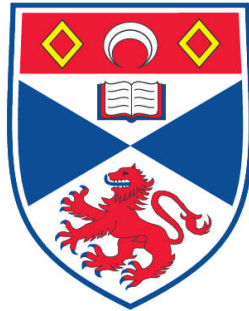


**THE SONG OF DEBORAH (JUDGES CH. 5): STUDIES IN THE  
VERSIONS AND IN THE POETIC ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE  
AGAINST SISERA**

**Harold A. Kay**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St. Andrews**



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THE SONG OF DEBORAH

Judges Chapter 5

Studies in the Versions

and

in the poetic account of the battle

against Sisera

A Thesis

submitted to

The University of St. Andrews

St. Andrews, Scotland

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Harold A. Kay


January

1984




DECLARATION

(a) I certify that Harold A. Kay has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
Signature of supervisor

(b) I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on October 1, 1976 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended) on 1st May, 1976.....

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Prof. William McKane and Dr. James D. Martin.

  
Signature of candidate

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## ABSTRACT

A large part of this thesis consists of an examination of Judges ch. 5 in the light of the Versions, Rashi and Kimchi. In addition, the tribal situation, religious cohesiveness of Israel, as well as the historical context and date of the battle against Sisera, are examined. The Song of Deborah presents a unique situation in the period of the Judges in which an alliance of many tribes participated in a concerted action. These tribes are designated by the name 'Israel'. The God of Israel is known as Yahweh, Israel is the people of Yahweh, and the religious unity of Israel is based upon a common religious faith in Yahweh. The Song does not represent Israel as a system of twelve tribes or as having its cohesiveness in an amphictyony. This historical battle against Sisera depicted in the Song probably occurred at a time late in the period of the Judges, at the end of the 12th century B.C. or early in the 11th century B.C.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Anchor Bible
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJSL	The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
ALUOS	Annual of the Leeds University Oriental Society
ALUOS <sup>D</sup>	Annual of the Leeds University Oriental Society, G. R. Driver
ANET <sup>3</sup>	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3rd ed.
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAR 1	The Biblical Archaeologist Reader, Book 1, 1961
BAR 2	The Biblical Archaeologist Reader, Book 2, 1964
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BDB	Brown-Driver-Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament
BH Stutt.	Biblia Hebraica, Stuttgartensia
Bibl	Biblica
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CMHE	F. M. Cross, <u>Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic</u>

EAEHL	Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land
G-K	Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IB	The Interpreter's Bible
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JPOS	Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KB <sup>3</sup>	Koehler-Baumgartner, Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon, 3rd ed.
L-S	Liddell-Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon
LXX	The Septuagint
LXX. A	Codex Alexandrinus
LXX. B	Codex Vaticanus
MT	Masoretic Text
NEB	New English Bible



Cr.	Orientalia
OT	The Old Testament
OTS	Old Testament Studies
Pesh.	Peshitta
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	Revised Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
Sym.	Symmachus
Targ.	Targum
TGUOS	Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society
Theod.	Theodotian
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTS	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
Vulg.	Vulgate
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal
YGC	W. F. Albright, <u>Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan</u>
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

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## INTRODUCTION

The Song of Deborah describes the joint action of a group of northern Israelite tribes against a Canaanite coalition, which may indicate a Sitz im Leben late in the period of the Judges. The book of Judges deals with wars waged by charismatic deliverers involving one or two of the tribes. However, the battle against Sisera (Judg. 5) indicates an occasion in the period of the Judges (possibly the first occasion of its kind) when an alliance of many tribes participated in a concerted action. The criticism levelled against the tribes which did not take part in the battle seems to indicate that all ten tribes, participants and non-participants, were expected to answer the call to battle, and that there existed a link between a wide alliance of tribes. Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali took part in the battle, but it is clear from the Song (vv. 15b-17) that Reuben, Gilead, Dan and Asher were expected to participate in the action.

Judg. ch. 4, on the other hand, mentions only the two northern tribes, Naphtali and Zebulun, as participants in the battle against Sisera. These two tribes are mentioned in ch. 4:6, 10 and in ch. 5:14,

15, and 18. It seems probable that there existed two distinct groups, a northern group of tribes who may have been connected with a sanctuary located at Mount Tabor (4:6), and a mid-Palestinian group led by Deborah who was living in the hill-country of Ephraim (4:5), and who may have been active as a judge in that region.

Judg. 4:6-10 suggests that the tradition about a war against Sisera was a tradition which involved only the northern group, whereas ch. 5:14-18 includes the central-Palestinian group in the battle. The reference to Ephraim in 4:5 may have been inserted by a later redactor to establish a connection with the mid-Palestinian group, and to attach more importance to the tribe of Ephraim which became more dominant in Israelite tradition.<sup>1</sup> However, according to Judg. 5, the battle was not confined to one group, but was an activity carried on by several tribes and at least two major groups. The position taken in this thesis is that the Song of Deborah, in whole or part, may be an eyewitness account of the battle and is probably the older account, and as such describes a battle which was not confined to one group, but was the experience shared by different groups of tribes. The northern

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<sup>1</sup>Gwilym H. Jones, "'Holy War" or "Yahweh War"?,' VT, 25 (1975), p. 647.

tribes appear to have taken the lead (5:15, leaders come from Issachar; 5:18, Zebulun and Naphtali are in the heat of the battle), but the mid-Palestinian group comprised of Ephraim, Benjamin and Machir play an active role in the conflict.

Judg. 5:4-5 indicates that Yahweh marched out to enter the battle on behalf of his people, and it is Yahweh's actions (v. 11, *צדקות יהוה*) which are praised and recited by his people (vv. 11b and 13, *עם-יהוה*) who have mustered to fight on Yahweh's behalf (v. 23, *לעזרת יהוה*). There appears to be an element of 'Holy War' expressed here which seems to link the tribes in concerted action against a common enemy which threatens the existence of the tribes.

Judg. 5:3 and 5 also refer to Yahweh as 'the God of Israel' (*יהוה אלהי ישראל*), and this suggests that the name 'Israel' is a reference to the tribes, and that Yahweh is the God of the greater entity, Israel.<sup>2</sup>

If the tribes of Israel do have some cohesive element, it may have existed in a traditional religious unity. That cohesiveness may have been rooted in a

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<sup>2</sup>A. D. H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, SBT, Second Series, No. 20. (London: SCM Press, 1974), p. 2f.

covenant relationship between the tribes and with Yahweh. However, it is difficult to reconstruct the origin of this religious unity from the context of the Song of Deborah, and the religious unity may have existed prior to the establishment of individual tribes or of a tribal system. What is certain is that there existed a group or groups of tribes at the time of the battle against Sisera. It is not certain that there existed a unity of tribes other than that some tribes fought a battle against a common enemy. Judg. 5 describes a large alliance of six tribes engaged in military action against the Canaanite enemy. It also appears certain from the Song that prior to the establishment of the monarchy under David and then Solomon there existed an entity called Israel, which probably differed from the later use of the term 'Israel' with reference to the northern kingdom. To gain a picture of the tribal system, and of Israel in the period of the Judges, an examination of the place of the religion of Yahweh in that period is necessary.

Martin Noth believes that the cohesiveness of this entity 'Israel' was achieved by an amphictyony rather than the idea of a common religious consciousness. It is also suggested that the so-called 'wars of Yahweh' originated from an amphictyony and so were 'holy wars',

having the central sanctuary as their focal point. Opposition to the amphictyony hypothesis presented by Noth rests upon the idea that Israel was really an ethnic unit based upon a religious cohesiveness.

The existence of an amphictyony should find its support in an alliance of tribes in battle against a common enemy. Thus the Song of Deborah either defines Israel as a people who acknowledge Yahweh as the God of Israel who wages war on their behalf, or demonstrates evidence in favour of the existence of an amphictyony in which there is a system of tribes organized around a central sanctuary. The organization of a group of tribes into a 'Yahweh army' seems to indicate a period when the tribes had sufficiently settled in the land to be capable of mustering a sizeable force against a Canaanite coalition. The nature of this tribal organization and its religious cohesion is examined in this study to suggest a Sitz im Leben of Israel at the time of the battle against Sisera.

If the Song of Deborah indicates some kind of tribal organization in the period of the Judges and prior to the establishment of the monarchy, it may also give evidence of the time period in which the events commemorated in the Song occurred.

Robert Boling's analysis of Judg. 5:6 led him to



conclude that this verse represents the disruption of the caravan trade in the north by the Israelites. He notes: 'The Israelites concentrated in the hill country were responsible for the cessation of caravans travelling to and from the remoter regions to the south and east, the caravans that followed "the winding roads", not the level main roads of Esdraelon and the coastal plain.'<sup>3</sup> Boling sees a relationship between this aggressive action of the Israelites living in the hill country and the Hebrew caravaneers mentioned in v. 10. He believes that the turning point in Deborah's day was this collaboration between the two elements mentioned in vv. 6 and 10. He states:

The turning point in Deborah's day was collaboration between Israelites concentrated in the hill country and certain Hebrew caravaneers, as celebrated in vs. 10. In this new situation a rally of the tribes by Deborah and Baraq turned a prosperous and complacent Israel into a Yahweh army once again in order to take control of Esdraelon and other territories ... It thus appears that the cutting off of the caravan routes represents the expanding power of the Israelites under Deborah's leadership and their successful challenge to those engaged in that sort of trade. In other words, Deborah had organized the battle in which Israel for the first time was able to defeat the Canaanites ... All this

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<sup>3</sup>Robert G. Boling, Judges, AB (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), p. 118.

suggests a time far into the Philistine period ... 4

Mayes suggests that placing the battle in the period c. 1125 B.C. or earlier leaves it as an isolated event, and he prefers to see the victory over Sisera as the event which precipitated the Philistine-Israelite confrontation at Aphek (c. 1050 B.C.).<sup>5</sup> Mayes attempts to compare the battle against Sisera with other known biblical data.

Others, such as Aharoni<sup>6</sup> associate the battle against Sisera with the battle of the waters of Merom (Josh. 11:1-2), and so date the battle late in the 13th century B.C. Dating of the events commemorated in the Song range from as early as the latter part of the 13th century B.C. to the middle of the 11th century B.C. Sisera is mentioned in Judg. 4:2 as the commander of the Canaanite forces, and he is referred to as the commander of the forces of king Jabin of Hazor. In ch. 5 Sisera is the only Canaanite leader mentioned, and as

---

<sup>4</sup>Robert G. Boling, Judges, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup>A. D. H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, SBT Second Series, No. 20 (London: SCM Press, 1974), p. 95f.

<sup>6</sup>Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, trans. by A. F. Rainey (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 201-203.

such, may have been an independent king of a city-state. Judg. 5:19 refers to some kind of a coalition, and since Sisera is the only one mentioned by name, one might suppose (on the basis of ch. 5) that he was the leader of it. The fact that there is no reference to king Jabin of Hazor in ch. 5 appears to argue against the possibility that king Jabin is the leader of the Canaanite coalition in both battles. Also, Josh. 11:1-15 records the fall of Hazor ruled by Jabin in the 13th century B.C., at the time of Joshua's leadership of the Israelite forces. Excavations of the city of Hazor reveal that no city of any size existed there from the 12th century to the 11th century B.C.

Josh. ch. 11 and Judg. ch. 4 appear to connect the two battles because the two accounts mention Jabin. However, if the two battles are chronologically separated, the question arises whether or not there may have existed another Jabin who ruled over a Canaanite coalition late in the period of the Judges. On the other hand, there exists the possibility that Jabin's name occurs in Judg. 4:2 in order to connect the event with the conquest of northern Galilee by Israelite forces led by Joshua. This attempt to telescope the two events may have been intended to suggest a quick and decisive conquest of the land of Canaan by the

Joshua forces. To determine a date of the battle against Sisera, the apparent discrepancy in Canaanite leadership arising from Judg. 4:2 should be resolved.

The Song of Deborah also presents a picture of tribes who apparently have settled in Palestine and have consolidated their position in the land. The battle against Sisera appears to be an attempt to expand their occupation of the land and to consolidate their position. Such a situation would seem to presume a time late in the period of the Judges after the tribes had become settled in their respective territories, or an earlier time when the tribes had not yet become fully consolidated. The Song of Deborah mentions the tribe of Machir which later migrated to the Transjordan and was replaced by Manasseh (Judg. 5:14), thus indicating a time prior to consolidation of tribal territory. Dan is described as possibly living in the north at the former site of Laish, having migrated from the south. However, it must be determined if Judg. 13:2, 25, which locates Dan in the region of Zorah and Eshtaol, is descriptive of a time prior to the northward migration and whether Judg. 5:17 locates Dan in the foothills leading up to the Judean uplands, or as already settled in the north. The point at issue is whether the Danite maritime connection is

more easily explicable against the background of a southern or a northern location for Dan. An examination of the tribal situation as depicted by the Song of Deborah may shed some light on the time period in which the battle against Sisera occurred.

In addition, the reference in the Song to the specific sites Megiddo and Taanach (Judg. 5:19) creates the problem of whether the battle against Sisera took place when these cities were occupied or not. The stratigraphy of these sites may help correlate the biblical data and the archaeological evidence to determine a date for the battle. An examination of other known historical data does not produce a great deal of certain evidence with which to date the battle, but it may suggest an historical context for the battle.

As well as attempting to date the battle itself by reference to textual evidence which indicates a possible Sitz im Leben for the tribes of Israel, the linguistic evidence of the Song may suggest a specific time period of poetic Hebrew literature in which to place the Song. The Song of Deborah may be contemporaneous with the event it describes, or may have been composed in a style of poetic Hebrew closely resembling poetry of the period in which the battle

occurred. Therefore, an examination of the style and structure of Hebrew poetry may reveal elements of poetry in the Song of Deborah which will provide criteria for determining the dating of the Song, and place it in a given period of biblical Hebrew poetry. Stylistic parallels with the poems of Ugarit seem to give evidence of an early date of composition. However, the literary sequence-dating proposed by Albright, the linguistic evidence suggested by Robertson, and the chronological pattern of divine names ( אלהי ישראל, עם יהודה ) noted by Freedman in early Hebrew poetry, all seem to point to a date of composition either in the latter part of the 12th century B.C. or in the early part of the 11th century B.C.

It is the purpose of this study to examine not only the Song of Deborah, but also any relevant extra-biblical data which may provide a Sitz im Leben for the Song and determine a possible dating of the events commemorated in the Song. Therefore, a detailed study of the Song of Deborah in the light of the Versions, Rashi and Kimchi is made, followed by an examination of the amphictyony hypothesis as it relates to the Song. An attempt is made to determine a possible dating of the battle and also a dating of the

poem by reference to the events commemorated in the Song and to the linguistic evidence found in it. An appendix dealing with scansion of Hebrew poetry and of the Song of Deborah itself is added to indicate the poetic style employed by the poet and to give the complete Hebrew text of the Song.

CHAPTER I  
 A STUDY OF JUDGES CHAPTER 5  
 IN THE LIGHT OF  
 THE VERSIONS, RASHI AND KIMCHI

The prose account in ch. 4 involves Deborah and Barak, and Judg. 5:1 should be regarded as an editorial link between the prose and the poetry of ch. 5.<sup>1</sup> Repetitive parallelism, rhythm and meter, forms of Hebrew poetry found throughout the Song of Deborah, are not apparent in v. 1.<sup>2</sup> The superscription therefore does not seem to be an integral part of the poem.

The grammar seems to relegate 'and Barak' to a secondary position, or else suggests this is even a gloss.<sup>3</sup> However, it is a fairly common practice of biblical Hebrew to make a verb agree with the first portion of a double subject. A similar link verse or historical introduction to a poem is found in Ex. 15:1

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<sup>1</sup>James D. Martin, The Book of Judges, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible. Ed. F.R. Ackroyd, A.R.C. Leaney, J.W. Parker (Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Robert G. Boling, Judges, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>John Gray, Joshua, Judges and Ruth (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1967), p. 276, believes that the original text did not include the words 'and Barak'.



( אִז יִשְׁרַר מֹשֶׁה וְזַבְנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל ) in which the masc. sing. verb is used to give prominence to the major singer or reciter, Moses, who speaks on behalf of the children of Israel.<sup>4</sup> It is quite possible that Deborah is represented in v. 1 as expressing the words of thanksgiving on behalf of all the people. Barak's name is coupled with Deborah's in the superscription probably because of the prominent part he played in the battle and subsequent victory.

The ascription of the poem to Deborah and Barak is encouraged by verses 7 and 12. With respect to Deborah, שְׁקַמְתִּי (v. 7) would identify her as the author or reciter of the Song if it were construed as 1st. person. This is probably how it was taken and וְתִשַׁר דְּבוֹרָה in v. 1 has to be related to this. שְׁקַמְתִּי however is more probably an archaic form of the 2nd. person feminine.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. Num. 12:1 וְתִדְבֵר מֵרִיב וְאֶהְרֹן in which a fem. sing. verb occurs before a fem. sing. and a masc. sing. noun; and Judg. 1:3 וְיִאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְשִׁמּוֹן in which an entire tribe (Judah) speaks, and the masc. sing. verb is used. In such cases there exists a tribal interest, and the group speaks as one.

<sup>5</sup>The relative שֶׁ is used instead of אֲשֶׁר. According to G.F. Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges, 8th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1966), 144f., they are of different origin, and may have existed side by side in all periods of the language.

LXX. A and B ἀναστῆ 'she arose' (v. 7) render the two occurrences of קמתִי by the 3rd. person. Vulg. donec surgeret 'until she arose' agrees with LXX. Pesh. 'dm dꞗmt 'n' dbwr' 'until I Deborah arose' and Targ. דאשתלחית אנא דבורה 'until I Deborah was commissioned' indicate the 1st. person of the verb. Rashi comments on עד שקמתי : 'When I arose' thus reading the 1st person. Kimchi's exegesis gives precedency to Deborah as the singer of the Song: 'Deborah did according to that which was first practised when Miriam and Aaron spoke.' Pesh., Targ., Rashi and Kimchi seem to have been influenced by the theory that Deborah was the author of the Song.<sup>6</sup>

Instead of קמתִי giving rise to ותשר in v. 1, the reverse is suggested, that the verb in v. 7 was altered under the influence of v. 1. However, if v. 1 is an early editorial link, ותשר undoubtedly would have been influenced by קמתִי .

Similar forms of the 2nd. fem. sing. with the old ending 'i' are found in Jer. 2:20 שִׁבְרְתִי 'you broke',

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<sup>6</sup>NEB renders 'until I arose' with a footnote (or, 'you').

נִקְרַחְתָּ 'you snapped', and in Micah 4:13 וְהִתְחַבַּחְתָּ  
 'and you shall devote'.<sup>7</sup> Robert Gordis, in his  
 discussion of נִקְרַח and corresponding verb forms with  
 yodh, states:

In a number of instances, the older, more  
 original נִקְרַח occurs in the Kethib. This is  
 also true of the corresponding second person  
 feminine singular of the perfect ( קִטְלִיתָ ).  
 This final yodh was later discarded, as in  
 Syriac, though kept in the imperfect and before  
 suffixes. <sup>8</sup>

G-K also notes:

Where the Masora apparently regards the נִקְרַח as  
 the termination of the 2nd. sing. fem., e.g. in  
 Jer. 2:20 (twice), Mi. 4:13, it has rather  
 taken the form as 1st. pers. sing. (cf. Stade,  
 Gramm., p. 253); so in Ju. 5:7, where נִקְרַחְתָּ ,  
 on account of verse 12, must either have  
 originally been intended as 2nd. sing. fem., or  
 is due to an erroneous pronunciation of the  
 form קִטְמַת as נִקְרַח instead of 3rd. sing.  
 fem. נִקְרַחַת (as LXX). <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>G-K 44 h, notes that 2nd. fem. has sometimes a yodh  
 at the end, as in נִקְרַחְתָּ 'you went' (Jer. 31:21; cf.  
 Jer. 2:33; 3:4,5; 4:19; 46:11, and so commonly in  
 Jeremiah; Ezek. 16:18; Micah 4:13; Ruth 3:3,4). נִקְרַחְתָּ ,  
 etc., is really intended, for the vowel signs in the  
 text belong to the marginal reading נִקְרַח (without  
 yodh) as in the corresponding pronoun נִקְרַח ( נִקְרַח ).  
 The ordinary form has rejected the final shewa, but it  
 regularly reappears when pronominal suffixes are added.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Gordis, The Biblical Text in the Making. A  
 Study of the Kethib-Qere (New York: KTAV Publishing  
 House Inc., 1971), 101f.

<sup>9</sup>G-K, 121, n. 1.

v. 12 mentions Barak with the singer of the Song, and this has been taken by some as the occasion on which the Song was sung antiphonally by himself and Deborah.<sup>10</sup> The connection between Barak and the reciting of the Song is not made by v. 12 which exhorts both Deborah and him to vigorous war-like action. The apostrophe in v. 12 ( עוררי עוררי דבורה ) has encouraged the idea that Deborah is the singer aroused to utter a song, whereas Barak ( קום ברק ) is exhorted to take captives. The imperative forms עוררי and קום must either be taken in their usual sense as expressing a command, admonition or request, or as self-invocation with reference to preparation by Deborah for the ensuing battle by self-arousal of her determination. However, it seems unlikely that on the one hand Deborah is described as addressing a summons to herself, while in the second line Barak is exhorted to take captives rather than to inner contemplation. The imperative forms appear to exhort both Deborah and Barak to action; she to rally and encourage the troops, and he to take war-like action. The apostrophe (v. 12) does not support Barak's involvement as a singer, but does

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<sup>10</sup>C.F. Kiel and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. II, 'Judges', trans. by, James D. Martin (Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975), p. 308.

indicate his role as a warrior. There was a desire to mention both Deborah and Barak as associates, although the activity of reciting the poem by Deborah is suggested only if the verb ( שקמתי ) in v. 7 is taken as first person. However, שקמתי rendered 'you arose' would comply with v. 12 ( עורכי ), and with v. 15 ( עס-דבורה ) in which Deborah is addressed either in the 2nd or 3rd person. שקמתי is more probably an archaic form of the 2nd person feminine.<sup>11</sup>

The superscription may be rendered:

וַתִּשֶׁר דְּבוֹרָה וּבָרַק בֶּן-אַבִּינָעַם  
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאֹמֶר

Then sang Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam,  
on that day, saying:

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 145; and C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges (London: Rivingtons, 1918), p. 116. Burney, p. 105, voices the opinion of most scholars that it is highly improbable that the Song was actually composed by Deborah.

## V. 2.

בפרע פרעות

The connection of פּרע with 'leader' and 'leading' is old and can be traced back to early exegesis. One of the recensions of LXX. A (cf. Origen and Theodotian) ἐν τῷ ἄρξασθαι ἀρχηγούς ἐν Ἰσραήλ is rendered 'in the leading of leaders in Israel'. פּרע if rendered 'leader' is found only in Judg. 5:2 and Deut. 32:42, and the term is not used to indicate 'leader' in any other biblical passage where 'leaders' or 'chieftains' are mentioned, and both of these passages are open to a considerable measure of ambiguity.<sup>12</sup>

LXX. B's rendering ἀπεκαλύφθη ἀποκάλυμμα ἐν Ἰσραήλ 'a revelation was revealed in Israel' which introduces a reference to revelation or theophany is not altogether clear, although it should perhaps be

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<sup>12</sup>BDB I 1 renders בפרע פרעות 'for the leading of the leaders' or 'for the loosing of locks' (cf. BDB II פּרע 'long hair of head, locks'). פרעות occurs only in this passage and in Deut. 32:42 מראש פרעות where it is translated 'from the long-haired heads of the enemy' (RSV); 'from the head of leaders of the foe' (RV); and 'the heads of the enemy princes' (NEB); cf. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 108.

related to BDB פגח 'to uncover', but this may be connected with the taking off of clothes rather than with revelation. Symmachus ἐν τῷ ἀνακαλύψασθαι κεφαλᾶς 'in the uncovering of heads' is probably a reference to 'long locks of the head'. Presumably Symmachus was attempting to render the Hebrew text as a 'revelation' as did LXX. B, but as a showing forth or uncovering of the head, and therefore is a reference to 'uncovering of heads'. However LXX. B ἀνακαλύπτω (by itself) has no connection with 'long hair'.

Pesh. bpwr' nwt d'tpr' 'ysr' yl 'Concerning the retribution which Israel exacted' attaches the Aramaic sense of פגח 'retribution' to פגח פגח פגח, as does the Targ. paraphrase which refers to the defeat of Sisera:

When the house of Israel rebelled against the law, nations came against them and expelled them from the townships. But when they repented and were subject to the law, they prevailed against their enemies. They expelled them from the territory of the land of Israel. Therefore (it is written) concerning the retribution (involved in) the shattering of Sisera and his armies and concerning the wonder and salvation which was wrought for Israel, when their sages again studied openly in the synagogues, teaching the people the word of the Law, therefore bless and praise the Lord.

Targ. follows the same line of interpretation as Rashi who renders פגח as פגח 'breeches' and understands

'revenge' as 'when breeches were made against Israel' (i.e. Israel's territory was invaded). Israel had forsaken God, and only after they were punished and had voluntarily repented of their sins was salvation wrought by the Lord. Rashi comments:

When breeches ( פְּרָעוֹת ) were made against Israel by the worshippers of the stars (i.e. idolators), because they (the Israelites) had forsaken the Lord, and the people repented of their own free will, bless the Lord for the salvation which he wrought.

Kimchi glosses בפרע פרעות with בנקום נקמת which he renders into Aramaic איתפרע פורענותא 'when vengeance was exacted on behalf of Israel'.

Pesh., Targ. and Kimchi (cf. Rashi) associate פרע with 'avenge' and paraphrase v. 2 as the avenging of Israel's sufferings under Canaanite oppression. However, this sense of פרע, although common in Aramaic, is not paralleled in MT in which נקם is regularly used. This would place some doubt upon the rendering of פרע as 'vengeance'.<sup>13</sup>

Although the meaning of בפרע פרעות is obscure, and rests upon insecure etymological conjecture, the usage of פרע in biblical Hebrew favours the

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<sup>13</sup>Cf. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 109.



rendering 'long locks'.<sup>14</sup> The Nazarite vow (Num. 6:5) may be rendered 'he shall let the locks ( פְּרָע ) of hair ( שֵׁער ) of his head grow long' (cf. NEB 'he shall let his hair grow long' (i.e. unbound). The preceding line 'During the whole term of his vow no razor shall touch his head...' is a reference to the Nazarite's long hair which serves him as a mark of distinction and consecration to service during the period of his vow. Judg. chs. 13-16 associate Samson's Nazarite vow (cf. 13:5; 16:17) with the source of his great strength which remains as long as his hair is not shorn. However אַת-שֶׁבַע מַחֲלָפוֹת רֹאשׁוֹ 'the seven braids of his head (16:19) does not use the verb פָּרַע , and so this passage does not offer exegetical help in the translation of Judg. 5:2. The priests of Zadok are commanded not to let their hair grow long: 'They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long' (Ezek. 44:20 לֹא יִשְׁלַחֵהוּ ) lest it interfere in the performance of their priestly functions.<sup>15</sup> Lev. 13:45 rendered: 'One who suffers from a malignant

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<sup>14</sup>Moore, Judges, p. 137f.; cf. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 107; W.F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' JPOS, 2 (1922), p. 69.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Lev. 10:6 לֹא תִפְרָעוּ אֶל תִּפְרָעוּ 'you shall not leave your hair dishevelled'; and Lev. 21:10 אַת-רֹאשׁוֹ לֹא יִפְרָע .

skin-disease shall wear his clothes torn, leave his hair dishevelled' ( וְרֵאשׁוֹ זְהָהּ פָּרַע ) probably is intended as a means of detection of the leper.<sup>16</sup> Laws concerning jealousy entail the unbinding of the accused woman's head as a sign of mourning and as a token of shame.<sup>17</sup> Num. 5:18 is rendered: 'He shall set the woman before the Lord, uncover her head ( וְפָרַע אֶת-רֵאשׁ ), and place the grain-offering of protestation in her hands; it is a grain-offering for jealousy.'

The many indications in the Old Testament of a connection between long hair and a state of ritual preparation for a vow or sign, or between long hair and strength, give weight to the assumption that פָּרַע refers to 'long hair'. Burney maintains that Babylonian (or, Assyrian) pirtu means 'long hair' (of the head). The same substantive is seen in the Arabic far' 'long hair' (of a woman), 'full, or, abundant

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<sup>16</sup> Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targum (N.Y.: The Judaica Press, Inc., 1975), p. 1235, states that פָּרַע is a figurative expression for leprous (cf. Lev. 13:45) and means 'bareheaded' (i.e. the disease or shame is revealed).

<sup>17</sup> C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 107, and Keil-Delitzsch, Commentary on the O. T., p. 308, agree that פָּרַע has the meaning 'to let loose', 'let go'. This sense of the verb is seen in the act of unbinding or uncovering the head by removal of the turban, thus signifying a state of mourning.

hair'.<sup>18</sup> The preference for the interpretation 'when the leaders led' depends upon that the Arabic fara'a has the sense 'overtop' or 'surpass in height' and then 'became superior in eminence, nobility' and hence is derived the noun far' 'noble' or 'man of eminence'.<sup>19</sup>

C. Rabin connects Arabic far' to 'hair' and sees little justification for an interpretation 'took the lead' from far' 'to be lofty' or 'eminent'. He states:

Arabic far' is not the best word to adduce as etymological justification, for the Lisan (X, 117) shows it to mean 'eminent man' only in one standard idiom where it is metaphorical. The sense of eminence exists in tafarra'a min 'to be nobler than' and tafarra'a 'to marry a woman of the chief family of a tribe'. Some derivations mean 'summit', or the like, and others 'to go up' or 'to go down'. The original sense of the root seems to have been 'top of the head', as in fara'a ra'sahu 'he hit him on the head' (cf. Engl. slang 'to crown someone'). To tafarra'a 'to marry the chief's daughter', the synonyms are tanassā, from nāṣiyah 'forelock' and tadharrā from dhirwah 'top of the head', also 'summit'. From 'head' seem to be derived far', Hebrew paera' 'head full of hair (as opposed to bald) ... There is

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<sup>18</sup>BDB III פָּרַע , rendered 'to unbind (hair)' and 'to uncover' has the Arabic cognate 'to be empty, vacant, unoccupied' and the Syriac cognate 'to uncover'.

<sup>19</sup>Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 108; John Gray, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, p. 276, points out that 'leaders' is not the natural translation of the Hebrew, as the only justification is that the possible cognate of the words translated 'took the lead' means 'to be lofty'.

thus very little support for the meaning  
'leader'. 20

W. R. Smith points out that among the Semites and other ancient peoples the hair-offering is common, not only in mourning but in the worship of the gods. He notes that Achilles allowed his hair to remain long as a dedication to the river god, and it was cut as an honour to the god only upon his safe return from Troy. The Semites practised initiatory rites of admission into religious and civil communities, the hair offering being one of the oldest acts of dedication to the god. The Pentateuchal law, however, recognizes the hair-offering only in the case of the peculiar vow of the Nazarite. Smith states that the hair-offering is made the subject of a vow, and the vow is the recognized way of antedating a future act of service and making its efficacy begin at once. One is committed to active participation in or preparation for the service once the act of dedication has been made. If a man dedicates himself to a particular service (e.g. warfare) his hair becomes the visible mark of his consecration and is inviolable until the vow has been discharged. Arab pilgrims who had resolved to journey

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<sup>20</sup>C. Rabin, 'Judges V, 2 and the "Ideology of Deborah's War",' JJS, 6 (1955), p. 131 f.

to a religious shrine, were bound by that resolve, as to a vow, and were not allowed to either cut or comb or wash the hair until the pilgrimage was fulfilled.<sup>21</sup>

John Gray suggests that the long 'love-locks' (nuwās) of the Bedouin, which were a sign of their manhood and the loss of which was a particular disgrace, may have been a practise retained by the Israelites, and might symbolize a reversion to desert conditions. However, relationship between Bedouin and Israelite is tenuous, and attempts to prove desert origins for Israel, other than the exodus experience, are vague and

inconclusive.<sup>22</sup> R. C. Thompson and R. W. Hutchinson note that a tablet from Ashurnasirpal's palace, dated no later than the ninth century B.C. 'gives in poetic form the details of the wars of early Assyria, particularly against the Kassites who had occupied Babylonia. Column II deals with the events of the reign of Ashur-aballit II (c. 1386 - 1369 B.C.), the king of Assyria ... opening with the address of the

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<sup>21</sup>William Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1927), p. 325 and p. 332 f.

<sup>22</sup>John Gray, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, p. 276.

Assyrian troops to their king.'<sup>23</sup> Column II, lines 39 and 40 are rendered:

Baring (their) breasts,  
                   they throw aside their clothing,  
 Gathering up (their) flowing hair,  
                   they bound (their) shields behind (them).<sup>24</sup>

Evidence is given here of the practice of warriors gathering up their long hair when going into battle. According to P. C. Craigie this does not give positive evidence of growing long hair as a specific act of consecration to warfare. Line 39 of the tablet indicates that the more obvious display of aggressive action is the discarding of clothing which might be a hindrance in battle.<sup>25</sup> However, line 40 contains a reference to the flowing hair of the warriors, and implies that warriors wore long hair.

The philology which associates 𐎠𐎢𐎡 with 'leading' and 'leaders' is dubious, and the two biblical occurrences (Deut. 32:42; Judg. 5:2) are better explained on the assumption that the reference

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<sup>23</sup>R. Campbell Thompson and R.W. Hutchinson, 'The Excavations on the Temple of Nabu at Nineveh,' Archaeologia, 29 (1929), 126 f.

<sup>24</sup>Thompson and Hutchinson, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup>P.C. Craigie, 'A Note on Judges V2,' VT, 18 (1968), p. 398.

of פָּרַע is to 'long hair', and בְּפִיעַ פְּרַעוֹת is best rendered 'when long hair was unbound in Israel'.

בהתנדב עם ברכו יהוה

LXX. A renders עַם בַּהֲתַנְדַּב as ἐν προαιρέσει λαοῦ 'in the choosing of the people' and has the meaning 'to choose a deliberate course of action' (cf. vv. 13-15a, 18 which commend those who chose to respond to the call to battle). LXX. B ἐν τῷ ἀκουσιασθῆναι λαοῦ refers to 'involuntary action' and has the sense of committing 'unintentional sin' or 'sin through ignorance' which does not agree with MT or LXX. A. The verb ἀκουσιασθῆναι as a rendering of נִתְנַח appears to be an inner Greek corruption of ἐκουσιασθῆναι 'to freely offer' (cf. Aquila). The Sept. rendering of II Esdras 7:16 has μετὰ ἐκουσιασμοῦ 'with free-will offerings' and ἐκουσιαζομένων 'freely offered', concurring in the meaning of Judg. 5:2b.

Vulg. Qui sponte obtulistis de Israel animas vestras ad periculum 'You Israelites who freely put your lives in peril' gives the sense of the people freely offering themselves to battle against oppression. Pesh. btsbwht' d'm' : sbhw lmry' 'Concerning the praise of the people, praise the Lord'

is a paraphrase of MT.

Targ. וכך תבו למעבד אוריתא 'and when they repented and were subject to the law' and Rashi והתנדב העם לשיב בתשובה 'and the people repented of their own free will' associate בהתנדב עם with a willingness to repent. Kimchi on the other hand associates the verb with a willingness to fight and win the war. He comments on בהתנדב עם : 'When Israel willingly mobilized her strength to go out to war'.

There can be little doubt that Rashi and Kimchi understood בהתנדב as 'offering freely' and this is certainly true of LXX. B (corrected) and Vulg.

2 Ch. 17:16 המתנדב ליהודה is used in reference to military service, possibly as a mercenary.<sup>26</sup> In Neh. 11:2 the sense is given of men volunteering for a special service ( המתנדבים לשבת בירושלם ). The verb is used 'to offer a free-will offering' for the first temple (1 Ch. 29:5, 6, 9, 14, 17) and for the second temple (Ezra 1:6, 2:68, 3:5).<sup>27</sup>

LXX. A and B εὐλογεῖτε τὸν κύριον and Vulg.

<sup>26</sup>BDB I נדב 'to incite, impel' is rendered 'volunteer' for war in the Hithpael.

<sup>27</sup>C. Rabin, 'Judges V, 2 and the "Ideology of Deborah's War"', p. 129, notes that these passages (Ch., Ezra, Neh.) are from post-exilic usage, but it is quite probable that the late use is derived from the fem. noun נדבה.



benedicite Domino see the people's rising against oppression as the occasion to 'bless the Lord'. Targ. suggests that Yahweh is blessed and praised for the 'wonder and salvation which was wrought for Israel'. Kimchi comments on בַּהֲתַנְדֵּב עִם : 'When Israel willingly mobilizes to go to war. As if to say "for the evil and for the good, bless the Lord".' The meaning of this is perhaps 'whatever the outcome of the struggle may be, bless the Lord.'

בְּרַנְנוּ יְהוָה seems to mean 'celebrate his praise by reciting his mighty acts'. Thus v. 3 following calls kings and princes to hear of Yahweh's righteous acts on behalf of his people. 'Bless the Lord' is addressed to those who hear the Song and the story of his mighty acts. It does not concern those who take part in the events described in the Song. This appears to be the interpretation of LXX. A and B and Targ. Kimchi's comment could be interpreted as prophetic and anticipate what is to eventuate. This may be Rashi's exegesis as well ('bless the Lord for the salvation which he wrought'). However the Song is one of thanksgiving for the victory, and the more reasonable interpretation of 'Bless the Lord' is that of grateful celebration and praise of Yahweh.

V. 2 may be rendered:

בְּפֹלַעַ פְּרָעוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
 בְּהִתְנַדְּבַ עַם בְּרַכְוֵי יְהוָה

When long hair was unbound in Israel,  
 when the people freely offered themselves for warfare;  
 Bless the Lord.

V. 3

שמעו מלכים האזינו רזנים

LXX. A and B (cf. Origen) render מלכים as βασιλεῖς 'kings' (cf. Vulg. reges).<sup>28</sup> רזנים is rendered by LXX. A and B as σατράπαι 'rulers' (cf. Vulg. principes 'leaders').<sup>29</sup> Targ. renders מלכים and רזנים 'kings' and 'rulers' (as does Pesh., following MT): 'Hear, O kings, who came with Sisera; give heed, O rulers, who were with Jabin, king of Canaan.' Targ. understands the summons to be directed to Sisera and the coalition of Canaanite kings, and to Jabin, a king of Canaan, and the rulers who accompanied him. Kimchi interprets מלכים as מלכי הארץ 'the

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<sup>28</sup>BDB 777 which has the Aramaic cognate 'to be weighty, grave, firm of judgment' renders the m. Pt. רזנים 'rulers, potentates' in Old Testament poetical diction. It is parallel to 'kings' in Hab. 1:10 "At kings ( במלכים ) they scoff, and of rulers ( רזנים ) they make sport" (cf. Ps. 2:2; Prov. 8:15, 31:4), and parallel to "judges of the earth" in Isa. 40:23: "Who bring princes ( רזנים ) to nought, and makes the rulers ( שפטי ) of the earth as nothing".

<sup>29</sup>S. Langdon, 'The Assyrian Root rasānu, Hebrew 777, ' AJSL, 28 (1911-12), pp. 144-5, connects 777 'honourable, noble' with the Assyrian root rušunu 'important, dignified' and hence 'rulers'. Cf. W.F. Albright, 'The Amarna Letters from Palestine', CAH, 2 (1966), p. 20, "In Canaanite circles ... the prince was called 'king' -- Akkadian šarru, Canaanite milku".

kings of the earth' and adds: 'And there are those who interpret it: He (the poet) speaks with reference to Israel after the manner in which they say, "All Israel are sons of righteousness".' This explanation is somewhat obscure, but Kimchi's meaning is perhaps that 'all Israel are sons of righteousness' is hyperbole and by a similar hyperbole Israel is addressed as 'kings and rulers'.

The first stich שמעו מלכים האזינו רזנים clearly is a bidding to 'kings and rulers' to hearken to the victory celebrations in which are recounted the triumphal acts of Yahweh on behalf of his people. Moore understands these words to be addressed to the rulers of the nations of the world who not only learn of Yahweh's mighty acts but who become witnesses of his greatness.<sup>30</sup> As a rhetorical invocation, the line introduces the hymn of praise to Yahweh which follows. Yahweh's sovereignty over all rulers is acknowledged, a conventional motif in passages on the kingship of Yahweh.<sup>31</sup> Prophetic writings exhibit a similar device in which the universal power of Yahweh is stressed, and kings and princes of other nations are summoned to

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<sup>30</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges. p. 137.

<sup>31</sup>J. Blenkinsopp, 'Ballad Style and Psalm Style in the Song of Deborah,' Bibl, 42 (1961), p. 66.

witness to his universal rule (Isa. 40:23, 41:1-5, 52:15, Hab. 1:10, Ps. 2:10-12).<sup>32</sup> The Song of Deborah echoes the universal call proclaimed in the opening invocation of the Song of Moses to discern the greatness of Yahweh (cf. Isa. 1:2):

Give ear to what I say, O heavens,  
earth, listen to my words ...

When I call aloud the name of the Lord,  
you shall respond, 'Great is our God ...

the creator whose work is perfect,  
and all his ways are just,  
a faithful God, who does no wrong,  
righteous and true is He.

The formulatic phrase, having the same pair of imperatives in the same sequence as in v. 3a is standard in the Psalms:<sup>33</sup>

Hear this ( שִׁמְעוּ זאת ) all you nations;  
Listen ( הִשְׁמַעוּ ), all who inhabit this world ...<sup>34</sup>

These imperatives are often coupled in poetical parallelism:<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup>James D. Martin, The Book of Judges, p. 64.

<sup>33</sup>R.G. Boling, Judges, p. 107.

<sup>34</sup>Ps. 49:1; cf. Pss. 54:2, 143:1.

<sup>35</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 137.

Up, Balak, and listen:  
hear what I am charged to say, son of Zippor.<sup>36</sup>

The nouns 'kings ... rulers' are often coupled together  
in the same word sequence:

The kings of the earth stand ready,  
and the rulers conspire together  
against the Lord and his anointed king.<sup>37</sup>

אנכי ליהוה אנכי אשירה

LXX. A ἐγὼ τῷ κυρίῳ ᾄσομαι 'I shall sing to the  
Lord' omits a second אנכי.<sup>38</sup> LXX. B ἐγὼ εἶμι τῷ κυρίῳ  
ἐγὼ εἶμι ᾄσομαι uses more words than are  
necessary to express the meaning (in LXX, pleonastic  
for ἐγὼ ἐγὼ εἶμι τῷ κυρίῳ ).<sup>39</sup> Repetition here is  
for emphasis (cf. Gen. 37:30b; Ps. 76:8) and to give it  
the force of 'I am to (i.e. I belong to) the Lord'.  
The Hebrew text is interpreted as having the intention  
to emphasize אנכי as the poet and as the one who  
belongs to and extols Yahweh. Targ. understands the

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<sup>36</sup>Num. 23:18; cf. Gen. 4:23.

<sup>37</sup>Ps. 2:2; cf. Prov. 8:15, 31:4; Isa. 40:23; Hab.  
1:10.

<sup>38</sup>BH Stutt. n. 3b, indicates that the second אנכי  
is omitted in certain Greek versions.

<sup>39</sup>L-S, G, p. 489.

line to represent Deborah as the speaker who expresses the praises of the assembly: 'Deborah spoke in prophecy before the Lord: I give praise, thanksgiving, and blessing before the Lord God of Israel.' Pesh. follows MT: 'I will give praise to the Lord, and I will sing to the Lord, the God of Israel.' Vulg. indicates a setting in which a psalm of praise is sung: 'I, I to the Lord will sing, I will sing a psalm to the Lord God of Israel.'

Moore suggests that the repetition of the pronoun lends a note of force and therefore triumph in the treatment of the subject: 'Observe the repetition of the pronoun, which has a weight in Hebrew that we cannot give it in translation. The note of triumph rings in this exaltation of the subject.'<sup>40</sup> Burney states that the first אֲנִי of stich two is dependent upon and properly the 'over-hanging subject of the verb אֲשִׁירָה (a nominativus pendens) and therefore can not be separated from the verb and rendered: "I, even I will sing" but should be read: "I, to Yahweh, I will sing".'<sup>41</sup> Boling considers 'I to Yahweh / I' an

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<sup>40</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 138.

<sup>41</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 109.

excellent example of early repetitive parallelism.<sup>42</sup> NEB indicates the repetition and the nominative pending by repeating the subject and the verb: 'I will sing, I will sing to the Lord.' Martin suggests that אֲנִי־יְהוָה probably indicates the cultic leader who proclaims the Song on behalf of the congregation and as such is the prototype of later cultic prophets.<sup>43</sup> However this may be, it is certain that אֲנִי־יְהוָה is the poet whoever that poet may be.

Repetition either has the purpose of identifying the speaker as one who belongs to Yahweh and who extols Yahweh, or simply of adding force to the note of triumph in the Song. The intention of the speaker or poet seems to be to direct attention from self to Yahweh who is exalted, which is apparently the way MT, Pesh. and Vulg. understand the stich. LXX. A also seems to have the intention of directing attention to Yahweh by omitting the second 'I'. 'I (who) belong to the Lord, I will sing' is awkward, and lacks a sense of rhythm and parallelism. The stich has better balance

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<sup>42</sup>R.G. Boling, Judges, p. 107.

<sup>43</sup>James D. Martin, The Book of Judges, p. 64. Cf. Artur Weiser, 'Das Deboralied' ZAW, 71 (1959), 73. Weiser maintains that אֲנִי־יְהוָה is a cultic interjection ich will dem Jahwe and is found in the 'cultic renewal ceremony', cf. Josh. 24:15: "But I and my family, we will worship the Lord".



and rhythm when rendered: 'I to the Lord, I shall sing'.

לְשִׁירָא לַיהוָה לִזְמֵר

LXX. A and B equate זָמַר with ψαλῶ 'to strike, twitch with the fingers' hence 'to strike musical strings', a term used in LXX as the technical expression for singing with an instrumental accompaniment (cf. Ex. 15:20 'And Miriam ... took up her tambourine, and all the women followed her, dancing to the sound of tambourines; and Miriam sang them this refrain ...'). Vulg. psallam also is rendered: 'a song sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments'.

The Hebrew roots שָׁיר and זָמַר are found in sequence in the Psalms:

Sing the praises ( שָׁיר ) of God,  
raise a psalm ( זָמַר ) to his name.<sup>44</sup>

The verb זָמַר is used of singing to the accompaniment of an instrument in Ps. 33:2, 3:

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<sup>44</sup>Ps. 68:4; cf. Pss. 101:1, 104:33, 105:2.

Give thanks to the Lord on the harp;  
 sing to him psalms ( זמרו-לו )  
 to the ten-stringed lute.  
 Sing to him a new song;  
 strike up with all your art  
 and shout in triumph. 45

Thus זמר denotes singing to the accompaniment of a musical instrument, and is rendered in v. 3 'I shall raise a psalm', 'I shall strike up a song', or 'I shall make melody'.

V. 3 may be rendered:

שְׁמַעוּ מְלָכִים הִאֲזִינָה לְזָנִים  
 אָנֹכִי לַיהוָה אָנֹכִי אֲשִׁירָה  
 אֲזַמֵּר לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Hear, O kings; give ear, O rulers;  
 I to the Lord, I shall sing;  
 I shall make melody to the Lord God of Israel.

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<sup>45</sup>Cf. Pss. 144:9, 147:7.

Vv. 4 - 5

זה סיני

The Versions reproduce MT, stichs one and two, precisely. Rashi comments on *ה' בצאתך משעיר* :

This is a reference to the giving of the Law, as it is said (in Deut. 33:2), he shone forth for them from Seir. And what is it's meaning? Then spoke Deborah: The Torah is severe on those who diverge from it, and good to those who cleave to it, for in terror and power it was given. And so Israel is delivered into the hands of the idolators because she has deviated from it (the Law). When she freely resolves to occupy herself with it, she will be saved.

Deborah, according to Rashi, infers that the oppression which is realized in war upon Israel is punishment for the people's disobedience of the Torah. Rashi's commentary is important because it is indicative of one interpretation of vv. 4-5 that it refers to the giving of the Law at Sinai. Rashi interprets *זה סיני* as: '... abbreviated scripture (which) refers to what happened to it because of the fact that the Lord descended on it.'

Targ. (Sperber) reads: 'The mountains shook before the Lord. This Sinai was shaken. Smoke arose like the smoke of a furnace because the Lord, the God of Israel, was revealed on it.' It should be noted

that Targ. interprets vv. 4-5 as a reference to the giving of the Law at Sinai, and the natural phenomena which attended the theophany. There is nothing in Targ. which connects vv. 4-5 with the coming of Yahweh from his seat on Mount Sinai to Canaan in order to lead the Israelites in their wars of conquest.

The editor of the Song of Deborah apparently assumed that Seir, the poetical reference to Yahweh's ancient seat, was actually Sinai, as he included the words זֶה סִינַי in v. 5.<sup>46</sup>

Deut. 33:1 connects Sinai with Seir:

The Lord came from Sinai  
and shone forth from Seir.  
He showed himself from Mount Paran ...

Mount Paran is identified as one of the mountains in the mountain range of Edom. Hab. 3:3 also identifies Seir with Yahweh's seat:

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<sup>46</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 140 notes: 'The ancient seats of Yahweh were not in Canaan, but in the south, at Sinai ... or Horeb ... the latter is the tradition of the northern tribes ... and is probably to be assumed here. Horeb was in the land of Midian, i.e. in Arabia, east of the eastern prong on the Red Sea, the gulf of 'Aqabah ... from Horeb Yahweh would come into Canaan from Seir, from the plateau of Edom, as in our verse.'

God comes from Teman,<sup>47</sup>  
the Holy One from Mount Paran ...

Targ. and Rashi compare vv. 4-5 to the event depicted in Ex. 19:18f. (cf. 20:18-21): 'Mount Sinai was all smoking because the Lord had come down upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln; all the people were terrified, and the sound of the trumpet grew even louder. Whenever Moses spoke, God answered him in a peal of thunder.' Kimchi's commentary offers a different interpretation from that of Targ. and Rashi:

The reference to *בצאתך משעיר בצעודך משדה אדום* is explained by the circumstance that Israel began to fight against the nations after they had passed the mountain of Seir. They fought against Sihon and Og, and the Lord went ahead of them, and so they (Israel) were victorious over their enemies, and in his (the Lord's) power they prevailed in all these battles.

Here Yahweh the warrior God is associated with the march of conquest seen to have begun in the southern mountains, extending from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqabah, and located in the Song of Deborah in Seir, in the field of Edom, the two poetically linked to one geographical

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<sup>47</sup>i.e. the district of Edom, parallel to Seir; cf. Ezek. 25:12-15; Ob. 9.

area.<sup>48</sup> Kimchi's comment on /ה' מפני ה' refers to the trembling in fear of the Canaanites before Yahweh:

... just as when Sinai trembled before the God of Israel, so trembled all the world before him, as scripture says: 'Terror falls upon them, and all the inhabitants of Canaan dissolve in fear' (cf. Ex. 15:15-16).

He is also offering an exegesis of ז'ה ס'ינ'י here. It is of note because his general interpretation (unlike that of Rashi) does not presuppose a reference to Law-giving at Sinai.

Rashi and Targ. view vv. 4-5 as a reference to manifestations of theophany on the occasion of the Law-giving at Sinai, whereas Kimchi suggests it is a reference to Yahweh's journeying from his seat in Seir with the conquering armies of Israel and with theophanic accompaniments. There is no suggestion in Judg. 5:4-5 of Law-giving, and the Song itself deals with the Canaanite war against Sisera. Yahweh's march from Seir, from the plains of Edom, is to Canaan where he led his people in battle against the forces of Sisera. In this battle, Yahweh employs storm and

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<sup>48</sup> Frank M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 86, n. 17. Cf. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 109; Moore, Judges, p. 140.

tempest (vv. 20, 21) to succor Israel. The Song is an account of the recent deliverance of Israel and the circumstances surrounding that event, and it is assumed that vv. 4-5 deal with that same event. Kimchi's reference to earlier wars against Sihon and Og are not a part of the events described in the Song. Therefore it can not be concluded that the war against Sisera is an extension or part of the conquest of Canaan. One can only say that as Yahweh helped his people Israel enter and conquer Canaan so he now marches out against the forces of Sisera. Likewise, as Yahweh once appeared on Sinai in theophany, so he now manifests his presence and leadership of his people in the storm theophany at the river Kishon.<sup>49</sup>

Yahweh's action at Megiddo may have reminded Israel of his appearing to Moses on Mount Sinai, but the present battle is the focus of attention, and Yahweh is praised for the immediate victory. The improbability of vv. 4-5 being a reference to the theophany at Sinai, and the probability of the verses being a reference to Yahweh's present help of Israel

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<sup>49</sup>Alexander Globe, 'The Text and Literary Structure of Judges 5:4-5,' Bibl, 55 (1974), p. 176, suggests that in addition to the traditional formula, a new element 'the clouds' is added which stresses the uniqueness of a new historical event.

with theophaic accompaniments, negate the possibility that the mountains mentioned in v. 5 are actually Sinai. Moore states: 'The words "that is Sinai" are a gloss to "the mountains" in the preceding clause; originally, as its form shows, a marginal note, made by some one to whom the language of v. 3f. suggested Ex. 19. Subsequently it intruded into the text in the wrong place. The rhythm of the passage also gains by the removal of the words.'<sup>50</sup> Burney does not doubt that *זה סיני* is a scribe's marginal note which has crept into the text, but must have been an early gloss because of its appearance in the Versions and in Ps. 68:8.<sup>51</sup>

Gray, on the other hand, suggests that 'the close affinity in language and conception with Deut. 33:2f. and Ps. 68:8f. (cf. Ps. 77:18f.; Mic. 1:3f.; etc.) indicates the stereotyped language of the liturgy, and relates not to the coming of Yahweh to the particular battle with Sisera, but ... to his presence in the Sacrament of the Covenant.'<sup>52</sup> Gray appears to be

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<sup>50</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 141. Moore also sees 'Sinai' in Ps. 68:8 as a gloss in the same way as in Judg. 5:5; cf. NEB 'the lord of Sinai' which appears to be a gloss to 'mountains'.

<sup>51</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 113.

<sup>52</sup>John Gray, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, p. 277.



saying that the reference is to the Law-giving at Sinai, or to cultic language associated with a Renewal of the Covenant Festival. However, there is no evidence in the Song itself of a Covenant Renewal Ceremony, and the improbability of the event being a reference to Law-giving at Sinai has been mentioned above. The Song is closely linked to the event (the battle against Sisera) and its literary style and content give evidence of an account of the event by a poet who was either an eye-witness or not far removed in time and place from the event.

It seems probable that *זה סיני* is exegetical comment (a marginal note which has got into the text), and rests on the exegesis of vv. 4-5 which is found in Targ. and Rashi.

ארץ רעשה

LXX. A and B *ἡ γῆ ἐσεισάσθη*, Vulg. *terra mota est*, and Targ. *ארעא זעת* (Pesh. agrees with Targ. and uses the same verb, *z't*), all agree upon the rendering of *ארץ רעשה* as 'the earth shook'. Kimchi interprets *ארץ רעשה* as *ותגעש ותרעש הארץ* 'the earth quaked and shook', citing Ps. 18:7 and 2 Sam. 22:8, and he takes this as an allusion to wars. NEB renders *רעשה*

'trembled' (cf. Ps. 68:9 NEB 'the earth trembled').<sup>53</sup>

In agreement with the Versions and Kimchi ארץ רעשה is rendered 'the earth shook'.

גמ-שמיס נטנ

LXX. B renders שמיס נטנ as ὁ οὐρανός ἔσταξεν δρόσους 'the heavens dripped dew'. LXX. B read נטנ twice, ἔσταξεν δρόσους and ἔσταξαν ὕδωρ and reinforces נטנ by the addition of the accusatives in both cases.<sup>54</sup> LXX. A interprets the phrase ἐξεστάθη 'were put in confusion' or 'were agitated'. Footnotes of LXX. B (cf. BH Stutt.) record the variants εσταλαξεν (σταλάζω 'dropping, dripping') for ἔσταξεν (στάζω 'dripping'), and εταραχθη (ταράσσω 'disturb, trouble') for ἐξεστάθη (ἐξίστημι 'confound'). These variants are synonyms of the LXX verbs (and appear to be a scholar's view of the text rather than original Ms). Vulg. caelique ac nubes distillaverunt aquis telescopes the

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<sup>53</sup>NEB renders רעשה in 2 Sam. 22:8 and Ps. 18:8 'quaked'; in Isa. 13:13 'shaken'; and in Ezek. 26:18 'quake'.

<sup>54</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 141, suggests that 'dripped' might have been taken up accidentally from the next hemistich.

two occurrences of  $\text{גָּשָׁם}$  in MT.  $\text{גָּשָׁם}$  (cf. LXX. B) is taken in the sense of 'falling rain', and depicts rain falling from the clouds. Pesh.  $\text{šmy nṭpw}$  'the heavens dripped' follows MT. Targ. (Sperber) reads:

Your law which you gave to them, to Israel, when they transgressed against it, the nations held sway over them, and when they repented with respect to it, they prevailed against their enemies. Lord in the day which you revealed yourself in connection with the giving of the Law from Seir, when your glory was manifested in the regions of Edom, the earth shook, also the heavens were humbled (  $\text{מָכָה}$  ), also the clouds dropped (  $\text{גָּשָׁם}$  ) rain.

LXX. A.  $\text{ἐξεστάθη}$  and Targ.  $\text{מָכָה}$  apparently derive  $\text{גָּשָׁם}^1$  differently from  $\text{גָּשָׁם}^2$ . Rashi briefly comments on  $\text{גָּשָׁם}$ : 'They drip refreshing dew'. It is not clear whether the comment on  $\text{גָּשָׁם}$  refers to  $\text{שָׁמַיִם}$  or to  $\text{עַבְיָם}$  and does not elucidate MT. Other than Targ. and LXX. A, the Versions (LXX. B, Vulg., Pesh.) support 'dripped' in MT.

Burney translates  $\text{שָׁמַיִם נִטְפָּר}$  'heavens rocked' i.e. with thunder.<sup>55</sup> Moore maintains that  $\text{מָגָה}$  is not 'melt away' as commonly affirmed, but 'move in waves, be violently agitated' reading  $\text{נִמְוָגָה}$  with

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<sup>55</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 112. According to Burney 'dropped, dripped' does not properly describe a turbulent sky; cf. BH Stutt. n. 4a, prp.

LXX. A ἔξεστάθη .<sup>56</sup> Albright suggests נָמַטָּה  
 ( מָטָּה ) 'were shaken' be read instead of נָטַפָּה  
 'dripped' as he believes 'drip' to be an anticlimatic  
 and absurd depiction of Yahweh's appearance as Lord of  
 the thunder.<sup>57</sup> Boling renders the text:

With thunder the skies rained,  
 with thunder the clouds rained water.

Boling interprets גַּם 'sound, voice, thunder'.<sup>58</sup>  
 Boling, along with Burney and Albright, place emphasis  
 upon the turbulence of the skies seen in the lowering  
 clouds, and the commotion created by the thunder. NEB  
 also vocalizes שָׁמַיִם נָטַפָּה as שָׁמַיִם נָטַפָּה 'heavens  
 quaked' apparently from טַפַּף, a verb not recorded in

<sup>56</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 141.

<sup>57</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse', JPOS, 2 (1922), p. 75.

<sup>58</sup>R.G. Boling, Judges, pp. 101 and 108; cf. Mitchell Dahood, Psalms III, AB (1970), 137:1, n. 4, and p. 268, comments on Ps. 137:1. 'Just as šām, "there", describes the place, adverbial gam describes the manner of weeping.' He therefore renders Ps. 137:1

על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו  
 גם-בכינו בזכרנו את-ציון

Beside the rivers in Babylon, there we sat;  
 loudly we wept, when we remembered you, O Zion.

Dahood further comments on gam in Psalms II, on Ps. 85:13 - 'with a loud voice the Lord gives rain'; and on Ps. 71:24 - 'aloud will my tongue rehearse your justice'.

the Lexicons. The second *לַמַּיִם* is rendered by NEB *לַמַּיִם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם* 'the clouds streamed down in torrents'. NEB may have been influenced here by LXX. A in which the heavens are depicted as being agitated in tempest and storm, and possibly by Targ. in which the heavens are humbled (brought low), which may have the sense of being 'under the control of Yahweh' to be used to help Israel through the storm and the rain.

*לַמַּיִם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם* seems to give the imagery not only of storm but of Yahweh coming in the storm. Yahweh descends from the heavens in storm theophany and the earth shakes, and beneath him mountains 'dissolve'. The dropping (lowering) of the skies may well have suggested to the poet the descent or approach of the Lord (in the storm) from the heavens. In a similar way, Micah describes Yahweh's advance from his dwelling-place to bring his judgment upon Israel and Judah:

For look, the Lord is leaving his dwelling-place;  
down he comes and walks on the heights of the earth.  
Beneath him mountains dissolve  
like wax before the fire,  
valleys are torn open,  
as when torrents pour down the hill-side.  
(Mi. 1:4)

Ps. 97:5 describes the approach of the Lord from the heavens:

The mountains melt like wax  
 as the Lord approaches,  
 the Lord of all the earth.  
 The heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
 and all peoples see his glory.

Judg. 5:4-5 appears to be a statement by the poet of Yahweh's cosmic activity originating from the heavens. It is a description of Yahweh's advance from heaven to earth, as the preceding lines 'when you went out from Seir ... marched out from the plains of Edom' are descriptive of Yahweh's advance from his ancient seat in Seir to the battlefield. Therefore שמים נטפן may be rendered 'and the heavens lowered'.

גם-עבים נטפן מים

LXX. B reads ἔσταξαν ὕδωρ 'dropped water', and Targ. has נגידן 'dropped rain'. BDB נטפן is rendered 'drop, drip', and with the accusative 'of clouds dropping water ( מים ) in storm'. The rain storm is apparently indicated here (cf. vv. 20-21), and rain is dropped upon the battlefield in great torrents. The stich is therefore rendered 'also the clouds dropped rain'.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 141 renders 'the clouds dropped water'.

גזלג םררר

LXX. A and B ὄρη ἔσαλεύθησαν 'the mountains shook' read גזלג , the Niph. Pf. of גזל 'shake', and not גזלג .<sup>60</sup> Ἐλωεί (LXX. B ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου Ἐλωεί ) which does not appear in LXX. A is apparently a transcription of גזלג . These translators were reading an unpointed text.<sup>61</sup> Vulg. montes fluxerunt 'the mountains melted' supposes that the reference is to the dissolving or liquidifying of the mountains.<sup>62</sup> Pesh., like LXX., supposes that םררר גזלג is a reference to the shaking of the mountains (wṭwr dlw 'and the mountains shook'), and like Vulg. (et Sinai) it eases the syntax of גזלג םררר (whn syny). Targ. (Sperber) also renders 'the mountains shook before the Lord.'<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Isa. 63:19 'the mountains shook ( גזלג ) before you'; cf. Isa. 64:2 and BH Stutt on Judg. 5:5.

<sup>61</sup>G-K 67 t, dealing with גזלג verbs states that beside the ordinary form of the perfect with pathah there is a form with holem, e.g. גזלג 'they are rolled together' (Isa. 34:4).

<sup>62</sup>BDB גזל 'to flow' is normally used in reference to waters, e.g. Num. 24:7 גזלג 'waters will flow'; cf. Job. 36:28 'the rain clouds pour down in torrents ( גזלג? ); Ps. 147:18; Isa. 45:8; Jer. 9:17; and Ex. 15:8 and Ps. 78:16 for the poetic use of גזלג 'streams'.

<sup>63</sup>NEB 'mountains shook in fear'; cf. RSV 'quaked'.

Rashi's view of vv. 4-5 follows the line of Targ., although he takes נזלו as 'melted' rather than 'shook'. On הרים נזלו he comments: 'Like flowing water, melted' ( נמוג ). On הרים נזלו Kimchi comments that this has to be connected with the thought of a cosmic battle ( מן שמים נלחמו ), Judg. 5:20. It is not clear whether Kimchi's comments on vv. 4-5 is Ibn Ezra's exegesis or whether Kimchi himself is contributing to it. In any case the interest of it is that all the imagery is explained in connection with the thought of Yahweh fighting Israel's battles. These are battles against historical enemies, but there is also the thought of cosmic conflict in connection with which the mountains dissolve. The reference to Sinai itself is not related only to the giving of the Law; rather the trembling of Sinai on the occasion of the theophany and giving of the Law is explained as a parable or illustration of the terror which fell on Israel's enemies ('Fear and terror falls on them, all the inhabitants of Canaan dissolve (in fear)', cf. Ex. 15:15-16).

The picture which seems to be given in this text is of torrential rain pouring down the hills (Vulg., cf. Rashi), rather than of mountains shaking. The flowing water would give the impression of mountains



dissolving into liquid (cf. Ps. 97:5). As MT נזלה  
 'flowed' expresses the idea of torrential rain, as well  
 as the imagery of the fabric of the mountains becoming  
 liquid, the stich may be rendered: 'The mountains  
 flowed in torrents...'

Vv. 4 - 5 may be rendered:

יהוה בצאתה משׁעיר  
 בצעדתה משׁדה אדום  
 ארץ רעשה גס-שמים נטפּוּ  
 גס-ענבים נטפּוּ מים

הרים נזלה מפני יהוה  
 מפני יהוה אלהי ישראל

O Lord, when you went out from Seir,  
 when you marched out from the plains of Edom,  
 the earth shook, the heavens lowered,  
 also the clouds dropped rain.

The mountains flowed in torrents before the Lord,  
 before the Lord God of Israel.

V. 6

בימי שמגר ... בימי יעל

LXX. A and B ἐν ἡμέραις Σαμεγαρ υἱοῦ Ἀναθ, ἐν ἡμέραις Ἰαηλ      Vulg. In diebus Samgar, filii Anath, in diebus Jahel, and Pesh. bywmwhy dsmgr br 'nt. wby wmy 'n'yl, are simply rendering MT. Targ. mentions Shamgar and Jael as living in the period of oppression:

When they sinned in the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael, there ceased those who travel the roads, and those who travel on the chief paths (main roads) again travelled by circuitous tracks. The unwalled villages ceased, which the inhabitants of the land of Israel abandoned, and their inhabitants were scattered, until I was sent, I Deborah was sent, to prophesy to the house of Israel.

Kimchi connects Shamgar with Jael as a judge in Israel:

Shamgar ben Anath was one of the Judges of Israel as is mentioned above (Judg. 3:31). Although he delivered Israel, it was not a great deliverance, for in his days חדלו ארחות . By mentioning Jael he intends to say that some of the credit for the deliverance (wrought by Deborah) must be allowed to her, for she was a clever (resourceful) woman and a lover of the Lord. Through her was brought this deliverance, although it did not begin until 'Deborah arose and I was a mother in Israel'.

Rashi comments on בימי שמגר בן ענת בימי יעל : 'It shows that Jael was also a judge in Israel in her

days.'

Shamgar is not identified in the Song as either an oppressor or a deliverer of Israel.<sup>64</sup> Jael, on the other hand, is identified in vv. 24-27 of the Song as the heroine who killed Sisera. If 'in the days of Jael' is original, the intention of the poet is almost certainly to allude to the part played by Jael in achieving deliverance. Simply put, Jael is mentioned because of her heroic deed. Moore notes that the asyndeton would imply that Shamgar and Jael are contemporaries.<sup>65</sup> G. A. Cooke suggests that either the poet names the two most famous characters of the age, both of whom brought deliverance from the oppression, or that the words *בְּיַמֵּי יַעֲל* must be struck out as a gloss which crept in from the margins.<sup>66</sup> If *בְּיַמֵּי יַעֲל* is a gloss, the assumption that Shamgar was a hero and not an oppressor would be wrong, as 'In the days of Shamgar' would be connected with 'caravans ceased' (i.e. the period of oppression). W. F. Albright depicts Shamgar as an oppressor who robs caravans and

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<sup>64</sup>For a discussion of Shamgar's role in Israel, see the chapter 'The Dating of the Song of Deborah.'

<sup>65</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 142.

<sup>66</sup>G.A. Cooke, The History and Song of Deborah (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 32.

extracts taxes from the villages in his role as feudal overlord.<sup>67</sup> However, in this view, either *בִּמְתֵי יַעַל* must be omitted or emended to *יָזַעַל* 'he gained profit' or *עוֹלַל* 'he dealt severely', otherwise the stich does not make sense if Shamgar, the tyrant, is paired with Jael, the heroine. Martin suggests that Shamgar is ranked with the heroes of Israel (Judg. 3:31) and that Jael is the heroine mentioned later in the poem (v. 24f.), thus accepting the two as non-Israelite heroes and not as foreign oppressors.<sup>68</sup> As Shamgar is not mentioned as an oppressor in the struggle of Israel against the Canaanites, and is coupled with Jael, a deliverer, it may be assumed that these two are associated as heroes or deliverers, and mention of both is retained.

חִדְלוּ אֲרָחוֹת

MT *חִדְלוּ אֲרָחוֹת* is usually rendered 'roads, highways ceased'. LXX. A appears to render *אֲרָחוֹת* as

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<sup>67</sup>W.F. Albright, 'A Revision of Early Hebrew Chronology,' JPOS, 1 (1920), p. 60.

<sup>68</sup>James D. Martin, Judges, p. 65; cf. F.C. Fensham, 'Shamgar Ben 'Anath,' JNES, 20 (1961), p. 197.

βασιλεῖς 'kings' (which is inexplicable).<sup>69</sup> LXX. B  
 renders אַרְחֹת as ὁδοὺς 'roads' (cf. Symm.  
 ἐπαύθησαν ὁδοί 'the roads ceased'). Vulg.  
quieverunt semitae 'paths ceased' agrees with MT  
 ( אַרְחֹת ). Pesh. 'caravans ceased' also reads אַרְחֹת  
 as אַרְחֹת ( 'rḥt' ). Targ. also interprets חַדְלוּ  
 אַרְחֹת :

When they sinned in the days of Shamgar, son of  
 Anat, in the days of Jael, travellers ( אַרְחֹת  
 rendered as עַדֵי אֹרְחָן ) disappeared, and  
 those who werē making journeys again travelled  
 by circuitous tracks.

Rashi on חַדְלוּ אַרְחֹת comments: 'Israelites were  
 afraid to travel openly because of hordes of Gentiles  
 and so they journeyed secretly (in a clandestine  
 manner) by circuitous routes.'

BDB חַדַּל 'cease, come to an end' does not mean  
 'cease to be used', an idea expressed more naturally by  
 the verb שָׁמַם 'be desolated (deserted)', as in Isa.  
 33:8 'the highways are deserted' ( נִשְׁמָמוּ ), no  
 travellers tread the roads ( אֲרָחָה ). This verse, on  
 the other hand, describes the merchant travellers who  
 cease to travel the roads, rather than the roads which

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<sup>69</sup>One may hypothesise that 'king's way', the  
 principal trade route, is meant, but this can not be  
 proved from Judg. 5:6.

cease to exist. BDB אָרַח 'way, path' is found in the pl. Abs. אָרָחוֹת, and is rendered in the Hebrew text תִּדְלַג אָרָחוֹת 'the highways ceased'. BDB אָרַח is strictly a fem. sing. Part. of אָרַח meaning 'caravans' (cf. Gen. 37:25 and Isa. 21:13). The act. Pt. is used collectively to denote a travelling company, i.e. a caravan.<sup>70</sup>

Judg. 5:6 seems to be a description of roads which are empty of traffic, and of wayfarers who took circuitous paths to avoid harassment by oppressors. NEB, in agreement with Targ. and Pesh., render תִּדְלַג אָרָחוֹת 'caravans plied no longer', meaning that the caravans, not the roads, ceased. The rendering אָרָחוֹת appears to assume the pointing אָרָחוֹת.

והלכי נתיבות

והלכי נתיבות (Judg. 5:6) is rendered literally 'goers on paths', i.e. 'travellers'. Although LXX. Α τριβους 'beaten track, path' is a satisfactory rendering of נתיבות, αὐτοὶ ἐπορεύθησαν τριβους 'those who travelled beaten tracks' does not convey the sense of והלכי נתיבות 'wayfaring men', nor does it

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<sup>70</sup>BH Stutt. reads אָרַח; cf. Job 6:18,19, BH Stutt. Kethib אָרָחוֹת; Qere אָרָחוֹת 'caravans'.

indicate that in these troubled times the only people who travel are individuals who have to use circuitous and unfrequented paths. LXX. B does not make good sense of v. 6, and καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν ἀτραπούς 'those who travelled straight paths' is an odd rendering of והלכתי נתיבות ( נתיבות is translated 'straight paths'). In Pesh. והלכתי נתיבות is paraphrased wdmhikyn hww bšbyl' tryš' 'and those who were journeying on straight paths'. Thus tryš' is in agreement with ἀτραπούς (LXX. B).

ילכו ארחות עקלקלות

LXX. A and B ὄδοις δειστροπυμέναις 'crooked roads' is a rendering of ארחות עקלקלות . Targ. באורחן מגנבן 'circuitous tracks', Pesh. b'wrht' m'gmt' 'by roundabout paths', Vulg. per calles devios 'by unfrequented foot-paths' also follow MT (in repeating ארחות ), as does Rashi דרך עקלתון 'circuitous routes'. (Rashi is offering a comment on חללו ארחות and he says: 'they journeyed secretly by circuitous routes' i.e. glossing ארחות עקלקלות with דרך עקלתון ).

BDB עקל renders עקלקלות as 'roundabout paths' a fem. pl. adj. (Ps. 125:5 עקלקלותם 'their

crooked (way)'; cf. Isa. 27:1; Hab. 1:4). Moore believes ארחות is erroneously repeated from the preceding line (dittography) to the detriment of both the poetical expression and the rhythm.<sup>71</sup> Burney also feels that the insertion of ארחות 'paths' before עקלקלות spoils the rhythm by introducing a fifth beat into the stich, and therefore should be omitted.<sup>72</sup> However, Isa. 27:1 נחש עקלתון 'the twisting serpent' and Hab. 1:4 יצא משפט מעקל 'justice goes forth perverted' employ the use of a noun to denote the object, whereas Ps. 125:5, which does not have a noun with the adjective, denotes a manner or character ('their crookedness'; cf. BDB עקלקל ) rather than a substantive. From common usage (and in agreement with the Versions and Rashi) it would appear that ארחות is necessary in this stich.

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<sup>71</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 144.

<sup>72</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 115; cf. BH Stutt. n. 6c.



V. 6 may be rendered:

בְּיָמֵי שָׁמְגָר בֶּן-אַנָּת  
 בְּיָמֵי דְעַל קַדְלָה אֲנָחוֹת  
 וְהֹלְכֵי נְבִיבוֹת קָלְכָה אֲנָחוֹת עַקְלָקְלוֹת

In the days of Shamgar, ben Anath,  
 in the days of Jael, caravans ceased,  
 and wayfaring men travelled  
 by roundabout paths.

V. 7

𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁 𐤁𐤁𐤁

LXX. B (cf. O .) ἐξέλιπον δυνατοί 'mighty men ceased' has to be connected with the rendering of 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁 𐤁𐤁𐤁 as κεφαλὰς δυναστῶν 'chief man, warrior' in Hab. 3:14 (Kethib 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁 ; Qere 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁 ); cf. NEB 'chiefs' and BDB 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁 . The same sense for 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁 is indicated by a group of miniscules and Theod. ( οἱ κρατοῦντες 'chiefs'). φραζων which is the reading of LXX. A and two miniscules and which means 'counsellor', 'guide' is reflected in Eth. interpretes (see L-S), but it derives from an inner-Greek corruption as is clear from the reading φαραζων in one miniscule. What originated as a transcription of 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁 was corrupted to φραζων and this was identified as φραζων 'counsellor'. οἱ κατοικοῦντες 'dwellers' represented by uncials and miniscules (cf. Aliter: Ο', οἱ κατοικοῦντες , Fields, Hexaplorum), appears to be an attempt to give the rendering of 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁 in LXX, and it also appears in the Armenian and the Syro-Hexaplar (see L-S). Vulg. translates 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁 as fortes 'the strong' and agrees with LXX. B.

Targ. however understands 𐤀𐤁𐤁𐤁𐤁 as 'open

settlements' i.e. unwalled settlements, and not as 'dwellers' which is the meaning of κατοικοῦντες (cf. κατοικητήριον 'a dwelling place, a habitation'). Targ. on v. 7 reads: 'The open settlements (i.e. unwalled villages), which were inhabited in the land of Israel, were abandoned and their inhabitants were scattered...' On the other hand the marginal reading in the Arm. (pagi L-S) 'regions' agrees with Pesh. (psqw šṭh) and Targ. which render פתוחות 'open fields' or 'unwalled villages'. L-S probably means by pagi 'inhabitants of open settlements' or 'those who inhabit open settlements'.

On פתוחות פתוחות Rashi comments: 'Open towns which were unwalled. They were abandoned by their inhabitants because of the hordes of Gentiles and they were assembled in the fortified cities.' This is a further development of the exegesis of Targ. Kimchi explains פתוחות in the same way as Rashi (ערי הפתוחות).

There are two ways of understanding פתוחות, 'open settlements' (Targ., Pesh., Rashi, Kimchi), and 'leaders' or 'strong men' (LXX, Vulg.). Burney reads פתוחות 'villages', i.e. the unwalled villages which were easily overwhelmed by the Canaanites (cf. Judg.

6:2; 1 Sam. 13:6).<sup>73</sup> Gray suggests reading פּרָזוֹן in strict agreement with the pl. verb נָלַן , or פּרָזוֹת as in Ezek. 38:11 'unwalled villages' (cf. Zech. 2:8; Esther 9:19).<sup>74</sup> Moore states that the rendering 'mighty men' (cf. Vulg. fortes, LXX. Β δυνάτοί ) is recommended because it would 'be possible in v. 11 also, but has no support in usage or etymology, and in v. 7 is less appropriate to the context and parallelism.'<sup>75</sup> Albright believes that evidence for the rendering of פּרָזוֹן as 'warrior' is found in Papyrus Anastasi: 'The word perazon does not mean 'villages' as formerly thought, but is a collective from a Canaanite word for 'warrior' which appears in Papyrus Anastasi I, 23, line 4, in the correct consonantal transcription.'<sup>76</sup> If there is a Canaanite gloss

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<sup>73</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 115.

<sup>74</sup>John Gray, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, p. 279.

<sup>75</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 144.

<sup>76</sup>W.F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan (London: The Athlone Press, 1968), p. 43, n. 101; cf. E.A. Wallis Budge, An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary (London: John Murray, 1920), pp. 232, 240, 241, where Budge transliterates the word found in Anastasi I, 23, 4, from Egyptian hieroglyphics as partha; cf. peri, 'warrior' and perà 'he who attacks', perà 'warrior, hero'. The terms perà, peri also signify 'he who comes forth, he who attacks'. Albright says that פּרָזוֹן is Canaanite and Budge presumably is explaining it as Egyptian. Albright thinks that it is a Canaanite gloss in an Egyptian papyrus, and other Canaanite glosses have been found in it.

meaning 'warrior' and written perazon in the Papyrus Anastasi, Albright's find is the best piece of evidence available for this rendering. C. Rabin notes that פּרָזוֹן corresponds exactly to the Arabic verbal noun barazan in form and meaning, and that the translation 'championship' fits in both v. 7 and v. 11.<sup>77</sup> However barazan only resembles perazon and does not appear to be the same verbal root.

וְהָעִירִים הַבְּרוּשִׁים 'unwalled settlements ceased to exist (in Israel)' is an ancient rendering and makes good sense. It supports that וְהָעִירִים הַבְּרוּשִׁים refers to the abandoning and depopulating of these settlements or villages. This would also mean that the open settlements were indefensible and the chief men were unable to muster the villages in defense of their attackers. (LXX and Targ. may have been referring to this condition in the settlements rather than to 'warriors'.) At any rate it seems that וְהָעִירִים הַבְּרוּשִׁים is a reference to the depopulated villages, and is best rendered 'open (i.e. unwalled) settlements ceased to exist'. וְהָעִירִים הַבְּרוּשִׁים rendered 'warriors' has no support in biblical Hebrew, and the etymological evidence offered by Albright is inconclusive. It appears as well that

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<sup>77</sup>C. Rabin, 'Judges V,2 and the "Ideology of Deborah's War", p. 127.

the open settlements of the Israelites were in fact being attacked and rendered uninhabitable by the enemy, and 'open (i.e. unwalled) settlements' seems more appropriate to the context.

Targ., Pesh. and Rashi explain 'open settlements' as places 'inhabited' or 'abandoned by their inhabitants'. פּרָצוּת rendered 'open settlements' also seems to have the understanding that it also means the inhabitants or dwellers of the open settlements. A victory of these inhabitants of the open settlements over the oppressor would seem appropriate to the context of v. 11.

V. 7 may be rendered:

קְדָלָה פְּרָצוּת  
 בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל קְדָלָה  
 עַד שֶׁקָּמְתִי דְבוֹרָה  
 שֶׁקָּמְתִי אִם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

Open settlements ceased to exist,  
 they ceased to exist in Israel;  
 until you arose, Deborah,  
 you arose, a mother in Israel.

## V. 8

יבחר אלהים חדשים

LXX supposes the subject of בחר is Israel (LXX. A ἠρέτισαν ; LXX. B ἐξελέξαντο 'they chose'), and in this it agrees with Pesh. ngb' 'lh' sdt' 'one chooses new gods' which is an exact rendering of MT. Targ. opens its long paraphrase of v. 8 with 'When the house of Israel chose to worship new idols' (cf. Rashi 'When Israel chose for herself new gods' and Kimchi 'When Israel chose new gods'). This is the view of v. 8a which appears in NEB ('They chose new gods' where it is matched by 'They consorted with demons'

לְהַמְדִּים שְׂעָרִים .

None of the Versions deals satisfactorily with אֵלֵי שְׂעָרִים . LXX. B ὅτε ἐπολέμησαν πόλεις ἀρχόντων is translated 'When the cities of the rulers made war' (against Israel). LXX. A ὡς ἄρτον κρίθινον 'then barley bread' which appears to be a rendering of לְהַמְדִּים שְׂעָרִים is also found in Pesh. (whydyn lhm ds'rt'). It makes poor sense and cannot contribute to the elucidation of the text. Targ. 'Nations came against them and drove them from their settlements' agrees with LXX. B, as also does the exegesis of Rashi 'They were

forced into war at their own city gates' and Kimchi 'They experienced war in their gates'. Kimchi explains  $\text{מִלְחָמָה}$  as a noun (a verbal noun, formed from the Piel and signifying 'conflict, war'; cf. BDB  $\text{מִלְחָמָה}$  ) with the same sense as  $\text{מלחמה}$  . He observes that the segol is anomalous and he appears to explain  $\text{לחם}$  on the analogy of  $\text{לחם}$  (which, however, is not a noun).  $\text{שערים}$  should be regarded as pars pro toto and so  $\text{πόλεις}$  (LXX. B) is not an indication that the Greek translator read a text other than MT (cf. Rashi who cites Deut. 17:2 'If so be that, in any one of the settlements (  $\text{שְׁעָרֶיהָ}$  ) which the Lord your God is giving you' to make the point that  $\text{שערים}$  is used in Deut. 17:2 in the sense 'towns, settlements'). Vulg. has a different understanding of  $\text{לחם שערים}$  from Rashi 'they were forced into war' and Kimchi 'they experienced war' and reads: 'The Lord chooses new wars (nova bella) and himself overthrows the gates of the enemies.' Nova bella is a poor translation of  $\text{חדשים}$  and has no parallel meaning in the Hebrew bible.

The Versions, Targ., Rashi and Kimchi all refer to the sin of idolatry which is the principal cause of the deplorable conditions in Israel, and the translation 'They chose new gods' followed by 'then did Israel attach themselves to demons' (cf. NEB) is not



discordant with the context, and offers excellent parallelism. Such a translation does not change the consonantal text and merely requires change in pointing  $\text{מִלְּחָמָה}$  to  $\text{מִלְּחָמָה}$  and  $\text{שֶׁעִירְיִים}$  to  $\text{שְׁעִירִים}$ .

G. R. Driver suggests that the second stich may be made parallel in meaning to the first stich ('they chose new gods') by an alteration of the pointing rather than of the consonantal text:  $\text{אָז לָחֲמָה שְׁעִירִים}$  'then did (Israel) attach themselves to demons'. The Qal Pf. (  $\text{מִלְּחָמָה}$  ) has in Driver's opinion the sense of Syr. lham, Pe. 'applied oneself', Pa. 'joined', the equivalent of Arab. lahima I 'clung to', III 'joined' (cf. BDB I  $\text{לחם}$  ). The sense is that Israel 'attached herself to, became a follower of 'satyrs)', (cf. Lev. 17:7  $\text{לְשֶׁעִירִים}$  , 2 Chron. 11:15  $\text{לְשֶׁעִירִים}$  ).<sup>78</sup>

Driver and NEB 'They chose new gods, they consorted with demons' offer a translation of v. 8 a-b with the least emendation of the text. The following lines (v. 8 c-d) are not at variance with the thought of v. 8 a-b if the lack of visible armament is considered to be the result of apostasy and a lack of will to resist oppression.

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<sup>78</sup> G.R. Driver, 'Problems in Judges Newly Discussed,' ALUOS, 4 (1962-63), p. 7f.

מגן דא-גראה ורמח

דא is probably the דא of the cath (cf. NEB 'Not a shield, not a lance was to be seen') and has negative force. BDB דא 2, interror. part., (a), expects the answer 'No', especially in a rhetorical style (cf. Gen. 38:17 ונתת-דא 'will you give'). Pesh wsyp' wrwmh' l' nthz' bynt 'rb'yn 'lp' d'ysr'yl 'Not a sword or a spear was seen among the forty thousand of Israel' is the only version to pick this up. דא has been rendered 'if' by LXX. B εἰν and Vulg. si. LXX. A reads σκεπη νεανίδων σιρομαστῶν ἀνήφθη καὶ σιρομαστής. ἀνηφθη 'fixed' is the consequence of an inner Greek corruption which can be traced from the apparatus of LCS. The ἄν of ἀνηφθη is derived from εἰν or is a variant of εἰν and ἀνηφθη is a corruption of εἰν οφθη or ἀν οφθη (both of which are found in miniscules). ἀνωφθη which is also found in one miniscule may represent an intermediate stage of the corruption. LXX. Luc. is given by Field σκέπη νεανιδων ἄν ὀφθῆ καὶ σιρομαστής. He notes that νεανιδων is a corruption of εἰν/ιδω and ἄν ὀφθῆ a secondary reading of ונתת דא consequent on this

corruption.<sup>79</sup>

Rashi comments on מִגַּן אֶם לִרְאֶה לְרַמָּה :

See you, when they offer themselves freely to the Lord, whether a shield or sword can be found in Israel as necessary to fight against the forty thousand chiefs of the armies which the Gentile coalition has brought against them. God terrified them all in the battle of the stars and the Wady Kishon swept them away (v. 21).

Kimchi comments:

There are those who interpret מִגַּן אֶם לִרְאֶה in order to ascribe praise as if to say: 'When Israel did the will of the Creator and did not go after alien gods (this was in the days of Joshua) they had no need of the swords and spears among the forty thousand Gadites and Reubenites (cf. vv. 15-17). Although they were equipped for war, they had no need to display shields or spears, for the Lord was fighting for them ... There was no adversary or evil assailant, because they were doing the will of the Creator.

The distinctive aspect of Kimchi's exegesis is that he associates the 'forty thousand in Israel' with Gilead and Reuben which did not answer the call, whereas Rashi identifies the forty thousand with the Gentile enemies

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<sup>79</sup>F. Field, Origenis Hexaplorum, Tomus I, Genesis-Esther (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1875), p. 412; cf. C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 120, who believes that the variant  $\alpha\nu \sigma\phi\theta\eta$  was a marginal reading, copied into the text. Since  $\epsilon\alpha\nu \iota\delta\omega$  was superfluous by the side of  $\alpha\nu \sigma\phi\theta\eta$ ,  $\sigma\kappa\epsilon\pi\tau\eta \epsilon\alpha\nu \iota\delta\omega$  was corrupted into  $\sigma\kappa\epsilon\pi\tau\eta \nu\epsilon\alpha\nu\iota\delta\omega\nu$  thus supplying a subject for  $\sigma\phi\theta\eta$  .

of Israel. The thought that deliverance was consequent on keeping the Law which appears in Kimchi is found in Targ. which reads:

When they returned to the Law, they (the enemies) did not prevail over them, when they came with the forty thousand chiefs of their armies, wielding shields and spears, they were not able to wage war in Israel. 80

Kimchi, however, gives a second interpretation:

When Israel chose new gods, then they experienced war in their gates and were not able to find a shield and a spear to fight against their enemies. Although Israel were numerous, forty thousand and more, and this was thought to be a protection, nevertheless, they fled before their enemies and were shut up in their cities, with their enemies pursuing them up to the gates.

If v. 8 is a reference to apostasy, and that apostasy is coupled with an absence of any will to fight Yahweh's war, then 'not a shield nor spear was seen among the forty thousand in Israel' means that their morale and resolve was sapped by apostasy. Hence apostasy is associated with a kind of cowardice resulting in a loss of patriotism and religious fervour such as 'holy war' demands.

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<sup>80</sup>Cf. Rashi 'the forty thousand chiefs of their armies'.

V. 8 may be rendered:

לְבָחַר אֱלֹהִים חֲדָשִׁים  
 אֲזָ לָחֶם שְׁעִירִים  
 מִגִּזְ אִם-גִּרְאָה וְרִמָּח  
 בְּאַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

They chose new gods,  
 then did they attach themselves to demons.  
 Not a shield nor lance was seen,  
 among the forty thousand in Israel.

V. 9

לְבִי לְחֹקֵקִי

LXX. B τὰ διατεταγμένα '(the laws) which were laid down' would seem to indicate that לְחֹקֵקִי has been connected with חק ( חֻקִּים ) 'statute(s)'. Here לְחֹקֵקִי is translated by the acc. pl. part. perf. pass. of διατασσω 'to give orders, charges' (cf. Symm. εἰς τὰ προστάγματα ). Field records O', Θ. and 'A. τοῖς ἀκριβαξομένοις , which according to Walters, indicates Hebrew Poel חֻקֵּימָה 'commanders'.<sup>81</sup>

LXX. A. δυνασται 'rulers' in the second stich for המתנדבים suggests that the translator had been influenced by the sense of נָדָב 'nobleman'. This sense is also present in Pesh. 'You who are nobles among the people (dpryśyn b'm)', bless the Lord'. This contrasts with the thought of offering oneself freely which is indicated by LXX. B ἑκουσιαζόμενοι 'volunteers'.

Vulg. renders חֹקֵקִי as principes 'leaders' and

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<sup>81</sup>Peter Walters (formerly Katz), The Text of the Septuagint (Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 206; cf. BDB חֻק 4(a), Poel Part. pl.; and G-K 52, s: a few examples occur in the Part. Pual without the preformative הַ .

inserts diligat 'esteems highly': 'My heart esteems highly the leaders of Israel, you who of your own free will offer yourselves in a time of danger (crisis)'. Pesh. supposes that חוקקי means 'law-givers' (mbdqñ) as does Targ. Targ.'s paraphrase runs as follows:

Deborah said in prophecy, I am sent to give praise to the scribes of Israel, for when distress prevailed, they did not cease to expound the Law; and when it was fitting for them that they should study in the synagogues openly, they taught the people the words of the Law and blessed and gave thanks to the Lord.

Thus חוקקי is thought to refer to the scholars of the תורה, and similarly המתנדבים are those who supply a kind of spiritual leadership. This is also found in Rashi and Kimchi. On לבני Rashi comments:

I, Deborah, with reference to the Law-givers of Israel, that I should love the wise men of Israel who offer themselves freely (who freely offer leadership) to the people saying: 'Bless the Lord and return to him'.

In this Rashi gives a picture of Deborah who shows respect for the wise men of Israel who aroused the people to repentance. Kimchi notes that there are those who interpret חוקקי ישראל as her scribes and wise men, who suppose that they are being addressed and urged to bless the Lord for the victory which he has

won. In connection with this interpretation תורה is then understood as 'those who teach מצות and to the people'. Kimchi, however, records another interpretation of חוקקי ישראל which is in accord with Vulg. principes, since he glosses it with גדולי ישראל , שופטים and מנהיגיו : They are those who lead the people out to war. 'My heart and my will goes out to them and says to them, "Bless השם who has humiliated your enemies before your eyes."' He makes the transition to his other interpretation, given above, by observing that the גדולים or שופטים are called חוקקים because they lay down precepts for the people. Kimchi envisages that שופט is both war leader and legislator, and it is probable that חוקק is a military term in his view as is סופר in Judg. 5:14.

There are two lines of exegesis presented above, and the translation is either 'My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel' (LXX. B), or 'Those among the people who exercise leadership (cf. LXX. A, Vulg.), bless the Lord (for what they did)'. 'My heart goes out in admiration of the commanders of Israel' is more probable as the poet seems not to be directly addressing חוקקים and מתנדבים , but rather the poet is asking his audience to bless Yahweh (ברכו יהוה )



because of what these commanders achieved in a decisive battle.

Burney's translation 'Come ye commanders of Israel' ( לכו מחקקי ) also suggests that the commanders are urged to come and bless Yahweh in the victory celebration, and his emendation of the text ( לכו for לבני ) makes sense.<sup>82</sup> However 'Come' does not convey the pride of the poet ('my heart goes out') in arousing the audience to give thanks. NEB's solution to the text also is to amend לבני to לבני 'be proud of heart'<sup>83</sup> and supposes that the commanders or leaders are directly addressed. This, however, is not a logical parallel to the following lines 'You among the

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<sup>82</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 103.

<sup>83</sup>The verb form לבני is not found in biblical Hebrew. The verb לבב 'to ravish the heart' is found in the Niph. 'to get a mind' (cf. Job 11:12 וְאִישׁ נָבִיב וְיָבִיב? 'and a vain man gets a mind' i.e. NEB: 'Can a fool grow wise?'), and in the Piel 'to encourage' (cf. Ct. 4:9 וְלִבִּי נִבְּוֶנִי 'you have ravished my heart (encouraged me)' i.e. NEB: 'You have stolen my heart'). The verb גבה 'to be exalted, proud' is used with the noun לב in 2 Ch. 17:6 וְלִבּוֹ נִגְבָּה 'and his heart was exalted' (cf. Job. 36:7; Isa. 5:16); and גבה is used in Jer. 13:15 אַל-תִּגְבְּהוּ 'be not proud' (cf. Ezek. 31:14) to express speech or proclamation (of flow of words under excitement of inspiration). The noun לב is always coupled with the finite verb to express 'gladness of heart' (Ex. 4:14; Judg. 19:5; 1 K. 21:7; etc.); 'uplifting of the heart' (Ex. 35:21); 'rejoicing of heart' (Pss. 13:5, 105:3; etc.); 'joy of heart' (Isa. 65:14); 'pride of heart' (Isa. 9:9). The use of לבני by NEB appears to rest upon doubtful philology.

people who freely offer yourselves for service, bless the Lord'. NEB, line one, praises the leaders, whereas line two depicts the volunteers praising Yahweh. It would seem logical that both the 'commanders' and the 'volunteers' are called upon to 'bless Yahweh' in accordance with poetic parallelism.

V. 9 may be rendered:

לְבִי לְחֹקְקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 הַמִּתְנַדְּבִים בְּעַם  
 יְהוָה בְּרַכּוּ יְהוָה

My heart goes out to the commanders of Israel,  
 you among the people who freely offered yourselves,  
 bless the Lord.

Vv. 10 - 11

לכבי אתנות צחרות

LXX. B renders לכבי אתנות צחרות as ἐπιβεβηκότες ἐπὶ ὄνου θηλείας μεσημβρίας 'you that mount upon a female ass at noon', apparently reading צחרות 'tawny' as צחרות and connecting it with צהריס 'noon'.<sup>84</sup> LXX. A has nothing corresponding to צחרות. Apparently the Greek translator did not know how to translate צחרות and he paraphrased אתנות צחרות as 'beasts of burden' ( ἐπι ὑποδυσίου ). אחנות is perhaps excluded as a gloss on צחרות which is understood as 'beasts of burden'. Targ. similarly renders אתנות צחרות as אתנן 'she asses'. Vulg. nitentes asinos 'glistening asses' and Pesh. 'tn' hwrt' 'white asses' are translating MT אתנות צחרות and support the inclusion of both words. The more probable explanation is found in Rashi and Kimchi who both gloss צחרות with לבנות 'white'. Kimchi indicates that this is on the basis of Ezek. 27:18 ( וְצִמְרֵן צַחֵר ) which he understands as 'white wool' ( לבנות כמו וצמר צחר )

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<sup>84</sup>LXX. B ἐπὶ ὄνου θηλείας μεσημβρίας, according to Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 124, seems to prove that אתנות צחרות must have stood in the Hebrew Ms. used by the translator in the abbreviated form /אתנ/צחר which was read as אתנ/צחר and then interpreted as אֶתֶן צַחֵרִיס ('an ass at noon').

'white as white wool').

Keil-Delitzsch note:

Those who ride upon white, i.e. white-spotted asses, are the upper classes generally, and not merely the leaders (cf. Judg. 10:4, 12:14). צהר , lit. 'dazzling white'; but since there were no asses that are perfectly white, and white was a colour that was highly valued both by Hebrews and Arabs, they applied the term white to those that were only spotted with white. 85

G. A. Smith considers צהרות to be equated with a form of the same root in Arabic ('aṣṣar) which is the name of an ass of a reddish colour (roan).<sup>86</sup> Burney notes that צהרות occurs only in Judg. 5:10, and comparison with the Arabic shows that it denotes a light reddish-gray, or white speckled with red (ṣuhra, the colour, ṣahūr, a she-ass which has a mixed white and red colour).<sup>87</sup>

The most probably reading of אתנות צהרות is 'tawny she-asses', as is implied by Burney, Smith and

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<sup>85</sup>Keil-Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, II, p. 314; cf. Barnabas Lindars, 'Some Septuagint Readings in Judges,' JTS, 22 (1971), p. 7. According to Lindars, the hexaplaric reading λαμπουσσων is best regarded as an equivalent of צחחות 'glowing, dazzling'.

<sup>86</sup>George Adam Smith, The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Origins (Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 87.

<sup>87</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 124.

Keil-Delitzsch. This also accords with the translation of Vulg. and Pesh. and the commentaries of Rashi and Kimchi.<sup>88</sup>

לשבי על-מדין

להלכי על-מדין

LXX. A and B differ in their treatment of על מדין .  
LXX. B connects מדין with דין 'judgment' and renders καθήμενοι ἐπὶ κριτηρίου 'you that sit on the judgment seat'. LXX. A has the inexplicable rendering ἐπὶ λαμπηνῶν 'on chariots'. λαμπηνῶν also means 'covered wagons' but the connection between the Greek and Hebrew words is difficult to establish. However, there is implied in both the idea of textile coverings.<sup>89</sup> The remainder of MT in v. 10 ( להלכי על מדין ) is not indicated in LXX. A, Old Latin, Ethiopic and Theodotian.

Vulg. follows LXX. B in its understanding of על מדין ( in iudicio 'in judgment'). Targ.

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<sup>88</sup>Cf. B. Lindars, 'Some Septuagint Readings in Judges,' p. 8.

<sup>89</sup>Charles Goodwin, 'The Meaning of Judges 5:8b-13,' *JBL*, 63 (1944), p. 259, suggests that the explicit 'she-asses' is unnecessary as 'tawny' can also mean 'tawny she-asses'.

incorporates interpretations corresponding with both LXX. A and B, and applies the idea of 'coverings' to the asses which are draped with coloured cloths. Targ. takes  $\text{לְשׁוֹבֵי}$  as a synonym of  $\text{לְכַנְבֵי}$  although  $\text{לְשׁוֹבֵי}$  is never used in this way in biblical Hebrew. The paraphrase of Targ. is:

Since they were wasting their time riding (  $\text{לְכַנְבֵי}$  ) on she-asses saddled with (different) kinds of embroidered cloths and travelling over the whole area of the country of Israel and sitting to dispense justice when they chose to do so, they went their own ways and had regard to Powers which they themselves had made.

V. 10 in Targ. is criticizing the behaviour of those to whom it refers: 'Since they were wasting their time' etc. Targ. renders  $\text{מִדִּין}$  as 'judgment' as in Vulg. and LXX (  $\text{לִמְתָב עַל דִּינָא}$  'sitting to dispense justice'), and 'saddled with (different) kinds of embroidered cloths' is a paraphrase of  $\text{לְשׁוֹבֵי עַל מִדִּין}$  . Hence there is in the Targumic paraphrase a double rendering of  $\text{לְשׁוֹבֵי עַל מִדִּין}$  . Pesh. wytby bbt' 'and those who stay at home' is difficult to understand. It might reflect the influence of Deut. 6:6 which appears in Pesh. as m' dytb 'nt bbytk wm' d'zl 'nt b'wrh'.

The interpretation 'justice administered' is carried on by Rashi. However, the pejorative reference in v. 10 of Targ. which is perhaps connected with the

thought of apostasy/oppression followed by repentance/deliverance (cf. v. 11, Targ.) is not taken up by Rashi who in other respects is influenced by the exegesis of Targ. He explains *מדיו* as a legal term ( *דיינים* 'judges') and in one respect he reads a different text from Sperber (it is the result of Sperber preferring the Mss. which read *מתחברין* to those which read *מתבחרין* , agreeing with *Miqroat Gedolot*). Rashi explains this as a resumption of the giving of legal verdicts publicly ( *בפרהסיא* 'in public'). That is, *מתחברין למיתב על דינא* means that a college of judges dispensed justice in public, so that Rashi relates v. 10 to the changed circumstances which were consequent on Deborah's victory. Hence he glosses *שיחר* with *וספרו את התשועה* 'and narrate this victory'.

Kimchi comments on v. 10: 'You merchants who ride on asses of the first quality who were not able to travel because of the enemy, now speak and sing to God.' He notes that *מדיו* is used in three different senses; a place name (Josh. 15:61); the name of a road (Judg. 5:11); a legal term (Isa. 10:2). He says: 'It is the name of a road familiar to them on which they were afraid to go because of the enemy. Now, in that you travel in safety, speak and sing praise to the

Name.'

The ancient Versions and the Jewish exegesis in Targ., Rashi and Kimchi leave us with unanswered problems. The connection of מִדָּה with דָּה cannot be right and it must rather be associated with מָ (m.n.) 'measure, cloth, garment' and have the sense of 'saddle cloths'.<sup>90</sup>

NEB, in agreement with מִדָּה as the m. pl. of מָ ( מִדָּה 'saddle-cloths'), reads: 'You that ride your tawny she-asses, that sit on saddle-cloths ...' V. 10 is most likely addressed to those who travel by ass and those who travel by foot ( הֹלְכֵי עַל דֶּרֶךְ ).

שִׁחַר

V. 11 is concerned with the celebration of

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<sup>90</sup>G-K 87e, notes that דָּה as a termination of the m. pl., as in Aramaic, is found almost exclusively in the later books of the Old Testament, apart from the poetical use in some of the older and even the oldest portions, as in Judg. 5:10; cf. G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 148, who states that the noun מִדָּה is unknown, and although the older interpreters, by an impossible etymology, explain it 'judgment' or 'place of judgment', most moderns derive it from מָ with Aramaic pl. ending; and, Barnabas Lindars, 'Some Septuagint Readings in Judges,' p. 9, notes that the plural form of the translation of LXX. Α λαμπηνῶν 'covered wagons' corresponds with the traditional punctuation of MT מִדָּה as an Aramaic pl. of מָ ( מִדָּה 'measure', Jer. 13:25; מִדָּה 'his clothes', Judg. 3:16; etc.) and here perhaps 'rich carpets'.



Yahweh's victory over the enemy, and of the debt which the people owe to Yahweh and to Deborah in that they are able, in virtue of the great victory, to travel the roads in safety (cf. Rashi and Kimchi).<sup>91</sup> Only in LXX and the Old Latin has this connection been discerned.

LXX. B διηγείτοσε 'recount' is presumably a rendering of דִּינְתָּהּ which, contrary to MT, has been connected with what follows rather than with what precedes it.

The sense of LXX. B is obscure, but διηγείτοσε ἀπὸ φωνῆς ἀνακρουομένων apparently has the meaning 'Recount from the sound of those who strike the strings' (i.e. 'those who strike up a tune', L-S ἀνάκρουμα , 2).

LXX. A, with a different verb φθεύξαθε , does not indicate the דָּבַר of the Hebrew text ( φθεύξαθε φωνῆν ἀνακρουομένων 'Utter (the) sound of those who strike the strings'). Also LXX. A has ἀνὰ μέσον εὐφραينوμένων 'among those who rejoice' for מִשְׁמָחִים בְּיָדָם and it looks as if εὐφραينوμένων may be a misplaced doublet of ἀνακρουομένων 'those who make merry'. מִשְׁמָחִים בְּיָדָם is correctly indicated by LXX. B ἀνὰ μέσον ὑδρευομένων 'in the midst of the watering places'. Old Latin

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<sup>91</sup>Cf. Ps. 105:2 (and Pss. 69:13, 77:7, 145:5):

Give the Lord thanks, and invoke him by name,  
make his deeds known ( דְּבַר כְּבוֹדוֹ ) in the world around.  
Pay him honour with song and psalm  
and think upon all his wonders.

connecting שִׁחַר with v. 11, respondete vocative percutientes organa 'Give reply with the sound of beating upon a musical instrument' is nearer to LXX's ( δὲληγεῖσθε ... ἀνακρουομένων ) understanding of שִׁחַר מִקוֹל מַחְצִיט (cf. the addition of ἐν ὄργάνοις 'upon musical instruments' in one miniscule).

Vulg. follows the syntax of MT in respect of שִׁחַר (loquimini 'speak' attached to what precedes it). For מִקוֹל מַחְצִיט בֵּין מִשְׁאֲבִים Vulg. has Ubi collisi sunt currus et hostium suffocatus est exercitus 'Wherever chariots are defeated and the army of enemies is snuffed out' which has no apparent correspondence with MT. In Pesh. שִׁחַר is connected with v. 11 as in LXX, but the rendering which follows bears as little resemblance to MT as Vulg. and is an indication of the difficulty caused to the ancient Versions by מִקוֹל מַחְצִיט בֵּין מִשְׁאֲבִים Pesh. is rendered:

Reflect (rnw) on the word of the heretics (bšwy) among the teachers (mlpn). There they give (ntlwn = LXX δώσουσιν ) the righteous deeds of the Lord, the righteous deeds which he multiplied in Israel.

'Reflect on the word of the heretics among the teachers' has a midrashic flavour. מַחְצִיט  
'heretics' and מִשְׁאֲבִים 'teachers' is perhaps read as מִשְׁאֲבִים (although שָׁב does not occur as a Piel in

biblical Hebrew).

Targ. paraphrases v. 11:

Because the customs of officials and robbers who lurked beside the cisterns from which drinking-water was drawn were oppressing them and taking their property. There they celebrated the righteous deeds of Yahweh, his righteous deliverances on behalf of those who dwell in the unfortified cities of the land of Israel. Then the people of Yahweh came down from the strongly fortified cities to dwell in the unfortified cities.

Targ. is remote from MT. מחצצים has perhaps been taken in the sense of dividing spoil (i.e. 'taking their property').<sup>92</sup> על ורובין בית שקרא דמלא 'beside the cisterns from which drinking-water was drawn' is a paraphrase of בין משאנין.

Rashi's exegesis of מקול מחצצים shows the influence of Targ.: 'Those who ambush you, robbers and customs officials who take up position in force to ambush you at the places where you cross water.' He offers yet another explanation of מקול מחצצים : 'You were afraid to draw water because of the sound of

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<sup>92</sup>BDB II חצץ supposes that this is a denominative of חץ 'arrow' and argues that the sense in Judg. 5:11 is 'archers' rather than those 'dividing spoil'; c.f. KB 3, I חצץ, Piel Part. 'Wasser verteilen' ('apportion water') which is an interesting suggestion. If the philology of KB 3 is adopted the meaning is: 'Those who divide out the water at the watering places'.

the stones, the pebbles of the wady, because whoever treads on them makes a noise, and you were afraid lest the idolators would become aware of you. Now there is no one to notice this, and therefore he commands you that you should give praise to his name.' Rashi adds that the lexicographer Menahem explains *מחצצים* as *עורכי מלחמה* and *טורכי קרב* 'those who draw up formations for battle' and that he associates it with Prov. 30:27: 'locusts, which have no king, yet they all sally forth in detachments (i.e. 'bands')'. Hence the meaning is *גדודים* 'marauders'.

Kimchi on *מקול מחצצים* comments: 'Because of the sound of those who shoot arrows they were not able to draw water. And now let them recount there the victories of the Lord.' The meaning here is that the horsemen and archers shout and raise a war cry in order to make the people afraid. Kimchi cites Jer. 4:29: 'At the noise of horseman and archer every city takes to flight...'

*מחצצים* is found only in Judg. 5:11, and as noted above, is taken by Kimchi as a denominative from *חץ* 'arrow', i.e. 'archers', and by Rashi *חצץ* 'gravel'. Rashi's interpretation can not be taken seriously as philology. The more probable interpretation of *מחצצים* is that of LXX and Old

Latin 'those who strike up music' (i.e. the players of stringed instruments) as the context apparently has to do with sound or music. Hence קול מחצצים probably refers to the playing of stringed instruments by musicians at the watering places. NEB 'Hark the sound of the players striking up in the places where the women draw water' is also in basic agreement with LXX (although NEB's philological reasons for its rendering are not known). מקול מחצצים is best rendered: 'When the players of stringed instruments make music at the watering places'. Although שיחר is attached to v. 11 by LXX and Old Latin (cf. Pesh.) it is retained with v. 10 as MT. However, it has been seen that שיחר 'recount' is connected to what follows (i.e. the musicians who recount the victories of Yahweh at the watering places).

שם יתנו צקקות זהרה  
צדקת פרזונו בישראל

Both LXX. A and B δώσσοις 'will give' have read יתנו as יתני (cf. Pesh. ntlwn). Vulg. Ibi narrentur iustitiae Domini 'Let the story of the Lord's mercies be told' indicates that יתני has been correctly read as יתני and converted into a passive.

In Targ. פּרַנְנִי is rendered ַּרַּנְנִי 'they celebrated' and this also supposes the pointing of MT.

פּרַנְנִי is read as a verb by LXX. A ( ἐνίσχυσαν 'they strengthened') and by LXX. B ( αὐξήσαν 'increase'). (cf. Pesh. zdyqwth d'sgy b'ysr'yl 'his righteous deeds which he multiplied in Israel'). The imperative αὐξήσαν (LXX. B) goes with the assumption that הַהוּא is a vocative which connects with what follows and that it is not in a construct relationship with הַהוּא ( κύριε, δικαιοσύνας αὐξήσαν ἐν Ἰσραήλ 'Lord, increase righteous acts in Israel').

Vulg. Et clementia in fortes Israel 'And (his) forbearance among the leaders of Israel' shows a different translation of the second occurrence of הַהוּא (first, justitiae 'mercies'; second, clementia 'forbearance'), and a rendering of פּרַנְנִי which accords with that of פּרַנְנִי in v. 7 of Vulg. (fortes 'leaders'). Even so, MT is handled freely: Et clementia in fortes Israel is the rendering of הַהוּא  
בפּרַנְנִי וּבְשֵׁרָאֵל .

In Targ. פּרַנְנִי בְּשֵׁרָאֵל is paraphrased as: 'Those who live in the undefended settlements in the land of Israel' (cf. Targ. on v. 7), and the last stich of v. 11 is taken as a reference to a condition of peace and security which enables these places to be resettled.

Rashi, in reference to 'the places where you cross water', which formerly were places of ambush, comments: 'There recount now, you who ride on asses and you who go on foot, the victories of Yahweh.' He asks: 'And what are the victories of Yahweh?' and his reply indicates that he takes פּרָזְנוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל in the same sense as Targ.: 'In that he has restored tranquility to Israel, so that the undefended settlements are inhabited and one can go out individually from these settlements and not in connection with a muster of the people.' His exegesis of the last stich of v. 11 agrees with that of Targ.: 'They returned to the settlements from which they had fled that they might assemble in the fortified cities.' Kimchi follows Rashi in his explanation of צִדְקָה פּרָזְנוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל which is a reference to dwelling in safety in unfortified settlements.

פּרָזְנוֹ, following the exegesis of v. 7, and in agreement with Targ., Rashi and Kimchi, probably means (his) unfortified or open settlements. פָּרָז meaning 'peasant soldiers' goes well with צִדְקָה meaning 'victories', and assumes that the basic sense of פָּרָז is a military one and that פּרָזְנוֹ means 'peasant soldiers' and this is generalized into 'inhabitants of open villages' or 'open villages'. The sense of v. 11

is that the villages, aided by Yahweh, won a victory over the encroachments of the enemy, thus allowing the inhabitants to return to their settlements.

Vv. 10 and 11 may be rendered:

לְכַבֵּי אֲתָנוֹת צְהָרוֹת  
 יֹשְׁבֵי עַל-מַדִּינָה  
 וְהֹלְכֵי עַל-דַּרְכֵי שִׁיחָה

מִקּוֹל מְחַצְצִים בֵּין מְשֻׁאֲבִים  
 שֶׁם יִתְנַבֵּ צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה  
 צְדָקוֹת פְּרוֹזְנוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

You that ride upon tawny she-asses,  
 you that sit upon saddle-cloths,  
 and you that walk on the roads, recount it!

When the players of stringed instruments make music  
 at the watering places,  
 it is Yahweh's victories which they recount there,  
 the victories of his open settlements in Israel.



Vv. 11b - 12

אז ירדו לשערים עם-יהוה

LXX. A and B render לשערים as πολεις 'cities'. 'Gates' can mean 'cities' on the principle pars pro toto, and this was how the matter was understood by the Greek translators (cf. v. 8 πολεις = שערים ). Pesh. reads: hydyn nht ttr' 'mh dmry' 'Then the people of the Lord came down to the gates'. The paraphrastic addition of Vulg. tunc descendit ad portas populus Domini, et obtinuit principatum 'Then went down the people of the Lord to the gates and asserted supremacy' implies an attack against the gates of the enemy. Targ. (cf. Kimchi) interprets 'gates' as those of the Israelites to which they return after the victory in peace and security. Targ. reads: 'Then they came down from the strongly fortified cities to dwell in the unfortified cities of the people of the Lord.'

This part of the Song (vv. 12 - 22) deals with the march of the tribes into battle against the enemy. It also seems probable that v. 11b is a description of the preparation or muster for the battle, and is connected with what comes after, that is, a call to Deborah and

Barak to arouse the people for battle and to attack the enemy.<sup>93</sup> This is the view taken by NEB which read: 'Down to the gates came the Lord's people' followed immediately by the invoking of Deborah and Barak. The exegesis of Targ. and Kimchi which refer to a return of the inhabitants to unfortified settlements, consequent on Deborah's victory, seems to be out of place at this point of the Song if taken with v. 12. If taken with v. 11a, it could mean that the people gave thanks at the gates of their settlements, in line with the description of the victory songs sung at the watering places. However, the stich appears to fit better with v. 12 as an introduction to the battle itself (cf. Vulg.).

עוררי עוררי  
ושבה שביך

LXX. B ἐξεγείρου 'arouse' and Vulg. surge 'arise' follow MT. LXX. A also supports MT, but after ἐξεγείρου ἐξεγείρου δεββωρα adds ἐξέγειρον μυριάδας μετὰ λαοῦ 'Arouse the myriads of (Hebrew) people', which seems to be a reference to the assembly of troops

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<sup>93</sup>Cf. G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 149.

prior to the battle rather than to the battle itself or to the victory. Targ. 'Give praise, give praise, Deborah, give praise and celebrate, sing forth praise' points to a victory celebration. Pesh. 'tt'yry 'tt'yry dbwr', 'tt'yry w'tyydy wmlly tsbwht' 'Arouse, arouse, Deborah, arouse and celebrate and sing forth praise' agrees with Targ., as does Rashi who comments on עורכי דבורה: 'The meaning here is "praise". It is explained as "Sing with all your strength."' Rashi's interpretation of עורכי as ענה indicates a time probably subsequent to the battle.<sup>94</sup>

The exegesis of v. 1 has given reasons for believing that Deborah is addressed in the 2nd person in vv. 7 and 12, and she is not the author of the Song. Therefore, it may be assumed in v. 12 that Deborah is not being exhorted to sing the victory song, but is called upon to arouse her people to battle, and the setting is prior to the battle (cf. LXX. A, whereas Targ., Pesh., and Rashi indicate a setting after the

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<sup>94</sup>Kimchi does not contribute to the elucidation of the text and merely comments on the pointing: 'Arise, Arise. (Repeated) twice in pairs. The first two are milra and the last two are mil'el.' Cf. G-K 72s in which the same point is made: 'Judges 5:12 is intentionally varied from עֲרֹכִי to עֲרֹכִי (cf. Zech. 13:7; Isa. 51:9; Isa. 21:2) for rhythmical reasons.'

victory).<sup>95</sup> Lines one and two of v. 12 are parallel summons, and it does not seem logical that line one is addressed to Deborah to participate in the victory celebration while Barak is summoned to participate in the battle (two separate events). The more probable interpretation is that lines one and two are addressed to the leaders in a setting prior to the battle; Deborah to inspire the people to battle, and Barak to lead the people in the battle.<sup>96</sup>

Targ., LXX., Vulg. and Pesh. all follow MT

קום ברק ושבה שביר

'Arise Barak, and take captive

<sup>95</sup>R.G. Boling, Judges, p. 111, suggests that the reference here is to the song of celebration offered by the women upon the return of the warriors with the loot (cf. Judg. 11:34; Ps. 68:12). (However, there is no mention of women singers (as in Ps. 68:12) in the Song of Deborah, and עורכי is addressed to Deborah.) Cf. G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 149 who comments: '... interpreters who assume that in these words ( עורכי עורכי דבורה ) Deborah calls upon herself to sing the Ode of Victory find it hard to explain why this invocation stands thus in the middle of the Ode, instead of beginning it.'

<sup>96</sup>F.M. Cross, CMHE, p. 95, notes that the assonance between דבורה and דברי points to the possibility of their deliberate use as a word-play. Also דבר and שיר are found together in biblical Hebrew as a not unusual combination (Deut. 31:30 אה-דברי השירה ; cf. 2 Sam. 22:1; Num. 21:17; etc.).

your captives, son of Abinoam.'<sup>97</sup> It does seem clear from the following words ('Take captive your captives, son of Abinoam') what is the purpose for which Barak is aroused. קום itself probably is no more than a summons to action, and the nature of the action is indicated by שבה שביך .<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> הַשֵּׁבָה G-K 10g(b) notes that the pointing with hateph-pathah is often found under initial sibilants after waw copulative to emphasize the vocal character of the šewa.

F.M. Cross, CMHE, p. 95, n. 19, suggests that קום is terminology of Holy War associated particularly with the Ark (cf. Num. 10:35) which signals Yahweh's presence with his armies, and is here addressed to a war-leader Barak. Cross adds: 'One may compare קום ברק in Judg. 5:12, or of the deity in relatively early contexts, Pss. 132:8, 74:22, 82:8, and in general the use of qûm in the sense of 'attack' and gām in the sense of 'attacker'. (Ps. 132:8 is probably connected with a procession involving the Ark, and although Judg. 5:4-5 are a description of Yahweh's presence and his succor to his people, there is no mention of the Ark in the Song.) Cf. Delbert R. Hillers, 'Ritual Procession of the Ark and Ps. 132', CBO 30 (1968), p. 50f., who also sees the background of קום in the language of Holy War, when the Ark sets out before the people.

<sup>98</sup> קום signifies 'arise (for action)', i.e. for a specific deed (Ex. 32:1 קום עשה-לנו אלהים ) and more specifically 'to rise against' (Ob. v. 1 קומה ונקומה ) 'Rise up! let us rise against her for battle'; Judg. 8:20 קום הרג 'Rise and slay'; Deut. 19:1; Judg. 9:18, 20:5; Ps. 27:3.

Vv. 11b - 12 may be rendered:

אז ירדה לְשַׁעְרֵי עַם-יְהוָה

עַרְבֵי עַרְבֵי עֲבוֹרָה

עַרְבֵי עַרְבֵי עֲבוֹרָה-שִׁיר

קוּם בָּרַק

הַשְׁבֵּה שְׁבִיָּה קַח-אֲבִינָעַם

Then down to the gates came the people of the Lord!  
 Rouse yourself, rouse yourself, Deborah;  
 rouse yourself, rouse yourself, sing a song.  
 Rise up, Barak;  
 take captive your captives, son of Abinoam.

## V. 13

אז ירדו שרי צבאות

LXX. B τότε κατέβη 'then went down'; Targ. 'Then came down ( נחג ) one of the armies of Israel'; and Pesh. 'Then came down' (nht), indicate ירד .<sup>99</sup> Vulg. renders the first ירד by Salvatae sunt 'are saved', and the second by dimicavit 'contend'. Its testimony is therefore puzzling and inconclusive. LXX. A apparently renders the first ירד by ἐμεγαλύνθη 'Then his strength is exalted', and the second by an imperative ταπεινώσον 'O Lord humiliate for me those who are stronger than I am'. This evidence is also difficult to interpret. So far as sense goes 'humiliate' suits ירד but ירד cannot be a form of the imperative from this root. Both LXX. A and B wrongly interpret ירד as 'from me' and connect it with v. 13.

The Masoretic pointing of ירד is understood by Rashi and Kimchi as an apoc. impf. Piel from ירד 'to

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<sup>99</sup> BH Stutt. n. 13 a-a, also suggests ירד .

have dominion over, to rule, to dominate'.<sup>100</sup>

Rashi's exegesis of אַז יִרְדּוּ לְאֲדִירִים is:  
 ' יִרְדּוּ means יִרְדָּה as in: לִרְדּוֹ לְפָנָיו גּוֹיִם ("to  
 subdue nations before him", Isa. 45:1). The remnant of  
 Israel became dominant over the nobles who worshipped  
 idols.' Rashi quotes the Hebrew text ה' / יִרְדּוּ לִי בַגְּבוּרִים.  
 He then comments: 'He will make subject to me the  
 mighty ones who worship idols.'

Kimchi comments on אַז יִרְדּוּ שְׂרִיד : 'The full  
 form is יִרְדָּה . The interpretation is: The Lord  
 made Israel, which is being called a remnant, dominant  
 over the mighty peoples, even the nation of Jabin, king  
 of Canaan.' Kimchi illustrates a grammatical point by  
 citing two passages where he alleges that ל is being  
 used for ו : 'And the ל in לְאֲדִירִים is in place  
 of the ו as in "They shall dwell in the land ( לְאֶרֶץ )  
 with him" (Ezek. 28:25), and "I have slain a man for  
 wounding me" ( לְפָעַעֲכִי ) (Gen. 4:23).' Both Rashi and  
 Kimchi take יִרְדָּה as a reference to the domination of

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<sup>100</sup>G-K 69g, states: '... יִרְדּוּ? Judg. 5:13 (twice)  
 is not intended by the Masora either as a perfect (for  
 יִרְדּוּ, which really should be restored) or as an  
 imperative of יִרְדּוּ, but as an apocopated imperfect  
 Pi'el from יִרְדָּה (= יִרְדּוּ?) to have dominion.' Cf.  
 W.F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p.  
 76, notes that the pointing יִרְדּוּ? would suggest that  
 the Masoretic tradition derives the verb from יִרְדָּה .



the Israelites over the Canaanite kings.<sup>101</sup>

NEB 'Then down marched the column and its chieftains',<sup>102</sup> understands  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  in agreement with LXX. B, Targ. and Pesh., and makes good sense at this point in the Song, subsequent to the muster for battle (v. 12) and prior to the description of the tribes who either joined in, or refused to come, to the conflict (vv. 14-18). It does not make sense to insert a description of the victory (i.e. had dominion over the enemy) prior to an account of the battle which gave them that victory.

לְאִדְרִיִּים עִם

The Versions are in difficulty with  $\text{לְאִדְרִיִּים עִם}$ . LXX. B solves the grammatical difficulty by changing the punctuation of MT and connecting  $\text{עִם}$  with  $\text{יָהָרָה}$

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<sup>101</sup>BDB I,  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$ , does not occur in the Piel.  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  is therefore pointed  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  or  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  (of vb.  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$ ). Cf. C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 130, who suggests that if the verb were employed causatively (i.e. 'cause to have dominion') we should expect  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  the apoc. impf. Hiphil in such a sense (cf. Isa. 41:2); and G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 152, who believes that the context requires in both instances the perf.  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$ , as does R. Boling, Judges, p. 111, who considers the Qal. perf. to be in conformity with usage after  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  at the other parts of the Song (5:8, 11, 13, 19, 22).

<sup>102</sup>NEB renders  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$  for  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרְטוּ}$ .

( λαὸς κυρίου ). LXX. Β κατάλημμα 'the remnant' is paralleled to λαὸς κυρίου . Vulg. solves the problem by ignoring לאדיריס and renders the first stich: Salvatae sunt reliquiae populi 'the remnant of the people were saved'.<sup>103</sup>

MT לאדיריס עם taking the words together (apparently in a construct relationship) leaves us with a serious grammatical problem. Targ. deals with the problem by translating לאדיריס עם as if it were לאדיריס עם and reads גברי עממיא 'the mighty ones of the people'. The correct construct form of לאדיריס connected with עם is לאדיריס . However this rendering would still leave the verse unbalanced and lacking in parallelism. Targ. 'one of the armies of Israel' apparently understands שריד as a reference to Israel, as does Rashi /שרידי ישראל/ 'the remnant of Israel', and Kimchi ישראל שהיא שריד 'Israel which is being called a remnant'. Rashi 'over the nobles who worshipped idols' along with Kimchi 'over the mighty peoples ( באדיריס ) even the nation of Jabin, king of

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<sup>103</sup> BH Stutt. n. 13 a-a, ינר זשנאל באדיריס gives as an alternative the placing of the athnah at אדיריס and attaching עם to the beginning of the next stich ( עם יהודה ).

Canaan', connect עַם with the enemy forces.<sup>104</sup>

Pesh. mpsyn' 'deliverer' is a rendering of שַׁרִיד but the relation of mpsyn' to שַׁרִיד is difficult to explain,<sup>105</sup> as is the relation of lmšbhw 'to give praise' to לְאֲדִירִים . Pesh. has read עַם as עַת and hence the translation qdm mry' 'before the Lord'.

With LXX. B (cf. NEB) the alternative of placing the athnah at לְאֲדִירִים and attaching עַם at the beginning of the next stich ( עַם-יְהוָה ) is preferred in order to solve the grammatical difficulty presented by לְאֲדִירִים עַם , and to balance the lines. The prefix לְ probably means 'with respect to' or 'together with' (the nobles or chieftains) and stich one is rendered: 'Then the survivors came down with ( לְ ) (their) chieftains.'

In stich two לְ is in reference to the subject עַם-יְהוָה and is probably the ethical dative which is not usually expressed in English translation, as עַם-יְהוָה gives the complete thought. לְ as an ethical dative referring to יְהוָה would be possible.

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<sup>104</sup>BDB notes that שַׁרִיד 'survivor' is a term normally applied to a survivor or survivors from a defeat. In this passage the reference probably is to the survivors of oppression by the enemy force.

<sup>105</sup>mpsyn' may refer to one of the heroes (Barak or Deborah), but this is speculative.

only if Yahweh is the speaker, and לו has to be read to get an ethical dative referring to עם-יהוה .

Stich two is rendered: 'The people of the Lord came down like warriors' (lit. 'as warriors', essentiae).

V. 13 may be rendered:

אז ירדו שְׂרָיִד לְאַדְיָרִים  
עם-יהוה ירד-לוּ בַּגְּבוּרִים

Then the survivors came down with their chieftains,  
the people of the Lord came down like warriors.

## V. 14

מני אפרים שרשם בעמלק

LXX. A ἰσχυροτέρους 'the people who are stronger than I am' and LXX. B ἐξ ἐμοῦ 'from me' wrongly interpret מני as 'from me' and connect it with v. 13. Vulg. ex Ephraim and Targ. מדבית אפרים take מני to be a longer form of מן and begin v. 14 with מני אפרים. Pesh. correctly understands מני as a longer form of the preposition מן, but connects מני אפרים with v. 13 and the passage is rendered: 'Who came down with respect to me among the mighty men of Ephraim'. Kimchi explains מני as a longer form of מן: 'מן אפרים is כמו מן אפרים'. Rashi also explains מני אפרים as מן אפרים.

MT מני אפרים שרשם בעמלק rendered literally is: 'From Ephraim their root in Amalek'. LXX. A and Θ. render שרשם בעמלק: ὁ λαὸς Ἐφραὶμ ἐπιμωρήσατο αὐτοὺς ἐν κοιλάδι 'the people of Ephraim punished them in the plain', a free rendering or paraphrase of the verbal form שרש 'rooted them out', which is rendered more literally by LXX. B and O', ἐξερρίζωσεν αὐτοὺς 'rooted them out (in Amalek)'. Pesh. w<sup>6</sup>bdwhy b<sup>6</sup>mlyq 'they served him against Amalek' apparently read שרתם

instead of שרשם . Pesh. may be an avoidance of the difficulty created by שרשם (i.e. a conjectural emendation to שְׂרָתָם on the part of the Syriac translator).

Targ. paraphrases v. 14a: 'From the house of Ephraim arose Joshua, son of Nun, who was the first to wage war against the house of Amalek. After him arose king Saul from the house of Benjamin who destroyed the house of Amalek ...' Rashi and Kimchi, with Targ., detect a reference to the military exploits of Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim against Amalek recorded in Ex. 17:9f. שרשם 'their root' is equated with Joshua (i.e. Joshua is the 'root' of Ephraim). Rashi comments: 'By conjoining it (v. 14) to the preceding verse (it is possible) to offer the exegesis: Yahweh came down with respect to me among the warriors. He raised up Joshua to exercise dominion over Amalek.' The paraphrase of Targ., Rashi and Kimchi cannot be regarded as serious exegesis.

Both LXX. A and B read שְׂרָתָם as שְׂרָשָׁם (cf. O' and Theod.) and offer the most probable rendering 'rooted them out'. Vulg. also treats שרשם as a verbal form (pointed שְׂרָשָׁם ): Ex Ephraim delevit eos in Amalec 'From Ephraim he destroyed them in

Amalek'.<sup>106</sup> LXX. A ἐν κοιλάδι 'in the plain' (cf. O'.; Θ .; Syriac Hexaplar b'wmq') agrees with קמב (differing from LXX. B which reads קלמב ), and the original meaning probably was: 'Ephraim rooted them out in the plain', a reference to Ephraim's participation in the battle against the forces of Sisera. Virtually all scholars have emended קלמב to קמב 'in the plain', as there is no historical evidence of the tribe of Ephraim having settled among the Amalekites and evidence points to the desert region south of the Negeb as the region inhabited by Amalek (cf. 1 Sam. 15).<sup>107</sup> 'In the plain' rather than 'in Amalek' affords excellent sense to the text.

אחרי בנימין בעממין

LXX. B ὀπίσω σου Βενιαμείν 'behind you Benjamin' attempts to follow MT. LXX. A apparently reads אחרי as אחרי : ἐν κοιλάδι ἀδελφοῦ σου Βενιαμιν ἐν λαοῖς σου 'in the plain of your brother Benjamin, with your clansmen' which makes poor sense.

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<sup>106</sup>BH Stutt. n. 14a, indicates that אחרי is a corruption of the original text, and emends אחרי to אחרי 'they advanced'.

<sup>107</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 77; cf. G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 152 f.

Symm. reads: 'I shall follow you, Benjamin, with the people who are around you' which emphasizes the leadership of Benjamin in the battle. This is probably a correct understanding of אַחֲרַיִךְ בְּנִימֵן (cf. NEB 'With you, Benjamin!'; also, NEB at Hos. 5:5 אֲחִירְיָהּ בְּנִדְמֵיךְ 'Benjamin, we are with you').

Vulg. renders et post eum ex Benjamin in populos tuos O Amalec 'And after him (i.e. after Ephraim) those from Benjamin into (the territory of) your peoples, O Amalek'. Vulg. post eum apparently reads אַחֲרָיו and connects the suffix with אַפְרַיִם in v. 14a. The insertion of an additional 'O Amalek' is connected with the circumstance that Vulg. supposes עַמְמֵיךְ refers to the forces of Amalek, an interpretation which is not in agreement with other texts, and is hardly an appropriate rendering. Targ. takes בְּעַמְמֵיךְ in the same sense as Vulg. and renders 'and Amalek waged war against the remainder of the nations'. בְּשָׂר עַמְמֵיָא must be Targ.'s paraphrase of בְּעַמְמֵיךְ. Targ. and Vulg. have associated עַמְמֵיךְ with 'nations' conquered by Israel, but they misinterpret the grammar and text of the Hebrew.

Kimchi paraphrases the text:

... Joshua, the son of Nun, who was a root of Ephraim, and their leader. And after Joshua, Benjamin fought against Amalek. Then Benjamin



fought with Amalek, that is Saul, who was from the tribe of Benjamin. The כ of אחריו refers to Ephraim, and the כ of בעממיו refers to Benjamin.

It is difficult to understand Kimchi's reasoning here and to see how the first suffix ( אחריו ) can refer to a different party from the second suffix ( בעממיו ). If Kimchi is correct, the rendering would have to be, 'After you, Ephraim, you, Benjamin, with your clans'. Ephraim would have been the first to go out to the battle, followed by Benjamin (the suffix of אחריו referring to Ephraim and the suffix of בעממיו to Benjamin). This would also appear to be Rashi's view. Pesh. btrk bnymyn bhwbk 'After you with your love' is a confusion of אחריו with אהבתך and does not make any contribution here.

LXX. B and Symm. refer the suffix of אחריו to Benjamin, and LXX. B, Symm. and Kimchi suppose that the suffix of אממיו refers to Benjamin. As the text stands בעממיו can only refer to Benjamin and the most probable rendering is 'After you Benjamin, with your clansmen'.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>BDB I, 5, עט is rendered 'fellow-countrymen, kinsmen' (cf. Gen. 25:8; Jer. 46:16; Ps. 45:11; Ruth 1:10, 15, 16). BDB includes Juđg. 5:14 under 2c, perhaps 'a fighting band'.

מני מכיר ירדו מחקקים

LXX. A and B ἐξερευνῶντες 'examiners' apparently was reading a text with מחקרים or else misread מחקקים as מחקרים (cf. Pesh. mbdqn 'examiners').<sup>109</sup> The Greek translations of Aquila ἀκριβασταί (ἀκριβάζω 'a lawgiver, inquirer') and Symm. ἐπιτάσσοντες (ἐπιτάσσω 'to enjoin, order, set in command over') when used of persons, are used in reference to 'commanders' or 'marshalls' responsible for the muster of troops. Aquila and Symm. appear to agree with MT מחקקים as does Vulg. de Machir principes descenderunt 'out of Machir come leaders'. Targ. renders מחקקים by מרשמיך בקרבא 'those who kept the records of the war'. Rashi comments on מחקקים : 'Great princes who subdued the heathen' and glosses מחקקים with שרים. Kimchi describes those who go down from Machir as 'the great and wise ones' rendering מחקקים with הגדולים והחכמים (which appears to agree with LXX. A and B).

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<sup>109</sup>G-Buhl. suggests מחקקים (Piel חקק). Yet because this is found elsewhere only in Eccles. 12:9, and the participle חקקי without the initial מ is found in the vicinity Judg. 5:9, it is more likely that they mistranslated חקקים instead of חקקים. Cf. W. Gesenius, Handwörterbuch über das AT 16, ed. by Fr. Buhl (Leipzig, 1915), as quoted by Peter Walters, The Text of the Septuagint, p. 206.

Kimchi adds: 'And although they were across the Jordan, she encouraged them to come to this battle.' Kimchi believes Machir to be in Transjordan, and that the tribe came to the battle despite the distance from the area. מְחַקְקִים probably is a reference to military commanders (cf. v. 9 לַחֲרֻקִּי ) and is rendered: 'From Machir came down commanders.'

ומזבולן משכנים בשבט ספר

LXX. B 'And from Zebulun those who draw with the scribe's pen of record' ( δὲληγῆσεως which is difficult to translate), and LXX. A 'From there with a sceptre when leadership gains strength' ( ἐκέλευεν apparently reading משם instead of משכנים ; rendering שבט as ἐν σκήπτρῳ ; and rendering ספר as ἐνλισχύοντος ἡγήσεως ) do not make good sense of the text.

Vulg. '... leaders came from Machir, and from Zebulun those who lead the army into battle' gives a military reference to the text. Pesh. 'From Zebulun those who write with the pen of the scribe' (corresponding to LXX. B) is a reference to learned men or scribes. Targ. 'From the tribe of Zebulun those who wrote with the writing pen of a scribe', with Pesh.,

sees a role for the 'learned men' or 'scribes'. Kimchi comments on *ומושכים בשבט סופר* : 'That means the wise men and the scribes'; and on *שבט* : 'It means the stylus (pen). Thus Targ. Jon.: "With the writing pen of the scribe."' Rashi does not give as much prominence to the idea of 'learned men' or 'recorders' as does Kimchi, and the thought of leadership is presented: 'God selected this scripture reading for me to explain how the Lord subjugated for me the mighty men, Joshua to dominate the adversary Amalek.' However, there is something incongruous with the idea of scribes or penmen going into battle.<sup>110</sup>

NEB 'From Machir down come the marshals, from Zebulun the bearers of the musterer's staff' agrees with Vulg. The Versions show that *ספר* was already in the Hebrew text which was being translated, although this is not clear in respect of Vulg. since qui exercitum ducerent ad bellandum may be a free rendering of *מושכים בשבט* . *ספר* is attested early and it is probably best to retain the word in v. 14b.

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<sup>110</sup> BDB *מִשְׁכָּה* (3) renders *מושכים בשבט* 'those marching with the staff' and connects this verse with Judg. 4:6 ( *וַיִּשְׁכְּתוּ* 'and gather') having the sense of 'marching with' or 'wielding' (the staff) which is more acceptable than 'drawing' (with a pen). The sense may also be taken here of 'drawing after them 'recruits' and therefore signifying the enlisting of troops by the marshall.

There are two lines of interpretation in the Versions, Rashi and Kimchi in relation to *מחקקים* and *משכנים בשבט ספר*. A reference to 'learned men' or 'scribes' is made by LXX., Pesh., Targ. and Kimchi, and to 'war leaders' by Vulg. and Rashi. If *מחקקים* is rendered 'commanders' and is the parallel of *משכנים בשבט* then the second stich would make reference to military leaders rather than to 'scribes' to maintain the parallelism of the lines. In v. 14 *ספר* appears to be the title of a military official, and the *שבט* is evidently the symbol of his authority.<sup>111</sup> William McKane notes that the title of *ספר* was given to high officials, as is attested in lists of officials in the Old Testament. A member of David's establishment, Seriah who is *סֵפֶר* is ranked with the highest officials (2 Sam. 8:16-18); a 'Royal Secretary' (*סֵפֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ*) who is probably king Joash's Secretary of State (2 K. 12:10); and Shebna the scribe (*הַסֵּפֶר* 2 K. 18:18; Isa. 36:3) who is one of the king's leading advisers. McKane points to other passages where *ספר* is apparently the title of a military official. He

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<sup>111</sup>Cf. Isa. 14:5 *שֵׁבֶט מְשָׁלִים* 'the scepter of the rulers'; and Jer. 52:25 *נְאֻת סֵפֶר שֶׁר הַצִּבְּאָה הַמְּצַבֵּי אֶת-עַם* which NEB renders: 'the adjutant-general (i.e. commander-in chief) whose duty was to muster the people for war'.

translates  $\text{הַסֵּפֶר שֶׁל הַצָּבָא}$  'The Secretary, Commander of the Army' (2 K. 25:19), which he paraphrases as 'Secretary of State for War'.<sup>112</sup> McKane comments further on  $\text{רָשׁוּ}$  :

It is stated in both passages (Jer. 52:25; 2 K. 25:19) that the  $\text{sōpēr}$  was responsible for levying the people for military service and he is mentioned in company with several others who were considered by Nebuchudrezzar sufficiently influential to be singled out for deportation. Among these were the principal ecclesiastics, a military officer and five (seven according to Jer. 52:25) leading advisers of the king.  $\text{Sōpēr}$  also appears in the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5:14) as the title of a military official and the  $\text{šēbet}$  of this  $\text{sōpēr}$  is evidently a symbol of his authority. We must conclude in this case that either he is responsible for mobilization or that he is a high-ranking military officer. The parallel word in this verse ( $\text{m}^{\text{e}}\text{hōqēq}$ ) appears elsewhere in the Old Testament with the meaning 'staff', but its literal translation would be 'inscriber' or 'one who promulgates a decree' which would tend to support the conclusion that this is an official who is responsible for the muster. 113

The evidence points to 'war leaders' rather than to 'scribes' as the more probable rendering of  $\text{רָשׁוּ}$  .

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<sup>112</sup>William McKane, Prophets and Wise Men, SBT, 44 (London: SCM Press, 1965), pp. 17-19.

<sup>113</sup>McKane, Prophets and Wise Men, p. 22.

V. 14 may be rendered:

אֶפְרַיִם יִרְשָׁם בְּעַמֶּק  
 אַחֲרֶיהָ בְּנִימִין בְּעַמְמֵיהָ  
 מִנֵּי מַכִּיר יָרְדוּ מְחַקְקִים  
 וּמִזְבּוּלֹן מְשֻׁכִּים בְּשֵׁבֶט סֵפֶר

Ephraim rooted them out in the plain,  
 after you Benjamin, with your clansmen;  
 from Machir came down commanders,  
 and from Zebulun those who wielded  
 the marshal's staff.

V. 15

וְשָׂרֵי בִישָׁשָׁר עִם-דְּבוֹרָה

LXX. B καὶ ἄρχηγοὶ ἐν Ἰσσαχάρ μετὰ Δεββώρας  
 'And the leaders in Issachar (were) with Deborah'  
 suggests שָׂרֵי be read.<sup>114</sup> Vulg. Duces Issachar  
fuere cum Debbora 'The leaders of Issachar were with  
 Deborah'; Pesh. rwrbn' d'yskr 'm dbwr' 'The leaders of  
 Issachar were with Deborah'; and Targ. 'And the chiefs  
 of Issachar ( וְרַבְרָבֵי יִשָּׁשָׁר ) who were obedient to the  
 commands of Deborah' indicate וְשָׂרֵי יִשָּׁשָׁר עִם דְּבוֹרָה .  
 Rashi first indicates that וְשָׂרֵי בִישָׁשָׁר is equivalent  
 to שָׂרֵי שְׁבִישָׁשָׁר . However, he then makes a  
 grammatical comment on וְשָׂרֵי בִישָׁשָׁר , or more  
 specifically, a comment on the yodh ( יו//י ). He  
 says: 'The yodh is redundant, it is not fulfilling any  
 function,' and so appears to treat שָׂרֵי as equivalent  
 to the singular שָׂר . Rashi's reasoning is difficult

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<sup>114</sup>G-K, l, g, suggests that either the construct  
 state שָׂרֵי be read, or the pl. form שָׂרֵיִם . G-K  
 130, a, indicates that the construct state is  
 frequently employed in rapid narrative as a connecting  
 form, even apart from the genitive relation. Sec. 130,  
 a, l, states: 'Before prepositions, particularly in  
 elevated (prophetic or poetic) style ... thus before  
 שְׂמֵחַת בְּקִצִּיר , 'the joy of the harvest', Isa. 9:2;  
 2 Sam. 1:21; Ps. 136:8f. ...'



to follow and does not make much sense. In any case, the interpretation of שרי as a defective plural is doubtful.<sup>115</sup> Kimchi explains ושרי as a short form of the absolute שריים, and quotes Jer. 22:14 to show that חלונני is like (or, is the masc. pl. poetic of) חלוננים, and is similar to the noun חשוּפִי in Isa. 20:4, and other nouns like them.<sup>116</sup> NEB renders שרי ביששכר as ושרב יששכר עם דבורה 'Issachar joined with Deborah' by deleting the yodh and supplying a verb שרב.<sup>117</sup> Although the rare form of the plural suggested by Kimchi (cf. G-K) offers a more suitable translation than 'my princes', and the NEB rendering supplies a logical verb, Vulg., Pesh., and Targ.

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<sup>115</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 153, states that וְשָׂרֵי 'and my princes' is obviously impossible, and the correction שָׂרֵי (constr. before a preposition) 'princes in Issachar' though grammatically admissible is otherwise not much better. 'The princes of Issachar' gives a satisfactory sense, but we cannot be confident that this restores the original text. Cf. C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 136; and G.A. Cooke, The History and Song of Deborah, p. 44.

<sup>116</sup>G-K, 87, l, g, alternately suggest שָׂרֵי comparable to the rare form of the plural as חלונני (Jer. 22:14), חרני (Isa. 19:9) and חשוּפִי (Isa. 20:4), forms also quoted by Rashi and Kimchi.

<sup>117</sup>C.A. Simpson, Composition of the Book of Judges (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), p. 95, n. 51, also reads ושרב יששכר for ושרי יששכר taking שרב as the equivalent of סרב (=Syriac srah 'rebelled'; cf. סרב 'rebellious', Ezek. 2:6), and renders the text 'and Issachar joining in the revolt'.

support the construct form  $\text{שָׂרֵי}$  which involves no change in the consonantal text, and  $\text{וְשָׂרֵי בִישָׁכָר}$  is a possible construct relationship which may be rendered 'The leaders of Issachar were with Deborah'.

$\text{וְשָׂשָׁכָר כֵּן בָּרַק}$

LXX. A  $\text{ἐν Ἰσσαχάρ μετὰ Δεββώρας}$  'in Issachar with Deborah' does not mention Barak. LXX. B  $\text{καὶ ἀρχηγοὶ ἐν Ἰσσαχάρ μετὰ Δεββώρας καὶ Βαράκ}$  'And the leaders in Issachar were with Deborah and Barak' followed by  $\text{οὕτως Βαράκ}$  in the following line, has apparently read  $\text{וְבָרַק}$  where MT has  $\text{וְשָׂשָׁכָר}$ . It is quite possible that the Greek translator had the same text as MT before him and decided to alter it in order to get better sense in his translation. Vulg. 'The leaders of Issachar who were with Deborah and who followed the footsteps of Barak' is not quite correct, although the matter is complicated and obscure. 'And Barak' in Vulg. goes with vestigia sunt secuti, and the syntax of Et Barac is equal to that of  $\text{οὕτως Βαράκ}$  in LXX. Et Barac vestigia sunt secuti apparently represents  $\text{כֵּן בָּרַק שָׁלַח בְּרַגְלָיו}$ , ac barathrum is perhaps  $\text{בְּעַמְקָא}$ , and the rest is additional to MT. Both LXX and Vulg. have no representation of  $\text{וְשָׂשָׁכָר}$ .

Pesh. w'yyskr 'yk brq b'mm' 'And Issachar, and thus Barak with the people' represents MT ויששכר כן ברק but apparently has a different punctuation from MT, and renders בעמיס instead of עמק. Targ. attempts to understand ויששכר כן ברק by paraphrasing MT: 'The chiefs of Issachar who were obedient to the commands of Deborah, and the remainder of the tribe of Issachar who were similarly loyal to (i.e. served) Barak ...' According to Targ., the meaning is that one part of the tribe of Issachar fought with Deborah and another part with Barak. This also is the opinion of Rashi who explains ויששכר כן ברק: 'The remainder of the people who are serving with Issachar, they are with Barak and obey his every command.' Kimchi takes the text differently from Targ. and Rashi, and comments on MT: 'And so the tribe of Issachar in its entirety went out, and so Barak went out with Deborah.' (This is probably a comment on ויששכר כן ברק.) The meaning here is that Barak was as loyal to Deborah as was Issachar to her.

NEB 'Issachar stood by Barak' more or less agrees with Pesh. and Targ. which represent ויששכר. The only difference is that NEB indicates the joint leadership of Deborah and Barak over the one force.

Some commentators<sup>118</sup> suggest that the second occurrence of וַיִּשְׁכַּר is a scribal error inadvertently repeated from the first stich (cf. LXX. B) and that Naphtali in connection with Barak (cf. Judg. 4:6) was originally intended. However, the mention of Barak, the military leader from the tribe of Naphtali, may have been sufficient notice of the presence of that tribe to the discerning listener.<sup>119</sup>

Burney suggests that וְכִי translated 'so' or 'thus' appears to be impossible. It also has the sense of 'steadfast, reliable, honest' (cf. Gen. 42:11; Prov. 15:7; 2 K. 17:9), and could have that sense in Judg. 5:15 'And Issachar was faithful to Barak'. However, as Burney observes, a preposition ( בְּ ) would be required before וְכִי for this rendering.<sup>120</sup> Also, there is no evidence in biblical Hebrew to support וְכִי as a Qal transitive of וָכַח. There is no doubt that LXX. B, Targ., Pesh., Rashi and Kimchi have all understood וְכִי

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<sup>118</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 153; C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 137; John Gray, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, p. 286; C.A. Simpson, Composition of the Book of Judges, p. 20; and James Martin, Judges, p. 71.

<sup>119</sup>R. Boling, Judges, pp. 103, 112, considers וַיִּשְׁכַּר as an example of repetitive parallelism, and renders the text: 'Issachar's captains were with Deborah, Issachar was Baraq's support ...'

<sup>120</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 137.

as 'thus'. NEB has rendered the adverb  $\text{בְּ}$  'with' and has interpreted this to mean 'stood by'.  $\text{וַיִּשְׁכַּח בְּרַק}$  to indicate the joint leadership of Deborah and Barak, may be rendered 'And Issachar was with Barak'.

$\text{בַּעֲמֵק שֵׁל בְּרַגְלֵי}$

LXX. A renders  $\text{בַּעֲמֵק שֵׁל בְּרַגְלֵי}$  as  $\text{ἔξαπέστειλεν πεζοὺς αὐτοῦ ( εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα )}$ , 'he (Issachar) sent forth his (Issachar's) footmen (i.e. infantry) into the plain', which is connected with v. 14 'When leadership gained strength in Issachar' and identifies the troops as those of the tribe of Issachar. There is no mention of Barak in LXX. A v. 15.  $\text{ἔξαπέστειλεν}$  is a rendering of  $\text{הִצִּיף}$  rather than  $\text{הִצִּיף}$ , and  $\text{בְּרַגְלֵי}$  is rendered by  $\text{πεζοὺς αὐτοῦ}$  'his footmen' with nothing corresponding to  $\text{ב}$ . LXX. A also renders  $\text{בַּעֲמֵק שֵׁל בְּרַגְלֵי}$  as  $\text{ἔξέτεινεν ἐν τοῖς ποσίν αὐτοῦ}$  in another line. There is nothing in MT corresponding to the line  $\text{ἵνα τί σὺ κατοικεῖς ἐν μέσῳ χειλέων}$  'in order that you might dwell on the edges' ('edges' is obscure and may mean 'the sea shore'). LXX. B  $\text{ἐν ποσίν αὐτοῦ}$  is a literal rendering of  $\text{בְּרַגְלֵי}$  and does nothing to elucidate it. Vulg. et

Barac vestigia sunt secuti 'And the feet of Baraq pursue (are pursuing)' is presumably an interpretation of 'Barak was sent with his feet'. Pesh. has a different punctuation from MT and the other Versions, since it separates שלח from עמק and renders: ב'šdr byglwhy lplgwt' drwbyl 'He (Barak) was sent on foot (with his infantry?) to the divisions of Reuben'. Targ. משתלחיו 'were being dispatched' confirms MT שלח and is a rendering of שלח ברגלים : '... and the remainder of the tribe of Issachar who were serving with Barak were dispatched into the villages of the plain to every place where it was necessary to send a detachment.' Rashi comments on בעמק שילח ברגליו : 'He (Barak) sent them (Issachar) on every kind of military assignment, and to muster the people on all necessary tasks of the war.' Rashi points differently from MT ( שילח rather than שולח ). However, there is nothing in Rashi which shows conclusively that ברגליו is identified with 'foot soldiers'. Kimchi comments on בעמק שלח ברגליו : 'In that he did not ask for a beast to mount so great was his appetite for the battle', a reference to Barak, which shows that he takes Barak as subject of שלח .

LXX. A and Targ. suppose that 'Issachar' is subject of שלח , whereas LXX. B, Vulg., Pesh., Rashi

and Kimchi understand 'Barak' to be the subject. LXX. A renders  $\text{נְשָׂא}$  (possibly Rashi,  $\text{נְשָׂא}$ ); Vulg. 'The feet of Barak are pursuing' may be an attempted translation of 'Barak was sent with his feet', but this is not clear; Pesh. 'šdr renders  $\text{נְשָׂא}$ ; and Targ. 'were being dispatched' confirms MT  $\text{נְשָׂא}$ .

$\text{בְּרַגְלֵי}$  does not seem to mean 'foot soldiers' or 'infantry' (cf. LXX. A) as the text would have to be  $\text{בְּרַגְלֵי}$  rather than  $\text{בְּרַגְלֵי}$  which is rendered 'on foot' in Judg. 4:15, 17:  $\text{וַיִּנְסוּ בְּרַגְלֵי}$  'fled on foot' (cf. Num. 20:19; Deut. 2:28). V. 15b rendered 'Barak sent (them) on foot into the plain' is possible. However, this does not give the proper sense of troops being sent or dispatched into battle. The NEB reading of Judg. 4:10 'Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kadesh and marched up (  $\text{וַיַּעַל בְּרַגְלֵי}$  ) with ten thousand men ...' is treated as a reference to military action. Judg. 5:15b  $\text{שָׁלַח בְּרַגְלֵי}$  also appears to indicate a possible military phrase, and  $\text{שָׁלַח}$  taken with  $\text{בְּרַגְלֵי}$  seems to be a reference to troops dispatched into battle, and may be rendered 'marched forth, advanced, rushed, attacked'.<sup>121</sup>  $\text{שָׁלַח בְּרַגְלֵי}$  used in the sense 'to march forth' or 'to advance'

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<sup>121</sup> Job 30:12  $\text{בְּרַגְלֵי שְׁלָחוּהוּ}$  (rendered by NEB 'they attack' with note following, 'they let loose my feet').

indicates an active rather than a passive verb (cf. LXX. A), i.e. either 'Barak attacked' or 'Issachar attacked'. In agreement with LXX. A and Targ. (cf. NEB), 'Issachar' is taken as the subject as it seems logical to assume the movement of troops rather than the movement of an individual leader into the battle, and the stich may be rendered: 'Issachar advanced into the plain.'

בפלגות ראובן גדולים חקקי-לב

LXX. A ἐν διαίρεσιν Ρουβην 'in the divisions of Reuben' refers to 'divisions (or, differences) of opinion'. LXX. A v. 16 τοῦ διελθεῖν εἰς τὰ τοῦ Ρουβήν presumably means 'to go through the (areas) of Reuben' and is a reference to the territory of Reuben (but the sense is obscure). LXX. B reads εἰς τὰς μερίδας 'Ρουβήν 'in the factions of Reuben' (cf. v. 16 εἰς διαίρεσις 'among the divisions'; LXX. B reads εἰς in both verses indicating the dissenting groups within the tribe). Vulg. diviso contra se Reuben 'when Reuben was divided against itself (in both verses) renders נגד in the same way as LXX. A. Pesh. as Vulg. also renders exactly the same way in both verses 'With respect to the divisions (lplqwt) of Reuben, there were great



searchings of heart (bdqy lb'), but gives no exegetical hint for לפלגות ראובן . Targ. renders בפלגות ראובן as בְּזִרְעֵית רְאוּבֵן (v. 15) and develops the sense of deceit in v. 15 'Among the clans of Reuben there was great duplicity (deceit) of heart', and the sense of internal disagreement in v. 16 'Is this a right thing for you to do, O house of Reuben? Do you not know that the thoughts of your heart are revealed to Him?' Rashi and Kimchi comment upon Reuben's duplicity, but do not mention לפלגות ראובן , probably because they do not draw any distinction between בפלגות and לפלגות . Kimchi comments on בפלגות ראובן : 'Reuben, who was divided and disunited on the other side of the Jordan and did not come to the battle.'<sup>122</sup> Rashi renders בפלגות ראובן as בחייליקי לבי 'in the divisions of his heart' and is in basic agreement with all the Versions, including Targ. which indicates that בפלגות

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<sup>122</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 139, notes that the tribe of Reuben, associated with a pastoral setting amid quiet brooks, suggests the pointing of פלגות as פְּלָגוֹת 'water-courses, channels, brooks'. Hence Reuben would be content to remain in their pastoral setting rather than respond to the summons to battle. Burney points out that there are only two occurrences of פְּלָגוֹת and one of them is shown by the parallelism (Job 20:17) to mean 'streams'. (The pl. of פלג 'channel' is פְּלָגִים not פְּלָגוֹת , and only in Job 20:17 does פְּלָגוֹת mean 'streams'. BDB renders פלגה as (1) 'stream' (2) 'division' and reads perhaps פְּלָגוֹת 'division', cf. 2 Ch. 35:5.)

ראובן is a reference to 'factions' since what it indicates is probably internal disagreement.

בפלגות ראובן 'among the factions of Reuben' has to be taken with גדוליס חקקי-לב (v. 16 חקקי-לב ). LXX. A ἀκριβασμοὶ καρδίας ( ἐξιχνιασμοὶ v. 16) and LXX. B ἀκριβασμοὶ καρδίας ( ἐξετασμοὶ v. 16) 'searchings of heart' are renderings of חקקי (cf. O' and Symm.).<sup>123</sup> Vulg. diviso contra se Reuben, magnanimorum reperta est contentio in both verses 'when Reuben was divided against itself, the striving of the great souled (or: 'the (mental) strife of the great seeks out', i.e. גדוליס ) investigates' supports the interpretation 'heart searching'. Contentio is apparently a rendering of לב and גדוליס is taken as a genitive. It is not clear how reperta est is got out of חקקי or חקקי , but the sense of reperta est points to חקק rather than חקק . Pesh. follows closely MT, but is a reading of חקקי-לב and has the same translation (bdqy lb') in both verses.

All the renderings in the Versions probably reflect חקקי rather than חקקי (in both vv. 15 and

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<sup>123</sup>A'. ἀκριβολογία may be a combination of two words, ἀκριβῶς 'investigate accurately' and λογεία 'a contribution, collection' in an attempt to represent both חקקי 'decrees of' (cf. Isa. 10:1) and חקקי 'searchings of'.

16). Only in Targ. and Rashi do you get חקקי-לב interpreted in terms of craftiness and deceit. Targ. renders חקקי-לב as נכלי לב and reads: 'Among the clans of Reuben there were great hypocrisies of heart' indicating that Reuben acted deceitfully by holding back from participation in the battle until it was obvious who the victor would be. Rashi understands חקקי-לב as ערמומית 'craftiness'. Rashi glosses חקקי-לב with נכלו ליבא (cf. Targ. 'hypocrisies of heart') and adds his own gloss ערמומית 'craftiness'. He comments: 'In what did his craftiness consist? He remained behind the battle lines in order to ascertain which side would be victorious so that he might join it.' Kimchi explains גדולים הם חקקי as חקרי לבי 'and my heart-searchings concerning him' (i.e. Reuben). Kimchi supposes that the heart-searchings are not Reuben's but those of the author of the poem.

It is doubtful whether חקקי לב makes sense as biblical Hebrew.<sup>124</sup> None of the Greek renderings are

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<sup>124</sup>G-K 93, b-b, explains חקקי as a secondary form of חקקי (חקה) expanded to a trilateral form with abnormal weakening of the 'u' to 'i' (cf. Isa. 10:1 חקקי און 'decrees of iniquity'). BDB חק 3, 'action prescribed (for oneself), resolve' renders חקקי לב 'resolves of heart'. KB3 emend to חקרי לב. BH Stutt. n. 15e, indicates that חקקי should be emended (with a few Hebrew Mss. and Pesh.) to חקרי as in v. 16 'searchings (of heart)'.

explicable on the basis of חקקי לב . They all  
 ( αταβασμοι as well as the others) presuppose  
 חקקי לב . We do not really know what חקקי means if  
 it is not 'statutes', and none of the renderings in the  
 Greek Versions seem to point to this (cf. the  
 renderings of חקקי (v. 9) and מחקקים (v. 14) in  
 LXX. B which do pick up the 'statute' nuance of חקק ).  
 Therefore we can only assume that the Greek translators  
 were not reading a different text in v. 15 from what  
 they read in v. 16, and both verses are rendered  
 חקקי-לב .

V. 15 may be rendered:

וְשָׂרֵי בְּנֵי־שִׁשְׁכַר עִם־דְּבוּרָה  
 וְיִשָּׁשַׁר בֶּן־בָּרַק  
 בָּעֵמֶק שֶׁלַח בְּרִגְלָיו  
 בְּפִלְגֹת רֵאבֵן גְּדוּלִים חֲקָרֵי־לֵב

And the leaders of Issachar (were) with Deborah,  
 and Issachar (was) with Barak.  
 (Issachar) advanced into the plain.  
 Among the factions of Reuben,  
 there were great heart-searchings.

V. 16

למה ישבת בין המשפתיים

LXX. A μέσον τῶν μωσφαθαίμ is a transliteration of משפתיים . LXX. B μέσον τῆς διγομίας renders משפתיים as 'double burden' (cf. L-S p. 421, col. 2). This rendering gives some support to KB<sup>3</sup>'s 'two saddle-bags' (of the pack donkey): 'der 2 Sattelkörbe der Packesels, mit denen er sich oft störrisch niederlegt' ('the two saddle-bags of the pack-ass, with which it often lies down stubbornly').<sup>125</sup> KB<sup>3</sup>'s interpretation probably is: 'why do you ride your mules and continue with the usual pattern of your life?' LXX. B's translation agrees with KB<sup>3</sup>'s philology.

Symm. attempts to locate Reuben's position during the battle and interprets המשפתיים as μεταχμίῶν 'the spaces between two armies' or 'in the middle of no-man's land' (cf. L-S, 112). Vulg. Quare habitas inter duos terminos 'Why do you dwell between the two termini' indicates that the meaning of המשפתיים is 'termini' and that Reuben is taking up a position between the termini ( בין המשפתיים ), perhaps the

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<sup>125</sup>Cf. W.F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 82.

battle-lines of the rival armies. Pesh. renders  
 בֵּין הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים as bynt sbyl 'between the ways'  
 indicating that Reuben is between 'two somethings'.

Targ. renders הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים as תְּחִימֵיךָ 'borders'  
 and reads: 'Why do you turn back from the front-line  
 of war to sit between the borders (boundaries) ...'  
 Targ. expands upon MT: '... waiting to hear the news,  
 so as to know which army is victorious, so as to  
 associate yourself with it. Is this a right thing for  
 you to do, O House of Reuben? Do you not know that the  
 thoughts of your heart are revealed to Him?' Reuben  
 waited between the borders to see which side was likely  
 to be victorious before committing himself to the  
 battle.

Kimchi comments upon Judg. 5:16: 'I said to him  
 (Reuben), Why do you sit between הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים .' He then  
 goes on to define הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים : 'and they are the folds  
 ( מַעֲרֹכֹת ) and the pens for the sheep ( גִּדְרוֹת  
 הַצֹּאן ).' Kimchi glosses מִשְׁפָּטִים with  
 גִּדְרוֹת צֹאן 'sheep-folds', Num.  
 32:16, 36; 1 Sam. 24:4). Kimchi seems to render  
 מִשְׁפָּטִים as a dual of שָׁפַט 'to set, place', used to  
 indicate that 'pens' or 'folds' were divided into two

parts (layers) which formed an enclosure.<sup>126</sup> Rashi omits any reference to *המשפתיים* in v. 16. His comment on v. 15 seems to associate *משפתיים* with *שפים* and reads: 'Reuben took up his position between the battle lines' ( *משפתי המלחמה* ) a possible reference to 'borders'.

LXX. B and KB<sup>3</sup> suppose *בין המשפתיים* to mean 'between the two saddle-bags'; Vulg., Pesh., Targ. and Rashi suppose 'battle-lines' or 'borders'; Kimchi renders 'sheep-folds'. All the Versions, and Rashi and Kimchi render *משפתיים* as meaning 'between two somethings'.

Gen. 49:14 lends some support to the view that *משפתיים* means 'saddle-bags': *דִּשְׁשָׁכָר חָמֵר גִּרְמָם לִבְנֵי בֵּין* 'Issachar is a strong ass sitting ( *לִבְנֵי* ) between (two somethings)'. *לִבְנֵי* is used of an animal at rest, and this suggests Issachar, the strong ass, at rest, or in his subservient yet comfortable position (i.e. riding his mules and continuing with his usual pattern of life, and indisposed to answer the call to

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<sup>126</sup>BDB connects *שפה* (which is itself obscure) with I *שפה* and *משפתיים* with II *שפה*. BDB supposes that *משפתיים* is 'fireplaces' or 'ash heaps', but gives the sense 'sheep-folds'. KB3 has 'saddle-bags' and also mentions 'cauldrons' and 'sheep-pens'.

battle].<sup>127</sup> However Gen. 49:14-15 is not set in a war context as is Judg. 5:16 and vv. 14-15 constitute an aetiology of שכר 'hire' rather than the position assumed by Issachar in regard to the call to battle against the oppressor. The Versions (Vulg., Pesh.) and Targ., Rashi and Kimchi do not support the rendering 'saddle-bags'.

The cognate forms found in Gen. 19:14 ( המשפתיים ) and in Ps. 68:14 ( שפתיים ) are rendered by Albright as the dual form meaning 'hearth, fire-place'. (However, Ps. 68:13f. is so obscure that not very much can be built on it.) The two hearths, Albright suggests, were customary in antiquity as today among nomad Arabs. He sees the dual שפתיים as identical with Ugaritic mtpdm which he renders 'the two fire-places'. משפתיים rendered 'hearth' by Albright is, according to his interpretation, a description of

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<sup>127</sup>O. Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhurden in Ostjordanland,' in Kleine Schriften, III (Tubingen, 1966), p. 64, describes Issachar, once free, as having submitted to foreign domination and has forfeited his independence in return for safe and comfortable living conditions in a restricted area; NEB reading מְקַזְּ (cf. KB3) thinks that the meaning is 'castrated ass'. This is probably in reference to Issachar's submission to forced labour. But there does not seem to be a case for changing מְקַזְּ, and the meaning is probably 'strong ass' (חמור) (cf. RSV).



tribesmen sitting between or among the campfires.<sup>128</sup>  
 The meaning 'hearth-places' also is strongly defended  
 by Paul Haupt who writes: 'Die Steine, auf die der  
 Kochkessel gestellt wird, nicht bei den Viehkeerden  
 oder Viehhürden ...' (The stones upon which the pot  
 stands (is meant), not, beside the herds of cattle or  
 cattle-pens ...).<sup>129</sup>

G. R. Driver, however, renders mtpd' 'layer' and  
mtpdm 'two layers':

lrhq.elm.hkp(t.lrhq.élnym)  
 tn.mtpdm.tht.( 'nt árs.t lt mth)  
 gyrm.ídk.l yt(n.pn m.'ml tpn)  
 él d ped.tk hrš(n . . .

<sup>128</sup>W.F. Albright, 'A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric  
 Poems (Psalm 68),' HUCA, 23, No. 1 (1950-51), p. 22.

<sup>129</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 141, suggests  
 that מִשְׁפָּתִים is a dual form and may refer to a kind  
 of double pen with an inner and outer enclosure, and so  
 gives credence to the interpretation 'sheep-pen' or  
 'sheep-fold'. Burney fails to see any connection  
 between the village ash-heap and pastoral pursuits and  
 the tending of flocks. The use of the dual, he  
 believes, is abnormal if in reference to the ash-heap  
 as this would indicate an unusual situation in which  
 there were two ash-heaps to each encampment.

for the most distant of gods, Egypt (for the  
 most distant of ghosts),  
 two layers beneath (the springs of the earth,  
 three spans)  
 (under) the rocks. Then verily he set (his) face  
 towards Lutpan)  
 kindly god toward the cosmic mountain.<sup>130</sup>

Cyrus H. Gordon renders tn.mtpdm 'two stages under'  
 (the springs of the earth).<sup>131</sup> There is also a  
 reference to mtpdm in KB<sup>3</sup>. Driver is cited, as also is  
 J. Aistleitner 2918 mtpd: '2 Schichten unter den  
 Quellen der Eide.' Aisleiter agrees with Driver's  
 rendering of tn.mtpdm as 'two layers' (2 Schichten).

In the above lines of Ugaritic poetry, Anat, who  
 has been summoned by Baal, announces her intention to  
 make her way down into the depths of the earth (a space  
 between two layers). Ancient cosmologies, such as that  
 of Sumer, viewed the universe as one of cosmic levels.  
 The Babylonians viewed the universe as layers separated  
 by space. Apparently Driver and Gordon see mtpdm as  
 'two layers' (below the surface of the earth). Driver  
 translates both occurrences 'for the most distant of  
 ghosts (or, chthonic deities) two layers beneath the

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<sup>130</sup>G.R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, OTS, 3  
 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), p. 75 (Baal VI, iii,  
 20); 89 (Baal V, iv, 35).

<sup>131</sup>Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook (Rome, 1965),  
 p. 255 ('nt III:20); cf. Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic  
 Literature (Rome, 1949), p. 25.

springs of the earth'. According to this the reference is to the degree of depth below the surface of the earth where the chthonic deities have their home.

The Ugaritic evidence and the interpretations of mtpdm 'two layers' by Driver and Gordon do not support Albright's view that mtpdm means 'fire-places'. However, in respect of phonemic equivalences it is certainly reasonable to equate mtpdm with משפתים, and that the reference to an enclosed space is achieved by the preposition בין in conjunction with משפתים and is a reference to 'between the two somethings'.

John Gray interprets בין המשפתים 'between the converging fold-walls', a feature found in ancient drystone sheepfolds.<sup>132</sup> A. S. Kirkbride pointed out the purpose of the structure known as 'kite' found in the fertile hills to the north-west of Transjordan. The 'kite' was the name given to what appeared to be an enclosure built of rough blocks of basalt or lava, 30 to 40 meters across, with an outer wall which extended outward from the more-or-less circular enclosure in a V-shape upwards to 400 meters in length. The entrance to the circular enclosure was only at the point of convergence of the outer walls with the inner

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<sup>132</sup> John Gray, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, p. 287.

enclosure, a gateway 2 or 3 meters wide. Kirkbride noticed that these enclosures were adjacent to good grazing land. In the event of danger, primarily from raiding bands of nomads, the sheep could be quickly herded or stampeded from the adjacent pasture into the pen for safety. The walls of the inner enclosure contained a number of small enclosures, built in the wall, which were designed for the defence of the pen from attack by raiders.<sup>133</sup> The shape of these 'kites' and the purpose to which they were put led Eissfeldt to identify them with משפתיים and interpret them as 'sheepfolds', a term suggested early by Kimchi. Eissfeldt noted that these antique stone structures in Transjordan which Kirkbride talks about, and whose characteristics are the two long walls coming from the circle, are referred to by the dual form of the noun which means 'placing' (Setzung).<sup>134</sup> Eissfeldt describes the tribe of Reuben as sheep-herders who lived in an area threatened by attack from bandits, and who had always to be on watch to guard the sheepfolds. He suggests that they acted differently from their

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<sup>133</sup>A.S. Kirkbride, 'Desert Kites,' JPOS, 20, No. 1 (1946), pp. 1-5.

<sup>134</sup>O. Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhurden im Ostjordanland,' p. 63; cf. Y. Yadin, 'The Earliest Record of Egypt's Military Penetration Into Asia,' IEJ, 5 (1955), p. 8.

forefathers (cf. Gen. 32 and Josh. 22). At that time, when the Israelites took their land, the Reubenites who were able to fight went with their brother-tribes into west Jordan land after having built 'hurdles' for their cattle, and cities for their wives and children in the Transjordan which had been given to them. They went there (West Jordan) in order to help them conquer their portion, and only after having completed their task they returned to their lands. They now think it is impossible to leave, and think their own interests are more important than those of the Israelite coalition. They believe they have to leave their able-bodied men near and in the sheepfolds, watching and guarding against threatening attacks.<sup>135</sup>

A cairn, built over a Safaitic grave, near the main Baghdad road in the Transjordan, and discovered by Lankester Harding, contained the following inscription scratched on a stone: 'By Mani'at, and he built for Hani'.' And he drew a picture of the pen (or, enclosure) and the animals pasturing by themselves.<sup>136</sup> The drawing shows one of the stone-walled enclosures known as 'desert kites' described as follows:

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<sup>135</sup>O. Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhurden im Ostjordanland,' p. 65.

<sup>136</sup>O. Eissfeldt, p. 69.

On the left is the fortified enclosure in which a number of animals are already assembled; it has seven defensive embrasures in the walls and at the entrance the walls are turned inward to make escape of the animals more difficult. From the corners of the enclosure two long walls are shown extending ... The vertical strokes along these walls suggests that they were palisaded ... On the other side of the entrance, within the long walls, stands a man with arms upraised, directing the animals into the pen. At the mouth of the palisaded walls ... are other animals being driven or stampeded towards the enclosure by a man with arms upraised. Outside the limit of the walls, a few animals have succeeded in escaping and are making off in the opposite direction. 137

The drawing represents the same structure as Kirkbride saw and establishes that it is indeed a kind of sheep-fold.

The Safaitic period produced a literary language classified as North Arabic dating from about 500 B.C. to 300 A.D.<sup>138</sup> Clark suggests that these grazing enclosures are 1500 or so years old.<sup>139</sup> Eissfeldt maintains that the inscription 'By Mani'at, and he built for Hani'...' merely informs us that Mani'at took part in the building of the cairn and was the artist responsible for the drawing on the stone. Similarly

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<sup>137</sup>J. Desmond Clark, 'Desert Kites,' Antiquity, 28 (1954), p. 165f.

<sup>138</sup>CAH<sup>3</sup>, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, p. 137.

<sup>139</sup>J. Desmond Clark, 'Desert Kites,' p. 166.

the names of other artists are mentioned on other inscriptions on the stone. Eissfeldt states that the purpose and age of these structures, which has been disputed, are now answered by this drawing which dates back to the time when the structures were in use. This theory and the shape of the enclosures led Eissfeldt to suggest their identification with משפתיים in Judg. 5:16.<sup>140</sup>

The evidence points to the use of these structures in the Safaitic period, and perhaps earlier. Yadin suggests that the archaeological evidence, although definite in dating the 'kites' to the pre-Safaitic period, does not enable us to come to a firm conclusion concerning the date when these unique structures were established. Yadin admits that 'circumstantial archaeological evidence for the dating of these kites is very scanty indeed'. However, from observation of the slate-palette of Narmer, one of the most important documents from the beginning of recorded history in Egypt (beginning of the third Millennium B.C.), characteristic objects and buildings were seen to be depicted. One was an enclosure composed of a

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<sup>140</sup>O. Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhurden im Ostjordanland,' p. 70; cf. Y. Yadin, 'The Earliest Record of Egypt's Military Penetration Into Asia,' p. 5 and p. 9, n. 33.

semi-circular construction from which two long walls spread out fanwise and the only entrance was through the converging long walls. These structures, Yadin believes, are similar to the 'desert kites' photographed by Group-Captain Rees, and the date of the 'kites' may therefore be pushed back to at least the beginning of the third millennium B.C. and possibly to the latter half of the fourth millennium. This suggests to Yadin the possibility of these 'kites' already early in existence, being used by the Reubenite shepherds in the 12th century B.C.<sup>141</sup>

Kimchi's commentary, supported by modern evidence of 'desert kites' is probably the closest to an explanation of the meaning of *בין המשפתיים* and also gives credence to the phonemic equivalent expressed by Ugaritic *mtpdm* 'two layers', and the Versions inference to 'between the two somethings'. Kimchi sees Reuben preoccupied with duties at home, and did not answer the call to war, and describes the sheep-herders of the tribe of Reuben as sitting 'among the sheepfolds'.

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<sup>140</sup>Y. Yadin, 'The Earliest Record of Egypt's Military Penetration Into Asia,' pp. 1-10.



לשמע שרקות עדריס

LXX. A renders שרקות עדריס as συρισμοῦς ἐξεγειρόντων 'the sound of the pipes of those who raise the alarm'.<sup>142</sup> ἐξεγειρόντων (ἐξεγείρω 'to excite, arouse, awaken') is not the equivalent of עֲדָרִים . It looks as if the Greek translator read עֲדָרִים which (if it is a Poel Part. of עָרָה ) should be מְעָרִים . LXX. B renders שרקות עדריס as συρισμοῦ ἀγγέλων 'the whistling of messengers'. It is very probable that ἀγγέλων is an inner-Septuagental corruption for ἀγελῶν which is attested by miniscules (see Lower Case Septuagint) and that συρισμοῦ ἀγελῶν 'whistling of the sheep' is a rendering of MT שרקות עדריס , and is the correct explanation of ἀγγέλων (cf. Field: fort. ἀγελῶν ). 'Whistling of the sheep' does not necessarily imply that sheep 'whistle', but may refer to 'whistling' as a method of controlling sheep (the constr. relat. can mean 'whistling for flocks' as well as 'whistling of

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<sup>142</sup>L-S (p. 1731) lists σύριγχα as 'the sound of a pipe', and the verb σφίζω as 'to play the pipe' or 'to make a whistling sound', interpreting שרקות as 'the whistling of an alarm' to call the sheep together.

flocks').<sup>143</sup> Origen also reads ἀγελῶν, and another text which existed in Origen's day ( ἄλλος ) has ποιμνίων 'flocks'.

Vulg. ut audias sibilos gregum 'in order to hear the whistling of the sheep' is reading MT, and as LXX. B (corrected to ἀγελῶν) understood MT to mean 'the whistlings of the sheep'. Pesh. swq' ā'rd' 'the snuffings of wild asses' cannot be regarded as a rendering of שַׂרְקוֹת עֲדָיִם but is rather a rendering of שַׂרְקוֹת פְּרָאִים. It is clear that the Syriac translator of Judg. 5:16 is influenced by Jer. 14:6 where 'wild asses' ( פְּרָאִים rendered as 'rd') are said to sqw rwh' 'yk yrwr' 'snuff the wind like jackals'. In Judg. 5:16 it looks as if עֲדָיִם 'flocks' has been read as עֲדָיִם and thus equated with Syriac 'rd' 'wild ass'.

Rashi explains שַׂרְקוֹת עֲדָיִם by quoting verbatim from Ex. 32:18 which he renders: 'to hear the sound of the flocks of ( עֲדָיִם )war, which has the sound of the cry of power, and which has the sound of the cry of weakness.' עֲדָיִם is taken by Rashi to mean 'the armies of the field'. With Targ., Rashi interprets

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<sup>143</sup>BDB שַׂרְקוֹת indicates that the constr. שַׂרְקוֹת עֲדָיִם is interpreted as 'signal hissings (or whistlings, pipings) for flocks'.

this to mean (cf. Rashi's comment on v. 15 'to learn who was victorious') that Reuben listened to the noise of battle to discern from which side came cries of victory or of defeat. Both Targ. and Rashi go beyond a gentle censure of Reuben and portray the tribe as deceitful to the point of treachery. Kimchi comments on *לשמע שריקות עדרים* : 'As if to say, you dwell in security and showed no concern for the battle of Israel in the land of Canaan and you did not come to help in this battle.' Kimchi's commentary is probably correct in that Reuben was preoccupied with duties at home and did not answer the call to war.

Burney notes that Latin sibila 'hissings' or 'whistlings of (i.e. for) the flocks' is used of piping to flocks upon a mouth-organ of reeds. He says: 'The Latin term is also employed by Columella, 'De Re Rust.', ii, cap. 3, of "whistling" to oxen to induce them to drink more freely after work ... cf. the way in which whistling or music will cause cows which are difficult milkers to yield their milk more freely...'<sup>144</sup>

The idea of 'shepherd's pipes' seems to be probable only if *שִׁרְקוֹת עֲדָרִים* is read. There are two

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<sup>144</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 141.

main possibilities: (1) שְׂרָקוֹת עֵדְרִים which refers to a method of controlling the sheep or of driving them back into their pens; (2) שְׂרָקוֹת עֵדְרִים which refers to 'shepherd's pipes' and Reuben is portrayed as preferring the pastoral life to the harsh realities of battle. In either case, the sound is produced by the shepherds, not the sheep. In view of the reference in v. 16a to 'sheepfolds' and the activity of tending sheep, the second stich maintains a balance of thought by continuing the reference to pastoral activity (i.e. the whistling for sheep). It does not seem to mean that Reuben sat about playing pipes, but seems to indicate the active engagement in the watching and guarding of sheep. The scorn poured upon Reuben by the participants in the battle is described by G. A. Smith: 'It was a poor thing to listen to the flocks being whistled for, when God's call was abroad.'<sup>145</sup>

'To hear the whistling of those who give the alarm' (cf. LXX. A) fits in quite well with Eissfeldt's interpretation. He maintains that 'bleating of the herds' can not be expressed by שְׂרָקוֹת עֵדְרִים any more than can 'whistling by (near) the herds' which is attributed to the flutes of the shepherds. It can only

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<sup>145</sup>G.A. Smith, The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Origins, p. 88.

mean, Eissfeldt maintains, 'Herden-Zischen' (whistling for the herds) in the sense that 'herds' is the object, and they are made to move by the whistling. He writes:

The Herden-Zischen can only refer to noises by which the herds are driven (stampeded) either by the thieves who want to drive them away, or by the owners or shepherds who drive them into the sheepfolds in order to protect them. And both is possible. But more likely it is the latter possibility. The able-bodied Reubenites stay at their posts near the sheepfolds to listen to find out if the shepherds whistle and drive the animals together in order to be prepared to defend them.<sup>146</sup>

The evidence (LXX. B ἀγελῶν ; Vulg. sibilos; cf. LXX. A) seems to point to the rendering 'whistling for the sheep', and v. 16 may be rendered:

לָמָּה זָשַׁבְתָּ בֵּין הַמְּשֻׁפְתִּים  
 לְשִׁמֵּעַ שְׂרָקוֹת עֵדְרִים  
 לְפַלְגוֹת רֵאוּבֵן גְּדוּלִים חֻקְרֵי-לֵב

Why do you sit among the sheepfolds  
 to hear the whistling for the sheep?  
 Among the factions of Reuben  
 there were great heart-searchings. 147

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<sup>146</sup>O. Eissfeldt, 'Gabelhurden im Ostjordanland,' p. 66.

<sup>147</sup>NEB deletes לְפַלְגוֹת רֵאוּבֵן גְּדוּלִים חֻקְרֵי לֵב (v. 16) and reads חֻקְרֵי in v. 15 with 5 Mss.

V. 17

גלעד בעבר הירדן שכך

LXX. A and B Γαλαὰδ ἐν τῷ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ἔσκηνωσεν 'Gilead dwelt across (on the other side of) the Jordan' renders MT accurately. Vulg. Galaad trans Jordan quiescebat renders שכך as quiescebat 'reposed, dwelt peacefully'. Vulg. may have been attempting to illustrate the selfishness and irresponsibility in the attitude and culpability of Gilead, Dan and Asher in the rendering of the verbs in v. 17 (quiescebat 'dwelt peacefully (at ease)'; vacabat 'potttered about'; morabatur 'delayed, dallied'). Pesh. gd b'br' dywrdsn reads Gad instead of Gilead, and no reason is given for the tribe's failure to respond to the call to battle.

Targ. follows MT and reads: 'The House of Gilead remained ( שכך ) across the Jordan. Rashi comments on שכך בעבר הירדן שכך 'And he did not come to the battle'. Kimchi's first comment agrees with Rashi, 'Similarly Gilead remained across the Jordan'. Kimchi attempts to deal with the reference to Machir (v. 14) who apparently came to the battle:

There is a problem here. It is not said that Machir came to the battle. But Machir is the father of Gilead, and the territory of Gilead belongs to the House of Machir. As it is said (he quotes Num. 32:40), 'he gave Gilead to Machir, son of Manasseh'. And there are those who interpret that when he says, 'Gilead settled across the Jordan', he refers to the House of Jair, son of Manasseh. As it is written (he quotes Deut. 3:14), 'his portion was in the land of Gilead, as it is said, 'Jair, son of Manasseh, went and captured their tent-settlements.

Kimchi is saying that Gilead is the name of a region and its population. Gad is listed as one of the twelve tribes, whereas Gilead refers to the geographical area east of the Jordan, north and south of the river Jabbok (cf. Num. 32:34-41; Judg. 10:4, 11:1f.).

There is another interpretation offered by Kimchi, that the expression גלעד בעבר הירדן שכן is one of surprise and a way of saying to Reuben:

Why did you remain in your house and did not come to the battle? Gilead did the same thing as you did, for he settled and abode across the Jordan. Did not he show concern and come to help in the battle of Israel. And now why did you do as you have done? And although you are on the other side of the Jordan, was not he also on the other side of the Jordan?

Kimchi gives a further interpretation of this expression ( גלעד בעבר הירדן שכן ) according to which it is not one of surprise, but a way of saying:

Did not Gilead settle across the Jordan? Like you, his portion and protection is there. Nevertheless he crossed and came to the help of Israel. But you, why did you not act so?

The reason why Kimchi is occupied with these interpretations is that he is worried about the lack of agreement between v. 14 (Machir) and v. 17, if v. 17 means that Gad did not respond to the call. But Kimchi has another interpretation of this (his first interpretation) and he does not really commit himself to any one interpretation. MT גלעד בעבר הירדן שכן is best rendered (cf. LXX. A and B) 'Gilead dwelt (had settled) across the Jordan'.

למה יגור אנרת

LXX. A and B καὶ Δάν εἰς τί (A, ἵνα τί) παροικεῖ πλοίοις 'And Dan, why did he dwell beside the ships' supports MT. Vulg. et Dan vacabat navibus 'And Dan was pottering about in ships' emphasizes Dan's preoccupation with his own concerns. Vulg. does not represent MT למה . Pesh. wdn lm'n' g'r spyn' 'And Dan draws ships (to the?) harbour' is obscure. 'To the harbour' is not legitimate because the reading is not llm'n but lm'n 'harbour'. It certainly looks like an inner Pesh. corruption. It possibly may have been



confused with MT  $\text{לָמַח}$ , or it may have been deliberately introduced into the text to fit the context of marine activity.<sup>148</sup> However, Pesh. is too obscure to offer exegetical help here.  $\text{ג'ר}$  'draws' (or, 'drags') looks like an attempt to reproduce  $\text{גָּרַר}$  of MT.

Targ. connects the reference to ships with the river Jordan: 'The House of Dan migrated and crossed the Jordan, and they put their goods into ships'. Kimchi also sees Dan's location to be not by the Mediterranean but across the Jordan. He comments on  $\text{לְמַח לְגַרְר אֲנִיֹּת}$  :

It is not being said that he (sailed) on ships for he was not settled by the sea. For Zebulun's territory was there as it is said: 'Zebulun settled by the sea-shore' (Gen. 49:13). Although it is written concerning his (Dan's) allotted territory 'opposite Joppa' (Josh. 19:46), yet Joppa was not within his tribal area but 'ships of the Jordan'. That means, he crossed the Jordan because of fear of the enemy and removed his possessions to the other side of Jordan.

Rashi agrees with Targ. and Kimchi, and comments: 'And similarly Dan loaded up his wealth on ships to prepare to flee.'

Gray suggests that MT  $\text{לְגַרְר אֲנִיֹּת}$  without the

<sup>148</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 142.

preposition before *אנירות* is suspect.<sup>149</sup> However *גור* followed by the accusative of place is found in Ps. 120:5 *קִי-גִרְתִּי מִשֶּׁחַךְ* 'that I dwell in Meshech' and suggests that the rather obscure *גורר אנירות* means 'dwell in ships' (cf. Ps. 5:5 *לֹא יִגְדָּה קֶעַץ* and Isa. 33:14 *מִי יִגְדֹר לְנָה* ). Only LXX in virtue of *παροικεῖ* suggests rather 'dwelling beside ships' (i.e. presumably on the coast). This seems to be the more reasonable interpretation, and *גורר אנירות* probably is rendered 'dwelt (i.e. had his home) beside ships'.<sup>150</sup>

Interrogative *למה* is deleted by Vulg. and Targ.<sup>151</sup> and therefore suggests that the verse does not consist of recrimination, but is simply a statement of facts. We would have to suppose that *למה* came into the text in connection with a supposition that the

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<sup>149</sup>John Gray, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, p. 287.

<sup>150</sup>R. Boling, Judges, p. 112, states that the reference is either to the settlement of Dan in the north at Laish, or to the early attempt at settlement in the area adjacent to the Sharon and Philistine plains. The parallel line dealing with Asher seems to place Dan and Asher in a maritime context. Boling suggests that many Israelites found employment as crewmen aboard the merchant vessels of the Peoples of the Sea. (The location and occupation of Dan during the period of the Song of Deborah will be dealt with in the chapter on the possible dating of the battle.)

<sup>151</sup>Cf. Bh Stutt. n. 17<sup>a</sup>, 2 MSS, Targ., Vulg. dl.

verse did consist of recrimination. But, with *המב* deleted, all we have is a statement that certain tribes were settled in areas removed from the battle and that this explains their absence, without any intention to attach guilt to them. The second stich containing *המב* as recrimination does not fit into the context of stichs one and three which merely describe the dwelling places of Gilead and Asher and do not consist of recrimination. Therefore *המב* appears to be an aberration in the second stich, and is deleted in agreement with Vulg. and Targ.

אשר ישב לחוף הים  
 ועל מפרציו ישכון

LXX. A and B θαλασσῶν 'the sea' (in LXX chiefly for *ים* ), and LXX. A αἰγιαλὸν 'the sea-shore', LXX. B. παραλίαν 'the sea-coast' (MT *חוף* ), associate Asher with the Mediterranean, in the region west of Naphtali, where the tribesmen possibly hired themselves as labourers in the coastal ports of the Sidonians and in Tyre. LXX. A διακοπὰς literally 'gash, cleft, opening' is picking up the sense of Hebrew *פרץ* which means 'to breach' and has the sense 'creek' for *מפרץ* . LXX. B renders *מפרץ* as

διακοπας 'openings, outlets, ports'.

Vulg. renders ועל מפרציו ישכון 'Asher inhabited the shore of the sea, and in havens he dallied.' The thought of 'dallying' is a special feature of Vulg. Pesh. 'Asher dwelt upon the sea-shore, and upon its breaches (twr'th) he was dwelling' is a literal rendering of מפרציו . Targ. interprets מפרציו as 'breached' settlements damaged by Asher in the process of conquest and then restored and settled by them: 'The House of Asher dwelt on the sea-shore. They settled in the villages of the Gentiles whom they destroyed. They restored their buildings and lived in them.' Rashi comments on ועל מפרציו : 'To guard the undefended places ( פרצות 'breaches') of his land.' Both Rashi and Kimchi interpret the text to mean that Asher stayed to guard his unfortified villages instead of going to the battle. Kimchi comments on אשר ישב לחורף ימים : 'For there was his portion and his lot, as it is written concerning his lot: "It touched on Carmel as far as the sea" (Josh. 19:26). And it is said: "Its limits go to the sea as far as Achzib" (Josh. 19:29).' Kimchi further comments on ועל מפרציו ישכון : 'He remained beside those places of his settlements which had been breached (or, whose walls had been breached). And Targ. reads: "They

settled in the villages of the Gentiles, etc." Kimchi is not necessarily indicating that Targ. agrees with him. In fact, the interpretation of Targ. is different from Rashi and Kimchi.

MT מפרציו is connected with 'creeks' or 'harbours' by LXX, Vulg. (Pesh. is obscure), and with 'breached' towns by Targ., Rashi and Kimchi, although Targ.'s exegesis is different from that of Rashi and Kimchi. Such 'creeks' or 'inlets' are natural harbours, and this appears to be the meaning of מפרציו. All that is being said is that Asher continued her maritime activities, her commercial pursuits, and did not come to the war. MT לְחֹף יָמִים is best rendered 'sea-shore' and מפרציו 'creeks'.

זבלון עם חרף נפשו למות  
ונפתלי על מרומי שדה

MT חרף means (cf. BDB) 'despised his own safety and risked death' (NEB 'risked their very lives'). LXX. A ὠνειδίσας, LXX. B ὠνειδίσεν 'reproached' are translating MT. Pesh. is just as literal as LXX and reads 'insulted (hsd) their lives to death'. Vulg. on the other hand is a more satisfactory translation,

and reads 'Meanwhile Zebulun and Naphtali offered their souls to death'.

Rashi comments: 'They (Zebulun) risked their lives in the battle with Barak.' Kimchi comments on *נפשו למות* *קרן* : 'He went forth and risked his life and offered himself unto death, so great was his will to do battle.' Targ. reads: 'The House of Zebulun, with respect to the Gentiles ( *עממיה* ) who blasphemed ( *נפיקו* ) before the Lord, gave up their lives unto death.' Targ. identifies *עם* with the Gentiles and then makes it the subject of *קרן* which is rendered *נפיקו* 'in connection with the Gentiles who blasphemed'. But the subject of *מסרו* 'they surrendered' is Zebulun and Naphtali. Hence Targ. understands *נפשו למות* as the 'supreme sacrifice' in the war. Vulg. picks up the Hebrew idiom, and like Targ. it thinks in terms of 'giving up one's life', that is, making the supreme sacrifice in battle.

LXX. A, LXX. B and Pesh. 'and Naphtali upon the height of the field' are a literal rendering of MT. Vulg. in regione Merome, a reference to a geographical area, is an illegitimate translation of MT. Kimchi renders the text: 'And similarly Naphtali set himself there in the high places to fight' and he quotes Targ. Jon.: 'Concerning the House of Naphtali, all the

people of the land praised them.' Rashi reads: 'And similarly Naphtali on the high places on Mount Tabor.'

Here מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֵה is equated with Mount Tabor.

However, Mount Tabor is not mentioned in the Song, and v. 19 locates the battle in the plain (of Esdraelon) with its low rolling countryside of mounds and hillocks, where groups of enemy warriors could assemble to gain advantageous positions for an impending battle. Zebulun and Naphtali attack these positions without fear or risk of life. NEB appropriately renders מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֵה 'heights of the battlefield'.

Vv. 17 and 18 may be rendered:

גִּלְעָד בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁכְנוּ  
 דָּן בְּגִבְרֵי אֲנִיּוֹת  
 אֲשֶׁר לָשַׁב לְחוּף בְּמִים  
 וְעַל מִפְרָצָיו לְשִׁפְחוֹן  
 זְבֻלוּן עִם חֶרֶף נִפְשׁוּ לְמָוֶת  
 וְנַפְתָּלִי עַל מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֵה

Gilead had settled beyond the Jordan,  
 and Dan had its home beside ships.  
 Asher resided by the sea-shore,  
 and was settled on its creeks.  
 The people of Zebulun risked their lives;  
 also Naphtali, on the heights of the battlefield.

V. 19

בא מלכֵי נחלֵי  
 זא נחלֵי מלכֵי כנעֵן

LXX. A

ἦλθον βασιλεῖς καὶ παρετάξαντο  
 τότε ἐπολέμησαν βασιλεῖς χανάαν

Kings came and fought;  
 then fought the kings of Canaan

is a rendering of MT (see Vulg., Pesh., which reproduce the sense of MT). LXX. B adds αὐτῶν βασιλεῖς 'their kings' rendering מלכֵי as if it were מלכֵי . To 'the kings came' Targ. adds אִתּוֹן עִם סִסְרָא 'who were with Sisera'. The Versions understand 'Kings of Canaan' to be a reference to the Canaanite coalition, presumably composed of Sisera and his allies.<sup>152</sup>

בתענך על-מי מגדו

LXX. A and B, Vulg., Pesh., and Targ. precisely render MT בתענך על-מי מגדו 'at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo'. Rashi comments on בתענך על מי מגדו :

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<sup>152</sup>Josh. 10:3f., 11:1-6, refer to gatherings of kings against Israel; cf. Josh. 5:1 'kings of Canaan'.



Quoting Targ. Jon.: 'By Taanach they were encamped, and reached unto the waters of Megiddo'. The encampment began beside Taanach and extended as far as the waters of Megiddo.

Kimchi also comments on בתענך על מי מגדו :

Taanach and Megiddo are two places in the territory allotted to Manasseh and it is clear that they are distant from one another, as it is said: 'And the inhabitants of Taanach and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages (Josh. 17:11; Judg. 1:27). Hence when he says Taanach by the waters of Megiddo, the proper interpretation is that the kings of Canaan came to wage war, that is Sisera and those who came with him, to wage war at Taanach; and their forces (armies) were so numerous that they extended as far as the waters of Megiddo. According to Targ. Jon.: 'They were encamped by Taanach, and reached unto the waters of Megiddo'. 153

בצע כנס לבקק

LXX. A renders כנס בצע as πλεονεξίαν ἀργυρίου 'booty of silver', whereas LXX. B reads δῶρον ἀργυρίου 'gifts of silver' (Origen and L.S. δωρα can mean 'fees', 'bribes').<sup>154</sup> LXX. B might be thought to lean towards Rashi's view that the reference is to the kings

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<sup>153</sup> Taanach and Megiddo (less than five miles apart) are named in Josh. 17:11 as two cities allotted to Manasseh. Judg. 1:27 mentions that the two cities were under the control of the Canaanites despite efforts by Manasseh to conquer them.

<sup>154</sup> F. Field, Origenis Hexaplorum, Tomus I, p. 415, בצע Praedam. O'. δῶρον.

who make up Sisera's coalition and who take part without monetary payment. Rashi comments on וַיָּבֹאוּ לֹא לְקַחְתָּ : 'Freely they came to help Sisera. They did not seek wages from him.' Vulg. et tamen nihil tulere praedantes 'the spoilers took away nothing' renders וַיָּבֹאוּ 'spoil' as praedantes 'spoilers'.

Pesh. wnyn' wksp' l' nskw 'They took neither loot nor silver' supposes that וַיָּבֹאוּ is 'loot' ( וַיָּבֹאוּ ) other than 'silver'. This establishes that Pesh. understood the last stich of v. 19 as a reference to the repulse of the Canaanite kings who were not victorious and did not get the loot which they had anticipated. This is also the view of Vulg. 'spoilers took away nothing' and Targ. מִמָּוֶן דְּכֶסֶף לֹא קִבְּלוּ 'booty of silver they did not receive'. Kimchi comments on וַיָּבֹאוּ לֹא לְקַחְתָּ : 'They did not take money from the children of Israel who were fallen into their hands, but they slew them.' According to this interpretation the reference is to the circumstance that the Canaanite armies slew all Israelite prisoners and did not give them the chance of ransoming their lives by means of a money payment. The battle was so fierce that no quarter was given.

Rashi's interpretation that the enemy force was not composed of paid mercenaries is perhaps supported

by LXX. B; Kimchi stands alone in his interpretation of 'ransom'. LXX. A, Vulg., Pesh. and Targ. which render בצע כסף as 'spoil of silver' or 'plunder of silver' has the most support, and appears to refer to the unprofitable campaign by the Canaanite forces in which the normal spoils of war were denied them. This meaning seems to be the real intent of the last stich.

V. 19 may be rendered:

בָּאוּ מְלָכִים גְּלָחְמוּ  
 אָז גְּלָחְמוּ מְלָכֵי כְנַעַן  
 בְּתַעֲנָה עַל-מֵי מְגִדּוֹ  
 בְּצַע כֶּסֶף לֹא לָקְחוּ

Kings came, they fought;  
 then fought the kings of Canaan.  
 At Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,  
 no plunder of silver did they take.

(cf. NEB)

V. 20

מן שמים נלחמו  
הכוכבים ממסלולם

LXX. A observes the punctuation of MT <sup>אֲרָבָה</sup> and reads:

ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπολέμησαν  
ἀρτίερες ἐκ τῆς τάξεως αὐτῶν  
ἐπολέμησαν μετὰ Ἰσραὴλ

From the heavens they fought,  
the stars in their order  
fought with (on the side of) Israel.

LXX. B on the other hand reads in the first stich:  
ἐξ οὐρανοῦ παρετάξαντο οἱ ἀστέρες 'From heaven the  
stars were drawn up in battle order...' Pesh. agrees  
with LXX. B: 'bdw grb' kwkb' mn dwrythwn 'The stars  
from their courses waged war'. Vulg. agrees with LXX.  
A and MT and reads: de caelo dimicatum est contra eos  
'From heaven war is waged against them.' Vulg. also  
follows MT in the second stich but expands <sup>ממסלולם</sup>  
into mamentes in ordine et cursu suo 'remaining in  
their ordered course' (i.e. path)', thus following the  
punctuation of MT. Vulg. supposes that the stars  
remained in their established path through the sky and  
did not deviate from their course. Targ. also supports

the punctuation of MT: 'From the heavens war was waged with them. From the place where stars go forth, from the paths of their courses, there war was waged against Sisera.' Targ. in a way somewhat similar to Vulg. expands the second stich.

Rashi comments on *מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ* : 'Also the Holy One, the Lord, sent among them his armies which do not desire any pay.' The heavenly host, according to Rashi, were, like the Canaanite forces (v. 19), not mercenaries. Kimchi has a long midrash on *נָחַל קִישׁוֹן* *גִּרְפָּס* (v. 21) which he attaches to *מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ* .<sup>155</sup> He follows his midrash with p<sup>e</sup>śat which reads:

According to the mode of the p<sup>e</sup>śat, since the battle was in the plain which is beside the banks of the Wadi Kishon, (the enemy) was assembling in the wady, some to flee, and some to engage in battle against Israel, and the chariots faltered as in Egypt, as it is said, 'And he diverted the wheel of his chariots' (Exod. 14:25), and the horsemen fell into the wady and the wady swept them away and they were

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<sup>155</sup> Kimchi's midrash reads: 'The stars made them hot and they were clad in their armour; and because the heat was so intense they assembled in the Wady Kishon to cool themselves off, and the wady swept them away. Therefore *נָחַל קִישׁוֹן גִּרְפָּס* (v. 21) is to be connected with *מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ* (v. 20).' Kimchi means that the stars made the enemy soldiers hot and they (the Canaanite army) plunged into the water to get cool and they were drowned. This was the way in which the stars fought against Sisera. However, this is midrash and can only be taken as such.

drowned. But it was not thus with Israel. Rather they negotiated the wady in strength and crossed it without accident or loss; and this is what is meant by the scripture, 'Let my soul go on with strength' (v. 21), as if to say, the wady which swept them away I have negotiated with strength, for from the heavens they (the stars) fought against them when I crossed.

Kimchi interprets *מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחַמְנוּ* to mean that it was a 'miraculous' victory like the deliverance from the Egyptians.

LXX. A, Vulg., Targ. support the punctuation of MT ( *נִלְחַמְנוּ מִן שָׁמַיִם* ). The meaning of *הַכּוֹכָבִים מִמַּסְלוֹתֵם* is 'the stars located in the heavens' and it does not seem to make any difference to the exegesis if *הַכּוֹכָבִים* is put in the first stich. Even with MT punctuation the subject of *נִלְחַמְנוּ* must be 'the stars'. There is no indication in the Versions that the stars deviated from their fixed courses. Rather the passage presents the idea of 'cosmic war', of the involving of the universe in the fight against Sisera, and is a poetical description of the intervention of Yahweh in the battle which was won not by Israel alone ( *הַכּוֹכָבִים* 'stars' probably include the 'host of heaven' or 'the heavenly bodies'; cf. Pss. 8:4, 136:9, 147:4, 148:3, etc.). Even if the means of defeating the Canaanites is a storm, the cosmic elements, the ultimate reference is to Yahweh.

Josephus describes this passage as a poetical description of a great storm:

So the forces met, and amidst the clash of arms there came up a great tempest with torrents of rain and hail, and the wind drove the rain in the face of the Canaanites, obscuring their vision, so that their bows and their slings were of no service to them, and their infantry by reason of the cold could make no use of their swords. But the Israelites were less hampered by the storm, which was at their back, and they took courage at the thought of this succor from God; and so, thrusting into the midst of the foe, they slew multitudes of them. Thus, some beneath the hand of the Israelites, others discomfited by their own cavalry, the enemy fell, many being crushed to death beneath the chariots. 156

Although Josephus understands the statement 'the stars fought against Sisera' as a precise indication of a rainstorm which was the means of defeat, there is the further indication of divine intervention in Josephus (i.e. 'this succor from God') and this seems to be the thought of the poet who understands Yahweh as harnessing the elements to perform his will. Kimchi best expresses this thought of miraculous intervention. The idea of Yahweh's march to the aid of Israel is expressed in vv. 4-5 and v. 20 further describes the nature of that aid.

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<sup>156</sup>F. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, trans. H.St.J. Thackeray and Ralph Marcus (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1934), Bk. V(4), p. 93f.

עם-סיסרא

LXX. A reads μετὰ Ἰσραηλ , and it looks as if the translator of LXX. A was worried by the ambiguity of μετὰ Σισαρα . However μετὰ with the accusative can mean 'in pursuit of' (in an unfriendly sense; cf. L-S). All the Versions understand עם סיסרא as 'against' in the hostile sense (LXX. B μετὰ Σισαρα; Vulg. adversus Siseram; Pesh. 'm sysr'; Targ. תמן אתגח .  
 קרבא עם סיסרא .<sup>157</sup>

V. 20 describes the intervention of Yahweh in the battle by giving a poetical description of cosmic war. The subject of נלחמו is 'the stars' (cf. LXX. B and Pesh.). Therefore הכוכבים , denoting 'the host of heaven' is placed in the first stichos to indicate the idea of 'divine intervention' rather than to give an impression that the stars somehow deviated from their fixed courses and were drawn up in battle order to wage war.

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<sup>157</sup>Ex. 17:8 ויבא עמלק וילחם עם-ישראל

'The Amalekites came and attacked Israel' (cf. Num. 20:3; 1 Sam. 17:33; Isa. 3:14).



V. 20 is rendered:

מִן-שָׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ הַכּוֹכָבִים  
מִמְסֻלּוֹתֵם נִלְחָמוּ עִם סִיסְרָא

From heaven fought the stars;  
from their courses they fought against Sisera.

V. 21

נחל קישון גרפס

Pesh. attaches נחל קישון to v. 20 (bnhl dqyšwn), and begins v. 21 grp 'nwn nhl dqyšwn 'The Wady Kishon swept them away'. He may have wanted to put one of the two occurrences (the first one) of v. 21 into v. 20. He does this by reading the Hebrew as if it were בנחל קישון . Other than a spelling error (dqrmyn for dqāmyn) Pesh. follows MT.

LXX. A χειμάρρους Κισων ἐξέβαλεν αὐτούς 'The torrent Kishon cast them out'; LXX. B ἐξέσυρεν αὐτούς 'dragged them away'; Vulg. Torrents Cison traxit cadavera eorum 'The river Kishon dragged off their corpses'; and Targ. 'The Wady Kishon shatters them' ( תברינון ), are clearly interpretations of MT גרפס . Rashi comments on גרפס : 'They were swept from the world like the shovel which sweeps ashes from the stove.' גרפס clearly means that the rushing waters of the Wady Kishon 'swept away' the enemy warriors.

נחל קדומים

LXX. A and Theod. transliterate קדומים as

καθησειμ or καθησιμ (a corruption of καθημειμ which appears in two miniscules; also O'. according to Field). Thus םׁדמׁדק is understood as a proper noun, perhaps an alternative name for נחל קדומים (cf. Vulg. torrens Cadumim and Pesh. darmyn; properly dqdmyn). LXX. B χειμάρρους ἀρχαίων χειμάρρους Κελσών 'The torrents of the ancients (or, of antiquities), the torrent Kishon' follows MT precisely and renders םׁדמׁדק 'ancient men (or, times)'. Aquila renders םׁדמׁדק by καυσώνων. He connects םׁדמׁדק with the sense of םׁדק, the hot east wind or sirocco.<sup>158</sup> Aquilla may have understood נחל קדומים to mean 'the wady of the hot easterly winds' (i.e. the wady dried up by the hot easterly winds), and which now overflowed its banks (because of the rain storm) to trap the enemy.

Targ. renders the passage: 'The Wady at which were performed the wonders and mighty deeds from ancient times for Israel.' נחל קדומים is interpreted by Targ. 'wady of ancient wonders', i.e. the Wady where wonders and mighty deeds were wrought

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<sup>158</sup>Cf. Jer. 18:17 where LXX ὡς ἄνεμος καύσωναι is a rendering of םׁדק-ׁדמׁדק 'like an east wind'; and other occurrences where םׁדק is rendered by καίω or formations of καίω in the Greek versions: Jonah 4:8 καύσωνι; Hosea 12:2 and 13:15 καύσωνα; Job 27:21 καύσων.

from of old. Kimchi comments on נחל קדומים : 'The Wady which was there from all time, just as it was created. It was created there to take vengeance upon the enemies of the Lord, just as it was said: Everything that the Lord does has its purpose.' Kimchi interprets נחל קדומים as 'the ancient Wady', as does Targ. 'appointed from the very beginning to fulfill its destiny' (i.e. to destroy Israel's enemies).

LXX. A, O'., Pesh. and Vulg. understand קדומים as a proper name, perhaps an alternative name for Kishon. LXX. B, Targ., and Kimchi understand קדומים as 'ancient'. It appears that נחל קדומים was read by all the translators. Moore believes that it is simpler to connect קדם with Arabic kadûm 'one who is always in front of the fray' or 'one who is first in attacking the foe' hence a 'brave, daring man'. Thus נחל קדומים could be rendered 'the torrent of heroes'. However, this could be only if קדומים was employed in Hebrew in the Aramaic sense, and this appears to be very unlikely according to Moore.<sup>159</sup> Burney suggests that the second occurrence of נחל is an erroneous insertion made to explain the noun קדומים which has

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<sup>159</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 148.

replaced the verbal form  $\text{קדמה}$  <sup>160</sup> Burney renders  
 v. 21b:  $\text{נחל קישון קדמה}$  'It faced them, the torrent  
 Kishon.' He explains his emendation:

As MT stands  $\text{נחל קדומים}$  is a source of great difficulty. The root  $\text{kdm}$  in Semitic has the meaning 'to be in front, or, before'. Hence, in Hebrew, the subst.  $\text{kédhem}$  means, locatively, 'what is in front' ... Ps. 139:5, Job 23:8; and, especially, the 'East' ... was regarded as 'in front' in reckoning the quarters of the compass; or, temporally, 'what is before', i.e. 'ancient, or, former time' ... From  $\text{kédhem}$  comes the denominative verb  $\text{kiddēm}$ , which means 'to be in front' and also 'to confront' in a hostile sense (cf. the Ar.  $\text{'aḳdama}$ , 'cause to advance against the enemy').

... the sense obtained through the emendation involves something of a hysteron-proteron; since, strictly speaking, the torrent 'came in front of' the Canaanites in their flight before it 'swept them away' in their attempt to cross it: yet ... it is legitimate to explain the second verb as to some extent explanatory of the first -- the torrent swept them away because it confronted them in their flight. 161

NEB renders the passage: 'The torrent barred his flight' reading  $\text{קדמה}$  (interpreting  $\text{קדמה}$  as 'blocking' instead of 'confronting' or 'to be in front of'). Boling also suggests that  $\text{קדומים}$  be emended to  $\text{קדמם}$  and rendered 'overwhelmed them'.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 148; cf. BH Stutt. n. 21<sup>a</sup> deletes the second  $\text{נחל}$  and has the emendation  $\text{קדמה}$  for the supposedly corrupt form  $\text{קדומים}$ .

<sup>161</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 145f.

<sup>162</sup>R. Boling, Judges, p.113.

However, the verb *כסה* is normally used in this sense (cf. Ex. 14:28, 15:5, 10; Josh. 24:7; Pss. 78:53, 106:11; and in reference to waters overwhelming or covering: Job. 22:11, 38:34; Ps. 104:9; Jer. 46:8; Ez. 26:19).

Although *נחל קדומים* is read by the ancient translators, and there is the suggestion of a proper name (which is difficult to reproduce), the possible rendering 'the ancient wady' is very weak. It is probably better to understand *קדומים* as a verb (*קדַם*) which is the verbal parallel to *קָדַם* of stich one, and to describe the Wady as an obstacle to flight (cf. NEB), and omitting the first occurrence of *נחל* in the second stich, and rendering stich two: 'The Wady Kishon barred (his) flight'.

*תדרכי נפשי עז*

LXX. A and B *καταπατήσει αὐτὸν ψυχή μου δυνατή* 'Trample him down my strong soul' interprets *αὐτὸν* as the accusative 'the enemy' and *τὸν* as an adjective 'my strong soul' presumably reading it as *τῷ*.  
Vulg. *Concula, anima mea, robustos* 'Tread down, O my soul, the strong ones' (i.e. the enemy), connects *robustos* with *hostium* 'enemies' of v. 22, and reads *τὸν*

as the direct object robustos 'the strong one' and interpreted it as a collective 'strong ones'. Pesh. tdrk npšy hyl' 'Tread my soul with might' is an exact reading of MT. Pesh. does not give a definite indication of the meaning of עז, but has the same ambiguity as MT. Targ. takes עז as an accusative of manner used adverbially: 'The same Wady Kishon where the lives of the slain (of their) warriors were trampled down in strength' (i.e. vigorously).<sup>163</sup>

Rashi comments on תדרכי נפשי עז : 'With the feet; the strength of the warriors of Canaan.' He takes the text in the sense 'to tread down the strong (enemy)', but the interpretation of עז is not clear. Kimchi in v. 20 understands תדרכי נפשי עז to refer to the safe negotiating of the wadi by the Israelites. He continues:

And this is what is meant by the scripture תדרכי נפשי עז as if to say, 'The Wady which swept them away I have negotiated with strength (בעז), for from the heavens they fought against them when I crossed. And Targ. Jon. renders תדרכי נפשי עז as etc.

Kimchi does not take דרך in the sense of 'tread down' but in the sense of 'making safe progress'.

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<sup>163</sup>Cf. G-K 118, q,: 'Substantives in the most varied relations: thus, as describing an external state, e.g. Mic. 2:3 ולא תלכי רומה "neither shall ye walk haughtily".'

LXX., Vulg., Targ. and Rashi understand תדרכי נפשי עז to mean 'Tread down the enemy', i.e. a trampling under foot of the enemy warriors. The object is given in LXX ( αὐτῶν ), Vulg. (robustos), and Targ. ( בתקופ' 'vigorously'), and in MT the object is implied but not explicit ('Tread (them) down'). Kimchi, on the other hand, understands תדרכי נפשי עז as an exhortation ( דרכה נפשי בעוז ) meaning 'Let my soul march on with strength' or the like ( דרכה נפשי addressed to ). NEB renders the stich with an imperative 'march on in might my soul'. NEB considers the line to be a call to courage and to attack. The exhortation is addressed to the נפש . The meaning is that victory is assured, but press home the victory, and take advantage of the straits to which the enemy has been reduced, i.e. trapped by the flood-waters. עז taken as an accusative of manner rendered 'in strength, might, vigor' (cf. Targ. בתקופ' and Kimchi עעוז ) requires no emendation of the text (cf. Vulg. robustos apparently reading עז ).<sup>164</sup> MT תדרכי rendered 'tread down' is supported by LXX. and Vulg. (cf. Targ. and Rashi), but requires an accusative, implied or explicit. However, if the exhortation is addressed to

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<sup>164</sup>Cf. Ps. 93:1 לבש יְהוָה עֵז הַתְּאֵזֶר 'the Lord clothes himself with might' ( עז ).



the נפש it is best to understand תדרכי as  
 directed to the individual Israelite warrior ('my soul  
 be strong') to press the attack (i.e. 'march on')  
 rather than an exhortation to trample the enemy.

V. 21 may be rendered:

נחל קישון גרפם  
 קדמה נחל קישון  
 תדרכי נפשי עז

The Wady Kishon swept them away,  
 the Wady Kishon barred (his) flight.  
 March on in might, my soul.

## V. 22

אז הלמו עקבי-סוס

LXX. A ἀπεκόπησαν 'were cut off' (i.e. a mutilation of the horses' hooves) and LXX. B ἐνεποδίσθησαν 'were entangled' (i.e. were tied together) render הלמו as הלמו (a Pual, not found elsewhere), but appear to guess at the meaning of the Hebrew verb. Vulg. renders the stich Ungulae equorum ceciderunt fugientibus unpetu 'The hooves of the horses stumbled (i.e. lost their footing) while fleeing in panic'. Pesh. 'Then fell (npl, i.e. 'stumbled') the hooves of the horses' agrees with Vulg. Targ. renders the line: 'Then the hooves of their horses slipped as they retreated before you in front of (i.e. pulling) the chariots of his (Sisera's) warriors.' Targ. is obscure and אֲשַׁלְּפָא could mean 'detached', but Targ. seems to intend the meaning 'slipped'. Rashi comments on הלמו עקבי סוס : 'The hooves of their horses were loosened ( נשתלפר ) because the heat of the stars made the mud boil and the hooves became unfastened, just as the feet are scalded in boiling water, and the hooves became detached as a consequence of the loosening and striking of their feet.' This Rashi

passage is very obscure, but Rashi seems to understand  $\text{הלמו}$  in the sense 'detached' and since he translates  $\text{נשתלפו}$  (the same word as Targ.  $\text{אשתלפא}$ ) he probably understands Targ. in this sense also. Kimchi comments on  $\text{אז הלמו}$  : 'A Qal Stative, as though he said, the hooves of the horses were bruised (or, battered) because of so much galloping in the battle.' Kimchi is saying that  $\text{הלמו}$  is equivalent to  $\text{נהלמו}$ , i.e. to the Hiphil. He describes the hooves as bruised and broken because of the frantic retreat of the chariots.

$\text{הלמו}$  is treated by the Versions as a passive, and by Kimchi as a stative; and the subject is  $\text{עקבי-סוס}$ . Moore prefers the passive sense and renders  $\text{הלמו}$  'were battered'.<sup>165</sup> Burney, on the other hand, notes:

... we may remark that horses' hoofs are not very likely to be injured by excessive galloping, more especially on a plain which must have been largely in the condition of a swamp owing to the heavy rain-storm ... and further, if the poet meant that they were broken or bruised, he would scarcely have expressed this by stating that they were

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<sup>165</sup> G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 161.

hammered through themselves striking the ground. 166

The verb is not found as Pual elsewhere in biblical Hebrew, and is treated as a Qal Stative (cf. Ps. 74:6 'They ripped the carvings clean out, they smashed them ( יהלמוך ) with hatchet and pick'). There is no object, so הלמו must be taken intransitively or absolutely (cf. BDB and NEB 'hammered'), and probably is rendered 'hammered', 'kept hammering', or 'make a hammering noise'. The stich is more intelligible if rendered as a Qal intransitive as the interpretation of NEB clearly indicates: 'Then hammered the hooves of (his) horses'. The alliteration ('hammered, hooves, horses') in this line of the NEB translation attempts to reproduce the sound of the hoof-beats.<sup>167</sup>

מדהרות דהרות אנרינו

LXX. A αμαδαρωθ is a transcription of מדהרות

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<sup>166</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 150 has the footnote: '... in ancient times horses appear to have gone unshod. Isa. 5:28 refers to the hardness of the hoofs in the Assyrian horses ('like flint'), as a proof of their power to resist wear and tear; but whether this implies that trouble was common with the feet of ordinary horses is doubtful.'

<sup>167</sup>James Martin, Judges, p. 74.

(Hebrew ה is not shown in transcription). It would appear that LXX. A did not read the second occurrence of מדהרות . The resort to transcription may indicate the difficulty presented to the translator by the Hebrew text. LXX. A δυνατῶν αὐτοῦ 'his mighty ones' indicates 'warriors' not 'horses'. LXX. B σπουδῆ ἔσπευσαν ἰσχυροὶ αὐτοῦ 'while his strong ones furiously hastened away' similarly points to 'warriors' for אבירי . Vulg. et per praeceps ruentibus fortissimis hostium 'and when their strongest enemies fled headlong' interprets אבירי as 'enemy warriors'. Vulg. connects מדהרות with what precedes and renders it fugientibus impetu 'when they fled in panic'. Targ. also reads 'before the chariots of his warriors' rendering אבירי as גְּבִירוֹתֵי . Pesh. mn nhmt' dhyl' dtgypwhy 'from the roar of terror of his mighty ones' is ambiguous, although it probably refers to 'warriors'. Rashi cites וסוס דהר (Nah. 3:2) and comments on // מדהרות דהר : 'For they were making their horses prance in the battle. It is an expression for the prancing of a horse.' Rashi understands אבירי to refer to 'horses'. Kimchi comments on הלמו and מדהרות דהר :

The heels of the horses were bruised because they had galloped so hard in the battle ... In that a horse bangs its feet into the ground

when it is galloping and when it is not galloping. דהירה = מרקד , hence סוס דהר and ומרכבה מרקדה (Nah. 3:2) ... עקבי סוס are mentioned because there is no hoof on the heels.

Kimchi says that the heels of the horses were bruised because of the force with which the horse beats on the ground. Thus אניריו refers to either horsemen or horses.

The only other occurrence of the verb דהר is in Nah. 3:2 סוס דהר ומרכבה מרקדה 'horses galloping and chariots bounding' where the verb is used in reference to 'horses', which gives weight to the assumption that דהר in v. 22 is used in reference to 'horses' ('stallions, chargers', i.e. a horse ridden in battle). Support for the rendering 'horses' for אניריו is found in Jer. 8:16 (cf. Jer. 47:3) 'the whole land quakes at the sound of the neighing of their stallions' ( אניריו ).

MT reads 'because of' in מן of מדהרות (cf. Vulg. fugientibus impetu; Kimchi 'because of the force,' etc.). The sense of MT is 'the hooves of his horses made a hammering noise because of the constant galloping of his charges.' C. A. Simpson suggests that the ן of דהרות should be affixed to the preceding סוס of the first stich to form the plural סוסים . He states: 'Taking ן (rendered 'by reason of') from

before דהרות and affixing it to סוס , to form the plural סוס(י)ם '(his) horses'. The pronominal suffix is omitted from one of two parallel terms, as often in Ugaritic and occasionally in Hebrew poetry ...<sup>168</sup>. Burney also suggests that '... the מ belonging to סוסים at the end of the preceding stichos came erroneously to be prefixed to דהרו דהרו and this was treated as /מהרו/ דהרו , i.e. as an abbreviated plur. substantive ... Adopting our emendation ( דִּהְרִי דִּהְרִי 'off galloped, off galloped'), the couplet offers two stichoi parallel in sense ...'<sup>169</sup>

The second stich rendered 'galloping, galloping' denotes the action paralleled in the first stich (i.e. of the horses galloping or frantically striking their hooves on the ground. The words are onomatopoeic and intend to reproduce the galloping of horses. Repetition ( דהרות דהרות ) serves to intensify the expression to the highest degree.<sup>170</sup>

The plurals of names of animals or things, and of abstracts, whether they be masculine or feminine, are frequently construed with the feminine singular of the

<sup>168</sup>C.A. Simpson, Composition of the Book of Judges, p. 96, n. 64.

<sup>169</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 150.

<sup>170</sup>G-K 123, e; cf. Ex. 8:10 חֲמַרְסֵם חֲמַרְסֵם .

verbal predicate.<sup>171</sup> Hence the verbal form דָּהַרְתָּ  
 'galloped' (3 fem. sing. Pf.) is suggested instead of  
 דַּהְרוּת as an archaic form which would be quite  
 natural in so old a poem. Then אַבִּירֵינוּ could be  
 construed as the subject of the verb דָּהַרְתָּ.<sup>172</sup>

NEB suggests that the horses galloped away from  
 the battle in defeat and turmoil and correctly reads  
 'galloped, galloped away'. Here אַבִּירֵינוּ is rendered  
 'steed', i.e. a stallion (cf. Jer. 8:16), to indicate a  
 high-spirited horse.

V. 22 may be rendered:

אֲז הִלְמֵנוּ עֲקָבֵי-סוּסֵינוּ  
 דָּהַרְתָּ דָּהַרְתָּ אַבִּירֵינוּ

Then hammered the hooves of (his) horses,  
 his steeds galloped, galloped away.

<sup>171</sup>G-K 145 k; names of things with the fem. sing.  
 predicate occur in Ps. 37:31 לֹא תִמְעַד אֲשַׁרְיֵנוּ 'his steps  
 do not slide', and 2 Sam. 24:13; Isa. 34:13; Jer. 4:14,  
 51:29; Ps. 18:35; Job 14:20, 27:20.

<sup>172</sup>BDB and KB<sup>3</sup> give דָּהַרְתָּ, a noun; BDB 'furious  
 dashing' and KB<sup>3</sup> 'pursuing'.



## V. 23

אורר מרוז

LXX. B has a different punctuation from MT 'Curse Meroz, says the angel of the Lord, curse.' Then it reads אָרוֹר as אָרַר (pass. part.), 'Cursed be all who dwell in it.' LXX. A follows the punctuation of MT and renders אורר אורר as 'Curse with a curse' (καταράσει, a noun from καταρασις, see L-S). Theod. is similar to LXX. A and reads: καταράσει καταράσθε τῷς ἐνοικοῦντας αὐτήν. Vulg. 'Curse (maledicite) the land of Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse (maledicite) its inhabitants...' has rendered אורר אורר in the same way as it rendered אורר (1). Vulg. has not given any weight to the infin. absol. אורר in its rendering. Pesh. lwṭr lmrwd m'mr ml'kh dmry 'Curse Meroz, says the angel (or messenger) of the Lord' is an exact rendering of MT. In the second stich Pesh. is probably reading MT ( אורר אורר ) and is expressing the idea of continuance in the inf. absolute by means of a second imperative, and reads: lwṭwh wlwṭw lytbyh 'Curse him and curse its inhabitants.' Pesh. reads אָרוֹר, and also a suffix is added to אורר.

Targ. represents the inf. absolute of MT by the addition of a new word וַתִּבְרַח 'and shatter'. Targ. identifies מֵלֶאךְ יְהוָה as נְבִיא דִּי 'the prophet of Yahweh' and reads: 'Curse Meroz, spoke Barak the prophet of Yahweh. Curse and shatter her inhabitants.'<sup>173</sup> Rashi agrees with Targ. Jon. on אִמַר מֵלֶאךְ ה' : 'Barak spoke concerning his commission which he had from the Holy One, Blessed be He.' Kimchi comments on אִרְרָה מֵרֹז : 'The name of a city near the place of the battle. They (its inhabitants) did not come to (Israel's) assistance. Therefore she (Deborah) cursed them. But those afar off who did not come, she did not curse.' Kimchi identifies מֵלֶאךְ יְהוָה with Deborah ( קָלְלָה אוֹתָם ) 'she cursed them'. He comments on אִמַר מֵלֶאךְ ה' : 'The interpretation according to its plain meaning is that Deborah was a prophetess, and by words of prophecy she spoke thus.' It is plausible to identify מֵלֶאךְ יְהוָה with Deborah. But all that can be said is that Deborah is represented as exercising leadership, but not that Deborah is envisaged as the speaker in v. 23.

LXX. A, Theod., Pesh., and Targ. support MT (inf. absolute אִרְרָה ), and the idea of continuance adds

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<sup>173</sup>'Barak' does not appear in Sperber's text but is noted in his apparatus.

force and severity to the curse proclaimed against Meroz, and suggests the rendering: 'Curse Meroz, said the messenger of the Lord, curse forever her inhabitants.'

V. 23 is not a continuation of the battle scene, but is a reflection upon the action of Meroz, as vv. 15b - 17 are a reflection upon the lack of response of certain tribes. It is implied that Meroz was expected to cooperate with the Israelites, and therefore may have been an Israelite settlement, or else a Canaanite town in league with the Israelites.

Paul Haupt points out the severity of the 'curse' by suggesting that אָרַךְ is an archaic equivalent of הַחֲרִיט חָרָם 'to put under the ban' (i.e. 'to destroy by burning'). Instead of the imperative אָרַךְ he reads the perfect אָרַךְ and renders the text: 'They utterly banned.' Meroz, he believes, is a corruption of Megiddo which must have been Sisera's capital, and the Israelites did not 'curse' the city, but destroyed it (cf. Mal. 3:4 'smite the land with a ban' ( חָרַטְתָּ ), i.e. 'utterly destroy it').<sup>174</sup>

Albright suggests that Meroz probably is to be identified with Meron (read מֵרוֹן rather than מֵרוֹז )

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<sup>174</sup>Paul Haupt, 'Armageddon,' JAOS, 34 (1914), p. 419.

the town mentioned in Josh. 12:20 ( שַׁמְרוֹן מֵרֹאשׁ ) on the edge of the plain, north of Megiddo. He further speculates that the town was close by Harosheth, and so exposed to Canaanite vengeance in the case of an Israelite defeat.<sup>175</sup> At any rate, v. 23 is descriptive of the failure of the city, lying near the scene of the battle and along the route of Sisera's flight, to help destroy the fleeing enemy (cf. Judg. 8:5-9, Succoth and Penuel refused to help Gideon). The verse is in contrast to vv. 15b - 17 where failure of tribes to respond to the call to battle is met with rebuke, while here failure to help evokes the more severe 'curse'. The conduct of Meroz also is sharply contrasted with that of Jael in v. 23 who prevented Sisera's escape and therefore is 'blessed'.

H. C. Brichto understands the 'curse' to involve the imposition of a specific penalty, and that the verb נָקַח has the basic force of a verdict and not an imprecation. He connects Joshua's declaration regarding the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:23) and the Israelite proclamation regarding the Benjaminites (Judg. 21:18) with v. 23. The Gibeonites were banned (i.e. not permitted to mingle and become assimilated to the

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<sup>175</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 79.

people of Israel), and the Benjaminites were banned from intermarriage with the Israelites. Brichto also interprets v. 23 to mean that the people of Meroz were punished by banning or excommunication.<sup>176</sup> The 'war' which the Israelites are envisaged as fighting is 'Yahweh's war'. It is his 'war' and so the curse is directed against a kind of apostasy, a desertion of Yahweh, and probably is understood as an 'excommunication' of the offending group rather than a 'destruction' through the application of the 'ban'.

לעזרת יהוה בגבורים

LXX. A for לעזרת יהוה בגבורים has βοηθός ἡμῶν κύριος ἐν μαχηταῖς δυνατοῖς 'The Lord is our help with mighty warriors' (as if the Hebrew were לעזרת יהוה = 'as a (our) help is the Lord'. There is an ambiguity in ἐν μαχηταῖς δυνατοῖς, and it may mean either 'with' (the Israelites) or 'against' (the Canaanites). The latter is probably the correct rendering. LXX. B εἰς βοήθειαν ἐν δυνατοῖς 'to help with the mighty ones' is ambiguous, and does not render

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<sup>176</sup>Herbert C. Brichto, 'The Problem of "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible,' *JBL*, Monograph Series 13 (1963, cor. reprint 1968), pp. 89-90, 101-102.

the second *יהוה* . Vulg. ad auxilium Domini, in adjutorium fortissimorum ejus 'to the help of the Lord, to the help of his mighty ones' avoids the difficulty of *נגבורים* by not rendering the second *יהוה* and by the inclusion of a suffix (ejus) which clearly understands the phrase as a reference to Yahweh's warriors. Pesh. bqbr' simply reproduces MT. It does not therefore resolve the ambiguity of MT, as Pesh. could be rendered 'with the (Israelite) warriors' or 'against the (Canaanite) warriors'. Targ. continues his comment on Meroz: '... for she did not come to the help of the people of the Lord, to the help of the people of the Lord when they (Israel) waged war against the mighty warriors.' Targ. renders both occurrences of *יהוה* as *עמא דיי* . Hence the subject of *אגיה* 'fought' is *עם* and the meaning is 'when they (Israel) waged war against the Canaanites'.

Rashi is obscure but his comment on *לעזרת יהוה* is 'When my name is able to help Israel, it is as if it were helping the Shekinah'. This does not enable us to determine how Rashi understood *נגבורים* .

There are two lines of exegesis in regard to *לעזרת יהוה נגבורים* , (a) 'with the valiant (Israelite) soldiers' (Vulg., Targ. and possibly LXX. B); (b) 'against the powerful Canaanite forces'

(possibly LXX. A and Targ.). LXX. A, LXX. B, and Pesh. may be taken either way, and Targ. has both ('when Israel waged war against the Canaanites' but emphasizes the Israelite warriors). Only Vulg. clearly indicates נגבורים as 'Yahweh's warriors'. The contrast is made in Vulg. between the inhabitants of Meroz, who lacked the courage to act, and the valiant warriors of Israel, and it seems probable that the poet intended to emphasize the valour of the Israelite warriors. The battle is described as 'Yahweh's battle' ( לעזרת יהוה ) and the Israelite warriors are described as entering the battle 'with Yahweh' (i.e. 'coming to the help of the Lord'), whereas the people of Meroz are contrasted as holding back and as not coming to the help of the Lord.

V. 23 may be rendered:

אורה מרוז אַמַר מְלַאֲכָהּ יְהוָה  
 ארה אָרוֹר יִשְׁבְּתֶיהָ  
 כִּי לֹא-בָאָה לְעֶזְרַת יְהוָה  
 לְעֶזְרַת יְהוָה בְּגִבּוֹרִים

Curse Meroz, said the messenger of the Lord,  
 curse forever her inhabitants;  
 for they did not come to the help of the Lord,  
 to the help of the Lord along with (his) valiant  
 soldiers. 177

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<sup>177</sup>NEB reads 'and the fighting men'.

## V. 24

מנשים באהל

LXX. A renders  $\text{בְּאֹהֲלֶיהָ}$  as  $\text{ἐν σκηνῆ}$  'in tents' as does LXX. B  $\text{ἐν σκηναῖς}$ , and possibly read  $\text{בְּאֹהֲלֶיהָ}$  rather than  $\text{בְּאֹהֲלֶיהָ}$  (although this is not certain), as  $\text{γυναῖκων ἐν σκηνῆ}$  ( $\text{σκηναῖς}$ ) means 'women who are tent-dwellers' rather than 'in her (Jael's) tent'.

Vulg. et benedicatur in tabernaculo suo 'and may she be blessed in her tent' supposes that the reference is to Jael's own tent. Vulg. however does not render  $\text{מנשים}$  a second time in stich three, and benedicatur in tabernaculo suo seems to imply 'may her household be blessed' i.e., 'may she enjoy domestic blessedness' rather than 'may she be the most blessed of women in tents.' Pesh. dbmskn 'those who dwell in tents' is essentially the same as LXX. A and B. Targ.

translates: 'May Jael, the wife of Heber, the Shalmaite, be blessed with the blessedness of good women. With the women who serve in the schools may she be blessed ( $\text{מנשים דמשמשין באהל}$  is rendered as  $\text{מנשים דמשמשין בבתי מדרשין}$ ). Targ. makes no contribution to the exegesis of  $\text{באהל}$ .

Rashi comments on  $\text{מנשים באהל}$ : 'Sarah of whom



it is written, "Behold in the tent" (Gen. 18:9), Rebecca of whom it is written, "And Isaac brought her to the tent" (Gen. 24:67), Rachel and Leah, of whom it is written, "And Leah emerged from the tent", and so on.<sup>178</sup> Commenting on מנשים באהל תברך Rashi says: 'Referring to Jael in so far as women give birth to children and rear them, and if it had not been for Jael this evil would have come and destroyed them - and so it is in בראשית רבא .' Another interpretation: Jael also was a tent dweller, therefore he mentions her in connection with the blessing of tents.<sup>179</sup>

Kimchi comments on מנזר : 'Meroz will be cursed, but Jael will be blessed, because she was eager to come to the help of the Lord. She is the most highly blessed of women in the place where she was, namely, in her tent. Highly blessed is she above women who dwell in tents.' Kimchi agrees with Vulg. 'in her tent', but he appears to have a double exegesis because he includes the idea that she is the most highly blessed of women who are tent dwellers. The latter aspect of Kimchi's exegesis is perhaps the more

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<sup>178</sup>There is no verse in Genesis referring to 'And Leah emerged from the tent.'

<sup>179</sup>One of the exegesis of Rashi (Jael as the one who assured the safety of the children growing up) is in line with that of Midrash Rabbah.

important as it indicates that Jael is the most blessed of the women who live in tents. At this poetic moment praise and blessing are focused on Jael in virtue of her heroic deed and she is acclaimed as 'most blessed among women'. This is then made more precise 'Most blessed among women who live in tents'.

LXX. A and B, Pesh., Rashi and Kimchi render מְנַשִּׁים בְּאֵהָל תְּבַרְךָ 'Most highly blessed of nomadic women' and closely follow MT. V. 24 is an exclamation or an apostrophe of blessing addressed to Jael, and may be rendered:

תְּבַרְכֵי מְנַשִּׁים זַעֲיֵל  
 אִשֶּׁת חֶבֶר הַקְּנִיזִי  
 מְנַשִּׁים בְּאֵהָל תְּבַרְכֵי

May Jael be the most blessed of women,  
 the wife of Heber, the Kenite;  
 may she be the most blessed of women in tents.

V. 25

מים שאל חלב נתנה

All the Versions regard חלב as a liquid and חמאה as a solid (LXX. A and B render חלב as γάλα 'milk', and render חמאה as βούτυρον 'butter'; Vulg. lac 'milk' and butyrum 'butter'; Pesh. whlb 'milk' and h'wt 'butter').<sup>180</sup> Targ. suggests that Jael gave Sisera milk to test the state of his consciousness. Targ. reads: 'He asked her for water. She gave him milk to drink, that she might find out if he had his wits about him.' Rashi in his comment on חלב נתנה is apparently developing Targ., 'to find out if he had his wits about him', i.e. she did not give him what he asked, in order to discover if he was aware that he had been given milk and not water. Kimchi interprets Jael's action as an attempt to make Sisera sleep. He comments on מים שאל חלב נתנה : 'To make him drowsy that he might fall into a slumber

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<sup>180</sup>BDB supposes that חלב and חמאה are parallel in this verse, i.e. synonyms, but observed that the indications elsewhere are that חמאה is made from חלב ; cf. esp. Prov. 30:33 חלב יוציא חמאה 'milk produces butter' (NEB, 'curds'), and Isa. 7:22 'he shall get so much milk ( חלב ) that he eats curds ( חמאה ).'

quickly with fatigue. And the milk which he drank would make him unaware when she struck him.' Kimchi then proceeds to offer another commentary to explain that Jael first gave Sisera a liquid (a drink of milk from a skin), and then offered him a solid (curds in a bowl). He comments on *הקריבה חמאה* :

*חלב* is a gloss on *חמאה* which is mentioned first and *חלב* which is mentioned in the second place (cf. Gen. 18:8): And I offered milk (to drink) which was left after the curds because it makes (one) drowsy, and induces sleep, and confuses the mind. And it is proper to interpret that she gave him curds to eat after she had given him a drink, for she gave from a skin of milk. As one says, she opened a skin of milk and gave him to drink, and in a lordly bowl she gave him to eat.

Burney connects *חמאה* with leben the choicest drink of the modern Bedouin which is delicious and refreshing, but has a strongly soporific effect.<sup>181</sup> This agrees with Kimchi's exegesis, and seems to be a logical rendering of the text. Boling suggests that the effect of the verse is to focus attention upon Jael's cunning in giving Sisera a mild sedative before killing him.<sup>182</sup> It is doubtful if Jael tested Sisera's awareness, as his fatigue after the flight from battle

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<sup>181</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 93.

<sup>182</sup>R. Boling, Judges, p.114.

probably would be obvious to her. It is more likely that she offered Sisera a bowl of simmering fresh sheep's milk as normal hospitality.<sup>183</sup> That this created a sense of security for the fleeing chieftain, and induced sleep, is probably a result of her hospitality rather than a premeditated plan of murder. Whether she first intended to dispose of Sisera is not known, but she was afforded the opportunity to perform the deed and she carried it out.<sup>184</sup>

All the Versions regard חלב as a liquid and חמאה as a solid ('butter' or 'curds'). The verse indicates that Sisera was offered חמאה in a bowl, but it is not certain whether this was a drink to

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<sup>183</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 163, interprets חמאה as a reference to sour-milk, a refreshing drink offered as Bedouin hospitality.

<sup>184</sup>E. Power, "He asked for water, milk she gave" (Jud. 5,25), Bibl, 9 (1928), p. 47, (Kitab al-Agani XXI, p. 143, trans. by E. Power), suggests a similar situation which he observes in the narrative of a Bedouin woman who plays a part in the slaying of a famous chieftain named Shanfara. In this narrative the woman fed the chieftain curds to increase his thirst and gave him thick, sour milk, but kept water from him. This increased his thirst, and on his way he was obliged to seek water at the watering-places guarded by his enemies, which he hitherto had avoided. The woman informed her people of the chieftain's plight (his thirst) and they easily found and killed him. (However, the parallel of this story to that of Jael is not very close. Jael was presented with the opportunity to kill Sisera because of weariness which forced him to rest at her tent.)

quench the thirst, or a solid to eat. It is probably best to say with BDB that in poetic parallelism *חמח* is being used loosely as a synonym of *לבח* and they are rendered 'milk, curds' (cf. correlated synonyms in Gen. 18:8; Prov. 30:33).

בספל אדירים

The Versions render *בספל אדירים* in a fairly literal way (LXX. A *ἐν λακάνη ἰσχυρῶν* 'in a dish used by the mighty'; LXX. B *ἐν λεκάνη ὑπερεχόντων* 'in a dish used by the elite'; Vulg. in phiala principum obtulit 'in a dish of great men'; Pesh. bks' dgnbr' 'in a drinking vessel of mighty men' (gnbr'). Targ. reads: 'She brought to him cheese in a bowl (*בפילי* = Gk. *φιαλη*) fit for chieftains'. Targ. uses the same word as Vulg. *בפילי גברי* (cf. Pesh. gnbr'). Vulg. phiala (Targ. *בפילי*; Gk. *φιαλη*) is apparently a saucer-shaped drinking vessel, and Pesh. ks' is a cup. LXX *λεκάνη* is indeterminate. It is not really possible to be sure how precisely the Versions envisaged *בספל אדירים*, whether as the kind of vessel which a nobleman would use, or to indicate the generous proportions of the vessel intended.

Rashi comments on *בספל אדירים*: 'A bowl from

which water is drunk, because water is called אדירים , as it is written, במים אדירים (Exod. 15:10; Ps. 93:4).<sup>185</sup> That is, because אדירים is found in scripture as an attribute of מים , he supposes that בספל אדירים means 'a bowl from which water is drunk'.<sup>185</sup>

Kimchi comments on בספל אדירים : 'In a large bowl from which great men and nobles drink. And the sage Rabbi Jonah interpreted אדירים as 'the wealthy shepherds' as in אדירי הצאן (Jer. 25:34, 35, 36).<sup>186</sup> The exegesis of Kimchi and R. Jonah are based upon similar principles. Kimchi goes on to explain that Targ. used פיללי (=Greek φιλλη ) to render Hebrew כוס 'cup' and מזרק 'bowl' and, in Judg. 5:25, ספל . Thus Isa. 51:17, 22 כוס התראלק is rendered by Targ. as פיללי כסא דלינטיא 'vessels of cursing' ( פיללי and כסא are doublets). Amos 6:6 השותים במזרקי 'those drinking from bowls of' is rendered as דשתיים בפיללי חמר . Kimchi concludes this section by saying 'In the Greek language כוס =

<sup>185</sup> ספל occurs once again in Judg. 6:38 and denotes a dish or bowl for holding liquids.

<sup>186</sup> R. Jonah anticipates the NEB rendering 'masters of the flock' (Jer. 25:34,35,36); Encyclopaedia Judaica, 10, p. 179, describes R. Jonah (Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi), c. 1200-1263, as a Spanish rabbi, author, and moralist.

φιαλη .'. The exegetical principle by which R. Jonah concludes that כַּסִּיפִיָּה means 'a vessel used by flockmasters' is somewhat similar to the principle which Rashi concludes that it means 'a vessel from which water is drunk.'

Targ., Rashi and Kimchi understand כַּסִּיפִיָּה as a shallow bowl used for drinking purposes (Gk. φιαλη ) as does Vulg. phiaala.<sup>187</sup>

כַּסִּיפִיָּה is taken by the Versions to mean 'a bowl such as noblemen use' and this implies 'a handsome bowl'. It would seem logical that Jael would offer Sisera sustenance from her 'finest' vessel as a gesture of her hospitality. The bowl she offered him was the best she had (i.e. a bowl fit for a nobleman) and indicates a large and handsome vessel or dish.

James L. Kelso comments on כַּסִּיפִיָּה : 'The most difficult identification is the bowl family ... the identification for bowls herein suggested will be

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<sup>187</sup>KB<sup>3</sup> renders כַּסִּיפִיָּה : Schale (f. Wasser, Milch) 'bowl' (for water, milk), ak. saplu, ug. magnum vas aëneum. Cf. Encyclopaedia Judaica, 13, p. 939, which mentions a type of vessel used for drinking purposes from the Late Bronze II period (1300-1200): 'There is an abundance of imported pottery in this period, mostly of Mycenaean and Cypriot origin. Two main groups - (1) White Slip ware, which includes the "milk bowls", half-globular bowls with wishbone handles and a white-slip and ladder decoration painted brown or black ... The Late Bronze pottery seems to continue in the first phase of the Iron I period (1200-925 B.C.E.).'



accurate as to size although not too specific as to exact shape, i.e. profile. Taking them in order from large to small, they are as follows. The sēfel, the 'aggān, and the mizrāq are great banquet bowls.<sup>188</sup> He further comments: 'Sēfel is the large two-handed banquet bowl of Iron I. It was large enough to hold the water wrung out of Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:38). It was apparently an expensive piece of ware for it is called 'addîrîm in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5:25).'<sup>189</sup> E. L. Sukenik, during a visit to a modern pottery shop at Jeba, discovered a large bowl used as a wash-basin. It was called sifl (Arabic) which he noted is similar to ܣܦܠ. There is no derivation for this name sifl in Arabic, and Sukenik concluded that it is probably a loan-word borrowed from Aramaic ܣܦܠ or Hebrew ספל. Sukenik comments on sephel which he describes as a pottery vessel of large size: 'In the Song of Deborah ... Jael was trying to show great hospitality to Sisera ... Her good intentions were not only shown by the fact that instead of water she offered him milk, but also by the large quantity of

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<sup>188</sup>James L. Kelso, 'The Ceramic Vocabulary of the Old Testament,' BASOR Supplementary Studies, Nos. 5-6 (1948), p. 11.

<sup>189</sup>Kelso, p. 28.

food she put at his disposal. The same would apply to the second passage (Judges vi. 38) where the miracle shown to Gideon was such, that whereas the ground all around was dry, the fleece was so wet that Gideon could wring a large basin full of water out of it.<sup>190</sup> The evidence presented by Kelso and Sukenik (cf. Kimchi) points to the rendering of ספל as a large banquet bowl.

V. 25 may be rendered:

מִים שָׁאֵל חֶלֶב נִתְּנָה  
 בְּסֶפֶל אֲדִירִים הִקְרִיבָה חֲמָאָה

He asked for water, she gave him milk;  
 in a large bowl fit for nobles, she offered  
 him curds.

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<sup>190</sup>E.L. Sukenik, 'Note on a Pottery Vessel of the Old Testament' PEQ (1940), p. 60.

## V. 26

ידה . . . וימינה

LXX. A and B (τὴν) χεῖρα αὐτῆς τὴν ἀριστερὰν  
 ... (τὴν) δεξιὰν αὐτῆς 'her left hand ... and her  
 right' along with Vulg. Sinistram manum ... et dexteran  
 clearly interprets MT ידה . . . וימינה as 'left hand  
 ... right hand'. Pesh. reads 'her hand ('ydh) ... and  
 her right hand (wymynh)', as does Targ. 'her hand  
 ( ידה ) ... and her right hand ( וימינה )'.

Kimchi comments on תשלחנה ידה (this is given as his  
 father's interpretation): 'And my lord, my father (may  
 his memory be blessed) has interpreted תשלחנה ידה וימינה  
 שלחה as follows: "Because of the peg and the  
 mallet. Her left hand was needed for the peg and her  
 right hand for the hammer (mallet)."' LXX, Vulg. and  
 Kimchi understand the use of both hands by Jael (i.e.  
 one to grasp the tent-peg and the other to grasp the  
 hammer) as MT 'her hand to ... her right hand to'  
 clearly indicates.

תשלחנה

The Versions understand תשלחנה as 3rd. fem.

sing. and do not suppose that the נה ending indicated a 3rd. fem. sing. suffix with nun energicum. LXX. A and B read ἐξέτεινεν 'stretched forth'; Vulg. misit 'reaches'; Pesh. ׁwstt 'she reached out'; and Targ. renders תשלחנה as אושיטב 'she stretched forth'. Kimchi comments on תשלחנה : 'Equivalent to תשלח and the nun and he are additional.' Kimchi's comment cites מסדרונה (Judg. 3:23) and פרשדונה (Judg. 3:22). The two forms which he cites are nouns not verbs and they throw no light on תשלחנה .

G-K proposes תשלחנה as an alternative to the incorrect use of fem. pl. for fem. sing.<sup>191</sup> G. R. Driver, disagreeing with G-K reads תשלחנה ... ידה not as a fem. pl. but a sing. form with the emphatic -nah (the energic fem. sing. form), cf. תרמסנה 'it shall be trodden down' (Isa. 28:3).<sup>192</sup> W. F. Albright states that in Ugaritic the energic nun is very common and cannot be distinguished from the energic form with pronominal suffix (-nnu for -nhu) except in the light of the context. He sees the verbal forms אשגני and

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<sup>191</sup>G-K 47k.

<sup>192</sup>G.R. Driver, "Another Little Drink" in Isaiah 28:1-22,' in Words and Meanings, ed. by Peter R. Ackroyd and Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 50; cf. C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 152, takes תשלחנה as a sing. form.

אֶרְאָה (Num. 23:9), קָרַמְנָה (Num. 23:19), and  
 אֶשְׁבֵּבְנָה (Num. 23:20), as energetic forms. The first  
 two verbal forms have no antecedent to which they can  
 refer as they stand, and the last two forms are  
 correlated with forms which have no object at all ( נָרַר  
 and נָרַר ).<sup>193</sup> M. Dahood also observes that the high  
 incidence of energetic forms in Ugaritic has led to the  
 postulation of such forms in biblical Hebrew.<sup>194</sup> The  
 accentual pattern (3:3) and the equal syllable count  
 (9:9) has been attained in v. 26, according to David N.  
 Freedman, only by the addition of the energetic ending of  
 the verb תִּשְׁלַחְנָה . He believes that the poet  
 deliberately used this form of the verb to lengthen the  
 first stich so that it balanced the second.<sup>195</sup> Other  
 examples of nun energetic Freedman found in Job 17:16  
 ( תִּנְדָּנָה ); Prov. 1:20 and 8:3 ( תִּלְפָּה ); Lam. 1:13  
 ( וַיִּקְרָא );<sup>196</sup> and Gen. 3:17 ( הִאֲכַלְתָּה ).<sup>197</sup> The

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<sup>193</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Oracles of Balaam,' JBL, 63 (1944), p. 212, n. 23.

<sup>194</sup>Mitchell Dahood, Psalms I, 1-50, AB (1966), pp. Introd. xxxviii, 12, 99, 128, 241, 275.

<sup>195</sup>David N. Freedman, 'Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,' ZAW, 72 (1960), p. 102.

<sup>196</sup>Freedman, 'Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,' p. 102.

<sup>197</sup>David N. Freedman, 'Notes on Genesis,' ZAW, 64 (1952), p. 191.

existence of fem. sing. verbal forms with energic nun in biblical Hebrew (cf. Driver, Albright, Freedman) and similar energic forms found in Ugaritic, give weight to the possibility that תשלחנה is such a form, and may be rendered 'she stretched forth'.

להלמות עמלים

LXX. A renders להלמות עמלים as εἰς ἀποτομὰς κατακόπων 'to cut down the weary', and LXX. B εἰς σφῦραν ἁσπλώντων 'to hammer those who are tired out'. Vulg. ad fabrorum malleos 'to the hammer of carpenters' and Pesh. l'rzpt' dnqr' 'to the mallet of carpenters' understands עמלים as 'workmen' and identifies להלמות עמלים precisely with a carpenter's mallet. Targ. לארזפתא דנפחיקן 'to the hammer of the smith' associates the hammer with the trade of the Kenites who were smiths (דופחיקן is in M.G. but not in Sperber). Targ.'s expansion of עמלים 'to break wicked men and oppressors' shows that it is interpreting עמלים as 'those who cause mischief or oppression'. Rashi comments on להלמות עמלים : 'Sisera, who was weary and was struck.' On להלמות Kimchi comments that it is the name of a tool with which men strike blows. On עמלים he offers the

gloss בעלי המלאכה , i.e. 'workmen' or 'artisans'.

Two lines of exegesis are evident: (a) hammer or mallet of workmen, and (b) hammer or hammering of the weary. LXX and Rashi take עמלים in the sense of 'weary', and against Vulg., Pesh., Targ. (and probably Kimchi) which support the rendering 'workman's hammer (mallet)', and להלמות עמלים could be rendered 'to the workman's mallet'. The commonly received translation is that of Aquila εἰς σφύρακον μακρώντων.<sup>198</sup> Judg. 4:21 וַתִּשֶׂם אֶת-הַמַּקְבֵּץ בְּיָדָהּ 'and she took a hammer in her hand' clearly indicates that the weapon is a hammer or mallet.

There are four occurrences of עמל ; for Judg. 5:26, and Prov. 16:26 ( נפש עמל עמלה לו ), BDB gives the sense 'workman' (KB<sup>2</sup> also gives the sense 'workman' at Judg. 5:26 and Prov. 16:26); for Job 3:20 ( למה רך יתן לעמל אור ), and Job 20:22 the sense 'sufferer' is given. If עמלים is taken as 'weary' then it is possible to understand הלמות as an abstract 'hammering'. This is probably behind NEB's rendering 'to hammer the weary'. Moore suggests: ' עמלים does not mean "artisans" (smiths, carpenters) but men who are worn out, or wear themselves out, with toil and

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<sup>198</sup> Cf. G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 165, and C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 153.

hardships; "hammer of hard working (or weary) men" is a singular (sic. unique) metonymy for a heavy hammer.'<sup>199</sup> However, the sense of 'weariness' is late in biblical Hebrew and 'hammering of the weary' appears to be contrived. Targ. with reference to דנפחין 'smiths' probably is closest to the sense of the term, and with Vulg. and Pesh. understand the meaning to be 'hammer of workmen'.

והלמה ... מחקה ... ומחצה ... וחלפה

LXX. A renders וְחָלְפָה ... וּמְחֶצֶה ... מְחַקָּה ...  
וְהִלְמָה 'And she cut off (down) Sisera, and wiped him out; and she crushed and pierced his jaw.' LXX. A 'cut off' is understandable, but does not make good sense here. מחקה is a hapax legomenon. The Arabic cognate maḥaqa suggests 'wipe out, obliterate' (cf. BDB), and it may mean 'beat his head to a pulp' in Judg. 5:26. G. R. Driver on the other hand states that מחק is not cognate with Arabic maḥaqa but is an Aramaic loan word and is the equivalent of Hebrew מחך 'struck'.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 165.

<sup>200</sup>G.R. Driver, 'Hebrew Poetic Diction,' VTS, 1 (1953), p. 26, n. 3; cf. KB<sup>3</sup>.



LXX. B reads: 'And she hammered Sisera; she pierced his head and struck a deadly blow; she pierced his temple.' LXX. B punctuates differently from MT, connecting *הצחמתי* with what precedes. The most interesting thrust of this is the different senses attributed to *המכה* and *הקמה*; *המכה*, LXX. A ἀπέτεμεν 'cut off', LXX. B ἔσφυροκόπησεν 'hammered'; *הקמה*, LXX. A ἀπέτριψεν 'wiped out', LXX. B διήλωσεν (twice) 'pierced'.

Vulg. gives a free but idiomatic translation:

percussitque Siseram quaereus in capite vulneri locum 'to strike Sisera (i.e. she struck Sisera) seeking in his head a place to inflict a wound' (apparently rendering *ושרא הקמה* as 'seeking in his head a place to inflict a wound'), et tempus valide perforaus 'and piercing the temple with great violence.' Pesh. 'She struck Sisera, she shattered his head, she struck and she pierced his brain' renders *מחקה* as pkt 'shattered'.

Targ. 'She struck Sisera, she shattered his head, she cracked open his brain, she caused the tent peg to pierce his temples' renders *מחקה* by *תברת* 'shattered'. Rashi comments on *והחלפה*: 'Coming out the other side (i.e. pierced)'. Kimchi commenting on *ושרא הקמה* 'she removed his head' indicates the

sense 'sever' for *מחך*. Commenting on *מחצה* he cites *מחך מכתו* (Isa. 30:26). Commenting on *חלפה* 'she penetrated the temple with the nail. Or *חלפו* may be associated with *יחליף ויסגיר* (Job 11:10), that is, it is an expression for "cutting". The important points here are that Kimchi renders 'severing' for *מחך* and 'piercing' or 'cutting' for *חלף*. However, there is no reason to believe (from the Song itself) that Sisera was decapitated.

LXX. B 'hammered' (cf. Pesh., Vulg., Targ. 'struck') makes good sense of *הלמה*. With Pesh. and Targ. *מחקה* is rendered 'smashed' and *מחצה* is rendered 'shattered' (cf. LXX. B 'struck a deadly blow'). All the Versions understand *חלפה* as 'pierced'. LXX. A renders *רקתו* 'jaw'; LXX. B and Vulg. 'temple'; Targ. and Pesh. 'brain'. NEB takes *רקתו* as subject of ('his brains ebbed out') and attributes to *חלפה* the sense 'passed away' and 'his brains ebbed out'.

Boling suggests that *רקתו* refers to some portion of the head visible from the outside. Location of the *רקתו*, he says, is behind the veil in the Song of Solomon passages, and therefore it refers to some vulnerable spot such as the upper neck behind the lower

jaw, and hence renders *רקת* 'neck'.<sup>201</sup> The visible part of the head described in Cant. 4:3 appears to be the lower half of the head (i.e. the lips and jaw). The passage is rendered: '... your mouth is lovely, your lips as a thread of scarlet. Your cheeks ( *רקתך* ) are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil.' The veil worn by Bedouin women covered the upper part of the head and the eyes, leaving only the mouth clearly visible. The poet apparently is describing the delicate and fragile part of a woman's face, the temple, partly hidden by her veil, which he views as a silhouette, beautiful as the halves of a pomegranate behind her veil. *רקת* does not appear to mean 'brains' which may have gushed out (cf. NEB), and the usage of the word in Song of Solomon supports 'temple' (cf. LXX. B, Vulg.).

V. 26 may be rendered:

*ידָהּ לַיָּמִין תִּשְׁלַח יָדָהּ*  
*וְיָמִינָהּ לְהַלְמֹת עַמּוּלִים*  
*וְהִלְמָה סִיסְרָא מַחֲקָה רֹאשׁוֹ*  
*וַמְחַצָּה וַחֲלַפָה רִקְתּוֹ*

She stretched forth her hand to the tent-peg,  
 and her right hand to a workman's mallet;  
 she hammered Sisera, she smashed his head,  
 she shattered and pierced his temple.

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<sup>201</sup>R. Boling, Judges, pp. 98 and 115.

## V. 27

בין רגליה כרע נפל

LXX. B and Targ. reproduce MT exactly. LXX. B  $\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\kappa\omicron\lambda\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta$  'he rolled down' or 'he buckled (his knees)' is an indication of a standing position prior to falling (or, perhaps prior to a blow being struck). The shorter text of LXX. A does not represent the second  $\text{כרע נפל}$ . Vulg. 'Between her feet he collapsed, helpless and dying. He rolled at her feet, and lay motionless, lifeless and wretched.' In the second stich volvebatur 'rolled' may be an attempt to render  $\text{כרע נפל}$ . In the third stich there is apparently nothing corresponding to  $\text{באשר כרע שם}$  and et jacebat exanimis et miserabilis renders  $\text{נפל שדוד}$ . Pesh. does not represent the second stich  $\text{בין רגליה}$  and has a shorter text, a distich instead of a tristich: 'At her feet kneeling, he fell and lay. In the place where he knelt, there he lay despoiled.' Pesh.'s shorter text may possibly be accounted for as a haplography, an accidental omission of the second stich in view of its near identity with the first stich; or it could be that the Syriac translator had before him a shorter Hebrew text; or, it could represent a

conjectural emendation by the Syriac translator.

Kimchi comments on בין רגליה כרע נפל : 'The meaning is כריעה , in that he was no longer standing erect. Hence it is said: "Where he crumpled up, there he fell, despoiled of life."'

LXX. B renders שָׁחַת as ἔξοδευθεὶς 'having made his exit', i.e. 'departed this life', and LXX. A renders it ταλαίπωρος 'suffering misery' (which misses the sense). Vulg. is difficult to correlate with MT but שָׁחַת is perhaps rendered as exanimis et miserabilis 'lifeless and miserable' which looks like a double rendering, a confluence of the senses of LXX. B and LXX. A. Pesh. and Targ. simply reproduce exactly the past. part. of MT.

There is uncertainty about the text in the Versions. The first stich שָׁחַת ... בִּי is wanting in 18 MSS and is omitted in 8 MSS.<sup>202</sup> But there is no disagreement in the Versions about שָׁחַת as they all represent it. The disagreement in the Versions concerns the second and third stichs: Pesh. does not represent the second stich; LXX. A does not represent כרע נפל in the second stich; Vulg. does not represent באשר כרע שם in the third stich. It could

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<sup>202</sup>BH Stutt. n. 27<sup>a-a,b</sup>.

be argued on general grounds that the text of the 8 Hebrew MSS could be accepted if the series of verbs used in the second and third stichs **נפל ... כרע** is followed, and **שכב** which appears only in the first stich is obtrusive. A possible rendering of the verse could then be (with **שכב** deleted):

בִּיךָ רִגְלִיָּה כָרַע נָפַל  
 בִּיךָ רִגְלִיָּה כָרַע נָפַל  
 בְּאִשֶׁר כָרַע שָׁם נָפַל שְׂדוּד

None of the Versions, however, support the deletion of **שכב** which might be thought to be the odd verb in the series.<sup>203</sup>

The description of Sisera's death in v. 27 seems to imply that Jael struck Sisera a crushing blow from behind while he was standing (cf. LXX. B, Vulg., Kimchi). This is at variance with the method of killing Sisera described in Judg. 4:21 (i.e. as he lay

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<sup>203</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 80, n. 3, considers **בְּאִשֶׁר כָרַע שָׁם נָפַל** anything but poetical, and deletes the phrase. Also he believes **בְּאִשֶׁר** is questionable in its use here, as it is not found elsewhere in the poem; cf. Carl Gaenssle, 'The Hebrew Particle **אֲשֶׁר**', AJSL, 31 (1914-15), pp. 15, 18, 63, asserts that **בְּאִשֶׁר** is a relative adverb of place, and was originally a noun of place as Aramaic **שְׂתַר** and Arabic 'at̄aru(n).

sound asleep), and at variance with the interpretation that Jael gave him milk to make Sisera drowsy (v. 25). It is quite possible that v. 26 and v. 27 may reflect two variant traditions regarding the death of Sisera.<sup>204</sup>

It is also possible that the verb *כרע* which refers to the buckling or crumbling of the knees, i.e. 'a crouch', which is followed by complete prostration, is descriptive of Sisera's state of exhaustion, and his collapse after having received the milk and curds.

LXX. A has noticed the repetition of *כרע נפל* in the second stich, and Vulg. has difficulty with *באשר כרע שם נפל*. MT repeats *כרע נפל* in all three stichs. This may have been the result of dittography from stich one. The third stich may have originally intended to represent *נפל*, and *כרע* may have been added ( *כרע שם נפל* ) as in the previous two stichs. It is suggested therefore that *כרע נפל* be omitted in stich two and *שכב* be placed in stich two. Instead of *כרע נפל* in stich three the verb *כרע* is deleted and *נפל* is inserted as the principal verb of the stich. The only emendation of words has to do with *כרע נפל*, although the punctuation of MT is

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<sup>204</sup>James D. Martin, Judges, p. 75.

radically emended. However, the verse then is metrically balanced, and the description of Sisera's death is correlated with Judg. 4:21 and 5:26. It is suggested that v. 27 be rendered:

בִּיז רַגְלֶיהָ פָּרַע נָפַל  
 שָׁכַב בִּיז רַגְלֶיהָ  
 בְּאֶשֶׁר נָפַל שָׁם שָׁדוּד

At her feet he crumbled, he fell,  
 he lay down at her feet;  
 where he fell, there (he was) despoiled.



V. 28

וַתִּבֵּן

LXX. A has expansions over against MT. וַתִּבֵּן is rendered by καταμανθανεν 'she observed closely'. Then LXX. A has the addition ἐπιβλεπούσα ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπιστρεφοντας μετα σισαρα 'looking out for those who were returning with Sisera'. LXX. B παρακυπτω means 'to peep' or 'to peer' out of the window. It is a rendering of נשקפה , and וַתִּבֵּן is not represented in LXX. B. Vulg. renders וַתִּבֵּן as ululabat 'uttered a mournful cry'. Vulg. supposes that the mother of Sisera is already distressed at the non-return of her son. Pesh. renders the first stich: 'And from the window she looked. And the mother of Sisera shouted (wybbt) from the balcony.' Pesh. seems to give a note of anxiety in her voice (cf. NEB 'shrilly cried'), which is also found in Targ. which renders the passage: 'From the window she looked out, and the mother of Sisera peered (i.e. looked with anxiety) through the laths.' Targ. supposes that וַתִּבֵּן is a synonym of נשקפה 'she looked and peered', and renders וַתִּבֵּן as נקדקד 'peered'.

Rashi says, commenting on וַתִּבֵּן :

It is an expression of 'speaking' like 'fruit of the lips' (Isa. 57:19). Our Rabbis explain it as an expression for 'groaning' like תרועה which is translated into Aramaic as קנא . But I say that it is an expression of 'seeing' like נבט עיני (Zech. 2:12) and thus it is derived by Menahem G. Saruq. 205

Rashi is influenced by contextual considerations in the same way as Targ. is, and he supposes that ותיבב is a synonym of נשקף ('she looked and peered').

Rashi's lexicography which he takes from Menahem assumes that נבט עיני means 'sight of my eye' and that נבט is to be derived from the root בנב .

Kimchi comments on ותיבב : 'She cried out.

Targ. translates קנא another way. Targ. Jon. takes it as a reference to "peering". Kimchi reproduces both opinions, but seems to prefer 'cried (shouted) out' which he gives as his own rendering.

The lexicographical question is whether ותיבב is a 'seeing' word like נשקף or a 'speaking' word. Both BDB and KB<sup>3</sup> think it is a 'speaking' word, and

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<sup>205</sup>Cf. Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2, p. 1305f., which describes Menahem ben Jacob ibn Saruq as a 10th cent. author and lexicographer. His most important work is The Mahberet (The Book of Solutions).

this is what the comparative philology indicates.<sup>206</sup>  
 All the Versions render נשקפה ותיבב 'looked out, peered'.  
 Targ. and Rashi indicate 'peered' for ותיבב but  
 there is little doubt in view of the comparative  
 philology (LXX, Vulg., Pesh., Kimchi) that it must be  
 rendered 'cried' or the like.

אם סיסרא

Moore suggests that the separation of the subject  
 אם from the two verbs נשקפה ותיבב in the first  
 stich is explained as a dramatic device, and that the  
 effect of the transition from the first stich to the  
 second is heightened by this postponement of the  
 explicit subject to the second stich.<sup>207</sup> LXX. A, LXX.  
 B, Vulg., Pesh., and Targ. take אם סיסרא into the  
 first stich. The Versions are simply making the Hebrew  
 easier to read and they are not really improving the  
 Hebrew as poetry. However, the holding back of the  
 subject of נשקפה ותיבב to the second stich is

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<sup>206</sup>KB<sup>3</sup> indicates that יבב is a hapax legomenon.  
 It is supported by Aramaic יבב which means 'sound an  
 alarm' and by Syriac ybb 'make a joyful noise',  
 'shout', and in non-biblical Hebrew it means 'to wail,  
 lament'; the Paal means 'lament' in Aramaic and Syriac.

<sup>207</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 167.

dramatically effective. Certainly the verb 'looked' has to be repeated in the second stich in an English translation, and the two lines read: 'Through the window she looked and cried, the mother of Sisera (peered) through the lattice.'

בַּחַלּוֹן

LXX. A renders **בַּחַלּוֹן דַּבַּר** as *διὰ τῆς δικτυωτῆς* 'through the lattice window' (cf. *Ο΄.*, *Θ.*). LXX. B has *ἐκτὸς τοῦ τοξικοῦ* 'through the loophole (i.e. narrow window)'. Vulg. *de coenaculo* and Pesh. *ksstrwn* render **בַּחַלּוֹן** 'balcony' or 'porch'. Kimchi comments on **בַּחַלּוֹן** : 'Like "window". And so "from the window she went forward to look out" (Prov. 7:6).' Rashi also interprets **בַּחַלּוֹן** as a 'window'. **בַּחַלּוֹן** is a further specification of the more general **חַלּוֹן** , and indicates the precise type of window.

Y. Aharoni describes a plaque known as 'the woman in the window' which shows the head of a woman in the frame of a window, the lower part of which has a railing of three or four columns. The rows of decorated columns, Aharoni says, are the balustrades of windows. The ornamented window adorning the facade of the royal palace with the queen looking out is a common

motif in the Old Testament, according to Aharoni (cf. Judg. 5:28; 2 Sam. 6:16; 2 Kings 9:30; Prov. 7:6). The palace mentioned by Aharoni is a royal citadel and palace at Ramat Rahel. He states that Jeremiah singled out the conspicuous ornamented windows which decorated the facade of the main building (Jer. 22:13-14) of the magnificent palace which had been built by Jehoiakim.<sup>208</sup>

פעמי מרכבותיו

LXX. A and B 'Why are the footsteps of his chariots delayed?' are literal renderings of MT which do not confront the problem of פעמי מרכבותיו. Vulg. interprets מרכבותיו to mean 'chariot-horses' and must be considered a concentrated expression for 'horses of his chariot-horses'. Vulg. quadrigarum is genitive pl. of quadrigae 'a team of four horses', and refer here to the sound made by the horse-drawn chariots. Pesh. renders the stich: 'Why delays the chariot of my son to come? And why delays the din of his chariot?' Pesh. solves the difficulty of MT

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<sup>208</sup>Y. Aharoni, 'Beth-haccherem,' in Archaeology and Old Testament Study, ed. D. Winton Thomas (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 180f.

('footsteps of his chariots') in a different way by rendering דעם as זנג 'din'. Targ. is a very free paraphrase of MT which involves a significant change of sense: 'What has delayed the runners who were to deliver to me news of victory?' Targ. removes any suggestion of anxiety for her son's welfare. What she is wondering about is why the news of victory is so long in coming through.

Both Vulg. and Pesh. are trying to resolve the unevenness of 'hoof-beats of chariots'. They understand דעם in the sense of chariots pulled by a team of horses. It is the hoof-beats of the chariot-horses which the mother of Sisera waits to hear, and she asks: 'Why are his chariot-horses so long in coming?' (i.e. 'Why do I have to wait so long for the sound of the horses of his chariot-horses?').<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup><sub>BDB</sub> עז 'to thrust, impel' (prob. orig. 'strike, hit') has the poetic sense of 'hoof-beat' (f. n. עז, l, a), and in this verse may denote the hoof-beats of the chariot-horses.

V. 28 may be rendered:

בְּעַד הַחֲלוֹן נִשְׁקָפָה וַתִּזְבַּב  
 אִם סִיסְרָא בְּעַד הָאֶשְׁנָב  
 מִדַּיֵּעַ בִּישׁ רִכְבוֹ לְבוֹא  
 מִדַּיֵּעַ אַחֲרָי פְּעַמֵּי מַרְכָּבוֹתָיו

Through the window she looked and cried;  
 the mother of Sisera (peered) through the lattice.  
 'Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
 Why do the hoof-beats of his horses tarry?'

V. 29

חכמות

LXX. A and B both render MT fairly closely. LXX. A correctly takes the relationship between חכמות and שרוחות as genitive (σοφὰ ἀρχουσῶν αὐτῆς 'the wisest of her female advisors'). LXX. B αἱ σοφὰ ἀρχουσαι αὐτῆς 'her wise princesses' is less accurate. LXX. A and B render pl. חכמות and have a plural subject in the first stich.

Vulg. una sapientior ceteris uxoribus ejus haec socruī verba respondit 'One of the wiser among his wives replied to her mother-in-law in these words' is based on the assumption that תענינה is 3rd. fem. sing. + 3rd. fem. sing. suffix. Vulg. then explains 'her' as 'mother-in-law' in virtue of the identification of חכמות שרותיה with one of Sisera's wives. Vulg. 'mother-in-law' is connected with Vulg.'s earlier exegesis of חכמות שרותה as 'one of Sisera's wives'. Pesh. ḥkymt 'lymth 'phy 'nt w'mr' lh 'One of the wiser of her attendants replied and said to her' probably rests on the assumption that תענינה is a 3rd. fem. sing. + 3rd. fem. sing. suffix. Pesh. is close to MT but renders חכמות as sing. ( חכמת )



and expands תענינה which it also takes as a sing. into (nt w'mr) lh.

Targ. is an exact rendering of MT and renders חכמות שרותיה as חֲכִימַת פְּרִיסְתָּוֹתָהָ 'the wisest of her noble ladies' (understanding the pl. חכמות ). Targ. renders תענינה by עֲנִינָן לָהּ 'answer her', the act. part. fem. pl. + obj. for MT impf. plus obj.

Rashi comments on חכמות שרותיה תענינה : 'Wise women among her שרות . Therefore it is pointed with patah.' Rashi then goes on to discuss חכמת pointed with games-hatuph ( חכמות ) and he cites Prov. 24:7. More to the point is his explanation of Prov. 14:1 חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה which he explains as: "She who is wisest among women has built her house." This, however, should be approximated to Prov. 9:1 ( חכמות נשים ). חכמות should be deleted and חכמות pointed חכמות .<sup>210</sup> Rashi is simply reading MT and commenting on it. Rashi goes on to say: 'And the elucidation of תענינה is תענינה אותה .' He is explaining it as 3rd. fem. pl. + 3rd. fem. sing. suffix. So he continues: 'The dagesh in the nun serves in place of אותה .' The passage which he cites from Lev. 6:14 ( תְּנִינָה ) is not a correct

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<sup>210</sup>BDB suggests Prov. 14:1 חֲכִימַת should be read חֲכִימַת .

analogy because תביאנה is an easily understood form (2nd. masc. sing. + 3rd. fem. sing. suffix with nun energicum).

Kimchi comments on תענינה : 'Each one of her wise ladies answered her.' The form is written in Kimchi's commentary as תענינה , i.e. a regular form, 3rd. fem. sing. + 3rd. fem. sing. suffix with nun energicum.

G-K says that חֲכֻמוֹת in Prov. 1:20 and 9:1 appear to be a sing. form. William McKane on Prov. 1:20 חֲכֻמוֹת בַּחוּץ תִּלְוֶנָה 'Wisdom cries aloud in the streets' says: 'Albright explains hokmōt as a singular form ... In the form hokmōt ... Albright discerns a "Canaanitism" and ... derives it from a postulated hukmatu (hukmatu normally appears as hokmā in Hebrew, and the form hokmōt (sing.) exemplifies a retention of the final t, the lengthening of the short a and then its change to ō as is usual in Hebrew). Albright cites the parallel of Milkōt for Milkat 'queen' (name of a goddess). It is just possible that hokmōt on the analogy of Milkōt is another indication that Wisdom is a surrogate or replacement of a goddess.'<sup>211</sup>

LXX. A and B, and Targ. have rendered תענינה as

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<sup>211</sup>William McKane, Proverbs (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), pp. 272 and 363.

3rd. fem. pl. + suffix, and have a pl. subj. in the first stich (i.e. 'The wisest of her ladies answer her'). Vulg. and probably Pesh. has read it as 3rd. fem. sing. + suffix (i.e. 'One of the wiser of his wives' -- Pesh. 'her attendants'). Rashi and Kimchi simply reproduce MT. If תענינה is (a) 3rd. fem. sing., the form is תַּעֲנֶנָּה ; (b) 3rd. fem. sing. with suffix, תַּעֲנֶנְהָ ; or, (c) 3rd. fem. sing. with suffix and nun energicum, the form is תַּעֲנֶנְנָה . If the form is 3rd. fem. plural, it cannot be analysed as 3rd. fem. plural with suffix. It can only be analysed as 3rd. fem. plural with an anomalous daghesh forte. This is how G-K takes it, although G-K tries to explain the daghesh forte as affectuosum.<sup>212</sup> In any case, the daghesh forte here is an aberrant. If, on the other hand, the form is 3rd. fem. sing. with suffix and nun energicum, it is not defective, but, on the contrary, has an additional yodh. Therefore, תענינה should be read as 3rd. fem. sing. + 3rd. fem. sing. suffix with nun energicum ( תַּעֲנֶנְנָה ).

LXX. A and B (reading MT literally) and Targ. render חכמות and therefore have a plural subject in

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<sup>212</sup>It is clear from the combination of 75r and 20i that G-K favours the view that תענינה is fem. plural with a daghesh forte affectuosum.

the first stich. The subject of תשיב can resume the subject of the first stich only if that subject is singular. This is how the second stich is understood by Vulg. 'One of the wiser among his wives replied to her mother-in-law in these words'. Pesh. also has a sing. subject in the first stich. It is difficult to analyse Pesh. and Vulg. Either they are translating a shorter text (from which אף היא תשיב אמריה לה is absent) or they are telescoping this stich in their translation. If they are telescoping they take the subject of תשיב to be the same as the subject of תענינה .

Rashi comments on אף היא תשיב אמריה : 'By way of comforting herself, "Why am I expressing surprise at my son's delay?"' Kimchi comments on תשיב אמריה לה : 'As the wise ones gave an answer to her, so she (Sisera's mother) on her part answered and said, because of this (a ref. to v. 30) the footsteps of his chariot-horses were delayed.' Both Rashi and Kimchi understand the subject of the second stich to be Sisera's mother (a sing. subject).

LXX. A and B, Targ., Rashi and Kimchi suppose 'the mother of Sisera' to be the subject in the second stich, whereas Vulg. and Pesh. suppose the subject to

be repeated in each stich.<sup>213</sup> The most probable situation is that the ladies in attendance spoke comforting words to Sisera's mother, while she contemplated the delay and then expressed her own thoughts. Her 'advisors' supplied their reasons for Sisera's non-appearance, but she had her own ideas and expressed them. In the first stich one of her advisors is depicted as giving a reason for Sisera's delay, and in the second stich Sisera's mother expresses her thoughts. Therefore the verb *תענינה* in stich one is best rendered as fem. sing. with suffix, and the verb *תשיב* in stich two is rendered as a fem. sing. form.

V. 29 may be rendered:

חַכְמוֹת שְׂרוֹתֶיהָ תַעֲנִינָהּ  
אֶת-הָאִמָּה וְהִיא תִשָּׁבֵר אֶת-תְּשֻׁבָתָהּ לָהּ

The wisest of her ladies answer her,  
she too supplied her own answer.

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<sup>213</sup>H.W. Brekelmans, 'Some Translation Problems,' OTS 15 (1969), pp. 170 and 172, notes that *אֶת* as an introductory particle may either resume the subject of the first stich (cf. Isa. 26:9, 33:2; Prov. 23:27-28) or may point to a change of subject. He says that *אֶת-הָאִמָּה* (v. 29) refers to the wise lady in the first stich (i.e. it resumes the subject) and renders the verse 'the wisest of her ladies speak up, and replies to her.'

V. 30

הלא ימצאו יחלקו שלל

LXX. A and B describe the mother of Sisera reassuring herself, and render the first stich: 'Will they not find him dividing the spoil.' Vulg. 'Perchance he is now dividing the spoils' ( ימצאו not represented) and Pesh. 'Perchance he has gone off and found great spoil' depict one of Sisera's wives as the speaker (v. 29). Vulg. and Pesh. also render the verbs as sing. It is Sisera who is dividing the spoil. This is against MT ימצאו יחלקו . Targ. essentially follows MT: 'Perhaps they have found booty to share.' Rashi reproduces MT and comments: 'This is what delays them.' Kimchi comments on ימצאו יחלקו שלל : 'They found abundant spoil in the land of Israel, because they defeated them, and they divided the spoil between them. For this reason they delay in coming.' Targ. (cf. Rashi and Kimchi) in agreement with MT renders the subj. as plural, and this seems more acceptable than LXX., Vulg. and Pesh. which are not representing the verb in MT.

סחג סחמתיס לראג גב

LXX. A renders גב שראג לראג סחמתיס סחג as φιλιάζων φίλοις εἰς κεφαλὴν δυνατοῦ 'showing friendliness to friends (i.e. fraternizing) with the heads of the mighty.' Apparently LXX. A was reading סחמתיס סחג 'fraternizing with friends'. LXX. B on the other hand is more difficult to correlate with the Hebrew text. The rendering οἰκτεῖρμων οἰκτειρήσει εἰς κεφαλὴν ἀνδρός 'Being merciful, he will show mercy on the head of a man' is perhaps explicable on the assumption that οἰκτεῖρμων = סחמתיס and οἰκτειρήσει = סחג, but the position is not clear. LXX. may be a deliberate euphemism, a suppressing of the reference to 'women' as booty. Vulg. et pulcherrima feminarum eligitur ei 'The fairest of women will be chosen by him' gives the sense of women as booty. Pesh. 'And he is dividing a mule (kwdny) to each man' has a different punctuation from MT. Again, as with LXX, this may be a euphemistic device, but it is a curious translation, as there is apparently no word similar to סחג meaning 'mule'.

Targ. reads: 'Is it not that they have found and are dividing the spoil. They are giving a man and his household to each (victor) in turn.' LXX. A and B,

Pesh. and Targ. are puzzled by רחם רחמיים , and if 'woman' is correct, this is the only place in biblical Hebrew where רחם has that sense.

Rashi commenting on רחמיים לראש גבר says: 'Its meaning is "beautiful women in Israel". And each man among them has for himself two or three women in his bed.' It is not necessarily 'rape' that is intended by Rashi, although this is a reasonable interpretation of how victorious soldiers would treat women. Rashi may intend this meaning rather than simply 'concubinage' but one cannot be sure. Kimchi simply refers to the women as 'spoils of war'. He comments on רחם רחמיים : 'A damsel or two damsels' and on לראש גבר : 'To each and every man there is a damsel or two damsels for the spoil.'<sup>214</sup> Whether 'wench, damsel' are 'dishonoured women' or not is not clear, except in so far as they are slave-girls or concubines who become prizes of war.<sup>215</sup> We are hampered by the obscurity of רחם , but all that may be intended is that they are

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<sup>214</sup>Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook, p. 369, n. 424, suggests that išt.ištm 'one fire, two fires' (text 137:32) is the same construction as רחם רחמיים 'one girl, two girls' (Judg. 5:30).

<sup>215</sup>Deut. 21:10-14 dealing with the laws regarding women captured in warfare attests to the practise of taking women captive (as a prize of war), but רחם is not used in the passage.



women appropriated as concubines by victorious soldiers. Only Vulg. (cf. Rashi and Kimchi) renders  $\text{נַחֲמָנִים}$  'damsel', which means 'womb' elsewhere in biblical Hebrew.<sup>216</sup>

Burney observes that  $\text{נַחֲמָנִים}$  occurs in the plural with the meaning 'girl-slaves' or 'maid-servants' (i.e. 'wenches') in the inscription of the Moabite Stone, line 17, an account of captives taken from Israel and slain: 'So I went by night and fought ... slaying all, seven thousand men, boys, women, girls, and maid-servants.'<sup>217</sup>

$\text{שֵׁלֵל צִנְעִים}$

Both LXX. A and B represent the second occurrence of  $\text{שֵׁלֵל צִנְעִים}$  and agree with the punctuation of MT. They render  $\text{שֵׁלֵל צִנְעִים רִקְמָה}$  as  $\sigma\kappa\tilde{\upsilon}\lambda\alpha \beta\alpha\mu\acute{\mu}\alpha\tau\omega\nu \text{ ποικιλίας}$  'spoils of dyed stuff with embroideries' (i.e. 'spoils of embroidered dyed stuff'). LXX. A  $\beta\alpha\theta\eta$  is an inner Greek corruption of  $\beta\alpha\phi\eta$  (so the

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<sup>216</sup>BDB  $\text{נַחֲמָנִים}$  2 rendered 'woman-slave'.

<sup>217</sup>H. Donner, W. Rollig, Kanaanaische und Aramaische Inschriften (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), p. 33, 'Moabitische Inschrift', line 17: ...  $\text{נַחֲמָנִים}$  ;<sup>3</sup> cf. W.F. Albright, trans., 'The Moabite Stone,' ANET, p. 320.

miniscules abgln), used of the dropping of cloths in dye. LXX. Β ποικιλτων 'those who embroidered them' (i.e. 'the needle-women') apparently reads תְּמִתָּם (a fem. part. pl. + 3rd. pl. suffix) instead of תְּמִתָּם . Vulg. renders the third stich freely: 'Garments of various colours are handed to Sisera as spoil', as does Targ. 'Great spoil is before Sisera, spoil of embroidered dyed stuff upon his neck, and desirable vessels which they have taken as plunder are before his soldiers.' Both Vulg. and Targ. seem to delete at the end of the verse. Pesh. is difficult to correlate with MT and has the appearance of a very loose translation: 'A mule apiece for each man and great spoil, and dyed stuffs and embroideries for Sisera; and dyed stuffs and embroideries on the necks of the spoilers' (bzwz'). It looks as if the second שֵׁל צוֹנְעִים is not rendered. Also, the final שֵׁל would appear to have been read as שֵׁלִים (understood as a collective and rendered as a plural). This agrees with NEB שֵׁלִים 'spoilers, i.e. victors') and seems to be the most suitable rendering (the NEB translators do not seem to have noticed that Pesh. supports them).

יָרָאֵל

LXX. A περὶ τράχηλον αὐτοῦ σκῦλον 'round about his neck as spoil' and LXX. B τῷ τραχήλῳ αὐτοῦ σκῦλα 'for his neck as spoil' renders יָרָאֵל as if it were יָרָאֵל . Vulg. (see above) is a free rendering of the stich. Pesh. has 'on the neck of the spoilers' (cf. NEB 'the victor's neck'). Targ. has יָרָאֵל 'his neck' for יָרָאֵל , but also is a free rendering of the text. Kimchi comments on יָרָאֵל : 'The garments are set at the head of the spoil in order to give them to the commander of the army.' Thus Kimchi equates יָרָאֵל with שָׂרָאֵל and 'at the neck(s) of the spoil' means 'at the head of the spoil' (i.e. as the choicest spoil).

LXX. A and B, Pesh. (cf. NEB), include the final שָׂרָאֵל whereas Vulg. and Targ. delete it. Also LXX. A and B render the second occurrence of שָׂרָאֵל , and Vulg., Pesh. and Targ. delete it. The second occurrence of שָׂרָאֵל could logically be deleted (supported by Vulg. and Targ.). It has also been suggested by some that שָׂרָאֵל be deleted.<sup>218</sup> Moore renders the last stich שָׂרָאֵל 'a couple of

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<sup>218</sup>BH Stutt. N. 30<sup>C</sup>; cf. C.A. Simpson, Composition of the Book of Judges, p. 106, n. 75.

pieces of embroidery'.<sup>219</sup> On the argument of analogy  
 רחם רחמתיִם rendered 'one embroidery, two  
 embroideries' (i.e. 'an embroidery or two') is matched  
 by רקמה רקמתיִם (which would now appear in stich  
 four). With the deletion of the second occurrence of  
 שלל צבעים and of צבע in stich five, the verse  
 could be reduced to four stichs, and greater balance  
 would have been achieved. The final שלל (supported  
 by LXX. and Pesh.) is retained. Although the  
 emendation is quite radical, the deletions and  
 emendations mentioned above are suggested, and the  
 verse may be rendered:

הֲלֹא יִמְצְאוּ יַחְלִקוּ שְׁלֵל  
 רַחֵם רַחֲמָתִים לְרֹאשׁ גִּבּוֹר  
 שְׁלֵל צִבְעִים לְסִיסְרָא  
 רַקְמָה רַקְמָתִים לְצַנְהָרִי שְׁלֵל

Are they not finding and dividing spoil?  
 a wench or two for each man;  
 spoil of dyed stuff for Sisera,  
 an embroidery or two for the necks of the spoilers.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>219</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 171.

<sup>220</sup>V. 31 appears to be added by the editor of the Song to express an idea of a universal God who punishes the wicked and rewards the just (a Deuteronomic device), and therefore should be omitted from the

context of the Song. There is no great divergence from MT in Targ. or Versions in v. 31, apart from the emendation of אהביו to אהביו . Rashi offers an interesting comment on ותשקוט הארץ : 'This is not part of the words of Deborah, but is part of the words of the writer of the book.' Rashi recognized that the last part of v. 31 is not part of the Song. Vulg. 'And so for forty years the land was at peace' renders the final line as a separate verse (i.e. v. 32). The final line probably was written as a conclusion to the deuteronomic chronology at the end of ch. 4 and serves to include ch. 4 with the account of the victories of Deborah and Barak (cf. J. Martin, Judges, p. 77). The first stich: 'So perish all your enemies O Lord' is an abrupt apostrophe, invoking destruction upon all the enemies of Yahweh. W.F. Albright ('The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse', p. 83) maintains that the entire verse is formed by a very weak and awkward distich. Throughout the Song, immediate issues are dealt with (i.e. proclamation of Yahweh's help to Israel, the call to battle, the response to the call, the battle, the curse of Meroz, the death of Sisera). V. 31 suddenly introduces a new thought (i.e. אהביו 'those who love you') which is addressed to an audience separate from the events, and which has little to do with the immediate situation.

CHAPTER II  
THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL  
IN  
THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

1. Introduction

The period of the Judges appears to have been characterized by a fundamental religious allegiance to Yahweh which gave the people of Yahweh their unity and identity. Leaders, summoned by Yahweh, arose in times of crisis to lead the people, but there seems to have been no attempt to institutionalize this leadership. These leaders, who have the title of 'judge', maintained a bond of unity among the people only during periods of opposition to a common enemy. The question arises whether the judges maintained some effective central authority which bound the tribes in a loose federation, or whether each Israelite tribe maintained its own leadership.

In the period from c. 1200 B.C. to 1000 B.C., the Israelite tribes were struggling to maintain a foothold in the land of Palestine, and were faced with attacks by neighbouring peoples. Each Israelite tribe could

receive aid from neighbouring tribes who might join them in battle against a common enemy (Judg. 5:14-17). This loose bond of unity established by common cause against the enemy, and centered in a fundamental religious allegiance to Yahweh, probably was the only bond which held the tribes together. It is possible that a twelve-tribe system did not come into being in Israel prior to the establishment of the monarchy. However, the boundary lists of tribes found in Joshua chs. 13-19, which describe the location of the twelve tribes after the settlement in Canaan (c. 1250 B.C.), have suggested a broader organization of tribes in the period of the Judges.

It is the purpose of this section to discuss the amphictyony hypothesis, and alternative theories, which suggest tribal activity and organization in the period of the Judges. The Song of Deborah is examined with regard to each of these theories in an attempt to find evidence which may or may not be supportive of a confederacy of Israelite tribes.

## 2. The Amphictyony Hypothesis

An early suggestion of a relationship between the tribes of Israel based upon worship at and maintenance

of a central shrine appears in a work by H. Ewald in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Ewald did not use the word 'amphictyony' but as George W. Anderson observes, '... he drew attention to the importance of the number twelve, and to the way in which the twelvefold division could serve as a basis for the orderly registering of opinions (voting) and for the arrangement of the clans and their mustering for war (cf. Num. 1-2; 7). Moreover, he noted possible parallels in ancient Graeco-Italian literature and history ...'<sup>2</sup> This view was more fully developed under the title of 'amphictyony' by Martin Noth, first in 1930,<sup>3</sup> and in his later work, Geschichte Israels, 1950 (English title, The History of Israel). Noth concluded that Israel was organized in a sacred league which he compared to the amphictyonies which existed among the

<sup>1</sup>H. Ewald, Einleitung in die Geschichte des Volkes Israel, I, 3rd ed. (1864), pp. 519-531.

<sup>2</sup>George W. Anderson, 'Israel: Amphictyony: 'AM; KĀHĀL; 'ĒDĀH,' in Translating and Understanding the Old Testament, ed. Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 136.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Noth, Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels, BWANT 4. Folge, Heft 1. (1930), p. 47ff. (cf. pp. 122-132 on Num. 26:5-50).



Greeks, Old Latins, and Etruscans.<sup>4</sup>

... for lists of twelve tribes ... the Old Testament itself provides the nearest examples, since it contains in Gen. xxii, 20-24 a list of twelve Aramaean tribes, in Gen. xxv, 13-16 a list of twelve Ishmaelite tribes, and in Gen. xxxvi, 10-14 one of twelve Edomite tribes, whilst in Gen. xxxvi, 20-28 there is a list of six Horite tribes. The Israelite system of twelve tribes does not therefore by any means represent an isolated phenomenon ... the number is the result of certain established principles such as were customary in tribal societies which were still lacking settled political institutions ... The fact that similar associations of twelve tribes existed in ancient Greece and Italy is more helpful; and of these there are various traditional accounts which indicate that a cult observed in common formed the centre and that the members of these associations used to meet for particular festivals at the central shrine, in fact that certain cults were entirely sustained and administered by such associations of twelve or six tribes ... the members of these associations had to assume responsibility for the upkeep of the common shrine and its worship in a monthly or bi-monthly rota. In Greece such a sacred society was called an amphictyony, a 'community of those who dwell around' (around a particular shrine) ... We are thus concerned with a sacral association of the Israelite tribes, an 'ancient Israelite amphictyony'. 5

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<sup>4</sup>Noth's evidence is based in part upon studies of the Greek sacral leagues by G. Busolt, Griechische Staatskunde (Handb. d. Klas. Altertumswiss., IV, I, 1, 1926), revised by H. Swoboda, pp. 1280ff.

<sup>5</sup>Martin Noth, The History of Israel, 2nd ed., trans. Stanley Godman from 2nd German edition and revised by P.R. Ackroyd (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p. 87f. Cf. Martin Noth, The Laws in the Pentateuch, and other Essays, trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), p. 28.

The amphictyony hypothesis was supported by Albrecht Alt who noted the existence, sometime after the settlement in Palestine, of an alliance of the twelve tribes of Israel in the worship of Yahweh at a central sanctuary. This sacred federation corresponded to the early amphictyonies of Greece and Italy according to Alt. The union of tribes in the worship of Yahweh, with its regularly occurring festivals, was to Alt the means by which Israel was to realize its national consciousness. It did not, in his opinion, encroach upon the individual political life of its participants. It imposed a moral obligation upon the member tribes rather than a political authority.<sup>6</sup>

The chief characteristics of the Graeco-Roman sacral leagues Noth believed were present in the tribal leagues of early Israel. In the period of the Judges, according to Noth, the people of Israel consisted of twelve tribes, united in a sacred covenant, and grouped around a central sanctuary where the tribes offered common worship and from which an amphictyonic law was

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<sup>6</sup>Albrecht Alt, Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, trans. R.A. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), p. 180. Cf. Albrecht Alt, 'Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina' (Reformationsprogramm der Universität Leipzig, 1930) in Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Band II (München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959), p. 8.

promulgated and accepted as binding upon all its members. Thus the unifying element of the Israelite tribes was found in the religious sphere. C. H. J. de Geus expresses Noth's emphasis upon Israel's religious nature:

What made Israel into 'Israel' was her religion ... and religion, certainly in those ancient times, means cult. And if this cult were spread over many (tribal) sanctuaries, then instead of having a uniting 'Israel-forming' effect, it would have had a dividing and centrifugal effect. Thus a perfectly logical chain of reasoning leads Noth to the conclusion that there must have been a central sanctuary ... he finds it at Shechem. <sup>7</sup>

Apart from this sacral confederation, the tribes were independent and autonomous. Israel was not a political entity, and Noth saw Israel's tribal unity centered in a cult.

The essential characteristics of an Israelite amphictyony, based upon a comparison with amphictyonic leagues in ancient Greece and Italy, in Noth's view were:

- (1) an association of self-governing tribes in a six or twelve-member league;
- (2) worship of Yahweh at a central sanctuary;

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<sup>7</sup>C.H.J. de Geus, The Tribes of Israel (Assen/Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp. B. V., 1976), p. 41.

- (3) the acceptance of a divine law which was recited at the tribal gatherings at regular intervals and to which Israel committed itself in constantly renewed acts of affirmation;
- (4) the election of official representatives of the tribes, which group represented the tribes at the federal assemblies.<sup>8</sup>

Noth believed that the sacred Ark probably formed the centre of worship. Also the geographical and religious centre of the ancient Israelite amphictyony was located wherever the Ark was set up. Although Israel's organization resembled that of other amphictyonies, her unique character lay in the worship of Yahweh which was the visible expression of her communal life.<sup>9</sup>

The following discussion deals with the four characteristics of the amphictyony suggested by Noth, along with criticism both in support of, and in opposition to, the hypothesis.

- (a) An association of self-governing tribes.

Noth based his argument on an examination of the lists of the tribes of Israel which he compared with

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<sup>8</sup>Martin Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 87f., 91-97, 101-109.

<sup>9</sup>Noth, p. 97.

the amphictyonic leagues in ancient Greece and Italy, among which were numbered the famous Pylaeon or Delphic amphictyony, which according to Albright may be traced back to at least the eighth century B.C., but which may have been several centuries older.<sup>10</sup> These European leagues consisted of groups of loose political units which worshipped the same deity at a common shrine and acted together in the care and protection of the shrine. The Israelite tribal league also consisted of autonomous groups, in multiples of six or twelve, which were united only by the worship of a common deity in a common cult. Noth suggests that 'the number is the result of certain established principles such as were customary in tribal societies which were still lacking settled political institutions.'<sup>11</sup> The amphictyony hypothesis formulated by Noth rests upon the literary evidence of the twelve-tribe system as it is found principally in (1) the narratives of the births of the sons of Israel (Gen. 29:31-30:24) and in the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:1b-27) which include the tribe of

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<sup>10</sup>William F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), p. 103.

<sup>11</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 87.

Levi, and in which Joseph appears as one tribe;<sup>12</sup> and (2) the great tribal list (Num. 26:5-51) in which Levi is excluded, but Manasseh and Ephraim replace Joseph.<sup>13</sup> When Levi is omitted, the number twelve is maintained by dividing Joseph into Manasseh and Ephraim, and by transferring Gad to the position of Levi (Num. 26:15) in the order of the list.<sup>14</sup> These lists describe tribal prehistory before the settlement in Palestine, and do not reflect the location of the tribes in the land. Hebrew tradition traces each tribe back to one of the sons of Jacob, and the number twelve has remained constant. However, this schema does not imply an amphictyony, but apparently means that this schema is a genealogical list recording descent and relationship. The boundary lists found in Josh. chs. 13-19 are descriptions of the location of the tribes after the settlement in Palestine, and reflect conditions in the period of the Judges (c. 1250-1000 B.C.). Noth maintains that soon after the settlement in Palestine the Israelite tribes were grouped together

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<sup>12</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 85 (cf. Gen. 35:23-26; 46:8-25; Ex. 1:2-4; Deut. 27:12-13; 1 Ch. 2:1-2; Ezek. 48:1-35).

<sup>13</sup>Noth, p. 85 (cf. Num. 1:5-15; 2:3-31; 7:12-83; 10:14-28).

<sup>14</sup>Noth, p. 88f.

as a federation of twelve tribes, united in allegiance to Yahweh.

Noth also points to the existence of a six-tribe system (Gen. 36:20-28) outside Israel, and concludes that the Leah tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun and Issachar once formed a six-tribe association, which was the forerunner and basis of the later twelve-tribe association.<sup>15</sup> The earliest Israelite amphictyony, therefore, consisted of the six Leah tribes, and existed before the arrival of Joshua and 'the house of Joseph'. It was probably at Kadesh Barnea, in his view, that these tribes of Leah were assembled and were the first group to gain a footing in Palestine in the opening phase of the occupation. They appear to have formed a six-tribe amphictyony with Hebron as its centre.<sup>16</sup> The six 'Leah' tribes thus were established in the land prior to the occupation of territory in the central hill country by the 'house of Joseph' under the leadership of Joshua. This southern

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<sup>15</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup>Noth, p. 76f. Cf. A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 100: 'The settlement of the tribes which went to make up Judah took place apparently directly from the south.' Judg. 1:1ff., 16ff.; cf. Caleb's conquest of Hebron in Deut. 1:22ff.; Josh. 14:6ff.; 15:13ff.; Judg. 1:20; and Num. 13-14 presents the tradition probably pointing to a settlement of Hebron by Caleb directly from the south.

group may have been the 'Israel' mentioned in the victory stele of Merneptah (c. 1220 B.C.).<sup>17</sup>

Although there is no direct evidence of these two waves of settlement, Noth does establish the group of six Leah tribes as an historical reality, and connects them with the first wave of entry, and the 'Rachel' tribes with the second. It was this earlier confederacy, according to Noth, which provided the stimulus for the establishment of a larger confederacy to include the Leah and Rachel groups, along with other groups already living in the land.<sup>18</sup>

It is at Shechem, according to Noth, that the Rachel tribes<sup>19</sup> made a covenant with the earlier six-tribe Leah group (Josh. 24), and the alliance expanded to include the twelve members, united in the service of Yahweh who was worshipped as the 'God of

<sup>17</sup>Cf. M. Weippert, The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine, trans. James D. Martin, SBT, Series 2, no. 21 (London: SCM Press, 1971), p. 42.

<sup>18</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup>Noth, p. 86: 'The "Rachel tribes" consist of Joseph and Benjamin in the older and Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin in the later form. The rest of the tribes appear in a third group, which is the least fixed in form. According to Gen. xlix Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali belong to this group whilst in the later form represented by Num. xxvi Dan, Asher, Naphtali appear in this group.'



Israel' at their shrine.<sup>20</sup> Noth holds that Yahweh became the God of the amphictyony under the influence of Joshua and the Rachel tribes.

According to Noth, this so-called amphictyony appears to have been a loosely-structured tribal confederation which recognized the full autonomy of the individual tribes which lived side by side without common leadership. Noth recognizes that the settlement of Palestine by the Israelite tribes was a gradual process over a long period of time, that each tribe occupied its own territory, and that the tribes did not settle in the land at the same time.<sup>21</sup> Also, geographical conditions consisting of mountain ranges separating the plains areas contributed to the isolation of one tribe from another. A system of city-states divided the country into a number of small regions, so that Judah was isolated from the rest of the tribes in the north by the unconquered belt of Canaanite cities which lay between Judah and the north.<sup>22</sup> A further band of unconquered Canaanite city-states in the valley of Jezreel separated the

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<sup>20</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 92.

<sup>21</sup>Noth, p. 69f.

<sup>22</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 101.

tribes in the central hills from those living in the region of Galilee. It was probably not until the time of David that a central authority was established and tribal autonomy was replaced by the monarchy. At first, the clans or tribal units settled in the relatively sparsely populated wooded areas of the hill country where they were free from the outreach of the city-states and of Egyptian sovereignty. Gradually they adopted a sedentary life in a process of peaceful development, and eventually expanded into the plains and valleys which were occupied by the Canaanite cities. Noth states:

... at the time of the Israelite occupation the mountains were as yet in general little occupied by settlements, and only here and there were there isolated towns or groups of towns. Political and economic life took place in the plains and on the high plateaus where communications were comparatively favourable.<sup>23</sup>

Noth emphasized that the tribal league was not a political or a military association, and that the tribes acted independently. He states:

... the individual tribes each had their own particular prehistory and ... their mutual relationships were at best loose and fluid before they entered into a solid and lasting

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<sup>23</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 33.

association with one another on the soil of Palestine under the collective name of Israel ... these tribes had not been self-contained units at all before their occupation of the land, but consisted of clans which did not form themselves into tribes until they began living together in Palestine. 24

Noth concluded that in the absence of any settled political institutions among the Israelite tribes, it was logical to assume the existence of an amphictyony.

Noth's hypothesis that during the period of the Judges the tribes of Israel were united in an association of self-governing tribes (an amphictyony) was accepted by a number of Old Testament scholars. Arguments by some of these scholars who subscribe to the hypothesis are examined in the following chronological order: Albright (1940), Hallo (1960), Bright (1972), and Anderson (1975).

Chief among the supporters of the amphictyony hypothesis was William F. Albright. He wrote:

The social and political system of the new nation was exceedingly simple. Socially it was divided into a number of clan-groups which are known to us as 'tribes' ... The number and identity of these tribes vary somewhat in our lists; in theory there were twelve of them, whose organization went back to Moses and Joshua. Tradition uniformly emphasizes both the religious character of the bond between the tribes and the existence of a central sanctuary

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<sup>24</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 72.

at Shiloh, to which the tribes could send representatives (Josh. 18:1, 21:2, Jud. 21:12, 1 Sam. 1-4, Jer. 7:12 and passim). A. Alt and his pupils have correctly stressed the amphictyonic nature of this system, which has a number of extraordinary close parallels in the Mediterranean basin during the early centuries of the first millenium B.C. 25

Later Albright recognized factors which could contribute to the weakening of the amphictyonic hypothesis. He still maintained that such a federation of tribes would exercise a strong cohesive force to unify the tribes in religion and politics and somewhat also in language and custom. However, he notes, geographical conditions, such as the wedge of Canaanite city-states between the hills of Ephraim and the hills of Galilee, and between Judah and Ephraim, prevented political unity and led to the creation of language,

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<sup>25</sup>William F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 214f. Cf. G.E. Wright and F.V. Filson, Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 44b; Jacob B. Myers, The Book of Judges, IB, 2 (1953), p. 685a.

custom, and political boundaries.<sup>26</sup> In addition, internal problems (the conflict between Yahwism and Baalism) and external threats (the invasion of the Sea Peoples) threatened to disrupt any unity of the Israelite tribes.<sup>27</sup>

Albright also noted that a final blow was struck at the Israelite amphictyony when Shiloh was destroyed and the Ark was left without a central sanctuary.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Salomon Wittmayer Baron, A Social and Religious History of the Jews (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 54f., comments on the geographical features of Palestine: 'From the perennial snow of Hermon to the subtropical regions of the south which never have snow, from the heights of Lebanon to the lowest lying land found anywhere in the world, is but a short distance. The Jordan does not serve, like the Nile, or the Euphrates, as a unifying element, but precipitous and unnavigable, it is a barrier between Transjordan and western Palestine. It has been estimated that not less than forty different climatic and geographic units may be counted within the area of this country ... thus the inhabitants were broken into groups. Hence arose the numerous city states of the El-Amarna age and thereafter the permanent partition of the country among many ethnic groups such as Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines, apart from some Phoenicians and Aramaeans, all of whom shared the tiny area with the Israelites. Hence also the tendency toward tribal divisions among the Israelites themselves.'

<sup>27</sup>William F. Albright, The Biblical Period, reprinted from The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion, ed. Louis Finkelstein (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949. Pittsburg: Presbyterian Board of Colportage of Western Pennsylvania, 1955), p. 18f.

<sup>28</sup>W.F. Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 22.

Shiloh had been regarded by Israel as the central sanctuary of Israel, according to Albright. He notes that the priest Phinehas appears as leader of Israel with his place of worship (sanctuary) at Shiloh (Judg. 21:12), and that Samuel's mother, Hannah, worshipped Yahweh there once a year (1 Sam. 1:3ff.).

Shiloh is stated repeatedly in Joshua to have been the place where the Tabernacle was set up and where the Israelites were assigned their future homes by lot. In Judges 21 it figures as the place where an important annual festival of Yahweh was celebrated. In Samuel we find the Tabernacle and chief magistracy of Israel established there at the beginning of Samuel's career. 29

Albright recognized that Shiloh was not the only sanctuary of Yahweh in the time of the Judges, and that every Israelite town probably had its 'high place' where sacrifices could be offered. However, Judges 21:16ff., he believes, gives evidence of a well-known festival of Yahweh which was celebrated at Shiloh annually.<sup>30</sup>

W. W. Hallo has demonstrated that a twelve-part organization of Sumerian cities serviced the temples at

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<sup>29</sup>W.F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, p. 103.

<sup>30</sup>W.F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, p. 104.

Nippur during the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. 2060-1950 B.C.).<sup>31</sup> However, this system applies only to the servicing of a temple, and not to the amphictyonic concept of common worship at a common sanctuary. De Geus maintains that Hallo's parallel only holds for the Solomonic system of monthly supplies delivered to the court, and does not describe a true amphictyony.<sup>32</sup>

John Bright describes the Israelite amphictyony as a sacral institution based in faith and expressive of faith. Israel, he holds, was a people of faith, whose history is not the history of a twelve-clan league, but the history of the faith of its people. The amphictyony did not create its faith, but faith was constitutive of the amphictyony.<sup>33</sup> Thus Israel is first encountered in Palestine, according to Bright, as an amphictyony within which her sacred traditions and institutions developed and achieved normative form.<sup>34</sup> He further states that Israel's faith had been imparted to her in her desert days, and the antecedents of it

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<sup>31</sup>W.W. Hallo, 'A Sumerian Amphictyony,' Journal of Cuneiform Studies, XIV (1960), pp. 88-114.

<sup>32</sup>C.H.J. de Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 60.

<sup>33</sup>John Bright, A History of Israel, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 128.

<sup>34</sup>John Bright, A History of Israel, p. 128.

reach back to the religion of the patriarchs.

If Israel be a people, specifically the people of a faith, then one must begin one's history with the beginnings of that people, and the beginnings of its religion. One cannot begin with the twelve-clan league in Palestine, unless one is able to demonstrate conclusively that neither people nor faith had existence prior to that time. 35

Bright assumes that the component clans of Israel existed in some form with a common history on the part of at least some of them before their arrival in Palestine.<sup>36</sup> He sees the origins of the amphictyonic system, as well as the origins of faith in Yahweh, in the Sinai event. The community formed at Sinai was not an amphictyony, but smaller family units. At Shechem the amphictyony was normatively constituted in the covenant between the clans and with Yahweh, and was in reality a reaffirmation and extension of the covenant made at Sinai.<sup>37</sup> Israel, then, is first encountered in Palestine as a confederation of twelve tribes, an amphictyony, which took place after the settlement. Bright describes early Israel as:

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<sup>35</sup> John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing (London: SCM Press, 1960), p. 115.

<sup>36</sup> John Bright, Early Israel in Recent History Writing, p. 120.

<sup>37</sup> John Bright, A History of Israel, p. 145.



... neither a racial nor a national unit, but a confederation of clans united in covenant with Yahweh. This covenant both created her society and held it together. Though tribal designations actually assumed a territorial character with the settlement and the absorption of peoples already sedentary, Israel's structure remained in theory tribal. She had no statehood, no central government, no capital city, no administrative machinery. The various tribes enjoyed complete independence of central authority. Tribal society was patriarchal in organization, and without the stratification characteristic of the feudal pattern of Canaan. Though elders of the clans, by virtue of their position, adjudicated disputes in accordance with traditional procedure and were looked up to for the wisdom of their counsel, anything resembling organized government was lacking. The confederation had its focal point at the shrine which housed the Ark of the Covenant, through most of the early period located at Shiloh. There the tribesmen would gather on feast days to seek the presence of Yahweh and renew their allegiance to him, and also to adjust matters of controversy and mutual interest among the clans. 38

B. W. Anderson subscribes to the amphictyony hypothesis, and states:

One of the striking features of 'Israel' was its organization into twelve tribes. In the book of Genesis this structure is read back into the patriarchal period, for the sake of unifying the traditions and making them relevant for the whole people. Thus the patriarch Jacob is renamed Israel after a crucial experience (Gen. 32:28) and he is regarded as the father of twelve sons, each one the leader of a tribe (Gen. 29:16-30:24; 35:16-20). In the two centuries before David (c. 1200 to 1000 B.C.), when the Israelite

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<sup>38</sup>John Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 143-144.

tradition was being formed and transmitted orally, the pattern of twelve was so sacred that if one tribe dropped out, a way was found to fill its place. So, for example, when Levi lost tribal standing, 'the house of Joseph' was split into the two tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48). 39

Israel understood herself as a worshipping community, according to Anderson, and the number twelve signified the totality of Israel bound together in a covenant alliance and assembled on cultic occasions before Yahweh. He points to cultic occasions in which the number twelve signifies the community of tribes: Ex. 24:4 in which Moses set up twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel to seal the covenant made at Mt. Sinai; Josh. 4 in which twelve stones were set up after the people crossed the Jordan. According to Anderson, 'these traditions show that the pattern of twelve belonged fundamentally to Israel's self-understanding as a worshipping community, bound in covenant to the God who had delivered the people from Egyptian bondage.'<sup>40</sup> Anderson sees the Shechem covenant ceremony (Josh. 24) as the inauguration of the

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<sup>39</sup>Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 130.

<sup>40</sup>B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, p. 130.

twelve-tribe confederacy, or amphictyony. Shechem was, for a while, the centre of the amphictyony, but later on Shiloh, where the Ark was kept, became the location of the central sanctuary.<sup>41</sup>

Opposition to Noth's hypothesis has grown since 1960, and arguments directed against the idea of an amphictyonic organization of tribes existing in the period of the Judges are examined in the following chronological order: Kaufmann (1960), Orlinsky (1962), Rahtjen (1965), Campbell (1969), Anderson (1970), R. de Vaux (1971), Mayes (1974), C. H. J. de Geus (1976), Martin (1978), and Lindars (1979).

Noth did present good arguments based on the literary evidence (Gen. 49; 29:31 - 30:24; Num. 26:5-51) for the existence of a twelve-tribe system in the period of the Judges. However, he also realized that the number twelve was not always constant and the twelve-tribe system often was based upon a purely theoretical tradition.

Israel was constituted as a historical entity in the form of an amphictyonic twelve-tribe association; this fact was of basic

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<sup>41</sup>B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, p. 131. Cf. B.W. Anderson, 'The Place of Shechem in the Bible,' in BA, 20 (1 Feb, 1957), pp. 10-19; reprinted in BAR 2, p. 269.

significance for the whole subsequent course of its history. Israel, at any rate, always thought of itself as a community of twelve tribes, and upheld the conception in spite of all later attacks on its external form. To the very end of Israel's history it never became a pure fiction, since there were always descendants of the old tribes to sustain the tradition. On the other hand, however, Israel's organization into twelve tribes later tended to become part of a purely theoretical tradition with no correspondence to the actual facts. To some extent this was the case from the very beginning, since even in the older twelve-tribe system members of the preceding six-tribe system were included though only scattered remnants of them survived. Probably the same thing happened later on with other tribes. Nevertheless, the system, of which the fixed number of twelve was part, continued to be maintained; and the system held together the surviving remnants of tribes under the traditional names. 42

We have seen that William F. Albright noted the geographical barriers which separated Judah and Ephraim and Galilee and restricted the formation of an Israelite political unit. He also saw the invasion of the Sea Peoples as a disrupting influence in any Israelite amphictyony. These factors led to a weakening of inter-tribal relationships.<sup>43</sup> However, it was not until the 1960's that the tide of opinion began to grow against Noth's amphictyony hypothesis.

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<sup>42</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 96.

<sup>43</sup>W.F. Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 18f; cf. A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 100f.

Y. Kaufmann accepted only that the people of Israel were organized as tribes, and he did not see an amphictyonic structure in Israel's early history.

Israel had a political organization before the monarchy, though it is difficult to detect because of its excessively 'spiritual' character. It was a confederation of independent tribes whose unity became visible only under certain conditions ... Authority was vested in two institutions. There was, first, the secular, 'primitive democracy' of the elders. This authority, unlike that of the Greek amphictyony, was not religious in any way; it was not connected with any temple and had no sacral functions. It arose out of the ancient tribal council of elders ...' 44

In 1962, Harry M. Orlinsky claimed that the Israelite tribes 'maintained complete autonomy during the period of the Judges and recognized no central capital or shrine for all Israel.'<sup>45</sup>

... no amphictyonic league ever met at a shrine to decide a course of action or to pick a 'Judge'. One will go through all twenty-one chapters of the book of Judges and fail to find mention of Shiloh, or Shechem, or Bethel, or Ramah, or Beth-shean, or Gilgal, or any other shrine at which a confederacy of two, or six, or twelve, or any number of tribes met as an

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<sup>44</sup>Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg (University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 256f.

<sup>45</sup>Harry M. Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel and Related Groups in the Period of the Judges,' in Essays in Biblical Culture and Bible Translation (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1974), p. 68.

amphictyony. This is an outstanding anomalous phenomenon in the midst of an allegedly existing amphictyony, or of several smaller amphictyonies. Thus Shechem is mentioned but once in the entire book of Judges, in chapter 9, and it would have gone unmentioned altogether had not its Israelite inhabitants set up there a shrine to the non-Israelite -- or perhaps in this region and period, semi-Israelite -- god Baal-berith, and had not Abimelech, one of the many offspring of Gideon, tried to become ruler of the area. Nothing amphictyonic appears in the entire chapter of fifty-seven verses. 46

The absence of evidence of an Israelite amphictyony in the book of Judges, which deals with the period in which such a structure is argued to have existed, is compelling evidence against the hypothesis.

Orlinsky further claims that the city-states of Phoenicia, of the Philistines, and of the Aramean states north and east of Israel, did not constitute amphictyonies either.

The accepted idea of the political organization of the Philistines as given in the Bible -- a league of five city-states -- whose capital apparently changed on a rota basis from city to city -- should be treated with caution, in the

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<sup>46</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' pp. 70-71.

absence of any corroboratory evidence ... no Philistine written archives have yet been found. 47

These places, Orlinsky holds, give evidence of no one powerful king, but consist of coalitions of petty kings and sheikhs. He concluded that the exhaustive investigation of the Transjordan by Nelson Glueck<sup>48</sup> has not discovered any evidence of a centrally organized government in that area during the period of the Judges, and which would influence Israel in the establishment of an amphictyonic structure.

There is no evidence available at the present time, according to Orlinsky, to indicate that the relatively small and independent groups of Ammonites, Midianites, Israelites, Moabites, in the Transjordan area consisted of anything amphictyonic that would provide a model for an Israelite amphictyony. Orlinsky suggests that the picture of Edom given in Gen. 36:31-39, which gives a list of 'kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king of the Israelite

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<sup>47</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 75. Albrecht Goetze, 'Mesopotamian Laws and the Historian,' JAOS, 69 (1949), pp. 115-120, has argued that the area of Mesopotamia in the 12th century had no one powerful king, but consisted of coalitions of petty kings and sheiks.

<sup>48</sup>Nelson Glueck, 'Explorations in Eastern Palestine, III,' AASOR, 18-19 (1939), pp. 82-97.

reigned', does not point to a dynasty or anything approximating centralized rule of monarchy.

On the contrary, the picture of Edom given here, in the period prior to King Saul (or, rather, David and Solomon), is exactly that of Israel itself during the period of the Judges, prior to the rise of centralized authority under the monarchy - one of petty chieftains, local military leaders, some of the rulers not unlikely ruling contemporaneously in different regions of the land. The fact that the biblical text refers to Edom's chieftains as melakim should not impel the reader to jump to the conclusion that "king" in the classical sense is meant, any more than biblical shophetim in the book of Judges means "judges" in the classical sense. 49

Archaeological and literary evidence is lacking, in Orlinsky's opinion, to prove the existence of amphictyonic structures in Israel or in the neighbouring cultures.

In 1965, Bruce Donald Rahtjen pointed out that the Philistine league of cities fits the classical pattern of the amphictyony much better than did the Israelite league of tribes. It (the Philistine league) consisted of a league of five cities (Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza) which were independent, but did cooperate in the event of a common external danger. Thus it is parallel to the Graeco-Italian amphictyonies

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<sup>49</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 73f.



which consist of cities and never of tribes, and appears in this sense to disqualify Israel as an amphictyony modelled on the European amphictyonic structure.<sup>50</sup> Also, the Greek and the Philistine central shrine, according to Rahtjen, was a temple, whereas the Israelite center of cultic activity was wherever the Ark of the Covenant was located. The Ark was mobile, and the central shrine was moved several times, unlike the temple which was a permanent central sanctuary.<sup>51</sup> Rahtjen also pointed out that although the Delphic league (organized around the temple of Demeter at Amphela near Thermopylae) consisted of twelve members, others had odd numbers of members (the Calaurian league had seven members; the Boeotian league is variously reported as having ten, eleven, and twelve members). Thus the numbers six and twelve associated with the Israelite tribal-league can not be tied conclusively to the Greek and Italian models, and the relationship is coincidental in Rahtjen's view. He also says that the tenuous relationship between the two models (Israelite and European) can tell us nothing about the relationship of the numbers six and twelve to

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<sup>50</sup>Bruce Donald Rahtjen, 'Philistine and Hebrew Amphictyonies,' *JNES*, 24 (1965), p. 100.

<sup>51</sup>Rahtjen, p. 102.

the organization or history of the Israelite tribes.<sup>52</sup> Rahtjen has shown that the hypothesis of an Israelite amphictyony existing in the period of the Judges is based upon conjecture and coincidence.

Edward F. Campbell, on the other hand, had deduced from the list of tribes in the form of genealogies found in the book of Genesis (Gen. 22:20-24; 25:2, 12-16; 36:10-14, 20-30) that there existed groups of clans and tribes, very often six or twelve in number which had some relation to a shrine.<sup>53</sup> These West Semitic tribal structures, Campbell believes, can be linked to Israelite tribal structure by a similar terminology in the tribal lists which point to a similarity of organization.

The terminology in these tribal lists points ... to a similarity of organization. In Genesis 25:16, for example, appear these words: 'These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, in their villages and in their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribal units.' The term prince here is the exceedingly common designation in the Priestly tradition's description of the religious organization for the heads of the Israelite

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<sup>52</sup>Rahtjen, 'Philistine and Hebrew Amphictyonies,' p. 104.

<sup>53</sup>Edward F. Campbell, Jr. and G. Ernest Wright, 'Tribal League Shrines in Ammon and Shechem,' BA, 32, No. 4 (1969), p. 113.

tribes. Here as in many other instances, the Priestly tradition is probably employing terminology with a long tradition behind it.<sup>54</sup>

Campbell argues that the old terminology from the time of the Israelite tribal-league is also the terminology of the old lists of related tribal groups in the area east of the Jordan (e.g. the term alluph used to designate Edomite chiefs in Genesis 36:15-30 and in other passages may be related to the word eleph designating a clan and then a military unit, thus indicating a conceptual connection between Israel and Edom). His argument, however, is weakened by his own admission that evidence is lacking concerning the area and its population, and evidence so far has revealed only a sparsely settled area consisting of semi-nomadic peoples without permanent settlement.<sup>55</sup> The evidence for tribal confederacies existing in the Transjordan area is mainly literary and is indirect, and it is difficult to locate central sanctuaries in that area.

George W. Anderson points out that there is no Hebrew expression corresponding to the word 'amphictyony'. He states:

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<sup>54</sup>Campbell and Wright, 'Tribal League Shrines,' p. 114.

<sup>55</sup>Campbell and Wright, p. 115f.

It is, of course, possible to have the reality without the name. But when we consider the range of words describing family, social, and national groups in the Old Testament, it would indeed be strange if an institution allegedly so fundamental to the early constitution of Israel was in fact anonymous, or else had a name which is now lost without a trace. It might, indeed, be claimed that the word 'Israel' itself is the required term. Against this suggestion Fohrer has objected that a name compounded with 'El' and not 'Yahweh' is a quite inappropriate label for a confederacy whose chief bond of union was the worship of Yahweh. 56

Roland de Vaux maintains that there is not the slightest evidence of a Philistine amphictyony with Ashdod as the site of a permanent central sanctuary.<sup>57</sup> He also argues that the parallel which has been proposed between the grouping of the tribes of Israel and the Greek amphictyonies is not justified. The number twelve, he maintains, is not a significant argument for the existence of an Israelite amphictyony, as amphictyonies with a different number of members are known to have existed. It is impossible to prove the existence of a central sanctuary, nor is there found a council of tribal delegates. On the contrary, de Vaux

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<sup>56</sup> G.W. Anderson, 'Israel: Amphictyony: 'AM; KĀHĀL; 'ĒDĀH,' p. 142.

<sup>57</sup> Roland de Vaux, 'La Thèse de l'"Amphictyonie Israélite", Harvard Theological Review, 64 (1971), pp. 415-436, p. 421.

finds evidence of a number of sanctuaries. In addition there is no historical example of a concerted action by all the tribes. The individual tribes follow the common laws and customs of all the tribes, but this in itself does not constitute an amphictyonic rite. Even if it could be proven that a Judge of Israel existed who proclaimed the divine law at the central sanctuary, this remains a function unknown to the Greek amphictyonies. All in all, de Vaux maintains that the word 'amphictyony' in connection with Israel creates a false impression of relations between the Israelite tribes, and in his view, the term ought to be abandoned.<sup>58</sup>

A. D. H. Mayes in his examination of the tribal lists holds that Gen. 29:31-30:24 and 49:3-27 in which Levi is included is probably a later list than Num. 1:5-15 and 26:5-51 in which Levi is omitted. He maintains that the tribal name Joseph, included in the later tribal lists, is a collective designation of the brother tribes Ephraim and Manasseh, and that the later tribal lists (Gen. 29:31 - 30:24) presuppose the existence of the two tribes.<sup>59</sup> Num. 1:5-15, he

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<sup>58</sup>De Vaux, 'La Thèse de l'"Amphictyonie Israélite"', p. 436.

<sup>59</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 30.

believes, represents the original tribal list from which are derived later lists which do not include Levi. Also this earlier list included the tribes of Manasseh and Gad, and he concludes that these two tribes come from a time after the events recorded in the Song of Deborah which do not mention these tribal names.<sup>60</sup>

Mayes reconstructs the tribal system to account for the appearance of Ephraim and Machir as independent tribes in the Song of Deborah and to account for the absence of Manasseh. In Num. 26:29, 27:1, Machir is listed as the son of Manasseh and the father of Gilead, occupying the territory in east Jordan. In the Song of Deborah, Gilead is represented as independent of Machir who is living in west Jordan. It is only after the events presented in the Song of Deborah that Machir is designated as the father of Gilead and the son of Manasseh. Mayes suggests that the tribe of Ephraim was forced north, into territory occupied by Machir, by the Philistine encroachment into the interior. Most of Machir in turn migrated to the east Jordan area. Those left behind, remnants of the tribe of Machir and new elements of the tribe of Ephraim, formed a new tribe

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<sup>60</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 31.

which was called Manasseh. Later, according to Mayes, Ephraim and Manasseh were genealogically related as brothers, sons of Joseph. Manasseh, which became a more significant tribe than Machir, was made the father of Machir.<sup>61</sup>

Gilead, which is normally the name of a district, is probably a reference to a tribe in the Song of Deborah. Gad is not mentioned in the Song, and probably did not exist then as a tribe. Gilead also appears independently of Machir, as Machir had not yet migrated to the east of the Jordan. As Ephraim and Machir are listed in the Song of Deborah as independent tribes, not associated as brothers, and the name of Manasseh is omitted, the tribal lists in Gen. 49 and Num. 1:5-15 must come after the events described in the Song of Deborah. Mayes concludes:

... if an amphictyony ever existed, that is, if there ever was such a federation of Israelite tribes corresponding to either or both of the groups of lists, arranged in the way which Noth has described, it must have existed in the period between the battle against Sisera and the rise of the monarchy. However, this is only the case if the proposed Israelite amphictyony must correspond to the lists of tribes. 62

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<sup>61</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 29.

<sup>62</sup>Mayes, p. 31.

Mayes believes that the number of tribes given in the lists is not in itself sufficient reason for assuming or for denying the existence of an Israelite amphictyony.<sup>63</sup>

It would seem, then, that the full number of twelve tribes was not attained until just prior to or at the beginning of the establishment of the monarchy. However, the component groups are doubtless of earlier date. The fact that some tribes had ceased to exist (Reuben, Simeon, Gilead) by the time of David, points to the fact that some forms of the tribal system predate the monarchy. None of the lists of tribal systems are accompanied by any reference to the characteristics and activities of amphictyonies.

C. H. J. de Geus also goes beyond an examination of the outward form of the amphictyony and deals directly with Noth's basic thesis of the twelve-tribe Israelite league found in Gen. 29:31-30:24; 35:23-26; 46:8-25; 49:3-27; Ex. 1:2-4; Deut. 27:12-14; Ezra 48:31-35; and 1 Ch. 2:2, which contain the tribes of Levi and Joseph; and the lists in which Levi and Joseph are omitted and Ephraim and Manasseh are added found in Num. 1:5-15, 20-43; 2:3-31; 7:12-83; 13:4-15; 26:5-51; Josh. 13-19;

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<sup>63</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 34.



21:4-7, 9-39. Noth considered the splitting of the tribe of Joseph into the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh as a basic principle to his twelve-tribe hypothesis.

The most important descriptions of the tribal boundaries are found in Joshua 15-17. Josh. 16:1-3 begins a description of a theoretical unit 'Joseph' and develops the process of the division of Joseph into Ephraim and Manasseh.<sup>64</sup> De Geus believes that the mention of the Josephites in Josh. 16:1-3 is a later addition and that the original boundary description only counted independent tribes. He maintains that the places where the tribe of Joseph is mentioned date from the time of the monarchy, and the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are found in the earlier texts.<sup>65</sup> Therefore texts containing mention of Ephraim and Manasseh are older than those in which Joseph and Levi are mentioned. He claims that a secular tribe of Levi never existed, and hence a system of twelve equal tribes could not have existed. Levi was included in a later list, along with Joseph. According to de Geus, "Joseph" is not a real tribal name, but a

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<sup>64</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 59.

<sup>65</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 83.

comprehensive indication of the real tribes Ephraim and Manasseh. The whole formulation of the verses 16-18 (Joshua ch. 17), for that matter, with the expression "sons of Joseph/Josephites" seems fairly late.<sup>66</sup> This later list, according to de Geus, was not a system of tribes, but a genealogical system,<sup>67</sup> a list of eponyms, which came into existence after the fall of the northern state in c. 722 B.C. in an attempt to restore the Davidic line and rule.

... giving the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh the collective name of 'Joseph' is not ancient, but on the contrary late. Joseph is not at the beginning of a chain of development, but at the end! ... The territory of Ephraim seems to have 'lain fallow' until a fairly late period. We know that Ephraim is one of the youngest tribes, if not the very youngest. At any rate it is a tribe which was only constituted in the settled country and took its name from the har 'efrayim. Ephraim was an extremely militant, aggressive and expansionist tribe. This is touched upon in various places in the Book of Judges (8:1-3; 12:1-6; chs.

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<sup>66</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 82.

<sup>67</sup>Siegfried Hermann, A History of Israel in Old Testament Times, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 148. Hermann sees the twelve-tribe system as an attempt by the Davidic-Solomonic state to give a genealogical basis to the political unity then in existence. Under David a national theology or ideology was developed in Jerusalem, according to Hermann, to support the rule of the house of David. This was accomplished by assigning a common historical experience to all Israel, and by giving a genealogical basis to the political unity.

9-21). The settlement and rise of Ephraim seems to have been partly at the expense of other Israelite tribes, particularly Manasseh ... and Benjamin. The process of Ephraim's rise can be followed since the Song of Deborah, where Ephraim is named beside the far older Machir ... 68

Ephraim eventually became the most powerful tribe in the north as is evidenced by the later usage of calling the whole northern kingdom Ephraim. Later the order of tribes was reversed from Manasseh-Ephraim, and, according to de Geus, 16:1-3, referring to the Josephites, was placed at the beginning of the tribal list to claim the unity of the whole region.

Also the list in Josh. ch. 15 used for Judah, de Geus argues, 'does not go back to the time of the Judges, but clearly presupposes the kingdom of Judah.'<sup>69</sup> It is an attempt, he maintains, to claim the unity of the whole territory by describing not the tribe of Judah but the state of Judah. Thus it seems improbable that the boundaries described here can be regarded as those of an older southern amphictyony. De Geus maintains that,

... it is not only Judah's presence in the system which is doubtful, but also that of Dan.

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<sup>68</sup> De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 79.

<sup>69</sup> De Geus, p. 84.

Dan's former territory seems to have been divided among Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim, while the system attempts, in a very artificial manner, yet to leave a region open for Dan ... Whether the system of tribal boundaries also contained a description of the regions in Transjordan is very problematic ... No description of Issachar is given either. One may therefore conclude that the ancient document gave a description of the internal boundaries of the following six tribes in Central Palestine: Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali. Together with the towns or regions in Transjordan, this region is not very different from the 'Israel' which remains true to Ishbosheth in 2 Sam. 2:9 ... The enumeration of just these tribes therefore forms a very strong indication that the original system of boundary descriptions does indeed date from the later period of the Judges ... With this dating in the background, one can be fairly certain that the addition of the 'boundary description' of Judah together with the note about the Josephites presupposes the situation after the splitting up into two states. 70

It is the opinion of de Geus that the expression 'house of Joseph' first appears in the early monarchy.<sup>71</sup> He suggests that 'Joseph' is not a real tribal name, but a comprehensive indication of the tribes Ephraim and Manasseh, and that the expression 'sons of Joseph' is

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<sup>70</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 81.

<sup>71</sup>De Geus, p. 95.

late.<sup>72</sup> He notes that the expression 'house of Joseph' first appears in the early time of the Kings, and the Old Testament 'gives no occasion to think there was an ancient independent tribe of Joseph. Everywhere it could be shown that mention of a tribe of Joseph was either late, or secondary. The earliest traditions have only Ephraim and Manasseh.' De Geus concludes that a system of tribes containing Joseph can not be very old and can not date from the time of the Judges. He also points out that the list which includes Ephraim and Manasseh is younger than the Song of Deborah, as the Song includes Gilead and not Gad, as well as the ancient tribe of Machir.<sup>73</sup>

If the conclusions reached by de Geus are accepted, it seems quite probable that both tribal systems described by Noth are late, and probably represent an idealization of tribal unity which was accomplished only during the monarchy. The Song of Deborah possibly represents the heightening

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<sup>72</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 95. Also see pp. 82-94 for his examination of Josh. 17:14-18, 18:5, 24:32; Num. 27:1, 34:23, 36:1, 5, 12; Deut. 27:11-13; Judg. 1:22, 35; 2 Sam. 19:21; 1 Kings 11:28; Ezek. 37:16, 19, 47:13, 48:32; 1 Chron. 1-9; the blessing of Jacob and the blessing of Moses, Gen. 49:22-26 and Deut. 33:13-16; Amos 5:5, 15, 6:6; Obad. 1:18; Zech. 10:6; Pss. 77:16, 78:67-69, 80:2-3, 81:6, 105:17.

<sup>73</sup>De Geus, p. 111.

consciousness of tribal unity which saw its fruition under Saul and David.

B. Lindars states that 'if there was a tribal confederacy at this period, it was not identical with any form of it that can be deduced from the tribal lists on which Noth's theory was based.'<sup>74</sup> He believes that the number twelve can not be taken back earlier than the time of David. Lindars notes that Noth did not accept the list in Judg. 5 as having any bearing on the twelve-tribe system, on the grounds that the Song lists only participants in the battle, and also that the tribal designations are geographical rather than ethnic. Lindars does not disagree with Noth's argument, but notices that Noth's observations point out that a genealogical system of the tribes had not been constructed at this stage.<sup>75</sup>

If the unification of Israel was mainly brought about by the need to band together against the strength of the Philistines, there is no need to assume the interposition of a tribal confederacy. In such circumstances the movement towards tribal unity is likely to pass directly from local leadership to kingship. It is thus doubtful if it is appropriate to speak

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<sup>74</sup>Barnabas Lindars, 'The Israelite Tribes in Judges,' VTS, 30 (1979), p. 99.

<sup>75</sup>Lindars, p. 103. Cf. de Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 111.

of a confederacy of the tribes at all, implying some kind of military league, quite apart from the difficulty of identifying a group of twelve (or six) tribes as a coherent unit in this period. It thus begins to look as if the tribal lists are the result of a rationalization of a more complex and confused state of affairs, worked out subsequently. So far as they have an historical basis at all, this would seem to be derived from the tribal positions which obtained when Israel settled down under David, after the Philistines had been suppressed and the lingering allegiance to the house of Saul was ended. 76

Thus, Lindars finds no evidence which would enable us to trace the lists of twelve tribes to an earlier period. The numbers ten and twelve which were used as numbers denoting wholeness in the ancient Near East were, according to Lindars, used in Israel to represent the totality of tribes rather than a specific number of tribes. 'The sanctuaries at Gilgal and Shechem had twelve stones, and cultic use of them to represent tribal participants may have helped to fix twelve as the "complete" number of Israelite tribes.'<sup>77</sup>

In the Song of Deborah there is a unity probably based upon the consciousness of belonging to Israel. There is no evidence that the clans are ethnically related, but the designation 'Israel' seems to be

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<sup>76</sup>Lindars, 'The Israelite Tribes in Judges,' p. 100.

<sup>77</sup>Lindars, p. 100.

universally accepted as their collective description.<sup>78</sup>

A. D. H. Mayes states that the only way to define an Israelite tribe, as described in the Song of Deborah, is that they were 'the people of Yahweh.' They acknowledged Yahweh as their God, and waged battle against the Canaanite forces on behalf of Yahweh.<sup>79</sup>

Lindars also sees the particular tribes drawn together in mutual help without an institutional organization.

Their common religion does not include cultic gatherings of all the tribes at a central sanctuary, nor does it impose mutual obligations based on an amphictyonic theory.<sup>80</sup> Mayes believes that it is at Kadesh that there can be found the origins of Israel's unity as the people of Yahweh. There they came into existence and acknowledged Yahweh as their God, and from there they entered the land of Canaan, one part from the south and settled around Hebron, and another entered from the Transjordan opposite Jericho. Judah and Simeon, according to Mayes, are as much the people of Yahweh as were the tribes in the north. It was impossible for them to participate in the battle

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<sup>78</sup>Lindars, 'The Israelite Tribes in Judges,' p. 110.

<sup>79</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 99.

<sup>80</sup>Lindars, 'The Israelite Tribes in Judges,' p. 111.



against Sisera because of the barriers (geographical and military) separating them from the northern tribes. Despite separation between the north and the south, Mayes believes that Judah could have shared in a common faith with the other tribes. After the battle against Sisera 'the now extended people of Yahweh was defined in clearer terms, in the form of the descendants of twelve brothers, the sons of the patriarch Jacob. This is a reflection, not of an amphictyonic organization of twelve tribes, but of a community all of whose members acknowledged Yahweh as their God, and whose unity had been founded at Kadesh.'<sup>81</sup> When David established his capital at Jerusalem to unite north and south, he established the Yahwistic tradition which must have been as much the heritage of Judah as it was the heritage of the northern tribes.<sup>82</sup> It is only at this period of history that the unity of all the tribes found active and concrete expression in worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

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<sup>81</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 109.

<sup>82</sup>Mayes, p. 107.

(b) Worship of Yahweh at a central sanctuary.

Noth maintained that the essential feature of the Israelite amphictyony was the central sanctuary which was the central place of worship. The focal point of the central sanctuary was the shrine housing the Ark of the Covenant. The sacred Ark probably was set up there, and common worship 'before Yahweh' (i.e. before the Ark as the place of God's presence, cf. Judg. 20:26f.) was offered as the visible expression of Israel's communal life.<sup>83</sup> Shechem was, according to Noth, probably the first location of the amphictyonic centre, and for a time Israel's amphictyonic worship was performed there, although there is no evidence that the Ark was located there.<sup>84</sup> Later Bethel (Judg. 20:26-28; cf. 20:18; 21:2) assumed the role of the central sanctuary. Josh. chs. 4 and 5 appear to place the tribal center at Gilgal, but it is not certain that the Ark was located there. The Ark is finally located at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:3; 3:3; cf. Jer. 7:14; 26:9), and here the tribes assembled for religious festivals.

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<sup>83</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 97. Cf. Num. 10:35-36; Jer. 3:16f. which indicates that the Ark was thought of as the throne of the invisible deity.

<sup>84</sup>Noth, p. 93.

The Ark probably was a travelling shrine of wandering clans (cf. Num. 12:35f.) and a portable sanctuary (cf. Ex. 15:10ff; 37:1ff.) until it became a common cult object of the association of twelve tribes. Then it was set up in one place for a prolonged period as a central place of worship. However, it apparently had no permanent resting place, as is evident from the various locations of the Ark from time to time.

John Bright supports the identification of the sacred Ark with the central sanctuary:

... because the Tabernacle is scarcely mentioned through the period of the Judges, it was once commonly assumed that Israel had no central cult at that time. This is certainly erroneous. Not only were great pilgrim shrines the rule in most ancient Oriental countries, but Israel's amphictyonic organization -- as was true of similar organizations elsewhere -- required a focal point at a central sanctuary. Though worship at other places was not excluded, the shrine of the Ark was the official shrine of the tribal league and the heart of its corporate life. 85

Noth acknowledges that other local shrines in which local cults flourished existed, but for Israel as a whole only the worship at the central shrine was official. Details of this worship are not forthcoming.

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<sup>85</sup>Bright, A History of Israel, p. 147.

It may be assumed that it included regular offering of sacrifices at particular times, made in the name of the whole of Israel, and the holding of pilgrim festivals probably at least once a year. The old ordinances that 'three times in the year all thy males shall see the face of Yahweh' (Exod. xxiii, 17; xxxiv, 23) can only refer to the local shrines throughout the country and to the three agricultural festivals which were celebrated at these shrines, as it would have been impracticable to carry it out at the central shrine. When, on the other hand, we hear in 1 Sam. i, 3ff. that Elkanah, the father of Samuel, went with his family to Shiloh 'year by year' (verse 7) 'to worship and to sacrifice there in the house of Yahweh' it may have been an annual amphictyonic festival at which all the tribes had to be represented officially, but to which many other Israelites came as well, especially if the central shrine was as accessible for them as it was for the Ephraimite Elkanah. 86

John Bright holds that at the heart of the cultic life was the celebration of annual feasts which became the occasions upon which Yahweh's mighty acts on behalf of Israel were celebrated (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:18-24; cf. Lev. 23:1-44; Deut. 16:1-17; Passover-Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Ingathering). Thus Israel gave to ancient annual agricultural festivals a new rationale by imparting to them a historical content (Exodus, the Law given at Sinai, and the Wilderness Wanderings).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 97-98.

<sup>87</sup>Bright, A History of Israel, p. 149. Cf. Noth, p. 144.

Historically, according to Noth, the formation of the twelve-tribe confederacy is to be found in the assembly at Shechem (Josh. 24) where the league of six tribes known as Leah combined with the house of Joseph and other elements to form a twelve-tribe system. He held that a central sanctuary was a vital element in an amphictyony. There the representatives of the various tribes assembled and the amphictyonic law was promulgated. The central sanctuary was the place in which the Ark was located, where the amphictyonic representatives met, and where cultic and moral stipulations found in the Book of the Covenant were reaffirmed.<sup>88</sup> Mayes states that a central sanctuary must fulfil three requirements: (1) the Ark is lodged there; (2) it is visited regularly by the tribes or their representatives; and (3) a covenant renewal festival is celebrated there.<sup>89</sup>

Although the true central sanctuary was the place where the Ark was located according to Noth, there is no evidence that the Ark was located at one sanctuary during the entire period of the Judges. Orlinsky points out that Shechem itself is mentioned in Judges

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<sup>88</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 93f., 98, 104f.

<sup>89</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 35.

chapter 9 with reference only to the attempt by Abimelech to rule over the area. The site is not in any way described as an amphictyonic center. No mention is given of the Ark located there, not even in Josh. 24.<sup>90</sup> The Ark is variously located at Gilgal (Josh. 3-4; 7:6), at Bethel (Judg. 20:27-28), and at Shiloh (1 Sam. 3-4; cf. Josh. 18:1; Judg. 18:31; Jer. 7:12). However, these texts can not be used to support the theory of the Israelite amphictyony.<sup>91</sup> The Ark is referred to in Judg. 20:27 as simply located in Bethel. There the Israelites inquired of God which tribe should lead them into battle against Benjamin. However, the tribes involved had first gathered to take counsel against the Benjaminites at Mizpah. If the shrine at which the Ark was housed formed the focal and assembly point of the amphictyony, it is significant that the tribes met at Mizpah.<sup>92</sup>

Bethel is the location of an altar at which sacrifices are offered (Judg. 21:2-4) as well as the place at which the Ark is lodged. The importance of this site seems to be attested by these references.

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<sup>90</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 71.

<sup>91</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 53.

<sup>92</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 71.

However, there is no tradition which points to Bethel as a central sanctuary acknowledged and visited by all the Israelite tribes. Also, no covenant festival is recorded as having been celebrated there.<sup>93</sup>

Gilgal was certainly a sanctuary, and there is evidence that Yahweh was worshipped there in the form of a festival (Josh. 6:10-12, the Passover).<sup>94</sup> Gilgal is the only place which seems to comply with the features of a central sanctuary. However, 1 Sam. 7:15-17 says that Samuel made a yearly circuit to three important sanctuaries, Bethel, Mizpah, and Gilgal. De Geus holds that each of these three sanctuaries held its own special great festival, and so Gilgal was not an exclusive sanctuary. He comments on the three sanctuaries in Benjamin and Ephraim, Behtel, Mizpah and Gilgal:

There is every reason to suppose that these three sanctuaries correspond to the three 'high feasts' of ancient Israel. Each sanctuary had its own special great festival. As there were many more temples or sanctuaries in the rest of Israel at this time, it is to be presumed that there were more of such 'triads'. In any case one may not deduce from Exod. 23:14-19 that the Israelite was called upon to go up three times a year to one and the same central sanctuary.

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<sup>93</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 46.

<sup>94</sup>Mayes, p. 49.

No doubt a number of famous sanctuaries, such as those on Mount Gerizim and Mount Tabor, at Gilgal, Bethel or Beersheba, will have attracted great numbers of pilgrims every year. 95

He concludes that there existed many famous sanctuaries at which pilgrims gathered, as one would attend an annual occasion such as a fair.

Shiloh became the place at which the Ark was lodged toward the end of the period of the Judges. It was taken into battle against the Philistines (c. 1150 B.C.) and captured (1 Sam. 4:1-11). Nothing dealing with Shiloh, however, supports the theory that a national or covenant festival was held there.<sup>96</sup>

Josh. 24 gives evidence of a central sanctuary, but not of the Ark; Bethel has the Ark lodged there, but it is not the place at which the tribes gather, and was not the one sanctuary esteemed more important than others, as is evidenced by the recognition of Mizpah as an important sanctuary at the same time; Shiloh had the Ark but there is no evidence that the place held a central position, as, for example, the people gathered at Ebenezer (1 Sam. 4:1), and only subsequently sent for the Ark from Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:3-4). Orlinsky also

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<sup>95</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 199.

<sup>96</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 53.



notes that the ark is not mentioned in the Song of Deborah. Also, the entire book of Judges makes no mention of a shrine at which any number of tribes met as an amphictyony.<sup>97</sup> De Geus notes that neither the central sanctuary nor a central cult is mentioned in the entire book of the Covenant. The obligations in Ex. 23:14-19 requiring observance of the three high feasts three times in the year make no mention of a visit three times a year to one and the same central sanctuary.<sup>98</sup>

If there existed a multiplicity of sanctuaries at which Yahweh was worshipped, and if the presence of the Ark guaranteed not only the existence of the central sanctuary but also the presence of Yahweh, it seems probable that the Ark would have to travel from sanctuary to sanctuary to give legitimacy to the festival being celebrated there. In other words, if the Ark constitutes the sanctuary, it would of necessity have to be mobile, moving from one sanctuary to another. Hence the Ark must be a mobile sanctuary rather than a permanent central sanctuary. It appears that the Ark itself was sacred, and it did not make its

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<sup>97</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 70.

<sup>98</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 199.

home at all special.<sup>99</sup> None of the Israelite sanctuaries appear to be a common central sanctuary, nor do they in any way correspond to the amphictyonic shrines at Delphi and Pylae.<sup>100</sup> Orlinsky believes that the early Israelite conception of God was incompatible with the exclusive centralization of worship at a central shrine. He notes that the deity was not localized in the period of the Patriarchs, and that covenants were made and renewed in several different places. This created a number of shrines throughout the land in which God was worshipped. Shrines were found in practically every populated site, and this condition continued in the period of the Judges. Orlinsky also maintains that even Josiah's reformation (c. 621 B.C.) failed to destroy the numerous independent shrines found all over the country.<sup>101</sup>

The Song of Deborah makes no mention of a site at which a sanctuary may have existed. V. 11b 'Then down to the gates came the people of the Lord' refers to the place of local muster, the city gates of the individual Israelite settlements, the assembly point for social

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<sup>99</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 200.

<sup>100</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 54.

<sup>101</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 76.

and legal matters, and in this text appears to be the place for muster of the peasant army prior to assembly for battle. The prose account (Judg. 4:5) mentions a site where Deborah the prophetess 'used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim.' This is the only reference to sites which may have housed sanctuaries.

Judges 2:1-5 describes a movement of the Israelites from Gilgal to Bochim, and the establishment of a sanctuary there. If this is not Bethel, but a site somewhere south of that place, it may be a reference to Mizpah which is located between Bethel and Ramah. Mizpah is referred to as an assembly point for the tribes in Judg. 20:1 (cf. Judg. 21:1-5) and in 1 Sam. 7:5, 7, 12, 16, 17. Josh. 15:38 mentions Mizpah as a city allotted to Judah, and in Josh. 18:26 as a city of the tribe of Benjamin, located between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Joseph.

Whether the place where Deborah 'judged' is Mizpah or any other place, it seems possible that she 'sat' at a local sanctuary. From this sanctuary in the hill country of Ephraim, she, with Barak from Kadesh Naphtali, formed an alliance of the southern tribes with the northern tribes to wage a battle against the forces of Sisera. The hill country of Ephraim is the

natural center of the land and a suitable place from which to conduct a 'judgeship'.

We know of yet another Judge of Israel who came from Issachar, namely Tola. His place of residency and action according to Judges 10:1 lay not in the region of his native tribe, but 'he lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim.' That corresponds entirely to 'she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim' in Judges 4:5. Here as there, a descendant of Issachar performed a judicial function in the hill country of Ephraim. 102

The prose account of the battle against Sisera mentions another possible cultic site. Judg. 4:9b-10a reads: 'Then Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh ...' Excavations of Tel Kedesh (Tell Abu Qudeis) by E. Stern in 1968 led to the discovery of a level from the 12th century B.C. Here was found a cultic place with an altar, which Stern identified with the Kedesh mentioned in Judges 4:11 as the dwelling place of Heber the Kenite, and as the locality linked with the battle near Taanach. Tel Kedesh is situated almost midway between Taanach and Megiddo in the

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<sup>102</sup> Rudolf Smend, Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation, trans. Max G. Rogers (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 58.

Jezreel Valley.<sup>103</sup>

Strata IV-VII. The next four strata all belong to the Israelite period. These strata were well preserved for the most part, with walls and floors lined with stones, clay, or ground chalk. The most important building was a large structure in stratum IV, which was only partly exposed in the excavated area. It contained one long chamber with an entrance that led to a stone-flagged courtyard. Inside the chamber were a number of jar bases stuck in the floor, and adjacent to them was a limestone incense altar with four horns. These finds led the excavator to conclude that the building served as a cult place ... Careful examination of the ceramic remains showed that the earliest stratum (VII) belonged to the first half of the twelfth century B.C. 104

B. Mazar has concluded that Hobab the Kenite was the eponym of a clan which not only was involved in the craft of the smith but was connected with the function of worship, first in Negeb Arad in the territory of Judah.

Hobab entered into a family relationship with Moses, attached his clan to the Israelites, guided them through the wilderness, and finally, through his descendants, attained land inheritance within Judah in Negeb Arad. The passage of Hobab the Kenite was included in Judges 1 for no reason other than to emphasize the special importance of this noble family, which most likely tendered a religious-cultic tradition from its nomadic days, and evidently

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<sup>103</sup>E. Stern, 'Kedesh, Tel,' EAEHL, 3, p. 702f.

<sup>104</sup>Stern, p. 703.

also in order to preface that which follows in Judges 4, concerning one branch of the clan -- that of Heber the Kenite. 105

Mazar suggests that one branch of the clan, Heber the Kenite, continued the religious-cultic tradition at Elon Bezaannaim, by Kedesh. It was there, Mazar claims, that Sisera fled because Jael's dwelling-place was recognized as a sanctuary and place of refuge where protection was given even to an enemy.<sup>106</sup>

The borders of the three Galilean tribes, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar, converged at Mount Tabor. It is possible that Mount Tabor served as a kind of border sanctuary. Moses' blessing to Zebulun and Issachar may be an allusion to it: 'They shall invite their kin to the mountain, where they offer sacrifices of success' (Deut. 33:19). Of the Galilean tribes, only Naphtali, Zebulun and Issachar fought in the battle against Sisera, and they concentrated their forces before the battle on Mount Tabor. Also the close proximity of unwallled villages in the region of Upper Galilee, and the cooperation of the three tribes Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar, may point to some kind

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<sup>105</sup>B. Mazar, 'The Sanctuary of Arad and the Family of Hobab the Kenite,' JNES, 24 (1965), p. 300.

<sup>106</sup>Mazar, p. 300.

of tribal league. However, evidence of a central sanctuary is lacking, and the mention of Mount Tabor, even if a sanctuary was located there, is only as an assembly point for battle.

What is certain is that there were sanctuaries in most settled areas. The prose account of the battle against Sisera implies that there were cultic sites, but there is no evidence to indicate that they were used as the centre of a religious confederation.

Orlinsky holds that,

There is a serious methodological error ... in assuming the existence of an amphictyonic league almost whenever and wherever a biblical Book records the existence of a shrine. Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Gilgal, Kadesh -- all were shrines in the twelfth-eleventh centuries; what does that prove for amphictyony? All these sites were shrines in Canaanite, pre-Israelite times; did amphictyony obtain in Canaanite society? 107

Orlinsky further states that neither the poetic nor the prose version of Judges chapters 4 to 5 makes mention of any central shrine which could be described as an amphictyonic centre. The book of Judges, on the other hand, gives the impression that there was no central authority in the land. In the period of the Judges, God was worshipped at a number of sanctuaries or

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<sup>107</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 70.

shrines, and not exclusively at one place, but sanctuaries were scattered throughout the land. He notes that even in the reign of Josiah independent shrines continued to flourish, and no one capital or shrine could achieve any kind of centralized authority. An amphictyonic structure, in his opinion, did not exist in Israel any more than it did in Transjordan or anywhere else in western Asia at the time.<sup>108</sup>

Biblical evidence points to the existence of numerous local shrines or sanctuaries rather than to a central sanctuary. It is precisely the existence of Canaanite city-states especially in the fertile valleys that forced the Israelites to settle in the mountains and prevented formation of an entity. The tribes in this period seem not to be engulfed by a larger amphictyonic community, and appear not to be committed to a central shrine in some cultic activity, or bound to a central authority. The existence of an amphictyonic structure for all Israel is a hypothesis, and there is no clear evidence to support the theory. Also, the evidence of the Old Testament for a tribal structure, consisting of a union of tribes, does not suggest that there was ever a central sanctuary which

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<sup>108</sup>Orlinsky, The Tribal System of Israel, p. 76.



acted as a place of assembly for the Israelite tribes in the period prior to the monarchy.<sup>109</sup>

(c) The acceptance of a divine law.

An essential feature of the Shechem assembly (Josh. 24), according to Noth, was the establishment of a 'statute and ordinance' which was written in 'the book of the law'. This he believes presents a picture of what Israel considered essential in the gatherings of the tribes at the central sanctuary -- the proclamation of the law.<sup>110</sup> At Sinai there was revealed to a group of clans that revelation of divine will which was to inspire and incorporate the later tribes into a sacred confederation; '... the encounter on Sinai would have meant that subjection to the will of God as formulated in a divine law was decisive.'<sup>111</sup> This divine law, Noth suggests, was recited at the tribal gatherings at regular intervals, and all Israel committed itself to the upholding of the divine

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<sup>109</sup>James D. Martin, 'The Office of Judge in Pre-Monarchic Israel,' TGUOS, 26 (1978), p. 64.

<sup>110</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 100.

<sup>111</sup>Noth, p. 133.

stipulations. Elders of clans administered justice 'in the gate' (at the entrance of the city or in the public square in front of the gate) to settle local issues. However Israel as a whole, according to Noth, was subject to a divine law which was regularly proclaimed and interpreted by the 'judge' of Israel who alone interpreted the law, and instructed the tribes about the meaning and application of its individual clauses.<sup>112</sup> Noth holds that,

The oldest traces of genuinely Israelite legal ordinances in the Old Testament may well be the original federal law of Israel and the later books of the law as far as and including the so-called Holiness Code in Lev. xvii-xxvi, and the deuteronomic law in Deut. xii-xxvi, may well be seen as further developments of the earliest statements. These earliest statements are to be found within the so-called Book of the Covenant in Exod. xxi-xxiii; and so the genuinely Israelite part of the Book of the Covenant, the religious and moral prohibitions in Exod. xxii, 17ff. have most right to be considered elements of the original divine law of Israel. 113

John Bright also suggests that the legal material of the Pentateuch goes back to the period of the Judges. The Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23; 34) he claims is of early origin and that it reflects legal

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<sup>112</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 103.

<sup>113</sup>Noth, p. 104.

procedure at the time of the amphictyony. The Decalogue too, he maintains, represents a fundamental and original element in Israel's faith.<sup>114</sup>

Noth holds that Israel was subject to a divine law which not only dealt with tribal relationships, but with the relationship between Israel as a whole and its God. The law was recited at regular intervals at the assembly at the central sanctuary by the 'Judge of Israel' and Israel committed itself to the law in constantly renewed acts of affirmation. Thus, the Israelite confederacy was constituted by commitment to, re-enactment of, and obligation to the divine law.

Noth gives as an example of the importance and seriousness of the divine law in the amphictyony the incident recorded in Judg. 19 and 20. In the Benjaminite city of Gibeah, the wife of a Levite was sexually assaulted. The Levite had claimed hospitality in the city for a night, and the assault was a violation of the divine law. An assembly of the tribes was called in Mizpah to deal with the crime and to punish those who had violated the divine law.<sup>115</sup>

In 1965, Georg Fohrer raised objections to the

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<sup>114</sup>Bright, A History of Israel, p. 130.

<sup>115</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 105.

assumption that Israel's religion since its origins was based on a covenant with Yahweh which was proclaimed in a covenant renewal festival held annually at the central sanctuary.<sup>116</sup> Although the origin of Yahwism was with the group under the leadership of Moses who experienced the Exodus and the events of Sinai, the acceptance of Yahwism by other groups and tribes was, in Fohrer's opinion, a gradual process. Israel's early period was characterized by a multiplicity of clan and tribal religions, and only gradually did Yahweh become the God of all Israel. Fohrer suggests that the group under the leadership of Moses and then Joshua, who brought Yahwism into Palestine, were absorbed by the central group of tribes belonging to the house of Joseph.

This group appears soon to have accepted the new faith, which proved itself in the fighting entailed by the occupation and self-assertion of the tribes, thus showing that it was the 'true' faith. In consequence of the political and military superiority of the central Palestinian group, as well as the activity of the Levites, who acted as missionaries of Yahwism throughout the land, Yahwism was rapidly acknowledged among the other Israelite

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<sup>116</sup>Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. David Green (London: SPCK, 1970), p. 207.

tribes. This process was probably essentially complete as early as the middle of the twelfth century. 117

After the initial victories of the Joshua group under the protection of Yahweh, Fohrer sees the victory over Sisera and the Canaanites (Judg. 5) as a further influence upon the people. The victory was attributed to Yahweh who intervened directly on behalf of the tribes (Judg. 5:4-5, 20-21). Thus Fohrer maintains that if his interpretation of the events is correct 'the victory song in Judg. 5 is also the acknowledgment of Yahweh on the part of his new converts.'<sup>118</sup>

Fohrer holds that Yahwism spread gradually from tribe to tribe after its initial introduction as a tribal religion into central Palestine, and that its spread was aided by acknowledgment of victories won by Yahweh on behalf of his people. 'Just as Joshua conquered in the name of Yahweh, Deborah offered the same opportunity to Barak, who was not yet a follower of Yahweh, and accompanied him as a guarantee of divine aid.'<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>Georg Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 87.

<sup>118</sup>Fohrer, p. 88f.

<sup>119</sup>Fohrer, p. 88.

Fohrer sees Yahweh being adopted gradually, and believes that it is possible that individual families and clans continued to worship their clan god, equated with El. Gradually the worship of Yahweh gained a footing at ancient sites, and the remnants of the clan-god cults lost their support. Yahwism adopted for itself the tradition of the clan gods who had been identified with local manifestations of El. As a result, the continuity between Yahweh and Israel was established from the time of the patriarchs.<sup>120</sup>

Fohrer regards the schema of twelve-tribes not as a sacral tribal league, but as a genealogical list recording descent and relationship. By tracing descent to a common ancestor, they become related as 'brothers'.

The schema of the twelve tribes of Israel is therefore intended to comprehend the totality of Israel living together in Palestine in a single genealogical list that declares them to be descendants of twelve related ancestors, themselves descended from a single ancestor ... It represents an abbreviated popular genealogy, and constitutes the totality of Israel as a whole united in blood relationship established by their tribal ancestor Jacob/Israel and ultimately, through the genealogical chain of

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<sup>120</sup>Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, p. 99.

the patriarchs, by Abraham. They are the 'am of Israel. Thus begins the process that forges of them one people, the 'am Israel. 121

The patriarchal clans probably settled gradually in Palestine from as early as the 14th century B.C. It is not until the end of the 13th century B.C. that the Moses group arrived in Palestine. At Sinai, the Moses group had become the 'am of Yahweh, and they brought with them to Palestine this new and fervent faith in Yahweh. The Moses group entered into relationship with the tribes of Israel, and, by a gradual process, the people of Israel became the people of Yahweh.

None of this means that Yahwism, once adopted by the Israelite tribes, did not likewise function as a unifying force binding them together. Indeed, it was precisely by its assimilation of the Moses host, constituted as the 'am of Yahweh, and by its adoption of Yahwism that the 'am Israel as a whole became the 'am of Yahweh and were drawn into community with Yahweh. On the one hand, the Moses host was assimilated into the 'am Israel; on the other, Israel was assimilated into the 'am of Yahweh. This observation helps us understand why Israel preserved the patriarchal traditions even after the adoption of Yahwism and equated the clan gods, in the form identified with local manifestations of El, with Yahweh. Israel thus established continuity, so that the 'am Israel descended from Jacob/Israel could appear from the very outset as the 'am of Yahweh. At the same time, this procedure made it possible to continue using kinship

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<sup>121</sup>Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, pp. 93-94.

categories for the relationship between Yahweh and Israel; these categories were natural to both the clan religion and Israel's own self-understanding. 122

Fohrer further sees Yahweh, like the patriarchal gods, as not restricted to any one site, but as a god who accompanies his people and who comes to their aid in time of need or crisis. If Yahweh does have a dwelling place at all, 'it is the heavens, from which he descends to appear upon the mountain of God, to accompany those who worship him during their wanderings, or to perform his deeds in settled territory, by the sea, or in the steppes.'<sup>123</sup>

In the Song of Deborah the tradition of the Sinai covenant is preserved (Judg. 5:4), according to Fohrer. This he sees in the fact that in the battle against Sisera the association between Yahweh and Israel is maintained and extended. The covenant is one of a relationship between Yahweh and the people of Yahweh, in which Yahweh's guidance and help are realized. Fohrer can not find this relationship in a cult, nor in a politico-military capacity, nor in an institution, but in a people.

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<sup>122</sup>Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, p. 94.

<sup>123</sup>Fohrer, p. 78.



W. Zimmerli comments on Fohrer's position:

... the historical event that established the link between Yahweh and the people led by Moses must not be interpreted by means of a covenant formulary. What emerged was simply a connection 'in the sense of a continuing association of a nomadic kind', i.e. 'a kind of kin-relationship in which the people led by Moses count as 'am Yahweh'. 124

G. W. Anderson also suggests that real unity of the Israelite tribes was not in an amphictyony but in the Sinai Covenant between Yahweh and the people. Israel's origin and consciousness, therefore, lay in her understanding of the Sinai Covenant.<sup>125</sup>

C. H. J. de Geus also maintains that the Israelite tribes were united in a religious covenant. It matters little, in his opinion, whether this covenant originated at Sinai, at Kadesh, or in Canaan. The important matter is that it was a covenant with one another and with Yahweh. Israel's consciousness is thus seen in its common 'fund of thought' which de Geus ascribes to Yahwism which was introduced into

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<sup>124</sup>W. Zimmerli, 'The History of Israelite Religion,' in Tradition and Interpretation, ed. G.W. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 378.

<sup>125</sup>G.W. Anderson, 'Israel: Amphictyony: 'AM; KAHAL; 'EDAH,' p. 150.

Israel.<sup>126</sup>

According to de Geus, judicial power resided in the clans who inhabited one or several townlets. The clan was ruled by a council of elders (called sārîm or šofēṭîm) who administered justice 'in the gates'.<sup>127</sup> These groups or clans, living together, maintained order and promoted common interests, among which was safety upon the roads to ensure travel and trade (cf. Judg. 5:6 in which conditions prevent safe travel on the main roads). It also would be in the interest of the clans to have agreement in the use of pasture and wells among Israelite groups as well as neighbouring peoples. In the event of disputes or threat from marauding groups, temporary union of groups came into being through concerted action, under the leadership of a strong character or a powerful clan. The leading figures of the townlets provided the temporary leadership required in an emergency. Larger groups, composed of separate clans, united whenever the local group could not muster sufficient strength to provide safety and security. De Geus does not visualize a tribal league administering justice on behalf of all

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<sup>126</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 120f.

<sup>127</sup>De Geus, p. 139f.

the tribes. The tribes 'can only be said to have had a true political function in so far as it was considered desirable to belong to a powerful tribe. If a tribe could no longer provide the safety a clan thought they had a right to, such a clan would join another tribe. This started a process in which the large tribes tended to grow still larger.'<sup>128</sup>

This is the situation which possibly existed at the time of the battle against Sisera. The more powerful tribe of Ephraim responded to the call to battle issued by the local judge Deborah, and united with other tribes in the north to suppress an enemy too powerful and threatening to be dealt with by one or two tribes. The situation in the Song of Deborah does not describe an assembly of tribes at a common sanctuary to consider action, but the common reaction against a common enemy by tribes whose only apparent unity is a common faith in Yahweh.

After the introduction of Yahwism into Palestine, new sanctuaries dedicated to Yahweh came into being, so that in time almost every Israelite settlement possessed a Yahweh sanctuary. Sacrifices were offered at these shrines (1 Sam. 1:21, 2:12ff.; Judg. 6:11f.,

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<sup>128</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 149.

13:19f.), and festivals were celebrated (Judg. 21:19ff.; 1 Sam. 1:3f.). There is no mention of a central sanctuary, but rather many sanctuaries associated with Yahweh existed in the period of the Judges. Yahwism was a religion of life and conduct according to hallowed rules expressing God's will, and nowhere in the Old Testament is there evidence of laws promulgated from a central sanctuary. Ex. 23:14-19, which deals with cultic prescripts, makes no mention of a central sanctuary, nor does Lev. chs. 17-26, in which acceptable worship is defined, refer to a central cult. Judicial matters were administered within individual tribes, and pantribal activity, such as united action against a common enemy, resulted from a religious consciousness rather than from a decision laid down by a central authority from a central sanctuary.<sup>129</sup>

- (d) The election of official representatives of the tribes.

The central feature and function of the Israelite amphictyony, according to Noth, was the proclamation of

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<sup>129</sup>Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, p. 113ff.

the divine law in the central cult, followed by a solemn renewal of the covenant. Israel did not emphasize a form of worship, but placed emphasis upon the fact that Israel was subject to a divine law, and it was Israel's task to proclaim that law at regular intervals during tribal gatherings at the central sanctuary. Noth maintains that it was the Judge of Israel who was the guardian of that law.

... the central judicial office of Israel was related to the law that was valid in the whole of Israel, the divine law to which Israel was subject and which had to be regularly proclaimed anew, and ... the 'judge' of Israel was the one who had to know and interpret it and give information about it, who had to see that it was observed and perhaps had himself to proclaim it in public, and whose duty it was to apply it to new situations and thereby assume responsibility for its development and constantly instruct the tribes about the meaning and application of its individual clauses. 130

It is the office of Judge that Noth finds explicitly mentioned in the oldest Old Testament tradition.

Noth further maintains that the so-called 'minor judges' listed in Judges 10:1-5; 12:7-15 are the true judges named šōf<sup>e</sup>ṭîm who played a leading role in the administration of the law. These were probably the elected officials of the Israelite amphictyony who were

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<sup>130</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 102f.

concerned with the law and the cult, and who were not political or military leaders.<sup>131</sup> They owe their success to their abilities as interpreters of the law and as intertribal arbitrators. The 'major judges', in his opinion, were charismatic leaders of tribes who arose in times of crisis, and were not elected officials. They were incorporated in the list of 'judges' by the deuteronomistic historian because one of these leaders in time of conflict, Jephthah, was also listed as a 'minor judge'. The military heroes thus were called šōf<sup>e</sup>ṭîm because one of their number (Jephthah) was represented in that list (minor judge), and was therefore a genuine judge. By extension the title šōf<sup>e</sup>ṭîm was given to the charismatic leaders as well. These major judges had the task of delivering the people on behalf of Yahweh. They were known and rose to power by their qualities of courage, skill, strength, and leadership, which were believed to have been bestowed upon the individual by Yahweh, and thus they were given charismatic gifts. They did not exercise authority by virtue of a formal election, and their period of office was local and temporary.

Alt held that military heroes, known by their

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<sup>131</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 101, 103. Cf. Bright, A History of Israel, p. 151.

deeds of martial prowess, acted by virtue of a personal gift and power from Yahweh regarded as charisma, and not by virtue of an authority given to them by a tribe.

... there is one feature common to all of them: they did their warlike deeds to protect the Israelite territory against foreign encroachments, not by virtue of an authority given to them by their own tribe, or which was previously provided for in the constitution for special cases, but on the strength of the sudden appearance of a personal gift and power which was regarded in Israel simply as a charisma, a free gift of Yahweh to the individual, and which therefore swept the populace along with it. It is, however, inherent in the nature of such charismatic leadership that it allowed no institutional consolidation, and, above all, that it could not be transferred to, or inherited by, another person. It ceased to exist after the death of the man who possessed it at any given time, if it had not already done so at the very moment when he returned victorious from his military and political task. 132

On the other hand, the list of minor judges (Judg. 10:1-5; 12:7-15), in Alt's view, gives evidence of šōf<sup>e</sup>ṭîm who were not military heroes with charismatic powers, but of individuals who were the guardians and proclaimers of the casuistic law, fragments of which are embodied in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23, the mišpāṭîm), and is a fragmentary legal code of the same category as the Code of Hammurabi, the Hittite

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<sup>132</sup>Albrecht Alt, Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, p. 178.

laws (c. 14th century B.C.), and the 12th century Assyrian laws. It represents the corpus of laws which developed in Canaan and was adopted by the Israelites living in the period of the Judges.<sup>133</sup>

William F. Albright did not see the sharp distinction between the minor and major judges as did Noth. The judge, in Albright's view, was a respected leader who arose in times of crisis or danger, and was followed, regardless of tribal affiliations, because it was believed that the leader was endowed with divine grace or charisma. The judge would most likely have been a military hero like Ehud, Barak, or Gideon, adventurers like Jephthah and Samson, or a Canaanite like Shamgar ben Anath. However, men of wisdom and justice like Jair, Ibzan, and Abdon might also be placed on a level with the military hero and recognized for their charismatic qualities.<sup>134</sup> According to Albright, most of the judges, like Ehud the Benjamite, were men of military prowess and not recognized for their judicial functions. They were military heroes and not magistrates. Filled by an outpouring of the

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<sup>133</sup>Alt, Essays on Old Testament History and Religion, p. 97f.

<sup>134</sup>W.F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 216.



spirit of God they excelled in valour and wisdom, and were commanders of armies.<sup>135</sup> He suggests that the Israelites probably adopted the word šōfēt from a cognate Canaanite word having the sense of 'prince', and found later among the Carthaginians to designate a 'magistrate, civic leader' or the head of the state. The Israelite Judge would play not only the role of arbitrator, but in a society of frequent lawlessness and blood feuds, he would be called upon to exert his physical prowess and shrewdness in strategy in making decisions.<sup>136</sup>

John Bright sees the authority of the judge resting solely on his charisma (cf. Judg. 3:10). The judge arose in times of danger and, as the representative of Yahweh, called out the clans to repel the foe.<sup>137</sup>

B. W. Anderson understands the role of the judge as involving either military action or the judging of legal disputes. Primarily the judge is looked upon as a deliverer or military champion (cf. Judg. 2:16), but also as an arbitrator whose authority extended beyond

<sup>135</sup>Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 20.

<sup>136</sup>Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 20. Cf. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 216.

<sup>137</sup>Bright, A History of Israel, p. 159.

the locale of his tribe, and was recognized by all Israel.<sup>138</sup>

H. C. Thomson presents an argument which defends the role of the judge as both charismatic leader and as arbitrator of legal decisions. He believes that in the prose narrative of Deborah (Judg. 4:4-6) there is evidence of the šōfēṭ who was a source of mišpāṭ.<sup>139</sup> He holds that Deborah was a charismatic person who was qualified to get a decision from Yahweh, and who was looked upon as one who could obtain a reliable decision. Her message to Barak to intervene in the emergency, which Thomson renders 'Has not Yahweh said, Go up?', is the mišpāṭ which the people sought in the crisis. Thus Thomson sees Deborah as a šōfēṭ who was a source of mišpāṭ, divining the will of Yahweh on matters affecting the well-being and safety of the amphictyony.<sup>140</sup>

Thomson also sees the šōfēṭ as the arbitrator of civil matters:

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<sup>138</sup>B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 148-149.

<sup>139</sup>H.C. Thomson, 'Shophet and Mishpat in the Book of Judges,' TGUOS, 19 (1961-62), p. 76.

<sup>140</sup>Thomson, p. 83.

It would not then be surprising if in times of comparative security the powers of the shophet would be sought to obtain decisions on civil matters, in cases where the elders in the gate could not, or would not, decide the issue. One would suppose that the shophet would do as before, and put the question 'Shall we do so-and-so?' and convey the answer to the parties. Mishpat would then tend to be a term used more and more for such case-law decisions. 141

Thomson believes that mišpāt implies the idea of a divine decision rather than the idea of man-made laws or social justice. Although he admits to the lack of evidence of the role of the minor judge, he holds that they probably acted as sources of mišpāt in civil rather than in military affairs. At any rate, he concludes that there seems to be no real distinction between the role of the major and the minor judges, as they both appear in the book of Judges to be šōf<sup>e</sup>ṭîm, sources of mišpāt.<sup>142</sup>

In 1962, Harry M. Orlinsky launched an attack upon the idea of a central sanctuary with its accompanying cultic, legal, and administrative functions. He held that judges of this period (c. 1200-1000 B.C.) were local individuals, not associated with any shrines, who exhibited exceptional military prowess in time of

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<sup>141</sup>Thomson, 'Shophet and Mishpat in the Book of Judges,' p. 84.

<sup>142</sup>Thomson, p. 85.

crisis and delivered their kinfolk from the enemy.<sup>143</sup> Their function was as 'deliverers' from the enemy, and not as proclaimers of the law. Orlinsky also questions the use of the words 'amphictyony' and 'charisma' as, these terms are not found in the Bible.

... when God's 'spirit' is said to have come over a man, he proceeded to go into action as a deliverer of his oppressed people ... but nowhere does the text say that the people made that man (shophet) a leader because they recognized in him something of the divine. It would seem that 'charisma' and 'amphictyony' are among several other concepts of nineteenth-twentieth century sociology ... 144

Orlinsky also suggests that there is no evidence whatsoever of any society on either side of the Jordan that is highly organized with a central authority or central shrine. Twelfth century Israel, as well as the adjoining states of Ammon, Moab and Midian, were relatively small and independent groups, each led by a local chieftain (cf. Judg. 3; 6 - 9). Also he sees Gen. 36:31-39 (the list of kings who reigned in the land of Edom) as a picture of petty chieftains and local military leaders, corresponding to the situation in Israel during the period of the Judges. He sees

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<sup>143</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 69.

<sup>144</sup>Orlinsky, p. 70, n. 8.

Israel as autonomous tribes which recognize no central capital or shrine during the period of the Judges.<sup>145</sup>

A. D. H. Mayes also maintains that there is no evidence that the judge occupied an office recognized by all Israel, and which would imply the existence of conditions favourable to the theory of an amphictyony in Israel. The judge, in his opinion, was a local official who had jurisdiction over a limited area, and was probably appointed by the tribal leaders for the judicial administration of that area.<sup>146</sup>

Mayes points to the use of the root špt in connection with charismatic deliverers and the judges in the list of Judg. 10:1-5; 12:7-15. He believes that these two groups should be kept separate, and he holds that the present book of Judges is the result of an editorial conflation of two categories of traditional material. One series of narrative deals with tribal heroes and their victories over enemies, and another section contains a list of judges who are said to have 'judged Israel'. He suggests that the editor of the book of Judges integrated both traditions into his own chronological scheme for the period of the Judges.

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<sup>145</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 73f.

<sup>146</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 67.

The use of the term špt to describe the activities of the charismatic deliverers is probably the work of an editor who wished to harmonize to some extent the two sources which he conflated in order to present a history of the period of the judges; on the other hand, the editor's use of the root špt was not totally illegitimate since this can have, as we have seen, the significance 'deliver'.<sup>147</sup>

The title 'judge of Israel', Mayes notes, is not used of the judges of Judg. 10:1-5; 12:7-15, and only occurs in Micah 4:14 in which its reference is ambiguous.<sup>148</sup>

It can not be implied, he maintains, that the members of the list in Judg. 10:1-5; 12:7-15 occupied an office recognized by all Israel as Noth concludes simply because it says that they all 'judged Israel'.<sup>149</sup> The

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<sup>147</sup> Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 61. Cf. Mayes, p. 57: 'In the majority of cases the root has the legal significance of "pronounce judgment", "give a decision". Yet, while this is apparently its primary significance, there are a number of passages in the Old Testament where such a restricted meaning is not suitable. In Isa. 1:17,23, for example, "judge the fatherless to their rights", or "defend, or deliver the fatherless from oppression"; and the idea of deliverance is also clearly required by II Sam. 24:16 (EVV v. 15) where the root is used twice, once in the sense of "decide between", and once in the sense of "deliver". Furthermore, it is to be noted that the occurrences in II Sam. 18 do not stand in a legal context, although this may be the context of Isa. 1:17,23. It is, therefore, evident that the root špt does have the general sense of "deliver" beside the specific legal sense of "pronounce judgment".'

<sup>148</sup> G.W. Anderson, 'Israel: Amphictyony: 'AM; KĀHĀL; 'ĒDĀH,' p. 148.

<sup>149</sup> Mayes, p. 65.

clearest example of a judge who fits the description of one who 'judged Israel' is Samuel.

... of all the individuals outside the list of judges it is Samuel who has most claim to having originally been a member of this list. Not only do the literary forms used in the context of the Samuel tradition correspond to the forms used in the list of judges, but the further details which the tradition provides conform well with Samuel's representation as a judge. 150

Mayes notes that 1 Sam. 7:16 gives evidence of the activity of Samuel as judge in a strictly local territory (among the mid-Palestinian tribes). Samuel made a yearly circuit in order to act as judge and arbitrator for the local people living in the vicinity of Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah. His functions were in a sense judicial rather than military, although he could issue the call to arms (cf. 1 Sam. 15:18f.).<sup>151</sup>

Although the precise function of the judges is obscure, Mayes concludes:

It is unlikely that military exploits formed part of their activities. Jephthah forms an exception to this, but he is the exception which proves the rule, for had the other judges taken the lead in military expeditions, these, just as Jephthah's war with the Ammonites,

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<sup>150</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 65.

<sup>151</sup>Mayes, p. 65.

would have been handed down in the tradition. Furthermore, even with Jephthah it is by no means certain that it was in his capacity as judge that he undertook the war with the Ammonites. Since this exploit is narrated before the notice of Jephthah's having 'judged Israel', it would seem to have been the intention of the editor to indicate that in his belief Jephthah did not fight as a judge, but became judge after his victory over the Ammonites. So, if the Jephthah tradition is to be ruled out there is no support for the view that leadership in war belonged to the functions of these judges. On the other hand, it is clear from the fact that Samuel made an annual circuit that the functions of the judge were, as the title indicates, judicial in some sense. 152

Mayes holds that the jurisdiction of judge is of a limited area, is not an office of significance for all Israel, and the office gives no support for the amphictyony hypothesis.

De Geus also maintains that 'it is not possible to draw a strict line between the "lesser" Judges as bearing an amphictyonic office, and the "greater" Judges as political and military "saviours"' as Noth did. The terms šōf<sup>e</sup>tîm and šārîm indicate the principal men in power in the small settlements of the pre-monarchial period, according to de Geus. 'Actual power was in the hands of the council of "elders" and the most prominent among these may be called šōfēt

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<sup>152</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 66.



and/or śar.<sup>153</sup> The judge was, according to de Geus, a municipal official (אֲשֵׁר) whose position rested upon the authority of the council of elders. The titles šōfēt and śar were also used in the period of the monarchy to designate municipal governors. The activity of the judge, de Geus holds, was focused in the city or settlement in which the judge lived, but occasionally the influence of the judge transcended the limits of the city. Thus de Geus describes the judge who had influence in the local area as a 'minor judge' and the judge with national importance as a 'major judge'. The only distinction between a major and a minor judge is seen by de Geus in the extent of their influence, and no real difference is seen in their basic role as urban administrators.<sup>154</sup>

James D. Martin notes that in the book of Judges there are only two places (4:5 and 11:27) where a judicial sense of 'judge' is clearly demanded. In Judg. 4:5 reference is made to the practice of going to Deborah for justice and judgment, which may imply a

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<sup>153</sup> De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 206. Cf. Ex. 2:41; Isa. 3:2-4; Hos. 7:7; Mic. 7:3; Zeph. 3:3; Job 9:24; 12:17. From Ex. 18:21-22 and Hos. 13:10 it is evident that the activity of a śar can be expressed with the root špt.

<sup>154</sup> De Geus, p. 206.

legal or consultative function on her part.<sup>155</sup>

In the accounts of the major judges, only in two places (Judg. 3:10 and 4:4f.) is the verb šp̄t used to describe these figures where a judicial sense is intended. Deborah (4:4f.) is said to have been 'judge' (šop̄eṭāh) over Israel, and the Israelites are said to have come to her for 'justice/judgment' (mišp̄āṭ).<sup>156</sup> The usage of šp̄t in 4:4f. is, according to Martin, unique in the book of Judges, 'and can be used only with extreme caution as the basis for any argument about the significance of šp̄t or the role and function of the judge.'<sup>157</sup>

The judges of Israel are not described as fulfilling any kind of legal function, and only in the case of Deborah is there any reference to the dispensing of justice (4:5). The hero sagas found in the book of Judges deal with a series of confrontations between Israelite groups and non-Israelite groups in Palestine. The role of the tribal hero appears to have been primarily a military one, which Martin suggests is

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<sup>155</sup>James D. Martin, 'The Office of Judge in Pre-Monarchic Israel,' p. 69.

<sup>156</sup>Martin, p. 74.

<sup>157</sup>Martin, p. 75.

similar to the role played by the šāpitu at Mari. The Mari texts give evidence of the function performed by officials there.

In the Mari texts there figures a high official known as the šāpitu (=Hebr. šōpēṭ) who is entrusted with the government of town and country, his duties involving not only the administration of justice but also the mustering, despatch and ultimate dismissal of troops, the securing of booty and the protection of the countryside from plundering nomads. The šāpitu in the context seems to have been some kind of local governor rather than a 'judge' in any kind of restricted sense. 158

The minor judges appear to have operated in fairly circumscribed areas, according to Martin, and there may have been many more such functionaries than are given in the minor judges' list.<sup>159</sup> The only indication of the activities of these functionaries is given by the verb šāpāt, which in the Old Testament has the general sense of 'rule', and is not restricted to a legal sense. Martin suggests that the functionaries in the list of minor judges are probably local governors

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<sup>158</sup> Martin, 'The Office of Judge in Pre-Monarchic Israel,' p. 70.

<sup>159</sup> Martin, p. 72, points to Tola (10:1-2) who is associated with Shamir; Jair (10:3-5) with Kamon; Jephthah (12:7) with a city of Gilead, probably Mizpah (11:34); Ibzan (12:8-10) with Bethlehem; Elon (12:11-12) with Aijalon; Abdon (12:13-15) with a town in the Ephraimite hill-country.

operating within fairly limited spheres of influence.<sup>160</sup> He suggests that there is not a great difference in kind between the major judges and the minor judges, and that they may have been 'the same type but operating in different social and political situations at different periods in the process of settlement and urbanisation in Israel.'<sup>161</sup>

It may ... not be too wide of the mark to regard the 'major judges' as an earlier equivalent of the later 'minor judges'. If the latter were the local governors in an urbanised situation, might it not be that the former were local raiders in a pre-urbanised situation, at a time when the tribal unit was still of first importance? The figure of Gideon, for example, fits perfectly the Mari concept of the šāpītum as someone who protects the countryside from plundering nomads. Instead, then, of thinking of the two types of 'judges' mentioned in the book of Judges as two totally different types of figure, we can think of them as being essentially of the same type. 162

Martin basically agrees with the view presented by de Geus, but would allocate 'minor' and 'major' judges to different periods of the settlement process.

B. Lindars holds that the minor judges were men of local eminence and, like Jephthah, often achieved their

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<sup>160</sup> Martin, 'The Office of Judge in Pre-Monarchic Israel,' p. 73.

<sup>161</sup> Martin, p. 77.

<sup>162</sup> Martin, p. 76.

position through military prowess. Judg. 11:11 (the oath of the chieftains at Mizpah) does not point to the conferring of inter-tribal status upon Jephthah, but is a local matter at a local sanctuary.<sup>163</sup>

According to Lindars, Judg. 12:8-10, which deals with Ibzan of Bethlehem and his policy of exogamy for his numerous family, illustrates Ibzan's attempt to extend his influence as judge among the clans which probably dwelt within the confines of his tribe. This, Lindars suggests, points out that the tribal structure of Israel in the period of the Judges is primarily a matter of kinship and marriage.

The 'father's house' (extended family) is obviously the basic unit, but is too restricted for the needs of a settled society. Hence the clan (mišpāhāh) is the endogamous unit, which is usually limited topographically to relatively enclosed areas by the rough terrain. The Samaria ostraca have proved that the clan names continued to be attached to these places well into the eighth century. The larger group of the tribe is a voluntary association of clans cutting across natural barriers, extending the range of inter-marriage. As the name (šēbet or maṭṭeh) implies, the tribe was

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<sup>163</sup>Lindars, 'The Israelite Tribes in Judges,' p. 97.

presided over by a chief who holds the staff of office (cf. Jud. v. 2, 9, 14). This need not have been a permanent office. 164

Evidence of the judge performing an official function at a central sanctuary (proclaimer of the divine law) is meagre.

Even more scanty is the evidence that tribal representatives, whom Noth referred to as n<sup>e</sup>sî'îm, met at a central sanctuary in the period of the Judges. According to Noth, the elders of the clans administered justice 'in the gate', but there is no evidence for a council of elders for the whole of Israel. Priests apparently administered justice at the country shrines. But the divine law which encompassed all Israel, and which was publically proclaimed at the central sanctuary, was the duty and responsibility of the judge of Israel in Noth's view. He holds that the official representatives of the tribes at the central sanctuary were the n<sup>e</sup>sî'îm. Each tribe was represented by its leader, the nā'sî', at the great festival gatherings by

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<sup>164</sup>Lindars, 'The Israelite Tribes in Judges,' p. 97. Cf. De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, pp. 133-139. James B. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures, p. 211, describes the Samaria ostraca as 63 ostraca (inscribed pottery sherds) assigned to the reign of Jeroboam II (about 786-746 B.C.). These documents are significant for the script, spelling, personal names, topography, religion, administrative system, and clan distribution of the period.

all the tribes at the central shrine. A list of twelve nēśî'îm, one belonging to each of the twelve tribes, is given in Num. 1:5-16; 13:4-15; 34:17-28.<sup>165</sup>

The term nāśî' has the general sense of 'leader' or 'prince' (cf. Gen. 34:2). According to Num. 7 these leaders bring tribal offerings to Yahweh at the central sanctuary. Also Num. 1:5-16; 2, and 7 indicate that the term denotes a tribal representative who performed duties related to the promulgation of the law at the sacred tribal gatherings. Noth does not translate nāśî' as 'prince', and regards the term as having been derived from the expression nasa' gol 'to raise the voice' and translates it as 'Sprecher', that is, 'speaker' or representative of the tribe at the central sanctuary.<sup>166</sup> Noth contends that these passages (Num. 7; Num. 1:5-16; 2 and 7) embody ancient tradition, and it seems probable that if there did exist such an

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<sup>165</sup>Noth, A History of Israel, p. 98. Gen. 25:16 refers to twelve nēśî'îm who evidently belong to the Ishmaelite twelve-tribe league; Ex. 22:28 forbids the cursing of the nēśî'îm who by virtue of their position are granted special protection under the law; Ex. 16:22 refers to the nēśî'îm as rulers of the congregation; cf. Ex. 34:31; Num. 4:34; 31:13; 32:2; Josh. 9:15, 18, 19, 21; 22:30.

<sup>166</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 157. In Gen. 34:2 nāśî' seems to have the general meaning of 'leader' or 'prince'. In Ezekiel (Ezek. 45:7ff.) it is applied to rulers for whom it is not thought appropriate to use the term melek.

institution as an amphictyony, these leaders performed specific duties in that system. However, the role of the nāśî' as perceived by Noth is predicated upon the assumption of the existence of the amphictyony, and then of representatives who fit into an amphictyonic pattern. The amphictyony and the parallel theory of tribal representatives elected to the central shrine of the amphictyony are mutually dependent, and if the argument for the amphictyony hypothesis is valid, then it would seem probable that the term nāśî' reflects an ancient amphictyonic practice as described by Noth.

No details are given about the office and tasks of the nāśî'. Noth poses the question whether these neśî'im elected the judge of Israel as the official who proclaimed the law on behalf of the tribes. Although the question cannot be answered, Noth clearly views the neśî'im as the representatives of the tribes at the federal assemblies, and the Judge as the guardian of the divine law proclaimed there. He seems to be implying that the Judge could not function without, at least, the approval of the neśî'im.

Noth had pointed to Ex. 22:27 ('not revile a nāśî'') as belonging to the Book of the Covenant, the collection of law which he held originated within the framework of the amphictyony. Hence, Ex. 22:27



derives, in his view, from the ancient amphictyonic law.

Mayes, on the other hand, argues that Ex. 22:27 does not support the meaning of tribal representative for a nāśî'.

... if Noth's suggestion were correct the most natural formulation of Ex. 22:27 would be: 'you shall not curse God nor revile the nēśî'im (plural) of your people'. In its present form Ex. 22:27 presents the nāśî' as a chief or leader in general, but no representative function is indicated except in so far as every leader is a representative. Apart from the late P passages there is nothing to indicate that the nāśî' was the representative of an individual tribe. This understanding is not contradicted by the general content of the book of the covenant, for this compilation does not necessarily presuppose the existence of an amphictyony as such; the group whose activities are regulated by it could be large or small. 167

Also, the term nāśî' only appears in passages of a late date, and, according to Orlinsky, the term occurs nowhere in the book of Judges, the one book which is alleged to have come from an amphictyonic society.<sup>168</sup>

De Geus holds that the list of nēśî'im in Num. 1:5-15 may well be ancient names, but this is an assumption without definite proof. It is impossible,

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<sup>167</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 55.

<sup>168</sup>Orlinsky, 'The Tribal System of Israel,' p. 69, n. 7.

in his opinion, to date the list decisively, or to assign a definite function to the nēśî'îm on the basis of Num. 1:16 which describes them as 'leaders' of Israel. He holds that it is not the name of one of the principal functionaries of the amphictyony but that it is a title that indicates a certain position. He states:

The title of nāśî' may be borne by various distinguished Israelites, and in the vast majority of cases it indicates a fully mundane, political function. It does seem that a certain 'position' was always required. According to Num. 7:2 and Josh. 22:14 the nēśî'îm had to be roś of a bēt 'āb. Noth is right, then, that the translation 'prince' is definitely incorrect. Any person holding a high office in ancient Israel could be called nāśî'. Since these functionaries were recruited from particular families, the term nāśî' may be regarded not only as a title, but also as a social (here 'noble') predicate. 169

According to de Geus, then, the office of nāśî' is a title indicating a fully secular political function. The association of the nēśî'îm with an official function at a central sanctuary can not be proven.

(e) The amphictyony theory in the light of Judg. 5.

The Song of Deborah does not mention the term

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<sup>169</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 157.

nāśî', nor a central sanctuary. It is as šōfēt, a local arbitrator, that Deborah arouses to battle the commanders (ḥōq<sup>e</sup>qîm), and the wielders of the marshal's staff (mōš<sup>k</sup>îm b<sup>e</sup>šēbet sōpēr), v. 14, and the leaders (śārîm), v. 15, all of whom appear to be leaders of the local clans. Authority appears to reside with the clan leaders, and Deborah's call extends beyond her local territory and influence to unite temporarily numerous clans against a common enemy. Deborah appears to maintain a role of local judge who gains prominence as a charismatic leader in the arousal to battle against Sisera. She herself is not pictured as a warrior, but, like Samuel later, she is an arbitrator in a defined area (possibly Mizpah) who issues the call to arms which involves other clans and leaders. Her role is primarily that of a 'minor judge' who becomes a 'major judge' because of the prominent, and intertribal, part she plays in the battle against the Canaanites, and as such is proclaimed 'a mother in Israel' (Judg. 5:7). Nothing is mentioned either in the prose account or in the Song of further activity among the tribes by Deborah.

The Song of Deborah does not give evidence of the existence of an amphictyony of Israelite tribes in this period of the Judges. There is a consciousness of

belonging to Israel, as this is their collective description in the Song. They are also referred to as 'the people of Yahweh' joined by a common faith and united temporarily to participate in a battle in which Yahweh actively fights and gains the victory on behalf of his people.

The tribal situation in the Song also indicates a period of tribal unity, in which tribes join together for concerted action against a common enemy, but not yet the formal league of twelve tribes as indicated by Noth. Mayes has pointed out that the full number of tribes was not attained during the period recorded in the Song of Deborah, and that the tribal lists undergo considerable changes prior to the lists in Gen. 49 and Num. 1:5-15 (Machir and Gilead appear as tribes in the Song; Manasseh is omitted; Reuben ceases to exist by the period of the monarchy). De Geus' argument that 'Joseph' is a late addition (possibly during the period after 722 B.C.) to claim the unity of the northern state (as is the case of Josh. 15 dealing with Judah), and therefore a system of tribes containing 'Joseph' can not date from the period of the Judges, adds further doubt to Noth's theory. The tribal lists examined by Noth represent an idealization of tribal unity which was accomplished only during the monarchy.

In the Song of Deborah there is no mention of a central sanctuary, and in fact the muster of the peasant army is at the gates of the Israelite settlements (v. 11b). Also, the victory is recounted not at a sanctuary, but at the 'watering places' and on the roads where the people gather or travel for secular purposes rather than for sacred ones (vv. 10-11).

There is no mention in the Song of any obligations or laws regarding the upkeep of a sanctuary, nor is there mention of any type of decision-making process taking place at a meeting of the tribes at a central sanctuary. The call to action is spontaneous, and the peasant soldiers respond to Deborah's rally cry, not because of a sacral obligation imposed by a central authority or law, but through a common identity as the 'people of Yahweh' (as suggested by Mayes) against a common enemy in a period of crisis. Vv. 2 and 9 emphasize the volunteer action of the clans or tribes as participants in the battle. Thus the commonly held characteristics of an Israelite amphictyony are missing from the Song of Deborah.

### 3. The Holy War Theory

Martin Noth held that the twelve-tribe association

did not appear to be a political and a military institution.<sup>170</sup> The waging of war was carried out by individual tribes, and in some cases, by a voluntary amalgamation of one or two or several tribes. There were no professional soldiers such as was evident by the ruling class in the Canaanite cities. The individual clans formed volunteer units, which were called a 'thousand' ( *אֶלֶף* ), a term occasionally used for 'clan', and which possibly indicated the approximate war strength of a large family.<sup>171</sup> In Noth's study of the clan lists found in Num. 1:20-46 and ch. 26, he notes that the word 'elep was understood in the sense of 'thousand' only at a later stage, and the original significance of the word may have originated in Israel's pre-monarchical period. He suggests that 'elep originally was understood as the designation of a military unit, such as a troop which may vary in size from an average of 5, 9-10, or 17 men per troop. The clan list was used to transmit the results of a census of the men of the Israelite tribes who were fit for military service. Num. 1 and 26 Noth attributes to different censuses, taken at different

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<sup>170</sup>Noth, The History of Israel, p. 105.

<sup>171</sup>Noth, p. 107.

times, of the military potential of the old Israelite tribes.<sup>172</sup>

Max Weber emphasized the military and legal functions of the confederacy, and was less precise concerning cultic activities and a possible central sanctuary. The unity of the confederation he saw existing only in the function of warfare. The term 'charismatic' he applied to the Israelite leaders, the war heroes, who were recognized beyond the boundaries of the local tribe as sources of legal decisions.

The Israelite confederacy itself, according to unambiguous tradition, represented a war confederation under and with Yahwe as the war god of the union, guaranteeing its social order and creator of the material prosperity of the confederates, especially of the requisite rain. This is brought to expression by the name 'Israel' which was meant to designate directly 'the people of the fighting god' ... In any case, 'Israel' was no tribal name but the name of an association, at that, of a cult league. 173

Based on Noth's amphictyony hypothesis, and his analogy with the Greek amphictyonies which waged

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<sup>172</sup> Martin Noth, Numbers: A Commentary, trans. James D. Martin (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1968), pp. 203-4).

<sup>173</sup> Max Weber, Ancient Judaism, trans. H.H. Gert and Don Martindale (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952), p. 81. In this translation of Weber's book 'Yahweh' is spelled 'Yahwe'.

'sacred wars', G. von Rad connected the 'holy war' theory with the amphictyony. It was, in his opinion, in holy war even more than in the covenant festival at Shechem that ancient Israel first saw its fulfillment. The war of Yahweh, then, is an event of the amphictyony, and took place under cultic auspices.

The amphictyony was not, in the last analysis, a religious union assembling simply for the communal performance of sacrifice and for hearing the rule which God gave it for its life. Rather was it a band of tribes which, besides engaging in cultic activities in the narrower sense, also, also safeguarded and defended its whole political existence, sword in hand. Now, of course, this second side of its activity was not secular, but cultic just like the other, and subject to definite laws and ideas. We refer to the institution to which we give the name, the Holy War. Perhaps it was in the Holy War even more than the Covenant Festival at Shechem that ancient Israel really first entered into her grand form. 174

These holy wars were in principle a reaction of the amphictyony. It was in the period of the Judges, the period of the Israelite amphictyony, that the holy wars took place, according to von Rad. It was always led by a mōšīā', a 'savior'. The ideology of the holy war is

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<sup>174</sup>Gerhard von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, SBT, No. 9, trans. David Stalker (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1953), p. 45. Cf. G. von Rad, Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), p. 25f.



found mainly in Deuteronomy, and is, according to von Rad, one of the basic cultic institutions of early Israel.<sup>175</sup>

Von Rad saw a cultic pattern emerging from the conduct of holy war: (1) first there is consultation of the deity at the central sanctuary; (2) the able-bodied men submit to certain restrictions, and are consecrated; (3) the 'people of Yahweh' assemble at the war-camp, and the camp is purified by sacrifice; (4) the people submit confidently to Yahweh who is the sole agent of the holy war; (5) the enemy is filled with terror sent by God; (6) the spoil (herem) taken in war is the exclusive property of Yahweh, and is dedicated to him.<sup>176</sup>

Von Rad is convinced that the Sitz im Leben of Israel's faith in Yahweh is to be found not in the religious life of the individual, but in the collective practices of the cult and the realization of Yahweh's active role in the arena of history which is discernible in Holy War.<sup>177</sup> He admits that quite often

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<sup>175</sup>Von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, p. 50.

<sup>176</sup>Von Rad, p. 48.

<sup>177</sup>Von Rad, p. 50f. Cf. G. von Rad, 'The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh,' JSS, 4, No. 2 (1959), p. 103f.

it is only the individual tribes which acted in warfare, and not until the period of the monarchy was there a concerted effort on behalf of all the tribes in war. However, he maintains that even these wars of individual tribes manifest the individual characteristics of the holy war, each in a different manner. Thus it is possible for von Rad to see the Song of Deborah as one of the sacred wars of Israel within the amphictyony.

E. W. Nicholson points out that the book of Deuteronomy was compiled in a much later period than that of the period of the Judges and deals with the needs of the period of the monarchy.<sup>178</sup> Nicholson further suggests that the term for military officials ( שׂרִיִּם ) used in Deuteronomy came into being only during the period of the monarchy when a standing army was formed. Also, the nature of holy war in Deuteronomy contrasts with the early period in that it is offensive rather than defensive.<sup>179</sup>

W. Zimmerli questions von Rad's thesis about holy war on the grounds that there is no indication in the Old Testament of the participation of all twelve tribes

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<sup>178</sup> E.W. Nicholson, Deuteronomy and Tradition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 52.

<sup>179</sup> Nicholson, p. 52.

in such an undertaking, and that the connection with Shechem as the central sanctuary of Yahweh is nowhere discernible.<sup>180</sup>

In 1970, R. Smend questioned the theory that the Yahweh war is an event of the cultic tribal confederation (he preferred the term 'Yahweh War' rather than 'Holy War'). Although he accepted both the amphictyony and the war of Yahweh concepts, he concluded that the war of Yahweh should not be associated with the cultus, and that a distinction should be made between the elements of Yahweh War and sacral tribal federation in the tradition.<sup>181</sup> From his examination of the Song of Miriam (Ex. 15:21) he noted that the words speak solely of the power and action of Yahweh, while nothing is said of accompanying cultic phenomena.<sup>182</sup> Also, Judg. 5 portrays Yahweh as 'the

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<sup>180</sup>W. Zimmerli, 'The History of Israelite Religion,' p. 361.

<sup>181</sup>Rudolf Smend, Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation, p. 37. Cf. W. Zimmerli, 'The History of Israelite Religion,' p. 361: 'A distinction must accordingly be made between the tribal federation based on the central sanctuary of the amphictyony, whose life was determined by Yahweh's Law (Sinai tradition) proclaimed there, and the faith of the Moses group which came out of Egypt and which for its part brought with it the element of the Yahweh war.'

<sup>182</sup>Smend, p. 38.

god of Yahweh war', and does not deal with the 'war of the amphictyony'. However,

... the participants were indeed the same. Yahweh is the god of Yahweh war and of the amphictyony. Indeed, in the Song of Deborah he is being praised with the name יהוה אלהי ישראל (Judges 5:3, 5), which is in a special way connected with Shechem, the principal site of the amphictyony. Certainly he does not come in his role as the god of the amphictyony; he comes not from Shechem but from Sinai (verse 5). But because Yahweh is there, in some sense Israel is also there. The צעקה of the threatened tribe is relevant for the neighbouring tribe which also worships the god Yahweh and therefore also belongs to the amphictyony. Thereby the first takes precedence unconditionally over the second, for it is indeed the war of Yahweh and not the war of the amphictyony. But because Yahweh is 'no tribal god, but the god of "Israel,"' his war is surely in principle also a war of Israel ... 183

War was the dynamic element in Israel's history, and the periods of peace between wars saw only the covenant structure operative, but politically static. The war of Yahweh thus leads to national unity but does not have its nucleus in national unity. Thus we see in the Song of Deborah what Smend calls the 'still semi-impotent "amphictyonic will"' which only found its full expression in the formation of the state. At the time prior to the Song of Deborah the tribes existed in

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<sup>183</sup>Smend, Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation, p. 39f.

a cultic yet politically powerless confederation. The battle against Sisera was an impulse leading to the tribal confederation, which in turn shaped the political path leading to the formation of the state.

Smend suggests that Yahweh war was 'unlike the tribal confederation ... unthinkable without the god Yahweh, and it is often perceived as the noblest sphere of the confederation's activity.'<sup>184</sup> However, the amphictyonic confederation as such is not related to Yahweh war. 'If it had been, then the refusal to participate would have been a breach of the confederation and also would have been evaluated differently in the Song.'<sup>185</sup> He points to the Song of Deborah in which the entire tribal confederacy is not represented, and ten tribes constitute the portion of the sacred confederation capable of action. Smend suggests that the missing tribes of Judah and Simeon were a part of the confederation at the time of the battle, but that, because of their isolation behind a belt of hostile Canaanite city-states, they were not reprimanded for their absence. As the military alliance acted separately from the sacral league, the

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<sup>184</sup>Smend, Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation, p. 42.

<sup>185</sup>Smend, p. 18.

failure to respond to the call to battle on the part of some tribes was only treated with derision, and they were not sanctioned as a consequence of a breach in a confederation covenant. Von Rad's position which connects the holy war with the amphictyony would have seen this non-participation of certain tribes in the Song of Deborah as a breach of the covenant.

According to Smend, the Rachel tribes introduced Yahwism and the Yahweh war tradition into central Palestine. It was among the Leah tribes that the amphictyony existed. These two elements were united in the Yahweh amphictyony, according to Smend, but the two elements were not connected, and Yahweh war was not an undertaking of the amphictyony.<sup>186</sup>

It is significant that Smend accepts the amphictyony hypothesis yet disassociates the holy war or Yahweh war from the sacral confederation. In view of the difficulty in finding evidence pointing to the existence of an amphictyony of Israelite tribes, Smend's theory of Yahweh wars independent of an amphictyony seems plausible, whereas his suggestion of a sacral confederation existing along with Yahweh wars is less defensible.

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<sup>186</sup>Cf. De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 203f.

A. D. H. Mayes notes that the Old Testament,

is silent on the amphictyony while it has much to say about the holy war; the amphictyony does not appear in the holy war; the commissioning of the leader of the holy war does not come from the amphictyony but from Yahweh; there is no original connection between such amphictyonic institutions as the judge of Israel and the central sanctuary on the one hand, and the holy war on the other. Holy war and amphictyony are two originally distinct institutions; the former had its origin with the Rachel tribes coming out of Egypt, while the latter belongs with the Leah group of tribes which were at this time already settled in the land. The two were gradually fused, and the original distinction between them consequently became blurred on account of the settlement of the Rachel tribes in the land, their becoming members of the amphictyony, and the God of the holy war (Yahweh) being accepted by the Leah tribes as the God of the amphictyony. 187

Mayes states that there is no evidence of the Israelite tribes as a whole united in battle, and thus there is no support for the theory of an amphictyonic connection of the Israelite tribes in the period of the Judges.<sup>188</sup> In the case of Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar (Judg. 3) only a limited group was involved. The action under the leadership of Gideon against the Midianites involved only the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and

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<sup>187</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 75.

<sup>188</sup>Mayes, p. 78.

Naphtali (Judg. 6:35), and not of all Israel.<sup>189</sup> Abimelech's attempt to become king over Shechem (Judg. 9) involved only the city and its environs, and not any tribe. Jephthah defeated the Ammonites with a force of Gileadites (Judg. 10:9) and gives evidence of a purely local tradition. The Samson stories are of the nature of border disputes. The war between Benjamin and the rest of the Israelite tribes (Judg. 19 - 21), in Mayes opinion, preserves a tradition which relates originally a dispute involving only two tribes, Ephraim and Benjamin. He believes that it was at a later stage that this local dispute assumed significance for all Israel in the tradition.<sup>190</sup> Benjamin was not excluded from the amphictyony, which was the penalty which the Greek amphictyonies imposed on themselves for breach of amphictyonic law. There is no evidence of an amphictyonic war waged against Benjamin in Judg. 19 - 21, according to Mayes. He concludes that there is no support for the theory of the existence of an Israelite amphictyony in the tradition involving disputes between tribes and foreign adversaries, or in inter-tribal conflicts.

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<sup>189</sup> Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 76f.

<sup>190</sup> Mayes, p. 81.



Gwilym H. Jones maintains that the Holy War theory is a late development, arising out of the early practice of Yahweh War, and that the wars of Yahweh were not an amphictyonic exercise. Jones suggests that certain rituals were performed in preparation for battle, principally to secure Yahweh's help.<sup>191</sup> Also, the joint action or cooperation between a war leader (Barak) and an inspired person (Deborah) may suggest that this consultation was part of the ritual of Yahweh War. A dedication of troops before the battle may have occurred at the sanctuary of Tabor under the guidance of Deborah and Barak (Judg. 4:6, 12). As the troops moved out to battle they may have raised the war-cry (Judg. 5:21b), which may have been a part of the traditional customs. However, in Jones' view, there does not appear in early Israel a standard cultic pattern associated with the practice of war, even though customs of a ritual and cultic nature were attached to Israelite warfare. In Jones' view, recognition of cultic practices does not prove that Holy War was a cultic event.<sup>192</sup>

Jones agrees with G. von Rad that it is possible

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<sup>191</sup>Gwilym H. Jones, "'Holy War" or "Yahweh War"?, 'VT, 25 (1975), p. 649.

<sup>192</sup>Jones, p. 651.

to describe a Holy War scheme. He sees this appearing in Judg. 6:33 - 7:22, and notes three structural key points: '(1) a summoning of troops (vi 33f.); (2) a rallying together and formation for battle (vii 1); (3) a statement that victory was won (vii 22).'<sup>193</sup>

Jones suggests that to the basic tradition about Gideon (Judg. 6:33 - 7:22), a redactor has added this framework to give the present form of the narrative a Holy War character.

Within this Holy War outline lies a basic tradition about Gideon, which related firstly how he visited the camp during the night and was encouraged when he overheard a soldier relating his dream, and secondly how he divided his men and planned his action against the enemy (vii 11b, 13-32) ... In addition to supplying key points which have given the present form of the narrative its structural outline, the redactor also made some insertions, which again emphasise characteristic Holy War themes. An example of such an insertion is the short section in vii 9-11a ... whose basic contents are the handing-over formula ... and the Do-not-fear theme in v. 10, both of which are prominent in Holy War sections. In this case, therefore, it would appear that the redactors provided a framework for the original tradition and also made some insertions; in this way the old tradition has been transformed into a typical Holy War narrative. Yet another version of the Holy War scheme appears in another section of the Gideon narrative, vii 23 - viii 21 ... this was basically a narrative describing Gideon's revenge on the men of Succoth (viii 5-9,

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<sup>193</sup>Jones, '"Holy War" or "Yahweh War"?,' p. 651.

14-21), but in its present setting it stands within a Holy War scheme which includes again a summoning of troops (vii 23f.), a rallying together and formation for battle (viii 4) and a statement that victory was won (viii 10-13); it has thus been transformed into a typical Holy War account. The redactors did not interfere with the contents of the received narrative, but succeeded in giving it a Holy War character by supplying the framework, mostly at the beginning (vii 23 - viii 4) and to a lesser degree at the end (viii 10-13). 194

Although Jones sees the Holy War scheme presented mostly in the framework of narratives and through the insertion of a structure, he maintains that the Holy War tradition was not carried out always according to a tight formula.<sup>195</sup> It is at a later stage in Israel's history that the Holy War scheme was adopted into the Deuteronomic tradition.

In earlier practice Israel's wars, although containing customs of a cultic and ritual nature, do not give the impression of a set form or of being conducted according to an accepted scheme. It was later that the material was manipulated and set within the framework of a Holy War scheme; the pattern, which was superimposed on narratives and traditions that existed in an unschematised form, emerged when the material was standardized in pre-Deuteronomic times, and the process reached a climax when the traditions were accepted into the Deuteronomic historical scheme. Whereas von Rad described a theory

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<sup>194</sup>Jones, "'Holy War" or "Yahweh War"?,' pp. 651-652.

<sup>195</sup>Jones, p. 653.

that was established before the practice, the presupposition of this approach is that the theory represents later development, and is a formulation of what existed previously in the ancient Yahweh tradition. 196

Jones suggests that the Holy War theory was built on a tradition that already existed in the Yahweh War experience. The basic element of the early tradition was that Yahweh fought battles on behalf of Israel. The formula or structure, which later was superimposed upon the early accounts, was used to emphasise Yahweh's activity and part played in war. Hence, there developed the Holy War theory, which, although built on historical events, had in itself no historical reality.<sup>197</sup> The actual event, therefore, is described by Jones as 'Yahweh War' in preference to the term 'Holy War' used by von Rad to describe an amphictyonic and cultic institution. Jones maintains that Yahweh War was not an undertaking of the amphictyony. Also Yahweh War, in his opinion, was not confined to one group, but was carried on by various groups which acted independently of each other. Thus, the war of Yahweh in which they fought was not an amphictyonic

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<sup>196</sup>Jones, '"Holy War" or "Yahweh War"?,' p. 655.

<sup>197</sup>Jones, p. 656.

exercise.<sup>198</sup>

De Geus suggests that the name 'Israel' was originally the battle-cry and watch-word of the tribe of Jacob and means 'El-fights'. The battle-cry later became the name of the people. The name 'Israel' became a profession of faith in the god Yahweh introduced by Moses. The determinant element in Israel's national character, de Geus suggests, was its religion, and it was through Yahweh that Israel found her identity. Israel understood Yahweh as warrior god who came to Israel's aid. He does not believe that this religious faith was expressed in a sacral confederation.<sup>199</sup>

In view of the scarcity of evidence linking the tribes of Israel to a sacral confederation, or to holy warfare, that is, warfare conducted by an amphictyony of tribes, it appears unlikely that the tribes did gather at a central sanctuary to make military decisions. The prose account of the battle against Sisera (Judg. 4:6 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor') suggests an amphictyonic sanctuary at Mount Tabor (cf. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, I, p. 21).

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<sup>198</sup> Jones, '"Holy War" or "Yahweh War"?' p. 648.

<sup>199</sup> De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, pp. 9 and 17.

Although vv. 6, 12, 14 mention Tabor as the rallying point of the troops, vv. 9, 10 suggest Kadesh as the place of muster. There is some inconsistency regarding the actual gathering place. Also Deborah is possibly identified with a sanctuary in the south, in the hill country of Ephraim (v. 5). The Song of Deborah itself makes no mention of a sanctuary, and the peasant army is pictured as gathering 'at the gates' of the settlements (Judg. 5:11b). The absence of the mention of a sanctuary in the Song, and the mention of more than one possible sanctuary in the prose account, provides no conclusive evidence of the existence of a central sanctuary at which the tribes gathered before the battle. Although Judg. 4:6, 12, 14 presents the possibility of a dedication of troops before battle at the sanctuary of Tabor, with Deborah as the judge promulgating a military decision, no set pattern for holy war emerges in either the prose account or in the Song. The performance of a set form of rituals according to a given formula are not evident in either account, nor does a standard pattern for the practice of war emerge. Certain practices do emerge such as the allowing of hair to grow long (Judg. 5:2), but this can not be connected to a ritual emanating from a pledge signifying dedication to a cause or particular action.

Despite these customs of a ritual nature, they do not appear in a set form or common scheme. Such practices seem to have been schematized or formulated in the period of the monarchy and reached a standard form in the deuteronomic historical scheme.

#### 4. Yahweh War and Mythological Warfare

C. H. J. de Geus suggests that von Rad's concept of holy war 'is the result of the study of the Old Testament in isolation of the study of the cultures of the ancient Near East in toto. The notion of the Holy War belongs to the ideology of many Near Eastern cultures.'<sup>200</sup>

Patrick D. Miller, Jr., has focused his study of divine warfare in ancient Israel upon its mythological background. He develops 'the role of the divine or cosmic hosts of Yahweh in Israel's conceptions of how Yahweh was involved in her wars and fought for her.'<sup>201</sup> He holds that Israel understood Yahweh to be the commander of the armies of heaven and earth who fought

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<sup>200</sup>De Geus, The Tribes of Israel, p. 204.

<sup>201</sup>Patrick D. Miller, Jr., The Divine Warrior in Early Israel (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 5.

for Israel, unlike the gods of Canaanite mythology and religion who fought their wars for selfish gain, to punish or save man, and to preserve order in the universe.<sup>202</sup>

Miller suggests that the 'conjunction of the human and the cosmic' is most clearly seen in Judg. 5. In the Song of Deborah the focus is on Yahweh as 'creator and leader of the warrior hosts of the cosmos coming to Israel's aid.'<sup>203</sup> The biblical host of heaven, which include the sun, the moon, and the stars, in Miller's view, makes up the divine assembly which has a military function on behalf of Israel.<sup>204</sup> The divine assembly consists of an array of divine beings (cf. 1 K. 22:21; Amos 8:14; Isa. 14:13; 44:26; Jer. 23:18; Ps. 82:1,6; 89:6,8; 104:3-4; Job 4:18; 15:8; 16:19; 33:23; Dan. 7:13); mythical creatures (cf. Gen. 3:24; Isa. 6:2-6); all the host of heaven are mentioned in II K. 22:19; it includes the sun, moon, and stars (cf. Deut. 4:19; 17:3); the angelic host (cf. Ps. 103:20-21; 148:2-3); it served as a judicial court (cf. Ps. 82; Job 1-2; Zech. 3); it was addressed by Yahweh or one of his

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<sup>202</sup>Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 64.

<sup>203</sup>Miller, p. 66.

<sup>204</sup>Miller, p. 66f.



messengers, the mal'ak ywhw, who in turn addresses Israel as Yahweh's messenger (cf. Isa. 40:1ff.; Jer. 23:18,22). Unlike the independent, self-sufficient heavenly beings of other cultures of the Near East, the divine assemblies of Israel were subject to the will of Yahweh. Deut. 33:2-5, 26-29 'present a hymn of praise to Yahweh, describing the conquest of Canaan in terms of a theophany of Yahweh and his heavenly host leading the armies of Israel.'<sup>205</sup> The scene is of Yahweh marching forth from Sinai in the south,

who rides the heavens to your help,  
riding the clouds in his glory... (Deut. 33:26)

marching forth in conquest of the land of Canaan. At Sinai Israel was formed as the community of Yahweh, and his kingship was established over the people, not by a mythological battle of the gods in which he emerged as supreme divinity, but by virtue of his coming (with his heavenly army) to fight the adversaries of Israel. His rule over Israel was evident in the historical victories he won over the enemies of Israel rather than in any primeval victory.<sup>206</sup>

In Judg. 5:11 the picture is given of the people

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<sup>205</sup>Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 75.

<sup>206</sup>Miller, p. 83.

of Yahweh assembling to give praise to Yahweh for his victories over Israel's enemies.

When the players of stringed instruments make music  
at the watering places,  
it is Yahweh's victories which they recount there,  
the victories of his open settlements in Israel. 207

The Song of Deborah also depicts Yahweh as marching forth from the south, the ancient geographical abode of Yahweh. The divine warrior marches forth with his hosts to fight on Israel's behalf (cf. Deut. 33; Ps. 68; Hab. 3),

O Lord, when you went out from Seir  
when you marched out from the plains of Edom,  
the earth shook, the heavens lowered,  
also the clouds dropped rain.  
The mountains flowed in torrents before the Lord,  
before the Lord God of Israel. (Judg. 5:4-5)

This passage, in Miller's view, 'is a key element in the hymn, linking the great theophany of Yahweh (and his army) to the holy wars of the people of Israel. Her wars were Yahweh's wars (1 Sam. 18:17; 25:28; Num. 21:14), her victory dependent upon his mighty intervention ... the theophany cannot be separated from its content; it describes Yahweh's coming to the aid of

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<sup>207</sup>This and the following renderings of Judg. 5 in this section are those suggested by the exegesis presented in ch. 1 of this thesis.

Israel against Sisera.<sup>208</sup>

Judg. 5:20,

From heaven fought the stars,  
from their courses they fought against Sisera...

outlines the cosmic scope of the battle. The heavenly host, the servants of Yahweh, join in this holy war on behalf of Israel. V. 21,

The Wady Kishon swept them away,  
the Wady Kishon barred their flight.  
March on in might, my soul...

points to the involvement of the elements, the sudden rain storm and the torrent Kishon. Although these are natural elements they follow the line of thought in v. 20 and point further to the involvement of all the elements of the universe in the battle.<sup>209</sup>

Although Yahweh, the divine warrior, fights and wins the battle for Israel, there is an obligation on the part of the tribes and clans to come to the aid of Yahweh. V. 13,

<sup>208</sup>Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 91.

<sup>209</sup>Miller, p. 98.

Then the survivors came down with their chieftains,  
the people of the Lord came down like warriors... 210

along with vv. 2 and 9 which praise the volunteers,  
indicate that Yahweh does not fight alone. Israel is  
bound by covenant to Yahweh, and joins in the battle. The  
victory belongs to Yahweh (cf. v. 11 sidqot yhw), and the  
numbers of Israelite warriors are insignificant (as is  
evidenced by the defeat of Midian by Gideon's small force,  
Judg. 7), but the obligation remains for Israel to  
participate. The command to curse Meroz (v. 23),

Curse Meroz, said the messenger of the Lord,  
curse forever her inhabitants;  
for they did not come to the help of the Lord,  
to the help of the Lord along with his valiant soldiers...

is delivered by the mal'ak yhw for the town's  
violation of the covenant obligation to come to the aid  
of the suzerain in battle.

Miller sees holy warfare as a 'synergism', a  
fusion of human and divine activity, which does not  
exclude Israel's fighting.

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<sup>210</sup>Cf. G.W. Anderson, 'Israel: Amphictyony: 'AM;  
ḲĀHĀL; 'ĒDĀH,' p. 150f. Anderson points out that where  
Israel is assembled for war the term חַדָּו is replaced  
by דָּו which may be applied to an individual as a  
term of kinship, or to the men of the community who are  
capable of bearing arms (I K. 20:15). However, this  
does not necessarily imply a reference to an  
amphictyony.

At the center of Israel's warfare was the unyielding conviction that victory was the result of a fusion of divine and human activity. As the centuries passed and the traditions grew, there came a tendency to ascribe the victory solely to the miraculous intervention of Yahweh apart from any participation of the people but in the early period of Israel's history there was no such abdication on the part of the people. While might of arms and numbers were not the determining factors ... it was yet possible for the people to see themselves as going to the aid of Yahweh in battle (Judg. 5:23). The emphasis, however, lay on the activity of the divine, the involvement of Yahweh as warrior and commander of the heavenly armies. The theophany of Yahweh and his coterie was the foundation stone. Yahweh fought for Israel even as Israel fought for Yahweh (Josh. 10:14; Judg. 7:20-22; and so on); the battles were Yahweh's battles (I Sam. 18:17; 25:28). Thus ... Yahweh was general of both the earthly and the heavenly hosts. 211

##### 5. Poetic Imagery in the Song of Deborah

The Song of Deborah is a song of praise which acknowledges Yahweh as the warrior god, and that the battles won are the 'victories of Yahweh' on Israel's behalf. Stephen G. Dempster describes Yahweh as Israel's divine warrior who goes forth as a 'man of

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<sup>211</sup>Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 156.

war' to destroy his own enemies.<sup>212</sup> In Judg. 5:4 Yahweh is described as 'going forth' ( יהוה בצאתך ) accompanied by Deborah and Barak and the warriors, the people of the Lord. Dempster holds that the verb יצא with Yahweh as subject has peculiar military connotations in other passages of scripture such as Isa. 42:13,

יהוה כגבור יצא  
כאיש מלחמות יעיר

The verb יצא is used to indicate the military attack of one force against another (2 Sam. 11:1):<sup>213</sup>

ויהי לתשובת השנה לעת צאת המלאכים

The verb is used with אלהים as subject (1 Ch. 14:15):

ויהי כשמעך את-קול הצעדה  
בראשי הבכאים אז תצא במלחמה  
כי-יצא האלהים לפניך להכות את-מחנה  
פלשתים

It is used in connection with cosmic forces (Jer. 23:19):

הנה סערת יהוה חמה יצאה

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<sup>212</sup> Stephen G. Dempster, 'Mythology and History in the Song of Deborah,' Westminster Theological Journal, 41 (1978), p. 46; cf. p. 46, n. 77: Ruth 1:3; II Sam. 5:24; Isa. 42:13; Jer. 4:7; Mic. 1:3; Hab. 3:13; Zech. 14:3; Ps. 68:7(8); 81:5(6); 60:10; 108:11.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. I Sam. 18:30; II K. 19:9; I Ch. 20:1; Judg. 3:10; 9:29,38; 20:14,28; Isa. 37:9; Jer. 37:5.

Miller has pointed out that the imperatives עורר and קום are 'common terminology for initiating or stirring up battle' and 'apply to Israel in her holy wars (Josh. 8:1; Judg. 7:9; 7:15; 18:9) when Yahweh commands her to arise and fight because he has already given the enemy into her hand.<sup>214</sup>

Dempster suggests that these imperatives applied to Deborah serve to depict her role as a warrior who goes forth with Yahweh to fight the enemy. Yahweh, who fights for Israel, does not fight alone, but is accompanied by Deborah. Dempster makes a comparison between Deborah, the mother of Israel (Judg. 5:7), and Anat, the Canaanite goddess of love and war. He suggests that Deborah is cast in a role similar to that of Anat, as warrior par excellence, and in this battle against Sisera, Deborah and Yahweh render Anat and Baal powerless in that it is Yahweh who has control over the cosmic elements and Deborah is his deputy fighting alongside him. Thus Dempster suggests that the author of the Song of Deborah gives the battle against Sisera cosmic significance by borrowing foreign mythological

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<sup>214</sup>Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel, p. 94.

elements.<sup>215</sup>

Dempster's analogy between Deborah and Anat, and Yahweh and Baal, is purely hypothetical, but does provide an interesting contrast between the mythological Canaanite gods and Yahweh and his forces. P. C. Craigie also observed that the use of poetic imagery associated with Deborah is based on the premise that there is a 'general similarity between the role of Anat in the heavens and that of Deborah in the Canaanite war.'<sup>216</sup> It is possible, according to Craigie, that the reputation of Anat was well known to the northern Israelite tribes, and that warlike epithets associated with Anat were used to describe Deborah's role as leader of the tribes of Israel. Craigie sees a parallel between Deborah's charismatic role as inspirer and leader (Judg. 5:7b 'mother in Israel') and Anat's designation as ybmt.limm 'leader of warriors'.<sup>217</sup> The battle-cry tđrky npšy 'z (v. 21b), Craigie interprets as the battle-cry uttered by Deborah in the heat of battle to inspire the warriors to

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<sup>215</sup>Dempster, 'Mythology and History in the Song of Deborah,' p. 50f.

<sup>216</sup>P.C. Craigie, 'Deborah and Anat: A Study of Poetic Imagery (Judges 5),' ZAW, 90, No. 3 (1978), p. 375.

<sup>217</sup>Craigie, p. 378.



victory. As Anat commands a host of stars, Craigie suggests, following Deborah's lead, the stars fought in the battle against the Canaanites.<sup>218</sup>

Craigie also suggests that Judg. 5:14b ('ahārēkā binyāmīn) may well have been the war cry of the tribe of Benjamin who were probably in the vanguard of the fighting force.<sup>219</sup> He also compares the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta and the Song of Deborah to find points of inter-relationship. Similarity is noted in the use of theophany, war-cries, treatment of enemy leaders, and the function of women in battle. Literary similarities are also noted such as taunt songs as a literary device to indicate taunt and sarcasm as a part of victory jubilation; the poetic use of simile and metaphor (the language of storm and flood, and the activity of the stars); short lines to create the greatest tension, atmosphere and dramatic effect (the staccato-type short line). There appears to be a high degree of probability that there exists an interrelationship between the two poems, but this is hypothetical and can not be submitted as fact. However, both poems do express the sentiments of war

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<sup>218</sup>Craigie, 'Deborah and Anat: A Study of Poetic Imagery (Judges 5),' p. 380.

<sup>219</sup>p.C. Craigie, 'The Song of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta,' JBL, 88 (1969), p. 257.

and victory in a very effective manner, and point to the conclusion reached by Craigie that 'in both bodies of literature the victory poem was a recognizable genre, probably with an early origin.'<sup>220</sup>

The imagery serves to emphasize the power of Deborah in the Canaanite war. Second, the use of this poetic imagery may serve a religious function, and this may be far more significant than the dramatic function. It is suggested that the goddess Anat was one of the divine leaders of the enemy on the battlefield; she may even have been represented by her female priestesses. Against the Canaanite foe, human and divine, the Hebrew victory was attributed to Yahweh, though it was won through his 'friends' (Judg. 5:31). In this context, the poetic imagery makes an important point. The power attributed by the Canaanites to their violent goddess was as nothing; poetically speaking, similar power could be seen in a human Hebrew woman, though that strength was not her own, but was rooted in her commitment to Yahweh. 221

The poetic imagery of the Song of Deborah does point to a language of warfare which is descriptive and sophisticated, and seems to indicate a vocabulary which developed over a period of time. It is probably the language of a late period in the time of the Judges when the concept of holy warfare had been understood.

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<sup>220</sup>Craigie, 'The Song of Deborah and the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta,' p. 265.

<sup>221</sup>Craigie, 'Deborah and Anat: A Study of Poetic Imagery (Judges 5),' p. 381.

However, amphictyonic holy war language is nowhere to be found in the Song. Rather, the language points to a concept of a divine warrior and Yahweh wars, but not to holy war understood as warfare conducted by a sacral confederation or amphictyony. Tribes are not described as gathering at a central sanctuary to make military decisions. The only warfare we have evidence of in the Song is that fought by the *עם יהוה* who had faith in Yahweh, the divine warrior, who fought on Israel's behalf in battle.

## 6. Conclusion

The Song of Deborah supports the theory of 'Yahweh Wars', of Yahweh coming to the aid of his people Israel, marching in theophany from the region of Seir (v. 4a), marshalling the cosmic forces (v. 20) and the forces of nature (vv. 4b, 5, 21), to overthrow the Canaanite enemy. The peasant soldiers gather at the gates of the settlements (v. 11b) to form the volunteer army of Israel (vv. 2, 9). The warrior-people of Yahweh (v. 13) marched into the plain of Esdraelon to do battle alongside their warrior-god. The entire scene is one of volunteers called to battle by the charismatic leader, Deborah, who confirms Yahweh's

support and victory over the enemy. The action begins and unfolds as a result of faith in Yahweh, a spontaneous reaction to a military threat, based on the assumption that the warrior-god will fight and win the battle for Israel.

Georg Fohrer holds that,

A 'holy' war as a sacral institution of the ancient period is nothing more than the result of a late systematization of the actual religious conduct of an early cultural stage, conditioned by religious hostility to everything alien. One can speak of a 'war of Yahweh' only in those cases in which the Israelites believed Yahweh had personally intervened in the battle. Since there were exceptional cases, we are usually faced with nothing more than the fact that the practices associated with the conduct of war were included in the general religious permeation of life. 222

The Song of Deborah is an instance in which Yahweh was thought to have intervened against Israel's enemy. Not only is there expressed faith in Yahweh who originally led his people in the conquest of Canaan (v. 4), but a conviction that he intervened in the battle against Sisera (vv. 20-21), filled the enemy with terror (v. 22), and brought about the complete destruction, not only of the Canaanite army but of Sisera himself. The Song does not support in any way

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<sup>222</sup>Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, p. 118.

the theory that the war against Sisera was the result of an amphictyonic military decision at a central sanctuary, which could be called a 'Holy War', but rather supports the faith expressed in the Song that the battle was a 'War of Yahweh'. The ultimate military hero is Yahweh, and it is his help, his power, and his victories which are recorded, while the achievements of the people of Yahweh are praised yet minimized.

CHAPTER III  
THE DATING OF THE EVENTS  
COMMEMORATED IN  
THE SONG OF DEBORAH

1. 'At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo' (Judg. 5:19)

William F. Albright's attempt to correlate biblical data and archaeological evidence led to the proposal that Judg. 5:19 'at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo' offered the most reliable evidence for dating the events commemorated in the Song of Deborah.<sup>1</sup> Literally rendered 'In (the district of) Taanach, on (the stream called) Waters-of Megiddo', the biblical verse identifies Megiddo with the stream Kishon which flows within a half mile of Megiddo and not the city itself, whereas Taanach, five miles to the south-east, is specifically named. Albright contends that the wording of the verse implies that Megiddo was not occupied at the time of the battle, but lay in ruins, and Taanach was the nearest prominent town by which to fix the

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<sup>1</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' BASOR, 62 (April 1936), p. 27.

location.<sup>2</sup> He argues that the two towns were never occupied simultaneously, and the omission of any reference to Megiddo is clear evidence that the site was unoccupied. Therefore the dating of the battle against the Canaanites under the command of Sisera must be set within an occupational gap of the Megiddo site.<sup>3</sup> In Albright's judgment, the battle against Sisera dates from between Megiddo VII and VI, about 1125 B.C.<sup>4</sup>

Archaeological evidence indicates periods in the occupational history of the Megiddo site. About the middle of the 15th century B.C., prosperous late Bronze Age Megiddo (Stratum VIII) was brought under Egyptian control (Thutmose III, c. 1468 B.C.).<sup>5</sup> Stratum VIII was destroyed during the early years of the reign of Ramses II, possibly during the rebellion in the fifth

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<sup>2</sup>Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>William F. Albright, 'Further Light on the History of Israel from Lachish and Megiddo,' BASOR, 68 (Dec. 1937), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Albright, 'Further Light on the History of Israel,' p. 25. (As this section deals with the dating of the events commemorated in the Song of Deborah, and the principal event is the battle against the Canaanite forces under the command of Sisera, the events will be referred to hereafter as: the battle against Sisera.)

<sup>5</sup>James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3rd. ed. (Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 234.

year of Ramses II, c. 1285 B.C. An immediate rebuilding program followed without a cultural break. This site (Stratum VII) was to remain until the destruction of the city about the middle of the 12th century B.C.<sup>6</sup> The Megiddo of Stratum VII-B exhibits characteristics of the last period of material wealth in the Bronze Age (13th century B.C.) whereas Stratum VII-A is ascribed to early Iron Age I (12th century B.C.).<sup>7</sup>

Since Strata VII-B and VII-A indicate two separate Strata of occupation, two phases of repair and reconstruction are credited to Strata VII-B and VII-A (c. 1250-1140/1100 B.C.).<sup>8</sup> Stratum VII-B probably suffered destruction c. 1175/65 B.C.<sup>9</sup> The rebuilding of the VII-B palace included the addition of a three-roomed 'treasury' in which excavators found a

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<sup>6</sup>J.N. Schofield, 'Megiddo,' in Archaeology and Old Testament Study, ed. D. Winton Thomas (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 318.

<sup>7</sup>Yigael Yadin, 'Megiddo,' in EAEHL, 3, English eds. Michael Avi-Yonah and Ephraim Stern (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975), p. 847; cf. W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 28.

<sup>8</sup>G. Ernest Wright, 'The Discoveries at Megiddo, 1935-1939,' BAR, 2 (1957), p. 232.

<sup>9</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1971), p. 61.



large collection of 'Phoenician ivories' which were tentatively dated between 1350 and 1150 B.C.<sup>10</sup> The majority of these ivories belong to the VII-B palace.<sup>11</sup> An ivory plaque bearing the inscription of Ramses III (1184-1153 B.C.)<sup>12</sup> indicates that the treasury was in existence during the reign of this pharaoh; also a model pen case of an Egyptian envoy bears the name of Ramses III, setting the latest possible date for the

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<sup>10</sup>ANET<sup>3</sup>, p. 263.

<sup>11</sup>Y. Yadin, 'Megiddo,' in EAEHL, p. 849.

<sup>12</sup>Egyptian chronology is based on: Jack Finegan, Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), Nineteenth Dynasty, p. 295, and Twentieth Dynasty, p. 315; cf. Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, trans. David Smith (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), p. 836 (who essentially agrees with Finegan's dating scheme); and, G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, Chronology of World History: A Calendar of Principal Events from 3000 BC to AD 1976, 2nd ed. (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), pp. 8 and 10. (Roland de Vaux notes: 'Any detailed chronology of this period inevitably depends on the precise date when Ramses II began his long reign of sixty-six years and two months and this date has been disputed. If it is correct that the sign of a full moon corresponds to one day in the Egyptian calendars, then the two possible dates of Ramses' accession according to astronomical calculations are 1304 or 1290 B.C. Scholars are not in agreement about which of these dates is correct and opinions have varied frequently. In my opinion, there is more evidence in favour of 1290. So far, no totally convincing arguments have been put forward, but most scholars who have examined this question in recent years have come to accept this second date.' Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 489.)

collection.<sup>13</sup> Stratum VII-A's end can be dated c. 1150 B.C. by an inscribed bronze statue base of Ramses VI (c. 1142-1135 B.C.) found in the ruins.<sup>14</sup> It seems possible that Megiddo VII-A was destroyed no earlier than Ramses VI's accession (c. 1142 B.C.) and no later than the end of his reign (c. 1135 B.C.) if the pedestal bearing the cartouche of this pharaoh does belong to Stratum VII-A.<sup>15</sup> A continuous occupation of Megiddo from the Middle Bronze Age to the fall of City VII-A is indicated from the inscriptions of Ramses III and Ramses VI. They also show that the city was under Egyptian influence at the time.<sup>16</sup> The settlement of Stratum VII-A came to a sudden end as is evidenced by the signs of destruction separating Strata VII-B and VII-A. Albright suggests that the destruction of

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<sup>13</sup>ANET<sup>3</sup>, p. 263.

<sup>14</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 28; cf. D. Winton Thomas, ed., Archaeology and Old Testament Study (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 320.

<sup>15</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 28.

<sup>16</sup>W.F. Albright, 'Further Light on the History of Israel,' p. 25.

Stratum VII occurred between 1140 and 1100 B.C.<sup>17</sup> An approximate date of 1130 B.C. is suggested by Yigael Yadin.<sup>18</sup> No evidence is available to show whether Stratum VII was destroyed by Egyptian, Philistine, or Israelite forces.<sup>19</sup>

Evidence of the complete and violent destruction of City VII-A is seen in the material and cultural decline in Stratum VI. The buildings were poorly built and the temples and high-places which had existed throughout the Bronze Age and early Iron Age were no longer in existence.<sup>20</sup> The site (VI-B) remained unfortified for a short period. J. N. Schofield believes that the city continued to be occupied by Canaanites.<sup>21</sup> However, according to Yadin, the sharp decline in culture as seen in VI-A may indicate an occupation by a new and different group of people.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>W.F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible (Cambridge, Mass.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1974), p. 226; cf. G.E. Wright, BAR 2, p. 226.

<sup>18</sup>Y. Yadin, 'Megiddo' in EAEHL, p. 850.

<sup>19</sup>J.N. Schofield, 'Megiddo,' p. 320.

<sup>20</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 28; cf. Y. Yadin, 'Megiddo,' in EAEHL, p. 850.

<sup>21</sup>J.N. Schofield, 'Megiddo,' p. 321.

<sup>22</sup>Y. Yadin, 'Megiddo' in EAEHL, p. 850.

Stratum VI-A exhibits construction of adobe-type buildings, some fortifications, and a ceramic culture which is typical of the 11th century B.C. and identical with Iron I at Bethel and with the latest culture of Shiloh before the Philistine destruction (c. 1050 B.C.). This Stratum (VI-A) was destroyed by a fierce conflagration, and the site appears to have remained unoccupied until the reign of Solomon.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Cf. John Day, 'The Destruction of the Shiloh Sanctuary and Jeremiah VII 12, 14,' in Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, 30 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), pp. 87-94, who notes that the Danish re-evaluation of the excavations at Shiloh in 1969 concluded that the evidence points to a destruction of the site in the 8th century B.C. rather than in the 11th century B.C., and that the biblical data does not support an 11th century B.C. destruction. (M.-L. Buhl and S. Holm-Nielsen, Shiloh, the Danish Excavations at Tell Sailun, Palestine, in 1926, 1929, 1932, and 1963 (Copenhagen, 1969), pp. 34 and 56-59.) H. Kjaer had argued for an 11th century dating of the destruction based upon the presence of a number of large 'collared-rim' jars, typical of Early Iron I sites (cf. R. Amiran, Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 232f.). Buhl, on the other hand, supports an 8th century B.C. dating of the 'collared-rim' jars at Shiloh, based upon a comparison of similar 'collared-rim' jars from Early Iron II found at Hazor. John Day argues that the 'collared-rim' jars from Shiloh resemble those from other Early Iron I sites rather than those from Hazor of Early Iron II (cf. John Day, p. 88). Day also refers to the biblical reference to Shiloh in Jeremiah 7:12-14 as evidence of an 11th century B.C. destruction of Shiloh: 'According to the Deuteronomists there was only one legitimate place where Yahweh caused his name to dwell (cf. Deut. 12:14) and from the 10th century B.C. onwards this was Jerusalem, specifically its Temple (cf. 1 Kings 9:3; 11:36; 14:21; 2 Kings 21:4,7). In view of this, the reference in Jer. 7:12 to the destruction of Shiloh, the place where Yahweh caused his name to dwell, cannot refer to an 8th century B.C. destruction but only one prior to the building of the Jerusalem Temple in the 10th century B.C.' Until more evidence is brought forward, Day's argument seems the most convincing.

All the archaeological finds testify to the Canaanite city which was destroyed at the end of the 11th century B.C. apparently by David, in Yadin's view.<sup>24</sup>

Stratum V contains inferior remains, with pottery reminiscent of Gibeah in the period of Saul.<sup>25</sup> Houses in Stratum V-B were built of rubble and sun-dried brick. This appears to be the first Israelite occupation of Megiddo, and probably dates to the Davidic period.<sup>26</sup> The culture of the new town is similar to that found in the hill country during the 11th and early 10th centuries B.C. and indicates that the Israelites had finally succeeded in conquering the city.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Y. Yadin, 'Megiddo' in EAEHL, p. 850; cf. Y. Yadin, Y. Shiloh, and A. Eitan, 'Notes and News: Megiddo,' IEJ, 22 (1972), p. 161ff.

<sup>25</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 28.

<sup>26</sup>Y. Yadin, 'Megiddo' in, EAEHL, p. 851.

<sup>27</sup>G. Ernest Wright, 'Archaeological Observations on the Period of the Judges and the Early Monarchy,' JBL, 60 (1941), p. 33; cf. Judg. 1:27f. in which Megiddo is described as remaining Canaanite until Israel grew stronger, possibly not before the 10th century B.C.

Albright, as we have seen,<sup>28</sup> dates the battle against Sisera during the period when the City VII-A lay in ruins, approximately 1125 B.C. He argues that the new, relatively crude culture which is found in Stratum VI is characterized by a pottery which is contemporary with Israelite pottery found in the earliest strata at Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Ai, Gibeah and Beth-zur and which, therefore, is Israelite as well.<sup>29</sup> Stratum VI is then, in his view, an Israelite settlement. He also maintains that there was a complete interruption in the settlement of the site between Strata VII and VI (c. 1150-1075 B.C.) and that a new and different people occupied the site.<sup>30</sup> Later research has proven that City VI remained Canaanite<sup>31</sup> and that there was a

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<sup>28</sup>Cf. W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 29: 'We may ... place the battle of Taanach and the Song of Deborah about 1125 B.C. in round numbers. By that time the weak Ramesses IX was on the throne of the Pharaohs, and the decline of the Egyptian power, which reached its nadir at the end of the 20th Dynasty, cir. 1070, was far advanced. The career of Sisera may be dated in the third quarter of the century and that of Shamgar somewhere in the first half.'

<sup>29</sup>W.F. Albright, 'Further Light on the History of Israel,' p. 25.

<sup>30</sup>W.F. Albright, 'Further Light on the History of Israel,' p. 25.

<sup>31</sup>J.N. Schofield, 'Megiddo,' p. 321.

stratigraphic continuity between VII and VI.<sup>32</sup> It is in Stratum V that is found the marked change in pottery, and evidence of a catastrophic and stratigraphic break is evident at the end of Stratum VI.<sup>33</sup>

The contrast between Canaanite fortress cities such as Megiddo and Beth-shan in the 12th century B.C. and those built by the early Israelites on the hill-country sites such as Shiloh, Bethel, Mizpah, Gibeah, Beth-zur, and Kiriath-sepher is clearly marked. Canaanite cities were well-built and possessed a fairly high degree of cultural advancement. Israelite settlements were not built well. 'Stones were gathered wherever possible, and no attempt was made to draft them to fit. Smaller stones were used to fill up the chinks. Little evidence of town planning is observable from the remains ... no good fortifications were built ...'<sup>34</sup> This type of construction is characteristic of Stratum V. Thus, Robert M. Engberg

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<sup>32</sup>Robert M. Engberg, 'Historical Analysis of Archaeological Evidence: Megiddo and the Song of Deborah,' BASOR, 78 (April, 1940), p. 5.

<sup>33</sup>Engberg, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>G. Ernest Wright, 'Archaeological Observations,' p. 31ff.

proposes to place the battle against Sisera between Megiddo VI and V, probably before 1050 B.C., rather than between VII and VI (c. 1150-1075 B.C.).<sup>35</sup> He believes that the Song of Deborah not only recounts the victory over the forces of Sisera, but also suggests that as a result of the battle the Israelites occupied Taanach and Megiddo. This event marks the beginning of Israelite control in the north, including these two Canaanite fortresses.<sup>36</sup> Beginning with Stratum V, Israelite presence in these sites seems continuous, whereas from Stratum VI backward there appears to have been a continuous Canaanite presence as far back as the second millennium.<sup>37</sup>

Albright's reply to Engberg is inclined to accept the revised chronology suggested. He writes:

Dr. Engberg is right in emphasizing the likelihood that the Israelites did settle on the site of Megiddo after their great victory over the Canaanites at the Battle of Taanach. If he is right about dating this battle between strata VI and V, we shall have to lower its date to after cir. 1100 B.C., since we can hardly place the fall of Megiddo VI less than a generation after that of Megiddo VII on any theory, and since Megiddo VII may not have

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<sup>35</sup>Engberg, 'Historical Analysis,' p. 7.

<sup>36</sup>Engberg, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup>Engberg, p. 7.



fallen until well along in the third quarter of the twelfth century. If the events commemorated in the Song of Deborah must be dated somewhere in the early eleventh century, the career of Shamgar of Beth-anath, who defeated the Philistines, must be correlated with the phase of Philistine expansion which culminated in the Battle of Shiloh (cir. 1050) rather than with an earlier movement as I have hitherto inferred. The Song of Deborah and the following careers of Gideon and Jephthah then fall between 1100 and 1050, while the brief reign of Abimelech in Western Manasseh may come down to the last years before Saul's accession to the throne. This telescoping of events does somewhat upset our usual views, but there is no serious historical objection ... The Song of Deborah certainly presupposes a long period of settlement and a century and a half is not excessive. 38

Albright assumes that the book of Judges recounts events in a chronological order. A. D. H. Mayes on the other hand claims that the book of Judges is a collection of what were originally local traditions, taken together by a later editor, and presented as a record of events descriptive of Israel's history throughout the period of the Judges. Mayes states that the chronological order of the book of Judges is uncertain.<sup>39</sup> He suggests, as an example of the difficulty in dating events in the period of the

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<sup>38</sup>W.F. Albright's reply to Robert M. Engberg in 'Historical Analysis,' pp. 7-9.

<sup>39</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 76.

Judges, that the Othniel tradition (Judg. 3:7-11 - the ancestor of the Kenite clan, a tribe of Judah) probably was written to provide a charismatic deliverer for Judah, as none of the other judges came from Judah, and is probably late in date.<sup>40</sup> Shamgar (Judg. 3:31) according to Mayes is impossible to place historically, and the editor's intention may have been to show Philistine aggression prior to the time of David.<sup>41</sup> The story of Gideon (Judg. 6-8) which involves Ephraim, one of the younger tribes in his view, probably belongs to a late period when the tribes had become settled.<sup>42</sup> Abimelech's attempt to rule over Shechem probably occurred at an early time when Canaanite kings ruled over the city-states of Palestine, rather than near the period of the reign of Saul.<sup>43</sup> Mayes dates the activity of Jephthah early (probably before or shortly after the battle against Sisera) as Gilead took part in the event (Judg. 10:9) rather than Gad which appears as a tribe only after the Song of Deborah.<sup>44</sup> Mayes

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<sup>40</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 76.

<sup>41</sup>Mayes, p. 76.

<sup>42</sup>Mayes, p. 77.

<sup>43</sup>Mayes, p. 77.

<sup>44</sup>Mayes, p. 78.

believes that the war between Benjamin and the rest of the tribes (Judg. 19-21) actually refers to an unsuccessful attempt by Benjamin to free itself from the dominance of Ephraim at a later time in the period of the Judges. He also notes that the tribe of Ephraim occupies a prominent position throughout the book of Judges (the story of Gideon, Judg. 8:1ff; the Jephthah tradition, Judg. 12:1ff; the Ehud tradition, Judg. 3:15ff; and the Deborah tradition, Judg. 5:14), which creates difficulty in dating the various events.<sup>45</sup>

Roland de Vaux maintains that,

... it is not possible to write a well-ordered history of the period of the Judges. Despite this, however, the book has considerable historical value. Both the deuteronomistic editorial work and the final editing with the appendices have preserved genuine traditions concerning this period during which the people of Israel was formed and for which the Book of Judges is our only source of information. In it, we are aware of the tribes becoming more firmly settled in the possession of their territories, defending them against pressure from their enemies in the land or against invasion from abroad, fighting amongst themselves to establish a hegemony and preparing the way for the unity which was eventually to be brought about by the setting up of the monarchy. We are also confronted with the social and political crises caused by the people's change from a semi-nomadic way of life to the urban life of Canaan. This encounter with Canaanite institutions also took

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<sup>45</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 82.

place in the religious sphere and the Book of Judges shows us how the Yahwism of the semi-nomadic life of the desert was preserved and yet at the same time became adapted to a settled way of life in Canaan and how its institutions developed there. The task of reconstructing this history is both fascinating and difficult. 46

Thus it appears impossible to list the events in the book of Judges in a chronological order as Albright suggests. The dating of the events in the Song of Deborah can not be calculated by placing the battle against Sisera within a chronology of events as found in the book of Judges. On the other hand, the archaeological evidence of Israelite settlement at Megiddo (Stratum V) does point to the possibility that the battle against Sisera may have occurred at the time of the destruction of the city (Stratum VI). However, there is no evidence in the Song of Deborah that the Israelites attacked and destroyed Megiddo at this time.

Excavations at Taanach have shown little evidence of an occupation of the site in the 13th century B.C.

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<sup>46</sup>R. de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 693. De Vaux notes that the deuteronomistic Book of Judges comprises the section of the Book of Judges as we have it from 2:6 to 16:31; to this were added certain traditions concerning the earliest stages of the settlement in Canaan (1:1-2:5), and, at the end, traditions concerning the tribes of Dan (17-18) and Benjamin (19-21), prior to the monarchy, in Early History, p. 689.

However, by the 12th century B.C. occupation does seem to have been extensive.<sup>47</sup> This occupation was completely destroyed c. 1125 B.C. as is evidenced by the ceramic tradition. A courtyard used throughout the 12th century B.C. shows evidence of a destruction at this time:<sup>48</sup>

... one of the best-preserved for any ancient Palestinian building, the courtyard contained several other interesting installations ... a hearth and an oven, a large stone-lined plastered basin ... west of the basin was a curious jumble of stones which may have originally been a partial curtain wall formed on supporting pillars for a roof. The floor immediately west of this was covered with heavy flagstones. Built against two of these supports from the east was a bin constructed of large stone slabs. They may have been a manger, especially if the suggestion that this court was part of a guardhouse adjacent to the town gate has any merit. This courtyard was used through much of the 12th century B.C. and was destroyed about 1125 in a massive destruction which heaped its mudbrick superstructure on the tramped earth courtyard floor, in places over a meter and a half deep. Similar and contemporary constructions at three other excavated spots attest the same destruction. Whether or not this destruction is to be attributed to the victory celebrated in the Song of Deborah, it is not far-fetched to suggest that some occupants of this building may have been numbered with the forces of Sisera. 49

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<sup>47</sup>Paul W. Lapp, 'Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo,' BA, 30, No. 1 (February 1967), p. 8.

<sup>48</sup>Lapp, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup>Lapp, pp. 15-16.

After the destruction of Taanach in 1125 B.C., archaeological evidence shows only a minor occupation of the city in the 11th century B.C., followed by a larger 10th century presence.<sup>50</sup>

If the destruction of Megiddo VII-A is dated between 1150 and 1130 B.C. (during or shortly after the reign of Ramses III, c. 1184-1153 B.C.), and the suggested date of about 1125 B.C. for the destruction of 12th century Taanach is accepted, it would appear that the 12th century occupation pattern at Taanach is very similar to that of Megiddo. Both suffered a major destruction about the middle or the last quarter of the 12th century B.C. followed by an occupational gap at Taanach, and at least a major decline of the Megiddo site.<sup>51</sup> It is fairly certain that both sites existed simultaneously in the 12th century B.C. and that the Song of Deborah did not refer to Megiddo as being in ruins while Taanach was occupied. Lapp offers the

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<sup>50</sup>A.E. Glock, 'Taanach,' in EAEHL, 4 (1975), p. 1147.

<sup>51</sup>John Bright, A History of Israel, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), p. 172, n. 81, states: '... both Taanach and Megiddo were violently destroyed ca. 1125 or a little earlier and left in ruins, Taanach for over a century.' Cf. J. Maxwell Miller, 'W. F. Albright and Historical Reconstruction,' BA, 42, No. 1 (Winter 1979), p. 41; and W.F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 117.

hypothesis that the victory of Deborah and Barak be associated with the destruction of these two fortresses, c. 1125 B.C.<sup>52</sup> However, neither the Song of Deborah nor the prose account in Judg. 4 makes mention of a conquest of these cities and probably would have done so if such an important event had occurred. It was only during the reign of David that these two sites were occupied by the Israelites.<sup>53</sup>

The possible occupational gap at Taanach and the cultural decline which occurred after the destruction of Megiddo (Stratum VII-A) and continued until c. 1000 B.C. may point to a period in which the Israelite forces were able to exercise military superiority over the area, and would support Engberg's dating of the battle shortly before 1050 B.C. The destruction of both cities c. 1125 B.C. refutes Albright's interpretation of Judg. 5:19, but leaves c. 1125 B.C. as a possible date for the battle against Sisera.

2. 'In the days of Shamgar, ben Anath' (Judg. 5:6)

Sh. Yeiven suggests a date c. 1175 B.C. for the

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<sup>52</sup>Paul W. Lapp, 'Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo,' p. 9.

<sup>53</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 795.

battle against Sisera, and argues that this date fits the period during which the Sea Peoples were invading the northern coast of Syria and Canaan. He connects this invasion of the Sea Peoples with Judg. 3:31 in which Shamgar 'killed six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, and he too delivered Israel' and with Judg. 5:6 which describes the unsettled conditions at the time of Shamgar. Yeiven considers the Philistines as one of the groups of Sea Peoples. He believes that detachments of Philistine warriors may have descended from the western hills of Lower Galilee into the plain of Megiddo and destroyed that town (Stratum VII-B)<sup>54</sup> prior to Ramses III's campaign against them (c. 1176 B.C.) and, as a result, may have cut off the northern tribes of Israel from their kinsmen in the south.

Yeiven suggests that the action attributed to Shamgar ben-Anath was against such marauding invaders, and that the marauders were not of sufficient strength to mount a punitive attack. Shamgar's feat, he believes would not have been possible at a later date when the Philistines were more numerous and more

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<sup>54</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, p. 104. (Cf. p. 61, the violent destruction of the palace in Stratum VII-B, c. 1300- 1175/65 B.C. is noted.)



securely established in the area.<sup>55</sup>

There appears to be evidence of the invasion of the Sea Peoples down the coast from Syria in the north to the mouth of the Nile in the south. Egypt seems to be their immediate goal, and there is no clear evidence that they stopped on the way to conquer other places, or to carry out acts of plunder. R. de Vaux notes in reference to the invasion of the Sea Peoples:

... there is clear archaeological evidence of the destruction of the majority of sites in Cyprus, of Tarsus on the coast of Asia Minor, of Ugarit, Alalah (to the east of Ugarit) and Tell Sukas (to the south of Ugarit) in Syria. This is in accordance with the inscription of Ramses III at Medinet Habu ... 'No land could stand before their arms, once Hatti, Kode (Cilicia?), Carchemish, Arzawa, and Alashiya had been cut off at one stroke. A camp was set up in one place in Amor (Coele-Syria?). They destroyed its people, and their land was as though it had never been.'

The destruction of the great Hittite sites in the interior of the country is not, however, explained by the invasion of the Sea Peoples. These sites were destroyed by other peoples ... 56

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<sup>55</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, p. 104; cf. W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 27; and, W.F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), p. 111. (Albright considers Shamgar to be a Canaanite from Beth-anath in Galilee who fought against the Philistines.)

<sup>56</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 500.

There is no mention of a campaign against the city of Megiddo.

The incursion of the Philistines inland seems to have been a gradual process. After having become established on the southern coastal plain and south of the Carmel range at Dor, the Philistines, according to Yeiven, gradually extended their hold eastwards and northwards. Their further progress north-eastwards was then effectively stopped by the small Canaanite city-state of Gezer, which remained independent until the days of Solomon, so that the Philistine territory on the north does not seem to have extended further than the latitude of Jabneh (at the western end of the maritime plain), or the confines of the city-state of Gezer (at the eastern edge of that plain).<sup>57</sup>

It is difficult to place Shamgar in the context of the invasion of the Sea Peoples. His activities are against Philistines, according to Judg. 3:31. The Philistines have been connected with the Sea Peoples, as one group of the invading peoples. They may have been among the group which settled in the plains area after their defeat by Ramses III, and 'Philistine' may have become the name by which these Sea Peoples in the

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<sup>57</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, p. 113.

area of the southern plain were known. But this process of settlement in the plains area was gradual, and the expansion of this people inland was over a longer period of time. It seems more probable that an encounter between Shamgar, on behalf of some Israelites, and Philistine bands, would have occurred during the later period of expansion inland by the Philistines.

It is not only difficult to place Shamgar in a definite period of Israelite history, but it is equally difficult to connect him with the Shamgar in the Song of Deborah and with the events commemorated in the Song. Shamgar ben-Anath may be the same person in both Judg. 3:31 and in Judg. 5:6. R. de Vaux however, considers the reference to Shamgar in Judg. 3:31 as an intrusion into the text,

... since verse 4:1 (the death of Ehud) is a continuation of verse 3:30, without any allusion at all to Shamgar. It was probably added to the text by the main deuteronomistic editor and may have included the figure eighty instead of forty for the period of rest after Ehud, this figure covering both Ehud and Shamgar. The words 'he too was a deliverer of Israel' emphasize the fact that it was an addition. It was probably inserted at this point in the text because Shamgar is mentioned in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5:6) together

with Jael and he was regarded as one who had delivered Israel. 58

About all that can be said about the biblical account (Judg. 3:31) is that Shamgar appears to have been a local leader (possibly Canaanite) who warded off a raid upon his neighbourhood, and in so doing he 'also delivered Israel' (Judg. 3:31).

G. F. Moore believes that a reference to the slaughter of the Philistines is premature in Judg. 5:6, as the Song deals with the struggles of the central and northern tribes against the Canaanites and not with oppression by the Philistines. Therefore the time is too early for Shamgar to appear as a champion of Israel against the Philistines.<sup>59</sup>

Paul Haupt suggests: 'Sisera may have been the successor of Shamgar. Both names seem to be Hittite. In the days of Shamgar, the Canaanites blockaded the trade routes traversing the great plain so that the Israelites in the mountains were cut off from the Mediterranean.'<sup>60</sup> Burney also connects Shamgar with a

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<sup>58</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 822.

<sup>59</sup>G.F. Moore, Judges, p. 105.

<sup>60</sup>Paul Haupt, 'Armageddon,' p. 419.

ruling Hittite dynasty in Canaan, and suggests that he may possibly be the father of Sisera.<sup>61</sup>

Benjamin Maisler connects Shamgar with the period of oppression prior to Deborah, and suggests that he was a Hurrian lord who was ruling in Palestine at the beginning of the period of the Judges and oppressed the Israelites. Maisler also considers it most probable that the author of the later reference to Shamgar in Judg. 3:31 actually derived the Israelite Judge from Judg. 5:6, and that the transformation of this oppressor into a judge is due to a misinterpretation on the part of the editor of the book of Judges. He further suggests that the deeds of Shammah, son of Agee the Hararite (2 Sam. 23:11-12), were transferred to Judg. 3:31, and attributed to Shamgar.<sup>62</sup> However, if Shamgar is a non-Israelite oppressor, it is difficult to explain why his name is coupled with that of Jael, a non-Israelite heroine.

An arrow-head, published by J. T. Milik, dated early Iron I (c. 1200 B.C.), and containing the inscription "the arrow of Zakkur son of Bin 'ana" has been connected with a census-list of soldiers from

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<sup>61</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 113.

<sup>62</sup>Benjamin Maisler, 'Shamgar ben 'Anath,' PEQ, 66 (1934), pp. 192-194.

Ugarit where the onomastic category 'bn plus the divine name or epithet' seems to have been popular among the army of Ugarit. This also suggests that there was in Syria-Palestine of the late Bronze - early Iron Period a mercenary body of soldiers whose profession was hereditary among certain families. Rather than Shamgar being connected with Beth-anath in Naphtali, it is probably a Canaanite name designating a hero who exhibited characteristics of Anath, the great goddess of war. Milik believes that Shamgar's Canaanite name and origin could easily connect him with the tribe of Asher who 'dwelt among the Canaanites' (Judg. 1:32).<sup>63</sup>

A. van Selms points out that the number 600 given as the number of the enemies slain by Shamgar is found elsewhere in the Old Testament in connection with military exercises<sup>64</sup> and appears to be a reference to a battalion of warriors. He suggests that the 600 warriors slain by Shamgar was a battalion or task force

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<sup>63</sup>J.T. Milik, 'An Unpublished Arrow-Head Phoenician Inscription of the 11th - 10th Century B.C.,' BASOR, No. 143 (October 1956), p. 3ff; cf. P.C. Craigie, 'A Reconstruction of Shamgar ben Anath (Judg. 3:31 and 5:6),' JBL, 91 (1972), p. 239f., in which Craigie suggests that ben Anath may be the name of a military family, or a military title or epithet, based upon the warlike character of the goddess Anath.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. Judg. 18:11; 1 Sam. 13:15; 14:2; 27:2; 2 Sam. 15:18; 18:2.

which probed into the northern plain during the migration of the Sea Peoples southward. Its purpose may have been to pillage food rather than conquer, and such a raiding party was driven off by Shamgar.<sup>65</sup> The exploits of this non-Israelite became a part of Israel's folk-lore, and in Israel's later history when the Philistines were her hereditary foes, Shamgar was celebrated as one who vanquished the enemy.<sup>66</sup>

John Gray offers the suggestion that Shamgar may have been a Hurrian mercenary commandant of Egypt who was active in the resistance of the Sea Peoples, including the Philistines, who invaded the coastal plain of Palestine in the first half of the 12th century B.C.<sup>67</sup>

It is evident from the Song of Deborah that the action of Shamgar took place before the clash with Sisera. If the action was against a marauding band of Sea Peoples, it could have occurred either shortly before or shortly after Ramses III's campaign against the Sea Peoples (c. 1176 B.C.). The Egyptian empire

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<sup>65</sup>Cf. 1 Sam. 13:17; 14:15.

<sup>66</sup>A. van Selms, 'Judge Shamgar,' VT, 14 (1964), p. 294ff.

<sup>67</sup>John Gray, Joshua, Judges and Ruth (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1967), p. 278.

was weakened at this time. Canaanite power, weakened by the defeat of Hazor, maintained limited but aggravating control over the plains area, preventing expansion by the Israelites. Yeiven suggests that the battle against Sisera may have taken place in this power vacuum (c. 1175 B.C.).

... these events that took place in the plains of Israel (the coastal plain as well as the central belt of the Megiddo, Jezreel and Beth-Shean valleys) did not affect the mountainous regions of Cisjordan, where the practically unhampered expansion of agriculturalized settlement of the Israelite tribes proceeded apace and strengthened their sense of freedom and self-reliance, especially among the Rachel tribes. Here it was that the weakened hold of Sisera on his Galilean territory, and the rapid decline of Egyptian control were properly assessed; and from this region sounded the call of Deborah the prophetess, to challenge in a final and decisive battle the Canaanite supremacy in the north. 68

It may have been Shamgar's local success that inspired more extensive action by the Israelite tribes. Certainly it was a time in which travellers kept to the byways (Judg. 5:6) because of the fear of marauding bands, and the security of the northern settlements was threatened. Perhaps this period of struggle, after the victory of Ramses III over the Sea Peoples and the

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<sup>68</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, p. 106.



peripheral victory of Shamgar, resulted in the conditions described in Judg. 5:6-7, 'In the days of Shamgar ... caravans ceased, and wayfaring men went by roundabout paths ... open settlements ceased to exist in Israel ...' Aharoni proposes that Shamgar's action may have resulted in a disruption in the security of the northern settlements, and so precipitated the conflict between Sisera and Deborah.<sup>69</sup> However, the real decline in Egyptian control over its Asiatic provinces was between the reigns of Ramses IV to Ramses XI (c. 1151 - 1087 B.C.) rather than during the reign of Ramses III. Yet a period of instability could have resulted from the military exhaustion of the Egyptians in the struggle against the Sea Peoples (c. 1174 B.C., in the eighth year of the reign of Ramses III), and it is possible that this may have created the conditions favourable for expansion of Israelite tribes into the plains area.

Another context for the exploits of Shamgar is suggested by the story of Wen-Amon (c. 1070 B.C.) which describes the rapid expansion of merchant shipping and

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<sup>69</sup>Y. Aharoni, 'New Aspects of the Israelite Occupation in the North,' in Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century; essays in honor of Nelson Glueck, ed. J.A. Sanders (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 255.

the struggle for control of northern trade which led to perilous conditions for traders and travellers, so much so that groups were organized for better protection against pirates and raiders.<sup>70</sup> This story indicates the complete absence of Egyptian influence which began to decline in the reign of Ramses IV and appears to have reached a decisive point by c. 1126 B.C. (twenty-five years after the death of Ramses III). The real disruption in the security of the northern settlements may have been during the period c. 1126-1070 B.C. Shamgar's defense of a village or group against pirates or raiders (possibly Philistine raiders) in the 'trade wars' of the 1070's B.C. appears more likely than a defensive action against marauding bands of Sea Peoples seeking food supplies in the 1170's B.C.

There is no firm evidence to suggest that the action attributed to Shamgar himself resulted in the battle against Sisera. Reference to him in Judg. 5:6 seems to have the purpose of depicting conditions prior to the appearance of Deborah upon the scene and the resulting battle against Sisera. Unsettled conditions

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<sup>70</sup>James B. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures (Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 16-24; cf. William F. Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 23.

existed in c. 1174 B.C., but also in 1126-1070 B.C. Shamgar may have fought his skirmish during either period. However, it does seem probable that his action is contemporaneous with that of the battle against Sisera, although this is hypothetical. In both references (Judg. 3:31 and 5:6) Shamgar is named in a very obscure context, and it is almost impossible to place him chronologically, and the evidence is too meager to point to a definite date for the battle against Sisera (based upon Shamgar's activities). However, the period c. 1126-1070 B.C. appears to be a very probably time in which to date Shamgar.

3. 'And Dan had its home beside ships' (Judg. 5:17)

The location of the Danites at the time of the battle against Sisera is the only reference in the Song of Deborah of a possible datable event which may be examined to determine a possible date for the battle. Judg. 17-18 describes the movements of the tribe of Dan. According to Judg. 18:1 the Danites were looking for territory to occupy because the Amorites had pressed them back into the hill-country and had not allowed them to occupy the southern plains area (cf. Judg. 1:34). So the Danites set out from Zorah and

Eshtaol to look for a place to settle (Judg. 18:11). They eventually reached Laish, took the city, rebuilt it and settled in it (Judg. 18:27-29).<sup>71</sup>

R. de Vaux notes that the dating of the Danite migration is difficult to ascertain. He suggests that it must have taken place after the conquest of Hazor, c. 1200 B.C. (Josh. 11), because 'it is clear that the little tribe of Dan could not possibly have reached Laish while the king of Hazor was still in power in the region.'<sup>72</sup>

Avram Biran believes that a date in the first half of the 12th century B.C. is safe to assume for the Danite migration northward. He presents the archaeological evidence discovered at Tel Dan:

... after the Late Bronze Age there is a definite change in the material culture, which ushers in the Iron Age. Whether this took place in the late 13th century or in the early 12th century is difficult to say. Certainly by the 12th century it is fully developed and it flourished till the destruction of Stratum V, about the middle of the 11th century. The

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<sup>71</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 777.

<sup>72</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 778.

material culture at Dan is similar to Hazor XII and XI. If the abundance of collar-rim jars is considered to be a distinctive element of Israelite settlement, then there is additional support for the conclusion that, in the Iron I period, Tel Dan was settled by Israelites. 73

The distinctive collar-rim jars, characteristic of Israelite settlement, were found in the final phase of Stratum V as well as in its earlier stages.

Archaeological evidence ascribes this level of occupation to the Danite conquest that probably took place, according to Biran, in the middle of the 12th century B.C.<sup>74</sup>

Y. Aharoni places the migration of the Danites early in the 12th century B.C., after the fall of Hazor, and at a time when Canaanite forces had been defeated in the north and their strength weakened. He assumes a time not long after the arrival of Judah in Canaan, and takes Judg. 17:7-8 as evidence that the grandson of Moses came to Mount Ephraim from Bethlehem of Judah in a movement of the tribe of Dan northward. Aharoni states: 'There is no reason to doubt the truth of this tradition concerning the cause of their northward shift. The tribe was still mobile, camping

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<sup>73</sup>Avram Biran, 'Tel Dan,' BA, 37 (1974), p. 38.

<sup>74</sup>Avram Biran, 'Tel Dan (Tell el-Qadi),' in EAEHL, 1, p. 316.

temporarily and then travelling on ...'<sup>75</sup> R. de Vaux suggests that the genealogy in Judg. 17:7 may be incomplete, and this passage may be only an attempt to connect the Danite priesthood with Moses.<sup>76</sup>

Aharoni also places the battle against Sisera at the beginning of the 12th century B.C. He notes that the description of the tribes in Judg. 5 closely resembles the list in Numbers 34, and is therefore an earlier document than Judg. 1.<sup>77</sup> He states that no doubt can be cast on the antiquity of Num. 34, as the description of the border of the land of Canaan in vv. 1-12 resembles a description of the province of Canaan in Papyrus Anastasi I, 'A Satirical Letter', a letter of a royal official named Hori, written at the time of the late 19th Egyptian Dynasty (end of the 13th century B.C.).<sup>78</sup> The list of Judg. 1 omits reference to Issachar, which has lost its place in the tribal league, and does not mention the Transjordan tribes. Machir has been replaced by Manasseh, and the cities of Dan

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<sup>75</sup>Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, p. 221.

<sup>76</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 780.

<sup>77</sup>Y. Aharoni, 'New Aspects of the Israelite Occupation in the North,' p. 260.

<sup>78</sup>ANET<sup>3</sup>, pp. 475-479.

have been incorporated as cities of Ephraim and Manasseh. The list in Judg. 6:35 (Gideon's call of the tribes to battle) gives only the northern Galilean tribes as the ones called to action (Asher, Manasseh, Zebulun, and Naphtali), and messengers are sent to Mount Ephraim (Judg. 7:24). Issachar is not listed at all although the battle took place in his territory. The lists found in Num. 34 and Judg. 5 are older than those found in Judg. 1 and 6:35 and, according to Aharoni, help to place Judg. 5 closer to the beginning of the 12th century B.C.<sup>79</sup> He fixes the date of the battle against Sisera at a time shortly after the migration of the Danites northward.

H. H. Rowley believes that the battle against Sisera occurred later than the Philistine entry into Canaan, and before the Philistines had begun to press inland.<sup>80</sup> He notes that the biblical account attributes the dislodging of the Danites to the Amorites (Judg. 1:34; Josh. 19:47), and this may imply that the Philistine incursion first dislodged the

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<sup>79</sup>Y. Aharoni, 'New Aspects of the Israelite Occupation in the North,' p. 260.

<sup>80</sup>H.H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, (Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 81.

Amorites who in turn pressed the Danites.<sup>81</sup> Rowley believes that the Philistines took some time to extend their hold over the maritime plain before they began to press into the central highlands. The migration of the Danites, therefore, is likely to have taken place about the middle of the 12th century B.C., shortly after the defeat of Sisera, when Canaanite prestige was low.<sup>82</sup>

William F. Albright maintains that there is no proof that the southern part of the plain of Sharon was occupied by the Philistines until comparatively late in the period of the Judges, when they began to expand northward.<sup>83</sup>

Sh. Yeiven fixes the date of the Danite migration about 1100 B.C., after the battle against Sisera which he dates c. 1175 B.C.<sup>84</sup> He suggests that the spread inland of the Philistines caused the tribe of Dan to leave their original territory around Beth Shemesh, Zarah, Eshtaol and Aijalon and to move northward to Laish. He states:

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<sup>81</sup>H.H. Rowley, From Joseph to Joshua, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup>H.H. Rowley, p. 85.

<sup>83</sup>W.F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 27.

<sup>84</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, p. 124.



We have no definite chronological indications with the help of which we could gauge the exact date of the course of the events described above. But having examined the Philistine military potential, it is hardly possible to assume that their spread inland proceeded at a very speedy rate. It is more likely that the gradual extension of their rule, till they reached the middle course of the Soreq (the Danite territory), lasted through most of the XII century B.C.E.; the Samson episodes should be, therefore, assigned approximately to the last quarter of that century; while the Danite migration northwards would then be fixed about the turn of the century (ca. 1100 B.C.E.). 85

Yeiven dates the battle against Sisera c. 1175 B.C. and the migration of the Danites c. 1100 B.C. He assumes, therefore, that the Danites are in the south at the time of the battle. Rowley also located the tribe of Dan in the south at the time of the battle against Sisera (middle of the 12th century B.C.), as he places the battle prior to the migration. Aharoni suggests that the migration of the Danites took place early in the 12th century and prior to the battle against Sisera which he dates shortly after the fall of Hazor and early in the 12th century B.C. If the archaeological evidence is accepted for the fall of Laish in the north (c. 1150 B.C.), the Danites would probably have been in the north in the middle of the 12th century B.C. R. de

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<sup>85</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, pp. 116-117.

Vaux tentatively locates the Danites as probably living in the north c. 1200 B.C., shortly after the fall of Hazor, and prior to the battle against Sisera. He points to the closeness of Dan and Asher in parallel lines (Judg. 5:17)

And Dan had its home beside ships.  
Asher resided by the sea-shore.

as probable evidence that Dan had already settled in the north, and he suggests that the Danites may have served the Canaanites in the coastal ports as the men of Asher did.<sup>86</sup> However, de Vaux points out that the 'connection between the Danites and the ships can apply equally well - or equally inadequately - to Dan still in the south and to Dan already settled in the north, since Zorah and Eshtaol were no further from the Mediterranean coast than Laish in Dan was. Before they migrated, the Danites might have served the ship-owners on the coast in the Jaffa region as hired men.'<sup>87</sup> At best, Judg. 5:17 'And Dan had its home beside ships' can only refer to a situation in which the Danites lived beside the sea and served in ships. It may be

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<sup>86</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 778f.

<sup>87</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 779.

not unconnected with the situation of Asher in the following line, 'Asher resided by the sea-shore', and may imply a northern location for Dan by the time of the battle against Sisera. The reference may be to work activities in the Phoenician cities of the Syrian coast in return for settlement in the inland area around Laish. Thus, if the Danites were in the north at the time of the battle, and if a date c. 1150 B.C. is accepted for Dan's conquest of Laish, the battle against Sisera would have occurred after 1150 B.C., probably some time in the period from 1125 B.C. to 1070 B.C. However, as de Vaux points out, there is no certainty that the Song of Deborah follows a geographical order in its list of tribes.<sup>88</sup> Despite this, Judg. 5:17 does seem to point to the tribe of Dan as residing in the north along with Asher, and prior to the battle against Sisera, and thus to a date for the battle some time after c. 1150 B.C.

#### 4. The relationship between Josh. 11 and Judg. 5

Yohanan Aharoni attempts to find a historical relationship between the two Galilean battles recounted

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<sup>88</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 779.

in Josh. 11 and Judg. 5. Josh. 11:1-11, the account of the battle at the waters of Merom, in which Joshua and the Israelite forces conquered Jabin, king of Hazor, concludes:

At this point Joshua turned his forces against Hazor, formerly the head of all these kingdoms. He captured the city and put its king to death with the sword. They killed every living thing in it and wiped them all out; they spared nothing that drew breath, and Hazor itself they destroyed by fire.

Judg. 4:1-2 mentions this same Jabin, and connects him, through the commander of his forces Sisera (cf. Judg. 5:25-30), with the battle fought against the Deborah/Barak forces in the plains of Jezreel near the waters of the Kishon.

After Ehad's death the Israelites once again did what was wrong in the eyes of the Lord, so he sold them to Jabin the Canaanite king, who ruled in Hazor. The commander of his forces was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles.

According to Aharoni, the victory over Sisera was followed by the battle of the waters of Merom which resulted in the destruction of Hazor and the consequent control of the northern region by Israelite tribes. Hazor, he states,

suffered a total destruction at the end of the late Bronze Age ... No inscriptions were

discovered by which one could fix an exact date for its devastation, but in the two latest Canaanite levels (XIV and XIII) there were all the pottery types typical of late strata from the late Bronze Age, including Mycenaean III-B imports which, according to all opinions, belong to the 13th century. 89

The decline of the Egyptian 19th Dynasty, from the reign of Seti II (c. 1200-1194 B.C.) until the resurgence of the empire in the 20th Dynasty in the reign of Ramses III (c. 1184-1153 B.C.) provided the power vacuum in which these events were possible.

The Canaanite cities in the plains and in the north which up to now had been under the protection of the Egyptians, who preserved a nominal 'status quo', were suddenly left alone to face the attacking Israelite tribes ... At first they succeeded in imposing their authority upon the Galilean tribes by virtue of their chariot force, but at one fell swoop the battle of Deborah shifted the balance of power decisively in favour of the Israelites. In this battle the Canaanites were still the attackers, and the King of Hazor dominated an alliance of cities distant from his own. But afterwards came the battle of Merom, in which the Israelite tribes were already on the offence, storming northward towards Canaanite Upper Galilee. 90

Aharoni assumes here that the events described in Josh. 11 came after those described in Judg. 5.

A sharp decline took place at Hazor (between

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<sup>89</sup>Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, p. 207.

<sup>90</sup>Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, p. 208.

Strata XIV and XIII) and this, Aharoni believes, came about as a consequence of the battle against Sisera. He cites archaeological evidence of pottery found on the site (Stratum XII) which points to attempts to settle upon the ruins by squatters at the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the 12th century B.C. He had conducted a survey of Upper Galilee and found the remains of many small hamlets and settlements with typical Iron Age (12th century B.C.) pottery. The settlements were, in his opinion, evidence of the first peaceful infiltration by Israelite tribes into Galilee. The attempt at settlement by squatters at Hazor was an extension of the Upper Galilee Israelite settlements. The pottery of Stratum XII resembles that of the Israelite settlements discovered in Aharoni's survey.

This wave of settlement did not spread equally over the whole of Galilee, and these settlers are not found in areas suitable for settlement. They are concentrated in harsh mountain areas where there was no Canaanite population - areas which until that time were most probably wooded. They did not penetrate into Canaanite Upper Galilee. This picture does not fit in with the theory that the Israelites penetrated Galilee in one big military campaign in which they defeated the Canaanites led by the king of Hazor. On the contrary, it fits in with the views of those scholars who think that in Galilee, too, the penetration into unsettled regions preceded the decisive military encounters ... Even though these facts contradict the description of a united military campaign in the days of Joshua, they explain why the battle was fought by the waters of

Merom. The struggle was now between the dense Israelite population in Lower Galilee, and the older Canaanite population in northern Upper Galilee ... The action of the king of Hazor ... now clearly appears to be a last effort to defend himself against the onslaught of the Israelite tribes from their settlements in Central Galilee. 91

Aharoni suggests, in the absence of further and more precise details, that the date c. 1125 B.C. 'is changed from a terminus a quo to a terminus ad quem: the event had to take place when both Taanach and Megiddo were still strong Canaanite cities in the region ...'<sup>92</sup> Judg. 5, however, refers to both as geographical sites and not as cities, and does not state whether they were occupied at the time. Aharoni also cites evidence to date the destruction of Hazor near the end of the 13th century B.C., and the settlement of possible Israelite squatters on the site near the middle or end of the 12th century B.C. However, according to his argument, the battle against Sisera preceded the destruction of Hazor, and if Hazor was destroyed no later than 1200 B.C., it follows that

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<sup>91</sup>Y. Aharoni, 'Problems of the Israelite Conquest in the Light of Archaeological Discoveries,' in The Holy Land: Antiquity and Survival, II, No. 2-3 (1957), p. 142.

<sup>92</sup>Y. Aharoni, 'New Aspects of the Israelite Occupation in the North,' p. 260.

the battle against Sisera took place in the 13th century B.C., and not as he maintains, towards the middle or end of the 12th century B.C.

According to de Vaux, Hazor was destroyed and razed in the second half of the 13th century B.C. (c. 1250 B.C.). Mycenaen VI-B pottery found in considerable quantities at Stratum XIII, the level of the destruction, gives evidence of the date of the destruction. Stratum XII gives evidence of an occupation similar to the poorer Iron Age I settlements in Upper Galilee. G. Cornfeld supports this conclusion:

... the excavations of Hazor, the largest city in Canaan, demonstrate beyond question that it was destroyed around the end of the thirteenth century B.C. A new population, presumably Israelites, who had lived in modest villages in Galilee, settled over the vast ruins, as indicated by the distinctive types of pottery. Moreover, the fall of Hazor serves as a chronological marker for the northern military campaigns, indicating that they took place during the interregnum between the XIXth and XXth Egyptian dynasties (roughly 1200 B.C.). The decline of Egyptian power had opened the way for the decisive wars between Israel and Canaan. 93

It therefore follows that if the battle against Sisera

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<sup>93</sup>Gaalayah Cornfeld, David Noel Freedman, consulting editor, Archaeology of the Bible: Book By Book (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 76.



is dated somewhere between the middle of the 12th century to the middle of the 11th century B.C., at that time there was no town at Hazor, and the inhabitants were the semi-nomadic people of Stratum XII. De Vaux also notes that Judg. 1:27-37 is regarded as historically more accurate than Josh. ch. 11, and indicates that in the list of Canaanite cities in the north not conquered, Hazor is not included, which points to an early conquest of the site.<sup>94</sup>

Yigael Yadin believes that the pottery found in Stratum XII (similar to that found in small Iron Age settlements in Galilee) represents the earliest efforts of the semi-nomadic Israelite tribes to settle in Canaan, but these do not represent a peaceful infiltration that preceded the battle against Sisera. These were tentative attempts at settlement, and it is

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<sup>94</sup> Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 661; cf. William F. Albright, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,' p. 26ff.; 'Further Light on the History of Israel,' p. 22ff.; and 'The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeology,' BASOR 74 (1939), p. 11f. in which Albright accepts the chronological and historical basis of Josh. 11 and Judg. 5. The battle against Sisera, in his opinion, took place at a later period, and the reference to Jabin, king of Hazor, in Judg. 4, is a later interpolation, influenced by Josh. 11; and, Y. Yadin, 'Excavations at Hazor, 1955-58,' BAR, 2 (1978), p. 207, in which Yadin concludes that Judg. 5 is the true historical record of the battle, and not Judg. 4 which he attributes to a later editor who tried to connect the battle against Sisera with Jabin, king of Hazor.

not until the 11th century B.C. that a small unfortified settlement was made on top of the ruins of the first semi-nomadic site.<sup>95</sup>

Yadin states that 'this huge city with a population of thousands came to an abrupt end by fire in the second half of the 13th century never to be rebuilt. The discovery of the Mycenaean III-B fragments in the topmost stratum shows that the city existed while such pottery was still extant, namely until 1230 B.C. Most probably the city was destroyed sometime in the second third of the 13th century (i.e. during the reign of Ramses II).'<sup>96</sup> Therefore, a gap in the Canaanite settlement of Hazor existed between Stratum XIII (destruction of the city by Joshua) and Stratum X (rebuilding under Solomon). If the battle against Sisera took place in the late 12th century, there was no city of Hazor during Deborah's time.

As far as Judg. 5 is concerned, the identification of Sisera with Jabin has nothing to do with the story. The events described in Josh. 11 and Judg. 5 are not

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<sup>95</sup>Y. Yadin, Hazor (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 254.

<sup>96</sup>Y. Yadin, Hazor, p. 145; cf. Y. Yadin, 'Some Aspects of the Material Culture of Northern Israel During the Canaanite and Israelite Periods, in the Light of Excavations at Hazor,' in The Holy Land: Antiquity and Survival, II, No. 2-3 (1957), p. 166.

related historically as Jabin had nothing to do with the battle against Sisera. Also, the location of Harosheth-ha-goiim (Judg. 4:2b which pictures Sisera as dwelling at this site) has not been positively established to date, and its relationship to the Song of Deborah remains a matter of conjecture.

5. The relationship between the battle against Sisera and the battle at Aphek

A. D. H. Mayes argues for a date of the battle against Sisera shortly before the Philistine victory over Israel at Aphek (second half of the 11th century B.C., c. 1050 B.C.).<sup>97</sup> He maintains that the Song of Deborah provides no datable historical allusions (other than the reference to the settlement of the tribe of Dan in the north), and that archaeological evidence itself is not conclusive. He does suggest that 'a historical context can be proposed which has a good measure of probability in its favour.'<sup>98</sup>

Archaeological investigation is not dismissed outright

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<sup>97</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, 'The Historical Context of the Battle Against Sisera,' VT, 19 (1969), pp. 353-360.

<sup>98</sup>Mayes, 'The Historical Context,' p. 355.

by Mayes, but he believes that it is the literary sources of the Old Testament which constitute the primary evidence.<sup>99</sup>

The biblical evidence shows no concerted action by the tribes in the early period. This could happen only when the tribes came to realize that united action was necessary for their survival. The Song of Deborah, according to Mayes, suggests that a large number of tribes were involved in the battle against Sisera, and Judg. 5:14-18 accurately presents the assembly of the Israelite tribes in battle against a common enemy. However, in the prose account (Judg. 4) only the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali assembled at Kadesh (v. 10) in response to the call of Barak. Mayes suggests that the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, Issachar and Machir joined in the battle.<sup>100</sup> Whether this is an historically reliable fact has been strongly questioned by some scholars. Martin Noth suggests that the conflict was initiated by the neighbouring tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun (Judg. 4:6, 10). Barak, of the tribe of Naphtali, led the two northern tribes from their assembly point at Kadesh to Mount Tabor where they

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<sup>99</sup> Mayes, 'The Historical Context,' p. 356, n. 1.

<sup>100</sup> A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 91.

moved out against the forces of Sisera in the plain of Jezreel.<sup>101</sup> Thus Noth would see the list of participating tribes in Judg. 5 as a later composition. Aharoni believes that the references to Zebulun and Naphtali in Judg. 4:10 and 5:18 suggest that these two Galilean tribes took an active part in the battle. However, he agrees that Judg. 5:15-17 is an accurate description of participating tribes, and that the battle took place in the territory of Issachar.<sup>102</sup>

Mayes sees vv. 12-30 as the 'kernel of the Song of Deborah' and vv. 14-18 as the reference to those tribes which participated in the battle and which stayed away.<sup>103</sup> Judg. 5, in his view, is the first occasion in the period of the Judges in which is recorded the concerted action by a wide alliance of tribes. This united action by such an alliance of tribes against a common enemy, is a unique event in the history of Israelite tribes, and must have taken place after a long period of settlement and consolidation of territory. It represents to Mayes a period in the 11th

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<sup>101</sup>Martin Noth, The History of Israel, p. 150.

<sup>102</sup>Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, p. 204.

<sup>103</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 92.

century B.C. rather than in the 12th century B.C.<sup>104</sup>

Mayes notes that vv. 12-30 express concern with the individual Israelite tribes, and is in contrast to vv. 2-11 which are directed towards Yahweh who is praised (cf. vv. 4-5, the theophany of Yahweh; v. 11, the triumphs of Yahweh). Vv. 2-11, Mayes suggests, 'comes from a time when the already existing Song was adapted in order to fit a cultic context.'<sup>105</sup> Vv. 12-30, on the other hand, do not support a cultic background to the Song but belong '... to an early time, before the Song was brought into a cultic context ...', and before the Song became a cultic hymn of praise to Yahweh.<sup>106</sup> Thus Mayes holds that vv. 14-18 which describe the tribes who took part in the battle and the tribes which stayed away as an early account of the battle, and is praise of those tribes which actually participated in the battle. He therefore sees v. 18 as a repeated reference to Zebulun and Naphtali which was done in order to 'point out the contrast between these two tribes and those mentioned in the previous verses which had remained in the

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<sup>104</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 96f.

<sup>105</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 90.

<sup>106</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 90.

security of their own tribal territories.<sup>107</sup>

Roland de Vaux suggests that the two major battles against the Canaanites, the battle at the waters of Merom (Josh. 11) and the battle against Sisera (Judg. 5), have been combined in Judg. 4. Jabin, king of Hazor, is, in de Vaux's opinion, an intrusion into the account in Judg. 4, as Israel's adversary here is Sisera and not Jabin. Jabin, he believes, was introduced into Judg. 4 because the two tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali, were the two tribes nearest to Hazor and consequently played an important part in the overthrow of that city. Judg. 5:18 shows that these two tribes also played an important part in the battle against Sisera. De Vaux supports his argument by reference to Judg. 5:18 which he renders 'The tribe of Zebulun fronted death, Naphtali too, on rising ground.' The action, he suggests, took place on 'rising ground' ('āl mērōmē sādheh), and this he believes to be an allusion to the name Merom. Thus Judg. 5:18, he says, is an early saying about Zebulun and Naphtali which referred to the battle of the waters of Merom and was

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<sup>107</sup>Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 91.

inserted into the Song of Deborah.<sup>108</sup> However, his correlation of m<sup>e</sup>rōmē sādēh (Judg. 5:18) with mē mērōm (Josh. 11:5) is difficult to understand and each reference appears to point to a different location. However, his argument that Jabin, king of Hazor, had nothing to do with the battle against Sisera, and Judg. 5:18 is a pointed reference to the bravery of these two tribes in contrast to the reluctance of some tribes to participate is convincing.

Mayes' hypothesis that vv. 2-11 suggest a cultic origin is difficult to accept as there is no evidence of cultic activity nor of a cultic site in the Song itself. Vv. 2-11 suggest the spontaneity of praise to Yahweh delivered at the time of victory which is attributed to the action of Yahweh on behalf of the tribes of Israel, rather than a subsequent cultic hymn of praise adapted to an original victory song. Judg. 5:14-18 also strongly suggest a spontaneous appraisal of tribal involvement or non-involvement in the battle with an emphasis upon the bravery of Zebulun and Naphtali on the field of battle, and as such is quite possibly an accurate historical account of the actual

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<sup>108</sup> Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 665; cf. A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 89.



event which took place late in the period of the Judges.

Only the Song of Deborah accounts for a major advance of Israelite tribes into the northern plain, and this advance, Mayes suggests, belongs to a fairly advanced stage of their process of settlement, probably shortly before the rise of the monarchy. Mayes states that 'in the latter half of the 11th century B.C. Israel defeated a coalition led by Sisera, and in turn was shortly afterwards met in battle and defeated by the Philistines at Aphek.'<sup>109</sup> Mayes believes that the victory over the forces of Sisera precipitated retaliatory action on the part of the Philistines and resulted in the battle at Aphek.

Mayes suggests that the real threat to Israelite existence came from Philistine expansion and encroachment upon Israelite settlements. Border skirmishes, such as those recorded in the Samson stories, characterized early engagements. The Samson narratives (Judg. 13:1-16:31) indicate that Zorah and its environs belonged to Judah (Jud. 13:2; Josh. 15:33) and that Philistine pressure was being exerted on the tribe of Judah (Judg. 15:9f.). It appears that it is

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<sup>109</sup> A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 96.

not until the middle of the 11th century B.C. that the Philistines attempted to impose their rule on the hill country, and prior to this time they confined themselves to the coastal plains. Aharoni notes that 'Philistine expansion began precisely at the time when the Israelites were becoming firmly established and asserting their independence. It was probably then that the Philistines began to feel the presence of a serious opponent who posed a threat to their security. Thus they tried to smash this new force while it was still in a formative stage.<sup>110</sup>

It is suggested by Mayes that Sisera is to be identified with the Sea Peoples with whom the Philistines entered the land, and that Sisera created a Canaanite/Philistine coalition which suffered initial defeat but shortly afterwards was to meet and defeat the Israelites at Aphek.<sup>111</sup> The invasion of the Sea Peoples appears to have taken place c. 1174 B.C. If Sisera, Israel's foe, was a leader of the Sea Peoples who headed a Canaanite confederacy, it seems highly improbable that one from among the Sea Peoples could so quickly establish himself as leader of a group of

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<sup>110</sup>Y. Aharoni, The Land of the Bible, p. 252.

<sup>111</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, 'The Historical Context,' pp. 358-359.

Canaanite kings and fight a decisive campaign in c. 1175 B.C. Such an undertaking of leadership would probably have required a fairly long period of contact with the Canaanites before mutual trust and acceptance of Sisera could be achieved.<sup>112</sup> This would support a later date suggested by Mayes.

The concerted action by the Israelite tribes as described in the Song of Deborah (vv. 14-18) is probably a unique event which could only have occurred after a long period of settlement in the land, and when Israelite tribes were able to expand from their hill-country settlements into the plains. This probably took place when the Canaanite cities were weakened (towards the last part of the 12th century) and when Philistine expansion into the hill country from the plains began (the beginning or middle of the 11th century). This movement or expansion of both Israelites and Philistines was bound to clash, and according to the biblical account (1 Sam. 4) reached its climax at the battle of Aphek. A prior battle between the weakened Canaanites and expanding Israelites could have precipitated the Israelite-Philistine showdown at Aphek shortly

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<sup>112</sup>William F. Albright, YGC, p. 218.

afterwards to determine who would succeed the Canaanites as the dominant force in land. Mayes concludes:

... it seems best to see the victory over Sisera in the general context of Israelite expansion into the plains of Palestine rather than as an isolated victory on the part of Israel without much cause or really appreciable effect. Israelite expansion into the plains, however, as a recognizable tendency on the part of Israelite tribes, belongs to a fairly advanced stage of their process of settlement; and, indeed, in so far as such a tendency would have provoked an immediate reaction on the part of the inhabitants of the plains, particularly the Philistines and other Sea Peoples, it seems that it was not until shortly before the rise of the monarchy that such attempts to expand into the plains were seriously undertaken. The battle between Israelite tribes and the Philistines at Aphek towards the end of the eleventh century B.C. also belongs in this context, and provides an eminently suitable sequel to Israel's first success represented by the victory over Sisera. The latter event should then be seen as the cause of a reaction which led to Philistine subjugation of Israel during the reign of Saul, and so also to a temporary halt in Israel's attempts to enlarge her territory. We would argue, therefore, that in the latter half of the eleventh century B.C. Israel defeated a coalition led by Sisera and in turn was shortly afterwards met in battle and defeated by the Philistines at Aphek. 113

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113 A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 96.

## 6. The contemporaneous extra-biblical sources

Sh. Yeiven assigns the clash with Sisera to about 1175 B.C. and suggests the period of Egyptian weakness in Canaan after the death of Merneptah as the proper historical context.<sup>114</sup> He points out that the Israelite incursion into northern Canaan was impeded by the Galilean Canaanites who were organized in the powerful confederacy of Hazor. The Israelites were compelled to settle in the wooded and uninhabited part of the region in Upper Galilee. After the collapse of Hazor (c. 1230/20, in Yeiven's dating), Sisera established his headquarters somewhere in western Galilee and maintained a loose hold on northern Galilee.<sup>115</sup> Yeiven connects this military activity in the north with the campaign of Merneptah (c. 1220 B.C.) undertaken to quell the disturbances. In the last poem of Merneptah's Hymn of Victory (the 'Israel Stela') mention is made of his triumph over Asiatic peoples, and Israel (an ethnic designation, and the only instance of the name in ancient Egyptian writing) is

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<sup>114</sup>Sh. Yeiven, The Israelite Conquest of Canaan, p. 91.

<sup>115</sup>Yeiven, pp. 83-84.

named as the most northerly people involved.<sup>116</sup>

The reign of Merneptah was followed by a period in which several pharaohs of less importance and power reigned (e.g. Seti II, c. 1200-1194; Siptah, c. 1194-1188; Tawosre, c. 1194-1186). According to de Vaux, the end of Tawosre's dynasty was chaotic, and the Papyrus Harris I states that the country was run by an Asiatic, a foreigner who exercised great power at the end of the Nineteenth Dynasty.<sup>117</sup> Conditions at this time are described as chaotic:

The land of Egypt had been cast aside, with every man being his (own standard of) right. They had no chief spokesman for many years previously up to other times. The land of Egypt was officials and mayors, one slaying his fellow, both exalted and lowly. Other times came afterwards in the empty years, and ( )\*, a Syrian with them, made himself prince. He set the entire land as tributary before him. One joined his companion that

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<sup>116</sup>Cf. ANET<sup>3</sup>, p. 378, n. 18, 'Much has been made of the fact that the word Israel is the only one of the names in this context which is written with the determinative of people rather than land. Thus we should seem to have the Children of Israel in or near Palestine, but not yet as a settled people.'

<sup>117</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 492.

their property might be plundered. They treated the gods like the people, and no offerings were presented in the temples. 118

De Vaux further notes that the founder of the Twentieth Dynasty, Sethnakhte, resumed control of the country and then two years later handed the throne over to his son Ramses III (1184-1153 B.C.).<sup>119</sup>

In the eighth year of the reign of Ramses III (c. 1176 B.C.) the Egyptian empire faced a serious incursion of Sea Peoples, a confederacy of sea-faring northerners who established themselves in Syria, Palestine, and in the Egyptian Delta.<sup>120</sup> Ramses III, in a boastful speech addressed to his sons and his courtiers, tells how he met the attack by the Sea Peoples at his Asiatic frontier in Djahi and within the river-mouths of the Delta:

The foreign countries made a conspiracy in their islands ... They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared

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<sup>118</sup>Cf. ANET<sup>3</sup>, p. 260 (note 6, p. 260 states: '...the actual name of the Syrian has dropped out.');

R. de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 492, gives this Asiatic the name Irsu, and notes that there is evidence of this personal name at Ras Shamrah and in Egypt.

<sup>119</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 492.

<sup>120</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 493.

before them. Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshesh, lands united. They laid their hands upon the lands as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confident and trusting: 'Our plans will succeed!' Now the heart of this god, the Lord of the Gods, was prepared and ready to ensnare them like birds ... I organized my frontier in Djahi, prepared before them: princes, commanders of garrisons, and maryanu. I have the river-mouths prepared like a strong wall, with warships, galleys, and coasters, (fully) equipped, for they were manned completely from bow to stern with valiant warriors carrying their weapons. The troops consisted of every picked man of Egypt. They were like lions roaring upon the mountain tops. The chariotry consisted of runners, of picked men, of every good and capable chariot-warrior. The horses were quivering in every part of their bodies, prepared to crush the foreign countries under their hoofs. 121

At Medinet Habu there are also several scenes of Ramses III's campaign in Asia. One scene depicts him attacking two Hittite towns, one of which is labelled 'the town of Arzawa'. In another scene the town of Tunip is being stormed, and in a third scene, the town of Amor is on the point of surrendering. A. Gardiner believes that all these pictures are anachronisms, and must have been copied from originals of the reign of Ramses II, and that evidence points to extensive borrowing from the neighbouring mortuary temple of

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121. ANET<sup>3</sup>, p. 262 (Accounts of this war come from two great inscriptions at Ramses III's temple at Medinet Habu at Thebes).



Ramses II.<sup>122</sup> Existing papyrus tells only of a campaign against Semitic nomads in the area south of the Dead Sea, and no mention of a Syrian or Hittite campaign is made. All that is said is that Ramses III 'destroyed the people of Seir among the Bedouin tribes'.<sup>123</sup> R. de Vaux also notes: 'It is generally believed that these campaigns are without any historical basis and the battle scenes are regarded as copies of the battles fought by Ramses II.'<sup>124</sup> It looks as if Ramses III, after checking the advance southward of the Sea Peoples, could only manage to defeat these unimportant tent-dwellers. Although successful in holding back the advance of the Sea Peoples, it appears that an accommodation was made with these intruders. Some measure of Egyptian control was exercised over the north of Palestine by the use of Philistine mercenaries in garrison towns with Egyptian

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<sup>122</sup>Sir Alan Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 288; cf. ANET 3, p. 262, n. 21.

<sup>123</sup>ANET<sup>3</sup>, p. 262 (Papyrus Harris I, which contains a summary of the northern wars).

<sup>124</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 493.

consent.<sup>125</sup> Inscriptions of Ramses III from Beth-shean show that during his reign the Egyptian base was reestablished there and the temples rebuilt.<sup>126</sup> Ramses III apparently maintained a garrison at Beth-shean until his death in c. 1153 B.C.

The victory, however extensive, lasted only for the lifetime of Ramses III. Power declined swiftly under his successors (Ramses IV-XI, c. 1151-1087 B.C.), and the Egyptian Empire in Asia collapsed completely. Within twenty-five years after the death of Ramses III (c. 1126 B.C.), Egypt was too weak to command respect abroad. Scarabs of Ramses IV and Ramses XI have been found at Gezer, but a bronze statue of Ramses VI (c. 1140 B.C.) discovered at Megiddo is considered to be the last evidence of an Egyptian presence in Canaan. Also, the Sinai mines exploited by Egypt ceased during the reign of Ramses VI and Egyptian influence fell back

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<sup>125</sup>G.M. Fitzgerald, 'Beth-shean,' in Archaeology and Old Testament Study, ed. D. Winton Thomas (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 191f.

<sup>126</sup>For evidence of a Philistine presence in Beth-shean, cf. Trude Dothan, 'Anthropoid Clay Coffins From A Late Bronze Age Cemetery Near Deir el-Balah' (Preliminary Report), IEJ, 22 (1972), p. 72; and, Henry O. Thompson, 'Tell el-Husn -- Biblical Beth-shan,' BA, 30, No. 4 (Dec. 1967), p. 128; and, G. Ernest Wright, 'The Discoveries at Megiddo, 1935-1939,' BAR 2, p. 233; and, H.J. Franken and C.A. Franken-Batterskill, A Primer of Old Testament Archaeology (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), p. 70.

to its own borders.<sup>127</sup>

After the defeat of the Sea Peoples by Ramses III, it appears that the defeated invaders were allowed to settle on the coast of Palestine, and after the collapse of Egyptian rule in the area, the Philistine settlements became independent. The bible mentions Philistine settlements from Jaffa to Gaza, and a confederation of five towns, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. At the beginning of the 11th century B.C. there is reference to three princes who possibly ruled over Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza. Warkatara is mentioned as the prince of Ashkelon, who carries on trade with the king of Sidon.<sup>128</sup>

The decline of Egyptian power in Palestine is illustrated by the disregard shown Egyptian representatives sent to Palestine on behalf of the pharaoh. About the time of the reign of Ramses IX (c. 1134-1117 B.C.) Egyptian messengers were detained at Byblos by the local Syrian prince for seventeen years and eventually died there having been unable to secure

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<sup>127</sup> Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 494.

<sup>128</sup> Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 509.

their freedom.<sup>129</sup>

The report of the Egyptian envoy Wenamum<sup>130</sup> mentions the pharaoh (probably Ramses XI, c. 1099-1070 B.C.), and shows that the power and prestige of Egypt have sunk to a low point as the envoy is subjected to humiliating treatment. More importantly, the report shows that the Sea Peoples were competing actively with the Canaanite cities on the Phoenician coast for control of the lucrative sea trade.<sup>131</sup> This expansion of merchant shipping is perhaps reflected in the Song of Deborah which mentions the maritime activity of members of the tribe of Dan and Asher (Judg. 5:17). The conditions encountered by Wenamum continued to prevail and in the XXI Dynasty (c. 1087-945) conditions were favourable in Palestine for the exercise of independence by the remaining groups (Philistines, Canaanites, Israelites) in the power vacuum left by

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<sup>129</sup>ANET<sup>3</sup>, pp. 25-29 ('The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia', cf. p. 28b).

<sup>130</sup>Cf. Jack Finegan, Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), p. 434, n. 70: The Golenischeff Papyrus which was found at el-Hibeh in middle Egypt and placed in the Moscow Museum. It dates to the early XXI Dynasty, and the events probably took place shortly before, probably in the reign of Ramses XI, last pharaoh of the XX Dynasty.

<sup>131</sup>W.F. Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 20.

Egypt.

The Canaanite population was concentrated in the numerous fortified cities located in the plains. This allowed the Israelite tribes to gradually gain a foothold in the sparsely inhabited regions, in the wooded hills where there was no opposition to their settlement. The Philistines settled along the coastal plain, and only gradually penetrated into the hill country.

The period from the reign of Ramses II (c. 1290-1224 B.C.) to the reign of Ramses VI (c. 1142-1135 B.C.) is generally considered the period during which the Israelites were gradually settling in Canaan.<sup>132</sup> An Israelite presence in Canaan is possibly attested by the Israel Stele erected by pharaoh Merneptah (c. 1220 B.C.). However, from that time until the last known period of Egyptian influence in Palestine (c. 1140 B.C.), there is no contact by the Israelite tribes with the Egyptians. R. de Vaux states:

... neither Joshua nor Judges contains a single reference to Egyptian troops or even to Egypt itself. The reason for this can only be that there was no occasion when the Israelites came into contact with the Egyptians. Only the coastal plain, including Gaza and the strategic

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<sup>132</sup> Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 496.

route to the north, and the plain of Jezreel and Beth-shean were effectively controlled by the Egyptians. As we shall see later, none of the cities where evidence of Egypt's presence has been found -- Gaza, Gezer, Megiddo, Beth-shean and even Lachish -- was occupied by the Israelites at the time of their settlement in Canaan. In the rest of Palestine, moreover, Egyptian rule was purely nominal. 133

Any connection made between the external contemporaneous Egyptian sources and the Israelite presence in Canaan is very tenuous. The chronology of the settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan can only be approximate. If the reign of Ramses II (c. 1290-1224 B.C.) is taken as the probable period of the oppression in Egypt (cf. Ex. 1:8-14), the exodus itself might have occurred c. 1250 B.C. or before, and the entry into Canaan a generation later, c. 1225 B.C., if the biblical evidence concerning the wilderness wanderings is accepted. Archaeological evidence places the destruction of Hazor at c. 1200 B.C., and by the Israelites if the biblical evidence of Josh. 11 is accepted as reliable. This gives a probable date for an Israelite presence in Canaan c. 1200 B.C.

The invasion of the Sea Peoples is mentioned in the inscriptions of Ramses III (c. 1184-1153 B.C.) as

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<sup>133</sup>Roland de Vaux, The Early History of Israel, p. 496.

having taken place in the eighth year of his reign (c. 1174 B.C.). The period between 1225 B.C. and 1175 B.C. would have allowed the Israelites sufficient time to settle in the hill-country without opposition from a rival group of invaders such as the Sea Peoples. From the reign of Ramses IV (c. 1151-1145 B.C.) to the reign of Ramses XI (c. 1117-1114 B.C.), Egypt's power declined very rapidly, and all her Asiatic possessions were lost at this time. This power vacuum left by Egypt is vividly described in the treatment of the Egyptian envoy Wenamun, c. 1070 B.C. It seems that at this time the Sea Peoples were exerting their power by control of the sea-trade on the Phoenician coast. The period c. 1126-1070 B.C. (from the period twenty-five years after the death of Ramses III to the period of Ramses XI) appears to be favourable for conflicting power groups to struggle for control of land and trade in Canaan.

After Egypt ceased to maintain sovereignty over Canaan, the numerous Canaanite city-states which had been the vassals of the Pharaohs, ceased to display any political cohesion between themselves, and split into independent city-states consisting of no more than the walled-city and its environs, and ruled by individual kings unable to exercise any power beyond their

city-state.<sup>134</sup>

Thus the Canaanite city-states, without the guidance and support of Egypt, were divided and vulnerable to the incursions of invaders. Both the Canaanites and the Israelites were left in a power vacuum, and an inevitable struggle for control of the area resulted. The weakened city-states may also have looked upon this time of political unrest and social upheaval as an opportunity to reassert their influence over the area. The battle against Sisera, leader of a coalition of Canaanite kings, may have been the last great effort to regain the greatness of that once powerful kingdom alluded to in Josh. 11:10: 'At this point Joshua turned his forces against Hazor, formerly the head of all these kingdoms.'

## 7. Conclusion

An examination of the biblical evidence shows that it is very difficult to arrive at an exact date for the battle against Sisera. Judg. 5:6 can refer to an early date for the activities of Shamgar (c. 1170 B.C.) or to a late date (c. 1126-1070 B.C.). Hypothetically, a

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<sup>134</sup>Martin Noth, The History of Israel, p. 33.



date c. 1070 B.C. seems logical if the engagement is against Philistines who probably were making incursions into the hill-country at a late date. Judg. 5:17 also seems to point to a time after the conquest of Laish by the Danites, which is set archaeologically in the middle of the 12th century B.C. (c. 1150 B.C.). Therefore, the battle against Sisera could have occurred, if Dan is in the north at the time of the battle, any time after c. 1150 B.C. However, the biblical data gives no clear indication of the whereabouts of the Danites at the time of the battle against Sisera, other than the allusion to the maritime activity of the Danites and possibly alongside the members of the tribe of Asher.

Engberg places the battle against Sisera between Megiddo VI and V, probably before 1050 B.C. (it is in Stratum V-B that an Israelite presence is noted, c. 1000 B.C.). Mayes places the battle in the latter half of the 11th century B.C. when Philistine expansion began into the interior. The battle against Sisera, which indicates Israelite expansion of its territory, was countered by Philistine forces in the battle of Aphek (c. 1050 B.C.), according to Mayes.

The extra-biblical evidence, although very tenuous, suggests the period between 1126 B.C. and 1070

B.C. as the most propitious for this concerted action by the tribes of Israel. Albright's suggestion of a date c. 1125 B.C. appears acceptable, as does Engberg's and Mayes' suggested date of c. 1050 B.C., for different reasons.

Judg. 5:6 'In the days of Shamgar ... caravans ceased, and wayfaring men travelled by roundabout paths' seems to describe trade conditions c. 1070 B.C. if the journey of Wenamun can be accepted as reliable evidence of conditions at that time throughout the north of Canaan.

The meager evidence seems to point to a late date in the period of the Judges for the battle against Sisera rather than to an early date. However, this still leaves a wide margin of possible dating (c. 1126 B.C. to 1050 B.C.). As the period around 1070 B.C. is a time of maritime trade wars, a lack of Egyptian hegemony over the area, Philistine expansion, lack of cohesion among Canaanite cities, Israelite ascendancy over the hill-country and expansion into the plains, and general unsettled conditions in the north, a date between c. 1070 B.C. and 1050 B.C. seems appropriate for the battle against Sisera.

CHAPTER IV  
THE DATING  
OF  
THE SONG OF DEBORAH

1. Introduction

The Song of Deborah has been described as a firsthand, and possibly eyewitness, account of the historical event, the battle against Sisera, and as one of the oldest passages of extant Hebrew literature in the Old Testament<sup>1</sup> Robert Boling notes that certain parts of the Song appear to be archaic. The 'curse' in v. 23 ( אַרְרִי מִלְּוֹזֵז ) and the 'blessing' in v. 24 ( תְּבַרַךְ מִנְּשִׂימַי יְעֵל ) are, according to Boling, possible quotations from the earliest traditions of the battle. The Song, in its present form, he suggests, probably dates about a century after the events it relates, that is, in the late 11th century B.C.<sup>2</sup> Boling also suggests that vv. 2, 3, and 4b-5 of the Song 'display

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<sup>1</sup>Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>Robert G. Boling, Judges, p. 114.

patterns of repetitive parallelism that are closely comparable to Ugaritic epic forms and mark the Song as archaic.<sup>3</sup>

Ugaritic poetry is older than Hebrew poetry (the literature from Ugarit dates from the 16th to the 12th century B.C.), and the appearance of some elements of Ugaritic poetry in Hebrew poetry (e.g. repetitive parallelism) may indicate an early date for some biblical Hebrew poetry. Also, the indication of elements in Hebrew poetry which are rare in Ugaritic poetry (e.g. paronomasia) may indicate a later date of composition of some biblical Hebrew poetry. The style of poetry observed in Ugaritic literature and biblical Hebrew may provide criteria (repetitive parallelism, paronomasia, etc.) to determine a pattern of change from the 13th to the 10th century B.C. in biblical Hebrew poetry, according to Albright, and thus establish a relative chronology based upon the arrangement of the poems in sequence.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the style and structure of Hebrew poetry, with reference to Ugaritic poetry, is examined to determine whether the Song of Deborah can be dated to a given period of

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<sup>3</sup>Boling, Judges, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup>William F. Albright, YGC, p. 8ff.

Israelite history or development.

## 2. The Style and Structure of Hebrew Poetry.

### (a) Parallel lines.

Menahem ben Saruch (c. 960 A.D.) hinted at a structure in Hebrew poetry and observed: 'One half of the line teaches about the other.'<sup>5</sup> David Kimchi (A.D. 1160-1235) suggested that Hebrew verse was characterized by a reduplication of the same thought in two parallel lines. Kimchi's comment on Judg. 5:22 ('Then hammered the hooves of his horses; his steeds galloped, galloped away') notes that the same thought is expressed twice over by means of synonymous terms: 'For it is evident that *בעת המחלה* ('excitedly standing') and *בעת המרוצה* ('excitedly running about') are in synonymous parallelism as is seen in (Nah. 3:2) *וסוס דוהר ומרכבה מרקדה* ('and galloping horse and bounding chariot').' In his comment on *ואנו הדיגים* in Isa. 19:8 Kimchi wrote: *הפסוק כפול* *בענין במלות שונות* ('The verse is recited twice in

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<sup>5</sup>Cf. William R. Watters, Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament (Berlin, 1976), p. 92; and James Barr, Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament (Oxford, 1968), p. 62.

corresponding words of repetition'). Ibn Ezra (A.D. 1093-1168) also observed that many poems found in the Pentateuch were characterized by a style in which the same thought was repeated by means of synonymous words. G. B. Gray mentions examples cited by Ibn Ezra which exhibit the same characteristics of the divided line in which the writer repeats his thought by means of synonymous terms:<sup>6</sup>

שאל אביך ויגדך  
זקניך ויאמרו-לך (Deut. 32:7)

מה אקב לא קבה אל  
ומה אזעם לא זעם יהוה (Num. 23:8)

(b) Parallelismus membrorum

In 1753 Robert Lowth emphasized the categories of parallelism in Hebrew verse to be the foundation of classical poetry:

The correspondence of one verse or line with another, I call parallelism, when a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it, in sense; or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction; these I call

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<sup>6</sup>G.B. Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), p. 18; cf. Gen. 49:6 כבדך ... נפשי , and Num. 24:17b שבת ... כוננו .

parallel lines; and the words or phrases answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms. 7

Lowth observed a structure of the sentence the nature of which he found consisted of complete sentences in each stanza:

... a complete sense is almost equally infused into every component part, and ... every member constitutes an entire verse ... the poems divide themselves in a manner spontaneously into periods, for the most part equal; so the periods themselves are divided into verses, most commonly couplets, though frequently of greater length. This is chiefly observable in those passages, which frequently occur in the Hebrew poetry, in which they treat one subject in many different ways, and dwell upon the same sentiment; when they express the same thing in different words, or different things in a similar form of words; when equals refer to equals, and opposites to opposites... 8

This division of the members into short and equal sentences Lowth termed the 'sententious style'.<sup>9</sup> The verse extended only to the conclusion of the sentence, and lines do not run into each other but are complete in themselves. Enjambement is not a characteristic of

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, Vol. II, trans. G. Gregory (London, 1787), Lec. 19, p. 32, n. 10; cf. R. Lowth, Preliminary Dissertation to Isaiah (London, 1778), p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 3, p. 68.

<sup>9</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 4, p. 98f.

Hebrew poetry according to Lowth.<sup>10</sup>

The earliest application of Hebrew poetry Lowth saw in the praise of God through hymns and songs offered in the service of worship. Sacred music, the vehicle of hymns and poems, was sung antiphonally by leader and choir or congregation (e.g. the Song of Miriam, Ex. 15:20,21, in which all the women followed Miriam with timbrels and dance, and sang the responses to the chorus of men).<sup>11</sup> This manner of singing led to composition of poems into equal stanzas and equal distichs which consisted of verses or parallelisms corresponding to each other, a form which pervaded the whole of Hebrew poetry.

The poetical conformation of the sentences ... consists chiefly in a certain equality, resemblance, or parallelism between the members of each period; so that in two lines (or members of the same period) things for the most part shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other by a kind of

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<sup>10</sup>Stephen A. Geller, Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry, Harvard Semitic Monographs, 20 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 379, notes that enjambed units such as Ps. 2:6 which he renders: 'I have anointed my king / On Zion my holy mountain,' are the very model of the non-parallel couplet. He suggests that non-parallel units play an important role in poetic systems, and that these non-parallel units are not 'synthetic parallelism' as Lowth would maintain.

<sup>11</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, pp. 24-26.



rule or measure. This parallelism has much variety and many gradations; it is sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes more vague and obscure ... 12

Parallelism of members (a term coined by Lowth as 'parallelismus membrorum') consisted of three species:

(i) Synonymous parallelism. This is the most frequently employed species and has great variety in form. The parallelism is formed by:

a) repetition of the same sentiment in different but equivalent terms:<sup>13</sup>

בצאת ישראל ממצרים  
בית יעקב מעם לעז (Ps. 114:1)

b) reiteration of the former member either in whole or part:<sup>14</sup>

אל נקמות יהוה  
אל נקמות הופיע  
עד מתי רשעים יהוה  
עד מתי רשעים יעלזר  
(Ps. 94:1, 3)

c) repetition of a word or phrase from the first member to complete the meaning of the second:<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 41.

שלח מלך ויתירהו  
משל עמים ויפתחהו (Ps. 105:20)

d) the whole of the second member answers only to some part of the first:<sup>16</sup>

יהוה מלך תגל הארץ  
ישמחו איים רבים (Ps. 97:1)

3) triplet parallelism in which the second line is generally synonymous with the first, while the third line either begins the stanza or concludes it, and frequently refers to both the preceding:<sup>17</sup>

נשאו נהרות יהוה  
נשאו נהרות קולם  
ישאו נהרות דכים  
מקלות מים רבים  
אדירים משברי-ים  
אדיר במרום יהוה (Ps. 93:3,4)

f) in stanzas of five lines, the line that is not parallel is generally placed between the two

<sup>16</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 42.

distichs:<sup>18</sup>

כאשר יהגה הארזה  
 והכפיר על-טרפו  
 אשר יקרא עליו מלא רעים  
 מקולם לא יחת  
 ומהמונם לא יענה (Isa. 31:4a)

g) in stanzas of four lines which generally form two regular distichs, line one is parallel to line three, and line two to line four:<sup>19</sup>

משמים הביט יהוה  
 ראה את-כל-בני האדם  
 ממכון-שבתו השגיח  
 אל כל-ישבי הארץ (Ps. 33:13,14)

h) an alternate correspondence is formed between the members and line one is parallel to line four, and two

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<sup>18</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 42. Chiastic parallelism is also found in which a group of four or more lines in which the outer lines match each other while the inner lines have the same thought or correspondence, e.g. Ps. 6:9-11,

סורו ממני כל פעלי ארץ  
 כי-שמע יהוה קול בכי  
 שמע יהוה תחנתי  
 יהוה תפלתי יקח  
 יבשו ויבהלו מאד כל-איבי  
 ישבו יבשו רגע

Lines one, five and six express the same thought as do lines two, three and four.

<sup>19</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 43.

is parallel to three:<sup>20</sup>

מי כיהוה אלהינו  
המגביהי לשבת  
המשפילי לראות  
בשמים ובארץ (Ps. 113:5,6)

(ii) Antithetic parallelism. a) the thought of the first line is emphasized or confirmed by a contrasted thought expressed in the second line:<sup>21</sup>

נאמנים פצעי אהב  
ונעתרות נשיקות שונא (Prov. 27:6)

b) a contraposition of parts of the same sentence ('swarthy ... as the tents of Kedar; comely ... as the pavilions of Solomon'):<sup>22</sup>

שחורה אני ונאורה בנות ירושלם  
כאהלי קדר כיריעות שלמה  
(Song of Solomon 1:5)

(iii) Synthetic or Constructive parallelism.

a) the lines answer to each other, not by repeating or contrasting the thought of the first member, but by supplementing or completing it. No term of the second line is parallel to any term in the first, but the second line consists entirely of what is fresh and

<sup>20</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 44.

<sup>21</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 46.

additional to the first:<sup>23</sup>

תורת יהוה תמימה משיבת נפש  
 עדות יהוה נאמנה מחכימת פתי (Ps. 19:8)

b) triplets are frequent:<sup>24</sup>

זרמו מים עבות  
 קול נתנן שחקים  
 אף-חצצירך יתהלכו

קול רעמך בגלגל  
 האירו ברקים תבל  
 רגזה ותועש הארץ (Ps. 77:18,19)

c) one line or member may contain two sentiments:<sup>25</sup>

המו גויים מטר ממלכות (Ps. 46:7)

d) a definite number may represent an indefinite term:<sup>26</sup>

על-שלשה פשעי דמשק  
 ועל-ארבעה לא אשיבנו (Amos 1:3)

The variety in the form of this synthetic parallelism presented by Lowth is very great, and the degrees of resemblance almost infinite, so that sometimes the scheme of the parallelism is very subtle and obscure.

<sup>23</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 49.

<sup>24</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 51.

<sup>25</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 51.

<sup>26</sup>Lowth, Lectures, Vol. II, Lec. 19, p. 54.

## (c) Complete and Incomplete Parallelism

George Buchanan Gray adopted Lowth's poetic theories and presented a thorough analysis of 'parallelismus membrorum'.<sup>27</sup> He recognized that parallelism was not peculiar to Hebrew poetry only, but was the common heritage of the entire ancient Near East.<sup>28</sup> The discovery of Babylonian literature a hundred years after Lowth's thesis revealed that parallelism was a characteristic of much of its poetry, as is illustrated in the opening lines of Enuma elish:

When above the heavens was not named  
And beneath the earth bore no name,  
And the primeval Apsu, the begetter of them,  
And Mummu and Tiamat, the mother of them all... 29

In his analysis of 'parallelismus membrorum' Gray

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<sup>27</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, pp. 37-83.

<sup>28</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 72f., also notes that biblical poetry is derived from the poetic style of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

<sup>29</sup>G.B. Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 38 (following Gray's translation); cf. D. Winton Thomas, Documents From Old Testament Times (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1958), p. 5, whose translation articulates the parallelism in the stanza more clearly:

When the heaven (-gods) above / were as yet uncreated,  
The earth (-gods) below / not yet brought into being,  
Above there existed primordial Apsu / who engendered them,  
Only Mummu, and Tiamat / who brought all of them forth.

noted that the term 'synthetic parallelism' admitted to a wide variety of forms and infinite degrees of resemblance, and in his opinion was really not parallelism. Its subtlety and obscurity led him to redefine the term 'synthetic parallelism' which he believed was really a subdivision of 'synonymous' or 'antithetic parallelism'. He found some verses in which the first and second lines were not parallel in thought, but in which line two contained an entirely new idea. Therefore, those lines which were not parallel in terminology or meaning were not complete parallels but incomplete parallels, and the degrees must be distinguished from one another rather than use the term synthetic to cover so wide a range of form. Gray wrote:

The vulnerable point in Lowth's exposition of parallelism as the law of Hebrew poetry lies in what he found it necessary to comprehend under the term synthetic parallelism: his examples include, indeed, many couplets to which the term parallelism can with complete propriety be applied; in such couplets the second line repeats by means of one or more synonymous terms part of the sense of the first, and by means of one or more terms adds something fresh, to which nothing in the first line is parallel. In virtue of the presence of some parallel terms such lines may be called parallel, and in virtue of the presence of some non-parallel terms they may be called synthetic, or in full the lines may be termed synthetic parallels, and the relation between them synthetic parallelism; but more convenient

terms for such lines, which are of very frequent occurrence, and for the relation between them, would be incomplete parallels and incomplete parallelism. 30

(i) Complete parallelism. The simplest form of complete parallelism, two lines consisting of two terms, each of which corresponds to a term in the corresponding position in the other line, was represented, according to Gray, by a.b:a'.b':<sup>31</sup>

אחלקם ביעקב  
ראפיצם בישראל (Gen. 49:7b)

The most frequent form of complete parallelism found in Hebrew poetry, Gray notes, is the three-term line, represented by a.b.c:a'.b'.c':<sup>32</sup>

חכלילי עינים מיין  
ולבן שנים מחלב (Gen. 49:12)

Complete parallelism may also be found in lines with four terms each, represented by a.b.c.d:a'.b'.c'.d':

מענה-רך ישיב חמה  
ודבר-עצב יעלה אף (Prov. 15:1)

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<sup>30</sup>G.B. Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 60.

<sup>32</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 61; cf. Ps. 24:3,

מי-יעלה בהר יהוה  
ומי-יקרום במקום קדשו



Alternate parallelism is found in which line one is parallel to line three, and line two is parallel to line four, represented by a.b.c.d:e.f:a'.b'.c'.d':e'.f':<sup>33</sup>

וישם פי כחרב חדה  
 בצל ידו החבליאני  
 וישימני לחץ ברור  
 באשפתו הסתירני (Isa. 49:2)

Numerous variations occur in the rhythmic scheme of complete parallelism, as Gray illustrates: (a) the two-term line: a.b:b'.a' (cf. Ps. 2:4); (b) the three-term line: a.b.c:a'.c'.b' (cf. Prov. 2:2), a.b.c:b'.a'.c' (cf. Deut. 32:30), a.b.c:c'.a'.b' (cf. Deut. 32:3), etc.; (c) the four-term line: a.b.c.d:c'.d'.a'.b'.<sup>34</sup>

(ii) Incomplete parallelism. The simplest form of incomplete parallelism is illustrated by the

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<sup>33</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 62; Gray renders Isa. 49:2,

He made / my mouth / like a sharp / sword  
 in the shadow of his hand / he hid me  
 he made / me / for a polished / arrow  
 in his quiver / he hid me.

which gives his scheme of a.b.c.d:e.f:a'.b'.c'.d':e'.f'.

<sup>34</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, pp. 62-72.

two-term line, represented by a.b:b'.c:

מדוע קדמוני ברכים  
ומה שדים כי-אינק (Job 3:12)

which also may be treated as a three-term line if the interrogative particles are counted as one term, represented by a.b.c:a'.c'.d.<sup>35</sup>

Gray further divides incomplete parallelism into two categories:

(a) Incomplete parallelism without compensation, in which one line contains a given number of terms and another line a smaller number of terms, represented by a.b.c:b'.c':<sup>36</sup>

הצילה מחרב נפשי  
מיד-כלב יחידתי (Ps. 22:21)

(b) Incomplete parallelism with compensation, in which two lines contain the same number of terms, and only some of the terms in the two lines are parallel, represented by a.b.c:a'.b'.d:<sup>37</sup>

הבו ליהוה בני אלים  
הבו ליהוה כבוד ועז (Ps. 29:1)

Examples of incomplete parallelism with compensation

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<sup>35</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 73.

<sup>36</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 74.

<sup>37</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 76.

are found in Judg. 5:12, represented by a.b.c:a'.b'.d:

עורי עורי דבורה  
עורי עורי דברי-שיר

and in Judg. 5:23, represented by a.b.c:b'.c'.d:

כי לא-באו לעזרת יהוה  
לעזרת יהוה בגבורים

Gray illustrates the phenomena of complete and incomplete parallelism as found in one verse, represented by a.b.c:a'.c'.d:e.f:e'.f':<sup>38</sup>

ידע שור קנהו  
וחמור אבום בעליו  
ישראל לא ידע  
עמי לא התבונן (Isa. 1:3)

There is nothing in the second line to balance the verb 'knows' in the first line, and the object 'owner' is expanded into two units 'master's crib' in the second line. This is an example of incomplete parallelism with compensation. In line three the subject 'Israel' is paralleled in line four to 'my people', and the verb 'know' to 'understand'. This is an example of complete parallelism.

Gray viewed with suspicion any metrical theory

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<sup>38</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 80f.; cf. T.H. Robinson, 'Hebrew Poetic Form,' VTS I (Leiden, 1953), p. 136.

that found all parts of the existing text equally metrical, and emendation made to accommodate meter he considered artificial and inconclusive.<sup>39</sup> His study of Lamentations led him to conclude that the same poem may contain distichs of different metrical character.<sup>40</sup> He maintained that the laws of Hebrew poetry did not require either that a single type of distich must be used throughout the same poem, or that all poems must be divided into equal strophes.<sup>41</sup> There is no regularity of distich or strophe found. Parallelism and rhythm of Hebrew poetry are associated with the sense. A single rhythm need not always be maintained through a poem. The important unit was, to Gray, the distich, and he believed it was better to measure and classify by distich rather than stich even in rhythmical classification. The stichs owe their rhythmical character to the fact that they contain the same number of stressed syllables as the halves of the distichs among which they occur.<sup>42</sup>

S. R. Driver also suggests that the distich, the

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<sup>39</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 125.

<sup>40</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 135.

<sup>41</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 224.

<sup>42</sup>Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry, p. 159.

couple of lines in poetry which are detachable from the context, is the measurable unit in Hebrew poetry. A monostich, the single line (i.e. stich), is occasionally used to emphasize a thought at the beginning and end of a poem. Verses of three lines, the tristich, occur in which a and b are parallel in thought and c completes the thought, or b and c are parallel, or a and c are parallel and b is of the nature of a parenthesis. Various forms of the tetrastich, the four-beat line, are: a is parallel to b and c is parallel to d; a is parallel to c, and b is parallel to d; a corresponds to d, and b corresponds to c; a, b, c are parallel and d is independent; a is independent and b, c, d are parallel.<sup>43</sup>

Georg Fohrer reduced the stylistic analysis of Hebrew poetry to two general principles or rules:

Verses consist of two (alternatively, two or three) members ... The structural principle is parallelism (parallelismus membrorum). This approach, however, is much too narrow and schematic to describe and explain all the observed facts. Quite apart from the solution of the metrical and rhythmic problems, we must instead take as our point of departure two principles more loosely formulated: (1) A verse can consist of one, two, or three

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<sup>43</sup>S.R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, 9th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), p. 364f.

members. A verse need not have more than one member, even though most extant verses do in fact have two or three. We may say at most that a verse potentially consists of two or three members. (2) The wording of the members is not absolutely determined by parallelismus membrorum. It is therefore more correct to speak of a repetitional and often parallelizing style ... The style is truly parallelizing in the first two categories of so-called parallelismus membrorum: (1) 'synonymous parallelism' in which the second member repeats the content of the first in different words, e.g., 'But his delight is in the law of Yahweh / and on his law he meditates day and night' (Ps. 1:2); (2) 'antithetical parallelism' in which the second member illuminates the content of the first by means of a contrasting idea, e.g., 'For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous / but the way of the wicked will perish' (Ps. 1:6). There are also long verses whose members are not linked by any kind of parallelism and some consisting of three members, one of which is not parallel to the other two. The third category usually mentioned, 'synthetic parallelism' is not parallelism at all, because the second member advances and supplements the thought of the first, e.g., 'He is like a tree / planted by streams of water' (Ps. 1:3). 44

Robert Gordis, in his study of the book of Job, observed that the fundamental virtue of parallelism is its power:

... the repetition in the second stich reinforces the truth of the idea set forth, or intensifies the depth of the emotion expressed, in the first stich. The ever-present danger of

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<sup>44</sup>Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 44-46; cf. Stephen A. Geller, Parallelism In Early Biblical Poetry, p. 375ff.

parallelism is monotony, particularly in a long composition. Hence, the poet will use every conceivable device for preserving the vigor and avoiding the monotony by modifying either the metrics or the parallelism. Thus the poet may (a) vary the meter pattern, (b) change the number of stichs in some verses, (c) modify the word-order within the stichs, so that a,b,c will be paralleled not only by a',b',c', but by a',c',b', or c',b',a', etc. He may change the parallelism from (a) the most frequent structure, the consecutive, in which a//b and c//d, to (b) the alternate, in which a//c and b//d, as, e.g., Hos. 5:3; Ps. 33:20f. ... In virtually every poem of any length, a variety of metric patterns is to be expected, either because of changing moods of the poet or out of the natural desire to avoid monotony ... This multiplicity of meters is evident in 'The Song of the Sea', Exodus, chapter 15, and 'The Song of Deborah' ... as well as throughout the Book of Job. Thus 'The Song of the Sea' exhibits virtually every biblical meter: 4:4 (v. 1), 3:3 (v. 2), 3:2 (v. 3), 5:5 (v. 4), 2:2 (v. 9) ... An unbroken succession of distichs, particularly in a long composition, would become exceedingly monotonous. The poet will, therefore, not hesitate to vary his pattern by introducing tristichs at various intervals. The efforts by some critics to place biblical poetry on a procrustean bed by eliminating all tristichs in favour of a uniform distich pattern ... or, conversely, by deleting all distichs or converting them into tristichs ... is an all-too-common methodological error. 45

(d) Climactic Parallelism

C. F. Burney's analysis of Judg. 5:5 indicated for

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<sup>45</sup>Robert Gordis, The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation and Special Studies (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), pp. 502-3.

him an example of yet another characteristic of parallelism, which he termed 'climactic'. The first line is complete in itself, while the second line uses words from the first to complete the meaning of the distich:

הרים נזלו מפני יהוה  
מפני יהוה אלהי ישראל

This is, according to Burney, a four-beat line, a.b.c.d:c'.d'.e.f, in which the last two beats of line one (c.d, 'before Yahweh') and the last two beats of line two (e.f, 'the God of Israel) complete the sense of the distich and form a climax. He states:

In this form, stichos 'b' of a distich does not offer a more or less complete echo of stichos 'a' in different words (synonymous parallelism); nor, on the other hand, is it merely formally parallel to stichos 'a', while in matter it offers an advance in thought (synthetic parallelism) ... stichos 'b' is partially parallel to stichos 'a' but adds something further which completes the sense of the distich, thus forming, as it were a climax ... 46

This type of parallelism described by Burney is observable in Ps. 29:1-2:

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<sup>46</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 169.



הבר ליהוה בני אלים  
 הבר ליהוה כבוד ועז  
 הבר ליהוה כבוד שמו  
 השתחוו ליהוה בהדרת-קדש

Here the parallelism reaches a climax by the gradual addition of new words or elements in each line, hence the term climactic or stair-like parallelism.

Burney places vv. 6, 7b, 9, 11, 12a, 18, 19a, 20, 23, 28, and 30 of the Song of Deborah in this category of climactic parallelism. V. 5 of the Song also seems to fit into this assumed category, as does the phrase 'a mother in Israel' in v. 7b. However, the intention of the poet in these cases may not only have been to create a 'climax' of lines, but also to achieve balance for the length of the line. Without אלהי ישראל (v. 5) the verse would remain awkward and unbalanced. The balance in these verses appears to be achieved by the addition of words rather than an attempt to balance the lines with an equal number of stresses or syllables.

#### (e) Repeated Words and Phrases

Prof. Milman Parry's studies of the Iliad and the Odyssey stressed the importance of tradition in the composition of ancient poetry. The verses abound in

stock expressions, consisting of repeated words and phrases, which are part of a traditional diction according to Parry. The same diction was common to all singers and could be drawn upon whenever the poet performed. Poets, over a period of time and usage had found the word and phrase to tell the tale, and every poet knew how to make use of the traditional.

Without writing, the poet can make his verses only if he has a formulaic diction which will give him his phrases all made, and made in such a way that, at the slightest bidding of the poet, they will link themselves in an unbroken pattern that will fill his verses and make his sentences. 47

Parry showed that the language of oral poetry was highly formulaic, and this formula extended from the repeated words and stock expressions to whole passages which had been passed on to him orally.

One oral poet is better than another not because he has by himself found a more striking way of expressing his own thought but because he has been better able to make use of the tradition. He strives not to create a new ideal in poetry, but to achieve that which everyone knows to be the best. This is true even of the poetry which may tell of happenings of the singer's own day: the event may be new, but it will be told in the traditional way on

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<sup>47</sup> Adam Parry, ed., The Making of Homeric Verse, The Collected Papers of Milman Parry (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 317.

the pattern of passages from other poems, and in more or less the same phrases as were used in those passages, so that the only difference between the poem made about the present and that which tells of the past is that the former will be made from the memory of a larger number of different poems. 48

A collection by Milman Parry of Slavic epic poetry revealed to Albert B. Lord, a student of Parry's, the creative genius and literary style of the talented singers of tales. Lord showed that an elaborate epic tale was developed by a skilled poet with a minimum of effort by the use of composite patterns and stock phrases. These repeated phrases were a traditional diction which could be drawn upon by the poet and used to assist in the oral composition of the poem.<sup>49</sup>

Stanley Gevirtz, in a discussion of Prof. Parry's work, noted that:

... repetition of stock expressions were not the result of accident, nor of an impoverished imagination, but of a long established tradition. So extensive in Homer's work did

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<sup>48</sup>Adam Parry, ed., The Making of Homeric Verse, p. 334; cf. William F. Albright, 'Some Oriental Glosses on the Homeric Problem,' AJA, 54 (1950), p. 162, in which Albright also recognizes stereotyped modes of describing almost any typical situation in the Homeric style which he identifies as stock phrases from which the poet could build up an elaborate epic.

<sup>49</sup>Albert B. Lord, 'Homer, Parry, Huso,' AJA, 52 (1948), p. 42.

Parry find the use of such formulas, as he termed them, that the poems have come to be recognized ... as having been composed almost entirely, if not entirely, of set phrases. 50

Parry, according to Gevirtz, believed that the poet had the use of formulaic phrases which could easily be adapted to his specific needs. However, Gevirtz maintains that the Hebrew poet structured his verses with whole formulaic phrases only on occasion, and primarily used fixed pairs of parallel terms. The poet was capable of manipulating, in a meaningful and coherent manner, the familiar word patterns which constituted the high point of poetic technique.<sup>51</sup> Parallelism of thought and line is possible 'by reason of the negative or positive correspondence in meaning of the terms which compose it.'<sup>52</sup> The word-pairs are the essential components of the parallelism, and whereas Lowth had viewed the entire hemistichs as

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<sup>50</sup> Stanley Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 11; cf. Robert C. Culley, Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms (University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, pp. 6 and 12.

<sup>52</sup> Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, p. 23.

synonymous, Gevirtz maintains that the lines are synonymous only because the word-pairs are synonymous. Gevirtz cites Lamech's Song to his wives as an example of parallel terms:

עדה וצלה שמעו קולי  
נשי למך האזנה אמרתי

(Gen. 4:23)

He sees three sets of parallel terms here:

'Adah and Zillah' / 'wives of Lamech', 'hear' / 'give ear', and 'voice' / 'speech'. Though the first of these, 'Adah and Zillah' / 'wives of Lamech', does not recur, it may nevertheless be regarded as having been constructed according to the manner of the Syro-Palestinian poets, for the setting of a noun or proper name in parallel formation with a descriptive or identifying word or epithet was a pattern, a regular feature of their style. We cite but one example from Ugaritic and one from Hebrew verse:

Udm is a gift of Il,  
And a present of the father of Man.  
(UM Krt 135-36)

Until thou didst arise Deborah,  
Didst arise a mother in Israel.  
(Judg. 5:7) 53

The word-pairs are to Gevirtz the essential components of the parallelism in both Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry.

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<sup>53</sup>Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, p. 26f.; cf. Judg. 5:3a 'Hear, O kings; give ear, O rulers' in which Gevirtz found an example of fixed pairs in the verbs 'hear' and 'give ear'.

William R. Watters suggests that there can be no parallelism without a word-pair, as the sense of the line is based upon the word-pair, and the word-pair is the tool which the poet used to construct parallelism.<sup>54</sup> Watters notes that Bishop Lowth's thesis not only pointed out 'parallelismus membrorum' in Hebrew poetry, but also made specific reference to the components of the line which make up the parallelism.

A close examination of Lowth's definition of parallelism clearly shows that he was fully aware of the components of the verse which go together to make up the parallelism ... 'words or phrases answering one to another in the corresponding lines', we now call word pairs and phrases ... 55

Word-pairs stand out clearly in the Song of Deborah and provide balance between the hemistichs:

שמעו מלכים // האזינו רזנים (Judg. 5:3)

יהרה בצאתך משעיר  
בצעדך משדה אדום (Judg. 5:4)

A series of related words provide balance:

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<sup>54</sup>William R. Watters, Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament, p. 70 and p. 107.

<sup>55</sup>Watters, Formula Criticism, p. 95.

ארץ רעשה גם-שמים נטפר  
 גם-עבים נטפר מים  
 הרים נזלו מפני יהוה  
 מפני יהוה אלהי ישראל (Judg. 5:4b-5)<sup>56</sup>

Lines one and two contain the same verb ( נטפר ), as well as the word-pairs שמים ... ארץ and מים ... עבים . Lines four and five contain similar words in pairs מפני יהוה and line five adds אלהי ישראל to balance the length of line four (cf. v. 3c אלהי ישראל and v. 7d אם בישראל ). These extra words fill out the line, and although they are not essential to the understanding of the line which has been given by the word-pairs, they are critical to the balance of the whole stanza (cf. climactic parallelism).

The word-pairs in the Song of Deborah are an essential component of the parallelism, where it exists. However, word-pairs are not found throughout the Song and strict repetitive parallelism is often replaced by assonance and paronomasia.<sup>57</sup> Although

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<sup>56</sup>The words זה סיני between lines four and five have been dropped; cf. exegesis of vv. 4-5 in this thesis.

<sup>57</sup>Cf. above, Sec. C, 'The Dating of Early Hebrew Poetry,' and the use of paronomasia in early Hebrew poetry.

word-pairs form one characteristic of Hebrew poetry, many poetic lines lack parallelism and word-pairs, and it is difficult to assume that a fixed traditional diction based only upon word-pairs existed. The poet, rather than regimented by a certain pattern of word-pairs, retains a creativity of style which takes many forms of expression.

### 3. The Style and Structure of Ugaritic Poetry

Between the years 1929 and 1973 the religious texts of Ugarit (Ras-ash Shamrah), dated between the sixteenth and twelfth centuries B.C., were discovered by C. F. A. Shaeffer. Numerous parallels between the Ugaritic and Hebrew literary style and vocabulary were noticed by Charles Virolleaud who published the first texts of the Canaanite Ugaritic epics.<sup>58</sup>

In 1936, H. L. Ginsberg isolated a form of 'repetitive parallelism' in Ugaritic which he believed to be also characteristic of Hebrew poetry. The form a.b.c:a.b.d, in which each letter stands for a separate word or pair of short words, the first two of which are

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<sup>58</sup> Charles Virolleaud, La Déesse 'Anat (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1938), p. 15ff.



repeated in the second half of the poetic line, is found in Hebrew and in Ugaritic.<sup>59</sup> Ginsberg also showed that this basic form was often expanded to a tricolon in both literatures. He quotes the following tricolon (a.b.c:a.b.d:a.d.b):

Lo! thine enemies, O Ba'lu,  
lo, thine enemies wilt thou smite;  
lo, thou wilt cut off thine adversaries.

which to him was a prototype of Ps. 92:10 in which practically the same rhythm is present in the first two lines, and in which there is a verbal congruence that in his opinion can not be due to chance:

For lo! thine enemies, O Yahweh,  
for lo, thine enemies shall perish;  
all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. 60

Many examples of the distich, the tristich, and verses of four or more lines, are found in Canaanite literature:<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>H.L. Ginsberg, 'The Rebellion and Death of Ba'lu,' Orientalia, N.S. 5 (1936), pp. 161-198.

<sup>60</sup>Ginsberg, 'The Rebellion and Death of Ba'lu,' p. 180.

<sup>61</sup>James B. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures (Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 103, 112, and 123 (Baal and Anath poems are translated by H.L. Ginsberg).

(1) a.b.c:a.c.b

Every mount to the heart of the earth,  
every hill to the earth's very bowels.

(Text: g. I AB. vi. 29)

(2) a.b.c:a.b.d:b.d

Ask for life, O Aqhat the Youth,  
Ask for life, and I'll give it thee;  
For deathlessness, and I'll bestow it on thee.

(Text: AQHT A. vi. 28)

(3) a.b.c:a.d.b:a.b.d:a.d.b

Quickly, a house, O Kothar,  
Quickly raise up a palace.  
Quickly the house shalt thou build,  
Quickly shalt raise up the palace.

(Text: e. II AB v, 114)

Cyrus H. Gordon also found that the essential feature of Canaanite poetry is the repetition of meaning in parallel form:

... even a simple utterance like tpr.wtdu (1 Aqht:134) 'mayest thou flee and fly' is to be classified as poetry. By the same token, poetic effect may be attained by the mere listing of parallel items ... However, the paralleled unit is generally longer than a single word. Thus there may be two words to each unit:

<u>in.smt</u>	'there is no fat,
<u>in.zm</u> (1 Aqht:117)	there is no bone.' 62

The most frequent length of the paralleled unit is

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<sup>62</sup>Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Grammar, Analecta Orientalia, 20 (Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1940), p. 79.

perhaps three accented words:

<u>wng.mlk.lbty</u>	And depart, king, from my house;
<u>rhq.krt.lhzry</u>	be distant, Krt, from my court!
	(Text: Krt:131) 63

W. F. Albright's translation of the lines from B III A 8-9, although differing slightly from that of Ginsberg, showed the classic example of Canaanite repetitive style to be a tricolon (3+3+3) with the word-pattern a.b.c:a.b.d:a.d.b:

Behold, thine enemies, O Baal,  
Behold, thine enemies, shalt thou crush,  
Behold, thou shalt crush thy foes! 64

Albright notes that a number of Psalms such as 29 and 68 contain words and phrases similar to those in Ugaritic. He points to the alteration to monotheistic purposes in Ps. 29 where the original 'Baal' has been replaced by 'Yahweh'.<sup>65</sup> Various repetitive patterns also appear in bicola (distich) with the word-pattern a.b.c:b.c.a, which became a common feature of early Israelite poetry:

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<sup>63</sup>Gordon, Ugaritic Grammar, p. 79.

<sup>64</sup>William F. Albright, YGC, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Old Testament and Canaanite Language and Literature,' CBQ, 7 (1945), p. 28.

The wings of the eagle shall Baal break,  
 Baal shall break their pinions.

(Text: Aqht. I, 148-150) 66

The tricolon also appears in the Aqhat Epic:

Do thou ask for life, O lad Aqhat,  
 Do thou ask for life, and I'll grant (it) thee,  
 Eternal life, and I'll accord (it) thee.

(Text: 1 Aqht. vi:28) 67

A similar stylistic device (the tricolon) was noted by  
 Albright in the Song of Deborah, Judg. 5:30

(a.b.c:a.b.d:b.d.e):

A spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera,  
 A spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,  
 Dyed and embroidered for the necks of the spoiled. 68

This verse, as rendered by Albright, does show the  
 rhythmic repetition of words which is a common feature  
 of Canaanite poetry and Hebrew poetry.

Albright also suggests that Judg. 5:12 is similar  
 in form to the Canaanite pattern of distich,  
 represented by the pattern a.b.c:a.b.d:

<sup>66</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup>William F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine,  
 rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 232.

<sup>68</sup>Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine, p. 232  
 (following Albright's translation).

Awake, awake, O Deborah,  
 Awake, awake, chant a song. 69

Judg. 5:3, he suggests, has a 2+2 beat in the repetitive pattern a.b:a.c in lines two and three in which there is repetition of single words in different patterns.

Even I to Yahweh,  
 Even I will sing. 70

However, the distich quoted by Albright (Judg. 5:3) is only a part of the stanza (as is the example of v. 12 above), and Albright may not be justified in chopping the verses into pieces to prove the existence of stylistic elements which are common to early Hebrew poetry and to Ugaritic poetry.

Robert Gordis notes that,

... poems from Ugarit, written in a dialect closely related to Hebrew, clearly demonstrate that the poet varies his rhythm as he chooses. Here there is obviously no possibility of attributing the changes to the multiplicity of sources or to late glossators ... The most dangerous foe of the poetic spirit is a slavish attachment to rules. It is therefore

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<sup>69</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 12.

<sup>70</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 13.

impossible to lay down hard and fast principles with regard to the use of meter and its variations. 71

Early Hebrew poetry does have features which are common to Ugaritic literature, but the Ugaritic evidence does not support regular patterns of either rhythm or meter. Early Hebrew poetry and Ugaritic poems are alike in the various patterns (e.g. a.b.c:a.b.c; a.b.c:b.a.c; a.b.c:a.b.d:a.d.b; a.b.c:b.c; a.b.c:b.c; a.b.d:b.d), but it is impossible, by comparison with Ugaritic poetry, to assume a fully developed rhythmic pattern in Hebrew poetry.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4. The Dating of Early Hebrew Poetry

Jacob B. Myers notes that the same metric elements are present in the Song of Deborah as are found in the Ugaritic texts. This indicates the influence of

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<sup>71</sup>Robert Gordis, Poets, Prophets, and Sages, Essays in Biblical Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 69f.

<sup>72</sup>William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic Wm. Bush, eds., Old Testament Survey (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), p. 313f.; cf. H.L. Ginsberg, 'The Rebellion and Death of Ba'lu,' pp. 161-198; Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Grammar, p. 79; and, William F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, p. 5ff.

Ugaritic poetry upon early Hebrew poetry, and at the same time points to the relative antiquity of the Song.<sup>73</sup>

Cross and Freedman, in their examination of the Song of Miriam, which as a song of triumph closely resembles the Song of Deborah, noted a metrical style and strophic structure which fits into the pattern of old Canaanite and early Hebrew poetry. They note that the archaic poetic structure a.b:a.c found in Judg. 5:3, the staccato style of Judg. 5:25-26, the omission of the conjunction between connecting parallel lines, and the omission of the definite article, are all stylistic characteristics of early Hebrew poetry and are common in Ugaritic literature. The repetitive parallelism, mixed meter, and the complex makeup of the strophes suggests an early date of composition for both the Song of Miriam and the Song of Deborah. They suggest that the Song of Deborah is of the same period as the Song of Miriam which they date not earlier than the 12th century B.C. and not later than the 11th

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<sup>73</sup>Jacob B. Myers, 'The Book of Judges,' IB, Vol. II, p. 718.

century B.C.<sup>74</sup>

(a) The literary sequence-dating suggested by Albright

William F. Albright has fixed the date of the Song of Deborah at c. 1150 B.C.<sup>75</sup> This dating is suggested to Albright by reference to Ugaritic poetry which is older than biblical Hebrew poetry and which contains stylistic elements common to early Hebrew poetry. Albright was able to arrange the poems in a basic sequence-dating from the 13th century B.C. to the 10th century by using the stylistic phenomena as a point of reference. This provided him with a method of looking at the poems in stylistic sequence and to develop a pattern of literary sequence-dating.<sup>76</sup>

David Noel Freedman notes that the determinative criteria of the poems in sequence by Albright is repetitive parallelism and paronomasia.

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<sup>74</sup>Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, 'The Song of Miriam,' JNES 14 (1955), p. 238, p. 240, and pp. 244-246.

<sup>75</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 8f.



Albright proposed a basic sequence dating, using certain stylistic phenomena as determinative criteria. Chief among these were repetitive parallelism and paronomasia or wordplay. Relative chronology is fixed by reference to Ugaritic poetry which is substantially older than practically all surviving biblical verse. Since repetitive parallelism is frequent in Ugaritic poems, its occurrence in Hebrew poetry would be an indicator of early date. On the other hand, paronomasia is rare in Ugaritic, so its occurrence in Hebrew poetry would point to a somewhat later date of composition. Albright was able to discern a pattern in early Hebrew poems exhibiting a gradual decline in the use of repetitive parallelism with a corresponding increase in the use of paronomasia. 77

The Song of Miriam, which Albright dates in the first quarter of the 13th century B.C., contains, he suggests, three instances of full repetitive parallelism:<sup>78</sup>

למִינֵךְ יְהוָה נִאֲדָרְכִי בַכַּח  
למִינֵךְ יְהוָה תִּרְעַץ אוֹיְבֵי (Ex. 15:6)

מִי כַמְכָה בְּאֵלֶם יְהוָה  
מִי כַמְכָה נִאֲדָר בְּקִדְשׁ (Ex. 15:11)

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<sup>77</sup> David Noel Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles in Early Hebrew Poetry,' in Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller, Jr. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), p. 55; cf. William F. Albright, YGC, p. 8f.

<sup>78</sup> Albright, YGC, p. 10.

תפל עליהם אימתה ופחד  
 בגדל זרועך ידמו כאבן  
 עד יעבר עמך יהרה  
 עד יעבר עם-זו קניית (Ex. 15:16)

and v. 3 is an instance of partial repetitive parallelism:

יהרה איש מלחמה  
 יהרה שמו (Ex. 15:3)

The Oracles of Balaam (c. 1200 B.C. according to Albright) contain one example of repetitive parallelism similar to the Ugaritic style a.b.c:a.c.b:<sup>79</sup>

והיה אדום ירשה  
 והיה ירשה שעיר (Num. 24:18)

He also gives the following example of one word repeated in parallelism:

נאם בלעם בנו בער  
 ונאם הגבר שתם העיין (Num. 24:3,15)

The repetitive style is not found at all, in his view, in Num. 24:20-24. The gradual replacement of

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<sup>79</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 13f.

repetitive parallelism for assonance is found in this Oracle. An example of etymological assonance which has begun to displace repetitive parallelism is found by Albright in Num. 23:8 (cf. Num. 23:10, 20; 24:4, 7, 10):

מה אקב לא קבה אל  
ומה אזעם לא זעם יהרה

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Psalm 78, which Albright considers to be an archaic poem composed prior to the destruction of Shiloh, contains only one example of repetitive parallelism (v. 8):<sup>81</sup>

דור סורר ומרה  
דור לא-היכין לבו

Deut. 33, which Albright dates before the fall of Shiloh about the middle of the 11th century B.C., contains in his opinion instances of one-word repetitive parallelism (vv. 13-16 repetition of מנגד ; v. 17b which repeats a single thought רבנות אלפי ...).<sup>82</sup> At this stage (c. 1100 B.C.) paronomasia appears as the more prominent stylistic device.

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<sup>80</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 14.

<sup>81</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 22.

<sup>82</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 15.

Deut. 32 (dated by Albright c. 1025 B.C.) shows very little evidence of repetitive parallelism.<sup>83</sup> It dates from a time when assonance and paronomasia had become the characteristic features of poetic style.<sup>84</sup>

Poems attributed to David (10th century B.C.) represent, according to Albright, the next stage in the development of early Hebrew poetry. David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:18-27) contains only three examples of repetitive parallelism of single words (v. 20 *בנות* ; v. 21 *מגן* ; v. 26 *אהבתך מאהבת* ). Assonance appears in occasional repetition of unaccented negative particles (e.g. v. 20 *אל* and *לא* ; vv. 19, 25, 27 *איך* ; the interrogative is used as an exclamation of lament in v. 21 *ואל ... אל* and in v. 22 *לא ... לא* ; in the use of conjunctions, e.g. v. 22 *וחרב ... קשת* ; in the use of suffixes, e.g. v. 23 *ובמותם ... בחייהם* ; a play on words in v. 20a *אל-תגידו בגת* (cf. Num. 23:8 *אקב לא קבה* ); and in the use of a refrain *איך נפלנו גבורים* (cf. vv. 19, 25, 27, and the opening refrain of vv. 23 and 27).<sup>85</sup> Albright also dates the

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<sup>83</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 15f.

<sup>84</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 17.

<sup>85</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 21.

final words of David (2 Sam. 23:1-7) in the 10th century B.C. This poem contains single words repeated in parallelism (vv. 3b, 4a, 5b, 6), and assonance (vv. 8, 11, 26-27).<sup>86</sup>

The Song of Deborah, which Albright dates c. 1150 B.C. or a little later, shows, he suggests, a marked deterioration in the form of repetitive parallelism. Of the eighteen examples of repetitive parallelism he finds in the Song, only vv. 12, 23, and 30 display a pattern similar to that of Ugaritic poetry, whereas the others are, as he describes them, 'secondary imitations of the standard structures of the Bronze Age.'<sup>87</sup> v. 12a,

עורי עורי דבורה  
עורי עורי דברי-שור

is an example of the ancient pattern a.b.c:a.b.d, and v. 23b is composed in the Canaanite pattern a.b.c:b.c.d,

כי לא-באו לעזרת יהוה  
לעזרת יהוה בגבורים

and v. 30b,

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<sup>86</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 21f.

<sup>87</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 12.

שלל צבעים לסיסרא

שלל צבעים רקמה

is an example of the old normative a.b.c:a.b.d form.<sup>88</sup> Albright also notes that there is no evidence of repetitive parallelism in vv. 14-18, possibly because of the deterioration of this style at the time of composition of this description of the tribes.<sup>89</sup>

Albright further notes the use of assonance, which has replaced strict repetitive parallelism, in vv. 2, 6, 19, and 30.<sup>90</sup> This gradual abandonment of repetitive parallelism for various forms of assonance and paronomasia points to a later composition of the Song of Deborah, possibly in the 11th century B.C. or earlier.<sup>91</sup> It is more often the repetition of single words in different patterns or positions through a series of lines that becomes the dominant style of biblical poetry in this period.<sup>92</sup>

Thus Albright sees the gradual abandonment of repetitive parallelism, and the presence of assonance

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<sup>88</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 10f.

<sup>89</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 13.

<sup>90</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 13.

<sup>91</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 24f.

<sup>92</sup>Albright, YGC, p. 13.

and paronomasia as evidence of a late date of composition for the Song of Deborah, possibly in the 11th century B.C. The Song resembles the poems found in Deut. 32 and 33 (c. 1050 B.C.), and Ps. 78 (prior to c. 1050 B.C.), which contain few examples of repetitive parallelism, but do not appear to be as late as 2 Sam. 1:18-27 (10th century B.C.) which contains no evidence of strict repetitive parallelism. On the basis of Albright's basic sequence dating, composition of the Song of Deborah could be dated in the same period as Deut. 32 and 33, and Ps. 78, possibly toward the end of the 12th century B.C. and the beginning of the 11th century B.C. prior to the fall of Shiloh (c. 1050 B.C.).

(b) The linguistic evidence suggested by Robertson

David A. Robertson proposes to date biblical poetry to the period from the 13th century B.C. to the 10th century B.C. by means of linguistic evidence. He attempts to reconstruct early Hebrew poetry by correlating it with earlier Ugaritic poetry to determine if a linguistic form in Ugaritic poetry was present in early Hebrew poetry. If the linguistic forms in Ugaritic are present in early Hebrew poetry,

this, he suggests, may constitute evidence in favour of an early date for early biblical poetry.

Robertson notes that poetry datable on non-linguistic grounds is known from the 8th century B.C. onwards (e.g. Amos, c. 750 B.C.; Hosea, c. 730 B.C.; Micah and Isaiah, c. 730-700 B.C.; Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Jeremiah, pre-exilic; Joel, Isaiah 56-66, Zechariah 9-14, post-exilic) which he calls 'standard' poetic Hebrew. However, no datable poetry exists from the 13th century B.C. to the 10th century B.C.<sup>93</sup> He maintains that if similarity between a poem of unknown date, such as the Song of Deborah, and early poetry from Ugarit can be established, this would favour an early date for the early biblical poetry. Also, if similarity between such a poem of unknown date and 'standard' poetry can be established, this may point to a date in the 8th century B.C. Robertson suggests that 'it is best to think of the thirteenth and eighth centuries as poles, with the poetry of unknown date attracted to one or the other.'<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>David A. Robertson, Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry, SBL Dissertation Series 3 (Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, 1972), p. 2f.

<sup>94</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 5.



Robertson states that the pattern of verbal forms in past narrative in early biblical Hebrew closely resembles the Ugaritic pattern in which the pref conj (i.e. the Imperfect, indicating incomplete action in past time) and the suff conj (i.e. the Perfect, indicating complete action) are the forms predominantly used to narrate past events. The waw-pref conj (i.e. waw-Imperfect) seldom occurs and is merely a conditioned variant of the pref conj. In 'standard' Hebrew poetry the suff and w-pref conj are used, and the pref conj occurs occasionally. The w-pref in 'standard' poetry is an independent verbal form. In early Hebrew poetry the w-pref conj is almost always medial, whereas in 'standard' poetry it is more often initial.<sup>95</sup> In Ugaritic poetry the w-pref conj is very rarely initial and almost always medial (i.e. it occurs within lines, not at their beginning). Thus, this positioning of finite verbal forms in past narrative in early Hebrew poetry closely resembles the verbal pattern of Ugaritic. Robertson suggests that Exodus 15 is an early poem as 'the distribution of verbs ... is similar to that in those Ugaritic poems where both the pref and suff conjugations occur abundantly but the

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<sup>95</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 27f.

suff predominates.<sup>96</sup> Also, the pref forms in Ex. 15 'are understood as syntactically equivalent to suff forms as in Ugaritic.'<sup>97</sup>

Robertson's examination of Judg. 5 indicates a strong resemblance between Ugaritic poems in which the pref and suff conjugations occur, but in which the suff conj predominates. The pref and suff conjugations also are syntactically equivalent, as is shown by the pattern of verbal parallelism in v. 6 נדלו ... לכנ and in v. 17 גור ... שנ. In v. 26 Robertson notes that three w-suff forms ( חלצה ... רצחצה ) are parallel with a suff form ( מחקה ) in the Ugaritic fashion.<sup>98</sup> In v. 28 the w-pref form ( תגב ) occurs medially as in Ugaritic but follows a suff form ( נשקה ). 'This is the only resemblance between Judges 5 and the verbal pattern of standard poetic Hebrew.'<sup>99</sup>

Robertson notes that the total number of early forms in Judg. 5 is more than the total number found in 'standard' poems. It appears, therefore, that Judg. 5

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<sup>96</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 30.

<sup>97</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 31.

<sup>98</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 32.

<sup>99</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 32.

was composed at a time when verbal patterns of early poetry were found extensively, but also when 'standard' poetry was beginning to influence the style in which poems were composed. It is not until the 8th century B.C. that 'standard' poetic Hebrew completely supplanted early Hebrew poetry. Robertson concludes that most poems written in 'standard' poetic Hebrew contain examples of archaizing, and most undatable poetry (13th to 10th centuries B.C.) contain some elements resembling 'standard' poetry. It can only be supposed that poems are of an early date when a concentration of archaic forms are found in them.

Robertson states:

... only the forms in Ex. 15 can be used without qualification as evidence of an early date, for it lacks standard forms. The use of early forms in Dt 32, Jud 5, 2 S 22 = Ps 18, Hab 3 and Job must be qualified, for each one contains standard forms. None of them, with the possible exception of Job, exhibit any significant number of verbal forms characteristic of standard poetic Hebrew. But they do have other standard forms: Dt 32, 2 S 22 = Ps 18, Hab 3 and Job a considerable number, Jud 5 a very few, most of which are textually suspect. 100

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<sup>100</sup> Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 154, notes: The relative pronoun v. 5 ze, which is omitted in this study, and v. 27 'šr, Robertson considers textually dubious.

Robertson suggests that only a very small number of poems contain linguistic evidence of an early date (Ex. 15, Deut. 32, Judg 5, 2 Sam 22 = Ps. 18, Hab. 3 and Job).<sup>101</sup> Ex. 15, he proposes, is the oldest, and possibly next Judg. 5 (at the end of the 12th century B.C., c. 1100 B.C.) which manifests numerous early forms.<sup>102</sup> However, as noted by Robertson, the archaic elements in Judg. 5 are dispersed throughout the Song and do not offer conclusive evidence for an early date. Ex. 15 can be considered early on the basis of his evidence which proposes the following relative chronology:

... oldest is Ex 15, which contains no standard forms; possible next, at the beginning of the transition period, should come Jud 5, which manifests numerous early forms, a very few standard ones; next, in the transition period, come Dt 32, 2 S 22 = Ps 18, Hab 3 and Job, all of which contain numerous examples of both; then, shortly after this period, when the forms of standard poetic Hebrew have become firmly rooted, comes Ps 78, where standard forms are overwhelmingly predominant, but where early ones are more numerous than in standard poetry ... 103

Robertson's study points to the lack of precision

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<sup>101</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 153.

<sup>102</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 155.

<sup>103</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 154.

in dating early poetry, and notes that early Hebrew poetry can not be convincingly reconstructed on the basis of Ugaritic poetry.<sup>104</sup> At best, the evidence he gives for early and 'standard' forms in Judg. 5 suggests a date for composition of the Song sometime in the latter part of the 12th century B.C. or early in the 11th century B.C.

(c) The use of the divine name in early Hebrew poetry

David Noel Freedman's study of the use of divine names and epithets in Hebrew poetry notes that a traceable evolutionary pattern from the 12th to the 10th-9th centuries B.C. is discernible. His studies show that the term  $\text{אלהים}$  was not in use until the 10th century B.C. or later, and the term  $\text{אלהים}$  was in use in early times, but was not used as a name for God until the 10th century B.C. or later ( $\text{אלהים}$  is not used regularly for God until the Psalms).<sup>105</sup> The term  $\text{אלהים}$  was used only to apply to other gods as a numerical plural (cf. Judg. 5:8; Deut. 32:17, 39) until

<sup>104</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 85.

the 10th century B.C.<sup>106</sup> The construct form אלהי is an exception, and is found in several early poems from the 12th to the 10th century B.C. The term אלהי-ישראל occurs twice in the Song of Deborah (cf. Pss. 68 and 72). From the middle of the 10th century B.C. onwards אלהים was used as a designation of God, and a surrogate for Yahweh.<sup>107</sup>

The divine name אל occurs in the poems of the 11th to the 10th century B.C., but does not appear in early poetry such as Ex. 15, Judg. 5 and Ps. 29. Freedman states: 'The divine name El was not in use during the earliest phase of Israelite poetry; neither Exodus 15 nor Judges 5, which are overwhelmingly Yahwistic in character and tone, have it.<sup>108</sup> In the Oracles of Balaam, Yahweh is identified with El, and is dated in the 11th century B.C. by Freedman. In Num. 23-24 El occurs eight times; Yahweh three times; Yahweh/El twice; and Jacob/Israel eight times (Num. 23:7, 10, 21, 23; 24:5, 17, 18-19; cf. Deut. 33 and Gen. 49).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 88.

<sup>107</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 88.

<sup>108</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 89.

<sup>109</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 68.

The term *יהוה*, according to Freedman, was introduced into general use during the 13th century B.C.<sup>110</sup> It is not equated with *אל*, and the title of God of Israel is attributed to *יהוה* and not *אל*. In the Song of Deborah *יהוה* is emphasized to the exclusion of *אל* (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 23 use the term *יהוה*; vv. 3 and 5 use the term *יהוה* in parallel with *אלהי-ישראל*).<sup>111</sup>

In the Song of Deborah, the people of Yahweh is identified as Israel (vv. 2, 9), and Yahweh is identified as the God of Israel (vv. 3, 5).<sup>112</sup> The name Israel appears for the first time in the Song of Deborah in vv. 2, 7, 8, 9, and 11 (as the God of Israel in vv. 3 and 5). It does not occur in Ex. 15 or Ps. 29, though in both the term *עם* is used with direct reference to Yahweh.<sup>113</sup> In Judg. 5, *עם-יהוה* is used along with Israel, whereas in Num. 23-24, Gen. 49, Deut. 33, 2 Sam. 23, Deut. 32, and Ps. 78 the two names Jacob/Israel are linked, which does not appear, according to Freedman, in poetry of the 12th century

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<sup>110</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 87.

<sup>111</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 63.

<sup>112</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 62.

<sup>113</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 95.

B.C. but is typical of the 11th and 10th centuries B.C. The term *עַמֵּי* is used from the 12th to the 11th centuries B.C., and in the 10th to the 9th centuries B.C. it is used less consistently.<sup>114</sup>

The repeated occurrence of the pair Jacob/Israel (cf. Gen. 49:2, 7, 24) reflect the period in which the tribes were organized, probably in the first half of the 11th century B.C. The tribal lists of Gen. 49 (cf. Num. 1:5-15) probably come from a time after the battle against Sisera. A. D. H. Mayes states:

... neither of the two basic types of tribal list can be derived from, or can be based on a prototype which derives from, a time earlier than the battle against Sisera. This means that if these tribal lists reflect historical conditions, that is, if they are based, not on a theoretical idea of Israel, but on an actual Israel consisting of precisely these tribes, and if, moreover, they are to be claimed as reflections of conditions before the rise of the monarchy, then the Israel which is reflected here was the Israel which existed in the short period, of about fifty years, between the battle against Sisera and the rise of Saul. 115

Freedman sees *עַמֵּי-יִשְׂרָאֵל* as a description of the Israelite tribe in the early period. In the Song of Deborah the term is descriptive of those who took part

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<sup>114</sup>Freedman, 'Divine Names and Titles,' p. 94f.

<sup>115</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 105.



in the battle. They are the עַם-יְהוָה (Judg. 5:13, 23), the people who acknowledged Yahweh as their God, and who saw the battle against Sisera as a battle waged on behalf of Yahweh. Freedman assigns Judg. 5 to the 12th century B.C., and agrees with David A. Robertson who dates Ex. 15 in the 12th century B.C. and Judg. 5 at the end of the 12th century B.C.<sup>116</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

It has been suggested that early Hebrew poetry and the poetry of Ugarit have similar features such as repetitive parallelism (Lowth and Gray) and word-pairs (Gevirtz and Watters). However, Gray is suspicious of any metrical theory, and finds no regularity of distich or strophe. To him, the important unit is the distich. Burney suggests a form which he terms 'climactic' parallelism, a device which was used to balance lines. Gevirtz sees formulaic phrases as an essential component of parallelism in Ugaritic and in Hebrew poetry. However, word-pairs do not constitute a major part of the Song of Deborah, and more often it is assonance and paronomasia which is employed. When

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<sup>116</sup>Robertson, Linguistic Evidence, p. 155.

there are word-pairs, these are used freely and creatively, and do not appear to be limited to a strict pattern of either rhythm or meter. Robert Gordis notes that it is impossible to formulate stylistic rules for Hebrew poetry, and it can not be assumed that a fully developed rhythmic pattern exists. Neither does Ugaritic evidence support a regular system of meter.

The same metric elements found in early Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry do suggest an early date for the Song of Deborah. Cross and Freedman have found stylistic characteristics common to both literatures, and suggest the late 12th century B.C. or early 11th century B.C. as a date for the Song.

Albright's method of literary sequence-dating, based upon evidence of assonance and paronomasia, dates the Song of Deborah c. 1150 B.C. He notes the deterioration of the use of repetitive parallelism in the Song at the time of composition, and the increase in the use of assonance and paronomasia. This, he suggests, indicates a date in the beginning of the 11th century B.C. or earlier. According to Albright, the Song of Deborah also resembles Deut. 32 (c. 1025 B.C.) and Deut. 33 and Ps. 78 (which Albright dates in the period before the fall of Shiloh). This, he suggests, places the Song of Deborah in the same time period

before the fall of Shiloh.

Robertson cites patterns of verbal forms which are similar to both Hebrew and Ugaritic literature. He notes that the Song of Deborah has a greater number of early forms than 'standard' forms (8th century B.C.), and suggests that the Song was composed at a time when verbal patterns of early poetry were common. He dates the Song of Deborah in the latter part of the 12th century B.C. or in the early part of the 11th century B.C. However, he points out that the archaic elements in the Song are so dispersed throughout the poem that they can not be used to give conclusive evidence of an early date.

Freedman suggests that the word *אלהים* was not used until the 10th century B.C. as a designation of God, and appears in the Song of Deborah only as a numerical plural to apply to other gods. The divine name *אל*, which also is not used in the Song of Deborah, occurs in poetry of the 11th century B.C. to the 10th century B.C. The term *יהוה* (identified as the God of Israel) which is used in the Song of Deborah, is used in the early period (13th century B.C. onwards), and indicates an early composition of the Song. In addition, the Song of Deborah identifies Israel as the *עם-יהוה*, an early designation (12th

to 11th centuries B.C.) of the people of Yahweh. In the poetry of the 11th to 10th centuries B.C. (e.g. Num. 23-24, Gen. 49, Deut. 33, 2 Sam. 23, Deut. 32, and Ps. 78) Israel is linked with the designation 'Jacob' (Jacob/Israel) as a reference to the people. This does not occur in the Song of Deborah. Therefore, Freedman concludes that the Song of Deborah is earlier in composition than poems containing the reference Jacob/Israel, and can be dated in the 12th to 11th centuries B.C. with poems which designate the people as עם-יִהְוָה .

The linguistic evidence found in the Song of Deborah points to a date of composition either late in the 12th century B.C. or in the first half of the 11th century B.C. (c. 1125 B.C. to 1050 B.C.).

## CONCLUSION

The study of the Song of Deborah in the light of the Versions, Rashi and Kimchi, has not produced a radical emendation of the Masoretic text, and hence offers a fairly conservative rendering of the text. Not all exegetical difficulties have been resolved, and a cautious reliance upon the Versions to sort out differences of interpretation is favoured rather than leaning toward extra-biblical evidence. In v. 7, פְּרָדִים is rendered 'open settlements.' However, 'peasant warriors' remains an attractive alternative, and there is a tendency to give a rendering which would include both meanings, 'the inhabitants' and 'the open settlements'. V. 8 is extremely difficult to understand, and an exact rendering may be impossible. V. 27 has been emended radically to give continuity to the meaning of vv. 25-27 of the Song, and to correlate Judg. 4:21 with the poetic account. In v. 5 זֶה סִינַי has been deleted. Despite these and other slight emendations to the text, the basic account of the battle, the tribal situation, and the activity of Yahweh in the battle on behalf of Israel, are reproduced as found in MT.

The Sitz im Leben is presented in this study as a struggle by Israelite tribes for supremacy over the northern plains area, the Esdraelon Valley. It is noted that there is no evidence of an earlier alliance of such a large number of tribes in this period of the Judges, and therefore the battle against Sisera is a unique occurrence, and probably the first time an alliance of tribes was involved in a concerted action.

The Song also marks a period in which the tribes living in the north and south of the Valley of Esdraelon were able to meet in a common effort. Prior to this, the plains area was occupied by a line of Canaanite city-states from Dor on the coast to Bethshean in the east. It probably represents a time in which the Canaanite cities were militarily weak and unable to exert effective control over the area. Philistine and Israelite forces seeking to extend their control over the plains were a threat to Canaanite supremacy. Mayes notes that the victory over Sisera is the only major advance of Israelite tribes into the valley of Esdraelon that is known of for this period.<sup>1</sup> This expansion into the plains from the hill-country

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<sup>1</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 95.

occupied by the Israelites, represents an advanced stage of settlement of the Israelite tribes, probably in the middle of the 11th century B.C.

This study also concludes that in this period of the Judges the unity of the Israelite tribes was primarily ethnic, and that a system of tribes did not exist prior to the establishment of the monarchy, and came into being only at that time to provide a cohesion of tribal groups which heretofore existed as independent groups. It appears that a system of twelve tribes came into being only after the fall of the northern kingdom (c. 722/1 B.C.) as a genealogical system which would hopefully be the basis of restoration of the Davidic order and empire. Thus, the tribal lists of Gen. 49 and Num. 1:5-15 appear to come from a time after the battle against Sisera.

It is also impossible to find evidence in the Song of Deborah which would demonstrate the existence of an amphictyonic office or institution. There is no mention of a central shrine or of a central cult in the Song. The Judges themselves appear to be local officials or administrators who gain prominence among a wider group of tribes because of their specific deeds. They do not assemble at a central sanctuary and issue a call to the tribes to act in concerted action. Hence

the wars of Yahweh do not originate from an amphictyony, and the cohesiveness of the tribes is based upon their common religious unity as the *עם יהוה* and in the belief that Yahweh acts on behalf of his people to aid them in the struggle against a common enemy.

This study would agree with Mayes<sup>2</sup> that the battle against Sisera is best placed in the period of Israelite and Philistine expansion in the 11th century B.C. in which Israel first defeated a Canaanite/Philistine coalition, but shortly afterwards was defeated in her turn by the Philistines at the battle of Aphek (c. 1050 B.C.). The extra-biblical evidence also suggests that the opportunity for Israelite expansion occurred during the period in which Egyptian hegemony over Palestine had ceased and the Canaanite city-states, without the support of Egypt, were divided and vulnerable to incursions by other peoples. This power vacuum (c. 1126-1070 B.C.) seems the most probable period favourable for conflicting groups such as the Israelites and Philistines to struggle for control of land and trade in northern

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<sup>2</sup>A.D.H. Mayes, Israel in the Period of the Judges, p. 96.



Canaan.

The biblical evidence, contemporary historical data, and archaeological discoveries, do not offer conclusive evidence to date the events commemorated in the Song of Deborah. However, the arguments favour a late date rather than an early date in the period of the Judges, and this study is inclined to accept c. 1070 B.C. as the most probable date for the battle against Sisera. The linguistic evidence also favours a date for the composition of the Song late in the period of the Judges, and if the Song (or the major part of it) is contemporary with the battle, this would date the Song itself sometime shortly after c. 1070 B.C. Also, discussion of the amphictyony hypothesis has concluded that the tribal situation noted in the Song of Deborah is that which existed prior to the establishment of the monarchy and late in the period of the Judges. Although the individual arguments are not conclusive, it is the opinion of this study that the cumulative evidence drawn from biblical and contemporary extra-biblical evidence favours a late date for the time of the battle against Sisera, and for the composition of the Song of Deborah.

## APPENDIX

## THE SCANSION OF HEBREW POETRY

## 1. Rhythmic Stresses.

C. F. Burney regarded Hebrew poetry as having a definitely marked rhythmical system, and counted the rhythmic stresses which occur in each stich as the most observable pattern of meter.<sup>1</sup> Burney suggests:

We speak of a rhythmical, rather than of a metrical, system, because there seems to exist in Hebrew poetry no regularly quantitative system of meter (i.e. a strict form of scansion by feet consisting each of so many syllables in regular sequence), but rather a system of so many ictus or rhythmical beats in each stichos, the number of intervening unstressed syllables being governed merely by the possibility of pronunciation. 2

Although the ground rules or principles of stress-accentuation are not only difficult to define but imprecise in application, Burney did attempt to

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<sup>1</sup>C.F. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>C.F. Burney, The Poetry of Our Lord (Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 22.

formulate rules in determining the rhythmical character of Hebrew poetry. His main principles of stress-accentuation were:<sup>3</sup>

1. Every word, with the exception of monosyllabic particles, normally receives one stress-accent.  
e.g. Ex. 15:6,

ימינֶךָ יְהוָה נֹאדָרְךָ בְּכָה  
ימינֶךָ יְהוָה תִּרְעַץ אוֹיֵב

2. Two words closely connected receive one stress when the second word following the first has an accent on the first syllable.  
e.g. Gen. 4:23,

נֶשֶׁךְ-לֹמֶךְ

3. A long vowel two places before the stress-accent (marked with methegh by the Masoretes) normally receives an additional stress.  
e.g. Isa. 1:14,

דְּמוּעַיִיכֶם

4. The word which has a long vowel two places before a stressed syllable and is the first syllable of that word, and normally receives an additional stress, does not receive a stress if it is immediately preceded by a word with a stress-accent on its last syllable.  
e.g. Isa. 33:15,

הִלֵּךְ צְדָקוֹת וְלִבְךָ מִשְׁרָיִם

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<sup>3</sup>Burney, The Poetry of Our Lord, pp. 44-58.

( וְיִּ does not receive a stress as it is preceded by the stress-accent in וְיִּנְגַּד ).

5. (a) The negative אֵל is normally unstressed.  
 (b) Prepositions are normally unstressed except in suffix forms.  
 (c) If two particles are in juxtaposition one is normally stressed.  
 e.g. Lam. 3:8,

אִם כִּי אֶזְעַל וְאֶשְׁחָע

However, it is not necessary that one of two conjoined particles should receive a stress-accent.  
 e.g. Micah 6:8,

כִּי אִם עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאֶהְבֵּת חֶסֶד

Burney found that the greater part of the Song of Deborah (five-eighths of the poem) contained the three-beat measure, a six-foot line of verse in which each three-beat stich is complete in itself, and the two lines of the distich are usually parallel in sense. Judg. 5:4 Burney identified as 3:3,<sup>4</sup>

יְהוָה בְּצִאתְךָ מִשְׁעֵר  
 בְּצִעְדְךָ מִשְׁנֵה אֲדָמָה

V. 5 he identified as a four-beat measure (4:4) found

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<sup>4</sup>Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 98; cf. Burney, The Poetry of Our Lord, p. 33.

in three-eighths of the Song:<sup>5</sup>

הַרְיִים נִזְלָו מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה  
מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Occasionally the four-beat line is followed by a three-beat line (4:3) as in v. 4b (cf. vv. 15b, 18, 26b, 27a):<sup>6</sup>

אֶרֶץ רַעֲשָׁה גַם-שָׁמַיִם נִטְפָּר  
גַם-עֲבָיִם נִטְפָּר מִיָּם

or, in the reverse order 3:4 (v. 6a; cf. v. 9):

בִּימֵי שִׁמְגָר בֶּן-עֲנַת  
בִּימֵי יַעֲלֹל חִדְלוֹ אֲרָחוֹת

William F. Albright believed that early Hebrew poetry contained not only repetition of words and phrases, but was accentual with verse-units of a 3:3 or 2:2 beat.<sup>7</sup> He followed the lead of his teacher Paul Haupt, who, in the manner of the traditional school represented by Bellermann, Saalschutz, Ley, Budde, and Sievers, scanned most of the poems he examined 3:3 or

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<sup>5</sup>Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 97.

<sup>6</sup>Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 70.

3:2 with occasional 2:2.<sup>8</sup> An example of metric alternation was found by Albright in the Gezer Calendar:

... the text on our plaque is definitely mnemonic, being a poetic ditty composed of a tricolon 2:2:2, a tricolon 3:3:3, and two cola 2:2. First we have three double months, then three single months, lastly a double month followed by a single month. For a grown peasant, to whom the succession of agricultural activities was as familiar as the use of his senses, such rhythmic enumeration would have no importance; to a child who had not yet learned the immediate sequence of activities, it would be just as useful as our familiar 'thirty days hath September ...' <sup>9</sup>

Meter patterns or beats per colon which developed before the 10th century B.C. according to Albright were 2:2, 2:2:2, 3:3, 3:3:3, and 4:3.<sup>10</sup>

Albright reconstructs the Song of Deborah as he believes it to be preserved in the Masoretic Bible with hardly any alteration, except that he changes four-foot strophes into two-foot strophes in accordance with what he believes to be the general rule in Hebrew verse.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Douglas K. Stuart, Studies in Early Hebrew Meter, Harvard Semitic Monograph Series, 13 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Gezer Calendar,' BASOR, 92 (1943), p. 25.

<sup>10</sup>Albright, 'The Gezer Calendar,' p. 25.

The Song of Deborah falls without a single disturbance of the order of stichoi, and with the excision of only a very few variant lines and obvious glosses, into fifteen strophes, with the scheme 3:3, 3(2:2). A few stanzas are incomplete, having only two lines 2:2. <sup>11</sup>

Stanley Gevirtz points out the difficulties involved in counting stressed syllables, and suggests that Hebrew poetry follows no discernible regular pattern.

Meter in Hebrew poetry has generally been described in terms of the number of stressed syllables. But meter, in the strict sense of the word, must account for unstressed syllables as well. Lowth's argument against the likelihood of defining the meters of biblical Hebrew poetry has never adequately been refuted: namely that the correct pronunciation of ancient Hebrew, the syllabification of many words, and the quantity and accent of the syllables are all highly uncertain. Recourse to the sub- and supra-linear signs of the Massoretic text, the so-called "accents" or cantillation signs, for the purpose of determining accent is of questionable value ... Ugaritic preserves case endings, while Hebrew, with rare exceptions according to the received text, does not. Since Hebrew does not preserve the case endings found in Ugaritic, while it does preserve the very specific word pairs, the meters would necessarily differ. It is merely a begging of the question to ignore all these difficulties and, in counting stresses alone

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<sup>11</sup>William F. Albright, 'The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,' p. 73 (cf. pp. 74-80 for his Hebrew reconstruction of the Song of Deborah, and pp. 81-83 for his translation of the Hebrew).

(when even the exact placement of them is often uncertain!), to speak of meter. For what is counted most often is simply the number of words, or "significant" elements, in each colon. <sup>12</sup>

## 2. Syllable Counting.

Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman observed that syllable counting as a means of measuring meter was imprecise but that it does give a clue to the rhythmic structure of Hebrew poetry. A purely accentual system for measuring meter would be, in Freedman's opinion, inadequate to reflect differences in length of syllables.<sup>13</sup>

... a remarkable regularity obtains in the oldest Hebrew verse (as in early Canaanite poetry); this is easily recognized in spite of numerous corruptions in the preserved text. This regularity lies somewhere between a simple stress meter (i.e. matching accented syllables without regard to the number of unstressed syllables), and a complex meter involving syllable count and division into metrical feet. The symmetry is exhibited chiefly in parallel cola. It rarely extends beyond this to whole strophes, nor does it apply to word or syllabic subdivisions of the colon. The strong sense of balance seems to have required the same

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<sup>12</sup>Stanley Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, p. 12f.

<sup>13</sup>David N. Freedman, 'Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,' ZAW, 72 (1960), p. 102.



time-length for balancing cola, i.e., approximately the same total number of syllables in each of the two cola. Since in practically all cases the number of stressed syllables would be the same, the unstressed syllables would also balance. This does not mean that there was a regular pattern of unstressed syllables in relation to stressed syllables (that is, a sequence of regular metrical feet, as suggested by Sievers), but only that there is a correspondence in the total number of unstressed syllables in parallel cola ... the balance or equality in the number of stressed syllables has always been regarded as a fundamental principle of Hebrew metrical structure. 14

Cross and Freedman, from their examination of the Song of Deborah, found that the main body of the poem follows the mixed pattern 3:3 and 2:2, which is a characteristic feature of ancient Yahwistic poetry.<sup>15</sup> Although rigid rules can not be applied, they suggest that early Hebrew poetry is regular in structure and is susceptible to quantitative metrical analysis. Early poets may not have counted syllables, yet their verses are carefully balanced. Parallel cola frequently have the same number of syllables, e.g., there may be one or

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<sup>14</sup>Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry, SBL Dissertation Series 21 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975), p. 9; cf. David Noel Freedman, 'Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,' pp. 101-107.

<sup>15</sup>Cross and Freedman, Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry, p. 20f.

two syllables between stresses but not three, and as a result a two-stress colon will contain from four to six syllables and a three-stress colon will contain from six to nine syllables.<sup>16</sup> Freedman notes that a special metrical purpose is deducible in several cases whereby one colon or half-line is lengthened to balance the parallel colon or half-line. This, he believes, is employed to achieve a symmetrical pattern. However, Freedman does not suggest that the poet consciously used a numerical process, but only that it is a characteristic of early Hebrew poetic structure which is derived from its musical framework, such as rhythmic dancing and singing.<sup>17</sup>

Robert G. Boling expanded upon Freedman's suggestion that the number of stressed syllables offer a basis for scansion of Hebrew poetry. His investigation of the Song of Deborah supports the syllable-counting system.

It is now clear that the strophes need not be of uniform length. A line by line count of syllables in a poem will often disclose that it was the overall length of line or strophe, and

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<sup>16</sup>Frank Moore Cross, Jr., and David Noel Freedman, 'The Blessing of Moses,' JBL, 67 (1948), p. 197.

<sup>17</sup>Freedman, 'Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,' p. 101.

not the recurring accent pattern, that was most important to the poet ... Our division of the Song into nine parts of considerably varying length is based largely upon (Freedman's) syllable counting system, together with the observation that the contents of the Song are readily correlated to the patterns which emerge. This is clear in the outline of the Song according to length of lines. Verse 2 is a bicolon of ten syllables per segment (10+10=20) echoed in the concluding verse of Part I by the bicolon of vs. 9 (9+12=21). The three short bicola of vs. 3 total 36 syllables, balanced by two longer bicola totaling 33 syllables in vs. 8. Verses 4-5 have a bicolon and two tricola for a total of 61 syllables, where vs. 6-7 use four bicola with a total of 62 syllables. Such a clearly chiastic arrangement in balanced sub-units of nearly identical length was deliberate on the part of the poet who produced the written version of the Song. 18

Boling's arrangement of the Song into nine parts appears to have been prompted by the counting and arrangement of syllables into subunits of near-equal length, rather than from an analysis of the contents of the Song.

James D. Martin comments on Boling's use of syllable counting:

I find the syllable-count approach less than convincing ... Is it in fact more than coincidence that Parts II and VIII of the poem have 107 and 106 syllables respectively, narrowly missing the total of 108 found in Parts IV and VII? If it is more than

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<sup>18</sup>Robert G. Boling, Judges, p. 106.

coincidence, ought they, too, to have 108? If not, what is the significance of the number they do have? Might not all this lead us back to the dangerous era of metri causa emendations which so disfigured the poetic books in the 3rd edition of BHK? Professor Boling ends up with a division of the poem into Parts which sometimes seem to cut across a more natural sense division. For example, surely vv. 15b-17, all of which (pace Professor Boling's translation of vv. 15b-16) reproach various tribes for failing to participate in the battle, belong together and do not permit of a division between vv. 16 and 17. Perhaps more cogently, surely v. 19 which begins the account of the battle marks a new section, whereas in Professor Boling's division it occurs in the middle of Part IV. 19

Boling's analysis of the Song leads to a radical emendation of the text. It causes further sense-divisions to appear (as does his division of vv. 13-18 which should be included as one section, which lists all the tribes, participants and non-participants in the battle), and casts serious doubt upon the originality of the Song as it appears in MT.

In his reply to Martin, Boling supports his method of syllable counting as a key to structure by an appeal to its more cautious approach than other methods he has examined and which allows few emendations to the text. He states: 'If the symmetry thus disclosed yields rhetorical organization that is obscured by the

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<sup>19</sup>James D. Martin, 'Review of Boling's Judges,' JSOT, 1 (1976), p. 39f.

one-dimensional scrutiny of "content", the problem may be as much an old method as a new one.<sup>20</sup> This argument does not seem to deal directly with or answer the objection raised by Martin to the syllable-count analysis Boling presents.

Boling appears to count the vocal shewa (simple or compound) as an independent syllable. This rule is not followed by others, which points to the diversity of method and the uncertainty involved in the syllable counting system.<sup>21</sup> As pointed out by Gevirtz, the syllabification of many words, as well as the quantity and accent of the syllables is very uncertain.<sup>22</sup>

Douglas K. Stuart finds a basic problem of establishing meter in the lack of some knowledge of pronunciation of the language. He observes:

Every past theory of metrics has relied heavily upon Masoretic vocalizations. As a result, every system has had at least some trouble with the treatment of vocal shewas, furtive patahs, anaptyctic vowels, etc. As is well known, the Masoretes represented only one tradition of spoken Hebrew in matters such as these. To expect their pronunciation(s) of Hebrew from

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<sup>20</sup>Robert G. Boling, 'Response to Reviewers,' JSOT, 1 (1976), p. 51.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. G-K, 26m.

<sup>22</sup>Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, p. 12.

ca. 600 to 900 A.D., both provincialized and influenced by other Semitic tongues, to reflect accurately the language of our poems from a period as much as two millennia earlier, is most unreasonable. 23

Stuart maintains that the question of internal feet within individual cola is unresolved not only because it is based upon the analysis of Hebrew poetry in the Masoretic tradition, but because investigation in this area has not produced a consistent or convincing system of scansion. Nevertheless, he does consider the method of scansion by syllable-count as more reliable than the counting of stresses, as it does not depend upon any theory of internal stress.

The quantity of syllables per colon will continue to be a precise measure of couplet and triplet length regardless of other advances. A couplet whose cola are each eight syllables in length (8:8), for example, will remain 8:8 whether found to be iambic, trochaic, anapestic, dactylic, or any combination of rhythms. 24

Stephen A. Geller suggests that until the matter of the true nature of Hebrew meter is determined, it may be necessary to take a position somewhere between competing accentual and syllabic interpretation.

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<sup>23</sup>Stuart, Studies in Early Hebrew Meter, p. 24.

<sup>24</sup>Stuart, Studies in Early Hebrew Meter, p. 16.

In general, couplets that display syllable asymmetry support an accentual understanding of meter; conversely, examples in which the assignment of stresses according to any regular pattern is difficult, tip the scales toward a syllabic interpretation. However, syllable counts also play a role in interpreting the accentual evidence, since the assigning of one stress to both a word of one syllable and a word or compound of, say, five syllables is most problematic. 25

G. Douglas Young's analysis of the poems of Ugarit has shown that Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry are formally alike in that they have the same features of parallelism and meter. However, he suggests that there is no consistency in the sequence of similar stich combinations within a poem or within sections of a poem, nor is there a consistency of an accent per word pattern for the successive stichs.<sup>26</sup> He states: '... if an accentual meter existed at Ugarit, it might be seen in consistency between parallel passages within single poems, if meter were important to the composer, singer or reciter of the poetry.'<sup>27</sup> Young found no such consistency of accent-per-word pattern for the

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<sup>25</sup>Stephen A. Geller, Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry, p. 371.

<sup>26</sup>G. Douglas Young, 'Ugaritic Prosody,' JNES, 9 (1950), p. 125.

<sup>27</sup>Young, 'Ugaritic Prosody,' p. 128.

successive stichs in the Keret epic, lines 110-158.<sup>28</sup>  
 Young was unable to find either an accentual metrical system or a syllable-counting system in the poetry of Ugarit:

... Ugaritic poetry manifests no regularity in the manner in which stichs may be combined to form sentences, that is, complete thought units. Nor does it manifest any regularity in the sequence of similarly combined stichs. Nor does it show any evidence of an accentual metric system, or syllabic metric system. Variation is the norm, not the exception ... the poet of Ugarit felt no constraint to abide by strict poetic codes. The one outstanding mark of his poetry is the phenomenon of the repetition of thought in parallel stichs. He does not repeat every thought. His poetry is the telling of a single story ornamented ... with a liberal sprinkling of parallel thoughts. 29

### 3. The Scansion of the Song of Deborah.

The following rules are applied in determining the scansion of the Song of Deborah:

(1) A single consonant with vocal shewa, simple or compound, will not have the value of an independent syllable, but rather is attached to the following

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<sup>28</sup>Young, 'Ugaritic Prosody,' p. 126.

<sup>29</sup>Young, 'Ugaritic Prosody,' p. 132.



syllable, so that it forms practically one syllable.<sup>30</sup>

(2) Furtive pathah which is pronounced before the consonant, does not constitute an additional syllable, but is attached to the preceding syllable. The pathah is placed under the guttural, but sounded before it. It is thus merely an orthographic indication not to neglect the guttural sound in pronunciation

(i.e. ַ ְ ְ ְ ).<sup>31</sup>

(3) The preformative ׀ will constitute an additional syllable.

(4) The rules of stress-accentuation formulated by Burney, along with the stress as indicated by MT, will be followed.

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. G-K, 26m.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. G-K, 22f.

## שִׁירַת דְּבוּרָה

- 1 וַתֵּשֶׁר דְּבוּרָה וּבָרַק בֶּן-אֲבִינֵעַם  
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאָמֵר
- 2 בַּפֶּזַע פָּרְעוֹת בְּדִשְׁרָאֵל  
בְּחַתְנָהֵב עִם בְּרַכְוֵי יְהוָה
- 3 שָׁמְעוּ מַלְכִּים הַאֲזִינוּ לְדָנִים  
אֲנֹכִי לַיהוָה אֲנֹכִי אֲשִׁירָה  
אֲזַמֵּר לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- 4 יְהוָה בְּצִאֲתוֹ מִשְׁעֵר  
בְּצִעְדוֹ מִשְׁדֵּה אֱלֹהִים  
אֲרִץ רַעֲשָׁה גַם-שָׁמַיִם נִטְפוּ  
גַם-עֲבָיִם נִטְפוּ מֵיָם
- 5 הָרִים נָזְלוּ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה  
מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- 6 בַּיַּמִּי שָׁמַר בֶּן-עֲנַת  
בַּיַּמִּי זָעַל חֲדָלוּ אֲרָחוֹת  
וְהִלְכִי נְתִיבוֹת יִלְכֹּוּ אֲרָחוֹת עַקְלָקְלוֹת
- 7 חֲדָלוּ פָרְזוּז  
בְּדִשְׁרָאֵל חֲדָלוּ  
עַד שִׁקְמָתִי דְּבוּרָה  
שִׁקְמָתִי אִם בְּדִשְׁרָאֵל
- 8 בְּחַר אֱלֹהִים חֲדָשִׁים  
אֲזַל לְחַם שְׁעִירִים  
מִגֵּן אִם-גִּרְאָה וְרִמַּח  
בְּאֲרַבְעִים אֶלֶף בְּדִשְׁרָאֵל

- 9 לְבַל לְחֹקְקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הַמִּתְנַדְּבִים בְּעַם  
בְּרַכְוֵי יְהוָה
- 10 רִכְבֵּי אֲתָנֹת צְחָרוֹת  
לְשִׁבְיָ עַל-מִדְּיָן  
רְהַלְכֵי עַל-דָּרָר שְׂיַחַו
- 11 מְקוֹל מְחַצְצִים בַּיַד מְשַׁאֲפִים  
שֵׁם יִתְנֶה צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה  
צְדָקַת פְּרוֹזְנוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
- 11b אִזְּזוּ רִדְדָה לְשַׁעֲרֵים עִם-יְהוָה  
12 עֵרְוֵי עֵרְוֵל דְּבֹרָה  
עֵרְוֵי עֵרְוֵי דְבָרֵי-שִׁיר  
קוֹם בְּרֶקַע  
וּשְׁבֵה שְׁבִיהָ בְּז-אֲבִינָעִים
- 13 אִזְּזוּ רִדְדָה שְׁלִיד לְאֲדִירֵים  
עִם-יְהוָה רִדְדָה-לוֹ בַּגְּבוּרֵים
- 14 אֲפֹרֹתִים יִרְשָׁם בְּעֵמֶק  
אֲחַרְיָה בְּגִזְמֵיז בְּעַמְמֵיהָ  
מִנְּי מְכִיר רִדְדָה מְחַקְלֵים  
רַמְזָבוּלֹז מְשֻׁכִים בְּשִׁבְט סֹפָר
- 15 וְשָׂרָה בְּדִשְׁשָׁכָר עִם-דְּבֹרָה  
וְדִשְׁשָׁכָר בְּזוּ בְרָק  
בְּעֵמֶק שְׁלַח בְּרַגְלָיו  
בְּפִלְגֹת רֵאזֵיז גְּדוּלָים חֲקָרֵי-לֵב
- 16 לָמָּה לְשִׁבְתָּ בַיַד הַמְשֻׁפְּתִים  
לְשִׁמְעַ שְׂרָקוֹת עֲדָרִים  
לְפִלְגֹת רֵאזֵיז גְּדוּלָים חֲקָרֵי-לֵב

- 17 גִּלְעָד בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁכַן  
וַיָּדֹן דְּגֵר אַנְיֹת  
אֲשֶׁר קָשַׁב לְחֹף בְּמִים  
וְעַל מִפְרָצֵי יִשְׁפֹּז
- 18 דָּבָר לֵד עִם חֲרָף נִפְשׁוֹ לְמִית  
וְנִפְתְּלֵי עַל מְרוֹמֵי שְׂדֵה
- 19 בָּאֵה מְלָכִים נִלְחָמוּ  
אֲזַ נִלְחָמוּ מְלָכָי כְּנִעַז  
בְּתַעֲבָה עַל-מֵי מְגִדוֹ  
בְּצַע פָּסָף לֹא לְקַחֵה
- 20 מִד-שְׂמָיִם נִלְחָמוּ הַפּוֹכְבִּים  
מִמְּסֹלוֹתֵם נִלְחָמוּ עִם-סִיסְרָא
- 21 נַחַל הַיַּשׁוֹן גְּרָפָם  
הַדְּמָה נַחַל הַיַּשׁוֹן  
תִּדְרֹכֵי נִפְשֵׁי עֵז
- 22 אֲזַ הִלְמוּ עֲקָבֵי-סִיסְרָא  
דְּהִרַת דְּהִרַת אֲבִירָיו
- 23 אֲרוֹר מְרוֹז אָמֵל מִלְּאָה יֵהוּה  
אֲרוֹר אֲרוֹר יִשְׁבְּגָהּ  
פֶּן לֹא-בֵּאֵה לְעִזְרַת יֵהוּה  
לְעִזְרַת יֵהוּה בַּגְּבוּרִים
- 24 תְּבַרְה מְנַשִּׁים זָעַל  
אֲשֶׁת חֲבֵר הַקָּנִי  
מְנַשִּׁים בָּאֵהֶל תְּבַרְה
- 25 מִיָּם שְׂאֵל חֲלָבֵי דְהִרַת  
בְּסִפְלֵ אֲדִירָים הַקָּרִיבָה חֲמָה

- 26      קָדָה לְקַדֵּד תְּשַׁלְּחֶנָּה  
 קִדְמִינָה לְהַלְמִינָה עֲמִלִּים  
 וְהַלְמָה סִיסְרָא מַחֲקָה רֵאשׁוּ  
 וּמַחְצָה וְחַלְפָה רִקְתוּ
- 27      בְּיָז בְּגִלְיָה פָרַע נָפַל  
 שָׁכַב בְּיָז בְּגִלְיָה  
 בְּאֶשֶׁר נָפַל שָׁם שְׂדוּד
- 28      בְּעֵד הַחַלּוּז נִשְׁקָפָה וּתְיַבֵּב  
 אִם סִיסְרָא בְּעַד הָאֶשֶׁנֶב  
 מִדָּעַ בְּשֵׁשׁ רִכְבוֹ לָבוֹא  
 מִדָּעַ אַחֲרָי פְּעַמֵי מְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ
- 29      חֲכָמוֹת שְׂרוּתֵיהָ תַעֲנִינָה  
 אַף-הִיא תִשָּׁב אֲמַרְיָה לָהּ
- 30      הֲלֹא לְמִצְרָיִם חֲלָקָה שְׁלָל  
 רַחֲם רַחֲמֵינִים לְרֵאשׁ גִּבּוֹר  
 שְׁלָל צְבָעִים לְסִיסְרָא  
 רַקְמָה רַקְמֵינִים לְצִרְיִי שְׁלָל

#### 4. The Pattern of Stresses and Syllables in the Song of Deborah

Analysis of the Song of Deborah indicates that there is evidence of the three-beat measure (3:3) in vv. 8, 13, 19, 21, 22, and 24; the four-beat measure (4:4) in vv. 3, 5, 18, 25, 28, and 29; the three-beat line followed by the four-beat line (3:4) in vv. 14, 15, 27, and 30; and the four-beat line followed by the three-beat line (4:3) in vv. 4, 11, 16, 17, 20, 23, 26, and 27. However, there does not appear to be a consecutive or consistent pattern of beats-per-line as the meter may vary with an unequal number of beats-per-line (2, 3, or 4) in a verse, or may have two or more lines with an equal number of beats-per-line. Each verse has its own pattern of beats-per-line and although some verses display a similarity of beats (e.g. 3:3, 3:3:3, 4:3:4:3, etc.) there is no evidence of a consecutive pattern of meter from verse to verse.

A syllable-count of the Song of Deborah shows that the number of syllables per line varies: a two-word line containing two or three stresses may have from four to six syllables; a three-word line containing three stresses may have 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 syllables; a four-word line containing four stresses may have 7, 8,

9, 10, or 12 syllables; a four-word line containing three stresses may have 6, 7, 8, or 10 syllables. Again, there is no evidence of a consistent or consecutive pattern of syllables-per-line, as these appear to vary in almost every line.

A number of lines have similar patterns of words-syllables-stresses (e.g. 3:7:3 in vv. 1a, 4a, 7d, 9a, 15c, 19a, 22b, 23b, 24a and b, 30a; 4:8:4 in vv. 1b, 5a, 6b, 11a, 18b, 23c, 26c, 27a, 28c, 29b), but these are dispersed throughout the Song, and show no evidence of a consistent or consecutive pattern of syllable-counting.

The Song of Deborah does not show evidence of a consistent accentual meter, nor a consistent syllabic metric system. The poet appears to vary his rhythm at will, and it is the poet's spontaneity that is noticed and not a formulated and complicated system of meter.

Lowth's analysis of Hebrew poetry found that the poems were composed of an animated language, incapable of being reduced to a system of scansion. He observes:

... consider the proper genius and character of the Hebrew poetry. It is unconstrained, animated, bold, and fervid. The Orientals look upon the language of poetry as wholly distinct from that of common life, as calculated immediately for expressing the passions; if, therefore, it were to be reduced to the plain rule and order of reason, if every word and

sentence were to be arranged with care and study, as if calculated for perspicuity alone, it would be no longer what they intended it, and to call it the language of passion would be the greatest of solecisms. 32

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<sup>32</sup>Robert Lowth, Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, p. 330.



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