The Biblical Herem

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PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED PARALLELS
TO THE BIBLICAL HEREM

The Mesha Inscription is both the best and the best known of the parallels that have been adduced to the biblical הֶרֶם. In the next two chapters we look at other, lesser parallels. This chapter is devoted to parallels which have been suggested in the past. Chapter 4 contains some parallels that are, with the exception of the Hittite, which in my view has been wrongly scanted in the past, completely new. The first previously proposed parallel is from Old Babylonian Period Mari, and it will be treated more fully in the analysis of Joshua 7.

A. asakku at Mari: In 1960, A. Malamat, who has devoted himself indefatigably to the examination of the Mari findings in order to shed light on the Bible, published in Hebrew (and later in English), “The Ban in Mari and the Bible.” In this article he proposed an equivalence between the Akkadian expression, asakkam akalum as employed at Mari and the biblical הֶרֶם. CAD A2 (326b) defines asakku as “something set apart (for god or king, a taboo)” and the combination with the verb akalu as “to infringe on a taboo.” The peculiar character of the idiom thus employed is a result of straight translation from Sumerian. The הֶרֶם terminology is rooted entirely in Semitic usage. Immediately we can sense that this parallel has built-in limitations. For one thing, unlike asakku, הֶרֶם is never used in relation to a king in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. “the הֶרֶם of David”). More significantly, though the semantic domain of asakku is considerably broader than that of the noun הֶרֶם and its uses, it never functions in a way analogous to the hiphil usage. Thus asakku akalu can never refer to the kind of phenomenon that occurs when booty and human lives are consecrated to destruction, as in the MI and the Bible, but only to an infringement on the proper sphere of king or god.

The strength of Malamat’s Mari parallel lies predominantly not in its formal equivalency to Hebrew הֶרֶם, for in the abstract asakku seems no closer to it than any other Akkadian term for “taboo” or the like, such as ikkibu. Nor is there semantic identity. Statements like “the root הַרָּמִי is the semantic equivalent of asakkum,” are too sweeping. Thus the author of these words, A. Glock, immediately qualified his statement. What is truly impressive in the Mari material is the parallel between a Mari letter, and the Achan incident (Joshua 7), where the resemblance of the Mari account to the biblical story is undeniable, since both deal with stolen proscribed

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2 For the Sumerian, see, e.g. J.-M. Duand, "Une condamnation à mort à l’époque d’Ur III," RA 71 (1977), 126, 1. 12.

plunder.\textsuperscript{4} Since \textit{asakku} is used in a many more situations than כּוּן, and is clearly a more generic term, once can hardly speak of “semantic equivalency.” Moreover, as was just noted, there is no “war-asakku.” The \textit{asakku} has bearing on the כּוּן, but it should not be exaggerated. Comparable notions of the inviolability of certain war spoils are found both in Mari and the Bible, which tends to support those, like Kaufmann, who already believed in the authentic nature and genuine antiquity of the type of situation described in Joshua 7,\textsuperscript{5} but the war-כּוּן is not widely attested in among Israel’s neighbors. In short, \textit{asakku akalu} sheds indirect but welcome light on the war-כּוּן in its parallel to Joshua 7, the Achan story (see below), dealing with the aftermath of battle and the disposition of booty.

B. One of the most interesting parallels adduced heretofore comes from fourth century Athens in the oration of Aeschines, \textit{Against Ctesiphon} 107-113.\textsuperscript{6} The section, which deals with the sacrilege of two lawless tribes, the Cyrrhaens and the Cragilidae who εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ ἐν δελφοῖς καὶ περὶ τὰ ἀναθηματα ἡ σέβον, “had profaned the temple of Delphi and its votive offerings.” ἡ τὰ ἀναθηματα is often used by the LXX in its singular form (ἀνάθημα) or its equivalent (ἀναθεμα), or as a verb, in its attempt at translating the Hebrew root כּוּן. Unfortunately, the precise nature of the offence to the gods is not stated directly, although it is natural to speculate on the basis of the indictment that these “lawless tribes” had gone so far as to rob the sanctuary at Delphi of votive offerings set up there. This could consist of a variety of objects, such as weapons. As the text continues by saying that the Cyrrhaens and the Cragilidae also offended against the Amphictyons, these tribes may have gone on to raid the treasuries which the various city-states maintained at the site of the oracle. On the other hand, writing in the 2nd century A.D., Pausanias said that the Cyrrhaens behaved impiously towards Apollo, particularly in taking some of the god’s land, and this provoked the war against them.\textsuperscript{7} Yet this account differs from Aeschines, which mentions sacrilege against the temple.

The account given by Aeschines is a part of a polemic, indeed a dialectic, against his most hated enemy, Demosthenes. The history which he goes on to relate is vouchsafed us as part of an elaborate rhetorical device (by current standards) designed to place Demosthenes in the same camp as the villainous Cyrrhaens and the Cragilidae, as the denouement in §113 makes plain. Nevertheless, the story has a realistic dynamic, and though there may be distortions designed to enhance the orator’s point of view, these are probably minor, since the facts were so well-known. Even were the


\textsuperscript{5} Y. Kaufmann, \textit{The Book of Joshua} (Heb.), (Jerusalem, 1966), 127, calls it “a most realistic story.”

\textsuperscript{6} N. Lohfink, “Haram,” \textit{TDOT} V, 190-1 lists parallels.

\textsuperscript{7} Pausanius, xxxvii. 5.
story a fabrication, it would still be an instructive fabrication and an interesting though, even if wholly accurate, incomplete parallel to the Israelite  הָיְם .

The Pythian oracle decreed a harsh fate for the Cirrhaens and the Cragilidae, which was executed by the Athenians and their allies: their land, consisting of a plain and a harbor, was to be devastated, the population enslaved, and the land devoted to Apollo, Artemis, Leto and Athena Pronaea, to be left untilled for the future. This sounds very much like the later Hittite practice—the still more severe early Hittite practice will be dealt with in the fourth chapter. The curse is interesting in itself; it was designed to deter the utilization of the land devoted to the four gods and goddesses. The use of a curse in this situation is, of course, reminiscent of the one found in Josh 6:26. Here is the text of the curse in C. D. Adams's translation:

If any one should violate this,” it says “whether city or private man, or tribe, let them be under a curse,” it says, of Apollo and Artemis and Leto and Athena Pronaea.” The curse goes on: That their land bear no fruit; that their wives bear children not like those that begat them, but monsters; that their flocks yield not their natural increase; that defeat await them in camp and court and market-place, and that they perish utterly, themselves, their houses, their whole race; “And never,” it says, may they offer pure sacrifice unto Apollo...and may the gods refuse to accept their offerings.\(^8\)

By violating the sanctity of the gods in an egregious manner, whether by temple-robbing, treasury plundering or whatever, the two tribes brought upon themselves condign punishment in many respects worthy of comparison to the  הָיְם ; Lohfink points to Judges 21.\(^9\) The collective action of the tribes, first against Benjamin (Judges 20-1) and then against a specific locale, Yabesh Gilead, is somewhat parallel to the war of the Amphictyons against the two tribes (however, see the treatment of Judge 20-1 below). The setting apart of the land is more akin to the setting apart of the land of Jericho and Ai, especially as this feature of the curse occurs in Josh 6:26.

One of the fascinating things about this incident of classical Greek history for the historian of the ancient Near East is the multiplicity of sources bearing on it, something lacking in any account involving the  הָיְם . If it is hard to judge the accuracy of individual details of Aeschines account, as mentioned above, we at least know a sacrilege was committed, and that the punishment that followed resulted in rendering the Cirrhaen plain sacred to Apollo—hence fallow and not even to be used for grazing—for centuries. In Dio Cassius's Roman History (Epitome of LXII:14,2) he tells of the Emperor Nero taking away the sacred land of Apollo (Cirrha) from the god—truly a remarkable time span for the curse to have been in operation. Isocrates, a contemporary of Aeschines, alludes to it (Plataicus 32). Diodorus Siculus has an account of how someone set off a Sacred War. This occurred after the land was consecrated. The war involved the Phocians who were sacrilegiously cultivating the sacred land. The Phocians were heavily fined

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\(^8\) C. D. Adams, *The Speeches of Aeschines*, *LCL* (London and New York,1919), 393f..  
\(^9\) N. Lohfink, "Ḥaram," 191.
and there was also talk of cursing them. However, the Phocians were defiant and war resulted instead (Diodorus Siculus XVI 23, cf. also Pausanias 10,2,1 and 10,15,1; Justin 8,1).

The plenitude of sources, although they vary widely in date and in their general reliability, attest to the importance of the phenomenon in question. Nevertheless, the fact that the sources agree that the original population was not subjected to a large-scale massacre (in Judges 21, the virgin women were spared), but enslaved, makes this interesting sidelight of the religious history of classical antiquity only a partial parallel.

C. Old South Arabian hrg. N. Lohfink in his summarizing article (TDOT 5 180ff.) points to only one 'close parallel' other than the MI (and asakku), and this is from Old South Arabic. There seems to be no reason why this should be included. OSA hrg is equivalent to its Hebrew cognate, and means simply “to kill,” according to A. Jamme, or “to kill enemies,” according to H. F. Fuhs.10 The Sabean inscription Lohfink cites provides no justification for citing this verb as a parallel to the הרה. In the inscription, the verb appears thrice and a nominal form appears twice (A. Jamme’s translation):

6. wldhmw/wntyhmw/hrgw/wsbyw.... ...their children and their wives, so that they were either killed or captured.
7. 'wm/bhsm/wlhrgw/wshktm...wyhrgw/bnhmw/mhrgm 'Awwam is cutting to pieces and killing and destroying...and they deprived them of a war trophy...
8. ytwlw/bufym/wnhdm/wmhrgm/wsbym... they went back in safety and praise and (with) war trophy and captives....11

The last usage, in which mhrgm is understood by Jamme to mean “war trophy,” is unattested in Northwest Semitic, and certainly far removed from the semantic domain of הרה. The element of consecration (to destruction) is absent, even in the full text of the inscription. It is therefore hard to see what, if anything, about OSA hrg compares well with the phenomenon of הרה: not even the sense which has been imputed to OSA hrg , that of “kill on account of a sworn obligation,”12 comes close to the meaning of Hebrew or Moabite הרה. The fact that in Num 21:1-3 an oath was taken in connection with the הרה does not come into play here. The connection was not etymological but the result of circumstance. H. F. Fuhs’s definition of Heb. הרה, as “kill enemies in battle or to carry out the ban” (TDOT III 451f.), does not hold water and was dismissed by N. Lohfink in his article from the same theological dictionary. A prooftext, Gen 49:5-7, in which Fuhs holds that the use of hrg in Gen 49:6.6 must mean “to kill to carry out the ban,” since it must refer to the events of Genesis 34 (the rape of Dinah), rests on the

11 A. Jamme, Sabaean Inscriptions, #575 (p.64).
unwarranted assertion that the זור is at issue there, whereas both the word זור and the act of consecration through destruction are absent.

D. Livy VIII. IX. Most of the proposed parallels remaining are found in Roman sources. The only exceptions come from the Arab ambit, although they are unconvincing and have never shed light on the זור. The fact that “the Ghassanid prince Al-Harit ibn 'Amr is said to have burned his enemies to a man while invoking the gods,” or that “the same was done under the aegis of Islam by the Wahabi Ibn Saud,”\(^{13}\) is proof of a policy of religious extermination; which alone does not suffice for a true parallel to the זור. If these latter cases were relevant, the Assyrian Holy War practices would be still more relevant.

In the history of Livy (VIII. IX) (c. 60 B.C.-17 A.D.), cited by K. Hoffmann in the article “Anathema” (RAC I 427-30), we have, however, a much more interesting parallel. In part this is because Livy wanted to explain a forgotten and disused practice. He describes a battle that took place between Rome and a Latin army (around 340 B.C.) in which the Romans began to fall back and were in danger of losing. A consul named Decius, with the aid of a member of the pontifical college to instruct him in word and deed, devoted (devoveo) the enemy soldiers and himself to the Deis Manibus Tellurique; to the divine Manes (the Shades) and to the Earth. Having altered his attire to suit his special role Decius plunged into the fray, \textit{sicut caelo missus piaculum omnis deorum irae}, “just as one sent from heaven to expiate all the gods’ wrath” (cf the tantalising reference to Kemosh’s wrath at his people, MI 1.5). He soon succumbed, \textit{omnes minas periculaque ab deis superis inferisque in se unum vertit}; having “turned all threats and dangers from the heavenly and infernal gods on himself alone.” He died nobly. The Latin camp was taken and all found there were slain. As Livy sums it up:

\begin{quote}
It seems proper to add here that the consul, dictator, or praetor who devotes the legions of the enemy need not devote himself, but may designate any citizen he likes from a regularly enlisted Roman legion; if the man who has been devoted dies, it is deemed that all is well; it he does not die, then an image of him is buried seven feet or more under ground and a sin-offering is slain..... But if he shall choose to devote himself, as Decius did, if he does not die, he cannot sacrifice for himself or for the people without sin, whether with a victim or with any other offering he shall choose. He who devotes himself as the right to dedicate his arms to Vulcan, or to any other god he likes. The spear on which the consul has stood and prayed must not fall into the hands of the enemy; should this happen, expiation must be made to Mars with the sacrifice of a swine, a sheep, and an ox. XI. These particulars, even though the memory of every religious and secular usage has been wiped out by men’s preference of the new and outlandish for the ancient and homebred, I have thought it not foreign to my purpose to repeat, and in the very words in which they were formulated and handed down.\(^{14}\)
\end{quote}

Livy, in his charming prose, makes many interesting points. First, it is obvious that this parallel, too, is deficient. In this Roman practice, a

\(^{13}\) N. Lohfink, "Haram," 191.
\(^{14}\) B. O. Foster, \textit{The Histories of Livy, LCL} (Cambridge, 1957), 43.
“consul, dictator, or praetor” is required to devote himself, or another citizen to the divinities, and the devoted person's death is regarded as a desideratum. The devoted person must don a special garb and has the opportunity to dedicate his weapon to a god. All these things are absent from the דנ. It is interesting though, that an adept in sacred matters accompanied the army; that is vaguely reminiscent of the role priests sometimes play in biblical warfare. When one subtracts the many elements of Livy's account which diverge from the biblical picture, there remains a hard core of similarity. One should note the role the consul played, to expiate or avert the wrath of the gods. Although in the MI no note of expiation was overtly sounded, the wrath of Kemosh was in the background. It is unfortunately not specified at what stage the deity's anger was assuaged, although the MI makes it clear that after the דנ the situation rapidly took on a favorable hue and military action soon ceased or greatly moderated and Mesha could turn to works of peace. In Num 21:1-3, the people offered YHWH a דנ in order to propitiate the deity and solicit God's cooperation. More important still is the fact that the consul (Decius) devoted the enemy to the divinities, like Numbers 21 as a response to the fact that the battle was going badly. This is much closer to the concept of דנ than merely invoking the gods while slaughtering the enemy, as did ibn 'Amr, the bloodthirsty Ghassanid prince.

This practice had fallen into obscurity, yet Livy deftly portrayed the psychology involved. In speaking of the supernal and infernal powers whose threats must be dealt with, his narrative helps strengthen the argument that the mentality of דנ sprang originally from a polytheistic setting, from which it took root in the soil of the religion of Israel.

E. Other parallels from Roman sources. Lohfink cites a Roman practice of devoting criminals to the gods of the underworld, as reminiscent of Lev 27:29. However, as argued later on (ch.6), Lev 27:29 should not be subjected to the assumption that it forms part of the criminal law; it plainly deals with the vow and its most severe form involving the dedication of human life. The execution of miscreants for offenses is found elsewhere in relation to דנ, but always in cases of sacrilegious behavior. Hence this Roman practice can shed no light on the דנ of Lev 27:29, which takes its place in a different framework.

Another parallel frequently cited comes from Caesar's Gallic Wars (vi. 17). It is a somewhat problematic parallel because for the first time, the only record we have is that of a completely foreign observer, Caesar, who was not, of course, an anthropologist. It is hard to know how well his interpretation of events corresponded to Celtic notions. The crucial word, devoveo, the Latin “equivalent” of דנ, also appeared in Livy's account (as against, e.g. devotio), so it is possible that Caesar used the same or similar model as Livy's to interpret the Celts' actions. On the other hand, if one simply takes the report at face value, it does have some interesting elements: the devotion of spoil before the important battle (to 'Mars'), and the destruction of all enemy life after, as well as careful adherence to the principal of keeping hands off the devoted spoil. These are the chief features of the Celtic prac-
tice as described by Caesar. If the interpretation Caesar gives, viz. the idea of devoting booty to the god of war is correct—along with the report of the mass destruction of all enemy life, then we have more evidence that a polytheistic milieu was instrumental in producing a phenomenon similar to the Din.

In the final analysis, Caesar's observations might just have value for the study of Roman attitudes towards their enemies, were they not buttressed by similar observations of Tacitus of a German parallel to the Din. Tacitus (born c. 56) records in his annals (xiii. 57) a war between two German tribes, the Hermunduri and the Chatti, the outcome of which was bound to be deadly:

*quia victores diversam aciem Marti ac Mercurio sacravere, quo voto equi viri cuncta occidioni dantur. Et minae quidem hostiles in ipsos vertebrant.*

"...in that both sides consecrated, in the event of victory, the adverse host to Mars and Mercury (=Tiu and Woden); a vow implying the extermination of horses, men, and all objects whatsoever. The threat of the enemy thus recoiled upon himself."\(^{15}\)

The word *sacravere* is stressed here as it is not the same word used by Livy and Caesar, viz. *devoveo*, which a priori might be thought to have a more negative connotation than Tacitus's usage. But the two mean the same thing in the light of the context. However, *sacravere* is closer to the Hebrew root שפ (and to cnn) than *devoveo*. The war itself, according to Tacitus, broke out over a desire of the two tribes to control a river which had hitherto marked their respective boundary line, and which abounded in salt. This is, of course, a rather different *casus belli* than anything one encounters in the biblical סִירָת stories or in the MI. However, although Tacitus gave what may be a purely secular motivation priority in his account, he goes on to mention that the area in question was also held to be a place special to the gods where prayer was held to be more efficacious than in other areas. This may well have been a powerful motivating force for a sort of Germanic 'Holy War.'

The translator of the passage just quoted draws a comparison between the biblical סִירָת and the German practice described there.\(^{16}\) Yet in the citing of Joshua 6 and 1 Samuel 15, prominent biblical examples, there is an element missing. For in those passages, it is not by vow that the סִירָת is unleashed, but by virtue of prophetic transmission of God's will. This element is lacking in all parallels cited heretofore, if one distinguishes between a cultically-based oracle such as the Pythia and the less constricted and more powerful prophetic figures of Joshua and Samuel (a Mari parallel treated below has a 'prophet').

Yet if we take Tacitus at face value as a reliable reporter of the German view of their practice, we find a certain similarity to the סִירָת, especially in the consecration by destruction of the enemy, including their horses, which reminds one of deuteronomistic prescriptions calling for slaughter of livestock


\(^{16}\) Ibid. 100, n. 2.
reminds one of deuteronomistic prescriptions calling for slaughter of livestock (also in 1 Samuel 15). Yet I can say little of the world of thought that brought about this behavior in the case of the German tribes, and this limits the usefulness of the parallel for this study, except to note once again that it adds another page to the body of evidence that the הָרֵם most naturally originated and developed in a polytheistic milieu.

In addition to this partial parallel drawn from Tacitus, Lohfink cites another putative parallel drawn from the Germanic sphere, this appearing in the Geography of Strabo 7.2. Strabo, a historian and traveler who flourished in the last half century B.C., recorded a peculiar practice of the Cimbri. The priestesses of this once well-known tribe would greet prisoners-of-war with wreaths, conduct them to giant kettles, slit their throats, and then practice divination with their entrails. While this is interesting in its own right, it does not compare to the הָרֵם. As I. J. Gelb noted, it was standard procedure in many societies on a low-grade economic level to execute prisoners, especially the most uncontrollable ones, the young males (soldiers).17 Not every ritual slaughter of POWs, as this example indicates, is to be put in the same category as the הָרֵם.

Some have also compared the הָרֵם with the account of the 5th century A.D. Christian writer Orosius (History v. 16,5):

The enemy seemed driven by some strange and unusual animus. They completely destroyed everything they captured, clothing was cut to pieces and strewn about, gold and silver thrown into the river, the breastplates of men were hacked to pieces...the horses themselves were drowned in whirlpools and men...were hanged from trees. Thus the conqueror realized no booty, while the conquered obtained no mercy.18

This example, stemming also from a Germanic milieu, was capably analyzed by F. M. Abel as reflecting a real fear of the conquerors for the "objects of defeat."19 Yet while some peoples may have been afflicted with this fear and so driven to destroy the booty, this was not the motivation of the הָרֵם. There are, firstly, the many places in the Bible and the ancient Near Eastern sources where the taking of booty is the object of the exercise and a matter not of fear but of great joy. Then there is the fact that even when the הָרֵם had been declared in all its gravity, we have the stories which show how the attraction of the spoil for Israel remained great—the stories of Achan (Joshua 7) and of Saul (1 Samuel 15). In Israel (and Moab) the הָרֵם was a special act of dedication and never the norm. Hence, the Orosius account, while again worth studying on its own merit, diverges sharply from anything we may reasonably term הָרֵם.

It should be clear from the above that only some of the parallels previously adduced hold water or shed light on the Israelite-Moabite practice

18 Translation provided by N. Lohfink in "Haram," TDOT V, 191.
19 F. M. Abel, "L'anathème de Jericho et la maison de Rahab," RB 57 (1950), 323.
said and done it provides only a limited model from which to understand the war-
מַדְּחָה. Within its limitations, which are easily discernable, it is important.
The only other parallels drawn from the ancient Near East--the Arab ones--have received short shrift here. The parallels from the Greco-Roman writers are mixed; it is hard to understand why some of them, such as that of Orosius just cited, should have interested biblical scholars at all in connection with מַדְּחָה. Others, such as Livy’s account discussed above, are valid parallels or partial parallels. Yet few conclusions have been drawn from them. We can only say that they enhance the historical plausibility of the biblical accounts which picture the מַדְּחָה as an actuality of Israel’s warfare. This, if paid attention to, should help counter those who would prefer to see the מַדְּחָה as unreal, viewing it as a practice too horrible to contemplate. The other conclusion we have drawn is that those parallels drawn from the polytheistic world help place the origin of the מַדְּחָה, not in a peculiarity of Israel’s (which may have later spread to Moab), but in a pagan world view which was adapted or inherited by Israel, along with so much else, and adjusted to Israel’s peculiar religion.

APPENDIX: A PROPOSED ARCHEOLOGICAL PARALLEL

According to the eminent archeologist, E. Stern, there is no purely archeological evidence bearing on the subject of the מַדְּחָה, or any reason to expect to find such evidence in the future, given the nature of the phenomenon. His point is that written testimony is all that can differentiate between the מַדְּחָה and a more ordinary destruction. However, there is a Palestinian find which has been so interpreted. The find is described as follows:

In a pit on the plain west of Tell al-‘Ajjul, (Sir Flinders) Petrie discovered an immense quantity of black ash, the remains of burnt garments. Amid this ash was goldwork which had obviously been most carefully destroyed. Bracelets had been cut into scraps, and the terminals, in the shapes of serpents’ heads...had been severed. (...) Found together with the gold were two basalt tripod stands which had been smashed on the spot.... Many horses’ teeth and chips of bone were also found. There must have been a complete destruction of property, gold and silver, at the spot.

The authors go on to cite Petrie’s dating of the find to the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C., and evaluate it as a “remarkable Canaanite example illustrating the biblical ordinance of the מַדְּחָה (doom)--the punishment of complete destruction.”

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20 Oral communication.
22 Ibid. 203.
ple illustrating the biblical ordinance of the בּוֹר (doom)--the punishment of complete destruction."

The find is indeed a remarkable one. If this definition of בּוֹר was complete, the find might indeed "illustrate the biblical ordinance." Yet without epigraphic evidence, we can not know if the element of "consecration to destruction," which is essential to the בּוֹר, was present or not. Also, Josh 6:19 allows for precious objects to be placed in the "treasury of YHWH" rather than be destroyed, as does the MI. Even if this verse from Joshua is an addition, it must have been a plausible addition. Another consideration is that this find seems to be close—in spirit if not in precise detail—to the account of the Christian writer Orosius mentioned above, where the warriors were seized with a frenzy of destruction (a different mode of operation from the pre-planned deliberation of the בּוֹר). If F. M. Abel was correct, this stemmed from a fear of the objects associated with the enemy, quite a different motivation from that of the בּוֹר. The chances of this find being an actual illustration of the בּוֹר, then, are slim. It does illustrate the fact that unusual acts of destruction on the scale of the בּוֹר were not strange to the inhabitants of Canaan, at least at the beginning of the 2nd millennium. Nothing in the Bible or MI matches this kind of systematic and all-encompassing destruction. Even in the case of 1 Samuel 15, the prophet's instructions only dealt with living things, and these instructions were not adhered to. It is doubtful that the impulse behind this more complete and careful destruction of everything including material objects was that of the בּוֹר. The remains may be better explained according to Abel's theory, or some third explanation.

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22 Ibid. 203.
23 F. M. Abel, "L'anathème de Jericho," 323.