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The Emergence of Israel in the Land of Canaan

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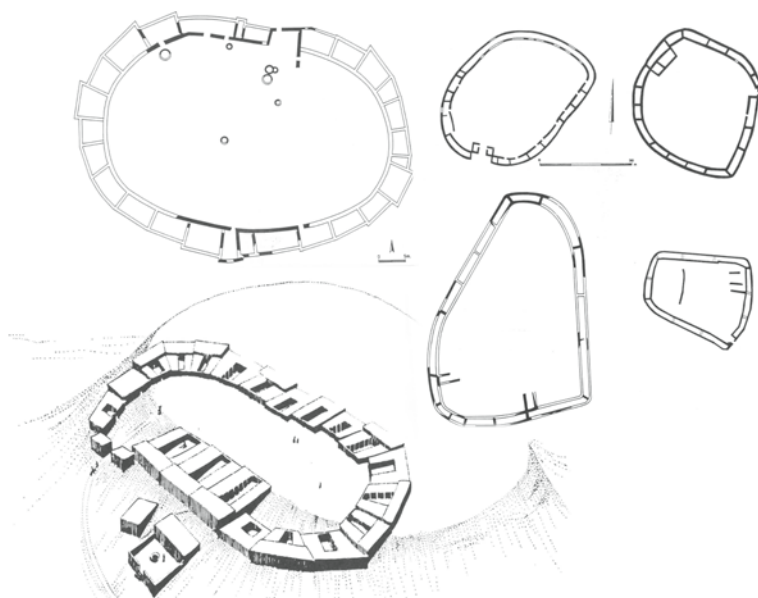
DURING THE 12TH CENTURY B.C.E., A NEW PEOPLE appeared in the central hill country of Canaan. Almost undoubtedly, these newcomers were the Israelites as attested in the Bible. To examine this subject, we begin with the archaeological evidence, after which we will turn to the biblical material, especially the books of Joshua and Judges.

The Archaeological Evidence

During the Late Bronze Age (1500–1175 B.C.E.), which immediately preceded the biblical period, the central hill country was relatively open terrain. Extensive archaeological surveys of the region—from the Jezreel Valley in the north to the Beersheva Basin in the south—have identified only about 30 settlements dating to this period. However, in the immediately following Iron Age I (1175–1000 B.C.E.), the number of settlements within the same geographical area rose dramatically, to about 250.¹ This expansion cannot be due to natural population growth, but must rather indicate the arrival of a new people in the region.

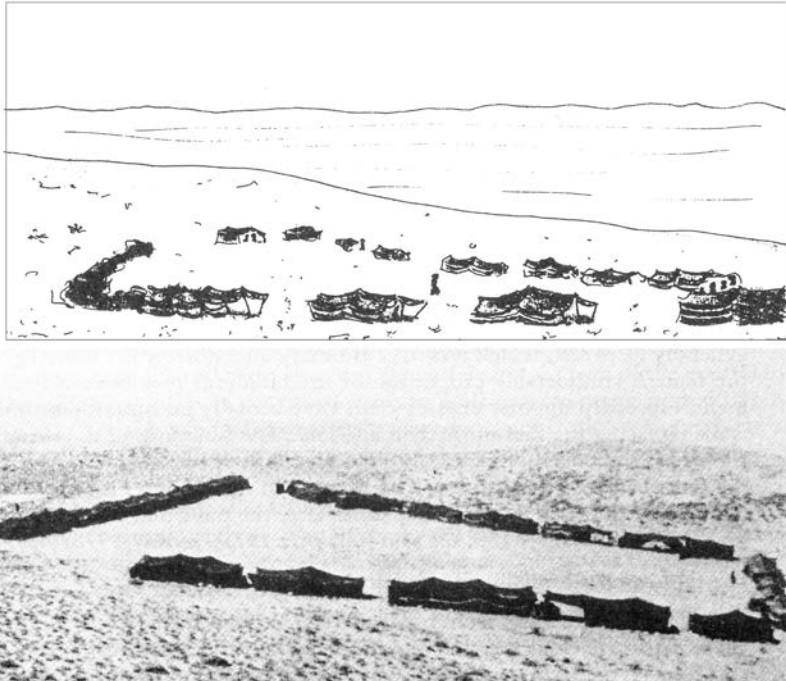
It is not only the number of sites that is relevant here but also the

distinctive configuration of many of these settlements, especially of the earlier and smaller ones. Beginning in the 12th century, the landscape becomes dotted with settlements arranged in elliptical patterns: the houses are aligned solely along the perimeter of the ellipse while the interior of the site remains open, thereby creating a central courtyard (see plans below).



SITE PLANS OF SELECTED Iron Age I elliptical courtyard sites (clockwise from top left): 'Izbet Sartah, Ein Qadeis, Atar Haro'a, Ketef Shivta, Rahba, and Beersheba.

This layout strikingly resembles the manner in which the desert-dwelling Bedouin of our own era fashion their encampments—that is, with the tents erected side-by-side along the perimeter, leaving the interior as an enclosed space for the sheep and goats. In the nighttime only a few shepherds on guard duty, along with their sheepdogs, are required to ensure the safety of the flocks; in the daytime the sheep and goats are led out of the enclosure to graze in the surrounding countryside (see next page).



Bedouin tent encampments from the first half of the 20th century.

From this parallel we may posit that the people responsible for the Iron Age I courtyard or elliptical sites were former pastoral nomads or, better, semi-nomads who over time became more sedentary. As they transitioned from their nomadic ways to a more settled way of life, they did not leapfrog from Bedouin-style encampments to full-fledged villages. Instead, when they began to construct more permanent dwellings, these newcomers to the central hill country organized their structures according to their customary elliptical site plan. These early Iron Age I settlements served the same practical purpose—that is, protection of livestock—but the dwellings changed from tents made of animal skins (which were portable) to simple houses constructed of stone.²

“To Your Tents, O Israel!”

The picture outlined here dovetails nicely with the depiction of the Israelites in the Bible. The issue of their historicity aside, the books of Exodus and Numbers portray the Israelites as a desert people wandering from place to place and living in tents, before they settled

in the land of Canaan. Indeed, a key phrase in Biblical Hebrew makes this point abundantly clear: the functional equivalent to the English expression “go home” is “to your tents.” Note the following passages:³

“To your tents” phrase in the Bible

1. Judges 7:8	“and all the rest of Israel, he sent each-man to his tents” – with reference to Gideon’s selection of his elite troops
2. Judges 19:9	“and you may arise-early tomorrow for your journey, and you may go to your tent” – the instructions of the concubine’s father, after bidding his daughter and son-in-law to spend the night with him
3. Judges 20:8	“we will not go, each-man to his tent, and we will not turn, each-man to his house” – with reference to the decision by the Israelites to remain and to attack Gibeah of Benjamin
4. 1 Samuel 4:10	“and Israel was defeated, and they fled, each-man to his tents” – upon the defeat inflicted by the Philistines
5. 2 Samuel 18:18	“and all Israel had fled, each-man to his tents” – with reference to Absalom’s supporters
6. 2 Samuel 19:9	“now Israel had fled, each-man to his tents” – upon the conclusion of David’s mourning for Absalom
7. 2 Samuel 20:1	“each-man to his tents, O Israel” – spoken by Sheba, in his attempt to have the people defect from David
8. 2 Samuel 20:22	“and they dispersed from the city, each-man to his tents” – upon the end of the siege of Abel-Beth-Maacah
9. 1 Kings 8:66 (~ 2 Chronicles 7:10)	“and they [i.e., the people] went to their tents” – upon the conclusion of Solomon’s ceremony for the dedication of the Temple
10. 1 Kings 12:16 (= 2 Chronicles 10:16)	“to your tents, O Israel!” – spoken by the people of northern Israel, when they realize that there is no purpose in following Rehoboam
11. 1 Kings 12:16 (= 2 Chronicles 10:16)	“and Israel went (each-man) to his tents” – the Israelites return to their homes, in light of the above
12. 2 Kings 14:12 (= 2 Chronicles 25:22)	“and they fled, each-man to his tents” – with reference to the Judahites, routed by Israel, during the reign of Amaziah

It could be argued that in the first four passages above, some or many Israelites still were living in tents. But for the remainder of the passages, this clearly is not the case. The approximate time frame for these episodes is c. 980 B.C.E. (5: David and Absalom) through

c. 780 B.C.E. (12: Amaziah), by which point the Israelites abandoned their tents completely and were living in true houses built of stone, as revealed in the archaeological record.⁴ And yet, tent imagery persists in the language, especially when used as a functional semantic equivalency for “go home” or “they went home” or “they fled home.”

The endurance of this idiom bespeaks a people who once upon a time lived in tents. A good modern analogy is the enduring use of the word “horse” within such English idioms as “hold your horses”; “stop horsing around”; or “a dark-horse candidate.”⁵ These expressions reveal a people (to wit, Britons and Americans) for whom the horse was once an essential part of their cultural repertoire. Such is no longer the case, yet the word “horse” continues to inform the contemporary English language. Such was the case, arguably, with the word “tent” in ancient Hebrew. By the tenth century, most Israelites no longer lived in portable dwellings suitable for desert and desert-fringe lifestyle, and yet the word “tent” is well preserved in the key idiom examined above.

The Southern Homeland of Yahweh

The origins of the people of Israel in the desert or desert-fringe region to the south of the arable portions of Canaan may be demonstrated in another way as well. As is well known, archaic biblical poetry repeatedly associates Yahweh, the God of Israel, with the general region of the Southland, using a variety of geographical terms, including Sinai, Se‘ir, Edom, Paran, and Teman in these passages:

YHWH, from Sinai he came forth,
And shined upon them from Se‘ir.
He appeared from Mount Paran,
And approached from Rivevot-Qodesh.
(DEUTERONOMY 33:2)

YHWH, when you came forth from Se‘ir,
When you marched forth from the highland of Edom.
(JUDGES 5:4)

God comes from Teman,
And the Holy-one from Mount Paran.
(HABAKKUK 3:3)

O God, when you went out before your people,
when you marched through the wasteland, Selah.
The earth trembled, indeed, the sky poured,
because of God, the one of Sinai;
because of God, the God of Israel.

(PSALM 68:8–9)

As Yahweh became more associated with Zion and Jerusalem (see, for example, Psalms 9:2; 48:3; 74:2; 102:17; 135:21; Isaiah 4:5; 8:18; 24:23), the linkage between the God of Israel and the Southland would eventually recede if not disappear altogether. But the passages listed above serve as a strong reminder whence Israel (and its deity) emerged.

The Shasu Connection

Given the above evidence, the Israelites most likely are to be related to the Shasu of Egyptian texts, where this catch-all term refers to nomads, Bedouin, desert denizens, and the like. In fact, Egyptian topographical lists from Soleb (dated to the reign of Amenhotep III [14th century]) and Amara (dated to the reign of Ramesses II [13th century]),⁶ mention a region known as *t3 ššw yhw*, “the land of the Shasu of Yahweh.” The people referred to here are likely to have some connection to either the proto-Israelites or early fellow travelers (see chap. 2 herein).

Characteristic Features of the Early Israelites in the Central Hill Country

As stated at the outset of this chapter, the Israelites of the general Southland (i.e., the large desert that stretches across modern-day Sinai, southern Israel, and southern Jordan) sometime in the 12th century surrendered their pastoral nomadic ways and settled in the sown of the central hill country.⁷ This explains the burgeoning of settlements in the area during Iron Age I (1175–1000 B.C.E.), as well as the distinctive shape of the rather simple elliptical courtyard sites. To be sure, many of the elliptical sites existed for only a short period, perhaps even less than a century (e.g., Ai, Raddana, and ‘Izbet Sartah), at which point the newly sedentarized people coalesced into neighboring villages, which in turn grew in size during the second half of the Iron Age I and into the Iron Age II (e.g., Bethel and Tell en-Nasbeh [Mizpah]).

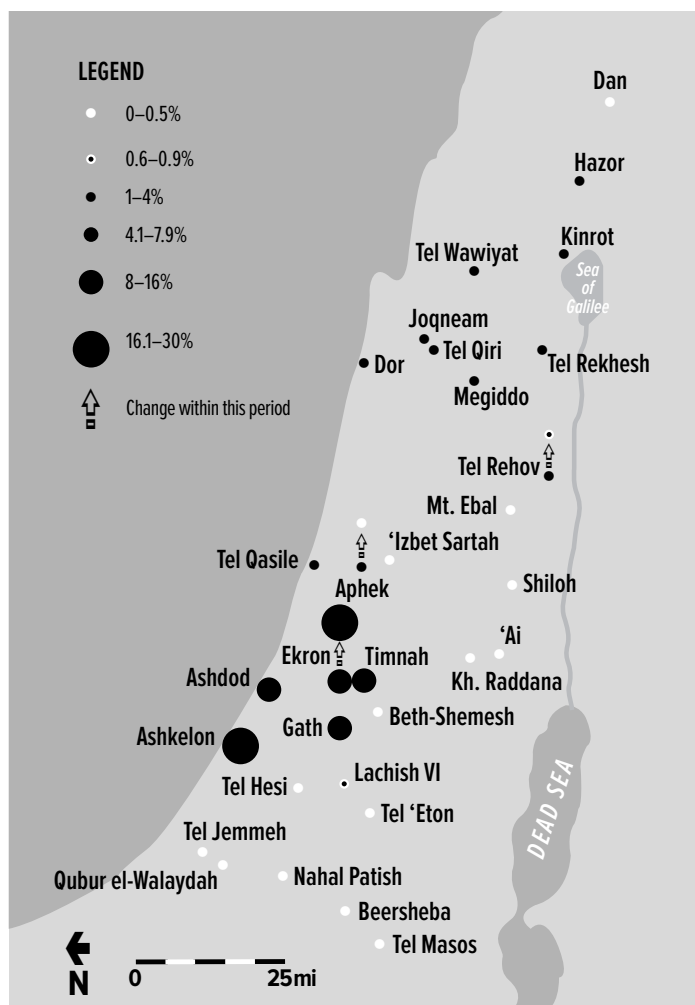


SHASU NOMAD. The Shasu people appear repeatedly in Egyptian texts of the Late Bronze Age as pastoral-nomads from the area of Transjordan and often show up in Egyptian art as bounded prisoners with bag-shaped headdresses, as in this colorful faience tile found at the Ramesside temple in Medinet Habu, near Luxor.

Among the most characteristic features of these people and their life-style is the near total absence of pig bones in the archaeological record. At the same time period, one observes considerable pork consumption amongst the neighboring Philistines.⁸ A glance at the map reveals the dearth of pig bones at sites stretching from Tel Masos and Beersheba in the south to Ai, Raddana, Shiloh, and Mt. Ebal in the central hill country (see map next page). This feature plots perfectly onto the area of Israelite settlement as evidenced in the archaeological record discussed above and in the biblical account. It is also noteworthy that the Bible's stories, especially in the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, play out mainly in this area, for example: Joshua 7–10 (Ai, Bethel, Gibeon), Judges 3 (Ehud of Benjamin), Judges 6–9 (Gideon and Abimelech in and around Shechem), Judges 19–21 (Gibeah in Benjamin), 1 Samuel 1–3 (Shiloh), 1 Samuel 6 (Beth-Shemesh), etc.

Most striking is the difference in the number of pig bones found at very proximate cities, with the Israelites of Beth-Shemesh abstaining from pork consumption and the Philistines in nearby Gath, Ekron, and Timnah including considerable amounts of pig in their diet. The lack

of pig bones at the early Israelite sites must be credited to the fact that the pig is the single most widely consumed animal prohibited according to the dietary laws of the Torah (Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8).⁹



Pork consumption in selected Iron Age I sites.

The main feature of domestic architecture in the villages was the four-room house, which begins in the Iron Age I and becomes ubiquitous in the Iron Age II. The same basic floorplan repeats at Israelite sites throughout the region (see plans on page 69¹⁰ and below).¹¹



ISRAELITE FOUR-ROOM HOUSE at 'Izbet Sartah.

The four-room house was well suited to the needs of self-sustaining communities subsisting on a mixed economy based mainly on the cultivation of crops, animal husbandry, and small-scale craft production. Although the archaeological remains in and around Iron Age I houses vary, textual sources and ethnographic data from the Middle East make it possible to reconstruct some of the specific activities that took place in domestic spaces. On the ground floor, one of the long side rooms apparently could be used as a stable or corral (see Deuteronomy 22:1–3), as suggested by flagstone paving and other evidence. The other long rooms often feature permanent installations (ovens and storage pits) and contain grinding stones, ceramic vessels, and food remains, thereby attesting to the use of the space for food preparation, consumption, and storage. The broad room at the rear also was multifunctional, and the presence of large storage jars in some houses suggests that these spaces, too, were used for food storage. The upper story and roof spaces were used for sleeping and many other activities. If we assume (based on anthropological parallels) that 10 square meters of roofed space was required for each person, it is estimated that several Iron Age I houses excavated at Ai and Raddana could have housed between four and eight family members, along with other individuals perhaps.¹² One may deduce that

this living arrangement constitutes the Hebrew term *bēt'ab*, “house of the father” (see, e.g., 2 Samuel 19:29), that is, the basic kinship unit comprised of several nuclear families, presumably descended from the same male individual.¹³

The commonest of all household activities was the grinding of grain into flour and the baking of bread. Relevant objects found in excavations include (as mentioned above) grinding stones and clay ovens, found either on the ground floor of the four-room house or in the courtyard space outside the house. From numerous passages in the Bible and from models of women working at these tasks found in Egyptian tombs, we know that bread production was an important task fulfilled by the women of the household.¹⁴

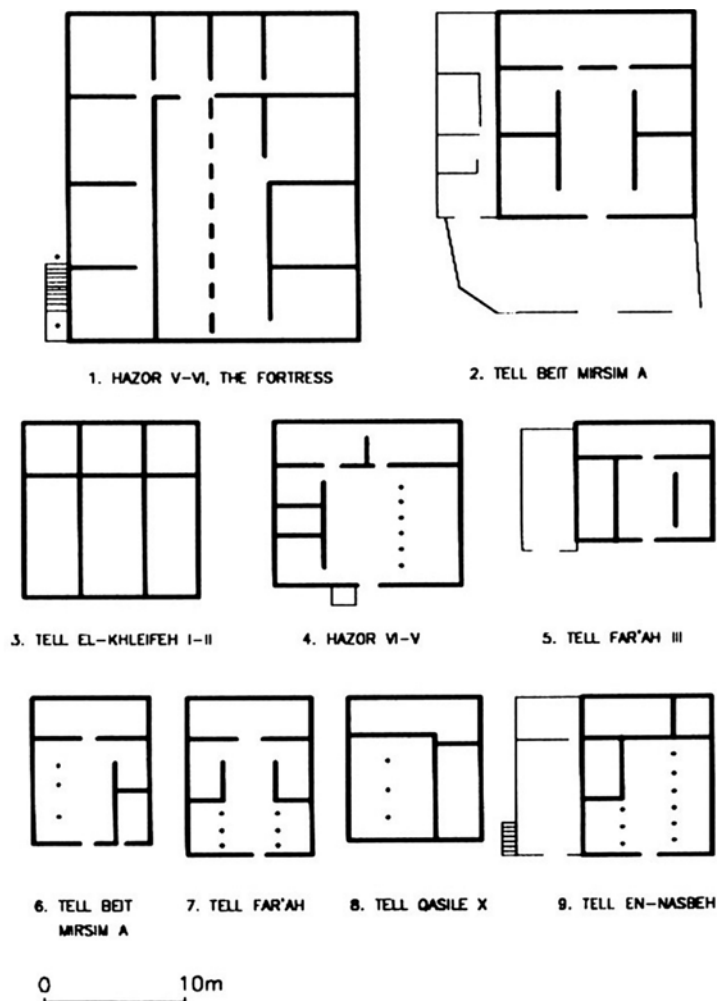
Scholars estimate that the daily per capita adult consumption of flour was about 500 grams, and about half that amount for children. A family of two adults and four children thus would require about 2 kg of flour each day, which would require about 2.5 hours of grinding. If a mother and older daughter worked together, as seems likely, it was about 1.5 hours of grinding¹⁵ each day, day after day—hence our English expression “the daily grind.”

In addition to the daily production of bread, women were responsible for the textile and clothing needs of the household (see esp. Proverbs 31:19–24)¹⁶—so much so that the spindle served as the symbol of feminine-ness, not only in Israel, but throughout the ancient Near East and the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁷ Excavations frequently reveal spindle whorls used to spin thread from wool and flax, and loom weights hung on horizontal looms used to weave clothing and other textiles.

During the 12th and 11th centuries, one also finds new technologies being introduced in the central hill country, including terraced farming (typical of mountain people around the world), silos for grain storage, and cisterns for the collection of rainwater. While all three of these elements may be found sporadically in other places and/or at an earlier time, the convergence of all three in the central hill country at this specific time period speaks to an emerging population in the region, one which we may identify as the Israelites.¹⁸

Another important feature of the early Israelite sites is the plethora of simple unpainted pottery, in stark contrast to the ornately decorated pottery found especially in the neighboring Philistine sites. One need

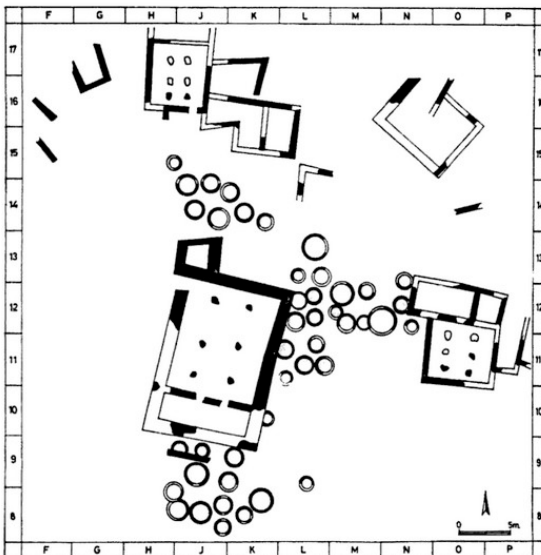
only compare the assemblage from a classic central hill country site, such as Shiloh (see below), with the assemblage from Gath, a major Philistine city (see next page). Included in the former grouping are the collared-rim jars (so named because of their distinctive “collars”), found in greatest abundance throughout the central hill country.¹⁹



FLOORPLANS of selected four-room houses through ancient Israel.



TERRACED HILLSIDES IN THE JUDEAN HILL COUNTRY, NOT FAR FROM JERUSALEM. No longer in use today (since modern Israel includes the coastal plain and the lush Jezreel Valley), these terraces nonetheless bespeak the Israelites of old. They were formed by intense labor, hewn from the limestone bedrock, out of necessity by the earliest Israelite settlers in the central hill country, 12th–11th centuries B.C.E., for the growing of crops.



'IZBET SARTAH. Line-drawing of an 11th-century B.C.E. four-room house (along with other nearby houses) at 'Izbet Sartah, surrounded by several dozen grain silos.



SHILOH POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE. Note the plain, undecorated vessels, including collared-rim jars, bowls, and kraters, all typical of Iron Age I central hill country settlements.

The Egalitarian Ethos

From the foregoing archaeological evidence, a clear picture emerges. As Avraham Faust has stressed, the people who inhabited the central hill country—let us call them Israelites—were guided by an egalitarian ethos.²⁰ No one has a larger home than his or her neighbor; rather, each four-room house is more or less the same size. In this early period of biblical history, there are no governor's mansions or other large homes. Outside the homes, the silos and cisterns are approximately the same size (see plan on p. 70). No one has fancier pottery than his or her neighbor; rather, simple unpainted vessels dominate wherever one looks. Not mentioned until this point, but equally relevant, is the total absence of elaborate tombs in the Iron Age I central hill country villages. Instead, the dead were buried in simple fashion—mainly in nearby caves, person after person, family after family, generation after generation.

The lifestyle portrayed here harmonizes well with the egalitarian ethos that permeates the Bible, especially during the early biblical

period. Naturally, there are priests and tribal leaders, and yes, slavery is countenanced, but a true social stratification, with a hierarchical figure or group dominating social, political, and economic realms, is not to be found in the Torah and other relevant books.²¹ It would be hard, if not impossible, to imagine a biblical author writing as Aristotle did: “From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule” (*Politics* 1.5). Such was the manner throughout the ancient world (from Egypt to Mesopotamia), where the social and political elite dominated every aspect of daily life—except in ancient Israel.



TELL ES-ŞAFI (Gath) pottery assemblage.

In fact, as the Torah states on several occasions, there is a single law not only for all Israelites but also for the strangers who reside in their midst (Exodus 12:49; Numbers 15:16; 15:29). This approach explains why earliest Israel did not have a king (in addition to the theological reason, namely, that only Yahweh was king). Moreover, when human kingship was proposed, Samuel’s denunciation of the proposal has less to do with the theological standpoint than it does with the distinctly undesirable prospect of an elite figure who would dominate the people’s social and economic fortunes (1 Samuel 8). This egalitarian worldview unfolded most prominently in the biblical prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E., but the very essence of this ideology is seen throughout the Bible, especially in the Torah and in early biblical narratives.

Midway Summary

To summarize up to this point: Early Israel emerged in the central hill country of Canaan during the Iron Age I period (1175–1000), when a core group of formerly pastoral (semi-)nomads underwent the process of sedentarization. They lived in simple elliptical sites reminiscent of Bedouin encampments; eventually they concentrated themselves in villages; and their lifestyle was characterized by simple homes, simple pottery, simple burials, and an egalitarian ethos.

Alternative Views

The picture offered here constitutes the most optimal reconstruction of what transpired during the 12th–11th centuries B.C.E. regarding the emergence of Israel in the land of Canaan. But other scholars have proposed different scenarios.²² Throughout much of the 20th century, the conquest model held sway, due mainly to the outsized influence of its leading proponent, W. F. Albright.²³ Hardly anyone today, however, would countenance this view, since, as we have seen, the central hill country was large open terrain, with a very small population prior to the arrival of the Israelites.

An alternative approach, generally known as the “peaceful settlement” or “peaceful infiltration” model, was developed by Albrecht Alt.²⁴ The reconstruction offered in the present essay aligns closely with the work of Alt. The fact that Alt worked in an era long before the accumulation of data used in our analysis makes his groundbreaking research even more remarkable.²⁵

A third model was developed by George Mendenhall and Norman Gottwald (working independently of one another, and with some differences between the two). According to their view, the Israelites were not outsiders who immigrated to the land of Canaan but rather were Canaanite peasants who revolted against their (largely urban) overlords to establish a new path and a new way of life. The knowledgeable reader rightly may see in this model (especially in the version espoused by Gottwald) a Marxist view of history, which holds that historical processes and outcomes are driven largely by socio-economic factors.

In general, neither of these two scholars worked with the archaeological data, though recently William Dever, renowned expert in

archaeological fieldwork, has supported their model, in whole or in part. In Dever's view, the material culture of the Israelites is sufficiently similar to that of the Canaanites to support the notion of a Canaanite origin for the people of Israel. Thus, for example, the pottery traditions of the hill-country settlements in Iron Age I are the same as those of the Canaanite areas of the coastal plains. In Dever's own words: "Early Israelites look ceramically just like Canaanites."²⁶ Naturally, not everyone agrees, for, as Israel Finkelstein has written, "Although it is possible to point to a certain degree of continuity in a few types, the ceramic assemblage of the Israelite Settlement types, taken as a whole, stand in sharp contrast to the repertoire of the Canaanite centers."²⁷

Where does all this leave us? To be sure, the conquest model is contradicted by the mass of evidence (or, better perhaps, lack thereof). The third, autochthonous model may relate to certain non-Israelite elements which in time became part of Israel (see below), but it is controverted as the sole explanation for the origins of the Israelites by the converging lines of evidence discussed above. As we have seen, "core Israel" (as we may call this entity) emerged from Shasu Bedouin-style nomadic or semi-nomadic society, with roots in the southland, as the people entered the land of Canaan from the outside. Thus, the "peaceful infiltration" or "peaceful settlement" model, originated by Alt, is the one which has stood the test of time and which coheres best with the reconstruction offered here.

The Books of Joshua and Judges

The picture outlined thus far is based mainly on the archaeological evidence. Let us turn now to the biblical text, with especial attention to the books of Joshua and Judges. It is important to note that these two books present divergent views concerning the arrival of the Israelites in the land of Canaan. The more famous account is that of the Book of Joshua. According to that version, the following occurred: upon the death of Moses, Joshua assumed the leadership of the people of Israel (chs. 1–5); a unified conquest of the land ensued (chs. 6–12); and then the land of Canaan was apportioned to the individual tribes (chs. 13–19). According to Judges 1:1–3, however, a different scenario unfolded:

And it was, after the death of Joshua, and the children of

Israel enquired of YHWH, saying, “Who shall first go up for us unto the Canaanites to fight against them?” And YHWH said, “Judah shall go up; behold I have given the land into his hand.” And Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Go up with me, unto my allotment, and let us fight the Canaanites, and I too will go with you, to your allotment”; and Simeon went with him.

LEARN MORE

The Origins of the Israelites

Who were the ancient Israelites and where did they come from? Archaeologists and historians have long grappled with these problematic questions, but two scholars, writing in the pages of *BAR*, have pointed the way towards new understandings of these complex phenomena.

In his article “Inside, Outside” (November/December 2008), historian, linguist, and biblical geographer Anson Rainey proposes that the early Israelites did not emerge out of Canaanite society, as is so often argued, but actually entered Canaan from the lands east of the Jordan River, exactly as the Bible claims. Not only do Israelite ceramic and architectural traditions—like the collared-rim pithos and the four-room house—conform to styles that appear in Transjordan as well, but the ancient Hebrew language itself seems to share a great deal more in common with eastern dialects like Moabite and Aramaic than with the Canaanite and Phoenician languages of the Levantine littoral.

But even if the Israelites did originate in the East, how do we explain their emergence as a single people, a people who saw themselves as unified and ethnically distinct from their Canaanite, Philistine, and even Transjordanian neighbors? In his pathbreaking article, “How Did Israel Become a People?” (November/December 2009), archaeologist Avraham Faust uses archaeological, historical, and anthropological evidence to show that Israelite identity formed in opposition to the cultural, dietary, and religious customs of neighboring groups, particularly the urban Canaanites and the pork-eating Philistines.

However the Israelites originated, by the mid-12th century B.C.E., they had begun to settle in small farming communities in the hill country, where they evidenced an egalitarian ethos that set them apart culturally, economically, and ethnically from the Canaanite populations around them. —HERSHEL SHANKS

The differences between these two versions are manifold: 1) in Joshua, the eponymous character leads the conquest of Canaan; in Judges, the conquest does not begin until after the death of Joshua; 2) in Joshua, the nation acts as a unified whole; in Judges, individual tribes or two tribes together (as here, Judah and Simeon) conquer portions of the land; 3) in Joshua, the land was conquered and then apportioned to the tribes; in Judges, the land is apportioned to the tribes, and then the conquest commences, again, tribe by tribe. While the Joshua story is the one better known, almost undoubtedly the Judges version is closer to the historical reality.

Most importantly, in our tracing the contours of the Israelite settlement (and not conquest!) in the land, there is no room for a national military campaign. As we saw, the central hill country was essentially open terrain, so to put this in other terms, there was no conquest because there was no one to conquer! The account in Judges 1, accordingly, is more reasonable, with individual tribes moving into their allotted territories to set up shop, no longer as semi-nomads but rather as part of the settled population of the central hill country. The narrative begins with Judah (and Simeon), who are then followed by other individual tribes settling their allotments: Benjamin in 1:21, house of Joseph in 1:22, Manasseh in 1:27, Ephraim in 1:29, Zebulun in 1:30, Asher in 1:31–32, and Naphtali in 1:33—even if, in most of these cases, the text describes the areas not conquered within the individual tribal allotments. That point notwithstanding, the Book of Judges presents the individual tribes as acting on their own, in contradistinction to the national conquest account presented in the Book of Joshua.

As the Book of Judges proceeds to the stories of the individual judges, once again we see single tribes acting on their own, with a particular judge, or leader, serving either his tribe only or a few adjoining tribes (ch. 3: Othniel of Judah, Ehud of Benjamin; chs. 4–5: Barak of Naphtali and Zebulun; chs. 6–8: Gideon of Manasseh; etc.). The picture that emerges is one of a loose confederation of tribes, without a single leader uniting all Israel. And while these stories typically reflect the tribes already settled in their territories, as opposed to entering the land, they may relate to the latter process as well.

From the linguistic perspective, it is important to note that the

Book of Judges is written in an older register than the Book of Joshua.²⁸ One will then assume that Judges represents the more “original” account within the collective memory of ancient Israel. Some of these tales may go back to the pre-monarchic period, while the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 is amongst the oldest compositions in the Bible, dated to c. 1100 B.C.E. (see below).

At a later time, a different version of events was created, based on the notion of the entire nation acting in unison under a single leader, Joshua. With the movement to kingship, well established from c. 1000 B.C.E. onward, quite possibly a later Israelite writer felt the need to create an alternative narrative, with a single leader at the helm (à la a king), and thus was born the Book of Joshua.

A More Complicated Picture

Thus far we have presented the main narrative of the Bible, confirmed by archaeological evidence, to wit: the Israelites emerged when a group (or diverse groups) of Shasu Bedouin types settled the sown in the central hill country. But life (and history) is never that simple. Consider, for example, the formation of modern Great Britain: The core population was Celtic, but successive waves of Romans, Angles, Saxons, Vikings, and Normans created what emerged as England (and Wales and Scotland) in the Middle Ages and early modern period. Or consider the United States: the country emerged mainly from the migration of Britons to the New World in the 17th and 18th centuries, though with significant populations from other countries as well (Dutch in the New York and New Jersey region, Spaniards in Florida, French in Louisiana, etc.), not to mention large numbers of Africans transported to America against their will to serve as slaves. To this mixture were added—in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—significant numbers of central and eastern European immigrants, as well as Asians (mainly Chinese and Japanese). And all of these various immigrant groups are but an overlay to the native population, present in the land for thousands of years. So it is with ancient Israel as well. And while we may not be able to detail its emergence from diverse origins in the same manner as can be done for England and the U.S., we do have ample evidence to suggest a parallel picture, roughly speaking.

Dan, Asher, and Gad

The first piece of evidence concerns the tribe of Asher as mentioned in PAnastasi I, which is dated by most authorities to the reign of Ramesses II (r. 1290–1224). This document contains a satirical letter of the master scribe Hori addressed to a scribe named Amenemopet, in which the former chastises the latter for his ignorance regarding the topography of Canaan.²⁹ In the course of his “tour” of the land, Hori mentions Rehob and Megiddo and then states: “Your name becomes like (that of) *q-ḏ-r-d-y*, the chief of *l-s-r*, when the (bear?/hyena?) found him in the *b-k-l-tree*” (col. 23, line 6–7).³⁰ The full intent of this satirical line may elude us, but its main import is the mention of the place named *l-s-r*, almost undoubtedly Asher, precisely in the location where one would expect to find it.³¹

First, the tribal allotment of Asher as described in Joshua 19:24–31 is found in this very area, which includes (apparently) two cities named Rehob (19: 28, 30). Second, the tree written as *b-k-l* recalls the biblical phrase in Psalm 84:7 *‘emeq hab-bākā*, “valley of the baka-tree” (thus the traditional interpretation), a northern locale, perhaps to be associated with the city of Baka, located in the Galilee and mentioned by Josephus (*J.W.* 3.39).

Incidentally, the same place name (*l-s-r*) is mentioned in a second Egyptian inscription, as a territory conquered by Seti I (r. 1300–1290), somewhere in the land of Canaan, though no greater specificity can be determined.³²

Now, if an entity named Asher was resident in Canaan (more specifically the Galilee) during the time of Seti I and Ramesses II, almost undoubtedly it could not have participated in the events experienced by the desert component of the nation that would emerge as Israel. This is a crucial piece of information, for it allows us to suppose that other elements of the people of Israel were similarly resident in Canaan during this time period (more on this issue below). We can only speculate what must have transpired, but the following scenario suggests itself. The desert folk entered the land of Canaan, and in time elements within Canaan came to align themselves with the newly arrived and newly settled people. What factors would have led to such an alignment we cannot determine. Most likely they were socioeconomic and/or military (e.g., mutual defense considerations), but one cannot rule

out the religious factor. Possibly Israel's unique worship of a single deity who manifests himself in human history and who protects the underprivileged resounded with others in the region.

A second tribe of Israel whose nondesert origins can be traced is Dan. During the reign of Ramesses III (1195–1164), specifically in his year 8 (i.e., 1187 B.C.E.), Egypt was threatened by an invasion of Sea Peoples, a confederation of Aegean and Mediterranean entities that crossed the sea in an attempt to invade Egypt (see ch. 2). The alliance included the following peoples: Peleset, Dananu, Shardanu, Meshwesh, and Tjeker. As the inscriptions at Medinet Habu (funerary temple of Ramesses III) reveal, the full strength of the Egyptian army and especially its naval forces were required to repel the Sea Peoples invasion.³³ What happened to these people after they were defeated somewhere along the coast of the Egyptian Delta? The best answer is that they migrated northeasterly and settled along the coast of southern and central Canaan.

We shall now consider three of the Sea Peoples listed at Medinet Habu: Peleset, Dananu, and Tjeker. The first group are clearly the Philistines, who settled in the southern coastal region of Canaan and established the pentapolis of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (the first three on the coast, the other two inland). The Tjeker are known from the slightly later Egyptian literary work the Tale of Wenamun (11th century B.C.E.) to have settled in Dor, in the central coastal region. The Dananu, called in one instance by the shorter form Danu,³⁴ are to be identified with the tribe of Dan, whose original allotment was a small enclave on the coastal plain, precisely where one would expect it—between the Philistines to the south and the Tjeker/Dor to the north (Joshua 19:40–46).

The biblical tradition confirms the Aegean origins of the Philistines, who repeatedly are connected with Caphtor, a term which refers either to the Aegean generally or to the island of Crete specifically (Jeremiah 47:4; Amos 9:7; see also Genesis 10:14; Deuteronomy 2:23). As to the Dan(an)u, most likely they are to be connected with the Danaoi of Homeric tradition; also related, perhaps, are Adana in Cilicia and the Danunians of that region, both mentioned in the Azitawada inscription from Karatepe, which is to say, the Dan(an)u group may have dispersed throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

More than the geography is required to connect the Dan(an)u of the Sea Peoples and the tribe of Dan of ancient Israel, of course. The following additional lines of evidence converge to argue in favor of the proposed identification. First, as observed above, the original territory ascribed to Dan in Joshua 19:40-46 is on the coast adjacent to Philistine territory. Second, the statement in Judges 5:17 (“and Dan, why do you dwell in ships?”) connects the tribe to a maritime lifestyle. Third, the greatest of Danite heroes, Samson, has intimate relations with the Philistines (Judges 14-16). Fourth, Genesis 49:16 (“Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel”) implies that until this point Dan was not a tribe of Israel but was in the process of joining the tribal league. Fifth, notwithstanding the allotment granted Dan in the Book of Joshua, Judges 18:1 states that “the Danite tribe was seeking for itself a land-grant in which to dwell, because a land-grant had not fallen to it until this day among the tribes of Israel.” Sixth, and finally, of all the tribes of Israel, Dan has the least developed genealogy. In fact, Genesis 46:23, Numbers 26:42, and 1 Chronicles 7:12 each record only one name (either Hushim or Shuham). Moreover, while 1 Chronicles 7:12 is a very late source, one is struck by the notation of Hushim son of Aher, with the latter word meaning “another” and standing for the tribe of Dan.³⁵

We can conclude that Dan originates with the Sea Peoples Dan(an)u group, which reached the land of Canaan by sea at approximately the same time that the main Israelite group reached Canaan by land.³⁶ The various Sea Peoples entities shared a common experience (maritime voyage, attack on Egypt, etc.), but once they settled on the coast of Canaan, at least two of them, it appears, traversed different paths. For whereas the Philistines in time became the archenemy of the Israelites, the Danites elected to join the Israelite coalition. As with Asher above, we cannot determine for what reasons Dan chose this course. It might have been the common enemy, the Philistines, that led Dan to join Israel. While the Philistines and the Dan(an)u may have been allies during the Sea Peoples attack against Egypt, such cordial relations may have ended once this common enterprise ceased. From Genesis 49:16, Judges 18:1, and the evidence of genealogies (or lack thereof), it would appear that Dan was the last of the tribes to join what eventually became the twelve tribes of Israel.

In sum, we may posit that the tribes of Dan and Asher did not participate in the Bible's main narrative of the Eisodus/Slavery/Exodus/Wandering, equivalent to our understanding of "core Israel" as Bedouin nomads or semi-nomads who emerged from the desert fringe to settle the sown. The one entity (Asher) appears always to have been present in the land; the other (Dan) arrived by sea at about the same time (12th century B.C.E.) as "core Israel" transitioned from a nomadic lifestyle to the sedentary way of life. It may not be a coincidence that the tribes of Dan and Asher are among the handmaiden tribes in the Torah's account. Dan is the son of Bilhah, handmaiden of Rachel (Genesis 30:5–6), and Asher is the son of Zilpah, handmaiden of Leah (Genesis 30:12–13). It is quite possible that the biblical tradition retains an accurate recollection of the primary tribes of Leah and Rachel as "original" Israel, and of the tribes descended from Bilhah, Zilpah, and Leah secondarily (see Genesis 30:17–20) as secondary entities, who associated themselves with Israel at a later time.

In the primary, Leah and Rachel group, one finds Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin. Levi is distinguished for sacerdotal duty, and Joseph splits into two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. Plot these tribes on the map and one finds them in precisely the area described at the outset of this chapter, from just south of the Jezreel Valley in the north to the Beersheba Basin in the south, with the addition of Reuben in southern Transjordan. The six tribes belonging to the second set (Dan, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali, and Gad) lie outside this central area: Dan is along the coast; Asher is in the hinterland of Phoenicia, in the Western Galilee; the next three are in Galilee proper, north of the Jezreel Valley; and Gad is located in Transjordanian Gilead.

Some scholars also have drawn attention to Mesha Stele, line 10, "the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ataroth since ancient times" (*me-ʿolam*), implying that this tribe was indigenous to the region of Gilead.³⁷ Should this assumption be correct, then we have yet another tribe which did not participate in the grand narrative of the early books of the Bible. Note, moreover, that Gad is another "handmaid" tribe, with Gad born to Zilpah (Genesis 30:10–11).

Even within "core Israel," however, there were "foreign" elements linked with the Israelites. The best evidence derives from Judges

1:16, regarding the Kenites, another desert group mentioned in the Bible on several occasions: “and the Kenites ... went up from the City of Palms [sc. presumably Jericho] with the Judahites, to the wilderness of Judah which is in the Negev of Arad; and they went and they settled among the people.” Note also that the Judahite hero Caleb son of Jephunneh (Numbers 13:6) is called a Kenizzite in Joshua 14:6 and 14:14, which elsewhere is listed among the foreign nations in the region (Genesis 15:19). To further complicate matters, the Judahite judge Othniel is introduced in Judges 3:9 as Othniel son of Kenaz, the younger brother of Caleb. All of this indicates that the various desert groups would realign from time to time: Kenites and Kenizzites could be non-Israelites or non-Judahites at one time, and then connected to Judah at another time.³⁸

Let us further recall the Jebusites of Jerusalem in Judges 1:21: “and the Jebusites dwelt with the Benjaminites in Jerusalem until this day.” About a century later, when David conquered Jerusalem and established the city as his capital, the population was not killed but rather was assimilated into Israel. This point would be remembered centuries later when the prophet Ezekiel addressed Jerusalem with the words, “Your origin and your birthplace are from the land of the Canaanites; your father is an Amorite, and your mother is a Hittite” (Ezekiel 16:3).³⁹

In sum, the ancestry (or better, ancestries) of the population of what emerged as Israel in the historical record is a much more complicated one than the main narrative may suggest. To be sure, the notion that the entire nation descends from the biological offspring of a single person (Jacob/Israel) and that all the people immigrated to Egypt, then wandered the Sinai, and then all at once entered the land is an idealized construct.

Reuben and Simeon

Two tribes from “core Israel” merit specific consideration, namely, Reuben and Simeon, who descended from the first- and second-born sons of Jacob/Israel, respectively. Reuben is the southernmost tribe in Transjordan, while Simeon is the southernmost tribe in Cisjordan. That is to say, the two tribes which remained closest to the desert fringe region geographically are the ones accorded first- and second-born status in the national narrative.

The last we hear of Reuben within the grand narrative of Genesis through Kings is in Judges 5:16, where, quite tellingly, the tribe is associated with its flocks and sheepfolds.⁴⁰

Simeon disappears even earlier, in Judges 1, though already in this episode the tribe's individual identity is waning, as its destiny is allied with that of Judah. In the Book of Joshua, there is a unique, character-revealing statement about Simeon. While all the tribes gain "cities and their settlements," including Simeon (Joshua 19:7),⁴¹ only with respect to Simeon do we read an additional statement with the word "settlements": "and all the settlements that surround these cities" (Joshua 19:8). This implies that the lifestyle of the Simeonites was more connected with unwallled, non-urban settlements (Heb. *ḥaṣerim*) than that of other tribes.⁴²

This is all rather obvious, since the territories of Reuben and Simeon are on the desert fringe, with no large cities. Consequently, the lifestyle of these two tribes was more connected to their flocks, sheepfolds, and unwallled settlements. And then the Bible loses track of Reuben and Simeon—not because they disappeared necessarily, but because the focus of the biblical material (prose, poetry, prophecy, etc.) becomes more and more focused on kingship, Jerusalem, and Temple.⁴³

But the Bible never lost track of the first-born and second-born status of Reuben and Simeon, respectively. These tribesmen retained their pastoral ways, even as most Israelites became more and more urbanized, and thus their eponymous ancestors are accorded first and second position in the Jacob cycle (and in later rehearsals thereof, including 1 Chronicles 2:1–2).

The Book of Joshua

After this long excursion into the nature and background of the individual twelve tribes, let us now return to the narratives in the books of Joshua and Judges. As intimated above, the Book of Joshua presents an idealized version of how Israel emerged in the land of Canaan. The book divides neatly into several large sections: chaps. 1–5 (preparation for the conquest); chaps. 6–12 (the conquest and the individual battles); chaps. 13–22 (the apportioning of the land to the individual tribes, the Levites, etc.); and chaps. 23–24 (valedictory speeches by Joshua). The most famous section of the book is the second one, with

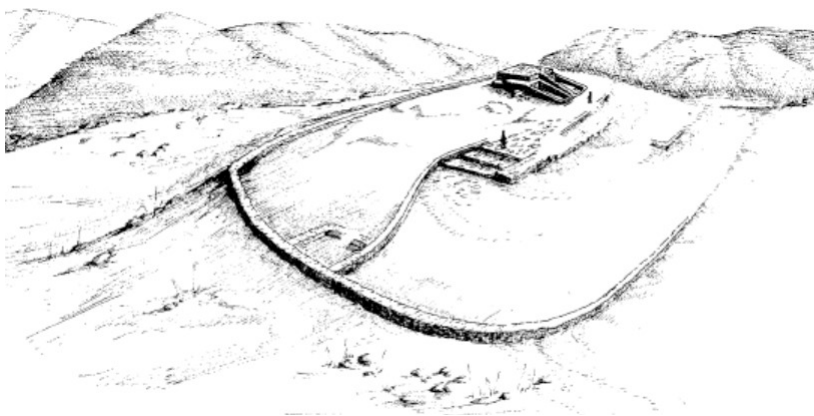
its accounts of the conquest of Jericho (chap. 6), Ai (chaps. 7–8), and Gibeon (chaps. 9–10).⁴⁴ As we noted earlier, however, the notion of the conquest of the land of Canaan must be surrendered. There simply is no archaeological evidence for such, and in the specific case of Jericho the site seems to have been largely abandoned during the period under consideration here (c. 1400–c. 900).

Nevertheless, the battle accounts in Joshua 6–10 do not appear to have been invented out of whole cloth; instead, they are based on known military strategies from the ancient world.⁴⁵ One example is Joshua marching his troops *at night*, from his base camp at Gilgal to Gibeon (Joshua 10:9), implying an attack of the city at dawn from the east, during which the rising sun would have blinded the city defenders. This may explain the famous saying that “the sun stood still at Gibeon” (Joshua 10:11–12), an epic feature in the account, since Joshua and his troops needed the sun to stay in position just above the eastern horizon until the military operation was complete.

In light of such demonstrable military strategies embedded within the narratives of Joshua 6–10, should we consider the possibility that, notwithstanding the largely peaceful settlement by the Israelite tribes in the central hill country that this chapter has postulated, here and there an actual battle needed to be fought? One cannot discount this possibility, though in general such encounters would have been very occasional and on a very limited scale, especially as we recall the openness of the terrain to be settled by the Israelites.

There is one archaeological site that may support a conquest by the Israelites as reported in Joshua: Hazor in the Upper Galilee, excavated by Yigael Yadin during the years 1955–1958 and 1968, and more recently by Amnon Ben-Tor (since 1990). Both scholars concluded that the large Canaanite city at the site represented by Stratum XIII was destroyed by a major conflagration c. 1200 B.C.E., after which a much more modest city represented by Stratum XII developed.⁴⁶ The evidence conforms with the statement in Joshua 11:10–13 that the Israelites conquered Hazor and set the city ablaze. Indeed, in the conquest narratives, only here does one read that the Israelites set a conquered city on fire. As always, the picture is more complicated, because in the alternative account of Judges 4–5 the city of Hazor remains a Canaanite city; and even when Barak defeats Sisera in battle,

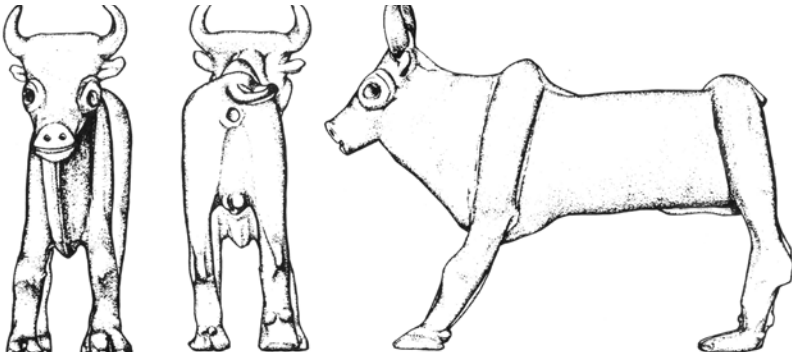
there is no mention of the capture of Hazor, never mind the burning thereof.⁴⁷ This issue aside, the coherence of the archaeological evidence and the account in Joshua 11 is rather striking.⁴⁸



MT. EBAL altar site in artist's reconstruction.

The various battle accounts are interrupted in Joshua 8:30–35, which describes the building of the altar on Mt. Ebal and the gathering of the Israelites there, in fulfillment of the instructions commanded in Deuteronomy 27:1–8. Remarkably, the excavations by Adam Zertal on Mt. Ebal revealed an altar dated to the Iron Age I (12th–11th centuries) (see drawing above), along with faunal remains of sheep, goats, cattle, and deer.⁴⁹ One will assume, accordingly, an inherent historicity in the account in Joshua 8:30–35, for the archaeological site demonstrates that the Israelites of this time period performed ritual offerings at this altar.⁵⁰

A second cultic site that deserves mention is in the northern reaches of the central hill country. In the 1980s, an Israeli kibbutznik accidentally discovered a bronze bull at a site near Mt. Gilboa, in the territory of Manasseh (see drawing here and plate 6). Amihai Mazar then excavated the site, which he determined to be a cultic site, replete with altar dated to the 12th century B.C.E.⁵¹ Most likely, the bull was intended to represent Yahweh (recall such passages as Exodus 32:4; 1 Kings 12:28; and Hosea 8:5–6), thereby giving us precious insight into the religion of early Israel, especially regarding a practice prohibited by the Torah and condemned by the prophets.



THE BRONZE BULL STATUETTE. Found at a hilltop cultic site near Mt. Gilboa, in northern Samaria. It measures about 4 inches high and dates to the 12th century B.C.E. This line-drawing shows three different views of the artifact; for the color photo, see plate 3.

One more cultic site in the central hill country was at Shiloh, where, according to the Book of Joshua 18:1, the Tabernacle was erected. The Tabernacle was the portable tent shrine that housed the Ark of the Covenant. According to the biblical tradition, the Tabernacle and its appurtenances were constructed in the Wilderness (Exodus 25–31 and 35–40) and then transported by the Israelites from place to place, until their entrance into the land of Canaan. Once the people settled in the central hill country, the Tabernacle found a permanent home in Shiloh. Note such expressions as “before YHWH in Shiloh” (Joshua 18:8), “in Shiloh before YHWH” (Joshua 18:10; 19:51), “the House of God in Shiloh” (Judges 18:31), “the feast of YHWH in Shiloh” (Judges 21:19), “the House of YHWH in Shiloh” (1 Samuel 1:24), and “the priest of YHWH in Shiloh” (1 Samuel 14:3), all indicative of the major role that Shiloh played in the religious life of Israel during this time period. And then references to the place stop.⁵² In fact, when the Ark was captured by the Philistines in battle (1 Samuel 4) and then returned to the Israelites (1 Samuel 6), the people did not restore the Ark to Shiloh but rather deposited it in the house of a resident of Kiriath-jearim (1 Samuel 7:1).

What, then, happened to Shiloh? Archaeology provides a plausible answer. Israel Finkelstein, who excavated the site in 1981–1984, discovered there a typical Israelite central hill country village, replete with simple unpainted pottery, including collared-rim vessels (see image on p. 71), and with traces of some cultic activity—though, naturally, no

evidence of the Tabernacle, which was made of perishable materials (wood, cloth, animal skins, etc.). The village was established in the 12th century B.C.E. and was destroyed in the 11th century B.C.E.⁵³ All of this coheres with the biblical passages cited above, which imply that Shiloh served as the cultic center of the Israelites in the central hill country for a century or so during Iron Age I. Its destruction presumably was wrought by the Philistines in connection with the battles described in 1 Samuel 4, even if the Bible does not state so explicitly. Centuries later, the prophet Jeremiah would evoke the destruction of Shiloh as a historical lesson for the people of Judah (Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9; see also Psalm 78:60).

Among the hundreds of toponyms mentioned in Joshua 13–22, listed within the tribal allotments, we call attention to one very interesting item: *ma'ayan mē neptōah*, “the spring of Me-Neptoah” (Joshua 15:9; 18:15). Because the Hebrew word *mē* means “waters of,” readers of the Bible have interpreted this toponym as “the spring of the waters of Neptoah,” with only the last element as a pure proper noun. The term, however, is better understood as “the spring of Merneptah,” especially in light of the fact that final *r* was lost in Late Egyptian.⁵⁴ So while the pharaoh’s name may have been written with the hieroglyphs *mr-n-ptḥ* (meaning “beloved of Ptah”), the actual pronunciation of the first element would have been closer to what is preserved in Joshua 15:9 and 18:15, where it is further indicated that this particular spring is located on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin, identified as modern Lifta (with further apocopation of the original name), 5 km northwest of Jerusalem.

In his famous victory stela, Merneptah proclaims that he campaigned in Canaan, with specific mention of Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yano’am.⁵⁵ From the reference to “the spring of Merneptah” in the Book of Joshua, one should assume that this pharaoh’s armies also reached the central highlands, perhaps Jerusalem itself. This point is only tangentially relevant to the history of ancient Israel, but it remains of great value and interest, nonetheless.

The Book of Joshua closes with the gathering of all Israel at Shechem for the renewal of the covenant. From such accounts we may conclude that Shechem served as the traditional “capital” of the tribal league before the establishment of the monarchy. Deuteronomy 27, notably,

envisions the tribes gathering on Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, the two mountains that flank Shechem. Moreover, when Solomon died, and it was time to make Rehoboam king, the people again gathered at Shechem—and Rehoboam journeyed there (1 Kings 12), even though his seat of government was in Jerusalem. Once the northern tribes separated from the Davidic-Solomonic dynasty, it was only natural for Jeroboam I to establish Shechem as the first capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 12:25). This last passage is the final reference to Shechem in the historical books of the Bible, for the capital soon was moved to Tirzah and thence to Samaria. The author of Joshua 24, regardless of its historicity, thus situates the account against the backdrop of pre-monarchic Israel, when the city of Shechem still held prestige within Israelite society.

The Book of Judges

The Book of Judges contains an easily discernible redactional pattern: the prologue (chaps. 1–2), the cycles of stories concerning the individual judges (chaps. 3–16), and the epilogue focused especially on Dan and Benjamin (chaps. 17–21).⁵⁶ As noted earlier, Judges 1 provides an alternative account (to the Book of Joshua, that is) of the emergence of Israel in the land of Canaan, one more in keeping with the historical and archaeological evidence. Judges 2:10–13 refers to the Israelites' worshiping of Canaanite deities (see also Judges 3:7), which seems to imply that as long as Israel retained its desert and desert-fringe lifestyle in isolation from outside influences, the people remained loyal worshipers of the single god, Yahweh. But once they entered the land and settled in close proximity to their Canaanite neighbors, they began to worship other gods and goddesses.

A note is now due about the Hebrew word *šōftīm*, traditionally rendered “judges.” Although the word can bear that meaning (e.g., Deuteronomy 16:18), in the Book of Judges we do not encounter any of the so-called judges adjudicating legal cases, except maybe Deborah (Judges 4:4–5). In this book the term *šōftīm* more typically means “leaders, chieftains,” especially in a social or military context. Sometimes these individuals act alone (Ehud, Samson), at other times they muster troops (Barak, Gideon). So although time-honored tradition obliges one to retain the title “judges” when referring to these

individuals, the reader should keep in mind the more accurate functional meaning of the term *šoftim*.

As the Book of Judges segues from the prologue to the stories about the individual judges, it uses the above picture of apostasy as the backdrop for what transpires. The repeated pattern is as follows: Israel “does evil in the eyes of Yahweh”; the people are delivered into the hands of an enemy; they cry out to God; God raises up a savior; the “spirit of Yahweh” descends upon him; said leader defeats the enemy; and peace is restored—until the whole cycle starts all over again.⁵⁷ Well-developed accounts are provided for the six (or seven) major judges (Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, and Samson), whereas only brief notices are given for each of the seven minor judges (Othniel, Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon).

Also noteworthy is the internal chronology of the Book of Judges. First there are the periods of foreign rule: for example, 8 years under Cushan-Rishathaim (Judges 3:8), 18 years under Eglon (Judges 3:14), 20 years under Jabin (Judges 4:3), 40 years under the Philistines (Judges 13:1). Next, the narrative refers to long schematized periods of peace in the land: for example, the 40-year spans associated with Othniel, Deborah and Barak, and Gideon (Judges 3:11; 5:31; 8:28, respectively), along with the 80 years associated with Ehud (Judges 3:30).

When we add up all these numbers, we arrive at a total of 410 years for the events described in the Book of Judges, far too long a time span between the emergence of Israel in Canaan (mid-12th century B.C.E.) and the events described in the following Book of Samuel (the beginning of David’s reign, e.g., may be dated c. 1000 B.C.E.).⁵⁸ The solution to this seeming conundrum is twofold. First, the years in the Book of Judges are not to be taken literally. Throughout the early books of the Bible, all manner of events span 40 years, including, most famously, the wandering in the desert (Exodus through Deuteronomy). Clearly this is but a schematic number used by the biblical authors writing in an epic style. Half that number is 20 (see Judges 4:3); twice that number is 80 (see Judges 3:30). No chronology can be adduced from these numbers, full stop.

Secondly, if there is any historical reality to any of these events, almost undoubtedly the individual episodes could have occurred simultaneously rather than sequentially. Note, for example, that the

story of Ehud concerns the tribe of Benjamin only; the story of Samson focuses on a single Danite hero; the story of Gideon involves the tribe of Manasseh, along with some Galilean tribes, with the action occurring mainly in the Jezreel Valley; the story of Jephthah occurs in Gilead, with the battle against the neighboring Ammonites; and so on. Presumably all these stories arose as local traditions amongst the diverse tribes, until a later Israelite author combined them into the esthetically pleasing and theologically appealing narrative which is the final form of the Book of Judges.

Of all the various components of the Book of Judges, a special word needs to be said about Judges 5, known as the Song of Deborah, for it constitutes one of the oldest poems (and hence one of the oldest compositions) in the entire Bible. The poem details the battle between the Canaanites, led by Jabin and Sisera, and the Israelites, led by Deborah and Barak. Some scholars consider the poem to be composed contemporaneously (or nearly so) with the events described, that is, c. 1100 B.C.E. To be sure, from both a linguistic and a literary perspective, the poem is very old.⁵⁹ Moreover, the presence of both the prose account in Judges 4 and the poetic version in Judges 5 provides biblical scholars with a unique opportunity to see the transition from song to story.⁶⁰ In earliest Israel, stories were narrated in epic poetry, on a par with Ugaritic literature, for example. At some point, however, the ancient Israelite literati developed the characteristic narrative prose that permeates the Bible, especially in the grand chronicle that spans Creation (Genesis 1–2) and the reign of King David (through 1 Kings 2). Only a few poetic snippets, such as Judges 5, remained, but otherwise the shift to narrative prose was complete.⁶¹

Finally, it is important to note that—regardless of the engaging tales concerning the individual judges—the Book of Judges carries an important political message.⁶² As is well known, a political crisis arose in Israel c. 1020, when certain forces sought to establish a monarchy, notwithstanding the strong opposition from the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 8). The latter view held that a human king was an intolerable concession against the ideal tenet that only Yahweh could serve as king over Israel; while the former position held that the times had changed and that a human king was necessary to preserve Israel from destruction by the Philistines. In the end, the pro-monarchic stance

won the day, as Israel moved to a monarchy, first under Saul, then under David. But the original tenet of Yahweh as king was never surrendered, for Israelite theologians continued to promote that image of Yahweh throughout the biblical period.⁶³

One cannot know for sure when the Book of Judges took its final form, but given the presence of both pro- and anti-monarchic statements, quite possibly the compilation was achieved sometime in the tenth century, when the issue was still fresh in the minds of the Israelites. The most glaring anti-monarchic statement in the book is Judges 8:22–23: the people, impressed by Gideon's victory over the Midianites, offer him kingship,⁶⁴ to which the hero responds, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; YHWH will rule over you."⁶⁵ The most glaring pro-monarchic statements are found first at Judges 17:6 and then in the final verse of the book, 21:25: "In those days there was no king in Israel, each-man would do whatever was right in his eyes,"⁶⁶ with reference to the dark chapters of Israel's history related in the epilogue to the Book of Judges (the story of the concubine at Gibeah, the war against Benjamin, etc.). Many scholars resolve the tension between the two positions by assuming that a later redactor combined a pro-monarchic source and an anti-monarchic source in creating the Book of Judges. Such need not be the case, though. To our mind, better to assume that the author/editor/redactor/compiler of the book simply wished to exhibit the ambivalence that all (or most) Israelites felt with the establishment of the monarchy—and thus he included both views.

pharaoh and the first to use the epithet “beloved of Seth.”

106 See chap. 5 herein.

107 On the shift from the epic storytelling tradition (mainly Genesis through Samuel) to the style of the Book of Kings and elsewhere, see Rendsburg, “Epic Tradition” (see n. 65), 26–27.

108 Israelit-Groll, “*pšw*” (see n. 72), 139. See also Bietak, “Historicity of the Exodus” (see n. 1), 29–30.

109 See chap. 3 herein.

110 For additional related lineages, see Rendsburg, “Internal Consistency” (see n. 96), 186–89, esp. the chart on p. 189.

111 The question of possible separate sources aside, the different numbers (400 and 430) may reflect an unstated inner-biblical tradition of 30 years of free and prosperous living while Joseph was yet alive and in charge.

112 A different approach is offered by Nadav Na’aman, who assumes that the Israelites originated from the local Canaanite population, with the suggestion that the burden of the Egyptian occupation during the Late Bronze Age in Canaan might have added later to the popularity of the Exodus story and to its establishment as the national myth. Nadav Na’aman, “The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historical Composition,” *JANER* 11 (2011), 39–69.

113 Others have used the same analogy; see, e.g., William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 234.

114 See the earlier statement in Bietak, “Historicity of the Exodus” (see n. 1), 28 and map here on p. 22.

115 Abraham Malamat, “Let My People Go and Go and Go and Go,” *BAR*, January/February 1998, 62–66.

116 The Hebrew term lives on in the name of the Christian holiday of Easter in various languages: Spanish *Pascua*, Italian *Pasqua*, Portuguese *Páscoa*, French *Pâques*, Dutch *Pasen*, Swedish *Påsk*, Greek *Páscha*, Russian *Pascha*, etc.

117 For example, Hershel Shanks, ed., *Ancient Israel*, 3rd ed., 51–52.

118 See already Bietak, “Historicity of the Exodus” (see n. 1), 31–32; and with much greater detail, Bietak, “From Where Came the Hyksos and Where Did They Go?” in Marcel Marée, ed., *The Second Intermediate Period (Thirteenth–Seventeenth Dynasties): Current Research, Future Prospects*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 192 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 139–81 + plates 11–26.

119 Burnt acorns found on an altar in front of the Broad-Room Temple and the Bent-Axis Temple are an indication that the goddess Asherah, who is synonymous with the oak tree, was venerated here. A tree pit beside the altar may have been for such a tree, which is not native to Egypt and must have been introduced by the Canaanites.

120 The name Ba’al Zephon is attested in the Ugaritic ritual texts, meaning “Baal of Mt. Zaphon (= modern-day Jebel Aqra’ in northern Syria). But see also the appearance of this term as a place name in Exodus 14:2; 14:9, in the lead-up to the Sea of Reeds crossing—even if its precise location cannot be established.

121 Labib Habachi, “Sethos I’s Devotion to Seth and Avaris,” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 100 (1974), 95–102 + plates V–VI.

122 For more on Josephus, see chs. 7–8.

123 Strictly speaking, the Hyksos were the rulers (see above, for the etymology of the word), and thus we use the term “Hyksos-people” to refer to the general population of Avaris and environs during the 15th Dynasty.

124 See also Numbers 11:4, though a different term, *ʾasafuf*, is used there.

3. The Emergence of Israel in the Land of Canaan

1 Israel Finkelstein et al., “Reconstructing Ancient Israel: Integrating Macro- and Micro-archaeology,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient*

Israel 1 (2012), 141. For the most sustained exposition, see Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: IES,

1988). Over the years, the author has retreated from some of his statements in the book, though I consider them valid still, especially as the evidence remains unchanged.

2 For a wide-ranging survey on sedentarization, with modern parallels, see Thomas E. Levy and Augustin F. C. Holl, “Migrations, Ethnogenesis, and Settlement Dynamics: Israelites in Iron Age Canaan and Shuwa-Arabs in the Chad Basin,” *JAA* 21 (2002), 83–118.

3 Michael M. Homan, *To Your Tents, O Israel! The Terminology, Function, Form, and Symbolism of Tents in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, CHANE 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 17–19.

4 B. S. J. Isserlin, *The Israelites* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 122–24; and Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 21–23. For detailed information on more than two dozen sites, see Avraham Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 207–12, even if the data derive mainly from the eighth–seventh centuries B.C.E., due to the nature of the evidence.

5 Many of these expressions have a good English pedigree: Lucas Reilly, “The Origins of 12 Horse-Related Idioms,” *Mental Floss*, May 22, 2014 (<http://mentalfloss.com/article/56850/origins-12-horse-related-idioms>). For more detailed analysis, see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. ‘horse’.

6 Both sites are in Nubia, in present-day northern Sudan.

7 For much of what follows, see Avraham Faust, “The Emergence of Israel and Theories of Ethnogenesis,” in S. Niditch, ed., *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Ancient Israel* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 155–73.

8 See Avraham Faust, “Pigs in Space (and Time): Pork Consumption and Identity Negotiations in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages of Ancient Israel,” *NEA* 81 (2018), 276–99.

9 For possible explanations regarding the origins of the pig prohibition, see Joseph A. Callaway and Hershel Shanks, “The Settlement in Canaan: The Period of the Judges,” in H. Shanks, ed., *Ancient Israel*, 3rd ed. (Washington: BAS, 2011), 73–74; and Gary

A. Rendsburg, “The Vegetarian Ideal in the Bible,” in L. J. Greenspoon, R. A. Simkins, and G. Shapiro, eds., *Food and Judaism*, Studies in Jewish Civilization 15 (Omaha: Creighton Univ. Press, 2005), 319–34.

10 While it started as the basic domicile, in time the four-room house was adapted to larger structures as well (see plan no. 1 on p. 69).

11 The lack of clear evidence notwithstanding, some scholars have proposed that the four-room house was modeled after individual Bedouin tent structures. See, e.g., Volkmar Fritz, “Conquest or Settlement?: The Early Iron Age in Palestine,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (1987), 84–100, esp. 97, with the following comment: “These types of houses may have developed from tent constructions, although what type of tent was used in the second millennium is not known.” For additional information on the Bedouin tent, with some historical considerations, see Benjamin A. Saidel, “Coffee, Gender, and Tobacco: Observations on the History of the Bedouin Tent,” *Anthropos* 104 (2009), 179–86.

12 Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakhai, “A Landscape Comes to Life: The Iron Age I,” *NEA* 62 (1999), 62–92, 101–27, esp. 75.

13 Gary A. Rendsburg and Jeremy D. Smoak, “Kinship Terms,” in Geoffrey Khan, ed., *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 471–77, esp. 471.

14 Elizabeth Lang, “The Daily Grind: Women’s Experience of Bread-Making in Non-elite Households of New Kingdom Egypt,” Ph.D. Dissertation (New Haven: Yale University, 2017).

15 See Carol Meyers, “Having Their Space and Eating There Too: Bread Production and Female Power in Ancient Israelite Households,” *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies and Gender Issues* 5 (2002), 14–44, esp. 21–22; and Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 129–30. For a delightful re-creation of the scene, see Jennie R. Ebeling, *Women’s Lives in Biblical Times* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2010), 43–44.

16 Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve* (see n. 15), 32, 133; and Ebeling, *Women’s Lives* (see n. 15), 57–58.

- 17 Harry Hoffner, "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity," *JBL* 85 (1966), 326–34.
- 18 On these features, see William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2003), 113–17.
- 19 Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006), 191–205.
- 20 Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis* (see n. 19), 92–107; and Faust, "Emergence of Israel" (see n. 7). For a summary statement, see Avraham Faust, "Early Israel: An Egalitarian Society," *BAR*, July/August 2013.
- 21 Joshua A. Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008).
- 22 For a fuller treatment, see Callaway and Shanks, "Settlement in Canaan" (see n. 9), 62–74.
- 23 Relevant publications include W. F. Albright, "Archaeology and the Date of the Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *BASOR* 58 (1935), 10–18; and W. F. Albright, "The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology," *BASOR* 74 (1939), 11–23. Many of Albright's students, such as John Bright and G. Ernest Wright, continued along the same path. Another major contributor to this school was Yigael Yadin, excavator of Hazor; see his essay "Is the Biblical Account of the Israelite Conquest of Canaan Historically Reliable?" *BAR*, March/April 1982.
- 24 Albrecht Alt, "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 175–221; originally published in German, in 1925.
- 25 A generation or so later, Alt was followed by Yohanan Aharoni; see his essay "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan: An Account of the Archaeological Evidence," *BAR*, May/June 1982.
- 26 Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites* (see n. 18), 121.
- 27 Finkelstein, *Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (see n. 1), 274. It is important to note, however, that Finkelstein wrote these words in 1988, 15 years before Dever's book. Moreover, less than a decade later, Finkelstein's position apparently had changed, as expressed in his "Pots and Peoples Revisited: Ethnic Boundaries in the Iron Age," in N. A. Silberman and D. Small, eds., *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 226: "[Pottery forms] on both sides of the Jordan reflect environmental, social, and economic traits of the settlers. They tell us nothing about ethnicity."
- 28 Frank H. Polak, "The Oral and the Written: Syntax, Stylistics and the Development of Biblical Prose Narrative," *JANES* 26 (1998), 59–105.
- 29 For the original text and an English translation, see Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), with the passage to be discussed herein on pp. 25*, 70. A more recent edition is H. W. Fischer-Elfert, *Die satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), with our passage discussed on 139.
- 30 A few comments on the translation offered here: a) the foreign terms written in Egyptian hieroglyphs are presented here in italics with hyphens between the consonantal sounds; b) the precise identity of the *hmt*-animal is unknown, and thus we content ourselves with (bear?/hyena?), the two possibilities proposed by scholars; c) the precise identity of the *b-k-f*-tree also is unknown, with pear and balsam the two possibilities proposed by scholars. For a translation of P.Anastasi I, see Edward Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt*, SBL Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 98–110, with our passage on 108.
- 31 For a survey of opinions on this passage, see Fischer-Elfert, *Satirische Streitschrift* (see n. 29), vol. 2, 199–200.
- 32 For the text, see C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler der Aegypten und Aethiopien*, Dritte Abtheilung, Band VI (Berlin: Nicolai, 1849), plate 140a, at <http://edoc3.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/lepsius/tafelwa3.html>.
- 33 For a translation of this important historical text, with parallel material in PHarris I, see K. A. Kitchen, "The 'Sea Peoples' Records of Ramesses III," in *COS* 4.11–14.
- 34 See K. A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 40, lines 3–4.

35 See Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 174.

36 The first person to propose the identity of biblical Dan with the Dan(an)u of the Sea Peoples was Cyrus H. Gordon, “The Mediterranean Factor in the Old Testament,” in *Congress Volume Bonn 1962, VTSup* 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 19–31, esp. 21. The proposal was developed further by Yigael Yadin, “And Dan, Why Did He Remain in Ships?” *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1 (1968), 9–23.

37 On the Mesha Stele, see ch. 5.

38 On such alignments and re-alignments, see Emanuel Marx, *Bedouin of the Negev* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1967), 137–38. For general treatment of the Bedouin, with an eye to the Bible, see Clinton Bailey, *Bedouin Culture in the Bible* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2018).

39 The terms “Amorite” and “Hittite” here appear to be general synonyms for “Canaanite.” Alternatively, they may refer to some remnants of the former Amorites and Hittites known from second-millennium B.C.E. sources.

40 True, the same word *mišpatayim* (sheepfolds) occurs in Genesis 49:14, with reference to Issachar, but the usage there is metaphorical, as the son/tribe is compared to a donkey.

41 This is clear from a reading of Joshua 13–19, though one must assume that 16:9 refers to both Ephraim and Manasseh.

42 Most translations, such as the New Revised Standard Version used in the other chapters of this book, render *hūgerim* as “villages,” but I prefer “settlements,” with specific reference to unwallled settlements.

43 The same is true for the northern kingdom, based on the literary remains thereof that are preserved in the Bible, with the focus on Dan, Bethel, Shechem, and Samaria.

44 Chaps. 11–12 provide summary information regarding the rest of the land of Canaan.

45 See Abraham Malamat, “Israelite Conduct of War in the Conquest of Canaan, According to the Biblical Tradition,” in F. M. Cross, ed., *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1900–1975* (Cambridge, MA:

ASOR, 1979), 35–55. For a popular version, see Abraham Malamat, “How Inferior Israelite Forces Conquered Fortified Canaanite Cities,” *BAR*, March/April 1982.

46 Amnon Ben-Tor, “Who Destroyed Canaanite Hazor?” *BAR*, July/August 2013.

47 The different versions of the defeat of Hazor in Joshua and in Judges is just one more instance of the conflicting information in the two books.

48 While an overall conquest of Canaan remains most unlikely (as argued above), for some food for thought, see B. S. J. Isserlin, “The Israelite Conquest of Canaan: A Comparative Review of the Arguments Applicable,” *PEQ* 115 (1983), 85–94, where the author rightly observes that there is also little archaeological evidence for some known historical events, such as the Norman conquest of England, the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England, and the Muslim Arab conquest of the Levant.

49 While the former three animals are commonly sacrificed according to the priestly legislation in Leviticus and Numbers, deer are permitted to be eaten but are never mentioned in the sacrificial texts. So either the deer were sacrificed at Mt. Ebal (which would be an example of extra-Torah traditions attested in the archaeological record), or they were consumed but not offered on the altar.

50 For the original publication, see Adam Zertal, “An Early Iron Age Cultic Site on Mount Ebal: Excavation Seasons 1982–1987: Preliminary Report,” *Tel Aviv* 14 (1987), 105–65. For a recent treatment, see Ralph K. Hawkins, *The Iron Age I Structure on Mt. Ebal: Excavation and Interpretation* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015).

51 Amihai Mazar, “Bronze Bull Found in Israelite ‘High Place’ from the Time of the Judges,” *BAR*, September/October 1983.

52 Except for 1 Kings 14:2, 4, with reference to the home of the prophet Ahijah in Shiloh.

53 Israel Finkelstein, “Shiloh Yields Some, but Not All, of Its Secrets,” *BAR*, January/February 1986. For the discovery of an altar about 2 km from Shiloh, which would seem not to be related to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, but which remains a curiosity, nonetheless, see Yoel Elitzur and Doron Nir-Zevi, “Four-

Horned Altar Discovered in Judean Hills,” *BAR*, May/June 2004.

54 See Antonio Loprieno, *Ancient Egyptian: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 38.

55 The same stela mentions Israel, for which see above, ch. 2.

56 Regarding Dan, see Judges 18, the story of the migration of the tribe from the coastal plain to the far north of Israel—apparently due to pressure caused by the expanding Philistines. With this process, the Danites evidently left their Sea Peoples origins (and culture too?) behind, as they established themselves at the headwaters of the Jordan River. Later biblical writers henceforth would refer to the extent of Israel as “from Dan to Beersheba” (1 Samuel 3:20, etc.).

57 Not that all of these elements appear in each of the accounts, but the schematic pattern is noticeable, nonetheless.

58 The relatively short time span for all the events enumerated in Joshua-Judges also is indicated by the mention of Moses’s grandson Jonathan and Aaron’s grandson Pinhas (English: Phinehas) in the closing chapters of the Book of Judges (18:30; 20:28, respectively). If the grandsons of the two leaders of the Exodus generation were yet alive at this point, the period narrated by Joshua-Judges must be shorter than is usually assumed. For the former passage, note that the text originally read “Moses” (as is reflected in the Septuagint recension of Codex Alexandrinus), which was later changed to “Manasseh”—for pietistic reasons.

59 For the linguistic profile, see Tania Notarius, *The Verb in Archaic Biblical Poetry: A Discursive, Typological, and Historical Investigation of the Tense System* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 125–50; and Ronald Hendel and Jan Joosten, *How Old Is the Hebrew Bible?* (New Haven:

Yale Univ. Press, 2018), 101–104. For some literary features, see Edward L. Greenstein, “Signs of Poetry Past: Literariness in Pre-Biblical Hebrew Literature,” in M. L. Satlow, ed., *Strength to Strength: Essays in Appreciation of Shaye J. D. Cohen* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2018), 5–25, esp. 17–18.

60 See Robert S. Kawashima, “From Song to Story: The Genesis of Narrative in Judges 4 and 5,” *Prooftexts* 21 (2001), 151–78; reprinted as Robert S. Kawashima, *Biblical Narrative and the Death of the Rhapsode* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2004), 17–32.

61 For the shift to narrative prose storytelling in ancient Israel, see Gary A. Rendsburg, *How the Bible Is Written* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019), 443–67 (i.e., ch. 21).

62 For reading Judges as a political statement, see Marc Z. Brettler, “The Book of Judges: Literature as Politics,” *JBL* 108 (1989), 395–418.

63 See Marc Z. Brettler, *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

64 Technically, the terms “king,” “kingship,” and the verb “reign” are not used in Judges 8:22, but dynastic succession is implied in the people’s words to Gideon: “Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson; for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.”

65 See also the parable of the trees which follows closely in chap. 9: beautiful trees—the olive tree, the fig tree, and the grape vine—prefer not to reign over the arboreal world, so that kingship is then offered to and accepted by the lowly bramble.

66 See also Judges 18:1; 19:1, with the first half of the statement: “In those days there was no king in Israel” (albeit in slightly different formulations in the two passages).

4. The Early Monarchy

1 William E. Evans, “An Historical Reconstruction of the Emergence of Israelite Kingship and the Reign of Saul,” in W.W. Hallo et al., eds., *Scripture in Context II* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 61–78, esp. 77.

2 Israel Finkelstein, “The Emergence of the Monarchy in Israel: The Environmental and Socio-Economic Aspects,” *JOT* 44 (1989), 43–74.

3 J. Maxwell Miller, “Is It Possible to Write a History of Israel Without Relying on the

ANCIENT ISRAEL

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FOURTH EDITION

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JOHN MERRILL AND
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ON THE COVER: A section of the original wall surrounding the City of David.

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