influence in the Yehudite economy during at least parts of the Persian period.

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POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF OTHER INFLUENCES

If this is the case, then Yehud existed as a colony of the Persian Empire that, at times, was economically exploited by a non-imperial entity, probably some of the early Greek city-states. Sometimes, Yehud was on the inside of the Persian Empire, functioning as a border area defining a boundary against the non-imperial states. At other times, Yehud functioned as a trade partner of non-imperial powers, presumably in the absence of a strong Persian presence that would have prevented trade with peoples such as the Greeks, the enemies of the empire. The frontier shifted, and so Yehud's status varied depending upon where the exact boundary of effective Persian control ran. This description of Yehud's economy moves beyond typical imperial-colonial theories, and requires a notion of a frontier on the periphery of more than one core.

WORLD-SYSTEM THEORIES

World-systems theorists offer a more comprehensive view of core-periphery relations (Wallerstein 1974-1988; cp. Chase-

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Dunn and Hall 1991a). Separate states and social structures interact through trade (both basic and luxury goods), military conquest, and other means (Gills and Frank 1991). The large scale of history moves not in terms of subsequent political states and empires, but in terms of the cumulative effects of civilization as it waxes and wanes throughout systematic change. World-systems theory introduces the concept of the semiperiphery. Chase-Dunn and Hall define four possible elements of the semiperiphery: 1) it may mix organizational forms of the core and periphery; 2) it may be geographically located between the core and the periphery; 3) it may mediate between the core and the periphery; and 4) it may exhibit institutional forms that are intermediate between the core and the periphery (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991b:21). This provides a helpful way to understand Jerusalem's role as a center of colonial administration within the Persian Empire. Though Jerusalem was far from the imperial core and exhibited markedly different organizational forms in comparison to the Persian capital cities, it was distinct from the rural areas of the periphery itself. Also, core-periphery mediation quite aptly describes the functions of the Jerusalem elite as they administered imperial policy. Chase-Dunn and Hall note that semiperipheral regions are often "unusually fertile zones for social innovation" because of their in-between status (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991b:30, 31,

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37 n. 17).

David Wilkinson expands on the notion of the semiperiphery. The semiperiphery, an area recently engulfed by the core, is

"a zone characterized by military subjection, powerlessness, relative poverty, technological backwardness, and low cultural prestige" (Wilkinson 1991:122). Wilkinson notes a tendency for cores to incorporate their peripheries over time, transforming them into semiperipheries or into completely depleted areas, at the same time as the cores themselves decline and power shifts to a new core.

The work of these various social scientists clarifies the interplay of life between core and periphery (as well as semiperiphery). The dynamic flow of power, resources, and ideology between imperial cores and colonial semiperipheries and peripheries requires a rethinking of the role of Jerusalem and Yehud within the Persian Empire. No longer can they be considered by themselves; the interrelationships of the whole world is a prerequisite for understanding the more local affairs of postexilic Yehud (cp. Holm-Rasmussen 1988).

However, Yehud cannot be considered a static semiperiphery. Its autonomy and its allegiances to Persia vis-a-vis Greece changed repeatedly over time (cp. Cunliffe 1993). When

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Persia exerted its economic and military might among its western colonies, then Yehud was a rather typical periphery or semiperiphery, depending upon how one analyzes the extent of its own control over the surrounding environs. But when the Persian Empire redirected its attention toward its eastern borders or, as was much more frequently the case, against Greece to the northwest, Yehud was ignored. The effective border shifted, and Yehud found itself outside the primary influence of the Persian Empire. It was no longer a colony, and yet it was not its own center. The shifting frontier created a new situation out of oscillating states of social organization.

MULTIPLE COLONIALIZATION

I suggest the following analysis. Yehud's frontier status involved multiple colonialization. At different times it was a colony of two competing world-systems -- Persia and Greece. Only Persia could be considered an empire, at least by Eisenstadt's definitions. Persia administered Yehud as an integrated part of a larger bureaucracy with military, political, economic, and ideological vectors. Greece, on the other hand, appears to have exerted no military pressures, nor to have extended direct political control into

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the Levant. Its influences were less formal, existing only within economic and ideological categories. Because of the non-political nature of Greece's influence, it has remained relatively unnoticed by prior historical explanations that have focused on official (i.e., political) norms.

Both Persia and Greece related to Yehud through extractive economies, by means of Persian taxation and Greek commerce. Both exerted ideological pressures, visible through the adoption of social forms and languages (Nehemiah 13:23-27; Heichelheim 1951; Margalith 1986). Despite the differences in form, Persia and Greece occupied identical positions of domination with regard to Yehud (Daniel 7:4-8, 11:2-4). In other words, Yehud was a colony of two imperial powers, albeit differently construed. Yehud was on a joint periphery, a frontier between Persia and Greece. This was not an explicit area of military attack, in contrast to Asia Minor (Balcer 1984); the conflict was cultural and economic. In the midst of this, Yehud struggled to keep some core identity stable despite shifting borders and intrusions of two radically different outside cultures.

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CONCLUSION

Are there other cases of religion as a response to multiple colonialization in semiperipheral regions? Certainly, there are a number of religions that have been founded or have flourished in peripheral situations, even though a full study of these cases in terms of multiple colonialization remains outside the range of this study. The shift from core to periphery, for instance, seems to have been a factor in the development of Native American Ghost Dance religions. Christianity's history offers many possible cases. For instance, the rapid expansion of early Christianity occurred during a time of shift frontiers between the Roman Empire and the so-called "barbarian" powers around it. The conflicts between Roman authority and German nationalities set the context for the rise of Protestantism. In Africa, the intrusion of Christian and Islamic worldviews, along with the economic world-systems connected to them, produced new forms of ecstatic religious expression (Lewis 1971). The boundaries between the system of Northern Hemisphere powers and the Two-Thirds world are presently the location of innovation in liberation theology. These situations represent a number of ways in which religion arises within semiperipheral cultures, and in some of these cases or ones of a similar background, further analysis might discover that the shifting frontier of multiple colonialization allowed the religious impulses to detach from

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politics and to establish themselves as a local symbolic elite, as was the case in Achaemenid Yehud.

The Achaemenid Empire's treatment of its western colonies did not allow regions such as Yehud or Egypt to exist permanently as stable colonies. The empire kept shifting its border,

leaving these colonies in frequent transition. The social historian can analyze Achaemenid-period Egypt as an alternation between periphery and core, but Yehud reflects a multiple colonization, in which it developed dependencies upon two different cores, each in different ways. The shifting frontier between Persia and Greece ran over Yehud repeatedly during the two hundred years of Persian domination, leaving the region open to multiple degradations of its economy and an inability to develop political autonomy. Leaders in Yehud, caught between world-systems on a shifting frontier, instead concentrated on the development of symbolic power, creating a rich religious system that organized the society and endowed prestige and social privilege to leaders without a political role in other world-systems. This development of symbolic power (including religion) as a response to the shifting frontier may be more widespread than this one case. In many cases, religion arises as a form of symbolic power in response to multiple colonialization.

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NOTES

(Note 1) Peter Skalnik (1981: 340) argues that studies of the state overemphasize the elites of the society, reflecting a "tendency towards seeing the state as a more self-generating phenomenon than it really is." Though the present work focuses much attention on the imperial elites, it also strives to show the local elites (who are part of the imperial "middle class") and the work by others against the formation of the state. These drives toward dissolution and the focus on colonial life attempt to correct a bias toward examining the highest levels of imperial life. The core-periphery distinction places both in context, paralleling the emphasis in class formation in Skalnik's work (1981: 344).

(Note 2) Clifford Geertz (1983) argues that peripheral figures also depend on the symbolics of the core; it would be impossible for anyone to understand a figure who did not partake of core symbols, since that is the only common ground for cultural communication. Though Geertz assumes homogeneous culture, his argument rightly emphasizes the

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importance of the cultural core in setting the language and the agenda for social debate throughout the society.

(Note 3) Although it remains outside the scope of the present paper, it is important to note that religion here becomes a significant force in the redistribution of

resources. Religion functions as a symbolic power of the same magnitude as the economic, ethnic, and political concerns, and deserves a wider place in the analysis (cp. Bilde 1993).

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