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The gēr in Deuteronomy: Expanding Ancient Near Eastern Precedent for the Protection of Vulnerable Classes

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The gēr in Deuteronomy:
Expanding Ancient Near Eastern Precedent for the Protection of Vulnerable Classes

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The *gēr* in the Hebrew Bible is a legal classification representing persons who reside outside their ancestral lands with people outside of their kin. The status of the *gēr* is not static in the Bible. Rather, historical and textual evidence in the respective law codes informs the socioeconomic and religious standing of the *gēr* in Israelite society. In Deuteronomic tradition, the *gēr* is among the most vulnerable groups in Israel and is therefore appended to the ancient Near Eastern widow-orphan dyad in Deuteronomy. The first section of the present thesis traces the law codes and wisdom literature of ancient Near Eastern cultures to discern their influence on Deuteronomy's *gēr* laws. The second portion of this paper outlines Deuteronomy's remarkable expansion of ancient Near Eastern precedent to deal with a large population of displaced persons in the book's historical situation. Finally, the work explores the legislative measures taken by the Deuteronomists to incorporate the *gēr* into the socioeconomic and religious society of Israel.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Alyssa, for the late nights that I kept her awake while I studied and for her faithful love and support during this process; and to my parents, who taught me that Jesus welcomes the questions in our minds as we follow him in his Way.

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INTRODUCTION

From time to time, the student of the Hebrew Bible will encounter a reference to an unnamed character, which is usually translated “resident alien” or “sojourner.” In the Septuagint, the same references were translated προσήλυτος (proselyte). However, the Hebrew referent, גֵר (hereafter, *gēr*), is not easily understood by any of these translations. Instead, the meaning of *gēr* in the Hebrew Bible is nuanced and changes depending on the historical and theological context of the text in which it is found. However, the term is important in biblical history due to motivational clauses throughout the Pentateuch that identify the patriarchs and their offspring, Israel, as having been *gēr* while in Egypt. It would appear that the *gēr* references of the Hebrew Bible are formative for Israel’s national identity.

Abraham is *gēr* in Egypt.¹ Moses is *gēr* in Midian and names his firstborn after the experience.² The prophets address the issue of injustice on behalf of the *gēr*.³ Additionally, the Psalms address the *gēr* and utilize Israelite familiarity with them to wax poetically about their shared experience. The Psalms identify the feeling of displacement as though they were *gēr*, recognize the violence done to *gērim*, and theologize about God’s preference for the poor as the Sustainer of *gērim*.⁴ Finally, the law codes all refer to the *gēr*, though they do so in different ways with differing legislative prescriptions. One consistent thing in biblical law is YHWH’s protective love for the *gēr*.⁵ Deuteronomy 10:18 provides a motivational clause for the Israelite

¹ Gen. 23:4.

² Exod. 2:22; 18:3.

³ Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5.

⁴ For metaphorical usage, see Psalms 39:12; 119:19. For specific references to the *gēr*, see Psalms 94:6; 146:9.

⁵ Cf. Exodus 22:21-22; 23:9; Deuteronomy 10:17-18; Leviticus 18:33.

to this end. The Israelite is to love the *gēr* because Israelites were *gērim* in Egypt. Thus, the *gēr* in biblical law enjoy YHWH's protection.

Ancient Near Eastern (hereafter, ANE) cultures are known to have ethical considerations for vulnerable classes of people. Scholarship often identifies the vulnerable class as *personae miserabiles*. The present research will explore ANE texts to determine the extent of these protections and consider whether the legal precedent set by these cultures was influential in the development of biblical law. Due to the limited scope of this work, the study will then focus specifically on the influence of ANE legal traditions on the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy's law code is known to have humanitarian interests, and since the book also features the most *gēr* references in the Hebrew Bible, it is probable that the research will yield insight into the interaction between ANE precedent and the development of biblical law. This thesis intends to demonstrate that ANE law codes and wisdom texts inspired Deuteronomy's protective measures for the *gēr* as a newly established component of Israel's *personae miserabiles* class.

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PRECEDENT: THE WIDOW-ORPHAN DYAD

Scholars have demonstrated that biblical law did not emerge in a vacuum, nor does the inner-textual history of the Hebrew Bible represent recorded history. Instead, compilers and redactors seem to have brought multiple strands of tradition together. As it relates to the present subject, the legal traditions of Israel and Judah's neighbors have influenced the biblical law codes. The following will explore the ANE ethic of protecting widows and orphans that eventually led to a widow-orphan doublet that pervaded the cultures of surrounding areas and

played a role in the development of Deuteronomy's law codes, which will be discussed in the main body of this work.

Widow–Orphan Dyad in Ancient Near Eastern Texts

Stories from the ANE world typically tell of great kings and wise persons. Rarely does a researcher find stories written by or about lower socioeconomic classes. Usually, anything one might learn about vulnerable social classes in the ancient world from ancient texts must be discerned through implicit statements or short references aimed at conveying the greatness of a king or sage. However, scholars have done some critical work analyzing ancient texts and have noted implicit statements that show how rulers perceived the needs of disadvantaged persons.

The judicial and social protection of vulnerable groups in ANE law codes is well-attested; however, the *gēr* is not typically part of the protected class.⁶ Indeed, the protection of the widow-orphan (or fatherless) class appears in Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian law codes dating centuries before all possible dates for Deuteronomy's composition. F.C. Fensham notes that the protection of the widow-orphan and the poor was standard policy in the ancient Near East, closely associated with virtue in gods, kings, and judges, and was intimately tied to a ruler's successful reign.⁷ The precedent set by centuries of ANE legislative tradition may have influenced Deuteronomy's consideration of *personae miserabile*. The following will explore ANE texts that were potentially influential on *gēr* laws in Deuteronomy.

⁶ Jose Ramírez Kidd, , *Alterity and Identity in Israel: The גר in the Old Testament*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 40.

⁷ F. Charles Fensham, "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature," *JNES* 21, 2 (April, 1962): 129-139, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/543887>, here 129.

Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian literature contains explicit references to the widow-orphan dyad. In the epilogue to the Code of Hammurapi (ca. 1750 BCE), the Mesopotamian ruler is portrayed as the “perfect king” due to the following claims: he was not neglectful or careless with his people; he sought peace for the land; he was a beneficent shepherd whose scepter was righteousness; he governed his people in peace and sheltered them in wisdom.⁸ Following the extensive list of the regent’s achievements, the ruler states, “In order that the strong might not oppress the weak, that justice might be dealt the orphan (and) the widow...I wrote my precious words on my stela, and in the presence of the statue of me, the king of justice, I set (it) up in order to administer the law of the land, to prescribe ordinances of the land, to give justice to the oppressed.”⁹ Couched within the motivating framework of the law, the orphan and the widow are set together as groups who are susceptible to oppression and injustice. In other words, Hammurapi’s law code considers justice for the orphan and widow essential components of a righteous kingdom. However, these may represent ideological tendencies more than charitable action on behalf of the marginalized. Havice has observed that the stress of ethical duties in Mesopotamian emphasizes loyalty to superiors more than rulers doing beneficence toward the lower class.¹⁰

Notably, the widow-orphan dyad appears explicitly in Hammurapi’s epilogue but not in the body of the law code. The dyad is implicated in the law corpus but explicitly used only in the epilogue. There are pieces of casuistic legislation that address both the widow and the fatherless,

⁸ Theophile J. Meek, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Related to the Old Testament*, xxiv, 10-50, 177-178. Hereafter, this title will be referenced as *ANET*.

⁹ *ANET*, xxiv, 50-72, 178.

¹⁰ Harriet Katherine Havice, *The Concern for the Widow and the Fatherless in the Ancient Near East: A Case Study in Old Testament Ethics* (PhD diss., Yale University, 1978): 164-165.

with the implication that widows and orphans are in a similar legislative category. Law 177 deals with adjudication in the case of property bequeathed to a widow's husband, should she remarry, and assures protection for the deceased father's children.¹¹ The preceding legislation raises the issue of a widow's property and the rights of her children when she seeks to remarry. The children of the deceased would likely be considered "fatherless" since their mother is the widow, and law 177 may function as a case law corresponding to the claim in Hammurapi's epilogue. In this way, the widow-orphan dyad is implied by their inclusion in the same piece of legislation.

Ugarit

Ancient documents found at Ugarit have yielded two mentions of the widow-orphan dyad. The Ugaritic "Tale of Aqhat" (ca. 1375-1350) broaches the subject of the widow and orphan regarding judicial law. Danel, Aqhat's father, whose name means "God judges," is portrayed as a jurist who is concerned with the widow-orphan grouping. Danel is described as a justice who sits under a tree, "Judging the cause of the widow, Adjudicating the case of the fatherless."¹² Again, the judicial concern for the widow-orphan class in this narrative form is striking. While no specific case law exists to demonstrate how Danel's implements his care for *personae miserabile* into practice, the ideology of a righteous judge in connection with concern for the widow-orphan is notable. Notably, the implied ethic of equality in judicial procedure and the mandate that the judge must protect those vulnerable groups who do not have a protector must be highlighted.

¹¹ Ibid, *ANET*, 174.

¹² Ibid, *ANET*, see *AQHT A v*, 4-8; *AQHT C, i*, 24-25149, 151.

Ugaritic concern for the widow and orphan in judicial law is implied in other places as well. In the Ugaritic tale, “Legend of King Kirta,” the king’s son, Yassib, attempts to supplant his father by accusing him of faltering in his kingly responsibilities due to sickness. Among the charges leveled against his father, Yassib claims, “You don’t pursue the widow’s case, You don’t take up the wretched’s claim. You don’t expel the poor’s oppressor. You don’t feed the orphan who faces you, nor the widow who stands at your back.”¹³ Yassib’s feigned humanitarian concern centers on the widow-orphan and poor classes, both for their safety and sustenance. Again, the implication of Yassib’s accusation against his father evidences an ancient assumption that a competent king must take up the cause of the widow and the orphan. Havice suggests that Ugarit’s ethic intends positive action toward the weak akin to that found in Egypt more than in Mesopotamia.¹⁴

Finally, Lohfink cites Ugaritic literature and notes, “In a Canaanite city, the king’s primary duty was to go in the morning to the city gate where the citizens settled their disputes. There ‘he helped the widow to obtain her rights and spoke just judgment for the orphan.’”¹⁵ Lohfink does, however, point out that many of the ANE law codes that purport care for the poor and oppressed do not have laws that deal directly with them. Most lack social legislation or specific language to protect the *personae miserabile*.¹⁶ Indeed, as in the case of the Code of Hammurapi, it appears that the Ugaritic use of the dyad appears in narrative contexts rather than

¹³ “Kirta” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 3 CAT 1.16, Column 6, 44-50, trans. Edward L. Greenstein, ed. Simon B. Parker (SBL, 1997), 41.

¹⁴ Havice, *Concern*, 172.

¹⁵ Norbert Lohfink, “Poverty in the Laws of the Ancient Near East and the Bible” in *Theological Studies*, 52 (1991), 35.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, *Poverty*, 37.

legislative code. Lohfink conjectures that the epilogue and prologue in the ANE law codes may have functioned something like a hermeneutical key for the law code, but offers no concrete evidence.¹⁷ Rather, Lohfink admits that there is no social legislation in any of Mesopotamian texts in his study and further notes that the world created by the language of the legal texts does not address the plight of the poor as highlighted in the epilogue.¹⁸ The use of the dyad exclusively in narrative texts rather than pieces of legislation leads the present study to question whether the literature of the ancient Near East involving the poor is ideological rhetoric or legitimate practical care.

Certainly, the presence of the dyad in judicial procedure and righteous reign of a leader is significant to the present study. Ugarit's destruction in 1200 BCE places a historical endpoint for dating the above texts, both of which antedate relevant biblical texts. Both "The Tale of Aqhat" and "The Legend of King Kirta" provide precedent for ANE judicial procedure and the ethic of impartial justice, which is also seen in biblical texts related to the dyad and the *gēr*.¹⁹ Biblical texts contain similar judicial protections for the dyad, and as we will see, also include the *gēr* in Deuteronomy, which charges judges to this end but also portrays YHWH as suzerain and judge who adjudicates fairly for the widow, the orphan, and the *gēr*.²⁰

One must consider the ramifications of ideological and religious texts that do not afford practical steps to caring for the vulnerable classes. If, in ANE culture, a king's successful reign is linked with their ability to deliver justice for vulnerable persons, as in the case of Danel and

¹⁷ Ibid, "Poverty," 36, *see* footnote 7.

¹⁸ Ibid, "Poverty," 37.

¹⁹ Lev. 24:22; Num. 19:10; Deut. 1:16

²⁰ Deut. 1:16; 10: 18.

Aqhat, but there is no legislative precedent for such actions, how might a king be remembered as a success? On the other hand, if social legislation were introduced, a king would likely be accountable to the laws in ways he might not prefer. It is plausible that the widow-orphan dyad is of an ideological and theological nature to avoid accountability for social programs to care for the disadvantaged. However, it is also possible, as Havice concedes, that the reported ethical value to act charitably was carried out without a legislative frame in Ugarit.²¹ Whatever the case, it is essential to note that both Mesopotamian and Ugaritic texts that include the widow-orphan dyad are ideological rather than legislative.

Assyria

The Middle Assyrian law code is, potentially, a close contemporary to the *Tale of Aqhat*, though the ideological concern for the widow-orphan class is less clear. The law code dates from the time of Tiglath-Pileser I during the 12th century BCE, but the content of the laws may go back to the 15th century.²² The Middle Assyrian Laws discuss women whose husbands die and to whom their well-being falls. It seems that a wife whose husband has died is not legally deemed a widow unless the deceased husband's father has also passed, in which case the woman becomes a widow and "may go where she wishes."²³ In other instances in which a woman's husband dies and her father-in-law is alive, the woman appears to remain in limbo until she remarries or returns to her father's house.²⁴ There are, however, some protections for the widow and her

²¹ Havice, *Concern*, 172.

²² *ANET*, see Meek's comments in the introduction of "The Middle Assyrian Laws" section, 180.

²³ *Ibid*, see *Law 33*, 182.

²⁴ Cf. *Ibid*, *ANET*, see *Laws 25-27*, 182.

fatherless sons. For instance, any property that a widow has received from her father may not be taken from her, unless she chooses to remarry.²⁵ Further, the sons of the widow are not responsible for their deceased father's debts.²⁶

It appears the Assyrian laws are at least concerned with ensuring that the widow and the orphan are not robbed of their inheritance or manipulated by the deceased's debtors. While the concept exists, there is no explicit use of the dyad in Assyrian law codes. The absence of the dyad in Assyrian law does not remove Assyria from the web of influence between the Hebrew Bible and its ANE neighbors. For instance, Fox argues that the Assyrian conquest of the 8th century BCE enabled Egyptian wisdom literature to influence Deuteronomy and wisdom texts in the Hebrew Bible.²⁷

Egypt

Ideological legislation for the *personae miserabile* class is apparent in ancient Egyptian literature as well. José Ramírez Kidd notes that Egyptian literature contained two significant categories of vulnerable classes in the Book of the Dead: the “hungry, thirsty, and naked” and the “widow-orphan.”²⁸ The scholar observes the widow-orphan is an old fixed form, dating to the Middle Kingdom (20th – 18th Centuries BCE) and found in biographical inscriptions, hymns, and in the wisdom story, “The Protests of an Eloquent Peasant.”²⁹ Havice exerts considerable effort

²⁵ Ibid, *ANET*, see *Laws 28-29*.

²⁶ Ibid, *ANET*, see *Law 28, final clause*.

²⁷ Michael V. Fox, “From Amenemope to Proverbs: Editorial Art in Proverbs 22, 17–23, 11” *ZAW* 126, 1 (2014): 77.

²⁸ Ramírez Kidd, 36-37.

²⁹ Ibid, *Alterity*, Cf. *ANET*, 407.

to show how two primary duties informed the structure of Egypt's social hierarchy. First, each class performs beneficence to their inferior "because it is right in and of itself to live in harmony with the hierarchical world order."³⁰ Second, each class generates goodwill by remaining loyal to their superiors.³¹ However, as in the case of Ugaritic materials, this study has found no legislation to enforce the ideological principles found in Egyptian texts. The following will explore Egyptian wisdom texts that have been influential in biblical literature.

In "Protests," a peasant goes to Meru, son of Rensi, a judicial figure, to protest a landowner who has stolen his goods and donkey and beat him. In his first cry for justice, the peasant appeals to Meru with honorific titles that infer judicial equality for disadvantaged groups: "Because thou art the father of the fatherless, the husband of the widow, the brother of the divorcee, and the apron of him that is motherless."³² The peasant's appeal clearly expects justice for the poor, including the widow and the orphan, as an apodictic standard. Egyptian legal groupings appear to operate as adjoining clauses rather than merely two coupled words. The dyad appears implicitly within the peasant's statements without explicitly listing "widow and the orphan," as in Ugaritic texts. In "Protests," the orphan is mentioned twice. In the first clause, the peasant calls Meru the "father of the fatherless," and in the third, the "apron of him that is motherless." Between the honorific titles regarding the protection of orphans, the widow is sandwiched between two statements that mention the orphan. While the dyad is perhaps not used in the same manner of adjoining words, it is reasonable to view the adjoining phrases as an alternative formulation of the widow-orphan dyad.

³⁰ Havice, *Concern*, 97.

³¹ *Ibid*, *Concern*, 97-98.

³² *ANET*, 408.

A second and especially relevant work, The Instruction of Amenemope (hereafter, Amenemope), provides very close parallels to the biblical texts at hand.³³ Amenemope is clearly an ideological work, categorized as wisdom literature, and is often noted for its correlation to Proverbs 22:17–24:22.³⁴ The date of composition for Amenemope ranges 13th and 11th centuries BCE, however, the question of when cultural transfer between Egypt and Hebrew took place is less clear. The biblical record provides possible clues. Deuteronomistic history alludes to some precedent regarding Egypt’s contact and influence on the Judean monarchy. First and Second Kings convey Egypt as a partner noting open lines of communication, marriage pacts, a refuge for Jeroboam, and a trade ally for much of the period of Judean monarchy.³⁵ However, Fox asserts the unlikelihood that Hebrew scribes acquired an aptitude for translating hieroglyphic script due to its difficulty. He notes that Egyptian scribes spent years in scribal schools acquiring the skill, and while there is some evidence of borrowed signs on Hebrew ostraca, it would have been difficult for an Israelite or Judean to learn hieroglyphics as a scribal system.³⁶ Fox favors cultural transfer via an Aramaic copy; however, no such copy of the work has been found.

Schipper argues for a relatively late cultural transfer based on conditions in Egypt that provide a plausible transfer between Egypt and Judah/Israel in the 25th and 26th dynasties of Egypt (ca. late 9th century BCE – early 6th century BCE). Schipper argues that the 25th and 26th

³³ Also known as “Amen-em-opet” in ANET, 421-424, however, scholarship has more commonly referred to the work as “Amenemope.”

³⁴ See ANET, 421. For a review of the history of research related to Old Testament, see A. Erman, Das Weisheitsbuch des Amen-em-ope, OLZ 27 (1924), 241-252. J.A. Emerton, “The Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs XXII 17–XXIV 22: Further Reflections on a Long-Standing Problem” in VT, 51, 4 (2001): 431-465 and Mark A. Awabdy, “Teaching Children in the Instruction of Amenemope and Deuteronomy” in VT, 65, 1 (2015): 1-8.

³⁵ Cf. 1 Kgs. 3:1; 9:16; 10:28-9; 11:40; 12:2; 2 Kgs. 7:6; 17:4; 18:21; 23:34; 25:26.

³⁶ Fox, “Amenemope,” 77.

dynasties in Egypt were marked by an openness to outside intellectual and cultural exchange, which were characterized by a demotion of national, “inside” knowledge.³⁷ The scholar also notes Egypt’s interest in Judah as a strategic territory in the geopolitical world of the 8th-6th centuries, which can be surmised from Necho’s action against Josiah in 2 Kings 23.

Despite the lack of clarity on the date of cultural transfer, scholarship has primarily agreed upon the relationship between Amenemope and Proverbs, and there are further instances of the correspondence between the Egyptian work and biblical texts. Mark Awabdy notes, “The Instruction of Amenemope and the book of Deuteronomy share a common conviction about the nature and intent of parental teaching.”³⁸ Awabdy posits that Amenemope was influential in Deuteronomy’s framework command for parents to teach their children the Deuteronomic laws.³⁹ There may be more contact between Deuteronomy and Amenemope in older portions of the Deuteronomic text also.

Amenemope provides the only extra-biblical contact point that includes the stranger or a dependent outsider among the protected classes in the ancient Near East. In the twenty-eighth chapter, Amenemope’s instruction states,

“Do not recognize a widow if thou catchest her in the fields,
Nor fail to be indulgent to her reply.
Do not neglect a stranger (with) thy oil-jar,
That it be doubled before thy brethren.
God desires respect for the poor
More than honoring of the exalted.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Bernd Ulrich Schipper, “Kultur und Kontext – zum Kulturtransfer zwischen Ägypten und Israel/Juda in der 25. und 26. Dynastie” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 29 (2001): 318.

³⁸ Awabdy, “Amenemope and Deuteronomy,” 1.

³⁹ Ibid, “Amenemope and Deuteronomy” Cf. Deut. 6:7; 11:19.

⁴⁰ *ANET*, 424.

The above reference to the stranger is salient for the present study. First, this passage represents the only extra-biblical reference in close approximation with care for the widow in *ANET*. The statement, “God desires respect for the poor more than honoring of the exalted,” demonstrates the association of these two groups as vulnerable classes in the Egyptian texts’ situation.⁴¹ Care for the poor in ancient Egypt falls within the wisdom tradition of *Maat*, a classical Egyptian conception of truth, morality, and justice considered to be of divine origin. *Maat* informs the Egyptian wisdom genre of instruction to which Amenemope belongs. *Maat* dictates that the widow is allowed to glean and that the landowner must share his oil with the stranger. Therefore, the conception of the stranger in Egypt is more optimistic than in other places. The stranger is needy but evidently not a threat. Karenga posits that the ancient Egyptian word *kri* is a foreign, landless person in need, and its usage in Egyptian texts suggests a positive approach to the stranger rather than a xenophobic one.⁴²

Second, the stranger in the text is a person without means who depends on the charity of others for sustenance. Such vulnerability likely implies food insecurity and landlessness, two of the major features of Burke’s archaeological model for identifying refugees in the ancient world, which will be discussed below. Finally, Amenemope could provide a precedent for legislative action on behalf of the vulnerable. Whereas much of the parallel texts in ANE literature address the dyad in narrative, ideological texts, Amenemope gives some tangible instruction.

As Amenemope is the only extra-biblical cognate related to the biblical concept of protecting the *gēr* alongside the widow, this study postulates, with some caution, that the Egyptian wisdom literature had some influence on Deuteronomy’s interest in adding the *gēr* to

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Maulana Karenga, *Maat, The Moral Idea in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics*, (Routledge, New York, 2004), 342.

the widow-orphan dyad. Admittedly, Amenemope's genre belongs to wisdom literature rather than a legal tradition; however, the mandates for the widow and the stranger in this context both relate to providing food and oil for the widow and the stranger.⁴³

Ancient Israelite Texts (Pre-Deuteronomic Texts)

Lohfink posits that the widow-orphan doublet is a fixed word pair first observed in the Code of Ur-Nammu (late-3rd millennium) that Israel inherits as a dyad and which functions as a symbolic name for those in need of help. In the Covenant Code, which many scholars date before D, the widow-orphan dyad appears twice apart from any mention of the *gēr*. Glanville posits the reference to the pair in Exodus 22:22, 24 is ancient, predating the Exodus narrative.⁴⁴ Further, Achenbach identifies the Covenant Code as the first time in Israelite history that the *gēr* are acknowledged together with the dyad as an integral part of *personae miserabiles*.⁴⁵

It seems reasonable to assume that the biblical texts which predate the Deuteronomic material are influenced by the world in which they are written. Havice notes, "Not only does the hierarchical character of the ANE find expression in Israel, but the concern for the underprivileged must be understood in its light. The two duties of concern for the inferior and loyalty and obedience toward the superior mark the ethical concern of Israel, both in the wisdom literature as well as in the law codes."⁴⁶ Havice argues that some of the clear lines of social

⁴³ Cf. Lev. 19:10; 23:22; Deut. 14:21; 24:19, 21.

⁴⁴ Mark R. Glanville, *Adopting the Stranger as Kindred in Deuteronomy*, (Atlanta: SBL, 2018), 188.

⁴⁵ Reinhard Achenbach, "Gēr-nākhri-tōshav-zar: Legal and Sacral Distinctions regarding Foreigners in the Pentateuch" in *The Foreigner and the Law*, edited by Reinhard Achenbach, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle, (Harrassowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden 2011): 30.

⁴⁶ Havice, *Concern*, 273-274.

hierarchy and bidirectional ethic found in Egypt are less clear in Israel. However, she observes that the influence of ANE ethical precedents on biblical literature is clear.⁴⁷

As such, the Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian texts above provide a strong foundation to argue the presence of ANE ideological precedent for the protection of the people groups represented by the widow-orphan pairing. Further, the ANE ideological precedent evolves in biblical texts, specifically in the law codes, as ideals gain structure and legislative language forms around ethereal ethical convictions. With the development of structure and language, the law codes begin to introduce measures of protection and pathways to social integration, which we will see in Deuteronomy and prophetic texts in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE.

Is There Precedent for a Widow–Orphan Dyad in the Ancient Near East?

There is some consensus in scholarship that considers the widow-orphan phrase in ANE legal traditions a doublet or dyad.⁴⁸ Ramírez Kidd examines the precedent for a widow-orphan doublet in ANE texts. The scholar notes that the widow-orphan is often found together in Mesopotamian and Egyptian literature. Further, Mayes notes that the biblical writers adopt the well-known ANE tradition of pairing the widow and the orphan.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Ramírez Kidd finds significant support for the existence of a doublet in ANE literature alongside other classes of people.

⁴⁷ Ibid, *Concern*, 271-274.

⁴⁸ In addition to Ramírez Kidd, Glanville assumes a widow-orphan doublet (*Adopting*, 76-79). See also, Fensham, “Widow,” 134-135. Mayes also assumes a doublet, *Deuteronomy*, 210-211.

⁴⁹ Andrew D.H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 210-211.

Egyptian texts place the widow-fatherless dyad next to the poor, humble, citizen, fearful poor, the motherless and divorcees, the prisoner, and the sick.⁵⁰ In Mesopotamian literature, the dyad appears both alone and adjacent to the weak, widower, abused and deprived, the man of one shekel, the poorest, the refugee, and the weak.⁵¹ In Ugaritic literature, there are passages where the dyad exists alone and others where the dyad is linked with other groups, including the wretched, the poor, and the oppressed.⁵² Ramírez Kidd's observation of ANE precedent for attaching different people groups to the widow-orphan doublet is significant for our consideration of Deuteronomy (below). However, the *gēr* is not mentioned in connection to the widow-orphan (as a triad) prior to Deuteronomy.

Some scholars disagree concerning the level of influence of ANE legal tradition on biblical law codes. Van Houten argues that Old Testament law is not influenced by Egyptian, Hittite, nor Syria-Palestine laws.⁵³ However, Van Houten's claim may be hasty given the close contact of Amenemope with Proverbs and Deuteronomy (above). Ramírez Kidd provides fifteen examples from ANE texts that support the plausibility of a widow-orphan doublet in ANE literature.⁵⁴ The presence of at least three contact points from different books (Exodus, Isaiah, and Psalms) provides enough material for a solid hypothesis that the widow-orphan was considered a legal doublet in the earliest biblical texts as well.

⁵⁰ Ramírez Kidd, *Alterity*, 38. See also *Appendix*, 134.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, *Alterity*.

⁵² *Ibid*, *Alterity*. See also, "Kirta" in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 3 CAT 1.16, Column 6, 44-50.

⁵³ Van Houten, *The Alien*, 33-35.

⁵⁴ It must be noted that some scholars disagree concerning the level of influence of ANE legal tradition on biblical law codes. Van Houten argues that Old Testament law is influenced by Egyptian, Hittite, nor Syria-Palestine laws. The scholar argues further that the overlap between Mesopotamian and biblical law codes share a common legal tradition, Christiana Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1991), 23-26.

This paper posits that a precedent for a widow-orphan dyad in ANE literature is demonstrable. However, it must be noted that the dyad is confined primarily to narrative texts and framing texts *à la* Amenemope or Hammurapi's epilogue. ANE law codes did not include codification that led to specific protections for widows and orphans. Rather, these admonitions were included in epilogues and narrative texts as ideology. The distinction is substantive as political texts express a social idea or expectation of social justice but lack concrete legislation to guarantee governance or support for the ANE ideology.

Defining the Term *gēr* in the Hebrew Bible

After establishing ANE precedent and biblical use of the widow-orphan dyad, it is necessary to define the meaning of the Hebrew noun, *gēr*, relevant to the aim of the present study. To define *gēr* in the Hebrew Bible, one must consider all relevant biblical texts and determine whether the meaning of the word is static or morphs over time given varying socioeconomic, political, religious, and historical contexts. Close consideration of the term will involve a brief exploration of cognates and examination of the term's usage in biblical law codes.

Cognates

The term *gēr* is cognate to several Western Semitic languages. Ramos notes the noun *gēr* in Semitic etymology contains a dual meaning. On the one hand, *gēr* can infer an outsider who may be a threat, but on the other, the term may refer to an outsider who requires communal protection.⁵⁵ Glanville confirms that the Akkadian cognates, *gērû* and *girru*, are associated with

⁵⁵ Melissa Ramos, "Immigration Studies and the Resident Alien in Ugarit an Ancient Israel," in a presentation for SBL (Boston: SBL, 2017) 2-3.

foreignness, hostility, and travel, but concludes that Northwest Semitic cognates are more closely associated with the use of *gēr* in the Hebrew Bible.⁵⁶ Glanville contends, while *gēr* implies foreignness and dependence, the lexical qualities do not paint the full picture; instead, one must consider how these qualities are viewed according to the implicit information of each text.⁵⁷ Thus, the meaning of the term *gēr* is not static to its cognates nor its usage in the Hebrew Bible.

Glanville argues further that observations about Northwest Semitic cognates can clear a path for research concerning the *gēr* in the Hebrew Bible. The scholar argues that there is nuance and specificity that the term alone cannot provide. For example, Glanville notes the following: *gēr* can refer to various levels of displacement, and context is determinative; “foreignness is not by any means germane to the lexical meaning of [*gēr*] in Northwest Semitic cognates”; the *gēr* in Deuteronomy is similar to the Covenant Code but differs from the Holiness Code; in Deuteronomy, the *gēr* is a person who is both displaced and also dependent in a new context.⁵⁸

Distinctions in Biblical Law Codes

For the present study, it is necessary to explicate the differences between *gēr* in the Covenant Code (CC) from *gēr* in the Deuteronomic Code (DC) and Holiness Code (HC). TJ Meek’s 1930 study on the translation of the *gēr* continues to be influential.⁵⁹ The scholar traces the varying meaning of the term throughout the different source traditions of the Pentateuch and notes substantial distinctions between them. Meek concludes that the definition of *gēr* did not

⁵⁶ Glanville, *Adopting*, 33.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, *Adopting*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, *Adopting*, 36-39. Brackets mine.

⁵⁹ Theophile James Meek, “Translation of *Gēr* in the Hexateuch and Its Bearing on the Documentary Hypothesis,” in *JBL* 49, 2 (1930): 172-180.

retain the same connotation throughout the biblical sources but went through three distinct stages of usage, which are best translated “immigrant,” “resident alien,” and “proselyte.”⁶⁰

Van Houten is critical of parts of Meek’s assumptions, including more recent studies in socio-historical criticism that cast doubt on the existence of the Hexateuch in favor of a more composite tradition.⁶¹ Glanville also questions parts of Meek’s conclusion that *gēr* is someone who has been displaced by Israelite conquest.⁶² However, Glanville affirms Meek’s assertion that there are changes in the *gēr*’s status between the CC, DC, and HC. In his assessment, Glanville asserts that the *gēr* in CC is a displaced person who does not yet enjoy protective or religious inclusion within a household, whereas in DC, the *gēr* consistently refers to a displaced and dependent person who has entered the household but has not yet been integrated into socioreligious life as in the case of HC.⁶³ Awabdy agrees with Glanville that *gēr* is a legal status for displaced persons which changes with context but concludes that the meaning for the term in Deuteronomy suggests the status of an immigrant.⁶⁴

Ramírez Kidd defines *gēr* as an outsider who is granted immigrant status, with *gwr*, which connotes an Israelite who sojourns abroad.⁶⁵ The scholar asserts that because there are no synonyms for the term nor instances of its feminine form, the *gēr* in biblical law codes is a legal status in the masculine nominative form.⁶⁶ Ramírez Kidd agrees with Glanville and Awabdy that

⁶⁰ Ibid, “Translation,” 177.

⁶¹ Van Houten, *The Alien*, 15-17.

⁶² Glanville, *Adopting*, 13.

⁶³ Ibid, *Adopting*, 38-41.

⁶⁴ Mark Awabdy, *Immigrants and Innovative Law: Deuteronomy’s Theological and Social Vision for the גר*. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) 2-3.

⁶⁵ Ramirez Kidd, *Alterity*, 23.

⁶⁶ Ibid, *Alterity*, 26, 28-31.

context supplies a clearer understanding of changing status of *gēr* in the various law codes and that the status changes between the CC, DC, and HC. There is consensus that *gēr* in CC, DC, and HC indicates emigration, but the status of immigrant is not static between the law codes. The extent of the *gēr*'s integration in the socioreligious life of Israel changes.

In the CC, the *gēr* is a socially vulnerable person who is not to be oppressed. The motivational clause that the Israelites were *gērim*, and their experience as immigrants, supports the legislation.⁶⁷ The narrative references to *gēr* in Genesis and Exodus both envision an immigrant traveling from their homeland to a place that is not their own.⁶⁸ Significantly, the two persons referenced in the narrative texts as *gēr* are Abraham and Moses. Undoubtedly, the identification of the two most important human figures in Torah must be significant to the overall ethic regarding *gēr* in the law codes.⁶⁹ Further, the presence of the motivational clause, “for you were *gēr* in Egypt” in the three law codes evidence the staying power of the *gēr* motif in Israelite legal traditions.

The *gēr*'s status in the HC changes a great deal from early considerations in CC. Nihan observes, “In *all* other Pentateuchal codes... the [*gēr*] is exclusively considered as a dependent member of the Israelite society, who can survive only by being included into an Israelite household (See Exod. 23:12) or by living on the charity of Israelite landowners.”⁷⁰ Nihan notes that there are similarities between the *gēr* in HC with CC and DC, including gleaning laws, but

⁶⁷ Exod. 22:21-23; 23:9.

⁶⁸ Gen. 15:13; 23:4; Ex. 2:22; 18:3.

⁶⁹ See Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:33; Deut. 23:7; See also Deut. 5:14; 10:19 which are later additions to Deuteronomy.

⁷⁰ Christophe Nihan, “Resident Aliens and Natives in the Holiness Legislation,” in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Reiner Albertz, and Jakob Wöhrle, (Harrassowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2011), 113.

affirms with the majority that HC has borrowed from DC.⁷¹ Further, Albertz suggests that while HC is aware that the *gēr* may be an economically and socially vulnerable person, this connotation is limited in the tradition compared to CC and DC.⁷²

Comparatively, Albertz contends that HC presents a considerably different social situation for the *gēr* compared to their status in DC.⁷³ It would appear that some social integration has occurred, and *gērim* are economically stable people who are afforded the opportunity to worship YHWH⁷⁴ but enjoy some freedom of religion provided they do not curse YHWH or sacrifice children to Molech.⁷⁵ At the same time, the *gēr* is welcome in Yahwistic worship, religious festivals, and must obey dietary restriction according to the holiness theology of HC.⁷⁶ The inclusion of the *gēr* in the Jewish community of HC and P traditions may inform the LXX translation *proselytos* due to the relatively close dating of the texts.

Finally, Rendtorff observes the pairing of *gēr* with *'ezrah*, noting that the references involving the two groups typically focus on commonality rather than difference.⁷⁷ Thus, *gēr* in HC indeed appears to have integrated socially, economically, and religiously though not entirely as demonstrated by the inherent differences in worship and juxtaposition of *gēr* and *'ezrah*.

⁷¹ Ibid, "Holiness Legislation," 117.

⁷² Rainer Albertz, "From Aliens to Proselytes: Non-Priestly and Priestly Legislation Concerning Strangers," in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Reiner Albertz, and Jakob Wöhrle, (Harrassowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2011), 57.

⁷³ Ibid, "Aliens," 58. See also Glanville, "Adopting," 39-41.

⁷⁴ See Albertz, "From Aliens," 58 Cf. Nihan, "Resident,"

⁷⁵ See Albertz, "From Aliens," 59 Cf. Lev. 20:2; 22:18; 24:16.

⁷⁶ Lev. 17:8; 24:18;

⁷⁷ Rolf Rendtorff, "The Gēr in the Priestly Laws of the Pentateuch" in *Ethnicity and the Bible*, ed. Mark Brett (Boston: Brill, 2002): 88-87.

Though they share differences, they are still distinct classes according to HC. The *gēr* in HC, according to context, is a legal term denoting peoples who have migrated and are largely economically and socially stable, and, in some cases, are converts to early Jewish religion.

DC, which is located between the sociohistorical situations of CC and HC, portrays the immigrant as having integrated, to some extent, into social and economic life in Israel. DC aims to deepen social support and cohesion while also providing a path for religious integration. Glanville's work posits the *gēr* laws of Deuteronomy seek to adopt the *gērim* through kinship bonds by including the *gēr* in economic, social (households), and religious spheres of social cohesion.⁷⁸ Glanville asserts three possibilities for identifying the *gēr* in Deuteronomy, including refugees in the wake of the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom, a foreigner from another kingdom other than Judah or the Northern Kingdom, or a displaced Judahite. The present study is concerned more with the status of the *gēr* informed by legislative measures than by the *gēr*'s provenance. The following section will explore Deuteronomy's addition to the ANE precedent of protecting the vulnerable class represented by the widow-orphan dyad.

DEUTERONOMY'S EXPANSION OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PRECEDENT FOR PROTECTED CLASSES

We have seen that ANE cultures had clear and ancient precedent for protecting the vulnerable people groups. Dating back to the third millennia BCE, rulers were expected to administer justice for those who had no one to speak for them. Deuteronomy is clearly aware of this ANE precedent. However, the present work will argue that the Deuteronomists sought to expand the precedents of ANE literature in several ways to address Judah's socioeconomic,

⁷⁸ Glanville, "Adopting," 103-104.

cultural, and religious situation beginning in the time of Josiah and continuing well into the post-exilic period. The following will compare key similarities and differences between ANE precedent and the Deuteronomic expansion thereof.

Comparing the Ethics of Protection for Rulers

F.C. Fensham's assertion that an ANE king's success was closely associated with his successful protection of the widow-orphan class may be influential in Deuteronomy.

Hammurapi's stele posits the ruler as the "perfect king" who executes justice for the orphan and the widow. Conversely, Deuteronomy 10:17-18a envisions YHWH as "God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow." Both Deuteronomy and the Mesopotamian stele portray a supreme ruler whose preeminence is closely tied to judicial equality and protection of vulnerable persons.⁷⁹ Scholars have noted similarities in Hammurapi's epilogue and Deuteronomy 10:17-19.

In the chart below, one may see the similarities between Hammurapi's epilogue and YHWH's honorific title in Deuteronomy. The connection of governance with divine honor and purpose is apparent in both texts (1A Cf. AB). Further, the respective rulers' righteousness and justice are linked with protecting vulnerable classes (3A Cf. 3B). Certainly, there is contact between Deuteronomy and the ANE precedent of a ruler administering justice on behalf of the vulnerable. Deuteronomy also sees the peoples' ruler, YHWH, as a supreme ruler who dispenses justice and provides for the needy.

⁷⁹ Deut. 10:17-18 Cf., Epilogue xxiv, 52-61, 80-90, *ANET*, 178.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19	Code of Hammurapi: Epilogue
1A. <i>“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome”</i> v. 17	1B. The great gods called me, so I became the beneficent shepherd whose scepter is righteous; my benign shadow is spread over my city. (ANET, 178).
2A. <i>“...who is not partial and takes no bribe,”</i> v. 18a	2B. In my bosom I carried the peoples of the land of Sumer and Akkad; they prospered under my protection; I always governed them in peace; I sheltered them in my wisdom. (ANET, Ibid.)
3A. <i>“...who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing.”</i> v. 18b	3B. In order that the strong might not oppress the weak, that justice might be dealt the orphan (and) the widow... (ANET, Ibid.)

While there are connections between Deuteronomy and the Code of Hammurapi, there are also differences between the codes that must be addressed. Lohfink points to the striking distinction between Deuteronomy and the laws of Hammurapi concerning their framing material.

Deuteronomy posits a system in which the community exists without poverty; however, while Hammurapi purports to care for the orphan in the epilogue, there is little record in the social law to implement protection for *personae miserabile*.⁸⁰ Whereas Hammurapi's claim to do justice for the vulnerable stands alone in the law corpus, Deuteronomy's vision extends further than grand claims, providing specific pieces of legislation to ensure justice for endangered groups. One of the more striking examples of delineation between Hammurapi and Deuteronomy concerns runaway slaves. Collins notes that the penalty for harboring a runaway slave in Hammurapi's code is death, whereas Deuteronomy prohibits sending the slave back.⁸¹ The present study finds Deuteronomy's humanitarian concern especially important. While it is clear that ANE cultures influenced biblical law codes, it is also evident that the Deuteronomic writers were not merely duplicating the laws of other countries. In some cases, they may have been explicitly overturning the laws and ethics of their neighbors. At a minimum, the scribes of DC were using diverse sources for their text.

Differing from the Neighbors

Deuteronomy differs from the rest of the ancient Near East in at least three ways. The first and most salient difference for the present study is that Deuteronomy includes the *gēr* among the archetypal widow-orphan class. This is significant because the triad, *gēr*-orphan-widow, is a novelty of the Hebrew Bible.⁸² CC introduced the *gēr* as a protected class in Israel,

⁸⁰ Lohfink, "Poverty," 35, 43-36; See also Glanville, *Adopting*, 212.

⁸¹ John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 2345-2349 of 7721, Kindle.

⁸² Aside from Deuteronomy's redaction layers, the triad appears in the following places: Jer. 7:6, 23: 3; Zech. 7:10; Psa. 94:6, 146:9; and a very close allusion in Mal. 3:5.

but DC formalizes the protection by forming a triad. The triad's appearances in DC provide significant evidence for the origination of the triad somewhere near Josiah's reforms.⁸³ Further, the presence of the triad in subsequent exilic and post-exilic prophetic books and the Psalms supports the notion that the triad was well-known from the time of Josiah and into the Second Temple period.

Importantly, the only occurrence before DC where the *gēr* appears near the widow-orphan dyad is in CC. Exodus 22:21-22 links the *gēr* with the widow and orphan with a proscription against oppressing the three groups in contiguous statements. It must be noted that CC's proscription does not include prescriptive elements, that is, legislative measures to provide for the lowly socioeconomic class. While CC includes general protection from exploitation, the early law code does not explicitly prescribe provision for the *gēr*.

Second, Deuteronomy advances the cause of the *gēr* by including the triad in theological, ideological, and legislative texts, communicating to the hearer three areas in which the *gēr* must be integrated into the community: socially, economically, and religiously. These areas of integration provide significant support for the present argument that Deuteronomy takes the issue of vulnerable persons very seriously. ANE precedent had expected kings to administer justice on behalf of those who had no one to defend them. The Deuteronomists envision state-wide participation, expecting all landowners to get involved. The expectation is evident in gleaning laws and festival meals, but also in the Deuteronomic verbiage "*gēr* who are in your gates/towns," and in later redaction layers, "your *gēr*."⁸⁴ Deuteronomy intends for the people to

⁸³ This is, of course, assuming some accuracy in de Wette's seminal work and conclusion that the Book of the Law purportedly found in 2 Kings 22:8ff is, in fact, an early form of Deuteronomy including DC.

⁸⁴ Gleaning and Festival, see Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19, 21; 26:11-12; "In your gates/town," see 5:14; 14:21, 29; 24:14; For "Your *gēr*" (*gēr*) see 1:16; 5:14.

take responsibility for the vulnerable class in their midst. This is a striking difference from ideological texts that speak primarily of rulers speaking up for defenseless persons.

Finally, the triad occurs more frequently in Deuteronomy and the exilic and post-exilic prophetic corpus than in any other ANE region's use of the dyad. One may suggest that the amplified usage of the term, along with previously stated advances in textual considerations, presumes that the issue became more central to the early audience of the biblical texts than it had been in previous ANE cultures. Thus, Deuteronomy's vision for the *gēr* goes beyond any ANE ethic of protection and provision for the *gēr*. While the use of the widow-orphan doublet in the Bible provides context for how biblical authors are similar to the ANE literary context at large, Deuteronomy's addition of *gēr* to the doublet may reveal how the writers differ from the rest of the ANE world.

Is the *gēr* a Protected Class in Deuteronomy's Contextual Situation?

In order to support the claim that the *gēr* in DC's historical situation is a vulnerable class within Judean society, it is necessary to establish a framework for determining at-risk persons in ancient historical settings. Burke posits an anthropological approach for the archaeological study of refugees based on Michael Cernea's "*Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction*" (IRR) model.⁸⁵ According to Burke, it is possible to identify refugees in the archaeological record using the IRR model. The relevant aspects of the IRR model to the *gēr* in Deuteronomy are food insecurity, landlessness, and marginalization.⁸⁶ The references to the *gēr* in Deuteronomy reflect

⁸⁵ Aaron A. Burke, "An Anthropological Model for the Investigation of the Archaeology of Refuges in Iron Age Judah and Its Environs" in *Interpreting Exile: Interdisciplinary Studies of Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, edited by B. E. Kelle and F. R. Ames. (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 43-44.

⁸⁶ Ibid, "Anthropological Model," 44-45. Burke's study is relevant for the later discussion of possible historical locations for the *gēr* laws of Deuteronomy. For now, the specified aspects of Burke's implementation of the IRR model are useful for our examination of Deuteronomic texts.

an attempt to address apparent problems in the world of the text. Food insecurity, landlessness, and marginalization may all be implicit in the prescriptions and prohibitions regarding the *gēr*.

Food Insecurity

Ramirez Kidd notes the thrust of laws for the *gēr*, orphan, and widow concern provision of food for the triad. Indeed, ten of the twenty-one *gēr* references in Deuteronomy are closely associated with food.⁸⁷ Ramirez Kidd distinguishes between the triad references of the Deuteronomic law code and the command to love the *gēr* in 10:19. The scholar contends that the Deuteronomy 10:19 reference addresses the underlying issue of the *gēr*'s acceptance in the community rather than material needs.⁸⁸ However, while some references may allude to a shorthand legal tradition, others are quite specific.

The gleaning laws are clearly intended to provide for the marginalized, and the stipulations that include the vulnerable class at feast days connote social provision as well.⁸⁹ Additionally, Deuteronomy's feasting laws and tithe laws include the *gēr* among the vulnerable classes of widows, orphans, and Levites. The inclusion of the Levites in this class need not lead to confusion, given Deuteronomy's intention to centralize cultic practices in Jerusalem. The vulnerable classes participate in the festival and tithe, not by contributing produce, but by eating their fill of the landowner's offering.⁹⁰ Further, the statute regarding payment for day laborers is

⁸⁷ Cf. Deut. 10; 18; 14:21; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24: 11, 19, 21; 26:11, 12

⁸⁸ Ramirez Kidd, *Alterity*, 82. The scholar approaches the triad construction of DC texts as a shorthand reference to persons in need rather than *gēr* as an immigrant specifically.

⁸⁹ Deut. 24:17, 19.

⁹⁰ Deut. 26:11, 12.

significant in understanding food security as well.⁹¹ One who requires daily payment is unlikely to make a lot of money or have land from which to sustain themselves. In ancient, agrarian culture, the likelihood is that the daily wage would pay for, at least in part, daily bread.

Finally, the case of the *nebelah* likely indicates food insecurity for the *gēr* as well.⁹² This law is intriguing of distinguishing the *gēr* from both the citizen and the foreigner (*nokher*). In Deuteronomy 14:21, the citizen is restricted from eating *nebelah*; however, the carcass may be sold to *nokher* or given to the *gēr*. Thus, the *gēr* is a resident individual who requires charity for sustenance but is not considered a citizen of Israel/Judah. Thus, Deuteronomy's legislation reflects a situation in which *gēr* are individuals who need aid, including day labor, the opportunity to glean from others' fields, and an accommodation to eat unkosher foods. Indeed, the *gēr* would qualify as a class of persons suffering from food insecurity.

Landlessness

Further, the necessity of leaving crops for the *gēr*-orphan-widow class to glean the edges of landowners' fields suggests landlessness for these individuals. Glanville's position that the *gēr* is a person who lives outside of the territories of kinship and relies on the charity of those who are outside the normal bonds of kinship assumes landlessness. Further, Deuteronomy's religious inclusion of the *gēr* in 26:11 is preceded by the communal memory of being *gērim*. When the priest presents the offering at the altar, the participant states, "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as *gēr*, few in number, and there he became a

⁹¹ Deut. 24:14.

⁹² Deut. 14:21.

great nation, mighty and populous.”⁹³ The liturgical statement in 26:5 rehearses the collective memory of being *gērim* in Egypt, thus reminding the people that the *gēr* among them are not an outside threat but a reminder of their past living next door, or more accurately, “within their gates.”⁹⁴

Marginalization

The final point of interaction with the IRR model will consider whether the laws of Deuteronomy advocate for marginalized people. Na’aman notes, “The common features of all the sojourners referred to in the Book of Deuteronomy [regardless of textual strata] are their residence away from their family’s birthplace, their being landless, and their position in the lowest stratum of society.”⁹⁵ Na’aman posits that Deuteronomy’s placement of the *gēr* next to the orphan and the widow implies that the *gēr* is among the most vulnerable persons in society. The threat of marginalization is imminent for the *gēr* in Deuteronomy.

Glanville’s work focuses on the evident threat to the *gēr* based on whether they are integrated into the Israelite community or socially marginalized. He states, “DC fosters incorporation of the *gēr* within a household and a clan, while the framework of Deuteronomy fosters the incorporation of the *ger* within Israel.”⁹⁶ In fact, the scholar considers displacement the most pressing social issue within the community during the period of Deuteronomistic

⁹³ Deut. 26:5 Cf. Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33; Deut. 10:19.

⁹⁴ Deut. 5:14; 14:21, 29; 16:11, 14; 24:14.

⁹⁵ Nadav Na’aman, “Sojourners and Levites in the Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century BCE” in *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte*, 14 (2008): 258.

⁹⁶ Glanville, *Adopting*, 29.

redactor (Dtr) and post-Dtr.⁹⁷ Further, Glanville asserts that Deuteronomy's framing texts aim to legislate the inclusion of those who had been separated from patrimony and kindred. The scholar posits judicial law was an essential legal category for the integration of the stranger within the community.⁹⁸

Certainly, Deuteronomy's *gēr* laws intend to integrate the *gēr* in the social strata of society. The food provisions meet the physical needs of the *gēr* while laws pertaining to judicial equanimity and quick payment of day wages seek to ensure fair treatment in daily social life.⁹⁹ The requirements for judicial equality occur in Deuteronomy's frame as well as within the law code. Deuteronomy 1:16 charges Israel's judges to give every member of the community, whether "brother" or *gēr*, a fair hearing. Tigay notes the fraternity of the Israelite community is represented in the phrase "hear between brothers," while the inclusion of *gēr* in the command connotes an ethic of equanimity before the law.¹⁰⁰ The inclusion of the *gēr* in each redactional layer of Deuteronomy indicates that the *gēr* continued to be a relevant issue in the life of the Jewish people throughout the history of the book's formation. Further, the legal classification *gēr* reveals that these people were vulnerable in terms of basic sustenance, judicial equality, and social contexts. Deuteronomy's interest in protection through social and religious measures demonstrates the plausibility that these people were not necessarily welcomed with open arms.

There is evidence in the biblical references that the status of the *gēr* changed over time. In Deuteronomy 28:43, Moses casts a vision that the *gērim* in the community will rise above the

⁹⁷ Ibid, *Adopting*, 146.

⁹⁸ Ibid, *Adopting*.

⁹⁹ Deut. 1:16; 27:19

¹⁰⁰ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1996), 12.

native-born Israelite people if they disobey the covenant and bring the curses down upon themselves. The framing text of Deuteronomy envisions the possibility that the *gēr* will prosper. Later, the Holiness Code reports a situation where the *gēr* have flourished, and an Israelite falls into debt slavery to the *gēr*.¹⁰¹ The change in the Holiness Code corresponds to the connotation that the *gēr* has, to some degree, integrated into the community.¹⁰² In Deuteronomy, the *gēr* falls within the context of Burke's criterion for refugee status, and as such, is among the most vulnerable groups in society. The laws addressed in Deuteronomy indicate that the *gēr* are, in fact, among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community.

Gēr–Orphan–Widow Triad in Deuteronomy

As argued above, the *gēr* in Deuteronomy's sociohistorical situation is among the most vulnerable classes in Israel. As such, Deuteronomy includes the widow-orphan dyad and builds on its precedent by adding the *gēr* as a third category of protected persons. According to Ramírez Kidd, Deuteronomy's extension of the doublet is a novelty in the Hebrew Bible, originates around the time of DC's composition, and continues throughout the Deuteronomic tradition.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Lev. 25:47.

¹⁰² Some key differences between DC and HC may be introduced briefly. *Social law*: DC makes dietary accommodation for *gēr*, HC does not, Deut. 14:21 Cf. Lev. 17:15. *Judicial Law*: DC takes special precautions to ensure judicial protection for *gēr*, but makes it clear that *gēr* are separate from *אֲנָשִׁים*, whereas HC commands one law for both without special considerations as part of the land theology that required all inhabitants to keep the land pure as a stipulation of occupation, Deut. 24:17-18 Cf. Lev. 18:26-27, 24:16, 22. Additionally, in Deuteronomy, the *gēr* are invited to participate in feasts as clients of landowners as well as the ritual enactment of the covenant, they are conspicuously absent from those invited to Passover. In HC, some *gēr* may have means as they are able to sacrifice at the entrance of the tent of meeting (17:8-9) and may own slaves (25:47). Deuteronomy envisions the triad as a protected class that will integrate into the community, and while the Deuteronomists provide for the *gēr*, the alien is not paired with the poor. In HC, the *gēr*'s economic status has diversified. In some instances, *gēr* are paired with the poor (Cf. Lev. 19:10; 23:22) while others have risen in the social strata of Israel and have means (17:8; 25:47).

¹⁰³ Ibid, *Alterity*, 36.

Ramírez_Kidd states, “The [*gēr*] mentioned in this triad is part of that group of helpless and marginalized people of late pre-exilic Israel for whose material well-being the Deuteronomic code was concerned.”¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the triad does not appear in materials prior to DC and the Josianic reform. While CC adjoins a single *gēr* statement with a statement on protection for the widow-dyad, DC is the first to use the triad explicitly. It appears the issue of the *gēr* in DC’s situation was prevalent enough to warrant a triad for shorthand purposes.

Further, the present study finds that close contact with Egypt during the Judean monarchy opens the possibility that Amenemope influenced DC for the triad. This assumption is based on a few factors. Amenemope may have influenced DC by way of the Egyptian wisdom composition’s influence on Proverbs.¹⁰⁵ Deuteronomy appears to rely on sapiential literature as a background for its legislative framework. Weinfeld suggests that the interest in justice in biblical wisdom texts is influential in Deuteronomy’s laws, noting Amenemope, in particular as an influential text that influenced the Deuteronomists.¹⁰⁶

Amenemope uses a cognate term translated “stranger” in close proximity to a reference to a widow, which is unique in ANE texts. The present study finds that the proximity here and the development of a triad in Deuteronomy is unlikely a matter of coincidence given the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, *Alterity*, 36.

¹⁰⁵ For discussions in English, see Fox, “Amenemope” and J.A. Emerton, “The Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs XXII 17–XXIV 22: Further Reflections on a Long–Standing Problem,” in *VT* 51, 4 (Oct 2001): 431–465. Both of these scholars emphasize the work of A. Erman, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amen-em-ope*, *OLZ* 27 (1924), 241–252 (in German). Emerton considers Whybray’s objection to broad consensus on Amenemope’s priority and influence on Proverb and concludes that the Erman’s original thesis stands up to criticism.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, *Deuteronomic School*, 272–273.

observations of Weinfeld and Awabdy that Amenemope influenced the Deuteronomists.¹⁰⁷

However, occurrences of the triad in other parts of the Hebrew Bible elevate the plausibility of an early provenance for the triad in the Deuteronomic tradition. The triad appears in the early portions of the book of Jeremiah as well as instances in Malachi, Zechariah, and Psalms.¹⁰⁸ All of these attestations appear to place the triad within a *personae miserabile* class, and the texts prescribe either benevolence, judge mistreatment, or assume the *gēr* is dependent and is considered an outsider by the community.

In particular, Jeremiah's sermonic rebuke of King Jehoiakim is particularly relevant.¹⁰⁹

Scholars disagree whether the prose material in the Temple Sermon of chapter 7 originates with the prophet or is a later insertion.¹¹⁰ However, it seems there is some consensus that scholars view the language of the Temple Sermon as authentic to 7th century Hebrew. Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard contend that the similarities between Deuteronomic language and Jeremiah's prose material are to be explained in terms of "classical Hebrew prose style, as it existed in the 7th and 6th centuries."¹¹¹ Further, the scholars posit that the language of Jeremiah 7 is indicative of

¹⁰⁷ Awabdy's findings relate to later redactions of the Deuteronomic text. Weinfeld's argument for contact is more generalized than Awabdy's. The question of when Amenemope's cultural transfer happened may have been in the Deuteronomic timeline is important, but this it is difficult to answer with available materials.

¹⁰⁸ Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Zech. 7:10 use the triad in the same manner as DC. There are also close similarities in Mal. 3:5, Psa. 94:6 and 146:9.

¹⁰⁹ Jer. 7, see the *gēr*-widow-orphan triad in v. 6.

¹¹⁰ Some scholars question the date and accuracy of Jer. 7:6; see EW Nicholson, *Jeremiah 1-25* London: Cambridge University Press, 1973, 11. However, many others find the prose section of chapter 7 to be reliable; see Bright, "The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jeremiah," *SBL* 70, 1 (March 1951), 27-29; Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (Dallas, TX: World Books, 1991), 117-118, and Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 2.

¹¹¹ Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard, Jr., *Jeremiah 1-25: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (Dallas, TX: World Books, 1991), 117-118.

phrases used in the Josianic reform. Thus, the use of the triad in v. 6 is characteristic of late 7th or early 6th century Hebrew.

Additional support for a broad historical location within Iron Age II and the possibility of contemporaneous influence from Egyptian wisdom literature may also be observed from implicit evidence in the text. The historical writings in biblical literature often portray Egypt as an ally, at least in the eyes of some of the Judahite elite, in 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and Jeremiah.¹¹² Finally, the triad appears in every redaction layer of Deuteronomy and is prevalent in DC, which is considered the oldest portion of the book. Thus, the present study finds that the introduction of the *gēr* in a triad alongside the widow-orphan doublet originates in the early form of Deuteronomy, and it is plausible that DC is influenced by Egyptian wisdom literature as Judah attempted to address an influx of refugees in the late 7th century.

The significance of the *gēr*'s addition to the widow-orphan word pair cannot be overstated. Of Deuteronomy's twenty-one references to the *gēr*, twelve references adjoin the *gēr* with the orphan and widow. Nine of the eleven occurrences of the *gēr*-orphan-widow triad in Deuteronomy occur in the Deuteronomic Code (Ch.'s 12-26). If, in fact, the dyad was shorthand for the most protected class in society, the expansion to a triad must have made a clear statement regarding the status and prescribed treatment for a class of people that were not likely welcome in Deuteronomy's sociopolitical context. Deuteronomy makes an unprecedented effort on behalf of the *gēr* beginning in the book's early stages. Indeed, all of Deuteronomy's redaction layers

¹¹² Cf. Solomon's favorable relations with Egypt, 1 Kgs 3:1; 4:30; 8:65; 9:16; 10:28-29; Egypt becomes a place of refuge for Hadad, 11:17-18, 21; also Jeroboam 11:40; 12:2; Hezekiah reportedly had a treaty with Egypt in his rebellion against Assyria, 2 Kgs 18:21, 24; Judah becomes Egypt's client, 2 Kgs 23:29, 34; And after the conquest of Jerusalem, many flee to Egypt 25:26, see also Jer. 42-43.

contain considerations for the vulnerable class, and consistently name the *gēr*-orphan-widow in this order.¹¹³

Glanville asserts that the *gēr*'s connection to the orphan and widow doublet is absorbed within the greater brother-sister ethic of Deuteronomy to address a context where displaced and vulnerable people are a pressing social concern.¹¹⁴ Glanville views the *gēr* laws of Deuteronomy as a method of integrating displaced persons into the social and religious community as kin. Kinship, it would seem, involves groups of people living and working together for the benefit of flourishing together. In a situation where a communal society chooses not to include those who are landless and suffer from food scarcity, the outsider would certainly be in danger. Lohfink argues, similarly, that Deuteronomy is not adding new groups to the class of those who are poor, but rather attempting “to change the structures of society so as to provide support for those groups which, for very different reasons, are not in a position to live off their own land. If that system worked, these groups could no longer be considered poor.”¹¹⁵ Lohfink posits further that Deuteronomy envisions a world where even those traditionally destitute—the *gēr*, widows, and orphans—would no longer be considered poor.¹¹⁶ These scholars view the *gēr* in Deuteronomy as at-risk persons who require benevolence while also recognizing Deuteronomy's long-term solutions for the vulnerable by integrating the *gēr*, orphan, and widow into the fabric of Israelite society.

¹¹³ Cf. Deut. 24:19, 21; 27:19; 29:11; Josh. 8:35; Deut. 14:29 and 16:11,14. Deut. 16:11, 14 add the Levite to the protected class of *gēr*-widow-orphan, Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisen Braun's, 1992), 55 footnote 1. See also Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Zech. 7:10.

¹¹⁴ Glanville, *Adopting*, 145.

¹¹⁵ Lohfink, “Poverty,” 44. Cf. Deut. 28:43

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, “Poverty.”

Deuteronomy's Vision for the *Gēr*

Deuteronomy envisions a future where those who are displaced and vulnerable will eventually integrate into social, economic, and religious life. The uniqueness of the widow-orphan-*gēr* triad in Deuteronomy is that it brings the issue of the *gēr* to the fore of Deuteronomy's cultural situation and attempts to solve the problem of displaced, vulnerable people in the land. Whereas ANE legal traditions tend to leave out specific legislative protections for the dyad, Deuteronomy extends ideological precedent by protecting the widow-orphan-*gēr* triad both in narrative tradition and specific legislation.¹¹⁷

More than a simple legal triad to connote disadvantaged people, Deuteronomy conveys a situation where real people are at risk, and the text looks to improve the situation for them by addressing the issue of the *gēr* in at least four ways. First, in DC, the *gēr* is added to the ANE doublet, widow and orphan, to form a legal triad.¹¹⁸ Whereas the doublet in extrabiblical texts is typically used in narrative texts such as Hammurapi's epilogue, Deuteronomy goes further, firmly providing a place for the *gēr* next to the widow and orphan, and at times, the Levites.¹¹⁹ Secondly, laws pertaining to day laborers separate the *gēr* from slaves as dependents who may work as paid day laborers.¹²⁰ The *gēr*'s distinct status from the slave is confirmed in the Decalogue as well, which connotes the *gēr*'s status in Deuteronomy is relatively unchanged between early and late editions of the book.¹²¹ Third, gleaning laws provide sustenance by a

¹¹⁷ Cf. Deut. 18:18-19; 27:19; 29:11 (narrative); Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:17, 19, 21; 26:12-13 (legislative).

¹¹⁸ Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:17, 19, 21.

¹¹⁹ Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24: 14, 17, 19, 21; 26:11-13.

¹²⁰ Deut. 16:11, 14; 24:14

¹²¹ Deut. 5:14

social system that benefits the triad, including the *gēr*.¹²² The framework amplifies the Deuteronomic law code's imperative, citing YHWH as the guarantor of justice and provision for the *gēr*.¹²³

Finally, DC envisions a partial integration of the *gēr* in the religious community. The law code sends mixed signals regarding the religious integration of the *gēr*. It seems the *gēr* has an open door to participate in the festivals and ritual at Mt. Gerizim, but the *gēr*'s invitation to Passover is conspicuously absent.¹²⁴ Interestingly, DC welcomes the *gēr* to participate in religious festivals during Shavuot and the tithe, which takes place *inside* the temple, but does not restrict the *gēr* from eating the *nebelah* though the native may not.¹²⁵ Presumably, DC includes the *gēr* in religious festivals and the ritual at Gerizim for food provision and social integration, and potentially, providing a pathway for religious integration as well. The following will explore the suspended status of the *gēr* as a people group distinct from foreigners and yet not fully incorporated citizens. Scholars often refer to this in-between state as “liminal.”

Liminality of the Gēr

The *gēr* is protected as a member of the community but is still an outsider, demonstrating the liminality of the *gēr* in both DC and subsequent framing texts' situations. While the *gēr* enjoys social provisions in DC and judicial equality in the narrative frame, it is clear the *gēr* is implicitly distinguished from the “brothers” of the community. Glanville maintains, “It is critical

¹²² Deut. 14:21, 29; 24:19, 21.

¹²³ Deut. 10:18.

¹²⁴ Deut. 16:1-8 Cf. 16:9-12.

¹²⁵ Festivals, Deut. 14:29; 16:11, 14; *nebelah*, Deut. 14:21.

that the *gēr* in Deuteronomy is a liminal figure, on the threshold between one social status and another.”¹²⁶ The presence of the *gēr* in 1:16 implies that, at the time of redaction, DC had not yet fulfilled its purpose in integrating the *gēr* into Israelite society. Glanville notes the pronominal suffix “your *gēr*” is unique to Deuteronomy and serves as an integrative formula.¹²⁷ The scholar posits that the pronominal suffix in Deuteronomy may imply a contentious relationship as the *gēr* was landless and dependent, yet as a free person, was perhaps inclined to confrontation with landowners as necessary.¹²⁸

Deuteronomy 1:16 stipulates the *gēr* ought to have a fair hearing and fair judgment in the case of legal dispute. However, it seems that the necessity of including the *gēr* in judicial equanimity, while also differentiating the *gēr* from the citizen, implies a transitional phase between the social status of an outsider and that of an integrated member of the community. This transitional status begins with DC as the *gēr* is provided for and invited to religious feasts but is not held to the dietary standard of the “holy people to the Lord God.”¹²⁹

In addition to Glanville’s observation of the uniqueness of the pronominal suffix associated with *gēr* in Deuteronomy, Ramos argues that the book’s ritual performances in chapters 27-29, as well as the Shema and chapter 12’s centralization of cultic worship, provide a mechanism for social integration and cohesion.¹³⁰ Ramos contends that the performance of ritual addresses perceived imbalances, instability, and tumult within communities. Rituals take on

¹²⁶ Glanville, *Adopting*, 165.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, *Adopting*, 61.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, *Adopting*, 116-117.

¹²⁹ Deut. 16:11, 14 Cf. Deut. 14:21.

¹³⁰ Melissa Ramos, *Ritual in Deuteronomy: The Performance of Doom. The Ancient Word Series*, ed. by Seth L. Sanders, (Routledge, forthcoming), see 19, 62-65.

particular importance in times of change, liminality, and the threat of instability in the life of a community.”¹³¹ The performance of said rituals can settle social anxieties about sudden changes, including political changes, etc. Glanville affirms that Deuteronomy has the intention to integrate the *gēr* socially *and* religiously. Ramos argues that Deuteronomy’s ritual portion is central to its effectiveness as rhetoric (or preaching), in effect, restoring cosmic order to a threatened community. The influx of *gērim* into a community likely suits the situation where DC would need to address a *gēr* situation.

Love and Fear in Deuteronomy

Love is an important theme in Deuteronomy. In the Shema (Deut. 6:5), the people are given the imperative, “You *shall* love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength.” As we have seen in 10:17-18, Deuteronomy also suggests that God loves the *gēr* and provides food and clothing for them, and further, that Israelites must love the *gēr* because they were *gērim* in Egypt. Interestingly, the *gēr* here is not in the plural as one might expect. As Ramirez Kidd observes, Deuteronomy uses *gēr* as a legal term to signify a displaced person who is protected under law and has similar rights.¹³² The *gēr* in Deuteronomy is speaking about specific kinds of people but does so in terms of legal status more than relationship to citizens in the community.

Of course, the legal nature of the term *gēr* is no surprise for scholars, given the similarities of DC to ANE treaties. Moran’s seminal article outlines the similarities of the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon (STE) with Deuteronomy’s form and observes the term *ahav* belongs in the category

¹³¹ Ibid, *Ritual*, 19.

¹³² *Alterity*, 46.

of ANE terminology of international relations.¹³³ Moran's contribution has been widely recognized; however, there are scholars with nuanced disagreements with him. Gerstenberger counters Moran, stating that the language of covenant treaties derives from kinship verbiage, and therefore, even in suzerain-vassal treaties, the intention of the language was intended to inspire affect.¹³⁴ Further, Lapsley argued that, while Moran's observations of similarity between Deuteronomy and STE were valid, his conclusions stripped *ahav* of the affective dimension inherent in ethical adherence to a covenant. She states plainly, "the legal significance of loving God does not obviate its emotional connotations. Indeed, even a modern understanding of 'loyalty' is loaded with emotional content, and there is no reason to assume that ancient 'loyalty' did not also involve the emotions in a significant way."¹³⁵ While it is true that there are similarities between STE and Deuteronomy, Lapsley's point is salient. Surely, the collective identity construction that Deuteronomy aims to solidify would be bolstered by the readers' affective connection to motivational clauses, including the Shema and, "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there."¹³⁶

Bill Arnold has examined the lexical connotation of the terms *ahav* and *yirah* in the Deuteronomistic texts, engaging the work of scholars such as Moran and Lapsley.¹³⁷ He notes, per Moran, that *ahav* has a close relationship to the covenantal love of ANE treaties. Conversely, in agreement with Lapsley, Arnold posits Deuteronomy's

¹³³ William L. Moran, "The ANE Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," in *The Catholic Bible Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 1963): 77-87.

¹³⁴ Erhard S. Gerstenberger, "Covenant and Commandment," *JBL* 84 (1965): 39-40.

¹³⁵ Jacqueline Lapsley, "Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy" in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65, 3 (July 2003): 352.

¹³⁶ Deut. 15:15; 24:18

¹³⁷ Bill T. Arnold, "The Love-Fear Antimony" in *VT* 61, 4 (2011): 551-569.

conception of love certainly does not exclude affect. Arnold argues that scholarship has too quickly abandoned the possibility of affect in Deuteronomy's notion of *ahav*, "Just as the cognitive nuance of love is more naturally associated with behavior—in this case loyalty—so 'fear' has a cognitive nuance leading to behavioral reverence."¹³⁸ Arnold concludes that these terms in Deuteronomy are not lexically contiguous, but their proximity in the Deuteronomic text contains an implicit lesson concerning covenantal relationship with YHWH; love and fear are not mutually exclusive, but they balance one another out to avoid both terror and irreverent familiarity.¹³⁹ The love-fear tension in Deuteronomy intends to teach Israel wisdom and faithfulness through covenantal relationship with God that involves fear and love dialectically. The wisdom to fear God is counterbalanced by the love of God, both in loyalty and affection. Love is then expressed in service to those in need on behalf of God.

For example, Deuteronomy 10:17–19 portrays YHWH as the ideal king who loves the widow and orphan and also the *gēr*. Deut. 10:17-19 shares a resemblance to Hammurapi, but this work argues that the passage intends more holistic care for the triad than Hammurapi's epilogue does for the widow-orphan dyad. The term '*ahav*' appears five times in 10:12–11:1, and '*ahav*' is twice directed toward the *gēr*.¹⁴⁰ The pericope introduces YHWH's covenantal expectation of Israel, which will be outlined further in DC. YHWH's title at the beginning of the section, "God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome" likely intends to strike fear into the vassal, but his

¹³⁸ Ibid, "Love-Fear," 565.

¹³⁹ Ibid, "Love-Fear," 567.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. 10:12, 15, 18, 19; 11:1; Love directed to the *gēr* in 10:18, 19.

supreme authority, which is demonstrated in the Lord's justice and benevolence to *gērim*, would more likely inspire affect in the vulnerable classes.¹⁴¹ In this passage, YHWH has loved Israel and saved them when they were *gēr* in Egypt. In return, God's covenantal expectation of Israel includes loving both God and the *gēr*. Deuteronomy's dual meaning of love portrays YHWH's affect and loyalty to the *gēr*. In turn, the Israelite must also express love for the *gēr* in faithful action and affect. Thus, the covenant expectation of Deuteronomy 10:17-19 is that God's people are to do as God has done, that is, providing for vulnerable persons.

DEUTERONOMIC SUPPORT MEASURES

Deuteronomy's vision for the protection and integration of the *gēr* extends beyond ideals to provide practical care for the *gēr* as a matter of social justice. Weinfeld's study on social justice in ancient Israel is relevant to the nature of support measures taken by the Deuteronomists to support their ideal of integrating *gērim*. In his study, Weinfeld explores the Hebrew hendiadys, *mishpat veh-tzaddikah*, as a cognate concept to the ANE, *kittum u mīsarum*.¹⁴² The scholar posits that the hendiadys, both in Israel and in other ANE cultures, is inextricably linked to equity and truth and is implemented by ensuring personal freedom.¹⁴³ Weinfeld's observation is that the biblical ideal for justice and truth is in conjunction with mercy and kindness, which is expressed by creating equity for the poor or vulnerable classes.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Deut. 10:17-19.

¹⁴² Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995): 25-27

¹⁴³ Ibid, *Social Justice*, 27-33.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, *Social Justice*, 29; Weinfeld argues that צדק refers to the abstract principle of righteousness, while צדקה refers to righteous acts. Weinfeld argues that the means for doing justice and righteousness is mercy and

The present study has noted that ANE cognate literature contains provisions for the widow-orphan dyad. However, it has also been noted that mentions of these classes of *personae miserabile* in relevant materials do not specify legislative measures for the care of vulnerable groups. Rather, the respective cultures include the dyad in epilogues to law codes or wisdom literature, which are ideological. It is thus the observation of the present research that Deuteronomy extends the ANE precedent of protection by adding the *gēr* to the widow-orphan dyad and legislating equitable situations for the vulnerable class in three ways: judicial protection, social provision, and pathways for religious integration into the Deuteronomic community.

DC is considered by scholars to be an early development in Deuteronomy's final form, and the law code extends the dyad precedent by adding the *gēr* and by specific legislation for the triad's protection. It would appear that the framers of DC are dealing with an influx of outsiders, and DC response is protection, inclusion, and socioreligious integration. Magen Broshi has argued that the Assyrian conquest of the late-8th century BCE is the beginning of a massive influx of refugees from the Northern Kingdom fleeing to Jerusalem.¹⁴⁵ Na'aman mostly follows Broshi, but observes further that the earliest form of Deuteronomy reflects a social situation that "was a direct outcome of the campaign of Sennacherib to Judah and the devastation it wreaked on its settlements and inhabitants."¹⁴⁶ The situation of refugees flooding the smaller Southern

kindness, and that these qualities are implemented by working for liberation by equitable regulations. Further, the scholar clears up confusion with Rabbinic confusion by discussing the ideal means by which a king's throne was established in the Bible (Kindness and Truth, Cf. Isa. 16:5; Prov. 20:8), 34-38.

¹⁴⁵ Magen Broshi, "The Expansion of Jerusalem in the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh," in *IEJ* 24 (1974), 21-26. See also

¹⁴⁶ Na'aman, "Sojourners," 276. Contra Na'aman, See Avraham Faust, "Settlement and Demography in Seventh Century Judah and the Extent and Intensity of Sennacherib's Campaign," in *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 140, 3 (2008): 168-194. Faust challenges the position that Jerusalem's swell under Hezekiah due to Sennacherib's campaign continued throughout the 7th century. He argues that those who sought shelter

Kingdom may have created a crisis of socioeconomic and national identity, and Deuteronomy may well be addressing the situation by providing support measures to settle uncertain times in Judah.

Glanville states, “Central to Deuteronomy’s legislative strategy for the *gēr* is the interplay within various subgroups of law, namely, social law, feasting texts, and law of judicial procedure.”¹⁴⁷ Certainly, the laws in Deuteronomy, beginning in its early stages, seem to address real people with real needs, which is evident by the provision of food, judicial equanimity, and the command to pay *gēr* who are day laborers on the day in which they work.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, the laws regarding the *nebelah* and wages for day laborers appear to speak to specific situations. DC must be dealing with real people in real situations to address the dependent strangers with such specificity. The following will explore the three primary categories of DC’s legislative consideration where the triad appears: judicial law, social provision, and religious integration. These categories amount to the support measures necessary for fulfilling Deuteronomy’s vision for the *gēr*, along with other vulnerable groups such as widows, orphans, and Levites.

Judicial Law

Deuteronomy’s vision to integrate the *gēr* from a liminal figure to a full-fledged member of society includes equal protection under law. Whereas CC offers a general admonition against oppressing the *gēr*, DC adds meat to the bones of ANE tradition by including *gērim* in specific

inside the walls of Jerusalem did not stay long, opting instead to form settlements in the fringe areas of Judah.

¹⁴⁷ Glanville, *Adopting*, 21.

¹⁴⁸ For food provision ,see Deut. 14:21, 29; 24:10-21; For judicial procedure, see Deut. 24:17, and for redaction layers dealing with the same subject, Deut. 1:16; 10:18; For the day laborer ethic, see Deut. 24:14.

legislation and stipulating equality under law. No doubt, the issue of the *gēr* continued throughout Deuteronomy's development history in some form or another. The *gēr* is addressed in legislation related to judicial law in at least three redaction layers.¹⁴⁹

Deuteronomy implies an intention to advance the ethic of social integration and protection through judicial law while contemporaneously encouraging social consciousness in the community by transferring the locus of responsibility from the king to the community. Tigay acknowledges that ANE precedent laid the protection of the vulnerable on the shoulders of monarchs. However, Tigay also notes that the protection of the *gēr* was far less common and that biblical law expands the duty of protection to all Israelite citizens.¹⁵⁰

Glanville observes the shift away from ANE precedent whereby kings acted as judges. He notes that, in Deuteronomy, the community was responsible for appointing justices, “undermining the usual privilege of the king as the chief justice.”¹⁵¹ The communal responsibility to establish honorable judges and to do right by vulnerable classes is indicative of Deuteronomy's interest, not only in judicial equality but also in social justice and communal responsibility. No doubt, the election of judges and officials by the people could still be problematic for the marginalized, but the ideology of Deuteronomy 16:20 and additional emphasis in 24:17 may have intended to influence community-wide considerations for the *personae miserabiles* class. The responsibility to appoint the office of judge would then fall within the category of communal responsibility to pursue justice.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Deut. 1:16; 10:17-18; 24:17; 27:19.

¹⁵⁰ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 228.

¹⁵¹ Glanville, *Adopting*, 106; Cf. Deut. 16:18, “you shall appoint judges and officials...”

¹⁵² Cf. Deut. 16:20

The judicial provisions for the *gēr* in Deuteronomy may have been influenced by Egyptian wisdom literature, especially Amenemope. Weinfeld has suggested that Egyptian wisdom texts were influential in Deuteronomy's laws. Specifically, the scholar notes the relationship of Amenemope's exhortation against the falsification of weights and slander, which are considered abominations in the abomination laws of Deuteronomy.¹⁵³ Weinfeld posits that the nature of the crimes represents an archetypal deception and hypocrisy. Further, the scholar suggests that in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic historiography, the hypocritical attitude or half-hearted person is juxtaposed with the individual who is whole-hearted before God.¹⁵⁴ Finally, Weinfeld compares Deuteronomy 16:20 with Proverbs 21:21. The scholar observes that the "notion that one's pursuit of justice and righteousness will preserve one's life is an intrinsic idea of biblical wisdom literature (Prov. 11:19; 12:28; 16:31; 10:2; 11:4) and appears to have its ultimate source in Egyptian wisdom teaching, in which we repeatedly meet with the concept that the practice of *maat*—'Justice'—preserves one's life."¹⁵⁵ Thus, the background of Deuteronomy's judicial concern has been informed by the Deuteronomists' interest in socioeconomic and religious integration and influenced by wisdom traditions.

Social Justice and Provision

As previously observed, the ANE status quo for protection of the vulnerable class mainly included grand claims by rulers, which, as Lohfink posits, likely benefitted the ruler's reputation

¹⁵³ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomic School*, 267-269; Cf. Deut. 7:25-26; 12:31; 13:14; 17:1, 4; 18:9, 12; 20:18; 22:5; 23:18; 25:16; 27:15.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, *Deuteronomic School*.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, *Deuteronomic School*, 273; Cf. Havice, 97-98 (Refer to comments above in "Egypt" section).

more than any at-risk persons. Typically, the ANE kings' mention of *personae miserabiles* began and ended with judicial advocacy. Deuteronomy's vision for at-risk groups does not stop with rulers or judicial, and, in fact, it doesn't start there. The core of Deuteronomy's *gēr* laws revolves around food provision and socioreligious integration. These laws seek to ensure that the *gēr*, though landless and therefore suffering from food insecurity, is sustained by the community and given a pathway to integrate into society.

The previous discussion on Burke's matrix for determining the *gēr* with the vulnerable class, including marginalization, landlessness, and food insecurity, is relevant for Deuteronomy's social law. Landlessness and the resulting food insecurity were likely the two more pressing issues for the *gēr* in DC's historical situation. As noted previously, nearly half of the *gēr* laws in Deuteronomy revolve around the theme of providing food for the *gēr*. In line with ANE cultural understanding, Deuteronomy supports its claim that YHWH is the supreme ruler by the fact that he provides food and shelter for the triad. Deuteronomy 10:17-18 sets up a DC theme that Israelites are to follow YHWH's example of beneficence concerning the *gēr*.

The first mention of the *gēr* in DC concerns the provision of the *nebelah*, which was a prohibited food source for the citizen. This law offers a fascinating insight into the status of the *gēr* in Deuteronomy's view. The *gēr* is a member of society and must be cared for by the community. However, the special accommodation of the *nebelah* for the *gēr* conveys a liminal status.¹⁵⁶ The present example is indicative of Israel's ethic of providing equitable conditions for those who have yet to integrate fully. The *gērim* are allowed to join religious festivals and

¹⁵⁶ Deut. 14:21.

partake in the bounty of the tithe, but they are not invited to Passover nor required to adhere to the same dietary restrictions as the pure or “holy people.”¹⁵⁷

Bruggeman argues that social justice is always in tension with purity as twin trajectories in Deuteronomic law, positing that social power must be used in the service of justice, offering a revolutionary vision for its economic program, “whereby the community has active responsibility for the well-being of each of its members.”¹⁵⁸ Scholars have long noted the humanitarian concern prevalent throughout Deuteronomy. Bruggeman’s position that Deuteronomy envisions community responsibility to care for the vulnerable actively aligns with the studies of both Weinfeld and Havice discussed above.¹⁵⁹

The location of the *gēr* in the Deuteronomic triad suggests a special priority as well. Peter Vogt raises the issue that Deuteronomy seeks to alter the conception of poverty in Israel consciously.¹⁶⁰ The revolutionary vision of Deuteronomy extends ANE ethics by including the ideology of ancient cultures but further extends the ethics by legislating care for the *gēr*-orphan-widow group and by repositioning the locus of responsibility from rulers to all landowning people.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Religious festivals 16:11, 14; Tithe Deut. 14:22-29; 26:11-12; Passover 16:1-8. Cf. 14:21.

¹⁵⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 189.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Weinfeld, *Social Justice* and Havice, *Concern*. See also M. Weinfeld, “The Origin of Humanism in Deuteronomy” *JBL*, vol. 80, no. 3 (Sept 1961): 241-247; Weinfeld argues against scholars who assign a late date for Proverbs and determine the book contains Deuteronomic influence. Weinfeld argues conversely that wisdom literature, including Proverbs, was influential for DC writers. In the article, Weinfeld categorizes humanist laws peculiar to Deut. including laws which emphasize value on human life and dignity and laws dealing with social relations, 241.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Vogt, “Social Justice and the Vision of Deuteronomy” in *JETS* 51, 1 (March 2008): 38-39.

¹⁶¹ Cf. 14:29; 24:14, 17, 19, 21 ; 26:11-12.

Glanville notes that Deuteronomy's ethic for the *gēr* in social law operates in three areas of society: economic, social, and religious. Indeed, these three areas combine to weave the intricacies of social cohesion and kinship bonds in ancient Israel. Glanville argues, ultimately, that Deuteronomy aims to utilize the law code and religious rituals to provide pathways of integration that result in kinship bonds.¹⁶² Deuteronomy's social ethic is evident in the text.¹⁶³

Religious Integration

The final component of the Deuteronomic support measures for the care and integration of the *gēr* is religious integration. Deuteronomy's invitation toward the *gēr* to join the majority of religious events is consistent in the redaction layers. The Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic tradition's vision for the *gēr* is not limited to that of an accepted stranger kept at arm's length but a vulnerable person who will be embraced by the community through kinship bonds. For a person to become a full member of Israel, they would have to be assimilated into the covenant with Israel's God. Glanville contends that Deuteronomy integrates the *gēr* religiously through the festival calendar, including the Festival of Firstfruits and the third-year tithe.¹⁶⁴ He notes that the festival calendar incorporates the *gēr* at the level of clan grouping and that the feasts served as an inclusive environment for kinship bonds to form through the sharing of meals.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Glanville, *Adopting*.

¹⁶³ Glanville, *Adopting*, See chapter 3; here, 103. Cf. Deut. 5:14; 10:19; 14:21, 29; 16:11, 14; 24:14; 26:11-12; 31:12.

¹⁶⁴ Glanville, *Adopting*, 208. See also laws concerning Festival Calendar, Deut. 16:1-17, Festival of First fruits, 26:1-11, and Third-year tithe, 14:28-29; 26:12-15.

¹⁶⁵ Glanville, *Adopting*, 157-165. For the festival calendar, see Deut. 16:1-17.

It must be observed, however, that the *gēr*, though present at most religious festivals and the covenant enactment ritual at the end of the book, remains a liminal figure in Deuteronomy. One may not speak of the *gēr* as a convert to Yahwism in Deuteronomy. The separation is indicated by the *nebelah* law where *gērim* are allowed to eat non-kosher meat, but the “holy people” are not.¹⁶⁶ Van Houten cites this passage and the lack of *gēr* inclusion in the Passover law to support her position that “the exclusive relationship which the Israelites had with God meant that no way was open for aliens to become members of the Israelite community.”¹⁶⁷ However, contra Van Houten, while Deuteronomy implies the *gēr* is not a convert to Yahwism per se, one cannot state that there is no plausible way by which the *gēr* might integrate into the religious life of Israel. Sparks finds that religious adherence and loyalty to YHWH, rather than ethnic identity, was the most critical criterion for community membership in Deuteronomy.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, the *gēr*’s invitation to the ritual enactment of the covenant is one indicator that Deuteronomy envisions a future where the *gēr* is part of the religious community.

Ramos has demonstrated that the ritual character of Deuteronomy’s preaching, wherein the ritual in Chapters 27-29 reenacts the Deuteronomic covenant with YHWH, acts as a catalyst for social cohesion during times of duress. Further, Ramos states, “Rituals are performed in order to address an existential threat to a community and to produce an outcome that secures future

¹⁶⁶ Deut. 14:21.

¹⁶⁷ Van Houten, *The Alien*, 107.

¹⁶⁸ Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 26. Sparks concludes that ethnicity in the historical situation of Deuteronomy was likely difficult to discern. He suggests that Deuteronomy is less interested in distinguishing classes and more interested in setting a rubric for proper Yahwism vs. improper YHWH worship, 267. Following Glanville, Awabdy, Lohfink, and the findings of present research, Sparks final conclusions on the matter do not work. While it is difficult to identify the ethnicity of the *gēr* in Deuteronomy, ethnicity is distinguished. Cf. Deut. 23:3-8.

security and prosperity in the face of instability, change, liminality and perceived danger.”¹⁶⁹

There are several possible threats in DC’s situation. Assyrian campaigns in the 8th century had sparked a mass flood of people to seek shelter in Jerusalem. The late 7th and early 6th centuries BCE in Judah certainly qualify as times of duress as well. Josiah’s reforms likely caused social upheaval as any large-scale reformation would.¹⁷⁰ Further, Josiah’s death at the hand of Pharaoh Necho, the deportation of Josiah’s son and chosen successor, Jehoahaz, and the client status of Jehoiakim under Egyptian control are all plausible, as is the Babylonian invasion that followed. Notably, the *gēr* is included as a participant and witness in the ritual enactment of the covenant in chapters 27–29 and Moses’ exhortation of the people in chapter 30.

Awabdy posits a key difference between HC and DC concerning the *gēr* and religious participation. He identifies Exod. 12:48-49 with HC and notes that *gērim* are invited to celebrate the Passover on the condition that they be *physically* circumcised. Conversely, he posits Deuteronomy’s criterion for the YHWH-worshipping *gēr* is *spiritual* circumcision.¹⁷¹ For Awabdy, spiritual circumcision includes two primary components, “sustained residence in Israel and a favorable disposition to Israel are requisite for one seeking religious assimilation.”¹⁷² Awabdy views Deuteronomy 23:2-9 as an attempt to influence Israelite thought to incorporate *gēr* into religious life. He suggests that the *nokher* who came to reside in Israel was tolerated as *gēr* for three generations, at which point, the *gēr*’s family line was integrated as a full-fledged

¹⁶⁹ Ramos, *Ritual*, 62.

¹⁷⁰ An obvious example of a social group that would have been disrupted by Josiah’s reform is the Levites. The centralization of cultic worship in Jerusalem likely challenged the Levites’ stability. They are included alongside the Deuteronomic triad in Deut. 12:12, 18-19, 27, 29; 16:11, 14; 18:1; 26:11.

¹⁷¹ Awabdy, *Immigrant*, 271

¹⁷² *Ibid*, *Immigrant*.

member of the *qahal Adonai*.¹⁷³

The *gēr* in Deuteronomy's situation is thus not a religious convert, nor a full-fledged member of society. However, though the *gēr* has liminal status in the community, contra Van Houten, they are on a pathway to religious integration. Deuteronomy's religious support measures are linked to social law, which aims to promote relational bonds that will later become kinship bonds. Following Glanville, the notion that festival celebrations provide the environment for relational bonds to form appears to be an apt approach to understanding the practical steps of religious integration in Deuteronomy.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the present study was to explore the biblical conception of the *gēr* and ascertain the intention of Deuteronomy's laws concerning the immigrants and refugees. The ancient Near East's longstanding precedent for considerations for vulnerable classes in society has been well-documented. However, many scholars assume that the precedent is set in legal traditions. The research completed for this paper indicates that ANE precedent concerning *personae miserabiles* was set in ideological texts and wisdom literature and not in legislative material. This finding provides an opening for Deuteronomy's contribution to the well-documented tradition of social justice texts in the ancient Near East.

The literature review of ANE texts and the scholarship around them indicates that biblical material, including Deuteronomy, is at least aware of, if not reliant upon, ANE texts for its ethic regarding the *personae miserabiles* class. However, this understanding does not stipulate that the biblical material is entirely derivative of extra-biblical materials. Deuteronomy extends the ANE

¹⁷³ Ibid, *Immigrant*, 76-91.

precedent in every redaction layer of the book. Such continuity conveys the importance of *gēr* issues in Deuteronomy's situation, beginning in the earliest parts of the tradition. Indeed, the prevalence of *gēr* in social, religious, and judicial law indicates that the *gēr* were real people, and Deuteronomy's audience faced conspicuous issues concerning immigration and refugees in the book's sociohistorical situation.

As a result, Deuteronomy extends the ANE precedent in ambitious and revolutionary ways. First, the inclusion of the *gēr* with the vulnerable class represented by the widow-orphan dyad of the ancient Near East is remarkable. Burke's IRR method has provided evidence to confirm that the *gēr* may be understood as an ancient refugee. The *gēr*'s consistent position as the first member of the triad confirms vulnerability in Deuteronomy's situation. Second, the sheer volume of *gēr* laws is extensively more than any prior ANE text. The volume speaks to the seriousness of emigration in Deuteronomy's situation but also to the creativity and commitment on the part of the writers to establish inroads for socioeconomic and religious integration for the *gēr*.

Third, the Deuteronomic conception of responsibility expands from the typical ruling class to the whole community, though Deuteronomy places particular emphasis on all landowners. While one may assume that the majority in an agrarian society would be landowning people, the expansion of the city of Jerusalem in the 8th and 7th centuries begs such an assumption to account for an increasingly urbanized society and centralized cult. Finally, Deuteronomy improves on ancient precedent by including both ideological *and* legislative protections and provisions for the *gēr*. The Deuteronomic support measures aim to improve the lives of the *personae miserabiles* class, but also, as Lohfink has argued, to eradicate poverty and integrate the *gēr* into every facet of Israelite society.

Several ANE cultures included some ideological measure of protection, but only Egypt specifies provision for the vulnerable class, and only Egypt includes a reference to the stranger. Further, following Weinfeld, since Deuteronomy is dependent on wisdom literature for its laws, the present study finds that the Instruction of Amenemope is particularly influential on Deuteronomy's *gēr* ethic. The openness of the 25th and 26th dynasties in Egypt, along with Judah's longstanding relationship with Egypt as an essential trade partner, indicates a strong possibility of cultural transfer.¹⁷⁴ It is plausible that the Deuteronomists were indebted to Amenemope for the provisional laws and the idea to join *gērim* in the vulnerable legal class in need of social and judicial protection.

Finally, one may consider the applicability of the Deuteronomy text in present-day American culture. The research for this thesis has exposed a few important considerations for the researcher. First, exploring biblical texts for ethical guidelines in a vastly different historical location is tricky business. There is no simple transposition between cultures in history. Second, issues of immigration have always been with humankind. As long as there are wars, there will be vulnerable people who suffer displacement as a result of the violence of others. However, considering the ethic inherent in Deuteronomy's socioeconomic and religious integration laws, faithful people of God might remember the theological claim of Deuteronomy 10:17-18. God cares for displaced persons, and all who are his people must follow suit. Finally, we must acknowledge that our privileged positions are not according to the fruits of our labor. As it was in Israel, we must consider the pursuit of a more just and righteous world akin to expressing love

¹⁷⁴ This is contradictory to Van Houten who has stated that Egypt is not influential in biblical law codes. See Van Houten, *Alien*, 24.

for our God. Let us build in-roads for integration and equity rather than walls that divide us or policies that marginalize the vulnerable.

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