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Chapter 14

Clan Sagas As a Source in Settlement Traditions

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Students of ancient Israel long ago realized the complexity of the biblical accounts of the conquest of Canaan. Inter alia, they recognized the existence of distinct patterns in the depiction of this major event: Besides the dominant pattern of a national conquest—one people, a united army, and a single leader—there is a tribal model, expressed, for instance, in the story of the conquest of Laish (Judges 18).¹ In this article, I shall attempt to demonstrate the existence of yet another ancient model, found frequently among the settlement and conquest stories: the model of the clan enterprise, in which a hero, at the head of his clan, settles the land or conquers a place therein, as one well-integrated component of the larger complex of family episodes. This model, too, evidently comprises "divergent traditions," and scholars of the Bible and ancient Israel have already noted the atypical character of these traditions as well, wherever they encountered them.² However, it seems to me that scholars have never addressed all of these traditions together, as one category. Such a comprehensive study has the advantage of allowing each passage to shed light on the others. Align-


² See, for example, the following commentaries: John Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1903) 507; George B. Gray, *Numbers* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1903) 437-441.

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ing all of the passages will bring the historical perspective embedded in them into sharper relief and clarify the literary genre to which they all belong. On this basis, it will be possible to suggest general conclusions regarding the source of these traditions, their reliability, and their value for today’s historian.

1. Genesis 48:22

And now, [says Jacob to Joseph] I assign to you Shechem, one mountain more than to your brothers, which I wrested from the Amorites with my sword and bow.3

This brief verse contradicts all that is known of Jacob’s history. Jacob did not conquer Shechem; rather, Simeon and Levi did—unbeknownst to Jacob at the outset and regretted bitterly by him afterwards (Genesis 34, esp. v. 30). Jacob then left the land, not to return, and sojourned in Egypt, where he declared his last will and testament to his sons and died (Genesis 46–50). Against this background, what value can the special inheritance Jacob leaves to Joseph in Egypt have? Clearly, then, the passage in Gen 48:22 operates under a different assumption: Jacob, by his own valor, conquered Shechem, just as he had conquered other parts of the land, and now, still in Canaan and prior to his death, he leaves his estate to his sons and bestows Shechem, as an extra portion, upon his favorite. Jacob conquers and settles the land—this constitutes an alternative tradition about the nation’s patriarch.

2. Joshua 17:1b

For Machir, the first-born of Manasseh and father of Gilead, since he was a valiant warrior, he possessed the Gilead and the Bashan.

3 Translations generally follow NJPS, but have been adapted to the author’s understanding.
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“the father of Gilead,” means the founder of the settlement in the Gilead; cf. 1 Chr 2:24, “Ashur the father of Tekoa”; v. 42, “Mesha his first-born, who was the father of Ziph”; and many others. The continuation, “since he was a valiant warrior,” explains how Machir founded the Israelite settlement in the Gilead: Through his strength as a warrior he took the Gilead and the Bashan.

Again we stand in wonder. Who is this Machir? According to Gen 50:23, Machir was born in Egypt, where he married and begot children, all during the lifetime of Joseph, prior to the enslavement. Here, by contrast, he appears as a conqueror of Canaan. Josh 17:1b, then, knows neither the enslavement in Egypt nor the exodus therefrom. Moreover, Numbers 21 and Deuteronomy 2–3 claim Moses as the conqueror of the entire Transjordan. What room is there for the warrior Machir in a story about the division of the land, when the land has already been conquered? Rather, the note concerning Machir in Josh 17:1b contradicts the mainstream story of the conquest of the land. It contains a divergent tradition about Machir, the son of Manasseh and grandson of Joseph, who captured a territory by the force of his weapons and founded there a settlement: “the father of the Gilead.”

3. Numbers 32:39, 41–42

The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead and captured it, and he dispossessed the Amorites who were there ... Yair son of Manasseh went and captured their tent-villages, which he renamed Havvoth-yair, the tent-villages of Yair. And Nobah went and captured Kenath and its dependencies, renaming it Nobah after himself.

The transition from plural to singular is not smooth and will be explained further on. He captured their tent-villages — whose villages? The possessive pronoun has no antecedent and thus no referent. Therefore read: “the villages of Ham.” The name Ham belongs to this area according to Gen 14:5.

These verses occur at the end of the story of the allotment of the land of Ya‘azer and the Gilead to the tribes of Gad and Reuben (Num 32:1–38). The tribe of Manasseh only makes its appearance in v. 33, where the sole mention of its possessions, “the kingdom of Og, king of the Bashan,” in the chapter occurs. Furthermore, the main part of the chapter, through v. 38, discusses the land already taken, which the tribes of Gad and Reuben now wish to settle; by contrast, vv. 39, 41–42 relate a string of new conquests: Machir in the Gilead, Yair in the tent-villages of Ham, Nobah in Kenath.
Between these two perspectives a clear clash emerges—the conquest of Transjordan and its settlement under the leadership of Moses (Num 21:21-22:1; 32:33; Deut 2:24-3:22; Josh 12:1-6; 13:8-33) and a conquest spearheaded by clan leaders in independent operations. Verse 40 constitutes a clear attempt at bridging this gap: "so Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of Manasseh and he settled there." By this harmonization, the independent operations now appear as though Moses commissioned them. Similarly, the plural form in v. 39, "the descendants of Machir went," which is followed by the singular "the dispossessed," marks an attempt to harmonize the report concerning Machir with the settlement story of the tribes of Gad (vv. 34-36) and Reuben (vv. 37-38). Originally, behind vv. 39, 41-42 stood an independent tradition about the settlement of three conquerors from the tribe of Manasseh. The report in v. 39 concerning Machir complements well the mention of Machir in Josh 17:1b, discussed above; and the report concerning the tent-villages of Yair resembles, in a number of respects, that given about Yair in Judg 10:3-5:

After him arose Yair the Gileadite, and he led Israel for twenty-two years. He had thirty sons, who rode on thirty burros and owned thirty boroughs; these are called Havvoth-yair, the tent-villages of Yair, to this day, which are in the land of the Gilead. Then Yair died and was buried at Kamon.

The conception reflected here presents Yair as one of the "minor judges." But if we ignore the regular formulaic elements ..., what remains constitutes none other than a clan saga: Yair had thirty sons and thirty tent-villages, with each son inheriting one village. Indeed, similar information exists in 1 Chr 2:21-23:

Afterward Hezron cohabited with the daughter of Machir father of Gilead—he had married her when he was sixty years old—and she bore him Segub; and Segub begot Yair; he had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. But Geshur and Aram took from them Havvoth-yair, the tent-villages of Yair...


5 Among the "Minor Judges," Tola son of Puah (Judg 10:1-2) and Elon the Zebulunite (Judg 12:11-12) also appear as clan leaders in the genealogies. See, in Hebrew, S. Skulsky, "The Minor Judges," *Beth Mikra* 13 (1967/8) 75-99, esp. 97. In my opinion, the original tradition probably described most of them as "great people," heads of clans.
Caleb dislodged from there the three Anakites... from there he marched against the inhabitants of Debir... and Caleb announced, 'I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher.' His kinsman Othniel the Kenizzite captured it; and Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage. When she came [to him], she induced him to ask her father for some property...

According to Josh 10:36–39 and the summary there, vv. 40-42, and similarly according to 11:21–22, Joshua, at the head of the entire Israelite people, conquered both Hebron and Debir and cleared them of the Anakites. Joshua 15 presents a different tradition: Caleb, at the head of his clan, conquered Hebron, and Othniel his kinsman vanquished Debir. Josh 14:6–15 offers another attempt to harmonize variant stories, in relating how Caleb’s deeds had Joshua’s authorization. Yet a fundamental contradiction persists: Did the conquest of Hebron and Debir take place prior to the apportioning of the land (Joshua 10; 11) or afterwards (Joshua 14; 15)? It is likely that originally there stood here an independent clan saga concerning Caleb’s taking of Hebron and Othniel’s defeat of Debir.

The passage in Judg 1:10–15 represents another reworking of this tradition, surprising in its direction:

Judah marched against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron, and they defeated Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai... from there he marched against the inhabitants of Debir... and Caleb announced, ‘To the man who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher...’

And in v. 20:

They gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had promised; and he drove the three Anakites out of there.

In vv. 10–12, the subject switches with no warning: first the tribe of Judah, then Caleb. Verse 20, however, still treats Caleb as the original subject. Since the entire chapter tells of the conquest of the land in a tribal framework—Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, the house of Joseph, etc.—there is no reason to doubt that editorial activity caused the unevenness in the story of the conquest of Hebron and Debir: A clan story regarding Caleb has found itself reworked into the tribal framework of Judah.
The sons of Ephraim: Shutelah, his son Bered, his son Tahath . . . also Ezer and Elead. The men of Gath, born in the land, killed them because they had gone down to take their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. He cohabited with his wife, who conceived and bore a son; and he named him Beriah, because it occurred when there was misfortune in the house. His daughter was Sheerah, who built both Lower and Upper Beth-horon and Uzzen-sheerah.

This story, too, conflicts with the story of the descent to Egypt and the conquest of Canaan in the time of Joshua. Ephraim here does not live in Egypt, but rather in Canaan, in the southern part of the Ephraimite hills. His sons engage in cattle-rustling in the area of Gath (in the area of modern Ramle?). The people of Gath therefore kill them. Ephraim mourns, and his kinsmen come to console him. His daughter Sheerah builds three cities in the Ephraimite hills. Every detail here clashes with the portrayal in Genesis 37–Exodus 15. The rabbinic sages sensed this conflict and smoothed it over by positing a premature Ephraimitic attempt to flee Egypt; the mission failed, and the bones of the Ephraimites were still hanging in the land of the Philistines even in the time of Moses. But even the Sages could not properly situate the information regarding Ephraim who lived in Canaan, in the hills, and his daughter who built three cities. At its root, this information constitutes a unique, divergent tradition about Ephraim and his first children, the founders of settlements in the portion of the tribe that bears their name.

* * *

If we attempt to describe the common ground between the five reports discussed here, we can summarize by saying that all of them contradict the

6 B. Sanh. 92b alludes to the saga of “the Ephraimites who calculated the terminus of the enslavement erroneously”; Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael (ed. H. S. Horovitz and I. A. Rabin; repr. Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrman, 1960), Beshalach, on Exod 13:17; 15:14, relates the tradition in detail; Exod. Rab. 20:11 relates it at length.

7 See Gershon Galil, “The Chronicler’s Genealogies of Ephraim,” BN 56 (1991) 11–14. He estimated that the list in 1 Chr 7:20–24 contains harmonistic editorial activity that strives to accommodate the list to the dominant story of the descent to and exodus from Egypt: The names have been doubled in a symmetrical-concentric manner in order to extend the number of generations and to indicate that the “grieving” Ephraim was not Ephraim son of Joseph. See also: N. Na’amah, “Sources and Redaction in the Chronicler’s Genealogies of Asher and Ephraim,” JSOT 49 (1991) 99–111, and the additional bibliography there.
predominant narrative of Israel’s beginnings. They do not know of the patriarchs’ status as sojourners in Canaan, of the descent to Egypt and the subjugation there, or of the conquest of both sides of the Jordan by Moses and Joshua. They portray settlement and conquest in the generation of the patriarchs or immediately following. They speak of campaigns led by clan heads with their followers, campaigns entwined in family circumstances such as inheritance (Gen 48:22), birthright (Josh 17:1b), marriage, marriage price, and dowry (Josh 15:14–19), progeny (Num 32:41 + Judg 10:4), loss of children, mourning, and consolation (1 Chr 7:20–24). These reports lay out a complete family life-cycle, which justifies categorizing them as clan sagas of conquest. As for their outlook, they are very earthly, with no mention at all of God’s intervention on behalf of the heroes. Moreover, not faith, but rather the desire to excel and win the leader’s daughter, Achsah, impels Othniel’s deeds. It is not prayer that assists Machir in his conquests, but rather his character as “a valiant warrior.” There is even glorification of brute strength, of human valor: Jacob boasts that he vanquished Shechem “with my sword and bow.”

This spirit, which glorifies human valor, did not sit well with later generations. The Mekhilta interpreted Gen 48:22, “with my sword and bow” as “with my prayer and supplication,” which bears the exact opposite of the original sense! And long before the Mekhilta, the author of one of the Psalms denounces this mundane attitude towards the conquest of the land:

With Your hand You planted them, displacing nations;
You shattered peoples, and drove them out. It was not by their sword that they took the land, Their arm did not give them victory,
But Your right hand, Your arm, Your goodwill, For You favored them (Ps 44:3–4).

And an historian from pre-exilic times, the author of Joshua 24, truly sounds as though he is arguing against Gen 48:22, for he says: “I sent the hornet ahead of you, and it drove them out before you—the twelve Amorite kings—not by your sword or by your bow” (Josh 24:12 LXX). The two passages share three elements: Shechem (the locale of the congrega-

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8 See Mek. (n. 6, above), 92. See also b. B. Bat. 123a. On this issue I have benefited from a paper presented by Mr. Eliashiv Frankel to Prof. Menahem Kister, at the Hebrew University, 1997.

tion in Joshua 24), the Amorite as an inclusive term for the inhabitants of Canaan, and "sword and bow" (specifically, with possessive pronominal singular suffix). Clearly, then, Joshua 24 rejects Gen 48:22, explicitly negating the version of a conquest based on human strength. "Deliverance is the Lord's," determined later generations who emphasized that God saved his loyal ones in response to their prayers.\(^\text{10}\)

Hence, one can explain the rejection of these clan sagas from the predominant narrative of Israel's history. Their religious conception did not fit the faith of later generations, who preferred those historical depictions which, in the end, merited sanctification in the biblical corpus: the portrayals of the patriarchs as sojourners who received a divine promise, the depiction of their children as slaves redeemed by God through wonders and miracles, and the description of their children, in turn, who traversed the desert under divine guidance and conquered Canaan under His leadership—all of which evince the divine providence over Israel. These stories, then, came to dominate the history of Israelite beginnings, while pushing aside other, alternative traditions.\(^\text{11}\) This group of rejected traditions, remaining only in scattered fragments, comprises the clan sagas we have seen.\(^\text{12}\)

Naturally, the question arises concerning the value of these clan sagas as sources for the history of Israel's settlement in Canaan: To what extent and in what way need the contemporary historian employ them to build an historical description? It appears to me that the answer is not unequivocal, for one must take into account a number of considerations.

First, one cannot ignore the etiological character of the clan conquest sagas.\(^\text{13}\) They attribute to the distant past the origins of present situations:


\(^{11}\) Which undermines Kaufmann's sharp distinction between "the patriarchal layer and the tribal layer"; see, for example, in Hebrew, Yehezkel Kaufmann, A History of the Religion of Israel (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937–1956) 2.302–311.

\(^{12}\) A parallel process—and yet how different—occurred with the Greeks. Hecataeus of Miletus, in the beginning of the fifth century BCE, wrote of the origins of Greece with the intention of making order among the genealogies and explaining the myths rationally. In both instances, a later historian incorporated the ancient sagas; in Israel, the faith directed the history, whereas in Greece it was the rationalistic critique. On Hecataeus, see L. Pearson, Early Ionian Historians (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939) 25–108; G de Sanctis, Studi di storia della storiografia greca (Firenze: Nuova Italia, 1951) 3–19.

\(^{13}\) The movement and function of these sagas is evident, despite the absence of alleged etiological formulae; see the seminal study of our beloved jubilarian, B. O. Long, The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament (BZAW 108; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1968).
Why did the tribe of Joseph deserve an additional territorial portion? Why does the populace of the northern Transjordan consist of the descendants of Machir? Why do three settlements in the southern part of the Ephraimite hills trace their lineage to the clan of She’erah? And one cannot comfortably rely on etiologies as historical sources: They infer backwards in time from the present, and in particular, facts which in and of themselves are correct they link incorrectly. If, for example, we take account of the fact that the Song of Deborah mentions Machir alongside the tribes situated west of the Jordan river (Judg 5:14), it stands to reason that the descendants of Machir migrated to Transjordan at some later date during the period of the judges. This conclusion undermines the attractive story about Machir son of Manasseh, “a valiant warrior,” who founded the settlement in the Gilead and the Bashan. The result: The literary category of the sagas of conquest cannot offer us reliable historical sources.

On the other hand, these clan sagas represent alternative sources, as we have seen; with time, they were marginalized from the dominant description of the history of Israel, which serves to prove their antiquity, even when embedded in late books such as Joshua and Chronicles. Moreover, they appear to reflect a pre-national and in some measure even pre-tribal allegiance. Whoever first told the story of Caleb’s taking of Hebron did not express a tribal consciousness, and, a fortiori, a national one; he gave expression to the Calebite allegiance (cf. 1 Sam 25:3; 30:14) and to the memories preserved among this clan. We may infer, then, that clan settlement sagas generally stem from the days prior to the consolidation of tribal and national solidarity in Israel; their historical provenance belongs to the period between the settlement and the monarchy.


From this emerges the conclusion that conquest sagas, although they contain incorrect details regarding the actual deeds, nevertheless reflect social-historical reality. In the settlement period, the clan served as the defining unit for migration, military operations, and settlement. This unit included a number of families who preserved a consciousness of shared origins. All in all, the clan comprised several dozen men, including both sons and slaves. Probably, a significant portion of the taking of Canaan occurred within the framework of activity of the Israelite clans.  

Finally, the clan conquest sagas testify to the existence of a wide variety of sources regarding the settlement, of which only a meager element has survived in the Hebrew Bible. And from the literature, we may conclude generally about Israel’s history that the settlement of Canaan occurred as a protracted process, drawn out over an extended period of time. In this process, Israel infiltrated the land slowly and gradually, in various waves, sometimes in the framework of tribes or groups of tribes, and sometimes in smaller frameworks of clans led by individual heroes, clan leaders who evolved into founders of settlements. The variegated nature of the sources, then, serves as evidence of the complexity of the process of Israelite settlement in Canaan.

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Alongside the clan sagas that describe the settlement of Canaan exists another type of patriarchal military story. This type appears partially in Genesis and partially in the apocryphal literature.

Genesis 14 relates how Abram the Hebrew came to rescue his nephew Lot from the four great kings, Chedorlaomer king of Elam and the kings who came with him, trounced the kings and chased them all the way the various stages of their development. Moreover, Momigliano has already taught: “In the field of political, social, and religious history, the differences outweigh the analogies.” See Arnaldo Momigliano, “Studi biblici e studi classici,” in La storiografia greca (Torino: Einaudi, 1982) 341.

For the definition of the units תַּהֲשִׁים and בָּאֲרִים, see Y. Liver, “תַּהֲשִׁים,” Encyclopedie Miqra’it (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1968) 5.582–588, and the bibliography there. I assume that numbers like three hundred for the Abiezer clan (Judg 8:1–4), six hundred for the Danite clan (Judg 18:1), and מִילָה thousand, as a synonym for clan (Judg 6:15; 1 Sam 23:23) reflect a later reality.

Therefore, I tend to accept the model of Alt and Aharoni for the description of the process of Israelite settlement. I. Finkelstein, The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988) has provided this model with a novel development; see his historical conclusions. For the problem overall, see Antoon Schoors, “The Israelite Conquest: Textual Evidence in the Archaeological Argument,” in The Land of Israel: Cross-Roads of Civilizations (ed. E. Lipinski; Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 19; Leuven: Peeters, 1985), 77–92.
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“north of Damascus,” and returned Lot and his property along with the captives taken from Sodom to their land. This account constitutes the sole depiction of Abram as a warrior. Genesis 34 recounts the annihilation of Shechem by Jacob’s sons in retaliation for the abduction and rape of their sister Dinah. The Book of Jubilees tells of the war Jacob and his sons waged against the seven Amorite kings who had attacked the sons while they were tending their flocks in the wilderness of Shechem (Jub. 34:1–9). Jacob and his sons defeated the kings and exacted tribute from them, “and they became servants to him until the day he and his sons went down into Egypt” (34:9). Similarly, Jubilees 37–38 tells of the war Jacob and his sons waged against Esau and his sons who had hired mercenaries against them: Aram, Moab, Ammon, Philistines, Horites, and Hittites. Jacob defeated Esau and killed him, and his sons crushed all their enemies. At the war’s end, Jacob buried his brother in Adoraim, while the sons subdued Esau’s sons at Mt. Seir (38:9–10), “and they paid Jacob a tax until the day Jacob descended to Egypt” (38:13). The same wars against seven Canaanite kings and against Esau and his sons are recounted in T. Judah 3–7; 9. Apparently there was a common source from which these apocryphal books, as well as medieval Jewish midrashim, derived their material.

On the face of it, it appears that these four stories belong together with the sagas surveyed above. All portray the patriarchs as warriors, and the wars have a clan setting. Abram fights to save his nephew (Genesis 14); Simeon and Levi avenged the offense committed against their sister by Shechem (Genesis 34); the war in the hills of Ephraim takes place in response to the Amorite attack on the sons tending their flocks in the wilderness of Shechem (Jubilees 34); the conflict between Jacob and Esau is a sibling quarrel over the birthright, in which Esau’s sons initiate and Jacob’s descendants retaliate (Jubilees 37–38). The narrative motifs here also appear in the fragmentary sagas mentioned above.

However, at root, one may differentiate well between the two groups of sources and establish which are early and which are late. The sagas presented above comprise stories of conquest, occupation, and foundation of settlements; they take the settlement activities of Israel in Canaan as their subject. Therefore, they also fundamentally contradict the story of the descent to Egypt and the exodus therefrom. Not so the second group of

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18 According to the translation of O. S. Wintermute, OTP 2.35–142.
20 Actually, Albright considered all of them to be sound sources for the history of the settlement in the Late Bronze Age; see William F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (2d ed.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957) 277. In this direction, but with more detail and more caution, treads also Yochanan Muffs; see his essay, “Abraham the Noble Warrior,” JJS 33 (1982) 81–107.
stories. Their background does not concern the Israelite occupation of the land, and the wars described in them present no organic continuity: Abraham does not establish an empire; Simeon and Levi do not settle Shechem; even the subjugation of the Amorites and Edomites lasts only “until Jacob’s descent to Egypt.” These wars have a sporadic nature. It appears, then, that the accounts of these wars do not stem from authentic tradition; they give expression to ideological interests. They articulate the desires of later generations projected backwards onto the figures of the patriarchs—portraying them as imperial conquerors; deriding the people of Shechem as impure and contaminating, unworthy of acceptance into Israel; employing Edom and the other nations (Amos 9:12; cf. Isaiah 34) as a paradigm for Israel vanquishing its enemies. It is not easy to identify the historical provenance of these stories, for it may range from the united monarchy (Genesis 14?) to the days of the Hasmonaeans (Jubilees 37–38). In any case, it is difficult to assume that before the author of Jubilees stood ancient traditions. Jubilees reports that Jacob buried Esau in Adoraim (38:9). Information such as this stems from the Persian-Hellenistic period, by which time the Edomites had already “forgotten” their original territory to the east of the Arabah and considered the Hebron hills as their ancient legacy; therefore they “discovered” there the grave of Esau their patriarch!

In sum, we have discerned two types of clan sagas concerning the forefathers. One type consists of complete stories, quite long, in which the forefathers wage war against Israel’s enemies: Abram against the four kings (Genesis 14), Simeon and Levi against Shechem (Genesis 34), Jacob and his sons against the Amorite kings (Jubilees 34; T. Judah 3–7), and against Esau and his sons (Jubilees 37–38; T. Judah 9). These are not stories of conquest and settlement, stories of the inheriting of Canaan. They serve to glorify the nation’s patriarchs as warriors chalking up victories against the classic enemies of Israel. The exploits of Israel in the historical period have been projected back onto the patriarchal period. The deeds of the sons have be-

21 See already Abraham Kuenen’s discussion, “Dina und Sichem (Gen 34),” 1880, which was translated into German by K. Budde in Kuenen’s Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur biblischen Wissenschaft (Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig: Mohr, 1894) 255–276.

22 Concerning Genesis 14, scholars have also pointed out its resemblance to late narrative, such as the Book of Judith. See, for example, Weippert, Settlement, (n. 14, above), 93–101. On the Hasmonean background of the wars in the Book of Jubilees, see F. M. Abel, “Topographie des campagnes machabéennes: 17. Interpretation haggadique de ces opérations,” RB 34 (1925) 208–211; S. Klein, “Palastinisches im Jubiläenbuch,” ZDPV 57 (1934) 7–27.
come portents for the fathers. These stories wish to say: Israelite and non-Israelite traits have timeless roots; so may our lot be!

The other type, dealt with first, includes brief fragments—solitary verses and half-verses. They deal with the dispossession of the inhabitants of Canaan and settling in their place. They also deal with the building of cities in Canaan. The main issue consists of settlement, not war. These passages do not conform to the dominant version of Israel’s history; rather they contradict that version either implicitly or explicitly. They have survived as the remnants of ancient traditions, tied to a specific clan or locale, that predate typologically (and sometimes also chronologically) the creation of an Israelite national consciousness. These fragmentary reports teach us how rich and variegated the Israelite historical tradition was, and through them we learn how complicated and complex were the beginnings of Israel. A protracted and complicated process that extended over generations and fractured into dozens of events in different regions, in the end brought Israel to the occupation of its land.

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