MANASSEH: REFLECTIONS ON TRIBE, TERRITORY AND TEXT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible Series
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary.* Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon.* Oxford, 1907; repr., Peabody, MA, 2000
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Edited by Jack M. Sasson. 4 vols. New York, 1995.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
LXX	Septuagint

NEAEHL	*New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.* Edited by Ephraim Stern. 5 vols. Jerusalem, 1993
MT	Masoretic Text
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie*
RB	*Revue biblique*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
TA	*Tel 'Aviv*
UF	*Ugarit Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY, HISTORY OF RESEARCH AND BACKGROUND

Among the Israelite tribes described in the biblical narratives the tribe of Manasseh is unique in two respects. First, many narratives present Manasseh as the only tribe situated both west and east of the Jordan River – in the central hills region of the west and in northern Gilead in the east. This is a striking characterization because the biblical writers otherwise cast the Jordan as a boundary between the eastern and western tribes and while these two Manassite regions do not necessarily represent a contiguous area of land they are nonetheless viewed as a single tribal unit. Insofar as the biblical narratives present conflicting views of the legitimacy of the east Jordan region and those Israelites that inhabit it, Manasseh operates, at least conceptually, in both the eastern and western orbits.

There are, however, several issues with this portrait of Manasseh as an east-west entity. To begin with, this is one of two distinct views of the tribe: while Manasseh appears divided among both sides of the Jordan in the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles, the book of Judges casts it solely as a western entity with no explicit connection to the east. Although the overarching framework of Judges betrays the hand of later Deuteronomistic editing, many of its individual stories focus on northern figures and regions, a feature that is rather incongruous with the Judah-centric orientation of the Bible as a whole. These materials thus seem to represent, in broad strokes, some type of historical memory or invention. This east-west portrayal of the tribe is also beset

by various historical- and literary-critical tensions. Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles envision Manasseh as part of the twelve-tribe Israelite coalition bound together by common ancestry, religious ties, and the Exodus/Wilderness experiences whose members split off into two geographic groups during the conquest and settlement of the land. Yet this depiction of a united twelve-tribe alliance as well as its rapid conquest and occupation of the entire land (east and west) of Canaan is widely acknowledged to be a much later picture with distinct ideological agendas. These materials also often conceive of the eastern and western portions of the tribe as distinct entities – the two tribal halves are rarely, if ever, described as acting in concert and the traditions regarding their territorial allocation differ in both form and content.[1] These books further tend to treat the eastern tribes of half- (or east-) Manasseh, Reuben and Gad as a unit – an "eastern bloc" – rather than as individual entities and occasionally hint at division between the eastern and western groups (e.g., Num 32; Josh 22).

Manasseh's second notable attribute is its close yet occasionally contested relationship with the neighboring tribe of Ephraim that stands over against its ties with the other Israelite tribes. The connection between these two is highlighted in genealogical traditions that cast their eponyms as full brothers descended from Joseph, rather than as Jacob's immediate sons like the other tribal ancestors, and in tribal lists that view them as subgroups of the larger Joseph tribe. While scholars widely agree that the conceptualization of the Israelite tribes as the descendants of a single ancestor represents

[1]One could conceivably argue that the east and west Manassites act in concert in the related narratives of Num 27 and 36, which focus on Zelophehad's daughters and their land inheritance. This focus on land inheritance, however, assumes the concerns of settled peoples, which is not yet feasible according to the narrative logic of the wider story.

a late, schematic view of tribal, or national, identity, the fact that Manasseh and Ephraim are conceived of differently within this genealogical framework is striking.

Since these varying images of Manasseh are included in texts that were, in the view of most scholars, ultimately written and compiled several hundred years after Israel's "tribal period" in a southern Judahite context, we must consider the degree to which the biblical depiction of the northern tribe of Manasseh represents an ideological picture of the nation's past. This study focuses on Manasseh as a tribal entity, a territorial region and a literary/ideological construct in order to explore facets of ancient Israel's social history and the ways in which it (re)constructed this history in the biblical narratives. While there has been a great deal of scholarship on the Israelite tribes as a whole and a few studies that examine specific features of select tribes, there has not been a full-length study that focuses on the phenomenon of Manasseh as an east-west entity nor one that explores the historiographical and/or ideological nuances of this portrayal. This project seeks to address this gap by examining Manasseh through the lenses of literary analysis, anthropology, archaeology, and historiography.

The goal of my project is two-fold. On one level I seek to examine what sort of unit Manasseh was in the past, to the extent this can be ascertained, and on another level I aim to explore how and why it is constructed as it is by later biblical writers. My thesis is tripartite. First I will argue that the biblical portrait of Manasseh has been shaped by two distinct layers of tradition: one tradition knows Manasseh solely, or at least predominantly, as a western entity and is largely focused on its relationship with Ephraim while a second tradition conceives of Manasseh as a rather obliquely defined eastern entity connected to the west mainly in name alone. Second I will show that while the

idea of Manasseh as a tribe that spans both sides of the Jordan is a plausible model of socio-political tribal organization, the concept of east Manasseh only makes sense within the framework of the twelve-tribe system which scholars widely recognize as a late, ideological construct. Finally I will argue that insofar as Manasseh is cast as an east-west entity, the tribe ultimately stands as a complex, ambiguous object that simultaneously subverts and reinforces the biblical distinctions between east and west Jordan.

1.1 Procedure and Methodological Considerations

This study employs historical-critical, literary, ideological and social-scientific methods, including insights and data derived from the fields of anthropology and archaeology, to examine biblical Manasseh from varying perspectives: as a tribal entity, a territorial region and a literary idea. This combination of approaches is intended to facilitate our analysis of Manasseh as a historical entity, to the extent this can be determined, as well as what the tribe meant to later biblical writers and how it functions in the biblical text. First, by exploring Manasseh in light of historical and anthropological research on the organization of tribes and tribal relationships to territory, I will assess the viability of the biblical portrayal of Manasseh as a likely non-contiguous east-west Jordan tribe. I will then examine archaeological evidence in the purported Manassite region(s) from the Iron I – Persian periods to explore its physical and material development during this time. Next, through a combination of historical-critical, literary and ideological analyses of the texts that refer to Manasseh, and with a view toward the late southern Cisjordanian matrix of the text, I will explore the concepts of “Manasseh” and “the half-tribe of Manasseh”/east Manasseh as literary tropes, examining how they

are used in the biblical materials and what they signify. At the start of this study, however, I must address certain methodological concerns.

1.1.1 Caveats in using the Hebrew Bible as a source for the Israelite tribes

Since much of our information on Manasseh derives from the Bible, I must acknowledge the serious concerns in utilizing this material as a viable witness for Israel's so-called "tribal period" or pre-monarchic/Iron I period. Such considerations are not only a matter of and for historical criticism but also affect our application of social science studies and data to the text. While social science criticism does not necessarily presume the historicity of the biblical materials, in its attempt to help illuminate the social worlds of and behind the text it assumes, to a certain extent, that the texts convey some sense of social verisimilitude and that the social data they offer can be examined through comparative analysis with other similar societies.

Scholars have heatedly debated the extent to which the biblical materials can be used as a source for premonarchic Israel over the past 30 years. While many maintain that the narratives contain some faint degree of historical data about this early period, most are increasingly cautious if not outright skeptical of utilizing the Bible to reconstruct it.[2] Several factors have influenced this methodological reserve. To begin

[2] In certain scholarly circles there is a growing consensus that the Bible cannot be used as a viable historical source until the at least the 9th century BCE, when extra-biblical evidence confirms the existence of the kingdom of Israel and some of the events described in the biblical texts (e.g., Israel's conflict with Moab in 2 Kgs as reflected in the mid-9th century BCE Mesha Stela). For example, based on archaeological data that suggests that Israel cannot be considered a centralized nation until the 9th century BCE, Finkelstein begins his historical reconstruction of Israel with an examination of the Israelite monarchy under Ahab. He accepts that stories of the patriarchs, exodus, wilderness and settlement are fictitious and dates them to the 7th c. BCE. See Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001). Mario Liverani

with, most contemporary scholars agree that the Bible is not history in the modern sense of the term but is rather a theologically and politically motivated narrative about Israel's history. Secondly, archaeological research has demonstrated the lack of physical evidence for some of the major "tribal" events the text recounts, which has important implications for one's evaluation of the period and the validity of the documents. There is no material evidence for the Conquest/Settlement by an outside group described in Joshua nor is there anything in the material record that distinguishes "Israelites" from "Canaanites."[3] In contrast to the biblical story many scholars now agree that the Israelites likely emerged, in large part, from within the indigenous Canaanite population and view the Conquest/Settlement and the period of the Judges as legendary eras rather than actual historical periods.[4] Thirdly, many scholars today maintain that the biblical

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starts his examination of historical Israel during the 9th c. BCE as well, though he sees the "invented history" stories as belonging to the Persian era. See Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (London: Equinox, 2003). Other scholars offer differing views on the Bible's historicity. Philip Davies argues that the Bible's Israel is a literary construct dated to the Persian period and that the only viable "historical Israel" is the Iron II nation conquered by Assyria. He does, however, allow that the Persian era writers used pre-existing sources. See Philip R. Davies, *In Search of Ancient Israel* (JSOT Supp Series 148; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992). Niels Peter Lemche maintains that the Iron Age Israel is elusive in both historical documents and material remains and suggests that "ancient Israel" is a Persian or Hellenistic era creation. See Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998). Thomas Thompson suggests writing Israel's history based (solely) on extra-biblical evidence since he views the Bible as Hellenistic or later creation. See e.g., Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).

[3] Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 105-118; see esp. their chart on p. 114 outlining waves of settlement in the highlands between the Early Bronze and Iron I Ages. See also Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and What Is Forgotten in Israel's History," *JBL* 122/3 (2003): 410-25 and especially her discussion on pp. 405-411 regarding the distribution of features previously thought to be characteristically "Israelite" such as the four-room house and the collar-rim jar.

[4] See for example Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 42.

books describing Israel's "tribal period" – Joshua, Judges, portions of 1 Samuel – were written and arranged in their present form hundreds of years after the events they purportedly describe and thus cannot be considered primary sources of evidence for the Iron I period. These books form part of the so-called Deuteronomistic History, the connected narratives of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings that recount the Israelites' story from the time of the conquest through the Babylonian Exile. Although scholars debate the dating of this history, a number argue that some version existed at the earliest by the late 7th century BCE while many others believe that it derives from the exilic period. Even if portions of this history stem from the 7th century BCE, which I personally believe they do, the texts are nonetheless several hundred years removed from the events they ostensibly describe.

1.1.2 Corroborating Evidence for Israelite Tribalism

Despite these important concerns over the historicity of the Bible's depiction of the tribal period, however, several factors suggest that the general picture of Israelite tribalism is not a wholly fictitious re-creation of the past. Although many details about the tribes may not be historical, the basic biblical conceptualization of early Israel – or those early groups who eventually came to be considered "Israel" – as a tribal people(s) is entirely historically plausible. To begin with, archaeological data from the Canaanite highlands and social science parallels with other tribal groups broadly support the idea that (at least some of) the Iron I entities that would later be known as Israel were "tribally" organized.[5] Following the decline of the Late Bronze Age Levantine urban

[5] As I will discuss more below, there is a significant debate as to whether one can refer to "Israel" during the Iron I period and if so, what, specifically, this entity is.

centers, the Iron I period witnessed a great increase in small, agricultural settlements in previously unoccupied areas of the Canaanite highlands – areas that would form the core of the Israelite nation during the Iron II period (c. 1000-586 BCE). These settlements were largely clusters of single-family dwellings whose basic material remains, together with a lack of fortifications and public buildings, suggest a type of local social organization suited for subsistence farming and/or herding.[6] Since the settlement plans and material culture from these sites are similar those in contemporaneous highland settlements, scholars widely maintain that the new Iron I highland settlers were largely of indigenous origin and likely a heterogeneous mix of nomadic, seminomadic and sedentary pastoral and agricultural groups – most of which are known from contemporary Middle Eastern ethnographic study to be organized as "tribal" entities.[7] They do, however, offer somewhat differing theories to explain this phenomenon. Gottwald proposed that the new settlers were oppressed Canaanite peasants opposed to the prevailing city-state system engaged in a conscious process of "retribalization."[8] Stager believes the new highland settlements resulted from the ruralization of the various indigenous Canaanite populations following the decline of the city-state system.[9] Lemche argues that the settlements should be associated with the re-sedentarization and

[6] Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001): 163; Lawrence E. Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel" in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (ed. Michael Coogan; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 135-137.

[7] See n. 3.

[8] Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 25-29.

[9] Stager, "Forging an Identity," 123-124, 141-142.

re-tribalization of the non-sedentary highland *habiru* groups while Finkelstein and Silberman attribute them to the settling of indigenous, tribal pastoral nomads.[10]

The east Jordan highlands region in which the Bible broadly situates east Manasseh shows similar Iron I settlement patterns and material culture to that in west Jordan so that it is plausible that its population was "tribally" organized like its western counterpart.[11] Although the identity of the new eastern settlers is not clear, Jeremy Hutton proposes that they were likely indigenous to the region and follows Stager in pointing to ruralization following the collapse of the LBA city-state system as the likely explanation for the population increase.[12]

A second factor supporting the overarching biblical characterization of Israel's tribes is the nature of the relationship between tribes and states. Anthropological research indicates that tribes/tribalism can coexist with and under various types of state systems so that we need not assume that the Israelite tribes would have simply disappeared with the onset of the monarchy.[13] In fact, a number of anthropologists have recently proposed that

[10] Niels Peter Lemche, *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988): 75-117; Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed*, 115-119.

[11] Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed,* 118-119; Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel 1300-1100 BCE* (SBL Archaeology and Biblical Studies 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005): 165-169. See also Larry Herr, "Emerging Nations" *BA* 60/3 (1997): 115-182, esp. 117 where he notes that even during Iron IIA "there is a tendency for interregional similarity; that is, for instance, finds from Transjordan are very similar to those from Cisjordan."

[12] Jeremy M. Hutton, *The Transjordan Palimpsest: The Overwritten Texts of Personal Exile and Transformation in the Deuteronomistic History* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009*),* 59.

[13] See for instance, Philip Carl Salzman, "Ideology and Change in Middle Eastern Tribal Societies," *Man* 13, 4 (1978): 618-637.

the perceived dichotomy between tribes and states is false.[14] Although Lemche does not specifically refer to the Iron I –II context, he notes that tribal lineage structures survive in various political contexts, whether or not the higher level of tribal organization is present.[15] Along similar lines Shunya Bendor argues that the lower levels of the Iron I tribal structure – the family and clan structures– would have persisted in the rural areas of the Israelite kingdoms throughout the Iron II period.[16] It is therefore possible that remnants of Israel's tribal structure existed during the latter part of the Iron II period when some of the earliest biblical texts may have been written, or at least would have been a not too distant reality for writers in later periods.

Furthermore, the ancient Israelites' understanding of their past as tribal corresponds to a wider pattern of tribalism among the ancient west Semites.[17] The archives from the mid-18th century BCE kingdom of Mari offer an unparalleled view of tribal life in ancient Syrian society and an insider perspective on tribes unique in the

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[14] Jeffrey Szuchman, "Integrating Approaches to Nomads, Tribes and the State in the Ancient Near East" in *Pastoral Nomads, Tribes, and the State in the Ancient Near East: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives* (ed. Jeffrey Szuchman; OIS 5*;* Chicago: Oriental Institute. 2009), 1-9; Anne Porter, "From Kin to Class – and Back Again! Changing Paradigms of the Early Polity," in *The Development of Pre-state Communities in the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of Edgar* Peltenburg (ed. L. MacGuire and D. Bolger; Oxford: Oxbow, 2010), 72-77.

[15] Niels Peter Lemche, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy (*trans. Frederick H. Cryer; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 243.

[16] Shunya Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel: The Institution of the Family (Beit 'Ab) from the Settlement to the End of the* Monarchy (Jerusalem Biblical Series 7; Jerusalem: Ludwig Mayer, 1996) 39.

[17] Admittedly, while tribalism is widely accepted as a common ancient Near Eastern socio-political phenomenon, much of our information on tribes in the ancient world derives from non-tribal ruling elements who generally viewed them with hostility such that the details we have not only represent an outside perspective but an antagonistic one. Furthermore, the tribal references in the extant ancient texts often consist of brief, fragmentary snippets of information from which it is difficult to glean much in the way of concrete detail.

ancient world. Consisting of thousands of letters from the reign of King Zimri-Lim, who was both the king of Mari and the ruler of the Binu Sim'al tribal group, the archives demonstrate the important role that tribes/tribalism played in all facets of Marite society. They further illustrate the diverse composition and organization of the groups at Mari, thereby highlighting the fluid and variable nature of tribal society. For example, the Mari populace included what are often described as two "tribal confederacies" – the Binu Sim'al and the Binu Yamina – which had differing social and political structures.[18] The Binu Yamina were divided into five primary units or *li'mum* (which Daniel Fleming translates as "tribe") each of which had its own ruler, called a *sugāgum,* as well as an assembly that assisted in decision-making. In contrast, the entire Binu Sim'al group was ruled by Zimri-Lim; the primary unit of this group was the *gayum* (or "division" according to Fleming), which did not have a leadership equivalent similar to the *li'mum* but was rather associated with select *merhûms* and multiple *sugāgum*.

While the Mari texts offer a primary source of information on tribes whereas the biblical narratives offer secondary information at best, Fleming makes a case for drawing "historically bound analogies" between the tribal dynamics of the two. To his mind "the antecedents of Late Bronze and early Iron Age peoples in Palestine may have an indirect relationship to tribal groups further north, who ranged across Syria as far as Qatna, at least."[19] He also suggests that the differing social structures of the Yaminite and Simalite tribes show how responses to sedentarization might vary. Since many scholars argue that some of the earliest "Israelites" included recently settled nomadic peoples, the Mari

[18] See Daniel E. Fleming, *Democracy's Ancient Ancestors: Mari and Collective Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 24-103.

[19] Daniel E. Fleming, "Mari and the Possibilities of Biblical Memory," *RA* 92 (1998): 44.

evidence may provide a vehicle for conceptualizing how some of the Iron I groups might have been structured or at least for recognizing the tribes' potential for internal variability. At the same time we must be careful not to assume direct comparisons or links between the two tribal groups. Jack M. Sasson notes that the terminology linking the Amorite and Israelite tribes proves slippery since certain terms that are etymologically similar nonetheless appear to have differing applications for each group.[20]

Although the tribal evidence from Mari stems from a period well before that of the late second millennium BCE beginnings of the Israelites, there are several indications that the Israelite kingdom and its various antecedent groups existed within a geo-political milieu in which tribalism, or at least the conceptual framework of tribalism, played a role. Scholars widely agree that the Arameans, whom the Bible describes as Israel's contemporaries (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:18; 20:1), were initially a tribal people although their origins are unclear.[21] The Arameans are first mentioned in the annals of the Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser I (c. 1116-1076), who refers to numerous battles against "the *ahlamu* KUR *armayya*^{MES}" or the *"Ahlamu Arameans."* While there has been some debate over the nature of the relationship between the *ahlamu* and the Arameans in the text, a number of scholars suggest that "Arameans" initially referred to a diverse group of pastoral nomadic tribes (*ahlamu*) living within the geographical region known as Aram in the

[20] Jack M. Sasson, "About 'Mari' and the Bible," *RA* 92 (1998): 104-5.

[21] See e.g, Hélène Sader, *Les états araméens de Syrie depuis leur foundation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes* (Beirut: Steiner, 1987); Paul-Eugène Dion, *Les Arameans à l'âge du fer: Histoires politiques et structures sociales,* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1997); Edward Lipinski, *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture and Religion* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

Euphrates steppeland.[22] That is, Aram was first a geographic region that lent its name to the pastoral nomadic peoples that inhabited it. Unfortunately there is a dearth of information on the Arameans following this time. When they next appear in the 9th-8th century BCE cuneiform and extra-biblical literature, many of these tribes/groups had developed into the various kingdoms identified as *bīt X* ("House of X," e.g. the Aramean state *bīt-Agusi* or "House of Gush" for Arpad; *bīt-Haza'īl* or "House of Hazael" for Aram-Damascus; similarly *bīt-Humri* or "House of Omri" for Israel in the cuneiform sources) – a usage similar to the designation *bêt X* in the biblical text. It is uncertain whether the "X" in *bīt* X refers to an eponymous ancestor or a historical founder although the one does not necessarily preclude the other.[23] Complicating matters somewhat, a number of these *bīt X* entities are also occasionally referred to as *bĕnê X* ("sons of X") and the rationale for these differing terminologies is unclear.[24] For example, the Israelites are frequently referred to as *bĕnê Yisrā'ēl* in the biblical narratives and the Ammonites are referred to as "the sons/children of Ammon" (*bn 'mn*) in a local

[22] William Schniedewind, "The Rise of the Aramean States," in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations* (ed. Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger, Jr.; JSOTSupp Series 341*;* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 276-279; Sader, *Les états araméens de Syrie depuis leur foundation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes,* 271.

[23] Dion suggests most of these kingdoms were named after eponymous ancestors. See Dion, *Les Arameans à l'âge du fer,* 225-231. Sader holds that in certain cases, the "X" is a historical figure who was likely viewed as the dynastic founder of the entity. See Sader, *Les états araméens de Syrie depuis leur foundation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes,* 272-273. Bruce Routledge offers a concise and thorough summary of this issue. See Bruce Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity and Archaeology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 124-132.

[24] Schloen suggests that the *bīt/bêt* designation indicates that these entities were conceptualized as a patrimonial household, a conceptualization that would encompass or perhaps subsume a "tribal" mode of organization. See J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonalism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 63-73. Routledge, however, argues that this is too simplistic an explanation for the naming phenomenon. See, Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age,* 124-132.

inscription dated to c. 600 BCE (CAI no 78:2, 3) as well as in the biblical texts. While "sons of X" and "House of X" both make use of the kinship language that is characteristic of tribal societies, insofar as "House of X" is also used of royal houses, it is possible that the differing expressions reflect varying insider/outsider perspectives on social organization.[25]

In addition to understanding the Ammonites as a tribal people, many maintain that the mid-ninth century BCE Mesha Stela points to some degree of tribal heritage among the Moabites.[26] In fact, there is a tendency among certain biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholars to refer to Iron II Ammon, Moab, Edom and Israel as "tribal kingdoms" – a terminology that pointedly acknowledges their tribal undertones. According to Øystein LaBianca and Randall Younker, these entities simultaneously evidence features of both kingdoms and tribes: while they demonstrate some features associated with states in Mesopotamia or Egypt such as cities, inscriptions, monumental art and fortifications, they lack a high level of social complexity, a distinct settlement hierarchy and a diminished role for kinship among other things and in this way resemble tribal groups.[27]

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[25] Thus we should note that Judah appears as *bt dwd* ("House of David") in the Aramaic Tel Dan inscription.

[26] See for example Piotr Bienkowski and Eveline van der Steen, "Tribes, Trade and Towns: A New Framework for the Late Iron Age in Southern Jordan and the Negev," *BASOR* 323 (2001): 21-47; Routledge, however, problematizes this characterization. See Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 139-153.

[27] Øystein LaBianca and Randall W. Younker, "The Kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom: The Archaeology of Society in the Labe Bronze/Iron Age Transjordan (c. 1400-500 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy* Land (ed. Thomas E. Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995): 339-415; Øystein LaBianca, "Excursus: Salient Features of Iron Age Tribal Kingdoms," in *Ancient Ammon* (ed. Burton MacDonald and Randall W. Younker; Leiden: Brill, 1999): 19-23; Randall Younker, "Moabite Social Structure" *BA* 60/4 (1997): 237-248. See also Tapper's discussion of tribal states. Richard Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople in Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 68.

A final factor that loosely reinforces the biblical information on the Israelite tribes is the mid-9th century BCE Moabite Mesha Stele. Not only does this inscription situate "the man [read: men] of Gad" in the region in which the Bible broadly locates the tribe (lines 10-11), but it also complements the biblical portrait of Israelites residing in parts of east Jordan (lines 4-8, 10-11, 14, 18-19).[28] Although Mesha's Gad is not necessarily identical with the biblical tribe of Gad and although the biblical details on Gad's location are inconsistent and thus ambiguous, the inscription should nonetheless caution us against viewing the biblical information on the Israelite tribes as completely devoid of historical merit.

1.1.3 Caveats related to archaeology and early Israelite history

Another set of methodological considerations for this study relates to the intersection of archaeology and Israel's early history. Since this project draws on both the biblical text and archaeological evidence to assess the tribe of Manasseh, I must address the nature of the relationship between the two for the purposes of historical reconstruction. While the biblical data forms the starting point for this study, there are significant difficulties in utilizing this material as a historical record as outlined above. Archaeology, in contrast, offers a primary source of evidence for ancient Israel although we must recognize that material evidence is not an objective window to this ancient world. As the anthropologist Susan Keech McIntosh notes, artifacts do not provide unmediated access to the past but "rely on interpretative linking principles to establish the

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[28] See William F. Albright, "Palestinian Inscriptions," *ANET,* 320-321; K.A.D. Smelik, "Moabite Inscriptions," in *The Context of Scripture*, Vol. 2 (ed. William Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; Leiden: Brill, 2000): 137-138.

evidentiary relevance of their data as a record of the past."[29] In other words, material remains require some type of framework in which to be interpreted and in the case of ancient Israelite history the interpretative framework is often shaped, if only to a small degree, by the biblical text.[30] This study uses archaeological data as a key source of information on the social and material realia of the areas the Bible loosely describes as Manassite while cognizant that the biblical text is playing a role in shaping the very questions asked of the material evidence. While the archaeological data will largely serve as a check on, if not corrective to, the biblical data, it cannot stand in complete isolation from it.

This study also recognizes the serious issues in using archaeology to help identify and reconstruct Iron I "Israel." There has been discussion in archeological discourse as to whether material remains can identify ethnicity (the "pots equals people" issue) and in Syro-Palestinian archaeology in particular as to whether it is possible to identify "Israel" in the Iron I material record of the Canaanite highlands. Whereas previous generations of biblical archaeologists identified several Iron I material traits as "Israelite," such as collar-rim jars and four-room houses, more recent study has demonstrated that none of these traits is exclusive to the highland area and therefore cannot be considered indicative of an Israelite presence. Many scholars are now hesitant to speak of "Israel" during the

[29] Susan Keech McIntosh, "Archaeology and the Reconstruction of the African Past," in *Writing African History* (ed. John Edward Philips; Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 52.

[30] William Dever argues as much when he notes that a history of ancient Israel based solely on material evidence would not only be a slim history but an incomplete one since material objects require some kind of interpretative context. See for instance William Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 53-157.

Iron I period, arguing that this is a biblical and/or anachronistic description of the various groups in the region at that time.[31]

In this study I make no assumptions about ethnic identity of the Iron I highland inhabitants, identifying them simply as "Iron I inhabitants." Nor do I assume that the regions the Bible designates as "Manasseh" were in fact "Manassite" or necessarily had anything to do with the tribe during the Iron I period. Rather, my goal is to examine the material development of the territory the Bible broadly assigns to Manasseh to better understand the nature of the biblical portrayal of the tribe.

Finally, insofar as this study focuses on an ancient tribe, I must speak to the concerns involved in identifying "tribes" of any type in the material record. Anthropologists today widely point to the shifting and elastic nature of tribal groups as one of their defining characteristics; such characteristics, however, make tribes difficult to identify in the material record and archaeologists have struggled to find definitive material correlates for them. A number of scholars point to certain criteria as indicative of tribe, such as segmentation, small-scale, non-hierarchical though others feel that such a

[31] Dever, followed by others, suggests identifying the Iron I inhabitants of the Canaanite central hill country as "proto-Israelites" since they occupy the area that in the following Iron II period can confidently be described as Israel. See for example William Dever, "Ceramics, Ethnicity, and the Question of Israel's Origins," *BA* 58:4 (1995): 200–213; idem, "Archaeology and the Emergence of Early Israel," in *Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John R. Bartlett; London: Routledge, 1997), 20–50; *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001). Israel Finkelstein among others has challenged Dever's suggestion, arguing that there is no materials basis for distinguishing among the Iron I highland groups but that such an ascription is biblically inspired. See Israel Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Israel in Canaan: Consensus, Mainstream and Dispute," *SJOT* 5:2 (1991): 47–59; idem, "Ethnicity and Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands on Canaan: Can the Real Israel Stand Up?" *BA* 59:4 (1996), 198–212.

trait-list approach is too reductionist.[32] According to Severin Fowles, archaeologists often end up identifying "tribe" in the material record through what is ultimately an "impressionistic" assessment: looking for a segmented social context of moderate size with no evidence of elites that does not appear too big, too centralized or too chiefdom-like although he does not find this an entirely satisfying approach.[33] We will rely on this combination of traits and impressions to get at Manasseh while cognizant of the difficulties with such an approach.

1.2 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 examines Manasseh as a tribal entity against the backdrop of a wider discussion of "tribe" in both biblical and anthropological scholarship. While the differing biblical portrayals of Manasseh loosely correlate with certain features that are today associated with tribe, here I hope to demonstrate that: 1) the characterization of Manasseh as an east-west entity in Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr represents a (late), administrative view of the tribe and 2) ultimately the idea of east Manasseh only makes sense within the

[32] On trait lists see, Winifred Creamer and Jonathan Haas, "Tribe versus Chiefdom in Lower Central America," *American Antiquity*, 50 (1985): 738-754; David P. Braun and Stephen Plog, "Evolution of 'Tribal' Social Networks: Theory and Prehistoric North American Evidence," *American* Antiquity 47 (1982): 605-625; Gary Feinman and Jill Neitzel, "Too Many Types: An Overview of Sedentary Prestate Societies in the Americas," *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 7 (1984): 39-102. Severin Fowles, among others, points to issues with this approach, arguing that it is too reductionist. See Severin M. Fowles, "From Social Type to Social Process: Placing 'Tribe' in a Historical Context," in *The Archaeology of Tribal Societies* (ed. William A. Parkinson; Ann Arbor, MI: International Monographs in Prehistory, 2002): 14-19. Norman Yoffee offers similar critiques of the correlates of chiefdom, noting that the criteria of chiefdoms have significantly changed over the years. See Norman Yoffee, "Too many chiefs? (or Safe texts for the 90s)," in *Archaeological Theory: Who Sets the Agenda?* (ed. Norman Yoffee and Andrew Sherratt; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993): 60-78.

[33] Fowles, "From Social Type to Social Process," 17-18.

framework of the twelve-tribe system, both of which point to the historiographical or perhaps ideological nature of this portrayal.

The biblical texts often stress the territorial aspect of the Israelite tribes and many anthropologists point to some degree of territorial affinity as one of the main attributes of tribe. Chapters 2 and 3 will focus on the Manassite territories. Chapter 2 examines the east and west Manassite regions as they are described in the biblical text and in light of anthropological views on tribal territory. Here I argue that the narratives largely treat the two Manassite territories as distinct, unrelated regions and ultimately offer very schematic and idealized descriptions of their locations and extent. While Josh 13-19, which offers the most comprehensive picture of these territories, suggests that they roughly overlapped with discrete topographical regions, these materials are likely not reflective of (Iron I) tribal social realities.

Chapter 3 analyzes the material evidence from the geographical areas in which the Bible broadly situates Manasseh during the Iron I – Persian periods. The goal of this chapter is to assess the physical realia and development of these regions during those periods in which the Manassite traditions likely developed to better understand the biblical portrayal of the tribe although I also seek to problematize the delineation of these regions. While there are broad similarities between the two "Manassite" areas during the Iron I, such parallels are nonetheless part of a wider pattern of interregional, highland similarity. Although the nature of the archaeological data from east Jordan prevents us from drawing definitive conclusions about its material development, it is difficult to ascertain a particular connection or relationship between these two regions during later periods, if one existed at all.

Chapter 4 will focus on Manasseh as a literary signifier to show that the varying traditions about the tribe represent distinct and often incompatible concepts. In traditions that focus on Manasseh's relationship with Ephraim, the tribe largely appears as a western entity; in certain cases where the tribe possibly represents an eastern entity there is a nonetheless degree of ambiguity over its eastern status. In those traditions that portray Manasseh as an eastern entity, the group generally has no overt connection to its western "half" but is rather cast as a part of a wider, regional east Jordan bloc that stands over against the western tribes. At the same time Manasseh is missing from several key narratives focused on the eastern tribes so that its eastern status is ultimately nebulous.

Chapter 5 will offer concluding remarks and observations and will situate the biblical portrayal of Manasseh within the context of cultural memory and historiography.

1.3 History of Scholarship

There are a limited number of studies focused solely on the tribe of Manasseh. In the mid-1930s, Abraham Bergman attempted to reconstruct the historical development of half- (east-Manasseh) based on the biblical text, which he utilized as a largely accurate historical source, and extra-biblical data known at the time.[34] While Bergman's methodology and data are outdated today, contra most scholars of his time he cogently argued that Machir/half-Manasseh was consistently an eastern entity rather than a western group that later moved east. At the same time he posited a complex and convoluted historical evolution for the tribe that cannot be sustained in light of more

[34] Abraham Bergman, "The Israelite Occupation of East Palestine in the Light of Territorial History," *JAOS* 54/2 (1934): 169-177; idem, "The Israelite Tribe of Half-Manasseh," *JPOS* 16 (1936): 234-254.

recent understandings of Israel's history.[35] Other studies of Manasseh include a series of articles by André Lemaire largely focused on identifying and delimiting the geographical location of various sections of the tribe,[36] and select articles on disparate topics such as Diana Edelman's examination of the tribe's genealogy in Chronicles[37] or Edward Campbell's brief discussion of its border with Ephraim.[38] Heinz-Dieter Neef's *Ephraim: Studien zur Geschichte des Stammes Ephraim von der Landname bis zur frühen Königszeit*, which examines the history and geography of the tribe of Ephraim through the time of Solomon, includes a lengthy section on the Iron I material remains in west Manasseh as of 1980 and a discussion of the House of Joseph of which Manasseh was a part.[39] While Neef's monograph highlights the important ties between Manasseh and Ephraim, as does the present study, he often assumes the historicity and accuracy of the

[35] Bergman argues that the eastern group first consisted of "purely Israelite descendants of the House of Joseph," who had come to the region, then incorporated the older, indigenous population(s) around the Yarmuk basin, and finally, by the 10th century BCE, re-incorporated many of the other clans in northern Gilead that had initially been part of the 'original' tribe itself but had dispersed throughout the region in the intervening period. See Bergman, "The Israelite Tribe of Half-Manasseh," 253. Aside from the complex developmental trajectory Bergman posits here, this theory presumes that the Israelites were a cohesive, 12-tribe entity that originated outside and the early existence of a Joseph tribe, concepts that have been disproven in more recent years.

[36] André Lemaire, "Le 'pays de Hepher' et les filles de Zelophehad à la lumiere des ostraca de Samaria" *Semitica* 22 (1972): 13-20; Lemaire "Galaad et Makir: Remarques sur la tribu de Manassé à l'est du Jourdain," *VT* 31 (1981): 39-61.

[37] Diana Edelman, "The Manassite Genealogy in 1 Chronicles 7:14-19: Form and Source," *CBQ* 53 (1991): 179-201. Edelman ultimately concludes that this genealogy derives from sources that originated during the reign of Joash. See also A. Demsky, "The Genealogies of Manasseh and the Location of the Territory of Milcah Daughter of Zelophehad," *ErIsr* 16 (1982): 70-75 (Hebrew).

[38] Edward Campbell, "The Boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh," in *The Answers Lie Below: Essays in Honor of Lawrence Edward Toombs* (ed. Henry O. Thompson; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 70-93.

[39] Heinz-Dieter Neef, *Ephraim: Studien zur Geschichte des Stammes Ephraim von der Landname bis zur frühen Königszeit* (BZAW 238; Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995).

biblical materials describing the tribes, a view this study problematizes, and his work is based on now-outdated archaeological data.

More frequently Manasseh is mentioned, however cursorily, in the voluminous research on the Israelite tribes, in studies of early Israelite history and/or settlement, in analyses of specific biblical texts, and in literary examinations of the Bible's depiction of east Jordan. Rather than summarize these myriad works individually, which would be a tedious undertaking, I will sketch those areas of discussion within this material that form a backdrop for this project as a whole.

Manasseh's relationship with Machir: Many scholars have commented on the origin of Manasseh's relationship with Machir, the entity that is frequently cast as the tribe's major east Jordanian subgroup (Num 26; Num 32:29-31; Josh 17:1-6). Based largely on historical- and literary-critical analyses of Judg 5 (Song of Deborah) – a poem/tribal list widely considered among the Bible's oldest texts that does not mention Manasseh but that includes Machir – many argue that Machir was a western entity that later migrated east of the Jordan although they offer differing views of its ties with Manasseh. Martin Noth and Roland de Vaux maintained that Manasseh was originally a clan within the western tribe of Machir[40] while Siegfried Mittman held that Machir was a clan within Manasseh.[41] Hans-Jürgen Zobel on the other hand argued that Machir was initially an independent west Jordan tribe forced to move east due to the expansion and

[40] Martin Noth, *The History of Israel (*2nd ed,; trans. P.R. Ackroyd; New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 61-62; Roland de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel* (trans. David Smith; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 586-587; 651-652.

[41] Siegfried Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970), 64-71; 213-216.

dominance of the nearby tribe of Manasseh, a view that C.H.J. de Geus followed.[42] More recently, scholars such as Robert Boling, Norman Gottwald, and Lawrence Stager, who suggest that the Judg 5 mention of Machir is a synonym for or reference to western Manasseh, seem to accept the basic premise of this earlier scholarship without clarifying their understanding of the relationship between the two entities.[43] While these arguments connecting Machir to the west largely proceed from the assumption that the entities listed in Judg 5 are arranged in some type of geographical order, Lemaire has cogently challenged this rationale noting that it is difficult to discern a particular geographical sequence in the biblical text.[44] Lemaire posits that Machir initially referred to an east Jordan geographical region-cum-social group that came to be associated with the west and western Manasseh, a view I also hold and one that is plausible from both a literary-critical and anthropological perspective. Unlike Lemaire, however, I do not believe that the biblical materials provide enough information to pinpoint the group's location with any accuracy nor do I agree with his suggestion that Machir's connection to Manasseh

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[42] Hans-Jürgen Zobel, *Stammesspruch und Geschichte. Die Angaben der Stammessprüche von Gen 49, Dtn 33 und Jdc 5 über die politischen und kultischen Zustände im damaligen "Israel,"* (BZAW 95; Berlin: Töpelmann 1965), 112-115. C. H. J. de Geus, *The Tribes of Israel: An Investigation Into Some of the Presuppositions of Martin Noth's Amphictyony Hypothesis*, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 18 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976).

[43] Robert G. Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (AB 6A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 112; Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*; Lawrence Stager, "The Song of Deborah: Why Some Tribes Answered the Call and Others Did Not," *BAR* 15/1 (1989): 50-64; idem, "Archaeology, Ecology and Social History: Background Themes to the Song of Deborah" in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem, 1986* (ed. John A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 221-234. These commentators generally also hold that "Gilead" actually refers to 'Gad' since the latter is not mentioned among the ten entities. Yet aside from both of these names beginning with a gimel, the words have different etymologies such that this is not a plausible solution.

[44] The tribal order in Judg 5:14-17 is: Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun, Yissakhar, Reuben, Gilead, Dan, Asher, repeat of Zebulun, Naftali. See Lemaire, "Galaad et Makir." As noted above, Bergman also disagreed with the idea that Machir originated in the west although his reconstruction of the east Mansseh's development cannot be sustained.

was realized as early as the period of the Judges. Niels Peter Lemche briefly notes that Manasseh assimilated Machir as well as Gilead although he does not explicitly comment on Machir's geographical status.[45] While he holds that such assimilation could have only occurred prior to the monarchy, I do not necessarily agree with his proposed timing and believe that this assimilation might represent a socio-political idiom rather than a social reality. Building on the observations of Lemaire and Lemche especially, this project will explore the relationship between Manasseh and Machir within a wider discussion of the notion of "tribe" and the biblical conceptualizations of it.

Manasseh's position in the biblical tribal lists: A second topic of discussion that has focused on Manasseh is the interconnected issue of its relationship to Joseph and its position within the Bible's various tribal list systems. In the 1930s Noth observed that the biblical texts contain two twelve-tribe schemes: system A, which includes the tribes of Joseph and Levi but not Manasseh or Ephraim; and system B, in which the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim appear in place of Joseph and Levi is not mentioned.[46] To Noth's mind, A was the older of the two systems and the presence of Manasseh and Ephraim in B resulted from the splitting of the Joseph tribe into two separate tribal offshoots. While

[45] Lemche, *Early Israel*, 284.

[46] Martin Noth, *Das System der zwölf Stämme Israels* (repr. ed.; Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966); idem, *The History of Israel*, 85-97. Since Noth's time, several scholars have posited that there are more than two twelve-tribe systems in the biblical texts. Helga Weippert, who viewed Noth's system B as a geographical system, argued that there was a third geographically-based system similar in content to B though arranged differently so that Judah was listed first. See Helga Weippert, "Das geographische System der Stämme Israels," *VT* 23 (1973): 76-89. Koichi Namiki divided the Bible's numerous tribal lists into various genealogical and geographical systems and ultimately suggested that a basic genealogical scheme precedes the geographical schemes. Koichi Namiki, "Reconsideration of the Twelve-Tribe System of Israel," *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 2 (Tokyo: Yamamoto Shoten, 1976): 29-60. Zecharia Kallai holds that there are four twelve-tribe systems: two based on genealogy and two on geography and that the geographical systems precede the genealogical ones. Zecharai Kallai, "The Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel," *VT* 47/1 (1997): 53-90.

Gottwald followed Noth's stance,[47] de Geus convincingly argued that Manasseh and Ephraim were, in fact, initially two independent tribes that preceded the concept of a composite Joseph tribe.[48] According to de Geus, "Joseph" is a secondary category or grouping that derives from the early monarchical period at the earliest where it is utilized in opposition to the southern entity "Judah." De Geus' theory has been favored by a number of more recent scholars, including Lemche, Mario Liverani and Kenton Sparks, and Zecharia Kallai comes to similar conclusions although from a somewhat different direction.[49]

The discussion of Manasseh's relationship to Joseph and Ephraim and their respective roles in the Bible's tribal lists is part of a wider scholarly understanding of the twelve-tribe concept – the idea that the early Israelites were a confederation of twelve tribes descended from Jacob's sons – as a late(r) ideological construct rather than a pre-monarchic reality.[50] This understanding of the schematic nature of the twelve-tribe

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[47] Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 247-249.

[48] de Geus, *The Tribes of Israel*, 79-96, 210-211.

[49] Lemche, *Early Israel*; Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel*; Kenton L. Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel," *ZAW* 115 (2003): 327-347; idem, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expressions in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998); Kallai, "The Twelve-Tribe Systems of Israel." Building on the works of Noth, Weippert and Namiki, Kallai argues that the Bible's two geographically-based tribal systems – which include Manasseh and Ephraim –predate the two genealogical systems. Since he dates the final geographical system to the "lived reality" of the tribes during the United Monarchy period, the genealogical system must post-date this time. See Kallai, 87.

[50] This attitude toward the twelve-tribe concept was prompted by various observations, including differences between the number, identity and depiction of the tribes in Genesis-Joshua and those in Judges, the latter of which betrays no evidence of a twelve-entity system, as well as differing twelve tribe schemes within Genesis-Joshua itself. Many scholars agree that Judah was not originally viewed as an Israelite tribe, but was rather added to the story of the tribes and their founders at some point during the rise or ascendency of the Judahite monarchy. See for example A. D. H. Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges* (Studies in Biblical Theology 2/29; London:

system has important ramifications for the ways in which we evaluate the biblical depiction of Manasseh's origin and development, and other concepts associated with this system such as the tribal territorial allotments in Josh 13-19. While these latter chapters offer some of the most detailed information on the location and extent of the various tribal territories, in the end the twelve-fold tribal territorial division is part and parcel of the twelve-tribe concept.

Manassite territories: The territory ascribed to west Manasseh, and in many cases the tribe itself, is often discussed in archaeological or archaeological-based studies of the Canaanite highlands during the LBA – Iron I periods and later such as Adam Zertal's recent, multi-volume *Manasseh Hill Country Survey* and related articles, Israel Finkelstein's *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, and Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert-Nakhai's "A Landscape Comes To Life: The Iron Age I."[51] The latter studies in particular suggest that west Manasseh's territory would have followed, if not been determined along, geographical lines, noting that many of the tribal territories

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S.C.M. Press, 1974); Barnabas Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 30; Leiden: Brill, 1979): 95-112. See also Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel" and the literature cited therein. Anthropological studies of the biblical genealogical systems have also demonstrated that the language of kinship often signifies social, political and/or economic relationships among groups rather than simply expresses biological or blood-ties such that the idea that the tribes were descended from the patriarch Jacob should not be taken at face value. See Robert R. Wilson, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); idem, "The Old Testament Genealogies in Recent Research," *JBL* 94 (1975): 173-178; 182-188; idem, "Between 'Azel' and 'Azel' Interpreting the Biblical Genealogies," *BA* 42 (1979): 11-22; idem, "Genealogy, Genealogies," *ABD* 2: 929-932.

[51] See for example Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988); Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life: The Iron Age I," *NEA* 62 (1999): 62-92; 101-127; Adam Zertal, *The Manassite Hill Country Survey*, 4 vols (Tel Aviv: IDF and Leiden: Brill, 1996-2008). See also Zecharia Kallai, *Historical Geography of the Bible: The Tribal Territories of Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986); Nadav Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, (Jerusalem: Simor, 1986).

described in Josh 13-19 broadly correspond with discrete topographical areas. These works have greatly increased our understanding of first millennium BCE settlement patterns and material culture in the greater highlands region and while I will rely on this data to evaluate the development of the biblically delineated "Manassite" areas from the Iron I through Persian periods, this study problematizes both the biblical descriptions and our understanding of the Manassite territory.

The territory ascribed to east Manasseh has not been discussed as often or as thoroughly as that of west Manasseh although it is addressed in a fairly substantial manner in Magnus Ottosson's *Gilead: Tradition and History* and Burton Macdonald's *"East of the Jordan": Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures*.[52] Both studies readily acknowledge the vague biblical details on this region. While the former examines east Manasseh and its territory within a wider discussion of the literary and tradition history of Gilead, the latter focuses on the tribe's historical geography, summarizing archaeological data on many of the cities/towns the biblical text ascribes to it. These works provide an important starting point for my analysis of the east Manassite territory although I seek to problematize and highlight the issues defining and outlining this region.

Literary analyses of east Jordan's role in the biblical texts: Manasseh has also been mentioned in literary and ideological analyses of east Jordan's role in the biblical narratives. Douglas A. Knight, David Jobling, and Rachel Havrelock note that many biblical texts suppose, either explicitly or implicitly, that the Jordan River marks Israel's

[52] Magnus Ottosson, *Gilead: Tradition and History* (trans. Jean Gray; Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 3; Lund: Gleerup, 1969); Burton MacDonald,"*East of the Jordan": Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures* (ASOR Books 6; Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000).

eastern boundary and therefore operate within a binary framework that casts the Israelite peoples and territory west of the Jordan as legitimate while those on the east are "Other."[53] At the same time Jobling argues that Manasseh, which is split between both east and west, serves as a meeting point between these two regions. To his mind, "The tribe of Manasseh, in its bipartition, recapitulates and *mediates* the bipartition of Israel; Israel's being split in two is softened if there is a point at which these two are still one."[54] While Jobling astutely highlights the ways in which the idea of Manasseh disrupts the east-west dichotomy, his analysis fails to take into account the ambiguity and tensions that ultimately surround the notion of Manasseh as an east-west entity.[55] This study seeks to foreground such tensions to show that Manasseh is a site of multiple and contested meanings.

1.4 Setting the Stage: Other Background Matters

1.4.1 Biblical Distinction Between East and West

The depiction of Manasseh spanning both sides of the Jordan River is particularly striking since the idea of east Jordan – both the physical territory east of the Jordan River

[53] Douglas A. Knight, "Joshua 22 and the Ideology of Space," in *'Imagining' Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt; JSOTSup 359; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002): 51-63; David Jobling, "The Jordan a Boundary: Transjordan in Israel's Ideological Geography," in *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible* (2nd ed.; JSOTSup 39; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986): 88-134; Rachel S. Havrelock, "The Two Maps of Israel's Land," *JBL* 124, no. 6 (2007): 649-667; See also her more recent book Rachel S. Havrelock, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[54] Jobling, "The Jordan a Boundary," 116.

[55] As I was nearing the final stages of writing this dissertation, I came upon Havrelock's *River Jordan* in which she makes a similar argument. See Havrelock, *River Jordan*, 106-134.

and in a sense the Israelites who reside in it – is a fraught concept in the biblical literature. Certain traditions point to the east as a legitimate part of Israel. For instance, the various traditions linking Jacob with Gilead (e.g., Gen 31; 32), the idea that the Israelites acquired their eastern territory through Moses' defeat of the Amorite kings Sihon and Og (e.g. Num 21:21-35; Deut 2:24-3:20), and the very presence of Israelite tribes in the east suggest that this region rightfully belongs to Israel. Other traditions, however, imply that this region is not part of the nation. The idea that the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan River into the west represents the climax of the Wilderness era – a theme that runs from the end of Numbers through the book of Joshua – presumes that the "Promised Land" is synonymous only with west Jordan. A similar outlook underscores Ezekiel's utopian vision of the new, post-exilic Israel (Ezek 47-48), wherein the Jordan serves as the nation's eastern border. Complicating matters somewhat, even those traditions that accept the legitimacy of the east highlight its distinction from the west so that in the end the two regions appear as separate entities.

The differences between east and west manifest in various ways in the texts. For instance, as Knight argues, the conquest and settlement narratives envision two distinct eastern and western settlements. While the eastern settlement is associated with Moses, that of the west is associated with Joshua. The descriptions of the two regions' tribal territories also differ, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 2. Knight notes that while the boundary descriptions of most of the western tribes are fairly clearly drawn, the eastern territories are an "indistinct area" vaguely described "in terms of towns and

kingdoms, specifying the Jordan River as their western boundary (Josh 13:23, 27), but detailing nothing explicitly about their eastern border."[56]

Other narratives point to tension between the eastern and western regions and peoples. Joshua 22, which I will examine more closely in Chapter 5, explicitly establishes a dichotomy between the two and suggests that religious differences might have existed between them. The story recounts how the eastern and western tribes nearly come to blows after the easterners construct an altar on what appears to be the edge of their territory – a move the westerners view as sacrilegious. The plot presupposes hostility between these two groups based on their identification as distinct geographic groups although such an identification that would not have had time to crystalize given the timing suggested by the wider Joshua storyline. The text consistently describes the western tribes (only) as "Israelites," thereby setting them over against the eastern tribes who by extension are rendered non-Israelite. The religious distinction between the two is articulated through both plot and language. The westerners begin their reproach of the eastern tribes, "Thus says the whole community of Yahweh…" (v. 16), a description conveying a restricted notion of the Yahwistic nation in which the easterners have no role. The fact that the easterners feel the need to pre-emptively defend their Yahwistic status to the westerners suggests that this status might have been questioned at some point, and the very language they use in explaining their altar reinforces the notion that on some level YHWH was equated (solely) with the west. "We did this thing out of a concern that in the future your children might say to our children, 'What do you have to do with YHWH the god of Israel? For YHWH has set the Jordan as a boundary between us and you [Reubenites and Gadites.] You have no share in YHWH.'" (Josh 22:24-25).

[56] Knight, "Joshua 22 and the Ideology of Space," 61.

In this way, the easterners acknowledge that geographic boundaries might have religious ramifications. As Knight points out, the narrative casts the westerners as the "guardians of the faith."[57] It is they who determine that the easterners have committed apostasy and demand that they account for their actions. Furthermore, the easterners' fear that in the future their children will not be recognized as legitimate Yahwists rests on the assumption that the westerners control access to and membership in the cult.

The Jephthah narrative (Judges 11-12), which I will discuss more fully in Chapter 1, hints at political tensions between east and west over the issues of autonomy among what appear to be loosely allied regional entities. After the Gileadite Jephthah defends his homeland from an Ammonites attack, the western Ephraimites rebuke him for failing to call them up for war, suggesting they felt they had some say in the actions of their eastern neighbors. Jephthah shifts the onus onto the Ephraimites, claiming they failed to respond to his muster, and the conflict between the two groups escalates into war. This narrative also suggests that linguistic differences distinguished east and west. The Gileadites attempt to prevent the defeated Ephraimites from fleeing back to the west by ordering anyone wanting to cross the Jordan River fords to say the word "šibbolet"; those whose pronunciation identified them as western were killed.[58] Although the episode is an anecdote, in order for it to resonate with an ancient audience it likely reflects some degree of phonetic variance between the westerners and easterners.

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[57] Knight, "Joshua 22 and the Ideology of Space," 57.

[58] For more on the linguistics underlying this unit, see Ronald S. Hendel, "Sibbilants and *šibbolet* (Judges 12:6)," *BASOR* 301 (1992): 69-75; Gary A. Rendsburg, "More on Hebrew *Šibbolet*," *JSS* 32 (1988): 255-258; Robert Woodhouse, "The Biblical Shibboleth Story in the Light of Late Egyptian Perceptions of Semitic Sibilants: Reconciling Divergent Views," *JAOS* 123 (2003): 271-89.

Rachel Havrelock, following Moshe Weinfeld, suggests that part of the tension over east Jordan's status stems from its being caught between two differing conceptions of ancient Israel's territory, or two differing "narrative maps" of Israel that reflect the ideologies of differing biblical writers.[59] For the Priestly writers, the Jordan River largely delimits Israel's eastern boundary so that east Jordan does not fall within its territory (e.g., Num 34; Deut. 11:31; Josh 1:2; Ezek 47-48).[60] The Deuteronomists, in contrast, envision a much more expansive Israel. According to their "map," Israel's eastern border extends as far as the Euphrates River (e.g., Gen 15:18; Ex 23:31; Deut 1:7, 11:24; Josh 1:4; 1 Kgs 5:1) and thus includes east Jordan. Havrelock and Weinfeld note that neither of these maps corresponds to the social realities of any period in ancient Israel's history, but rather both are literary and ideological constructs intended to articulate and promote various ideas about Israel's identity, self-figuration and power. Yet Havrelock rightly observes that the Deuteronomistic traditions about east Jordan are not uniform, but that they too exhibit tensions over the status of the eastern land and Israelites who dwell there.[61] It is against this backdrop of varying and conflicting ideas about the position of east Jordan vis-à-vis that of "Israel" that the notion of Manasseh as an east-west entity becomes a particularly interesting concept.

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[59] Rachel Havrelock, "The Two Maps of Israel's Land," 649-67; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB5; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1991), 173-180. Note that Weinfeld considers the Priestly material earlier than the Deuteronomists'.

[60] Interestingly, the Priestly "map" as well as the Egyptian province of *Upe* that it ostensibly mirrors, appear to include the region of Bashan which is ascribed to east Manasseh in many, but significantly not all, the biblical texts; a feature which I will discuss in subsequent chapters. For more information on this map, see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 175.

[61] She suggests that those texts that cast the east as a fully legitimate part of Israel stem from what she terms "the Northern national myth" or what other biblical scholars had referred to as the E source although many scholars no longer accept the existence of an E-source. Havrelock, *The Jordan A Boundary, 9.*

1.4.2 Defining "Tribe"

Since this project focuses on issues surrounding the tribe of Manasseh, it will be helpful at the outset to clarify how I am defining "tribe." As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, elucidating this concept has proven slippery for both anthropologists and biblical scholars alike although for somewhat different reasons. Anthropologists have struggled to reconcile its myriad, varying definitions and its wide, inconsistent application.[62] Biblicists are confronted with the laconic and general nature of the Hebrew text, translation issues on both terminological and conceptual levels, and occasionally a reliance on outdated social science theory. Although there is still no consensus as to what precisely a "tribe" is, this project follows the growing acceptance among anthropologists and a number of contemporary biblical scholars that it is a dynamic, fluid entity conceptualized through the framework (or fiction) of descent, segmentation/kinship, and territory although the latter appears to be a somewhat more nebulous attribute. "Tribe" is generally viewed as a moderate-scale entity with two levels of hierarchy and certain material correlates although as I will discuss in following chapters, identifying universal tribal traits is a thorny undertaking.

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[62] Already in 1968 the anthropologist Morton Fried claimed "If I had to select one word in the vocabulary of anthropology as the single most egregious case of meaningless, I would have to pass over 'tribe' in favour of 'race.' I am sure, however, that 'tribe' figures prominently on the list of putative technical terms ranked in order of ambiguity as reflected in multifarious definitions." Morton Fried, "On the Concepts of 'Tribe' and 'Tribal Society,'" in *Essays on the Problem of Tribe* (ed. June Helm; Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1968), 4-5. Similarly, Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner note "Because the term *tribe* has been used to describe many different kinds of groups or social formations, a single, all-encompassing definition is virtually impossible to produce." Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, "Introduction: Tribes and the Complexities of State of State Formation in the Middle East," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 5. See also Szuchman, "Integrating Approaches to Nomads, Tribes and the State in the Ancient Near East," 1-9.

While several biblical scholars have proposed that early Israel is better envisioned through the lens of "chiefdom" than of "tribe," I believe "tribe" remains a helpful rubric, among others, from which to examine Manasseh and ancient Israelite society since newer understandings of the concept allow for a much broader application than in the past.[63] As Meyers observes "chiefdoms can still be considered tribal societies in some respects, particularly if one eschews a strict evolutionary model" since they often conceive of themselves as lineages, as do tribal groups, and since "territorial claims and arrangements can be rooted in tribal identity that endures even as administrative structures change."[64] Furthermore, many scholars today understand "tribe" as encompassing a wide range of socio-political forms conceptualized through the rubric of descent/kinship, and a number have recently questioned the oft-accepted dichotomy between "tribe" and "state."[65] When conceived of in such a way, "tribe" is a flexible designation that can accommodate

[63] Several scholars have argued that the concept of chiefdom, which is characterized by ranked leadership, better correlates with some of the materials remains in the region than does that of tribe, which many view as lacking regular centralized leadership. On early Israel as chiefdom see Carol Meyers, "*Tribes* and Tribulations: Retheorizing Earliest 'Israel,'" in *Tracking the Tribes of Yahweh: On the Trail of a Classic* (ed. Roland Boer; JSOT Sup 351; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 38-45 although she is careful to note the overlap between the chiefdom and tribe systems. See also Robert D. Miller, II, SFO, *Chiefdoms of the Highland Clans: A History of Israel in the 12th and 11th Centuries BC* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005); James W. Flanagan, "Chiefs in Israel" *JSOT* 20 (1981): 47-73; Frank S. Frick, *The Formation of the State in Ancient Israel: A Survey of Methods and Theories* (The Social World of Biblical Israel 4; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985).

[64] Meyers, "*Tribes* and Tribulations," 40.

[65] Anne Porter discusses this in a specifically ancient Near Eastern context, see Porter, "From Kin to Class – and Back Again!," 72-77; see also Szuchman, "Integrating Approaches to Nomads, Tribes and the State in the Ancient Near East," 1-9; J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonalism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 63-73.

various types of entities and therefore allows us a degree of latitude from which to analyze biblical Manasseh.[66]

1.4.3 Notes on Terminology

Many biblical texts refer to the eastern portion of Manasseh as the "half-tribe of Manasseh" (e.g. Num 32:33; Josh 1:12; 4:12; 13:29; Josh 22 minus v. 7); while the western portion of Manasseh is occasionally described as the other "half" of the tribe (Josh 12:7; 14:2; 21:25-26; 22:7), this latter entity is also often referred to simply as "Manasseh" (e.g., Josh 17:7-18 and as I will argue for other texts such as Num 34; Deut 34; Josh 16:1-4; Judg 6-8). To avoid the confusion generated by the biblical terminology, I will largely refer to the two portions of the tribe by their compass orientation, designating the western part of Manasseh as "west Manasseh" and the eastern part as "east Manasseh." However, when quoting or referencing specific biblical passages that use the phrase "half-tribe of Manasseh," I will retain the biblical expression for the sake of continuity.

I will also try to use the terms "west"/"west Jordan" and "east"/"east Jordan" in place of the terms "Cisjordan" and "Transjordan," respectively, which are commonly used in biblical studies since the latter are perspectival terms that reflect and repeat the western orientation expressed in the Hebrew Bible. "Cis" is Latin for "on this side" and

[66] In fact, Meyers proposes that early Israel was likely a heterarchical society in which various socio-political forms (e.g., 'tribe,' complex chiefdom, simple chiefdom, etc.) co-existed in shifting configurations. In her estimation, the strongly divergent environmental niches in the central Canaanite highlands and in Transjordan would have led to a "number of divergent, regionally based accommodations to the economic and political conditions of the early Iron Age...."[66] According to this line of thought "tribe" is one of several potentially valid rubrics from which to analyze Manasseh. Her argument should also caution us against conceptualizing the early Israelite groups in monolithic terms. See Meyers, "*Tribes* and Tribulations," 40-41.

"trans" means across. But what if one was a Manassite (or a Gadite or Reubenite) living on the east side of the Jordan? In this case, "Cisjordan" would designate the eastern side of the river while "Transjordan" the western side. To avoid prejudicing the legitimacy of one region over the other, I will use the more neutral compass terms to designate these two areas.

1.4.4 Notes on Dating

The dating of biblical texts has always been a fraught enterprise, and recent trends in biblical scholarship have shifted from diachronic examinations to various synchronic approaches. Not only have the dates scholars traditionally assigned to the textual sources (J, E, D, P) been questioned and generally moved later in time, but also the existence of some of these sources is debated. For instance, J, which was previously thought to date to the 10th century is now seen by some as exilic or later, and many have long doubted the existence of an E-source. The dating and contents of the Deuteronomistic History are debated although many agree that its final form stems from postexilic period and some scholars date much of the Bible's formation to the Persian period if not later. To avoid the pitfalls of being tied to any singular reconstruction of the development of the biblical literature, I do not advocate a particular dating scheme in this study although I do believe a case may be made for broadly conceptualizing texts as pre- or post-exilic and in certain cases pre- or post- 8th century BCE. When analyzing texts I will review the various dating proposals and offer a broad, estimated date range although precise dating is not my concern here.

CHAPTER 2

MANASSEH AS "TRIBE"

This chapter focuses on Manasseh as a tribal entity, examining the nuances of its portrayals against the backdrop of a wider discussion of the meaning of "tribe" in the biblical texts and in biblical and anthropological scholarship. The biblical narratives present two differing internal portraits of Manasseh: the tribe as descent group split into two seemingly non-contiguous territories east and west of the Jordan River (the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles), and a regional west Jordan entity that manifests no overt connection to the eastern groups/figures associated with it in the previous books (Judges). While both images are plausible from an anthropological perspective, in light of textual and conceptual discrepancies over the status of the group's eastern members I propose that "Manasseh" is a composite of initially distinct eastern and western entities that eventually, and most likely only literarily, coalesced into one. Although the merging of disparate groups into a larger whole is a common tribal phenomenon, ultimately the idea of east Manasseh only makes sense within the parameters of the twelve-tribe concept, which suggests it was a later development imagined by later writers.

2.1 The Notion of "Tribe" in the Hebrew Bible

While the groups traditionally designated as "tribes" play a key role in the Israelites' conceptualization of their early identity and history, biblical scholars have had

difficulty elucidating the meaning of "tribe."[67] In fact it is not certain that "tribe" corresponds with what the texts are describing. Part of the problem stems from the nature of the biblical materials, part from issues related to biblical translation, and part derives from varying views of "tribe" within academic discourse. Starting with the biblical materials we find that although the texts often refer to and focus on the "tribal" groups, the criteria for determining what or who constitutes a "tribe" is unclear. The notion of twelve tribes predominates in most but significantly not all biblical traditions (e.g., Judg 5) although the identity of the twelve varies. Certain groups who appear as tribes in narrative materials are not included in the various tribal lists (e.g, the Kenites, the Calebites, and the Gileadites, although the latter are subsumed into other tribes in some traditions).[68] Furthermore, the texts never describe what, exactly, a "tribe" is nor do they provide a clear picture of how it was structured. The biblical Hebrew terms most often translated as "tribe" are *šēbeṭ* and *maṭṭeh*. While these terms clearly denote a type of social unit and possibly a territorial one, they are not inherently connected to "tribe"; both can also mean "rod" or "staff" and most believe that the connotation of "tribe" derives from the leadership associated with one who wields a staff.[69] Although the two terms

[67] The tribes are ubiquitous in materials describing the pre-monarchic period. There are occasional references to the tribes during the monarchic period described in the books of Kings and Chronicles (e.g., 1 Kgs 8; 1 Kgs 11:29-12:24 in which the ten northern tribes of Israel "split away" from Judah following Rehoboam's rebellion) and somewhat unexpectedly the tribes play a role in Ezekiel's vision of the utopian, post-exilic period (Ez 48) although here "tribe" is clearly an idealized concept rather than an active social reality. Ezek 48 completely rearranges the "map"of the Israelite tribes in a highly stylized manner, situating all the groups west of the Jordan in longitudinal strips north and south of Jerusalem, which is given pride of place as the center of the nation. This picture not only largely divorces the tribes from any ancient connection they had with particular areas of the land, but also offers a cookie-cutter view of tribal holdings that makes little rational sense.

[68] Cf., McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 75.

[69] *BDB, "maṭṭeh"* 461; and Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahewh*, 245.

have synonymous meanings, or at least a synonymous semantic range, they appear to be used by different biblical writers and therefore may reflect a diachronic linguistic usage. The more frequently used *šēbeṭ* appears in Deuteronomy and many Deuteronomistic texts as well as in certain Pentateuchal materials. The less frequently used *maṭṭeh* is widely found within the Priestly materials; it is not used in either Deuteronomy or Judges although it is used in Joshua.

Together with *šēbeṭ/maṭṭeh*, the texts mention several other terms to describe tribal, pre-monarchic social organizational units such as *bêt 'āb*, variously defined as the nuclear family or the extended family, and *mišpāḥâ*, variously defined as the clan or the lineage.[70] While Josh 7:14-18 suggests that the tribe consisted of these three units of social grouping arranged in ascending size order – *bêt 'āb- mišpāḥâ - šēbeṭ* – scholars widely agree that this is a schematic, vague representation of the tribal structure. Not only are the meaning and referent of the individual terms ambiguous, but within the wider biblical corpora they are used so inconsistently that "tribe" is a much more nebulous concept than the Joshua text suggests.[71] For example, although Josh 7:14-18 suggests that *mišpāḥâ* was the middle level of the tribe, in Judg 17:7 *mišpāḥâ* appears to refer to the tribe of Judah itself while in Amos 3:1 the term refers to all the Israelite

[70] See for example Lemche, *Early Israel*, 247-290; Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (Autumn 1985): 1-35. On the difference between clan and lineage, see Lemche, e.g., *Early Israel*, 231-236.

[71] See for instance, Lemche, *Early Israel*, 245-290; Aloo Osotsi Mojola, "The 'Tribes' of Israel? A Bible Translator's Dilemma" *JSOT* 81 (1998): 15-29; McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 88-94. The anthropologist Richard Tapper has pointed to similar interpretative issues with modern Middle Eastern indigenous categories for tribal social units such as 'family' or 'group' noting that they lack specificity and are "ambiguous, not merely about level, but also in their connotations of functions or facts of identity – economic, political, kinship and cultural." Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople in Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," 49-73.

people (albeit metaphorically). In the case of Manasseh specifically, Judg 6:15 identifies the tribe's subgroup, Abiezer, as an *'elep*, a term that is not mentioned in Josh 7. While it is possible that the *'elep* overlaps in some way with the *mišpāḥâ* since Num 26 identifies Abiezer as a *mišpāḥâ*, the very use of the former term reinforces the stylized nature of the Joshua description.

The biblical texts also denote "tribe" through the nominal construction "sons/children of X." This usage suggests that the entity was conceptualized as either a descent group or a resident group – the sons/residents of a particular region if the tribal name is a geographic area (e.g., Ephraim) – and both descent/kinship and territoriality are often recognized as hallmarks of "tribal" groups. Since Manasseh is a personal name, a Piel participle from the root *nšh* "to cause to forget," the former connotation seems more likely although as we will discuss below, the two options are not mutually exclusive. The construction "sons/children of X," however, is not only used for the individual "tribes" but also for larger groups such as the Israelites as a whole (*bĕnê Yisrā'ēl*) and the Ammonites (e.g. Judg 10:9; 10:17-18), and the differing scale of these various entities again leads to questions over the terminology of designation.

According to John Rogerson, the Oxford English Dictionary suggests the word "tribe" actually made its way into the English language via biblical translation. The Hebrew terms now understood as "tribe" were translated in the LXX as *phyle*; *phyle* was rendered *tribus* in the Latin translations and from there rendered as "tribe" in English. In Rogerson's view,

> The word "tribe" from the outset in English, designated groups of people whose social organization was not know. Once the word "tribe" was in the language, it was applied to other, and often quite differing, social groups in many parts of the world. When such groups were more closely examined sociologically, because

> they had been labeled 'tribes,' attempts were made to define what tribes 'really were' on the basis of the findings of such investigations. Confusion resulted, for the single reason that it is doubtful whether these differing types of groups should have been labeled as 'tribes' in the first place.[72]

In a way, then, the biblical concept of tribe appears stuck in an interpretative or hermeneutical loop. Scholars or exegetes have often viewed the Israelite entities as "tribes" largely because of the biblical translation and then attempted to analyze them in light of contemporary understandings of "tribe" although it is not certain that the biblical translation is correct in the first place. At the same time, given the more fluid understanding of "tribe" in recent academic discourse (below), I believe the concept remains a valid category from which to examine Manasseh since it encompasses differing types of socio-political groups and thus has a wide range of applicability regardless of whether the traditional biblical translation is correct.

An additional hurdle biblical scholars face in defining "tribe" relates to dating issues. The tribal materials are largely contained in the Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic materials that postdate the so-called tribal period or Iron I by several hundred years. Even allowing for the fact that tribes can remain as units with or under state formations, It is therefore not clear whether these texts accurately represent the social organization of early Israel or whether the terms they use to describe differing social units were similarly conceived of during earlier periods.

There is also a sense in certain biblical materials (e.g. Numbers 1 and 26, and Josh 13-19) as well as in biblical scholarship prior to the 1980's, that "tribe" is a uniform, monolithic entity although more recent anthropological study has shown the fallacy of

[72] J. W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979): 87.

this characterization. As Paula McNutt notes, it is problematic to conceive of "tribe" in a general sense since "concepts of tribe refer to real relations and have social and economic significance, but these are highly variable, as tribal structure and membership change constantly."[73] Not only do the social and political organizations of the myriad groups described as "tribe" vary but so to do their means of subsistence and the ways in which their subgroups are composed. Although there are certain commonalities among Middle Eastern tribes, both ancient and modern, that we will discuss below, we should not assume that the particular characteristics of any one tribe necessarily apply to any other.

2.2 "Tribe" in Biblical Scholarship

There is a long history of biblical scholarship focused on the Israelite tribes although since the demise of Noth's longstanding amphictyony hypothesis in mid-1970s this work has benefited from a more critical engagement with social science research on "tribe." At the same time, many biblicists of the 1970s/early 1980s whose work helped shape contemporary understandings of early Israelite society relied on mid-20th century theories about "tribe" that have been abandoned or modified in more recent anthropological discourse. In his 1976 *The Tribes of Israel,* C. H. J. de Geus argues that the (Israelite) tribe was primarily a vague geographical concept, a "grouping of related clans, with but a few functions of their own" that permitted Israelites in a specific region to define their relationship with Israelites in other regions;[74] as such it only had meaning

[73] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* 82.

[74] de Geus, *The Tribes of Israel,* 211.

in relation to Israel as a whole.[75] As Lemche astutely notes, however, this is a circular definition since de Geus' rationale for the formation of a tribe is the geographical proximity of its members, which is also his definition of it.[76] In his 1979 *The Tribes of Yahweh*, Gottwald argues that the Israelite tribe was both a territorial unit and a "primary organizational unit" of society. He views the tribe as a segmentary, decentralized and egalitarian entity and ultimately defined it as

> an autonomous association of segmented extended families (*beth-'avoth* [*sic*]) grouped in village/neighborhood protective associations (*mišhpahoth* [*sic*]), averaging about 50 per tribe, functionally interlocking through inter-marriage, practices of mutual aid, common worship, and a levy of troops.[77]

Like de Geus he views the individual tribe only as part of the wider Israelite confederation, holding "it is a *shevet* [*sic*] only by virtue of being one of the *shivte* [*sic*] Israel."[78] While Gottwald's work was hailed as a watershed in American biblical scholarship for its integration of social science research and biblical studies, many of his ideas on tribes have subsequently been criticized, including his view of the Israelite tribes as egalitarian.[79] In more recent works Gottwald has revised some of his earlier theories

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[75] de Geus writes "One may conclude therefore that an Israelite tribe was always a 'branch' of the whole people, and had no meaning without that whole. At the same time the tribes expressed the inevitable territorial, linguistic and historical differentiation. The tribe was for the Israelite the manner in which the people functioned for him in his region, though he remained aware that the people was more than the tribe. That the contours of the concept of "tribe" remain more vague than those of the clan, is due to the nature of the Israelite tribe." de Geus, *The Tribes of Israel,* 149-50.

[76] Lemche, *Early Israel,* 288-89.

[77] Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh,* 339.

[78] Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh,* 345.

[79] One of the main objections to his work is the idea that the Israelite tribes were egalitarian since anthropological study has shown that segmentary systems are not inherently egalitarian. See e.g, Lemche, *Early Israel,* 202-244; 274; Meyers, "*Tribes* and Tribulations," 35-37. Another major critique centers on his reliance on the cultural evolutionary theories of tribe that are now outdated.

and in his 1994 *The Politics of Ancient Israel* he maintains that it is uncertain whether "'tribe' is more than a rough regional destination."[80] Lemche agrees with Gottwald and de Geus that the Israelite tribes were segmented groups although he argues they had the potential for greater internal differentiation and likely included more internal levels.[81] To Lemche's mind, the tribes were "autonomous units who dwelled in their own tribal areas, and it would presumably be best to describe them as an alliance of sedentary local mountain peasants who held a common territory."[82] Contra de Geus, however, he maintains that tribe is more than simply the sum of individuals within a given region.[83] The more recent studies of McNutt and Carol Meyers highlight the variability and dynamism of tribes noted in contemporary anthropological study (as did Lemche to an extent) and define these entities as groups conceptualized through the frameworks of common patrilineal descent and/or segmentation.[84]

While these scholars offer differing definitions of the Israelite tribe, they agree it was a politically decentralized entity that would have exerted a relatively negligible effect on peoples' daily lives. Rather, all suggest that the locus of power in early Israelite

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Meyers, "*Tribes* and Tribulations," 35-37. Lemche further argues that Gottwald arbitrarily mixed the theories of Elman Service and Morton Fried in a kind of mixed model although the two social scientists were aware of the differences between their models. See Niels Peter Lemche, "'System Theory, 'Macro Theories' and 'Evolutionistic Thinking'" *SJOT* 4/2 (1990): 73-88; cf., Lemche, *Early Israel*, 238.

[80] Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel,* 163-64.

[81] Lenche, *Early Israel,* 237-43, 274.

[82] Lenche, *Early Israel,* 243.

[83] Lemche, *Early Israel,* 282; cf., *idem, Ancient Israel,* 98-108.

[84] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel,* 82-83; Meyers, "*Tribes* and Tribulations" 35-45; Lemche, *Early Israel.*

society resided in the lower, more local levels of social organization although their opinions on which level in particular vary.[85] They also agree that several factors played key roles in shaping tribal formation and identity, including kinship – either biological or cultural— and territorial affinity as well as common economic interests, common history and common external enemies.

Gottwald, Lemche, and McNutt, among others, suggest that the Israelite tribe was likely a segmented group.[86] Segmentation is generally understood as a principle of socio-political organization and/or identity in which social units or "social segments of roughly similar scale and composition replicate themselves at varying levels within tribal societies."[87] In other words, segmented groups are comprised of various structurally similar social units, such as families, clans, lineages, and ultimately the tribe. Segmentation is often expressed through the notion of descent from a common patriarchal ancestor so that members of such groups frequently conceive of themselves as kin; in this way it underlies both a tribe's genealogy and its kinship structure. Not only

[85] de Geus argues that the *mišpāḥâ*, which he loosely associated with "clan" and saw as largely coterminous with the village, was the center of power in pre-monarchic Israel. See de Geus, *The Tribes of Israel*, 133-150. Lemche holds that the lineage, which he views as either the *mišpāḥâ* or the *bêt 'āb* was the key socio-political unit of this period. See Lemche, *Early Israel*, 245-272.

[86] Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 336 although in his more recent work he cautions that from an archaeological perspective it cannot be determined with certainty "whether society formed a segmentary kinship system of the sort known from anthropological investigations." Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, 164-165. Lemche, *Early Israel*, 223-237, 274; McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 78-81.

[87] William A. Parkinson, "Introduction: Archaeology and Tribal Societies," in *The Archaeology of Tribal Societies* (ed. William Parkinson; Ann Arbor, MI: International Monographs in Prehistory, 2002), 7-8. This notion of segmentation should not be confused with "segmentation lineage theory" as explicated by Evans-Pritchard and his followers. Segmentation lineage theory, which sought to provide a model for how various tribal groups act towards one another, has roundly been criticized by anthropologists. For an overview of the critiques of this idea, see for instance, Lemche, *Early Israel*, 223-31; Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological* Approach (2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 132-135; Adam Kuper "Lineage Theory: A Critical Retrospect," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 71-95.

does ethnographic study demonstrate that modern Middle Eastern nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary agriculturalist and village groups – the contemporary counterparts of the various Iron I highland Canaanite groups – are structured through this principle, but the biblical conceptualization of Israel's tripartite (or perhaps multi-partite) pre-monarchic social structure, despite the many interpretative issues associated with it, seems broadly reflective of it. Segmented groups are characterized by a great degree of flexibility and fluidity and can accommodate the fusion or fission of various social units that inevitably occurs due to changing social, economic and/or political realities.

2.3 Tribe in Anthropological Scholarship

While the aforementioned biblical scholars have grounded their work in social science theory, a brief discussion of recent anthropological views on "tribe" is warranted since scholarship continues to evolve which allows us a broader framework from which to examine the concept. Whereas many biblical scholars have stressed the territorial nature of the Israelite tribe, the link between tribe and territory appears more fluid in recent social science research. Rather, social scientists more frequently cite the concepts of segmentation and descent as the defining attributes of tribal groups.

The notion of tribe has long been problematized in anthropological discourse from both a conceptual and explanatory perspective.[88] While tribes are most often viewed as social systems, they have also been described as cultural, linguistic, political

[88] Already in 1975 Morton Fried asked "Do tribes exist? Or are they chimeras, imaginary compounds of various and, at times, incongruous parts, societal illusions fabricated for diverse reasons…." Morton H. Fried, *The Notion of Tribe* (Menlo Park, CA: Cummings, 1975), 4-5.

and/or economic systems;[89] "tribe" has been equally applied to groups of vastly differing size and complexity and many feel that this amorphousness and inconsistent application have rendered the term all but meaningless. In fact, since the mid-1980s many have abandoned the term "tribe" in favor of "intermediate level society" or "middle-range" holding that the latter allow for/encompass a greater variability of social forms, acknowledge a tribe's ephemeral nature and are free of academic baggage.[90] Yet while "tribe" remains a problematic term, a number of anthropologists and archaeologists suggest retaining it, noting that intermediate-level society is often little more than a semantic alternative.[91]

Scholars who use "tribe" today reject several key notions of term that were commonplace until the 1960's, such as the neo-evolutionist idea that tribe is a transitional or intermediary stage of socio-political evolution and the idea that a universal model or "ideal type" of tribe exists.[92] There is now wide appreciation of the incredible variability, elasticity and complexity that characterizes tribe and tribal identity although recent attempts to avoid the problems associated with "tribe" in earlier literature have often resulted in very generalized definitions of the term.

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[89] Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," 49-57; Szuchman, "Integrating Approaches to Nomads, Tribes and the State in the Ancient Near East," 4.

[90] See for instance Feinman and Neitzel, "Too Many Types," 39-102; Jerome Rousseau, *Rethinking Social Evolution: The Perspective from Middle- Range Societies* and the sources cited therein.

[91] Fowles, "Placing 'Tribe' in a Historical Context," 15.

[92] One of the classic examples of tribe as an evolutionary stage is the work of Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary* Perspective (2nd ed.; New York: Random House, 1971); see also Marshall Sahlins, *Tribesman* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ Prentice Hall, 1968).

While there is still no universally accepted definition of "tribe," many anthropologists suggest it is a group envisioned through the frameworks of segmentation, common ancestral descent, and territorial affinity although the latter appears as a more nebulous attribute. They also emphasize the situational nature of tribal identity and organization, recognizing that groups may come together for various reasons at various times, but that such configurations are dynamic and mutable. As Fowles writes, "societies are bundles of organizational options drawn up to meet changing needs over time" such that "tribal contexts must be viewed as a set of ever-shifting structural poses over time."[93]

Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all definition of a tribe, Dale Eickelman maintains that there are nonetheless certain "family resemblances" among ancient and contemporary Middle Eastern tribes that allow for comparative analysis. He stresses that tribal identity, like other bases of social identity, is something people create rather than an objective, external reality; it is a pattern of meaning that changes with historical circumstances and one that varies depending on who is defining it.[94] Tribal identity, in other words, is mutable and situationally defined. Eickelman holds that tribal identity – both modern and ancient – is made in one of four ways, each of which offers a differing understanding of tribe: through native ethno-political ideologies, native practical actions, administrators, and academics. The most frequent native ethno-political ideology of tribe is the notion of common patrilineal descent, a concept that is often linked with the principle of segmentation. In contrast to this indigenous view, administrative or

[93] Fowles, "From Social Type to Social Process: Placing 'Tribe' in a Historical Context," 21-22.
[94] Eickelman, *The Middle East*, 127.

"official" concepts of tribe often presume that it has a corporate identity and stable territorial boundaries since such features are useful for administrative purposes. In reality, however, these features do not exist since tribal members themselves perceive identity and territory more fluidly.[95]

In a somewhat similar vein, Richard Tapper notes that many Middle Eastern anthropologists understand tribe as a descent group – a view that conforms with Emile Durkeim's notion of mechanical solidarity, or what others describe as segmentation – which "may or may not be territorially distinct and politically united under a chief." [96] Like Eickelman he rejects the idea that tribes are "mappable, bounded groups with little membership change" arguing that this is a positivistic view of tribes held only by administrators and academics.[97] To his mind,

> Tribe may be used loosely of a localized group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organization, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct (in terms of customs, dialect or language, and origins); tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader, both features being commonly attributable to interaction with states.[98]

[95] Eickelman, *The Middle East*, 127-28. Morton Fried came to a similar conclusion in 1975, see Fried, *The Notion of Tribe.*

[96] Tapper "Anthropologists, Historians and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," 50.

[97] Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," 58.

[98] Richard Tapper, "Introduction," in *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (ed. Richard Tapper; London, 1983): 6, 9. Quoted from Khoury and Kostiner, "Introduction," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East,* 5.

At the same time, given the incredible variety among tribal groups and the difficulty defining the term with any precision he maintains "tribe… is rather a state of mind, a construction of reality, a model for organization and action."[99]

More recently, William A. Parkinson has affirmed several of Eickelman's and Tapper's conclusions about tribe although he approaches the topic from a different angle. Whereas Eickelman and Tapper highlight a tribe's variability via the short-term ethnographic study of modern Middle Eastern tribes, Parkinson emphasizes its diachronic dynamism from the perspective of archaeological research. He views "tribe" as a continually evolving system rather than a static social form, and defines it as a type of social organization characterized by segmentation that exhibits some degree of regular integration beyond that of the extended family unit or band.[100] Like Eickelman and Tapper he rejects the idea that tribes possess clear discrete social and geographic boundaries:

> The segmented nature of tribal systems, combined with their tendency to fission and fuse given different social and environmental conditions, results in a social picture that assumes discrete boundaries at only isolated moments in time. The tendency of different segments within the system to constantly renegotiate their relationship with each other can preclude the formation of established social boundaries over the long term, usually resulting in a complicated archaeological

[99] Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East," 55.

[100] Parkinson, "Introduction: Archaeology and Tribal Societies," 8. Severin Fowles also emphasizes the dynamic nature of tribe, arguing that tribal contexts reflect "ever-shifting structural poses over time." Although Fowles is somewhat more hesitant than Parkinson about identifying segmentation as the defining attribute of tribe in a general sense, since he suggests that all social contexts have some segmentary characteristics, he notes that segmentary principles are found in lineage systems that thus take on many of its characteristics. Ultimately Fowles suggests that given the myriad problems in defining tribe, discussion stands to profit from focusing "less on what a tribe is – and more with what happens over time in tribal contexts…" See Severin M. Fowles, "From Social Type to Social Process: Placing 'Tribe' in a Historical Framework," in *The Archaeology of Tribal Societies* (ed. William Parkinson; Ann Arbor, MI: International Monographs in Prehistory, 2002), 18.

> picture with fuzzy lines approximating the borders between different prehistoric 'groups.'[101]

2.3.1 Descent and Genealogy

Insofar as many scholars point to the notion of descent as one of the defining attributes of "tribe," they recognize that descent is not simply an attestation of blood ties but is rather an idiom of social, political, economic and/or cultural integration and thus an ideology of identity. While the notion of descent may have some biological basis, it may also be cultural or ascribed, and in both cases the concept serves as an organizing principle that, at least theoretically, implies certain rights and obligations among its members. As Anatoly Khazanov writes,

> Descent regulates relations between different groups and at the same time establishes an individual's membership in a given society as a whole and in specific subdivisions of it; this membership involves corresponding rights and commitments and sometimes even social positions. Kinship establishes the position of the individual in society, descent legitimizes it.[102]

At the same time, ethnographic research shows that individuals do not always act as descent or lineage principles would suggest, pointing to the ideological force of the concept.[103] "Descent" also relates to horizontal linkage among individuals and groups while "genealogy" is about internal cohesion. The notion of descent, which as noted above is often linked with the concept of segmentation, operates at varying levels of social organization within a tribal group – from the more localized family, lineage, and

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[101] Parkinson, "Introduction: Archaeology and Tribal Societies," 8.

[102] Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (trans. Julia Crookenden; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 140-141.

[103] Anne M. Porter, "Mortality, Monuments and Mobility: Ancestor Traditions and the Transcendence of Space," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2002), chap. 3; see also Eickelman, *The Middle East*, 151-178.

clan groups to the wider level of the tribe itself – such that in the end a tribe may be conceived of as an entity of nested, or at least interrelated, descent groups. It is an adaptive and flexible concept that accommodates various types of changes in a group over time and thus can articulate various social, political, economic and/or cultural configurations and relationships. To speak of the tribe of Manasseh, then, means in part to speak of a group whose members claim affiliation via the ancestor Manasseh for whatever reason, whether or not they are actually biological kin.

2.4 Textual Perspectives on Manasseh's Internal Composition

The biblical narratives offer two differing portraits of Manasseh: one in the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles which casts the tribe as an east-west Jordan descent group and one in the book of Judges which presents the tribe as a segmented western entity. In their general outlines, both conceptualizations of Manasseh loosely correspond with the broad definition of tribe in contemporary scholarship although admittedly we are comparing two generalized notions to one another and cannot assume that the similarities between them indicate that Manasseh was a tribe. There are also certain indications that east Manasseh is a literary category rather than a historical social entity, which speaks to the historiographical nature of the tribe's characterization.

2.4.1 Manasseh in the Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles[104]

The more prominent image of Manasseh is that in Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles, which depicts the tribe as an east-west entity and a member of the twelve-tribe Israelite coalition.[105] Continuing the narrative arc begun in Genesis, which casts the figure Manasseh as Joseph's son – and thus part of the wider Jacobite family – and the founder of a "people" (Gen 48:19), these materials portray the tribe as a segmented kin group descended from the eponym whose members split into two regions on either side of the Jordan River during the conquest/settlement. The texts describe the tribe through both an elaborate, if rather fixed, genealogical scheme (Num 26:29-34; Josh 17:1-3; 1 Chr 7:14-19; cf. the genealogical details in Num 27, 36 and Josh 17:3-6) and an affiliation with two specific territorial regions, however broadly defined and idealized these latter may be (e.g. Num 32:39-41, Deut 3:12-17 and Josh 13:29-31).[106] Viewed in their entirety, these materials cast Manasseh's affiliation with east Jordan in genealogical terms. The eponymous ancestor is linked to Machir, an eponym/entity connected to east Jordan through its association with Gilead, the latter of which is a geographical region occasionally depicted as an ancestral figure and a social group. While scholars widely

[104] These books offer a similar, although not necessarily identical, view of Manasseh as an east-west tribe. For my purposes, I will treat Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua as a literary/canonical unit while recognizing that their chronological relationship as well as the origin of their materials is unclear. Scholars widely view 1 Chronicles as a later composition that builds on the other texts. Since all these works offer a roughly comparable conceptualization of Manasseh I will discuss them together although I do not intend to suggest that they share similar authors or dating.

[105] There is, of course, discrepancy with respect to Manasseh's position in the twelve-tribe system. In many of the tribal lists – Noth's System B or what others consider lists with a geographical focus – it is counted as one of the twelve constituent tribal members while in others – Noth's System A or what others consider lists with a genealogical focus – it's inclusion (as well as that of Ephraim's) is implicitly assumed in the mention of Joseph.

[106] Strangely, half-Manasseh's "genealogy" in 1 Chron 7:14-19 does not really contain any genealogical information.

view these emphases on descent/kinship and territory as hallmarks of tribal identity, ultimately Manasseh's characterization in these materials, including its identification as one of the twelve tribes, appears to represent an administrative or "official" view of the tribe. I will discuss the tribe's connection to territory in more depth in the following chapter and here will primarily focus on Manasseh's internal composition as envisioned in genealogical or genealogically oriented texts.[107]

Manassite Genealogies

The various Manassite genealogies in Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr exhibit a high degree of literary interdependence and overlap although their chronological relationship and the origin of their materials are far from clear. For the sake of simplicity I will examine them in their narrative order, touching on historical-critical concerns as needed.

According to Numbers 26, a late Priestly text that purportedly enumerates all the tribal subgroups for the second Wilderness census, Manasseh consisted of eight subgroups (*mišpāḥôt*) envisioned via the following genealogical scheme: from the ancestor Manasseh came Machir, from Machir came Gilead ("Machir begot Gilead" v. 29) and from Gilead came the remaining *mišpāḥôt* associated with the eponym/tribe: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Shemida and Hepher (vv. 29-33). The Hepherite *mišpāḥâ* in turn included Zelophehad and his "daughters" Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah,

[107] The biblical materials express descent either through formal genealogies or through other expressions of kinship such as an anthroponym, e.g. the patronymic description "x son of y." For our purposes, any figure claiming descent from the eponymous tribal ancestor Manasseh can potentially be viewed as related to the tribe in some manner and such information is therefore useful in our understanding of the tribe whether or not it constitutes a true genealogy.

Michah and Tirzah (v. 33) although none of these figures is here identified with or as a specific social group.

Num 26:29-34
Manasseh
Machir
Gilead

Iezer	Helek	Asriel	Shechem	Shemida	Hepher
					Zelophehad
					Mahlah Noah Hoglah Milcah Tirzah

Several of these group names are toponyms known from biblical and extra-biblical sources. This phenomenon reinforces the correlation between lower level descent groups and local geographical regions noted in contemporary ethnographic and anthropological research and also affords us a rough picture of some extent of the tribe's geographical distribution as the Priestly writers understood it.[108] Shechem is a west Jordan city according to the Amarna Letters and biblical naratives; the biblical texts describe Tirzah as west Jordan city/town and Gilead as a both broad geographical region and a city in east Jordan. The mid-8th century BCE Samaria Ostraca – texts that record shipments of wine and oil to the capital of Samaria from various local areas – identify Abiezer, Asriel, Helek, Shemida, Noah, and Hoglah as district or town names, and their proximity to the capital suggests they were located in the northern highland regions of west Jordan (the area the Bible assigns to western Manasseh in Josh 17).[109] Given the differing size and

[108] See examples in Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol,* 101-133.

[109] *ANET,* 321; Nelson, *Joshua,* 199-200*;* Lawrence Stager suggests that these ostraca indicate that the tribal clan structure survived despite the onset of the monarchy. See Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," 24. Stager's theory, however, assumes that the identification of these toponyms as Manassite clans in Num 26 (cf Josh 17) dates to the pre-monarchic period.

scale of the toponyms that can be identified, however, we should not assume that the various Manassite *mišpāḥôt* were identical or monolithic entities. Furthermore, as Lemche has correctly noted, since the Ostraca date from the monarchic period they do not necessarily tell us anything about the social arrangements or settlement of the preceding pre-monarchic period.[110] In fact, we should not assume that these places would have been Manassite, let alone Israelite, during Iron I as I will discuss in following chapters.

While Num 26 offers one of the biblical authors' fullest articulations of Manasseh's composition, scholars generally view this chapter as providing a schematic picture of early Israelite society since it generically describes all the tribal subunits as *mišpāḥôt*.[111] There is also a strong probability that this genealogy does not represent Manasseh in its entirety. As Gottwald and David Schloen point out, the listing of the other tribal *mišpāḥôt* in this chapter, minus those of Manasseh and Ephraim, largely parallels the list of Jacob's descendants who went to Egypt in Gen 46; since the Genesis lists adds up to the stereotypical number of 70, it is likely that Num 26 as a whole presents a similarly schematized view of the tribal groups.

Compared with the other tribal genealogies in Num 26, Manasseh has fewer sons (first generation descendants) and more great-grandsons (third-generation descendants). The Manassite material also contains two supplementary details that are somewhat unusual within the context of the wider chapter: the note that Machir "begot" Gilead (v.

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[110] Lemche, *Early Israel*, 255.

[111] McNutt notes that this stereotypical use of the term *mišpahot* "…may be a Priestly systematization of kinship units that is secondary and has no relation to the social reality the term may at one time have been associated with." McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Early Israel*, 89; cf., Lemche, *Early Israel*, 262-263.

29) and that explaining that Zelophehad, son of Hepher had no sons, but rather daughters (v. 33).[112] The explanatory note about Machir and Gilead possibly signals a particularly close relationship between these two entities over against the other Manassite members as suggested in other narratives, or perhaps an attempt to link them to one another. It may also represent the insertion of an originally independent genealogy into that of the Manassite group. The detail about Zelophehad's daughters was perhaps intended to provide background information for the subsequent narratives in Num 27 and 36 that focus on these figures and the issue of female land inheritance or perhaps has legal implications that transcend the genealogical interest.

The information in Numbers 26 is essentially reconfigured along geographical lines in Josh 17:1-3 plus the related information in vv. 4-6, which describe west Manasseh's territorial allotment. The Josh text clarifies that Machir and Gilead are associated with east Jordan (vv. 1-2; cf. Num 32) while Manasseh's remaining sons and granddaughters (Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Shemida, Hepher, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah) are associated with west Jordan.[113] The chronological relationship between the texts, however, is uncertain and there are important differences between the two. Whereas Gilead appears as an ancestral figure in Num 26, in Josh 17 it is both an ancestral figure (vv. 1, 3; cf., Num 26) and a region with which the ancestor Machir is affiliated (vv. 1, 5, 6; cf. Num 32, Deut 3:12-17). Also, while in Num 26 there

[112] A few of the other tribes' genealogies contain this kind of supplementary detail though most do not. For example, the genealogy of Reuben includes a notice about Korah's rebellion [26:8b-10], the genealogy of Judah notes that his sons Er and Onan died in Canaan [26:19]).

[113] There is inconsistency within these verses regarding the status of Hepher: in v. 2 he is described as one of Manasseh's sons while in v. 3 he is described as one of Manasseh's great-grandsons (Hepher son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh).

are generational differences between Machir and the "male" *mišpāḥôt* of the tribe (Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Shemida, Hepher), the Joshua text casts all on the same generational level as Manasseh's sons/Machir's brothers (per v. 2; v. 3 offers another view of Hepher's status).

Josh 17:1-3

Manasseh

Machir Abiezer Helek Asriel Shechem (Hepher [per v. 2]) Shemida

Gilead

Hepher ([per v. 3])

Zelophehad

Mahlah Noah Hoglah Milcah Tirzah

The final Manassite genealogy appears in 1 Chr 7:14-19, a Persian-era text that Diana Edelman has charitably described as "disjointed and difficult to make sense of."[114] Many of the names in Num 26 and Josh 17 recur in the Chronicles list (Asriel, Machir, Gilead, Zelophehad, Mahlah, Shemida, Shechem). A few of the names tentatively appear with variant spellings in the latter (possibly Iezer for Abiezer, Likhi for Helek, and Hamolechet for Milcah). Certain names are outright missing from it: Hepher, Hoglah, Tirzah and Noah.[115] At the same time, the Chronicles list contains several names that are neither found in the two other lists nor are elsewhere associated with Manasseh. While some of these names are known from other biblical texts, the majority are *hapax*

[114] Edelman, "The Manassite Genealogy in 1 Chronicles 7:14-19: Form and Source," 184. Edelman concludes that this genealogy is comprised of two differing traditions or sources regarding the Manassite clans that have been joined together: one behind vv. 14-15 that seems to be based on Num 26:28-34 and Josh 17:1-6 and one behind vv. 16-19 she believes is based on an independent source.

[115] Edelman, "The Manassite Genealogy in 1 Chronicles 7:14-19," 184.

nomina.[116] The text itself is highly corrupt which forces scholars to propose various emendations to make sense of it.[117] Without delving into the myriad text critical issues with this unit, it identifies Machir as both the son of Manasseh and Manasseh's Aramean concubine, and as the father of Gilead (7:14). In this way the Chronicler explicitly links the names and places most frequently associated with eastern Manasseh to Aram, a foreign polity that several biblical texts describe as making claims on the northern east Jordan region (e.g. 1 Kgs 22:3; 2 Kgs 9:14) and a maneuver that possibly casts some degree of aspersion on the legitimacy of these eastern entities.[118]

Issues Related to Biblical Genealogies

While these biblical genealogies provide useful information about Manasseh, there are several important considerations to address in relying on this material to reconstruct the tribe. First we must take into account the nature and function of tribal genealogies. Anthropological research on the oral genealogies of contemporary tribal

[116] For example, Ma'acah appears somewhat frequently in the biblical texts, as a male name (e.g., Gen 22:24; 1 Chr 11:43), a female name (e.g., 2 Sam 3:3; 1 Kgs 15:2) and a place name (e.g., Deut 3:14; Josh 12:5); Huppim and Shuppim are associated with the tribe of Benjamin in Num 26:39 and 1 Chr 7:12.

[117] For a concise summary of the text critical issues with this unit, see Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993): 174-176; Yigal Levin holds that this genealogy is "full of geographical-historical information," arguing that it is too complex to have come from an archival source in its entirety but instead shows the "segmentation and fluidity characteristic of the oral genealogies of a living tribal society." Yigal Levin, "Understanding Biblical Genealogies," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 9 (2001): 39. However, at least in this article, Levin does not address the numerous text critical issues with the text, issues that affect ones understanding of geographical-historical information.

[118] Sara Japhet notes that the Chronicler conceives of the very bonds between Manasseh and the Arameans as deriving from person of Manasseh himself through his marriage, an idea that is not reflected in the other genealogies. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles,* 178.

societies indicates that such genealogies are not intended to serve as an accurate, "historical" record of blood relations. Rather, tribal genealogies are an inherently fluid medium used to reflect various aspects of social reality in domestic, political and/or religious contexts. Robert Wilson notes that genealogies can express social status, political power, economic strength, legal standing, ownership of land and religious importance.[119] The function of a genealogy is tied to its form. Segmented genealogies, which trace multiple lines of descent from a single ancestor, often express various types of relationships between living members of a society; linear genealogies, which trace a single line of descent to/from an ancestor, often tie a living individual to someone in the past.[120] Genealogies can also exist in mixed form containing both segmentary and linear features. Written genealogies, including those in the Hebrew Bible, display analogous functions and forms although by their very written nature they lose some of their fluidity. At the same time, the existence of multiple or variant forms of a written genealogy may reflect the varied perspectives of differing social contexts and/or diachronic social change.[121] Formally speaking, the Manassite genealogies are largely segmentary; in Num 26, however, Manasseh is connected to Gilead in a linear manner, which may represent an attempt to link these two figures together for varying reasons.

[119] Wilson, "Between 'Azel' and 'Azel,'" 11-22.

[120] Wilson writes, "If a genealogy's purpose is to relate lineage segments or groups in a particular social context, then the genealogy must be segmented…conversely linear genealogies can only have one function. They can only relate one individual or group to an individual or group living in the past." Wilson, "Between 'Azel' and 'Azel,'" 19.

[121] Wilson notes that structural differences between two or more genealogies of the same group may in fact be related to the differing functions of the genealogies. Wilson, "Between 'Azel' and 'Azel,'" 19.

Secondly, scholars widely agree that many, if not all, of the genealogies are late Priestly works that postdate the Iron I/'tribal' period by several hundred years and it is not clear to what extent these materials accurately reflect earlier conceptions of the tribe. A related issue stems from the disconnect anthropologists have observed between official or administrative understandings of tribe and on-the-ground tribal reality – whereas officials tend to view a tribe as a discrete corporate entity, tribal members themselves perceive social boundaries more fluidly. Since the Priestly writers (and other biblical authors for that matter) represented an elite, literate and likely urban segment of a population that was overwhelmingly rural and illiterate, their conception of the tribe's genealogy conveys an "official" view of Manasseh that may not have corresponded to the on the ground social reality. Furthermore, while the genealogies afford us a snapshot of the tribe's member groups, they cannot tell us how the tribe and its individual subgroups were structured or how the subgroups necessarily related to one another. Therefore, while these materials are helpful in elucidating how later biblical authors conceived of the tribe, their usefulness as a source for understanding Iron I tribal life is limited.

Presentation of East Manasseh in Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua and 1 Chronicles

One issue with the presentation of east Manasseh in Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr is that the genealogical materials in Num 26 and Josh 17 reflect but significantly do not entirely match up with narrative details about east Manasseh's ancestors and territory. Num 32:39-42, part of a wider chapter describing Moses' allocation of the eastern territory, contains two differing traditions linking "Machir son of Manasseh" to Gilead although here Gilead appears as a geographical region in which the group of Machir

settled rather than an ancestral figure/social group as in Num 26 and Josh 17:1-3 (cf. 17:4-6).[122] According to v. 39, the "sons of Machir son of Manasseh" took Gilead by force, expelling the Amorites who dwelt there, while in v. 40 Moses gave Gilead to "Machir son of Manasseh" and he dwelt there.[123] These verses also mention two additional eastern ancestral figures associated with Manasseh although neither appears in any of the comprehensive Manassite genealogies. The first, "Yair son of Manasseh," captured a number of villages and renamed them *ḥāwwôt yā'îr* ("Havvot-Yair," v. 40). These Havvot-Yair are mentioned in connection with the east Manassite territory in other biblical texts (e.g. Deut. 3:12-17; Josh 13:29-31) although the Bible provides an inconsistent description of their location. The second figure, Nobah, is linked with the village of Qenat (v. 41). While he is not given a patronym explicitly connecting him to Manasseh, he is nonetheless included in the verses focused on Manasseh's descendants and territory so that he appears to have been associated with this eastern group in some way.

The dating and provenance of Num 32:39-42 are unclear. Commentators widely agree these verses were interpolated into a narrative that initially focused solely on the eastern tribes of Reuben and Gad although they view this "original" narrative itself as a

[122] cf. Deut 3:13-15 although in this text, Machir is interestingly not identified with a patronym linking him to Manasseh.

[123] Machir's identification with the region of Gilead is somewhat complicated by the fact that earlier in the chapter, Gilead is also associated with the tribes of Reuben and Gad (vv. 1-38). I will discuss the difficulties demarcating the territory of Gilead in Chapter 2 and here will simply point out that a) commentators widely agree that material related to Manasseh in this chapter is a later interpolation in what was originally a narrative focused Reuben's and Gad's territory east of the Jordan such that we are most likely dealing with two originally separate narrative sources, and b) whereas Gilead is genealogically linked with Machir in several Manassite genealogies, it is never mentioned in the genealogies of Reuben and Gad.

composite work. Noth, Baruch Levine and Moshe Weinfeld suggest the Manassite material was a record of uncertain provenance that predates both the Deuteronomist and Priestly writers such that it formed the base from which other traditions about east Manasseh stemmed.[124] In contrast, John Van Seters argues that this material derives from the Yahwistic writer (J) whom he dates to the exilic period and whom he views as dependent on material in Deuteronomy. Specifically, he holds that the Machirite material in vv. 39-40 is dependent on Deut 3:12a, 13b-17, in which Machir is associated with the region of Gilead but is not connected to Manasseh.[125] Van Seters' argument is particularly appealing since it dovetails with my thesis that the idea of Manasseh as an eastern entity is a late(r) historiographical development.

Another issue with the biblical presentation of east Manasseh relates to its designation. The narrative materials of Num, Deut, Jos and 1 Chr repeatedly refer to the east Manassite members collectively as "the half tribe of Manasseh" (e.g., Num 32:33; Deut 3:12-13; Josh 1:12; 4:12; 13:8, 29; 22:1, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21). A few scholars have proposed that this is a secondary, schematic label, and while I agree with this assessment, the suggestion bears fleshing out since it speaks to what I view as the constructed nature of this entity.[126] To begin with, the appellation "half tribe [of Manasseh]" is not used of

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[124] Martin Noth maintained that this material does not seem to have belonged to any of the narrative "sources" (that is, J, E, D, P) although he felt it originated in the pre-state period. See Martin Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia, 1968), 240-241. Baruch Levine suggests it predates the Deuteronomist. Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4 vol.1; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2000), 478-479; See also Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB5*;* New York: Doubleday, 1991).

[125] John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus – Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 445-50.

[126] See, e.g. Levine, *Numbers,* 478; C. H. J. de Geus, "Manasseh," *ABD* 1, 459.

any of the eastern entities in Judges, a point to which I will return in more detail below. Secondly, there is textual inconsistency as to which groups in particular comprise the "half tribe of Manasseh." Machir is always mentioned as part of this eastern group; while Gilead is generally considered part of it, Gilead's status is somewhat ambiguous since it alternately appears as a social group – a subgroup of Machir– and as a territorial region in which Machir resided. The figures Yair and Nobah are briefly mentioned only in Num 32:40-41 although the region associated with Yair is invariably connected with the eastern group's territory. While it is normal for tribal composition to fluctuate, the expression "half tribe of Manasseh" occasionally seems to refer solely to the Machirite group, as in Deut 3:13 or Josh 13:29-31. In the latter text, which briefly (re)summarizes the outlines of east Manasseh's territory, the group is referred to as "the half tribe of Manasseh" in v. 29 while in v. 31 the same group is identified as "the children of Machir son of Manasseh" and "the one half of the children of Machir."

Manasseh's connection to Machir in these materials is notable insofar as it is framed by an obtrusive, if not curious, genealogical link between the two eponyms at the end of Genesis. In the pericope describing Joseph's last days and death (Gen 50:22-26), there is a brief, incongruous note in 50:23 that Joseph lived to see Ephraim's children of the third generation and "(also) the children of Machir the son of Manasseh were born on Joseph's knees." Since Gen 48 takes pains to explain Ephraim's dominance over Manasseh, it is very strange that Gen 50 offers such vague information on Ephraim's progeny compared with that of Manasseh's, whose son, Machir, is named.[127] It is also

[127] While it is conceivable that this verse attempts to account for the clans of the Josephite tribe, as was done for the other tribes in Gen 46, the two sections nonetheless differ since Machir is the only Manassite 'descendant' named and since none of Ephraim's descendants is identified.

unusual that the section on Manasseh's progeny opens by mentioning Machir as opposed to Manasseh himself. Although the meaning of the expression "born on X's knees" is not entirely clear, at a minimum it deliberately signals (or creates) a close connection between the two entities in question while many understand it as indicative of adoption.[128] This unit therefore intentionally links Machir to Joseph (and Manasseh), a link that does not seem necessary unless Machir was initially unconnected with this ancestor/group.[129] That is, the manner in which this pericope casts the relationship between Machir and Joseph suggests that the authors were deliberately trying to tie the two entities together and the very need to do so indicates that these entities were originally disparate or at least unrelated groups.

2.4.2 Manasseh in the Book of Judges

Judges offers a differing picture of Manasseh than that in the previous books. Here Manasseh is cast as a west Jordan geographical entity while Machir, Gilead and Yair appear as independent entities/eponyms with no observable affiliation to it or to one another. While the tribe appears to be segmented, as it does in the other books, Judges contains no explicit reference to tribal genealogy, features less emphasis on the concept of descent, and offers a much more diffuse notion of tribal territory. Although Judges forms part of the wider Deuteronomistic History, which many scholars argue crystallized

[128] See for example Tarja S. Philip, *Menstruation and Childbirth in the Bible: Fertility and Impurity* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 88; New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), 94-95.

[129] Van Seters understands this verse as indicating that Machir's sons were given tribal status along with Ephraim and Manasseh and would have been considered another Israelite tribe. While I don't necessarily agree with his argument, he too understands Machir and Manasseh as independent entities. See John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 324.

during the post-exilic period, there is general consensus that the book itself is a collection of originally independent traditions about local heroes that were subsequently woven into a wider whole. Since the individual narratives overwhelmingly focus on northern figures in northern locations, most agree that the core of these traditions stem from a northern Israelite and thus pre-8th century BCE milieu.

Manasseh in Judges 6-8

The Gideon narrative of Judges 6-8 offers some intriguing information on the tribe's composition and nature.[130] In this text, Manasseh appears as a segmented group with at least two units or levels of social organization below that of the tribe: the *bêt 'āb* and the *'elep*. In contrast to the previous books, here the tribe is not explicitly conceived of as a descent group nor is there any reference to its *mišpāhôt*. During Gideon's initial refusal of his divine commission, he describes himself as the youngest of his father's house (*bêt 'āb*), which itself is part of the weakest clan/lineage (?) (*'elep)* of Manasseh: "Look, my *'elep* (*'alpî*) is the weakest/most humble in Manasseh (*bimenaššeh*) and I am the least important/youngest in my father's house (*bĕbêt 'ābi*)" (Judg 6:15).[131] The use

[130] I will discuss the complex redactional history of this narrative in more detail in Chapter 4 and here will simply note that while the story as it now stands is the product of later waves of Deuteronomistic editorial activity, commentators generally agree that some narrative core derives from a northern, pre-exilic setting.

[131] Gideon's rationale for refusing the role of deliverer strongly resembles that offered by Saul in refusing his appointment as *nagid* (1 Sam 9:21), suggesting that we are dealing with a common motif (cf. the selection of David in 1 Sam 16:6, in which he is cast as the youngest member of a modest family). The terminology used for the social groups in these two texts, however, differs. In contrast to Judg 6, 1 Sam 9:21 variously refers to the tribe of Benjamin in a gentilic form and as a *šēbeṭ,* and mentions Saul's (unnamed) *mišpāhôt.* It is possible that these differences point to internal distinctions between the tribes in question although they may also simply reflect differing periods of composition and/or authorship. Many commentators also note the numerous similarities between Gideon's overarching call narrative and that of Moses' in Ex 3:11-4:17 which points to the stylized nature of these units. Some of the most recent articles on the latter

of the term *'elep* is unusual in that it generally refers to a military unit (e.g. Ex. 18:21, 25; 1 Sam 29:2) although here it obviously represents some type of social grouping between the level of the father's house and the tribe. It is possible that the term is synonymous with *mišpāḥâ*, which describes a grouping between the father's house and tribe in other texts, or perhaps it refers to another level or possibly type of grouping altogether.[132] The referent of the term *bêt 'āb* here and in the rest of the chapter is unclear, and Lemche suggests it may refer to either Gideon's immediate family over which his father presided or to his lineage.[133]

The image of Manasseh gleaned from the wider narrative is one in which the tribe appears to be a rather remote regional organization or designation. It is called upon for military action against an enemy and is understood as distinct from other seemingly regional groups e.g., Asher, Naphtali, Ephraim, who are threatened by the Midianite presence, yet otherwise does not play an active role in the overall story. Rather, in the narrative society appears to operate at the local town and lineage/clan level. In the pericope describing Gideon's destruction of his father's Baal altar (6:25-32), the hero interacts with both his father's house and the men of the town. Insofar as the latter confront Gideon over this altar destruction (6:28-32), it is possible that the town was conceived of as a corporate entity in which the actions of one member had ramifications for the group as a whole. It is not, however, certain that the town members thought of

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include Gregory T. Wong, "Gideon: A New Moses?" in *Refraction and Reflection: Studies in the Biblical Historiography in Honor of A. Graeme Auld* (ed. Robert Rezetko, Timothy H. Lim, W. Brian Aucker; VTSup 113; Leiden: Brill, 2007): 529-545; Hava Shalom-Guy, "The Call Narrative of Gideon and Moses: Literary Convention or More?" *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11 (2011): 2-19.

[132] Lemche, *Early Israel*, 254.

[133] Lemche, *Early Israel*, 254.

themselves as kin. The *'elep* of Abiezer (which Num 26 and Josh 17 cast as a *mišpāḥâ* of Manasseh) plays a more important role in Gideon's life than does the wider tribe. It is the first group called out for battle against the Midianites (Judg 6:34-35) and during Gideon's confrontation with the Ephraimites (8:1-4), he curiously contrasts this tribe with Abiezer rather than with the tribe of Manasseh, thereby identifying himself with his clan (?) over against his tribe.

The Gideon narrative arguably contains no indication that Manasseh's members or territory were located east of the Jordan River. Although Gideon's musters against the Midianites include "all Manasseh" (6:34-35 and 7:23), which conceivably could refer to both the western and eastern halves of the tribe, the musters otherwise involve west Jordan groups only and there is no mention of troops having crossed the Jordan to join him.[134] The first muster (6:34-35) includes Abiezer (a clan/area located west of the Jordan per Josh 17), "all Manasseh" and the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali (all of whom are located in west Jordan per Josh 17-19). This seems to imply that after first calling upon his own clan, Gideon then called upon the wider tribal unit in the immediate vicinity—that is, west of the Jordan—and then on the neighboring tribes in the area. The second muster (7:23), which is similar though not identical to the first (neither the clan of Abiezer nor the tribe of Zebulun is mentioned), also indicates that "all Manasseh" was called out, although in light of its similarity with the first, it seems likely that here too only western Manasseh was meant. According to 8:4-17, Gideon clashes with the east Jordan cities of Succoth and Penuel while pursuing the Midianites. A number of scholars have suggested that these cities were Israelite although the information in the text is

[134] The only time troops are described as crossing the Jordan is after the second muster during the pursuit of the Midianites in 7:23.

equivocal; in either case there is no suggestion that they were considered part of Manasseh.[135] While Gideon expected these eastern cities to support his pursuit of the enemy, which might suggest that some type of relationship existed between them, the leaders of Succoth and Penuel do not seem to have felt that their assistance was guaranteed. Of course, after Gideon punishes the leaders of Succoth and kills the people of Penuel (8:13-17), it might be assumed that he or his tribe of Manasseh exerted some implicit degree of control over these eastern areas. In fact, it is possible that this episode lays the groundwork for understanding Manasseh as having an east Jordan component. The narrative, however, does not pursue this avenue of thought, and in the end Manasseh's connection to the east is not clarified.

Manasseh's Absence from Judges Texts Involving East Jordan Groups

The idea that Judges conceives of Manasseh solely as a western entity is reinforced by the tribe's absence from narratives involving those eastern groups affiliated with it in Num, Deut, and Josh. Judges 5 (the Song of Deborah), a poem many scholars consider one of the earliest biblical texts,[136] includes both Machir and Gilead among the

[135] Elie Assis holds that Succoth and Penuel were Israelite cities since Gideon expects to receive their support and since the name Penuel is Hebrew. See Elie Assis, *Self-interest or Communal Interest: An Ideology of Leadership in the Gideon, Abimelech and Jephthah Narratives (Judg. 6-12)* (VTSupp 106; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 95, n. 151. Abraham Malamat did not consider these cities Israelite, but argued that they were Israelite vassals since Gideon's expectations of them echoes that found in 14th and 13th century BCE Hittite vassal treaties. See Abraham Malamat, "The Punishment of Succoth and Penuel by Gideon in Light of Ancient Near Eastern Treaties," in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfield Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran and Post-Biblical Judaism* (ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz and Shalom Paul; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 70-71. While the similarities with the Hittite treaties are interesting, Malamat's argument that a suzerain-vassal relationship existed between Gideon and the east Jordan entities is theoretical.

[136] There is a voluminous amount of literature on Judges 5. With respect to its dating, a number of scholars have proposed an early pre-monarchic date based on both the poem's linguistic

ten "Israelite" entities[137] mustered against a Canaanite coalition although it curiously contains no mention of Manasseh. In fact, not only is Machir here unconnected to Manasseh, but there is also no discernable connection between it and Gilead. Machir is described as an entity from which "'rulers' (*meḥoqqîm*) went down" (5:14) and appears to have battled the Canaanites together with Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali.[138] Gilead, who "remained on the other side of the Jordan," (5:17) seems not to have participated in battle along with Reuben, Dan and Asher. Manasseh's puzzling, if not problematic, absence from the text as well as Machir's distinction from Gilead have led commentators to posit myriad theories about the Machirite entity and its relationship to Manasseh. Some, who view the list of "tribes" as arranged in some type of geographical order, suggest that Machir was originally a western entity – and depending on the scholar either initially connected to Manasseh or independent of it – that

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features and its content, which lists ten "tribes" or groups instead of the standard twelve-tribe coalition described in most other biblical materials. See for example, D.A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 153-155; Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (SBLDS 21; Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975), 5; Robert Boling, *Judges*, 98-112; Baruch Halpern, "The Resourceful Israelite Historian: The Song of Deborah and Israelite Historiography," *HTR* 76 (1983): 379-401; J. David Schloen, "Caravans, Kenites, and Casus Belli: Enmity and Alliance in the Song of Deborah" *CBQ* 55 (1993): 18-38; Stager, "The Song of Deborah," 50-64. While many scholars no longer accept such an early dating, there seems to be a general consensus that the poem was composed by the 9th century BCE. See Gösta W. Ahlström *The History of Ancient Palestine* (ed. Diana Edelman; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 381; Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel*, 109-21; Kenton Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel," 328. Marc Zvi Brettler holds, "Its date is uncertain, though much of it is likely among the earliest biblical literature, but it has undergone changes of all sorts over time." Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Book of Judges* (London: Routledge, 2002), 79.

[137] Most scholars refer to these entities as tribes although they are not specifically designated as such in the poem. In other [later?] biblical texts, however, most, though significantly not all, are described as tribes.

[138] While the MT reads *ḥqq* (cf. vv 9, 15) "to inscribe, decree" the OL and Vat read *ḥqr* "to search out, investigate."

eventually migrated east of the Jordan.[139] Against this line of thought, however, I find it difficult to discern a particular geographical sequence in the text.[140] Furthermore, there is no indication in the biblical narratives of Machir having moved anywhere; rather, outside of Judg 5, in which its location is ambiguous, it is invariably connected with east Jordan. Others have suggested that "Machir" is simply a synonym for "Manasseh" since the two entities are genealogically connected in other texts.[141] Yet while this suggestion offers a way to include Manasseh in the text, nowhere else does "Machir" appear as a metynomic designation for the tribe as a whole; rather this entity is generally synonymous with the east Manasseh group only. I therefore do not believe there is any basis to suggest that Machir was ever a west Jordan entity nor that it was understood as a stand-in for Manasseh.[142]

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[139] For the view that the two were initially connected and western entities, see e.g., Noth, *The History of Israel*, 61-62; de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel*, 586; Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes*, 63-71, 213-16 For a critique of this view, see Bergman, "The Israelite Tribe of Half-Manasseh," 224-54.

[140] Lemaire, "Galaad et Makir" offers a similar argument.

[141] Boling, *Judges*, 112; Stager, "The Song of Deborah," 50-64. These commentators also hold that "Gilead" actually refers to "Gad" since the latter is not mentioned among the ten entities. Yet aside from both of these names beginning with a gimel, the words have different etymologies such that this is not an entirely plausible solution. Raymond de Hoop has proposed a rather complex and convoluted reconstruction of the poem in which it originally referred to only four names, one of which was Machir, which represented a Transjordanian entity. When the additional names, including Gilead, were added to the poem, he holds that Machir somehow came to be viewed as synonymous with Manasseh. Raymond de Hoop, "Judges 5 Reconsidered: Which Tribes, What Land, Whose Song?," In *The Land of Israel in Bible, History and Theology: Studies in Honor of Ed Noort* (ed. Jacques Ruitten and J.Cornelious de Vos; VTSup 124; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 151-166.

[142] Lemaire posits that Machir initially referred to an east Jordan geographical region situated in the plain near the Jabbok in the vicinity of Deir 'Alla that came to be associated with a social group. See, Lemaire, "Galaad et Makir." While I agree with the general outlines of Lemaire's argument, as noted in the introduction I do not believe that the biblical materials provide enough information to pinpoint its location with any accuracy.

Judges 10:3-5 briefly mentions the judge Yair the Gileadite who possessed 30 towns (*ḥāwwôt*) named after him – the Havvot-Yair – in the land of Gilead.[143] The biblical writers obviously envisioned a connection between this judge and the Yair son of Manasseh in Num 32:40 and Deut. 3:14 since they cast both figures as the eponymous founder of the Havvot-Yair. Yet while the Yair in Judges 10 curiously lacks a patronym, he is not explicitly connected with Manasseh nor is there any overt link between Gilead and Manasseh in this unit.

The tribe and/or ancestral figure of Manasseh also plays no major role in Jephthah narrative of Judg 11-12 which describes the Gileadite hero who rescued his people from the Ammonites. In this story Gilead appears as an east Jordan socio-territorial group, and while it appears to function much like a tribe it is not explicitly described as such. The narrative contains no reference to Machir (cf. Judg 5). While Manasseh is briefly mentioned twice in the text, Barnabas Lindars is undoubtedly correct in arguing that both references are "an insertion to bring the position into line with the later tribal designations."[144] According to 11:29, the spirit of YHWH came upon Jephthah and he "crossed over to Gilead and to Manasseh, and he crossed to Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he crossed over to the sons of Ammon." Since the Ammonites are described as "sons of X" – which generally indicates a social group – but this label is not applied to either Gilead or Manasseh, it seems that the latter are here intended as geographic regions. Yet even if Gilead and Manasseh are understood as social groups,

[143] Susan Niditch notes that details about Yair – his 30 sons and their donkeys and the villages named after him – are indicative of status and wealth, information that is characteristic of the stock details about tribal heroes or "big men." Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 121.

[144] Lindars, "The Israelite Tribes in Judges," 99.

the text nonetheless views them as separate entities.[145] Manasseh's second mention occurs in 12:4, in a pericope describing the Gileadites' confrontation with the tribe of Ephraim following the Ammonite battle (12:1-7) that scholars widely agree is a later addition to the story that preceded it.[146] Since Manasseh plays no role in this episode, either prior to 12:4 or in the subsequent description of the conflict between Gilead and Ephraim (12:5-7), it seems likely that its abrupt mention here represents a later textual interpolation.

2.5 Reconciling the Two Biblical Views of Manasseh

Since the Judges narratives show no indication that Machir, Gilead, and Yair are affiliated with Manasseh, as do texts in the books of Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr, I propose that these eastern groups were not initially, or perhaps ever, part of the tribe but were rather originally distinct, independent entities. At some point these eastern groups came to be affiliated with the western tribe for some reason, a phenomenon that was articulated through their inclusion in the Manassite genealogy and their patrynomic connection to Manasseh. Although this process of social merging, or what anthropologists refer to as fusion, is common among tribal groups, ultimately the idea of

[145] Jephthah's description of the region over which Gilead and Ammon lay claim reinforces this idea that Gilead is here viewed as territorially distinct from Manasseh. Jephthah insists to the Ammonite king that Israel had a legitimate right to the land "from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan" (11:22) since the Israelites had conquered it from Sihon the Amorite during the Wilderness wandering. Since this territory is situated below the Jabbok it does not seem to include the territory given to east Manasseh, which as I will discuss in Chapter 3, is generally associated with the region north of the Jabbok and with the figure of Og.

[146] The Ephraimites berate and threaten Jephthah for failing to call them up for battle and Jephthah in turn criticizes Ephraim for failing to respond to his call for assistance (12:1-3). After the Ephraimites taunt (or perhaps disparage) the Gileadites, claiming "fugitives of Ephraim are you, Gilead, in the midst of Ephraim, in the midst of Manasseh" (12:4) war breaks out between the two (12:5-7).

east Manasseh only makes sense within the framework of the twelve-tribe concept which suggests it is a literary or historiographic maneuver.

2.5.1 Social Fusion among Tribal Groups

Anthropologists have long noted the fluidity of tribal composition. According to Parkinson, "the tendency of different segments within the [tribal] system to constantly renegotiate their relationship with each other can preclude the formation of established social boundaries over the long term."[147] Eickelman makes rather similar observations in his study of the Bni Bataw tribe, a semitranshumant, Arabic speaking group in western Morocco, and some of his data may help us conceptualize Manasseh's relationship with the east. The Bni Bataw are structured in three levels of social grouping: the rural local community, the section and the tribe. Eickelman notes that the local communities frequently experience change; while the sections (or middle level group) are more stable than the local communities, they too are "subject to gradual shifts not only in composition but in formal identity. They acquire and lose people all the time, although there is greater structure in the names of the groups themselves…."[148] Eickelman also points out that formal arrangements between lower and mid-level social groups of the same and different tribes were common prior to the colonial era, and his description of the alliances the Wlad Khallu section of the Bni Bataw had with other tribal sections potentially offers us ways to envision west Manasseh's ties with the east Jordan

[147] Parkinson, "Introduction: Archaeology and Tribal Societies," 8.

[148] Eickelman, *The Middle East*, 143.

groups.[149] One Wlad Khallu alliance was with a section from an Arabic-speaking tribe with adjacent agricultural lands, an example that might help us understand the relationship between the various "Manassite" groups if the tribe's western and eastern regions were contiguous. Another Wlad Khallu alliance was with an Arabic-speaking tribe at some distance from its own land, which is an interesting perspective from which to view the Manassite groups if their territories were non-contiguous. A third alliance was with a Berber-speaking, and thus linguistically distinct neighboring group, which may help us imagine Manasseh's relationship with non-Hebrew speaking eastern groups, or may simply point to the wide range of relationships among tribal groups.

Notably, Manasseh is not the only biblical/Israelite tribe implicitly described as having incorporated other (and perhaps non-Israelite/"outsider") groups over time. Many argue that the tribe of Judah absorbed the tribe of Simeon as well as the Jerahmeelites, Qenizzites and Zeraites since these latter groups, who in certain texts seem to have been viewed as discrete entities, are eventually included in Judah's genealogy and thus (re)cast as part of Judah's kinship structure.[150] Unlike Judah, however, Manasseh appears as an entity in which groups in discrete, and likely non-contiguous, regions on either side of the Jordan River eventually coalesced.[151] This is a peculiar characterization insofar as the

[149] Eickelman, *The Middle East*, 143.

[150] See e.g., Gary N. Knoppers, "Intermarriage, Social Complexity and Ethnic Diversity in the Genealogy of Judah," *JBL* 120/1 (2001): 15-30.

[151] As I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, while the biblical materials clearly describe the Manassite groups as situated on both sides of the Jordan their proximity to one another is ambiguous. Josh 17 locates the western Manassites (immediately?) west of the Jordan River in the northernmost region of the Canaanite hill country. The eastern Manassites are vaguely described as situated in northern Gilead and the Bashan (Num 32; Deut 3:12-17; Josh 13:29-31) although these eastern regions are so hazily delineated that it is not possible to get a clear picture of their location. Nonetheless, based solely on the descriptions of the Manassite

biblical materials indicate that the Jordan otherwise served as a boundary for those Israelite tribes situated along its path, delimiting their membership and territory to one side of the river or the other. We must therefore consider why, in contrast to the other tribes, the Jordan did not act as a border for the Manassites and examine the plausibility of its membership residing in non-contiguous areas east and west of the Jordan.

2.5.2 The Jordan River as Tribal Boundary

Turning to the role of the Jordan River as a tribal boundary, anthropologists note that while tribal borders are nebulous and constantly shifting, they are nonetheless often influenced by the presence of geographical and/or topographical features (the entanglement and interaction theory). Marshall Sahlins suggests that when boundaries between tribes can be identified, they tend to follow naturally divisive features of the landscape such as the divide between hill country and valley.[152] It is therefore reasonable to expect that the Jordan River, part of the wider Jordan Rift Valley that bisects the highlands on either side of it (i.e., the east Jordan and west Jordan highlands), served as a boundary between these two regions. This river, which winds along a non-navigable course from Mt. Hermon in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, is passable only at

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territories themselves it is conceivable that the group occupied a wide swath of territory spanning both sides of the Jordan River. In texts describing the territories of the other tribes, however, the eastern Jordan Valley – the area that lay immediately adjacent to the Cisjordan – is variously ascribed to the tribe of Gad (Josh 13:24-28) or to the tribes of Reuben and Gad (Deut 3:16-17), but is never explicitly assigned to east Manasseh. It therefore seems that the two Manassite groups occupied non-contiguous territories, at least in the minds of later biblical writers.

[152] Sahlins, *Tribesman*, 16-23.

certain natural fords.[153] During the winter and spring its waters were swift moving and deep, and its steep banks rendered it unsuitable for irrigation. The strip of land immediately next to the river, the Zor, was dense with tangled vegetation; the area adjacent to this, the Ghor, was desert-like on much of the western side although it was well watered on the eastern side. While it is possible to cross the Jordan at certain places, and in fact many of the Bible's formative narratives involve traversing it (e.g., Gen 32; Josh 1), the river nonetheless seems to have functioned as a fairly constant boundary between the western and eastern highland regions during other periods prior to and following the Iron I/tribal period. For instance, during the Amarna era the various Late Bronze Age Canaanite city-states and the hinterlands they controlled largely appear to have been localized on one side of the Jordan or the other. Following the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE, the Jordan served as a fixed boundary, at least administratively speaking, between the various east and west bank entities under successive Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Hellenistic rule.[154] While these examples admittedly relate to non-tribal entities and further represent "official" or administrative views of a border that may not have corresponded to social reality, they nonetheless demonstrate the persistence of the Jordan as a boundary within the region.

[153] There is often a distinction made between the Upper Jordan, which lies north of the Sea of Galilee and the Lower Jordan, which lies south of it.

[154] For an excellent and concise summary of the position of the east bank during Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Hellenistic rule, see Havrelock, *River Jordan,* 128-134.

At the same time, we should not view the Jordan as an impenetrable barrier.[155] Finkelstein argues that the Amarna ruler Lab'ayu of Shechem and his sons were able to briefly extend Shechem's hegemony east of the Jordan such that the city-state spanned both sides of the river for a short period.[156] Similarly, the very fact that the Israelite kingdom encompassed territory and peoples on both sides of the Jordan for a time suggests that the river was not an absolute barrier between these areas. Furthermore, rivers need not always serve as tribal boundaries. Piotr Bienkowski and Eveline van der Steen argue that the wadi Arabah, which extends from the Dead Sea south to the Gulf of Aqaba, and which ostensibly separated the late Iron II tribal kingdom of Edom from that of Judah, was a highly porous border, if a border at all, during this time. Rather, they maintain that there was extensive contact and interaction among the various tribal groups in southern Jordan and the Negev for trade and shared resources, among other things, as suggested by the region's complex Iron II ceramic assemblages and ethnographic parallels with 19th and 20th century local tribal groups.[157] With respect to Manasseh, one of the most important Jordan River passages between west and east lies within the region ascribed to its western portion: the wadi Farah, which extends from Tirzah (tell el-Farah (N)) in the west to the ford at Adam and from there to the eastern River Valley. Insofar as the territory of the west Manassites could be viewed as one of the major gateways to

[155] From a physical perspective, the highland regions on either side of the river are geologically and topographically similar and appear to be a single unit separated by the rift so that we should expect some degree of environmental and thus likely socio-economic similarities between them.

[156] Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman, "Shechem of the Amarna Period and the Rise of the Northern Kingdom of Israel," *IEJ* 55/2 (2005): 172-193.

[157] Bienkowski and van der Steen, "Tribes, Trade and Towns," 21-47.

the east, perhaps it is not all that unusual that at some point its members were thought of, or perhaps remembered as, spanning both sides of the River.

Moreover, it is not uncommon for a tribal group to exist in two or more geographically non-contiguous areas – a phenomenon anthropologists refer to as reduplication – so that the image of Manasseh as a geographically diverse group is historically feasible. Anne Porter's description of the Yamutbal at Mari seems to point to reduplication among this group. The Mari texts indicate that the Yamutbal were situated in or affiliated with two distinct and non-contiguous locations that feature identically named towns: the southern region of and the northern region of Jebel Sinjar. While the explanation for this state of affairs is not clear, Porter suggests the shared name of Yamutbal in these regions "in and of itself…signifies and would be understood as, a conception of common descent affiliation"[158] and that "kinship itself was, and is, the means of time-space distanciation, functioning inclusively or exclusively according to contingent circumstances."[159] In his discussion of the modern day Yomut Turkmen of Iran, a nomadic people engaged in pastoralism and agriculture who live in mobile yurts, Carl Salzman notes that closely related Yomut tribal sections do not occupy adjacent territories.[160] Rather, the territories of closely related sections are separated by those of more distantly related Yomut groups in somewhat of a leapfrog pattern so that conflicts

[158] Anne Porter, "Beyond Dimorphism: Ideologies and Materialities of Kinship as Time –Space Distanciation," in *Nomads, Tribes and States in the Ancient Near East: Cross Disciplinary Perspectives* (ed. Jeffrey Szuchman; OIS 5; Chicago: Oriental Institute Publications, 2009), 204-205.

[159] Porter, "Beyond Dimorphism: Ideologies and Materialities of Kinship as Time –Space Distanciation," 208.

[160] Carl Salzman, "Ideology and Change in Middle Eastern Tribal Societies," *Man* 13 (1978): 627-29.

between neighboring territorial groups do not erupt into conflicts between closely related groups. In Salzman's view, this scenario reflects the Yomut's particular application of lineage ideology in such a way that it prevents conflict with their territorial reality. To his mind, lineage ideology functions as a social structure in reserve that can be activated in response to social or environmental changes, a theory that might offer another avenue from which to understand the idea of an east-west Manassite group.

2.5.3 East-Manasseh as a Historiographical Category

While the portrait of Manasseh as an entity split between the west and east sides of the Jordan River represents a plausible model of tribal socio-political organization, the portrayal of the tribe's eastern section is nonetheless problematic in several ways. Notably, the notion of east Manasseh only appears in those materials that conceptualize the Israelites as a twelve-tribe coalition, i.e., Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr. In Judges, whose individual narratives show awareness of a different tribal system, Machir and Gilead appear as independent entities in their own right who do not have a connection to Manasseh or even to one another. While the differences between these varying portrayals conceivably reflect natural diachronic change among tribal groups, scholars widely agree that the twelve-unit system is a schematic construct as opposed to a social reality and thus likely does not reflect the lived experiences of the tribal groups. In other words, the idea of east Manasseh only surfaces in texts that artificially, or at least literarily, limit the number of Israelite tribes to twelve. Furthermore, the materials in Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr conceptualize the tribes in terms of what appear to be late, schematic genealogies and fairly stable, schematized geographic regions (Josh 13-19), which suggests that they

provide an administrative view of the Israelite tribes that does not necessarily correlate with or reflect (an Iron I) social reality.[161] In the end, east or "half-Manasseh" appears to be a rubric that allows the various eastern entities to be considered part of the wider Israelite coalition while maintaining the parameters of the twelve-tribe system. By envisioning these eastern groups as part of the wider tribe of Manasseh, the biblical writers are able to explain their presence in the Israelite coalition, or perhaps claim them as Israelites, while still maintaining the illusion/ideology of the Israelites as a twelve-member group descended from the patriarch Jacob. The designation "half-Manasseh" therefore does not necessarily seem to have been a label of actual social relevance but may rather be an administrative or historiographic category.

[161] Moreover, as I will discuss further in Chap. 4 there are serious literary and conceptual tensions surrounding east Manasseh's status and identity as an eastern group such that in the end it appears as a rather ambiguous entity.

CHAPTER 3

THE MANASSITE TERRITORIES: THE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

While many anthropologists point to territorial affinity as one of the defining attributes of a tribe, a tribe's relationship to territory nonetheless appears a more imprecise marker of tribal identity than does descent. This chapter focuses on the Manassite territories as they are described in the biblical text and in light of anthropological views of tribal territory. Biblical scholars have long noted that the depiction of the Israelite tribes generally emphasizes their territoriality although in the case of Manasseh we are presented with somewhat of a mixed bag. The texts largely treat the tribe's eastern and western regions as distinct, unrelated units and offer sharply differing estimations of each. While they provide a fairly comprehensive description of west Manasseh, the information on east Manasseh is so vague as to permit only a tentative conjecture at its location. The geographical relationship between the two tribal sections is therefore ambiguous although the descriptions of the other Israelite tribal territories (Deut 3 and Josh 13-19) suggest they were non-contiguous. Certain biblical writers appear to have envisioned the Manassite territories (as well as those of the other tribes) as roughly overlapping with distinct topographical regions, allowing for the possibility that these two areas existed and/or were understood as discrete territorial units during ancient times. In the end, however, it is not clear to what extent these biblically delineated regions correspond to actual tribal territory.

3.1 Biblical Presentation of the Manassite Territories: General Notes

On the whole, the biblical texts treat Manasseh's eastern and western sections as separate, individual territories. The two regions are generally not described together and the traditions regarding their settlement differ in form and content. West Manasseh is connected with Joshua and its territory described within the materials detailing the allocation of western Jordan (Josh 14-19). East Manasseh is connected with Moses and its territory is usually briefly mentioned together with that of the other eastern tribes Reuben and Gad (Num 32; Deut 3:12-17). This distinction between the tribes' two territories, although perhaps somewhat puzzling from a conceptual perspective, nonetheless echoes the distinction between east and west Jordan that characterizes much of the biblical literature.

3.2 Delineating Manasseh According to the Text

Since there are no extra-biblical references to the tribe of Manasseh, our information on its locations and geographical extent ultimately derives from the biblical material. One hurdle in analyzing this information, however, is that the Hebrew Bible offers differing views of the tribal regions. Taken as a whole, Josh 13-19 – which describes the tribal allotments that purportedly followed the conquest of Canaan – suggests that the territories were discrete, contiguous areas that filled the entire land YHWH promised to the Israelites with no gaps in between. Since this material envisions each tribe's particular portion of this land as its divine inheritance, there is some sense of finality and permanence to the various tribal holdings. At the same time, certain details within the individual allotment chapters offer a more fluid view of the tribal lands in

which territory shifted according to circumstances. For example, Josh 17:14-18 suggests that the territory of the Josephites (the composite Manasseh-Ephraim group) could/did (?) expand due to population pressures; Josh 19:47-48 notes that Dan lost its original territory in the southern Shephelah and moved north to Leshem/Dan (cf, Judg 17-18); according to Josh 19:1-9 the tribe of Simeon's territory was actually contained within the wider territory of Judah. Still another picture of the tribal territories emerges in Judges. Here although the tribes appear localized in the general areas with which they are associated in Joshua, several live side by side with non-Israelite neighbors which suggests a different understanding of the regional layout. The Judges materials also depict certain "Israelite" entities who either do not appear among the twelve tribes allotted territory in Joshua or who are ostensibly subsumed into the twelve at some later point, such as Gilead (e.g., Judg 5:17; 10:2-5; 11:1-12:7) and Machir (Judg 5:14). Although these latter entities are associated with east Manasseh in Joshua, and Gilead is also connected with Gad and Reuben to some extent, the fact that they appear as distinct socio-territorial entities in Judges again points to these two biblical books as having different conceptualizations of the tribal "maps."

It is possible that these varying images of the tribal territories simply represent diachronic change as Gottwald suggests. Assessing the overall biblical picture of tribal territory, he claims "far from being 'frozen' geographically or demographically, it is clear that the *shevatim* [*sic*] developed over time and space, with both the component members and the territory occupied undergoing change, sometimes of a pronounced nature."[162] Gottwald's observation resonates with anthropological understandings of tribal territory

[162] Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 254.

as continually fluctuating in response to varying conditions[163] although I disagree with some of his examples, particularly his theories on the east Jordan tribes and his dating of the biblical materials.[164]

At the same time it is difficult to conceive of Josh 13-19 as reflective of a particular period of tribal social evolution since these chapters ultimately present an administrative or official view of the tribal territories that likely does not correspond to the social reality of the tribal period, as I will discuss below. Not only is this material tied to the concepts of the twelve tribe confederacy and the unified conquest of the land – both of which are widely accepted as schematic, ideological constructs rather than historical realities,[165] but its overall conceptualization of the tribal areas does not accord with anthropological views on tribal territory. While certain details within these chapters may reflect social realia, the conceptual framework underlying the unit as a whole does not.

3.2.1 Joshua 13-19

Despite the issues outlined above, Josh 13-19 serves as the starting point for our study of the Manassite territories since these chapters offer the most detailed and systematic presentation of the biblical writers' conceptions of the tribal layout. As

[163] See for example Parkinson, "Introduction: Archaeology and Tribal Societies," 8; Eickelman, *The Middle East,* 126-50; Sahlins, *Tribesmen,* 16-17.

[164] Among other examples, Gottwald follows Noth and Ottosson who hold that Manasseh's eastern settlement was the result of a group of initially western Manassites (the Machirites) moving across the Jordan. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* 255; Ottosson, *Gilead,* 138-140; Noth, *The History of Israel,* 61-62.

[165] See for instance J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006): 74-83; Mayes, *Israel in the Period of the Judges;* Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiograph,* 72-95.

previously mentioned, the two areas of Manassite territory are not described together in this material. East (or half) Manasseh's territory is outlined with those of the other eastern tribes, Reuben and Gad, in chapter 13, while west Manasseh's territory is detailed in chapters 16-17, among the west Jordan allotments. Although the description of west Manasseh briefly mentions the tribe's eastern region, albeit in what is likely a later textual interpolation (Josh 17:1-6), the biblical writers otherwise maintain a separation between east and west within this portrayal of tribal territory.

There is a vast amount of scholarship on the dating and historical setting of Josh 13-19. Rather than provide an exhaustive survey of the literature on this topic, I will here highlight a few of the major works. In the 1920s Albrecht Alt proposed that these chapters consist of two distinct types of literature: boundary descriptions and town/city lists.[166] He dated the boundary descriptions of most of the western tribes to the pre-monarchic period, for the purpose of settling disputes about territorial claims, and the town lists to the 7th century BCE reign of King Josiah.[167] Alt believed that the delineation of the eastern tribes' territories was separate from those of the west although he did not think it was possible to determine the date or origin of this eastern material. Noth largely followed Alt's theories on the dating of the boundary and town lists although he suggested that a system of boundary points preceded the boundary

[166] Albrecht Alt, "Judas Gaue unter Josia" *PJ* 21 (1925): 100-16; repr. in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol II, (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1953), 276-88.

[167] Note that Alt believed that the original boundary system related only to the "independent" western tribes and did not include the non-autonomous tribes of Simeon, Dan and Issachar. In his view, the latter were attached to the boundary system at a later date to conform with the traditional notion of the twelve tribes of Israel. See Albrecht Alt, "Das System der Stammesgrenzen im Buche Josua," *FS Sellin* (Leipzig, 1927): 13-24; repr. in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. 1, (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1953): 193-202.

descriptions. At the same time he viewed the allotment chapters as part of a secondary, post-Deuteronomistic addition to the Book of Joshua, albeit an addition that contained "historical" material.[168] While Yohanan Aharoni followed Alt's pre-monarchic dating of the boundary descriptions, he believed that the boundary list originally derived from a covenant of the northern tribes during the period of the Judges. He maintained that in its later form describing the regions of all twelve tribes it represented the administrative division of David's kingdom into twelve units.[169] Contra Alt, Zecharia Kallai, in *Historical Geography of the Bible: The Tribal Territories of Israel*, argued that the inheritance system as a whole – both the boundary descriptions and town lists – reflected the historical reality of the United Monarchy period under Solomon since the tribal allotments correspond with the Solomonic districts described in 1 Kgs 4. Kallai's argument, however, seems based on circular reasoning and an *a priori* assumption of the historicity of the biblical descriptions of the Solomonic period. Ultimately, he concludes that because the tribal boundary system accords with the reality of Solomon's time as this time is depicted in the biblical narratives, the boundary system should thus be dated to the Solomonic era.[170] In his 1986 *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, Nadav

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[168] Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, 66-67.

[169] Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (rev. ed.,; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979): 248-262.

[170] Kallai, *Historical Geography of the Bible.* See especially his general introduction and p. 279. Kallai examines the various texts containing geographical information synchronically, maintaining that the "literary history of a text is not of primary consequence for the historical analysis" (17) and then uses the "geographical significance" in the texts to determine the time period for which they portray existing conditions (16). However, the literary development of a text is in fact an important part of historical criticism, especially when one is basing one's history on the text itself. Diana Edelman makes a similar argument in her review of Kallai's work, see Diana Edelman, "Historical Geography of the Bible: The Tribal Territories of Israel" *JNES* 50/1 (1991): 69-73.

Na'aman agrees with Kallai's United Monarchy dating of the tribal inheritances system although he argues that the border descriptions were a combination of reality and literary invention.[171] In a more recent work, Na'aman and Nurit Lissovsky stress the fictitious and thus historiographical nature of the tribal boundaries, and date the allotment chapters to roughly the 7th century BCE.[172] Na'aman's latter work is reflective of a growing consensus since the mid-late 1980s that the allotment chapters date to the monarchic period or later and offer an idealized view of the tribal territories, and are therefore of limited use as a source for the Iron I/tribal period.[173]

Together with the late(r) dating many scholars now propose for the texts, there are several arguments for understanding the territorial descriptions in them as idealized or historiographical. First, as noted above, these chapters as a whole present a "map" in which all the land to which the Israelites lay claim is divided among the twelve tribes with no territorial gaps in between. Not only is this map of twelve units based on an

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[171] Na'aman writes, "the literary design of the system of tribal allotments – twelve tribes diving up the entire country with no territorial gap between them – obliged its author to combine actual tribal elements with additions and extensions of non-tribal elements." Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, 195; cf. 72-95.

[172] Nurit Lissovsky and Nadav Na'aman, "A New Outlook at the Boundary System of the Twelve Tribes," *UF* 35 (2003): 298.

[173] See for instance, Lemche, *Early Israel*, 286-88; McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 75-76; Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 74-83. Rainer Albertz suggests that Joshua 13-19 was a mostly post-exilic work dependent on similar geographical material used by the Priestly authors of Numbers 26-36. However, he believes that the allotment chapters preceded both these late Priestly chapters and the Priestly redaction of the Book of Joshua. See Rainer Albertz, "The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 295, n. 11. In his recent commentary on Joshua, Ernst Axel Knauf identifies chapters 14-17 as part of a mid-fifth century BCE Hexateuch redaction of the book characterized by priestly additions written in Deuteronomistic language. Ernst Axel Knauf, *Josua* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare AT, Band 6; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2008).

artificial or idealized view of the number of tribes themselves, but it also implausibly assigns the tribes territory that the Israelites could not have possessed during the Iron I/tribal period, such as Philistine holdings in the west.[174] Second, the contents of the chapters are anomalous compared with extant ancient Near Eastern literature. According to Lissovsky and Na'aman, "an internal boundary system defining administrative districts has never been found in any kingdom of the ancient Near East…because such lists served no purpose in the administration of the kingdom."[175] When border descriptions have been found in ancient Near Eastern documents, they either define borders between kingdoms or relate to estate matters (e.g., privately owned estates, the purchase or sale of contracts, and the registration of land grants and field plans). Lissovsky and Na'aman therefore conclude that the descriptions of the tribal perimeters were a fictitious literary creation. They acknowledge, however, that the town lists found in the biblical text could conceivably derive from archival documents available to its author(s), since such lists have parallels with other ancient Near Eastern documents.[176]

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[174] Lemche notes that the tribal allotment system includes Philistine territories that could not have been Israelite during the premonarchic period. Lemche, *Early Israel*, 287. Na'aman maintains that the allotments included Canaanite areas that had never been part of the tribal inheritance. Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, 195. While Na'aman's caveat regarding the Canaanite areas is somewhat problematic today since many scholars now recognize that the biblical distinction between Israelites and Canaanites is a later historiographical maneuver, we nonetheless find that several areas the biblical authors designate as 'Canaanite,' such as Megiddo, Ta'anach and Beth Shean, feature an Iron I material culture that is distinct from those of the new highland settlements but that continues the Egyptian and LBA traditions of an earlier era so that their inclusion within the tribal allotments is questionable.

[175] Lissovsky and Na'aman, "A New Outlook at the Boundary System of the Twelve Tribes," 298.

[176] In most ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, individual towns or settlements served as distinct administrative entities responsible for providing tax revenue and manpower to the central government, and therefore lists of such places served administrative purposes. Lissovsky and Na'aman, "A New Outlook at the Boundary System of the Twelve Tribes," 297.

A final argument for the schematic nature of Josh 13-19 relates to the nature of tribal boundaries. While the descriptions of the individual tribal territories vary dramatically in their specificity, the general sense derived from this unit as a whole is that the tribes occupied distinct geographic areas. Some of these areas, though not most, are depicted as bounded although the level of detail provided on these boundaries differs significantly. Yet anthropological and ethnological research demonstrates that the idea that tribes possess discrete, clearly defined territories or boundaries is a fiction promulgated by officials (and academics) that bears little resemblance to the reality on the ground.[177] To begin with, anthropologists widely understand tribal territories as relative geographical designations rather than fixed locales.[178] While a tribe's affiliation with a specific region may hold true for a period of time, such an affiliation does not exist as a static, external reality but is rather a dynamic part of the tribe itself. Anthropologists also note that it is incredibly difficult to define tribal boundaries; and rather than clearly demarcated lines between groups one often finds hazy, intertribal zones in which the lines between tribe A and B become blurred. Furthermore it is not uncommon for several tribal groups to occupy or use a single area so that specifically delineating the region of one group in particular is difficult.

Here, admittedly, the biblical material cuts both ways since it is a stretch to argue that Manasseh's territories are clearly defined (although its border with Ephraim is particularly detailed) and since its territory includes certain areas of overlap with the tribes of Ephraim and Issachar (Josh 17:7-13). Nonetheless, the overall scheme of Josh

[177] See for instance Eickelman, *The Middle East*, 127-128; Tapper, "Anthropologists, Historians and Tribespeople," 58.

[178] See Lemche, *Early Israel*, 288.

13-19, of which the Manassite material is a part, does not seem to reflect the social reality of tribal groups.

Even with these caveats regarding Josh 13-19 as reflective of the Iron I tribal period, many scholars allow that these materials preserve some degree of earlier, historical traditions about certain tribal territories and/or that the territories overlap with some type of early administrative units.[179] For example, as Lissovsky and Na'aman note and as we will discuss in more detail below, many of the tribal territories appear to loosely correlate with topographical units and anthropologists often point to geographical features as one of the phenomena that influence tribal boundaries.[180] Of course, here we are faced with an epistemological conundrum because although Josh 13-19 situates the tribal territories in distinct and largely geographically based regions, we cannot assume – or generally, verify – that these regions necessarily had anything to do with the individual tribes with which the Bible associates them. As Elizabeth Bloch Smith and Beth Alpert Nakhai note "the biblical association of tribes with particular territorial regions is ultimately elusive."[181] At the same time, the mid-ninth century BCE Mesha Stela's mention of "the man [men] of Gad" in the general region in which the biblical materials situate this eastern tribe suggests that the biblical picture of the tribal locations is not necessarily an entirely fictitious literary creation.

[179] Lemche, *Early Israel,* 288-289.

[180] See for instance Sahlins, *Tribesman,* 16-23.

[181] Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," XXX**.**

3.3 Locating West Manasseh: Joshua 16-17

Manasseh's western territory is first mentioned in Joshua 16:1-4 although these verses do not focus on the individual tribe itself. Rather, this unit treats the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim as a composite tribal grouping described as "the children of Joseph" (16:1) and outlines the southern border of their combined territory. This border, which broadly corresponds to Ephraim's southern border, extends from the Jordan River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The remainder of the chapter (vv. 5-10) focuses on Ephraim's territory.[182]

The description of Manasseh's territory proper begins in chapter 17. 17:1, although plagued by interpretative problems, notes that Manasseh's firstborn son, Machir, possessed the (eastern) regions of Gilead and Bashan.[183] Vv 2-6a list the "rest of the children of Manasseh," that is, the western Manassite clans – Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem,[184] Hepher,[185] Shemida, Malah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah – (cf. Num

[182] While v. 4 describes the children of Joseph as 'Manasseh and Ephraim,' such that Manasseh is mentioned first, Ephraim's territory is nonetheless outlined before that of Manasseh's.

[183] This verse contains seemingly contains three ideas although their translation and their relationship to one another are not certain. 1a of the MT notes "there was a lot (*gōrāl*) for the tribe of Manasseh since he was Joseph's firstborn" although the LXX reads *gebūl* (border) for *gōrāl*. 1b reads "to/for Machir (*lemākîr*), the oldest of Manasseh, father of Gilead since he was a man of war and to/for him (*lō*) belonged the Gilead and the Bashan."

[184] Shechem is explicitly included as part of Manasseh's territory here and in 1 Chron 7:19, and since there is no mention of it within the description of Ephraim's borders (Josh 16:5-10), this latter text seems to share the same understanding. Josh 21:21 and 1 Chron 7:28, however, assign Shechem to Ephraim. Nelson maintains that Shechem's affiliation with Ephraim in Josh 21:21 is likely the result of an error that occurred during the course of literary composition. See Nelson, *Joshua,* 197, n.10.

[185] There is inconsistency within these verses regarding the status of Hepher: in v. 2 he is described as one of Manasseh's sons while in v. 3 he is described as one of Manasseh's great-grandsons (Hepher son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh). Insofar as this latter genealogy describes Hepher as descended from Gilead and Machir –regions associated with Transjordan –it would seem that Hepher was possibly understood as somehow affiliated with the

26:29-34) and contain a brief narrative affirming the right of Zelophehad's daughters to possess property in the region (cf. Num 27 and 36). This section closes with another mention of Manasseh's eastern territory (17:6b).

Vv. 7-10 describe western Manasseh's borders:

> 7. The border of Manasseh extended from Asher to Michmethath, which is opposite Shechem. The border goes south to Jashub, En-tappuah. 8. The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah itself, on the border of Manasseh, belonged to the children of Ephraim. 9. The border goes down by the Wadi Kanath. South of the wadi are those cities belonging to Ephraim, although among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh is on the north side of the wadi. It ends at the sea. 10. Southward belongs to Ephraim and northward belongs to Manasseh. The sea is its border. They touch Asher on the north and Issachar on the east.

Vv 11-13, although beset by grammatical and transmission issues, the latter of which I will discuss below, note that Manasseh inherited the cities of Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo, as well as their "daughter towns" or surrounding areas, which lay in the tribal territories of Issachar and Asher.[186] The Manassites, however, were unable to take over these cities and dispossess their Canaanite inhabitants. The final verses of the chapter, vv. 14-18, contain a repetitive narrative that once again focuses on

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east. A similar understanding of Hepher's origins, and by extension those of Zelophehad's daughters, appears in Num 27 and 36, although the location of the clans of these women is not clear in these texts. In these Joshua verses, however, Hepher and the other clans listed in vv. 2-5 are intended as western clans. Lemaire comments on the issue of Hepher and Zelophedad. See Lemaire, "Le 'Pays de Hepher' et les 'Filles de Zelophehad' à la lumiere des ostraca de Samarie," 13-20.

[186] In the MT, the list of places that "belonged to Manasseh in Issachar and Asher" – Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo – largely parallels the list of the cities that the Manassites did not conquer in Judges 1:27. The Joshua verses, however, include the phrase "the residents of" before the mention of Dor, En-Dor, Tanaach and Megiddo, which does not make sense in context but rather appears to have been copied from the Judges text where the phrase is appropriate. The final two words of these verses `tpNh tvlv` are unclear and are generally not translated by most commentators. For a discussion of the relationship between these verses and Judges 1:27, see A. G. Auld, "Judges 1 and History: A Reconsideration" *VT* 25 (1975): 281, who argues that Judges 1:27 is dependent on this Joshua material.

territory of "the children of Joseph" – that is, Manasseh and Ephraim (cf. 16:1-4). The Joseph group complains to Joshua that they have been allotted only the single territory of Mt. Ephraim (vv. 14, 16); Joshua advises them to clear the forest to expand their holdings (vv. 15, 17-18).[187]

There are certain indications that this material has been shaped by various hands, or at least various traditions, and before discussing the geographical information in the text I will briefly comment on its literary structure. First, the references to the "sons of Joseph" in 16:1-4 and in 17:14-18 appear to be a secondary framework superimposed on the initially independent descriptions of the Ephraimite and Manassite territories such that the two are cast as a single, joint entity.[188] Secondly vv. 1-6, which focus on the Manassite *mišpāḥôt*, form a distinct subunit of text bracketed by mention of Manasseh's eastern territory in v. 1 and v. 6b that appears to stem from a different hand than the material that follows.[189] Not only does this unit differ in tone and content from vv. 7-13, but within the wider context of Josh 13-19 it is striking that Manasseh's *mišpāḥôt* are specified at all. While the other allotment chapters generically describe each tribe as having *mišpāḥôt* (e.g., "this was the territory of the children of Ephraim for their

[187] Richard Nelson suggests that these verses contain two sources: vv. 16-18 are viewed as the older version of the story, while vv. 14-15 are seen as a later supplement because they envision the entire land under Israel's control. See Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 203.

[188] I will take up the topic of the joint Manasseh-Ephraim entity in more detail in chapter 4. Here I will simply note that there are both stylistic and conceptual tensions between the descriptions of the individual tribes/tribal territories and that of the composite tribal group as well as discrepancy between the idea of Manasseh as one of Josephite members and Manasseh as an eastern entity.

[189] Rainer Albertz also holds that 17:2aßb-6 are priestly additions to this chapter. See Albertz, "The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua," 289. Cf, Auld, who views vv. 1-6 as additions to the basic information about Manasseh's boundaries. A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth*, 98-99.

mišpāḥôt" (Josh 16:5)), with the exception of the Judahite *mišpāḥôt* of Caleb and Othniel (Josh 15:13-19) none is explicitly mentioned. The singling out of these particular Judahite groups is notable since many commentators maintain they were originally independent, non-Judahite entities that were incorporated into the tribe and as such their tribal membership follows a similar trajectory to the one I propose for Machir. It is very possible, then, that the biblical writers highlighted the presence of these three particular eponyms/groups within the descriptions of their tribes' allotments to explain the inclusion of their territories within the Israelite tribal lands. In fact, in the case of Manasseh, Josh 17 is one of the few places in the biblical corpus in which the tribe's eastern and western territorial sections are explicitly mentioned together (cf., Num 26:28-33 although here the territorial aspect must be inferred).[190]

The geographical information in Josh 17 suggests that Manasseh's territory was situated in the northern part of the central hill country of Canaan, roughly bounded by Shechem in the south, the Jezreel Valley in the north, the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and presumably somewhere west of the Jordan River in the east. The tribe's southern, northern and eastern limits, however, are difficult to decipher. The delineation of Manasseh's southern border, while fairly detailed, is nonetheless rather convoluted and

[190] If we concede such a rationale underlying the reference to Machir in 17:1, then we may envision the following admittedly hypothetical development of the unit in vv. 1-6: Once Machir had been mentioned, it was (later?) felt necessary to mention Manasseh's western *mišpāḥôt* for the sake of parity and balance such that vv. 2-6 were then added to the text. It is also possible that the biblical authors included the material about the Manassite *mišpāḥôt* in these verses to offset the lack of a city list within the description of Manasseh's tribal territory since several of the Manassite *mišpāḥôt* names are actually toponyms, e.g. Shechem, Hepher, Tirzah, Abiezer. Against this line of thought, however, we find that not all the *mišpāḥôt* correspond with place names and that the description of Ephraim's territory, which like Manasseh's does not include a city list, contains no mention of its *mišpāḥôt*. For reasons that are not clear, the description of east Manasseh's territory in Josh 13 does not contain any reference to its western counterpart.

primarily described in terms of its relation to the neighboring territory of Ephraim.[191] According to the text this border begins at Michmethath, which lay south (*'al pĕnê*) of Shechem, and proceeds toward "Jashub and Ein Tappuah" (v. 7-8). While the area surrounding Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, the city itself was considered part of Ephraim's tribal territory. The border then seemingly runs westward along the Wadi Kanah toward the Mediterranean Sea (vv. 7-9), although it is not entirely clear whether the wadi itself served as a boundary;[192] the eastern segment of this southern border is not defined. Manasseh's northern extent is remarkably vague. V. 7 notes that it extends to the territory of Asher and according to v. 10, they – presumably Manasseh *and* Ephraim (cf. Josh 16:1-4) – touch Asher in the north and Issachar in the east. The geographical information on these latter two tribes, however, does not offer much in the way of concrete detail. Josh 19:24-31 broadly situates the tribe of Asher along the northern Mediterranean coast and 19:17-23 simply describes Issachar's border as extending (southward) toward the Jezreel Valley. Many commentators suggest that these two regions broadly served as Manasseh's northern border although the delineation of this boundary is debated.[193]

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[191] For a detailed analysis of the precise delineation of this border, see Na'aman, *Borders and Districts*, 145-158; Campbell, "The Boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh," 138-166.

[192] Nelson, *Joshua*, 202-203; Kallai, *Historical Geography*, 167-178.

[193] Kallai, *Historical Geography*, 167-78, and the references cited therein. Contra most scholars Kallai argues that the cities of Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, Taanach and Megiddo -- which the text indicates were located in the territories of Asher and Issachar (vv. 11-13) -- actually formed the northern boundary of the Manassite territory. Kallai's grammatical translation of these verses seems forced, however, and insofar as he does not adequately address the myriad interpretative issues with these verses, I find his theory questionable.

The location of Manasseh's eastern limit is unclear since it is uncertain whether the mention of Issachar in v. 10 refers to its northeastern boundary or to its eastern boundary.[194] Despite the laconic biblical information on Issachar's location, this tribe appears to be located north of Manasseh such that it would most plausibly serve as Manasseh's northeastern boundary. This is the way in which most commentators understand v. 10, suggesting that Manasseh's northern limit extended from Issachar in the (north)east to Asher in the north(west). When read this way, however, the text does not explicitly identify Manasseh's eastern extent although several options are implicitly suggested by the text. First, since Manasseh's territory is described among the tribal allotments located west of the Jordan River, the biblical writers very likely understood the River, or at least some part of it, as the tribe's easternmost limit. Alternately the fact that Beth-Shean and its daughter areas were situated in Issachar proper despite their affiliation with Manasseh (17:11) may also help illuminate the tribe's eastern extent. The city of Beth-Shean largely dominates the Beth-Shean Valley to its south, a narrow valley located immediately west of the Jordan River that connects to the southeastern end of the Jezreel Valley. Since Issachar is described as extending to the Jezreel Valley and since Manasseh is understood as abutting Issachar somewhere in the east, it is possible that a portion of the tribe was bound by the Beth Shean Valley in the east. Finally, since the opening verses of the chapter mention the tribe's eastern half, it is conceivable that

[194] This lack of clarity regarding Manasseh's eastern border is anomalous since the Jordan River is explicitly identified as the eastern border of most of the other tribes situated directly east of the River (e.g., Judah in Josh 15; Benjamin in Josh 18; Naphtali and Issachar in Josh 19). While the southeastern border of the Josephites is identified as the Jordan River (16:1-4), as noted above this border largely corresponds with Ephraim's southern boundary and it is not clear how it necessarily relates to Manasseh.

western Manasseh's eastern border was thought to correspond to eastern Manasseh's eastern border; curiously, however, the latter is nowhere articulated in the biblical texts.

The status of the cities Manasseh is said to have inherited in other tribal regions – Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo according to vv. 11-13 of the MT – as well as their relationship to the Manassite territory are ambiguous from both a conceptual and text critical perspective. Conceptually, it is unclear what, exactly, it means for a tribe to "inherit" certain Canaanite cities it does not appear to be able to control, especially when these cities are located within the territory of other tribes. (Is the text perhaps suggesting that Manasseh partially occupied these cities together with their "original" inhabitants?) Text critically, the number of cities ascribed to Manasseh differs among the various textual witnesses and the reason for this discrepancy is unknown: whereas the MT lists six cities, the LXXA lists four (Beth-Shean, Dor, Megiddo and Tanaach) and the LXXB three (Beth-Shean, Dor and Megiddo). Regardless of which cities are included, all are located in geographical regions that lay just outside the central hill country: Dor is located along the Mediterranean coast while the rest are located in the Jezreel and Beth Shean Valleys. That these areas are described as situated outside of Manasseh proper reinforces the view that its territory was understood as limited to the central hills region. At the same, the idea that Manasseh lay claim to cities beyond its borders points to a somewhat fluid notion of tribal territory in which "borders" were rather porous, a view that echoes the anthropological understanding of a tribe's relationship to territory. A similar phenomenon is suggested by v. 8 in which Ephraim is associated with the city of Tappuah, located within Manasseh's territory, although the Manassites controlled the surrounding region.

Although the description of west Manasseh's territory lacks a city list as do most of the other tribal allotments in Josh 13-19, several of the western *mišpāḥôt* mentioned in vv. 2-5 are toponyms in the northern Canaanite highlands attested in extra-biblical sources (Shechem in the Amarna Letters; Helek, Abiezer, Shemida, Hoglah, Noah and possibly Asriel in the Samaria Ostraca). This phenomenon not only very broadly corroborates the biblical description of the tribe's location, but as noted in Chapter 1 this association of place names with social units reinforces the relationship between tribe and territory. As I will discuss in the following chapter, however, not all of these areas were necessarily occupied during the Iron I period which leads to questions over the applicability of the territorial descriptions for the "tribal" period.

3.4 West Manasseh and the Geography of the Canaanite Highlands

As several scholars have noted, (many of) the tribal territories outlined in Josh 13-19 roughly approximate topographically discrete areas. Although west Manasseh's boundaries are ultimately rather vague, many hold that its territory broadly coincides with the northernmost region of the Canaanite central highlands. In making this argument, however, scholars dismiss the biblical claim that Manasseh's western border extended to the Mediterranean Sea (Josh 17:9-10), ostensibly because the coastal plain, which itself forms a discrete topographical region in Canaan, is widely accepted as not having belonged to the Iron I tribes.

Despite some disagreement over the divisions and definitions of the various geographical regions of Canaan, the central highlands are often defined as the mountainous district between the Jezreel Valley in the north and the Beersheeba valley in

the south.[195] Many maintain that this region may be divided into four distinct topographic subunits, the northernmost subunit of which – the area between the Jezreel Valley and Shechem, often called northern Samaria, – is roughly congruent with Manasseh's territory.[196] While not all scholars concur with this fourfold territorial division or feel that it is biblically inspired,[197] there is nonetheless wide agreement that the highlands region north of Shechem – which roughly matches the biblical outlines of Manasseh – is topographically distinct from the highland regions south of it. This area between Shechem and the Jezreel Valley contains several wide valleys, broad areas of soft limestone and numerous water sources, and offers a moderate, fertile landscape suitable for settlement and agriculture. In contrast, the more southerly highland regions consist of hard Cenomian limestone, rise to higher altitudes and offer a much harsher,

[195] This definition follows that proposed by Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 159; see also, Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 13-21; Israel Finkelstein and Zvi Lederman, eds., *Highlands of Many Cultures: The Southern Samaria Survey: The Sites*, Tel Aviv University, Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology, Monograph Series 14, (Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, 1997), 3; McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 37.

[196] Bloch-Smith and Nakhai write "the central hill country consisted of discrete topographic units roughly corresponding to the tribal territories." See Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 74. See also Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 17-19; 34-117; Finkelstein and Lederman, *Highlands of Many Cultures*, 3. The hill country subunits to the south of Manasseh appear to loosely approximate other tribal regions described in Joshua 13-19: the area between Shechem and Ramallah (often called southern Samaria), roughly overlaps with the tribe of Ephraim's territory (Josh 16); the plateau between Ramallah and Jerusalem with the tribe of Benjamin's territory (Josh 18); and the hills south of Jerusalem with the tribe of Judah's territory (Josh 15).

[197] Ann Killebrew maintains that the region is divided in this manner based on the biblical traditions. See Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 159. Finkelstein has elsewhere maintained that the central hill country can be divided into two geographic subunits: Samaria – the area between Shiloh in the south and the Jezreel Valley in the north; and the Judean Hills – the area between the village of Tayibeh in the north and the Beersheba Valley in the south, though he does note that the area north of Shechem is geologically distinct from the others. See Israel Finkelstein, "The Great Transformation: The 'Conquest' of the Highlands Frontiers and the Rise of the Territorial States," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas E. Levy; London: Leicester University Press, 1993): 353.

hillier landscape. In a study examining the settlement and demographic trends of the greater Canaanite highlands area, Finkelstein and Ram Gophna note a profound difference between the settlement patterns of northern Samaria and the areas south of Shechem as far back as the Chalcolithic-Early Bronze periods, which reinforces the view of this region as a discrete territorial unit.[198]

3.5 West Manasseh and 1 Kings 4:7-19

Many scholars maintain that a correlation exists between the tribal territories in Josh 13-19 and the twelve Solomonic districts in 1 Kgs 4:7-19[199] and have sought to link the description of west Manasseh's territory in the former with the latter.[200] The results

[198] Israel Finkelstein and Ram Gophna, "Settlement, Demographic and Economic Patterns in the Highlands of Palestine in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Periods and the Beginning of Urbanism," *BASOR* 289 (1993): 8.

[199] Among those scholars who argue for a correlation between the territorial systems in Josh 13-19 and 1 Kings 4:7-19, see for example, William F. Albright, "The Administrative Divisions of Israel and Judah," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 5 (1925): 17-54; Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, 310-316; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961): 33-35; Kallai, *Historical Geography of the Bible*; Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*; and more recently, Lawrence Stager, "The Patrimonial Kingdom of Solomon," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina,* Proceedings of the Centennial Symposium, W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research, May 29-31, 2000 (ed., William F. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003): 63-74. Other scholars, however, question the relationship between these two systems. See Paul Ash, "Solomon's? District? List?" *JSOT* 67 (1995); Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 211-213; Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, 509-514.

[200] Most commentators hold that the descriptions of the Transjordanian districts, Districts Six, Seven and Twelve, are corrupt. Among other issues, it is noted that District Twelve, defined as, "Geber, the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the land of Sihon king of the Amorites and Og of Bashan" (v. 19) appears to duplicate the territories of Districts Six ("Son of Geber in Ramoth-Gilead; in his charge were the Havvoth-Jair son of Manasseh in the Gilead; in his charge was the region of Argob in the Bashan, sixty large cities with walls and bronze bars." v. 13) and Seven ("Mahanaim" v. 14). For more information on these districts, see Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*; Nadav Na'aman, "Solomon's District List (1 Kings 4:17-19)

of this effort, however, have been mixed at best. Although certain Solomonic districts are identified by tribal designation, none is identified as "Manasseh" nor is there one that necessarily clearly mirrors the territory outlined in Josh 17. They therefore offer differing theories on the relationship between these districts and the western tribal territory.

Adam Zertal argues that west Manasseh's territory was largely congruent with Solomon's Third District, which included the cities of Arubboth, Socoh and "all the land of Hepher" (1 Kgs 4:10).[201] His theory differs from that of previous generations of scholars, many of whom tended to situate the Third District along the coastal plain.[202] Zertal follows the widely held identification of Socoh with modern Khirbêt Shuweiket er-Ras, a city on the eastern plain of the Sharon region. In contrast to earlier commentators, he suggests that Arubboth was ancient Nartaba/modern Khirbêt el-Hamam and identifies Hepher as Tell Muhaffar in the Dothan Valley, both areas that Josh 17 identifies as part of the Manassite territory. As I will discuss in the following chapter, however, the process of identifying biblical sites with modern toponyms – what is often referred to as historical geography – is a speculative enterprise and we must be aware that the identification of these latter two cities is not ironclad.

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and the Assyrian Province System in Palestine," *UF* 33 (2001): 419-436; Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, 512-514.

[201] Adam Zertal, "Arubboth" in *ABD*, Vol. 1, 465-467; *idem* "Arubboth, Hepher and The Third Solomonic District," Cited 28 February 2014. Online http://www.adamzertal.co.il.

[202] For a concise summary of the earlier theories on the location of this district, including various theories on the location of Hepher, see Zertal, "Arubboth, Hepher and The Third Solomonic District."

Nadav Na'aman maintains that Manasseh's western territory was divided between two Solomonic districts, the First and the Third, although his views on the Third District differ somewhat from Zertal's.[203] Na'aman identifies the First District, defined as "Mount Ephraim" (I Kgs 4:8), as a broad geographic area occupied by both the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim based largely on Josh 17:14-17. To his mind, the northern boundary of this district extended to wadi Tirzah and Samaria.[204] He concludes that the Third District overlapped with much of Manasseh's territory, extending from wadi Tirzah and Samaria in the south to the Jezreel Valley in the north and from Socoh in the west to the land of Hepher in the east.[205] Zecharia Kallai, who reads Josh 17 as indicating that Manasseh's territory included the cities of Beth-Shean, Ibleam, Dor, Taanach, and Megiddo, maintains that the Third District plus the Fourth and Fifth Districts, the latter of which include parts of the Jezreel Valley, correspond with Manasseh's western allotment.[206]

While many scholars now argue that the Third District corresponds to at least some portion of the western Manassite region, the extent of this district is simply unclear

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[203] Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography,* 158-166; and *idem*, "Solomon's District List (1 Kings 4:17-19) and the Assyrian Province System in Palestine," 419-436.

[204] Aharoni also holds that the First District included the tribal regions of Ephraim and Manasseh although he views the northern border of this district as the Jezreel Valley. See Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible,* 26-27. Kallai, however, argued that this region corresponded only to the tribe of Ephraim's territory. See Kallai, *Historical Geography of the Bible,* 47-49, 459-461.

[205] Na'aman follows Lemaire's theory on the location of the "land of Hepher," which situates this region in the eastern hill country north of wadi Tirzah. Lemaire suggests that the "land of Hepher" corresponded to the districts of Hepher's five 'granddaughters' described in Josh. 17:3 and was situated somewhere in the eastern central hills region. See Lemaire, "Hepher," 13-20 and "Bene Jacob," 321-33.

[206] Kallai, *Historiographical Geography,* 169. As noted above, however, Kallai considers the cities listed in Joshua 17:11-13 as the tribe of Manasseh's northern border, a view that is not shared by most commentators.

due to the laconic nature of the text. While there is likely some type of overlap between the "land of Hepher" in 1 Kgs 4 and the Manassite clans associated with Hepher in Josh 17, the information about the rest of this district as well as those districts surrounding it is ultimately too vague to allow for any definitive picture of its boundaries. Furthermore, since scholars often rely on the geographical information about Manasseh in Josh 17 to shed light on the boundaries of the First and Third Solomonic Districts, it seems methodologically problematic to then use the latter to then help inform the former. Yet while this district list cannot necessarily tell us much, if anything, about the western Manassite territory per se, it possibly suggests that the boundaries of the region articulated in Josh 17 do not necessarily represent a consistently defined territorial entity/unit. That is, depending on how one defines the various Solomonic districts, the conceptualization of the Manassite boundaries in Joshua appears to represent one option for dividing the territory of the Canaanite central highlands though other territorial permutations were also possible.

The dating and historical setting of 1 Kgs 4 are debated. Until fairly recently, most scholars argued that part, if not all, of this material derived from the 10th- century BCE court of king Solomon. This argument, however, was based on two assumptions – the historical accuracy of the biblical text as a 10th-century BCE Solomonic document and the notion of a dichotomy between Israelites and Canaanites – both of which have recently been called into question.[207] In a 2001 article that revises some of his earlier

[207] Paul Ash suggests that the material was transmitted orally to Judah after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, where it was then "abbreviated and garbled" by Jerusalemite scribes. He concludes that this list cannot be accepted as an early archival source and that its historicity is highly questionable. See Ash, "Solomon's? District? List?" 84. See also, Na'aman, "Solomon's District List."

theories, Na'aman suggests that the district list dates to some time after the 722 BCE Assyrian conquest of the region, arguing that it reflects the combined outline of the 8th-century BCE Assyrian provinces in Palestine and the vassal state of Judah. [208]

3.6 Locating East Manasseh

It is very difficult to identify, let alone outline, the territory of east Manasseh since the Hebrew Bible provides little information on its boundaries or extent. Together with its tribal allotment described in Josh 13:29-31, Num 32:33, 39-42 and Deut 3:12-17 offer generalized notes about the group's territory although the information in these texts is vague and confused and occasionally contradicts information about Reuben and Gad's territories. These texts display significant literary interdependence although their chronological relationship is unclear. While each situates east Manasseh in the region of Gilead, Gilead is a broad geographic designation used inconsistently in the biblical narratives. Most of the texts, though not necessarily all, also ascribe the region of Bashan to the tribe. The biblical information on Bashan's extent, however, is hazy, as is the nature of the relationship between the tribe and this territory. As a result of these factors, it is not possible define the location of east Manasseh with any accuracy nor is it certain that the biblical writers had a clear understanding of it.

[208] Na'aman, "Solomon's District List." He notes that the First and Third Districts overlap with the Assyrian province of Samerina; the Fifth District, plus districts Eight through Ten, correspond with the Assyrian province of Magidu; the fourth district is identical to the province of Du'ru; districts Six and Seven, which are located in Transjordan, possibly cover the area of the province of Qarnini; and finally, districts Eleven and Twelve, which cover the area of the kingdom of Judah, correspond to the region which was a vassal of Assyria.

3.6.1 Joshua 13:29-31

Joshua 13 outlines the east Jordan lands that Moses granted the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and (east)/half-Manasseh. Half-Manasseh's territory is sketched in vv. 29-31, in what is the shortest and least detailed description of all the tribal allotments.

> 29. Moses gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh [and it was for the half tribe of the children of Manasseh][a] for their clans. 30. Their territory was from Mahanaim, all the Bashan, the entire kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the Havvot-Yair (*ḥāwwôt yā'îr*) that are in Bashan, sixty cities. 31. Half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, the cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan belonged to the children of Machir son of Manasseh, to half of the children of Machir for their clans.
>
> Note a: this bracketed clause is missing in the LXX

Within this description no borders are delineated but rather half-Manasseh is assigned the geographical regions of Bashan and "half of Gilead" as well the cities Ashtaroth, Edrei, and the Havvoth-Jair. The fact that Half-Manasseh's territory included "half of Gilead," however, appears to contradict Josh 13:25, which states that "all the cities of Gilead" were allotted to the tribe of Gad. The cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei are widely believed to be located in the southern Hauran region (modern day southern Syria) although the location of the Havvot-Yair and the specific referent of the term *ḥāwwôt* itself are unclear. While these villages/towns (?) are here situated in Bashan (cf, Deut 3:14), other biblical texts associate them with Gilead (e.g., Num 32:41, Jud 10:4; I Kgs 4:13).[209] Although the text does not specify half-Manasseh's western extent, the description of Gad's territory in 13:24-28 indicates that the Jordan Valley belonged to the Gadites which in turn suggests that half-Manasseh's territory lay somewhere east of this region.

[209] Another oddity is the mention of "half of the children of Machir" (v. 31) since it seems to imply that a second half of Machir's children exists who were allotted territory elsewhere. Yet in no other text is Machir mentioned as being divided; we simply find references to "Machir" as an entity.

Scholars have been hard-pressed to offer any clarification of half-Manasseh's allotment. Zechariah Kallai notes

> Anyone attempting to draw the borders of the Half-Tribe-of-Manasseh must be content with general lines only. The south-western border shared with Gad is the closest of them all, although it too is based on general assumptions…The borders…in the south and in the east are pure conjecture.[210]

In a somewhat similar vein, Lissovsky and Na'aman argue "the vagueness concerning the scope of the allotment of Manasseh east of the Jordan is due to its location, in a remote, Aramaic region which had never been part of the kingdom of Israel. More than anything, it reveals the paucity of its author's knowledge of northern Transjordan."[211]

As discussed above, many scholars today date Josh 13-19 to the later part of the Iron II period with several arguing for a later date. There is some degree of consensus that the delineation of east Manasseh and the other eastern tribes in Josh 13 was independent from that of the western tribes although it is unclear when or from where this material originates. Several scholars suggest that the east Manasseh allotment material in vv. 29-31was a later editorial insertion into a text that originally described the east Jordan territories of Reuben and Gad only.[212] In the end, then, it is incredibly difficult to ascertain the provenance of this Manassite material.

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[210] Kallai, *Historical Geography of the Bible*, 275.

[211] Lissovsky and Na'aman, "A New Outlook at the Boundary System of the Twelve Tribes," 315.

[212] See e.g. Wüst, Manfried, *Untersuchungen zu den siedlungsgeographischen Texten des Alten Testaments* (Weisbaden: Reichert, 1975), 76-85.

3.6.2 Numbers 32:39-42

From a narratival perspective, east/half-Manasseh's territory is first briefly outlined in Numbers 32 which describes Moses' granting of the eastern regions of Gilead and Jazer to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh. Vv. 39-40 variously relate how Machir, son of Manasseh settled in Gilead.[213] Vv. 41-42 note that Yair, son of Manasseh captured a number of villages and renamed them *ḥāwwôt yā'îr*, and that Nobah captured Qenat and its villages and renamed them after himself. Unlike other texts that explicitly include Bashan as part of east Manasseh's territory (e.g., Deut. 3:12-17; Josh 13:29-31), there is no overt connection between the two in this unit.[214]

The geographical information in these verses is incredibly vague. While Manasseh is clearly associated with Gilead, the text does not indicate where, precisely, its territory is located. Earlier in the narrative Reuben and Gad are described as settling in Gilead (32:1-32, cf vv. 34-38), and in these verses the region appears to designate an area south of the Jabbok River; Manasseh, however, is generally not linked with this southern locale. The Havvot-Yair in v. 41 are associated with Gilead (cf, Jdg 10:4; 1 Kgs 4:13) although other texts place them in Bashan (Deut 3:14; Josh 13:30) such that their locale is ambiguous. The location of Qenat/Nobah (v. 42) is unknown.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the literary background of Numbers 32 is unclear. Scholars widely agree that the mention of Manasseh and its territory were later

[213] As noted in the previous chapter, there are also discrepancies in these verses as to the way in which Machir came to be in Gilead: according to v. 39 he captured it and dispossessed its Amorite inhabitants, while in v. 40, Moses granted it to him.

[214] While v. 33 mentions that Moses gave Reuben, Gad and half-Manasseh the territories of Sihon, King of the Amorites and Og, King of Bashan, scholars widely agree that vv. 33 and 39-42 stem from different hands such that the mention of Bashan in the former is not necessarily implicit in the latter.

additions to a narrative that originally focused solely on the tribes of Reuben and Gad although the origin of this Manassite/Machirite material and the period during which it was inserted into the wider Reubenite-Gadite narrative is unknown. While some commentators suggest the narrative pre-dates the Deuteronomist, others view it as dependent on this work.[215]

3.6.3 Deuteronomy 3:12-17

In Deut 3:12-17, which is cast as Moses' retrospective survey of the Israelite holdings in east Jordan, east Manasseh's territory is associated with the regions of both Gilead and Bashan. There are, however, a number of interpretative difficulties with these verses.

> 12. I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites the land that we took over at that time, from Aroer, which is on the Wadi Arnon, and half of the hill country of Gilead *(ḥaṣî har-haggil'ād)* and its cities. 13 I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh the rest of Gilead (*yeter haggil'ād)* and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, the whole region of Argob. That whole Bashan used to be called Rephaim country. 14 Jair son of Manasseh took the whole region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites and he named them – that is, Bashan-- Havvoth-jair after himself, as is the case to this day. 15 To Machir I gave Gilead. 16 And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave from Gilead and as far as[a] the Wadi Arnon, the middle of the wadi and adjacent territory, and as far as the Wadi Jabbok, the border of the Ammonites, 17 and the Arabah and the Jordan and its adjacent territory, from Chinnereth as far as the sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah to the east.

According to vv. 12-13, Reuben and Gad received "half of the hill country of Gilead" and Manasseh received the "rest of Gilead" as well as the Bashan. Yet in vv. 15-16, we read that Moses gave Gilead to Machir and gave Reuben and Gad territory "from Gilead as far as the Wadi Arnon." These latter verses seem to suggest that all of Gilead belonged to

[215] Noth, Levine and Weinfeld believe this material predates Deuteronomist, Van Seters argues it is dependent on Deut. 3. See n. 117.

Machir while Rebuen and Gad's territory lay beyond this region so that the meaning of "Gilead" differs from its usage in vv. 12-13. Vv. 15-16 further imply that Machir and Manasseh are synonymous entities although this is never made explicit in the text. In vv. 13-14, it is unclear whether Argob and Bashan are identical regions or whether Argob is an area within the wider Bashan region. Another confusion arises in v. 14 where Jair, son of Manasseh is said to have taken Argob/Bashan "and named them" Havvot-yair since, as noted above, these villages are elsewhere affiliated with Gilead.[216] In spite of these difficulties this unit clearly views east Manasseh's territory as excluding the Jordan Valley, as in Josh 13; in contrast to Josh 13, however, here the Jordan Valley is associated with both the tribes of Gad and Reuben (vv. 16-17) rather than solely with Gad.

Many scholars attribute this passage to the Deuteronomistic Historian. A number suggest it is a composite of two different sources: vv. 15-16 and vv. 13-14, the latter of which was intended to front and therefore "correct" the former.[217] Although opinions on the dating of the Deuteronomistic History vary, at the earliest we can postulate an early-7th century BCE date for some portion of this work although most scholars would argue that it belongs to the exilic period if not later.

There is significant literary overlap between these three texts describing east Manasseh's territory although their chronological relationship is unclear and largely depends on one's preference for the dating of the various biblical materials. Commenting

[216] Note too that the phrase "and he named them" is out of place in this verse since there is no corresponding plural antecedent; it likely derives from Num 32:41: "And Yair son of Manasseh went and took their villages and named them Havvot-yair."

[217] See e.g., Van Seters, *Life of Moses*, 445-450.

on the differing territorial descriptions in Numbers and Deuteronomy, Weinfeld, who argues for the priority of the Numbers materials, claims that "the Deuteronomic tradition assigns to [eastern] Manasseh a much larger area than the previous sources."[218] For example, he notes that Deut. 3:14 assigns to Manasseh the Argob district, which includes sixty cities, although this region is nowhere mentioned in Num 32. He also points out that while Num 32 locates the Havvoth-Yair in Gilead, in Deut 3:14 (cf Josh 13:30) these "villages" are located in the more northerly region of Bashan, which to his mind indicates an expanded understanding of the Manassite territory. While I do not necessarily agree with Weinfeld's dating scheme, his observations reinforce the idea that the east Manassite territory was either a loose, malleable concept that could be manipulated in various traditions and/or was not clearly understood by the biblical writers.

3.7 Defining Gilead

While each of the biblical texts discussed above situates east Manasseh in Gilead, it is very difficult to define this territory both because the term "Gilead" is used unevenly in the wider biblical corpus and because its boundaries are vaguely described.[219] Deut. 3:12-13 and Josh 12:2-5 suggest that the Jabbok River divides Gilead in half. Some texts appear to refer to Gilead as the region north of the Jabbok River (e.g., Deut 3:13, Josh 12:5), others appear to refer to it as the region south of the Jabbok River (e.g., Num

[218] Weinfeld argues that the areas of both Gilead and Bashan have been greatly expanded in the Deuteronomic tradition. See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11,* 181-5.

[219] The term "Gilead" is variously used in the Hebrew Bible to indicate a geographical region (e.g., Gen 31:25; Jud 10:4, 8, 17,18; Josh 17:5, 6; Deut 34:1; Josh 22:9, 13, 15, 32; Hos 6:8; Amos 1:3; Ps 60:9, 108:9), a tribe and/or territory (Judg 5:17; Judg 11:1-12:6) and the eponymous head of a tribe and/or region (Jud 11:1) who was the son of Machir (e.g., Num 26:29; Josh 17:1, 3; 1 Chron 2:21, 23). It is, however, always connected with the Transjordan.

21; Deut 3:12 and Josh 12:2) and still others suggest it covers territory both north and south of the river, from roughly the Yarmuk River in the north to the Arnon River in the south (e.g., Gen 37:35; Deut 3:10, 34:1, Josh 22:9?).[220] The etymology of the term is uncertain. Magnus Ottosson, who has written one of the most comprehensive studies on Gilead, tentatively suggests its root is *g'd* meaning "curly (of hair), difficult (of terrain)" which refers to the forested landscape of the region.[221] Surveying its myriad uses in the biblical texts, Ottosson concludes that the term is best understood as "an adopted name for the East Jordan countryside, and particularly for the afforested hill country running from north to south…"[222] but that its precise meaning can only be determined in context.

When east Manasseh's territory is identified as a portion of Gilead – described as "the rest of Gilead" in Deut 3:13 and as "half Gilead" in Josh 13:31 – it seems that the area north of the Jabbok is intended since the other half of Gilead, which is associated with the tribes of Reuben and Gad, appears to refer to the area south of the Jabbok and since this Manassite territory is often mentioned together with the Bashan, which is broadly located in northern Transjordan.[223] In those instances when east/half-Manasseh is simply identified with "Gilead" (e.g., Num 32:39-40; Deut 3:15; Josh 17:6), it is generally assumed that the northern portion of the region is intended in light of the

[220] See Ottosson, *Gilead,* 9; idem, "Gilead," *ABD* 2:1020-21; MacDonald, *East of the Jordan,* 195-99.

[221] Ottosson, "Gilead," 2:1020; idem, *Gilead: Tradition and History*, 3-15.

[222] See Ottosson, *Gilead,* 29.

[223] In Deut. 3:12, the 'half of Gilead' associated with the tribes of Reuben and Gad is affiliated with the area of Aroer in southern Transjordan; in Josh 12:2-5, this region is more explicitly defined as extending from Aroer to the Jabbok River. Elsewhere (e.g., Num 32:3, 34-8; Josh 13:15-28), these tribes are given cities that lie south of the Jabbok. It should, however, be noted that in the Joshua materials there are inconsistencies in the descriptions of Reuben's and Gad's boundaries and specific holdings.

aforementioned inter-textual identifications and/or issues. The texts, however, are equivocal.

Scholars disagree over whether Gilead originally referred to the area north or south of the Jabbok.[224] Lemaire makes a convincing case that it originally designated the area north of the Jabbok, noting among other things that geographical names containing the element "Gilead" (Jabesh-Gilead and Ramoth-Gilead) are all located north of the Jabbok.[225] While Ottosson ultimately concludes that it is not possible to determine the original referent of the term, he notes that Gilead is mentioned in two Amarna era Ugaritic texts and suggests "if *gl'd* has a geographical sense in Ugaritic, it might belong to a place or a region in northern Gilead, since the almost contemporary Amarna letters do not refer to any political activity south of Pella…"[226] If Gilead in fact had a geographical connotation during the Amarna period, then we must understand it as a geographical designation that predates the Israelites which they have then overlaid with their own traditions and territorial names.

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[224] Several scholars maintain that "Gilead" initially designated the area south of the Jabbok. See, MacDonald, *East of the Jordan,* 198-9 and the sources therein; Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes,* 212; Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine,* 402.

[225] Lemaire also maintains that the Jabbok, like the Yarmuk and Arnon Rivers in Transjordan, is a geographical marker used to delineate a territory. Since the Jabbok served as the border between Ammon and Gilead during the Ptolemaic era and since territorial limits tend to be relatively stable, it is very likely that the Jabbok served as the southern border of Gilead in earlier times. Lemaire, "Galaad et Makîr," 43-46. Cf, E. Lipinski, *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture and Religion,* 353-354; Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written & Archaeological Sources* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1992): 294.

[226] Ottosson, *Gilead,* 19. In Text 170, it is used as a place name and in Text 301 it is used as a personal name. See Cyrus Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook,* 1965.

3.7.1 Defining/Locating Northern Gilead

While the biblical materials suggest that northern Gilead was bound by the Jabbok River in the south, they do not mention its northern and eastern borders. They also offer two differing views of its western border that stem from two differing understandings of Gilead's relationship to the east Jordan Valley. As Ottosson notes, the Priestly writers envisioned Gilead's borders as extending west to the Jordan River such that it included the east Jordan Valley. The Deuteronomists in contrast conceptualized the division of east Jordan along topographical lines and therefore viewed the Jordan Valley (occasionally referred to as the *Arabah* or the Plain) as distinct from Gilead.[227] The latter writers, however, often link the Jordan Valley with the southern Jabbok region/southern Gilead (e.g., Deut 3:16-17, Josh 12:1-6, Josh 13) so that within the Deuteronomistic materials, northern Gilead is indirectly understood as laying somewhere east of the Valley.

3.7.2 Northern Gilead and the Topography of East Jordan

Although the biblical texts hint at northern Gilead's southern boundary only – the Jabbok River – scholars offer two differing views of the region's extent, both of which are based on topographical considerations. A number of scholars define it as the

[227] Ottosson, *Gilead*, 116-119. David Jobling, following Ottosson, makes a similar argument. He notes that Num 20:14-21:35, which focuses on the conquest of east Jordan, seems to presuppose a schematic geographical picture of the region in which it is simply divided into northern and southern halves along the Jabbok River, halves that are then associated with east Manasseh (north) and Reuben and Gad (south), respectively. This geographical pattern is disrupted in several Deuteronomistic texts, however, in which the entire east Jordan Valley – both the areas north and south of the Jabbok – is linked with the southern Jabbok region (e.g., Deut 3:16-17; Josh 13:24-28). See Jobling, *The Jordan A Boundary*, 110-112.

(mountainous) area extending from the Jabbok River in the south to the Yarmuk River in the north.[228] As Burton Macdonald notes,

> The Yarmuk and az-Zarqa/Jabbok Rivers along with Wadis al-Mujib/Arnon and al-Hasa/Zered, all flowing toward the west in these highlands, have generally been designated as natural divisions of the country…They are seen, at least occasionally, as political, ethnic, and/or administrative boundaries. While these rivers/wadis served as major geographical divisions, they were also the main water-carrying sources for the region.[229]

While there appears to be some scholarly disagreement regarding the divisions and definitions of the various regions of Jordan,[230] this area between the Jabbok and Yarmuk Rivers is broadly synonymous with the northern subunit of the Transjordanian highlands – itself one of the major geographical regions of Transjordan. This northern highland unit consists of two distinct topographical zones: in the north lies the well-watered plateau of Irbid, a moderate region suitable for agriculture and settlement; south of Irbid

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[228] Macdonald, *East of Jordan,* 198; Lemaire, "Galaad et Makîr" Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People,* 294.

[229] Macdonald, *East of the Jordan,* 26.

[230] Macdonald, following F. Bender, identifies five major morphological units in Jordan: 1. Northeastern Desert; 2. Azraq-Wadi Sirhan Depression; 3. Central Desert Areas of East Jordan; 4. Highlands at the Eastern Rim of the Wadi 'Arabah-Jordan Graben; 5. Wadi 'Arabah-Dead Sea-Jordan Depression. He notes that the Highlands can be divided into units by four major rivers/wadis. See Macdonald, *East of the Jordan,* 23-29. John Strange has noted that Jordan can be divided into five topographic subunits, one of which – northern Jordan – extends from the Yarmuk River to the Wadi Jabbok (Zerqa). He defines the other subunits as: central Jordan, the area south of Wadi Zerqa to Wadi Hasa; southern Jordan, the area south of Wadi Hasa; the Jordan Valley: from Tall Shuna (N) to the Dead Sea; and the desert to the east. See John Strange, "The Late Bronze Age," in *Jordan: An Archaeological Reader* (ed. Russell B. Adams; London: Equinox, 2008): 281. However, elsewhere Strange defines northern Jordan as, "bounded to the east by the desert, to the west by the Sea of Galilee and the river Jordan, to the south by the Ajlun mountain, and to the north by the river Yarmuk." See John Strange, "The Late Bronze Age in Northern Jordan in the Light of the Finds at Tell el-Fukhar" in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond: Essays in Honor of James A. Sauer* (ed. Lawrence E. Stager, Joseph A. Greene and Michael D. Coogan; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000): 477. In Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 105, the area between the Yarmuk and Jabbok Rivers is identified as central Transjordan.

and east of the Jordan Valley is the rugged and hilly Ajlun region. Other scholars define northern Gilead as extending from the Jabbok River in the south to the northern foothills of the ‘Ajlun mountains in the north such that it topographically corresponds with the Ajlun region.[231] According to this view, northern Gilead is a smaller though nonetheless discrete territory within the wider area outlined above.

3.8 Defining Bashan

The region of Bashan, which is frequently alhough not consistently included as part of Half-Manasseh’s territory, is also difficult to outline due to the vague biblical information. The texts generally describe it north of Gilead and south of Mt. Hermon (e.g., Num 21:31-35; Deut 3:1-14; Josh 12:4-5). Its western boundary sometimes appears as the Jordan River/Sea of Galilee (Josh 13:8-12) and other times as border of the territories of Geshur and Maacah (e.g. Deut 3:14; Josh 12:4) although these latter areas are themselves vaguely defined. It is said to have included the cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei (Deut 1:4; Josh 12:4; 13:12, 31), Salecah (Deut 3:10; Josh 12:5), and Golan and Beeshterah (Josh 20:8). Based on these descriptions, scholars understand Bashan as broadly situated in the fertile plateau of northern Transjordan located east of the Jordan Valley and Sea of Galilee although they offer only general views on its extent. It is unlear whether it included land south of the Yarmuk River and many loosely define the region as bounded in the south by the northern foothills of the ‘Ajlun mountains, in the

[231] See e.g., Macdonald, *East of the Jordan*, 113, n. 6; Randal W. Younker, “Bashan,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (ed., David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, Astrid B. Beck; Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000): 154-155.

west by the Jordan Valley just south of the Sea of Galilee, on the east by the desert and in the north by Mt. Hermon.[232]

3.8.1 Bashan and the Topography of East Jordan

In light of the biblical details, the Bashan appears to loosely (?) correspond to the modern-day Golan region in the west and the Hauran in the east. The Golan extends from the Yarmuk River in the south to Mt. Hermon in the north and from the Jordan Valley in the west to wadi er-Ruggad in the east.[233] The Hauran extends from south of the plain of Damascus in the north to the Syrian-Jordanian border in the south and from the Golan/wadi er-Ruggad in the west to the Syrian desert in the east.

3.8.2 Tensions with Manasseh's Connection to Bashan

East Manasseh's association with Bashan, however, is problematic for several reasons. To begin with, several biblical texts indicate that the western portion of Bashan belonged to the (Aramean ?) kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah during the premonarchic and early monarchic periods (e.g., Deut 3:14; Josh 13:13 though see Josh 12:5; 2 Sam 3:3, 10:6) so that its ascription to Manasseh is somewhat tenuous from a narrative

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[232] See Macdonald, *East of the Jordan*, 131; Younker, "Bashan," 154-55; Joel C. Slayton, "Bashan," *ABD* 1:623-4. Aharoni defines Bashan as the northern district of Transjordan situated mainly north of the Yarmuk although he acknowledges that it is not clear if the Yarmuk was its actual border. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, 37. Weinfeld identifies it as the region north and northeast of the Yarmuk. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 180.

[233] The Golan itself may be divided into three longitudinal sub-regions: the fertile plain of southern Golan (from the Yarmuk River in the South to Nahal Samakh and Mt. Peres in the north); the rocky central region (from Nahal Samakh to Nahal Shu'ah-Kafr Nafakh south of Quneitra); the forested northern Golan (from Nahal Shu'ah-Quneitra to Nahal Sa'ar). See Zvi Ma'oz, "Golan," *NEAEHL* 2:525.

perspective.[234] Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, scholars widely agree that at no point in the Israelites' history did their territory extend to the northern and eastern limits of Bashan outlined above. It is therefore unclear why this region is considered Israelite, let alone Manassite, in the first place. Weinfeld, following Benjamin Mazar, notes that these particular northern and eastern areas were considered part of the ancient Egyptian province of Canaan (Upe), a region whose territory otherwise lay west of the Jordan River. Pointing to the similarity between the outlines of this Egyptian province and those of Israel described in Num 34 (cf. Ez. 47:16-20 which is based on the Num borders), they suggest that the Priestly writers co-opted the ancient Egyptian "map" of Canaan as their own such that Bashan was envisioned as part of the promised land while the east Jordan regions south of it were not.[235] While the correspondence between the Egyptian and Priestly "maps" is interesting, this observation does not explain why or how the Priestly writers adopted such information, nor how or why the region of Bashan came to be associated with Manasseh in particular. It does, however, reinforce the view that the biblical writers' understanding and description of east Manasseh was not based on Iron I realities but is rather a highly schematic or idealized view of this period.

[234] Many scholars accept the biblical attribution of this region to Geshur and Maacah during (late) Iron I/early Iron II. See for example, Benjamin Mazar, "Geshur and Maacah," *JBL* 80 (1961): 16-28 though note that Mazar understands the Golan as distinct from Bashan. Juha Pakkala offers a somewhat more cautious evaluation of the material than Mazar. Juha Pakkala, "What Do We Know About Geshur?" *SJOT* 24/2 (2011): 157-77. See also Moshe Kochavi, Timothy Renner, Ira Spar and Esther Yadin, "Rediscovered! The Land of Geshur" *BAR* 18/4 (Jul/Aug 1992).

[235] See Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 174-78 and the sources cited therein.

3.9 Relationship Between the West and East Manassite Territories

It is difficult to evaluate the physical relationship between the eastern and western Manassite territories since the biblical materials (or at least the Deuteronomistic texts) often present them as distinct regions. On the one hand, the descriptions of the two territories in and of themselves leave their proximity ambiguous since neither west Manasseh's eastern border nor east Manasseh's western border is specified. At the same time, the descriptions of the wider tribal territories in Deut 3 and Josh 13-19 suggest the two Manassite regions were not geographically contiguous. Insofar as west Manasseh is described among the west Jordan tribal allotments, it is likely that its territory did not extend eastward beyond the Jordan River. Furthermore, the area on the adjacent (eastern) side of the River – the eastern Jordan River Valley (or Arabah) – is variously assigned to the tribe of Gad (Josh 13:25-27) or to the tribes of Reuben and Gad (Deut 3:16-17); it is never explicitly associated with east Manasseh. While the biblical materials allow for only an approximate understanding of east Manasseh's location, the presentation of Gad and/or Gad and Reuben's territory suggest it was situated somewhere in the highlands east of the Jordan River Valley and therefore not contiguous with either west Manasseh or west Jordan. Although several scholars acknowledge that the Deuteronomistic ascription of the entire Jordan Valley to Gad and Reuben/Gad represents a schematic territorial division rather than a historically informed view of the tribal territories, we nonetheless find that at least to the minds of these writers the eastern Valley was explicitly non-Manassite.

Moreover, if east Manasseh was understood as associated with the Jordan Valley in some way, we might expect that some of the major towns the Bible situates in this

region such as Sukkot or Penuel would either be included in its allotment or otherwise tied to the tribe, as with west Manasseh and Megiddo, Tanaach, etc. (Josh 17:11-13). Yet this is not the case; Penuel is not assigned to any of the tribes while Sukkot is included in Gad's allotment (Josh 13:27). Interestingly, both Sukkot and Penuel are obliquely linked with Manasseh in the Gideon materials of Judg 6-8. Although there is no overt indication in this story that these areas were Manassite, after Gideon destroys the towns and kills their elders (8:4-29) it is possible that he or perhaps his tribe of Manasseh was viewed as exerting some degree of hegemony over these eastern areas. Reading Judg 8 in this way, it is conceivable that this episode lays the groundwork for viewing these eastern regions as Manassite. This explanation, however, fails to explain why Deuteronomy and Joshua ultimately associate these regions with Gad and Reuben rather than with Manasseh.

CHAPTER 4

THE MANASSITE TERRITORIES: THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE

As discussed in Chapter 3, the biblical outlines of the Manassite territories appear to broadly approximate discrete topographical regions: west Manasseh roughly coincides with the northernmost region of the Canaanite central highlands while east Manasseh seemingly overlaps to some degree with the northern east Jordan highlands. Insofar as landscape factors partially influence settlement patterns and subsistence strategies, it is possible that these two territories existed and/or were understood as discrete units or entities during ancient times. Through an examination of the archaeological evidence in these geographical regions from the Iron I through Persian periods – periods in which the biblical traditions about Manasseh likely arose – this chapter will provide a picture of the "on the ground" development of the territories the Bible describes as Manassite against which we can ultimately examine the biblical portrayals of the tribe itself.[236]

4.1 Methodological Considerations and Caveats

I must reiterate at the outset of this chapter that I am not arguing that the areas the Bible describes as Manassite *were* Manassite or even necessarily Israelite during the Iron I period. As noted in the introduction, there is a large body of scholarship focused on the difficulty of identifying the Iron I highland settlements as Israelite or even "proto-

[236] I have selected such a time frame because the biblical traditions relating to Manasseh appear to have developed over a long period of time. While it is possible that some pre-date the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE, others likely stem from the Babylonian/Persian periods.

Israelite" and I do not wish to make any claims about the ethnic identity of these regions' inhabitants.[237] Rather, my goal here is to examine the physical and material development of the regions the Bible ascribes to Manasseh to help illuminate the manner in which the biblical authors envision and (re)construct this tribe's history. The material remains, then, take priority vis-à-vis the text and will serve as the base from which we can evaluate the biblical claims although as I mentioned in the introduction, artifacts cannot be interpreted in total isolation from the text. At the same time, as I will discuss more below, there is some circularity to this analysis insofar as biblical texts have played a role in determining the geographical area for study which we are then examining for evidence of the biblical phenomenon (Manasseh). Given the nature of the evidence, however, this is how we will proceed.

I should also point out that this survey precedes against a backdrop of wide-ranging similarities between the Iron I highlands of west and east Jordan so that we should expect some degree of similarity between the eastern and western "Manassite" territories regardless of whether their inhabitants were members of the same tribe. Both hill country regions witnessed a similar Iron I settlement increase and both display evidence of a similar material culture.[238] In fact, Avraham Faust maintains that the

[237] William Dever identifies the Iron I highlanders as proto-Israelites. Dever, "Ceramics, Ethnicity, and the Question of Israel's Origins," 200-213; idem, "The Identity of Early Israel: A Rejoinder to Keith W. Whitelam," *JSOT* 72 (1996): 3-24. Others are much more cautious about such an identification and offer a more nuanced approach to the question of ethnic identity. See for instance Finkelstein, "Ethnicity and the Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands of Canaan," 198-212; Bloch-Smith, "Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I," 410-425.

[238] For instance, Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity;* Finkelstein and Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed;* Finkelstein, "Ethnicity and the Origin of the Iron I Settlers in the Highlands of Canaan," 198-212; Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox Publishers, 2005) though I should note that I disagree with many of

differentiation between west and east Jordan during this time is modern and artificial. Yet since the settlement patterns in the wider highlands are not uniform and the economic bases of the groups residing in them appear to vary, this overarching Iron I highland resemblance does not necessarily preclude some type of inter-highland regional differentiation.

It is not entirely clear, however, how we should delimit the territories for analysis and such decisions will affect the nature of our archaeological examination. As discussed in earlier chapters, while scholars allow/suggest that most of the tribal territories outlined in Josh 13-19 overlap in some way with actual tribal regions, they nonetheless maintain that this material provides a schematic view of the tribal areas. But how are we to separate the "historical" wheat from the schematic chaff? For instance, Josh 17 indicates that Manasseh included the western Sharon plain although scholars widely dismiss this characterization. In the case of east Manasseh although certain texts explicitly exclude the Jordan Valley from the tribe's territory (Deut 3:16-17 and Josh 13), others appear to implicitly include it (Num 32). Whereas the tribe is often associated with the Bashan, part of this region is occasionally cast as the territory of the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah (e.g. Josh 13:13). While we should not expect tribal territory to remain a static, fixed area, the varying portraits of the eastern group's extent in particular seem to represent differing schematizations rather than diachronic social change.

For the purposes of this analysis I will follow the archaeologist Adam Zertal's outlines of the west Manassite territory since he defines the region in light of both geomorophological considerations and the biblical materials though we will discuss

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Faust's conclusions, including his rationale for understanding certain east Jordanian areas as Israelite.

concerns with this approach below. This territory, which covers the northernmost portion of the west Jordan highlands, does not include the Sharon in the west and extends east to the Jordan River south of the Beth-Shean Valley. I define east Manasseh as a highland region that excludes the Jordan Valley since both Joshua and Deuteronomy make a point of assigning the Valley to other tribes. Insofar as there are textual inconsistencies and conceptual issues connected to the eastern group's affiliation with Bashan, I will briefly summarize the findings from this area though will problematize its inclusion as part of the tribal territory.

I must also address the issue of identifying "tribe" in the material record. As I touched on in the introduction, archeologists have found it difficult to identify definitive, universal material correlates for tribe since these groups are widely viewed as dynamic, variable entities. While a number of scholars have posited a series of traits as indicative of tribe, others suggest that such traits are too vague to be of use, can be linked to other phenomena, and/or that the very idea of a trait list suggests a homogeneity that does not reflect tribal reality.[239] Nonetheless, archaeologists today widely point to segmentation as the defining attribute of tribe and many suggest its material expression can be found architecture/architectural hierarchy.[240] Tribal contexts are generally thought to be

[239] On trait lists, see e.g. Creamer and Haas, "Tribe versus Chiefdom in Lower Central America," 738-754; Braun and Plog, "Evolution of 'Tribal' Social Networks," 605-625. For a critique of these approaches, see Fowles, "Placing 'Tribe' in a Historical Context," 14-19. Yoffee notes we should be careful not correlate one or more of the central features of an ethnographic type with some excavated material and then extrapolate the rest of the characteristics of the type based on them to bring the dimensions of an ancient society into view. See Norman Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, State and Civilizations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 23.

[240] Fowles, "Placing 'Tribe' in a Historical Context," 15-16 although he does acknowledge that "'tribal' segmentary principles may at times be difficult to distinguish archaeologically from the

moderate in size (or, as Fowles describes it, "big but not too big") although size and scale are of course relative and manifest one to two tier settlement pattern that is ranked.[241] They are typically viewed as decentralized and lacking significant evidence of elites, e.g., elaborate burials or special residences.

Finally I must briefly note the difficulties related to site identification. Biblical place names are often identified with modern toponyms through the analysis known as historical geography.[242] Such identification, however, is a difficult and often speculative enterprise and one over which scholars repeatedly disagree. The identification process generally makes use of the following methods: analysis of the biblical text for geographical clues regarding a site's location;[243] survey of its identification in post-biblical writings (e.g., Josephus, rabbinic literature and early Church writings); analysis of archaeological data from the prospective site, especially its occupation at various historical periods; the study of modern Arabic place names that may preserve biblical and ancient names. Since each step of this process involves some degree of ambiguity, these identifications are generally not certainty but at best an educated guess.[244] In east Jordan

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equally situational decision-making structures of more 'band-like' groups (e.g., Johnson 1978) or from the conical clan structures of some chiefdoms (Sahlins 1968: 24-25, 49-50.)"

[241] Fowles, 17-18.

[242] For a good summary of the history and methodology of biblical site identification see Macdonald, *East of the Jordan*, 9-20.

[243] This process is occasionally supplemented by studying the mention of sites in extra-biblical sources, e.g. Amarna letters, Egyptian reliefs, Assyrian annals.

[244] From a textual perspective we must question the extent to which the biblical and ancient materials accurately preserve historical information. From an archaeological perspective, we must recognize that our understanding of a site's development is tentative and subjective since the interpretation of archaeological data constantly changes or is debated in light of new finds, new technologies and new methodological approaches. A correspondence between ancient and modern toponyms can be misleading since ancient place names can be transferred to nearby

in particular, the equation of biblical locales with modern and/or archaeological sites is tenuous.

4.2 Archaeological Examination: West Manasseh

The biblical materials broadly situate west Manasseh in the northernmost subunit of the Canaanite central highlands or what many scholars label northern Samaria.[245] The most recent and comprehensive archaeological survey of the region[246] is Adam Zertal's 1978-2004 "Manasseh Hill Country Survey" which covers approximately 2,500 km^2 between the Jezreel Valley in the north, the Wadi Qanah - Wadi Anhar line in the south, the Sharon Plain in the west, and the Jordan River in the east.[247] Zertal selected these

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locations. Furthermore, in many cases there is simply not enough evidence, biblical or otherwise, to locate a site with any certainty.

[245] Both Adam Zertal and Israel Finkelstein use the term "northern Samaria." While I do not wish to engage in the serious political issues with the use of this term for the region in modern-day Israel, it does seem a more appropriate, if somewhat anachronistic terminology for the Iron Age region since Samaria was a key site for the Israelite kingdom and since the later Assyrian and Babylonian entities in the region were designated by reference to the capital in some way.

[246] There are certain caveats related the use of survey data we must briefly address. First, archaeologists widely agree that surface surveys, no matter how systematically carried out, are inherently incomplete since they simply cannot locate all the small sites (e.g., small settlements, farms, campsites) that ever existed in a region. The number of sites reported for a particular area therefore represents all the sites that have been found in that area rather than all the sites that ever existed in it. A second issue relates to a site's dating. The time periods to which archaeologists assign sites (e.g., Iron I, Iron II, etc.) are generally hundreds of years long and it is largely unclear whether a site was occupied for the duration of the time period or for only some portion of it. This leads to questions over the contemporaneity and continuity of sites among other things, which in turn can affect our understanding of the settlement patterns of the wider region. A final issue relates to the determination of a site's size. If a site has been inhabited over multiple archaeological time periods it is very difficult to pinpoint its size during a particular period. While there are various methods of estimating the occupation extent of a specific period, we must note that these figures are approximations that may not be accurate.

[247] Adam Zertal, "The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age," in *Judah and Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschitz and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 377-78. The specific borders of Zertal's survey are: in the northwest – Wadi 'Ara; in the west – the 'Iron Junction-Qalqiliyeh road; in the southwest – Wadi

particular territorial boundaries for his survey based on the geography and topography of the region as well as the biblical descriptions of the tribal boundaries. As he writes,

> The biblical boundaries themselves seem to have been based on geomorphological units. This division continued into the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods, and signs of it exist even today. Another important point has to do with size. Historical processes take place in units of minimal size, a factor which justifies our choice of the Biblical boundaries. Theoretically, any other historical or geomorphological units might have been chosen as long as they suited the aims of the project and coincided with at least one of the ancient divisions.[248]

Yet Zertal's acknowledgment that "theoretically anyother geomorphological units could have been selected" as the survey area highlights an important issue. If other geographical units could have been selected for analysis, then the biblical texts are in fact an important consideration in his process of survey demarcation.[249] While this is not to suggest that the results from his survey are flawed or inaccurate, it is nonetheless important to note that the geographical area we will examine for evidence of Mansseh has

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Qanah, Mt. Gerizim and parts of the Shechem valley; in the southeast – the Jebel el Kebir ridge; in the east – the Jordan River; in the north and northeast – the line from Wadi Shubash to Jenin and the Megiddo junction." See also Adam Zertal, "'To the Land of the Perrizites and the Giants': On the Israelite Settlement in the Hill County of Manasseh" in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman, eds.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994): 48-49.

[248] Adam Zertal, *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey: The Shechem Syncline* (vol. 1 of *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey;* Culture and History of the ancient Near East 21.1, Leiden: Brill, 2004), 13.

[249] Ann E. Killebrew makes a similar observation. See Ann E. Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 158-159. Cf. Amihai Mazar, "The Israelite Settlement" in *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel,* Invited Lectures Delivered at the Sixth Biennial Colloquium of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, Detroit, October 2005 (ed. Israel Finkelstein, Amihai Mazar, Brian B. Schmidt; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007): 86; Finkelstein and Lederman, eds., *The Highlands of Many Cultures: The Southern Samaria Survey,* vol. 1, 3.

to some degree been (pre-) determined by the biblical boundaries, which is a circular issue and thus somewhat methodologically problematic.

Archaeological excavations in northern Samaria have been carried out at a limited number of large tells (Samaria, Tell Balatah/Shechem, Tell el-Farah (N)/Tirzah, Dothan and Tell Ta'annek/Taanach)[250] as well as two small Iron I cult sites (el-Burnat/Mt. Ebal and Dhahrat et-Tawileh/the "Bull Site"). While many of the tells were excavated in the mid-20th century, in most cases the notes and finds from the original excavations have been recently reexamined in light of new developments in pottery dating, stratigraphic analysis and new archaeological methods.[251]

4.2.1 Geography of Northern Central Highlands/Northern Samaria

The region of northern Samaria is topographically distinct from the Jezreel Valley to the north and from the harsher, hillier highland regions to the south. At the same time it is an internally diverse area containing alluvial valleys, hilly/mountainous regions and dry desert fringes. At its center lies the Shechem Syncline – the dominant geological feature of the region as a whole – that contains six inner valleys: the Dothan, Sanur, es-

[250] Taanach, which is located at the border of the central highlands and the Jezreel Valley, is occasionally, though not always, treated as part of the central highland unit in scholarly works. Zertal includes it within the boundaries of his *Manasseh Hill Country Survey*; in contrast Bloch-Smith and Nakhai treat it as part of the Jezreel Valley; see Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 85-86. In his *Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, Finkelstein lists Taanach under his section on Manasseh as well as in his section the Jezreel Valley.

[251] In recent years, final publications on the excavations at Shechem and Dothan have been released. See Edward Campbell, *Shechem III: The Stratigraphy and Architecture of Shechem/Tell Balatah*, Vol. 1, (Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2002); Daniel M. Master et al., eds., *Dothan I: Remains from the Tell (1953-1964)*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005); Ron E. Tappy has reexamined and reinterpreted the original excavation reports and material from Samaria. See Ron E. Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria* (Harvard Semitic Studies 44, 50; 2 vols.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992-2001).

Zababida, er-Rama, Tubas and Shechem valleys. This fertile area has abundant water sources, a Mediterranean climate, and is bisected by several major north-south and east-west roadways. [252] Hilly/mountainous areas of hard Eocene limestone, covering 50% of the region as a whole, separate and surround the valleys and cover the western part of the territory. East of the Shechem Syncline is the desert fringe, an area with a dry Irano-Turanian climate and two main water sources (Wadi Far'ah and Wadi Malih). East of the desert fringe is the Jordan Valley. From an agro-economic perspective, this region is amenable to various types of subsistence strategies: the inner valleys in the center of the region are suited to growing cereal crops, the hilly/mountainous areas in the west to cultivating vineyards and orchards, and the dry desert fringes in the eastern to animal grazing and dry farming.[253]

For the purposes of his survey Zertal divided northern Samaria into four geographic subunits: Nahal 'Iron to Nahal Shechem, which covers the western area of the region; the Shechem Syncline, which covers the central area of the region (including the Dothan, Sanur, er-Rama, and Shechem Valleys); the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringes, which covers the eastern valleys of the Syncline (the es-Zababida and Tubas Valleys) and the adjacent fringes of the desert; and the Nahal Bezek-Sartaba region, which covers the easternmost part of the region along the Jordan Valley. In the following sections, we will periodically refer to these subunits for the purposes of data analysis.

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[252] There are 63 springs along the western strip of the Syncline region and five springs along the eastern strip. See Zertal, "'To the Land of the Perrizites and the Giants,'" 49.

[253] Finkelstein and Gophna, "Settlement, Demographic and Economic Patterns in the Highlands of Palestine in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Periods and the Beginning of Urbanism," 4, 11.

4.2.2 Iron I Northern Samaria (1250 – 1000 BCE)

The archaeological picture of northern Samaria is somewhat complex during the Iron I period. While there is a dramatic increase and change in the region's settlement, there is also a fair degree of settlement continuity with the preceding LBA period and a notable abandonment rate of both the new Iron I sites and the LBA-Iron I towns. Compared with the highland units to the south, this region exhibits a greater degree of settlement density, large-sized sites, and LBA continuity, which seem to mark it as a distinct territorial unit.

The Iron I material remains allow for the region to be characterized as tribal during this period. The evidence points to a non-urban society whose economy appears based on small-scale agriculture and agro-pastoralism. The majority of sites are unwalled and lacking in both defenses and monumental public architecture; in the excavated towns, certain buildings identified as four-room houses have what appear to be domestic installations but there is little evidence of elite structures or elite goods. It is somewhat difficult to ascertain levels of settlement hierarchy although Finkelstein suggests the Iron I evidence points to a hierarchical pattern of settlement.[254] Some of the new, small Iron I sites may have had a symbiotic relationship with the larger LBA sites that continued into this period.[255]

[254] Finkelstein, "State Formation in Israel and Judah," 42.

[255] Bloch-Smith and Alpert, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 71.

Iron I Survey Results

Survey evidence points to a significant increase in the Iron I settlement of northern Samaria, from 51 Late Bronze Age sites to 205 Iron I sites, 172 (82%) of which were newly founded.[256] While settlement expansion is noted in other subunits of the wider Cisjordanian highlands during Iron I, the northern central hills region appears to have been the most densely settled of these areas.[257] The settlement pattern of the region also shifts. Whereas the LBA sites were largely situated around the fringes of the fertile central valleys and in the vicinity of major roads, the Iron I sites appear throughout the region as a whole. Most were located on the edges of the central valleys (as in LBA) although there were also large concentrations of sites around the Wadis Farah and Malih, in the desert fringes, in the southeastern area of Sartaba, and in the hills of the central and western regions. Zertal argues that the Iron I settlement gradually spread from the eastern areas of the region to the west based on an analysis of three types of cooking pots found in the region.[258] This east to west spread of settlement was also noted in Israel

[256] These numbers are derived from combining the Iron I period totals in volumes 1-4 of Adam Zertal's Manasseh Hill Country Survey. Zertal has published his survey data in four volumes, each describing one area within the wider region: volume 1: *The Shechem Syncline*, Hebrew, 1992, English, 2004; volume 2: *The Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert*, Hebrew, 1996, English, 2008; volume 3: *From Nahal Iron to Nahal Shechem* Hebrew, 2000; volume 4: *From Nahal Bezek to the Sartaba*, Hebrew, 2007/8. According to his calculations, there is evidence for 59 Iron I sites in the Shechem Syncline region; 49 Iron I sites in the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringes region; 42 Iron I sites in the Nahal 'Iron/Nahal Shechem region; 60 Iron I sites in the Nahal Bezeq/Sartaba region.

[257] Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 89.

[258] In the first phase, which he dates to the 13th century BCE, he cites semi-nomadic occupation along the eastern desert fringe between the wadis Far'ah and Malih. The second phase, dated to the 12th century, shows evidence of semi-nomadic settlement in the eastern Tubas and ez-Sababida valleys (in some cases, facing LBA sites) and permanent settlement along the fringes of the eastern and central valleys (Sanur, Dothan and er-Rama). The final stage of this process was the dissemination into the hilly areas of the western region at the end of the 11th century BCE. See Zertal, "To the Land of The Perizzites," 53-59; Zertal, *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey:*

Finkelstein's survey of the Land of Ephraim/Southern Samaria, although some scholars question this assessment.[259] While Zertal maintains that the new Iron I settlers in the region were of Transjordanian origin,[260] Israel Finkelstein has cogently countered that there is no archaeological evidence to support the claim that the new settlers were non-indigenous.[261]

The sizes of the Iron I sites vary although there are more large sites in this region than in the other subunits of the central highlands.[262] For instance, of the 108 sites in the Shechem Syncline and Eastern Valley/Desert Fringes regions, there were 44 small sites (less than 5 dunams or 0.5 ha), 23 medium-sized sites (5-10 dunams or 0.5-1 ha) and 41 large sites (greater than 10 dunams or 1 ha). At the same time, in the southeastern

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The Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert (vol. 2 of *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey;* Leiden, Brill, 2007), 84-85. Although Israel Finkelstein supports Zertal's general findings of east to west settlement expansion, he disagrees with his 13th century dating of the first phase, stating, "the fact that pottery in the tradition of the Late Bronze period was collected at a few sites is not conclusive proof, since these shapes appear also in the early phases of the 12th century BCE." He rather posits an early 12th century dating. See Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 90.

[259] Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 90. Note, however, that Elizabeth Bloch-Smith and Beth Alpert Nakhai have argued that this claim of east to west settlement expansion is biblically inspired since they believe that the published survey materials lack reliable chronological indicators. See Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 71.

[260] Zertal, "To the Land of The Perizzites," 67; Zertal, *The Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert*, 83-85. In the latter, he notes that differences in material culture, settlement patterns, and the fact that most Iron I sites in this area were founded on either virgin soil (44%) or on abandoned Middle Bronze II sites point to the non-indigenous origins of the settlers. However, there is nothing about these differences that points to the settlers' east Jordan origin.

[261] Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 90; Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Israel in Canaan: Consensus, Mainstream and Dispute" *SJOT* 5/2 (1991): 47-59; Finkelstein, "The Emergence of Early Israel: Anthropology, Environment, and Archaeology" *JAOS* 110 (1990): 677-86.

[262] I must again point out that determining site size at multi-period sites is especially tenuous and that sizes provided for a specific period at such sites are simply approximations. See n. 235.

Sartaba region most of the approximately 60 sites were categorized as small sites or very small enclosures.[263] While the vast majority of sites throughout northern Samaria were unfortified, Zertal identified several fortified settlements in the central Shechem Syncline region.[264]

While the overall Iron I settlement pattern of northern Samaria changes, there is nonetheless a significant degree of settlement continuity from the LBA to Iron I periods that is generally not found in the other Cisjordanian highland units. Of the 51 LBA sites, 38 LBA II sites continued to be occupied in the Iron I period, or 18% of the 210 total Iron I sites.[265] Since a number of these were large sites that likely had a greater population concentration than the new, smaller sites, their small number perhaps belies their relative significance. In the north and central regions we also find that many new Iron I sites or clusters of sites arose close to these larger LBA/Iron I settlements, possibly indicating some type of symbiotic relationship between the two.[266]

While the preponderance of new Iron I sites in northern Samaria is notable, a fair number of these sites were short-lived. 57 of the new Iron I sites (27%) were abandoned sometime during this period and do not continue to exist in the Iron II period. This settlement abandonment occurs in all four regions of Zertal's survey, in roughly

[263] In the Nahal Bezek-Sartaba area, of the 60 Iron I sites, almost half were very small enclosures while the majority of the rest were small sites. See Zertal, *Manasseh Hill Country Survey*, Vol 4.

[264] Zertal identified the following sites as fortified: #23 (Tell Muhaffar), 26 (Belameh; likely Ibleam) 40 (Dothan), 95 (el-Kebarrah), 97 (Kh. Kheibar), 137 (er-Sirtassa), 178 (Kh. Qarqaf).

[265] In the Shechem Syncline region, 13 LBA sites (22% of that region's Iron I total), including eight large sites, continued into Iron I; in the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringes region, nine LBA sites (18% of that region's Iron I total), including four large sites, continued into Iron I.

[266] Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 71.

comparable percentages.[267] The phenomena of settlement continuity and abandonment were also noted in Edward Campbell's survey of the Shechem region, an area only partially covered in Zertal's survey. Campbell noted that of the 22 Late Bronze Age II sites, 17 continued into the Iron I period, with 8 new sites founded during the early Iron IA. Yet all of these sites were abandoned from c. 1125 BCE until the early Iron II period (c. 975 BCE).[268]

The Iron I ceramic repertoire which Zertal describes as "simple, homogeneous and not typologically varied or rich"[269] is generally consistent with finds throughout the wider central highland region. The majority of finds include cooking pots, collared-rim jars and S-shaped craters with curved rims, which stands in contrast to more varied inventory of the preceding LBA period. As McNutt points out, the prevalence of large collared-rimmed jars suggests a subsistence economy in which the storage of food and water were basic concerns.[270] Three distinct types of Iron I pottery, however, were uncovered in the surveyed region, which may point to ties between certin areas within northern Samaria. The first type, decorated with holes and marks on the handles and rims, was mainly concentrated in the central Shechem Syncline region. Similar types of

[267] The settlement abandonment occurs in all four regions Zertal surveyed, in roughly equal percentages: in the Shechem Syncline region, 15 new Iron I sites (out of 59 total Iron I sites) did not continue into Iron II; in the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringe region, 15 new Iron I sites (out of 49 total Iron I sites) did not continue into Iron II; in the Nahal 'Iron to Nahal Shechem region, 12 new Iron I sites (out of 42 total Iron I sites) did not continue into Iron II; in the Nahal Bezeq to Sartaba region, 14 new Iron I sites (out of 60 total Iron I sites) did not continue into Iron II.

[268] Edward Campbell, *Shechem II: Portrait of a Hill-Country Vale, The Shechem Regional Survey* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 93-96.

[269] Zertal, "The Iron Age I Culture in the Hill-Country of Canaan," 242.

[270] McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*, 50.

pottery were also discovered in the northern part of the southern central hills area (in the Shechem vicinity).[271] The second is the "Eynun Family" of vessels, so-called because of their discovery at Khirbêt 'Eynun, that have been found in three sites in the Shechem Syncline region and a few others in the western part of the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringe region.[272] The third, which Zertal labels the "Manassite bowl" (ostentibly because it was found in the region; a medium to large-sized bowl of coarse dark brown clay with a thick, folded and inverted rim), was mostly distributed in the eastern part of the area as well as in the early Iron Age strata of Megiddo, Taanach and the "Bull Site."[273] While some specimens were found at Gezer (along the coast in the south) and at Tell Abu Hawam (along the northern coast), they have not been found in the southern hill country, the Jezreel Valley, Lower Galilee or the Beth-Shean Valley.

Iron I Excavation Results

At Shechem (Tell Balata), the early Iron I settlement (Stratum XI) largely appears as a continuation of the LBII occupation (Stratum XII) that preceded it.[274] This Iron I

[271] Zertal, *The Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert*, 54.

[272] Although Israel Finkelstein argued that the 'Einun pottery should be dated to the Middle Bronze II period, as opposed to Iron I, Amihai Mazar countered that these vessels do in fact belong to the Iron I period. See, Israel Finkelstein, "Two Notes on Northern Samaria: The ''Einum Pottery' and the Date of the 'Bull Site,'" *PEQ* 130 (1998): 94-98; Amihai Mazar, "The Bull Site and 'Einun Pottery Reconsidered," *PEQ* 131/2 (1999): 145-46.

[273] Zertal, "'To the Land of the Perrizites and the Giants,'" 23-24.

[274] Campbell, *Shechem III*, 9, 185. Campbell notes that the 14th century BCE Stratum XIII (LBIIA) was a period of prosperity that ended in radical destruction in the second half of the century. Stratum XII (LBIIB) shows evidence for recovery on the same lines as the preceding city, though on a less prosperous scale. In Stratum XI (LB/Iron I), there is evidence for a period of gradual and nonviolent transition to new arrangements of space and a new range of artifacts, which ended in overall destruction in the late 12th century BCE and is followed by a period of virtual abandonment. Cf, Edward Campbell, "Shechem," *NEAEHL* 4:1352.

settlement, however, ended in destruction in the late 12th century BCE (c. 1125 BCE) and the city was abandoned for over a century.[275] Evidence for renewed settlement appears in early Iron II (ca. 975 BCE). In light of this Iron I settlement gap, it is rather striking that Shechem is identified as one of the Manassite *mišpāḥôt* since it was unoccupied during much of what is traditionally considered the tribal period.

At Tirzah (Tell el-Farah N), a 10-hectare site located at the head of Wadi Farah and near an important crossroad, there is evidence of an unfortified Iron I settlement dated to the 12th or 11th century BCE (Stratum 4; period VIIa).[276] The relationship between the LBA and Iron I strata are uncertain since the LBA finds are still under study although the town appears to have been continuously settled during this time. The Iron I remains include a residential building likely containing a household cult and a building with a four-room plan; the archaeologist Alain Chambon notes that the buildings of this stratum were founded directly on top of the LBA walls. [277] Among the pottery finds were several pieces decorated with holes and incised decorations on the handles and rims, similar to those Zertal uncovered in the center of the northern central hill country. According to Chambon, evidence of a major refurbishment during the latter part of the settlement suggests continuity with the following Iron II period.

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[275] Campbell, "Shechem," *NEAEHL* 4:1352.

[276] Alain Chambon, "Tell el-Farah (N)" *NEAEHL* 2:439-40. Note, however, that Ann Killebrew suggests that this stratum should be dated to the 11th century, as does Adam Zertal. See Killebrew, *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity*, 189, n. 36; Zertal, *The Eastern Valleys and Fringes of the Desert*, 60; 421.

[277] Chambon, "Tell el-Farah (N)," 2:439.

At Tell Dothan, a 10-hectare site located on the eastern edge of the Dothan Valley between the northern Sharon Plain and the Jezreel Valley, tomb remains on the western side of the mound suggest that the town was settled during the LBA and LBA – Iron I transition although evidence of LBA II occupation is difficult to interpret.[278] During Iron I (12^{th} – 11^{th} centuries BCE; general Stratum X), a large four-room house compound and surrounding structures and installations were found on the southwest side of the mound (Area A). This area was destroyed sometime during the Iron I, but was quickly re-inhabited largely along the same lines. [279] The ceramic repertoire of this stratum includes a collection of collar-rim jars that show similarities with types characteristic of two different geographical regions: those of the Jezreel Valley and those of the central hill country. Painted pottery that continues the earlier LBA traditions was also found in this level.

[278] Tomb 1, the largest and best preserved of three tombs discovered on the western side of the tell, appears to have been continually used for a period of 200-300 years beginning in the LBA. Somewhat unusually, this tomb was stratified in five distinct levels separated from one another by earth fills .05-.4 m thick: level 1 was dated to the 12^{th} century BCE Iron I period; level 2 to the transitional LBA IIB/early Iron I period; level 3 to LBA IIB; and levels 4 and 5 were tentatively dated to the LBA IIA. The excavators estimate that between 300 and 500 people were buried here in total; 74 skulls were uncovered in level 1, 92 in level 2, plus another 122 in levels 3-5. For additional information on the tomb finds, see R.E. Cooley and Gary Pratico, "Tell Dothan: The Western Cemetery" in *Preliminary Excavation Reports: Sardis, Bir Umm Fawakhir, Tell el-'Umeiri, The Combined Caesarea Expeditions and Tell Dothan* (ed. W. G. Dever; AASOR 52 (Boston: 1994), 147-173. While Areas A, L, and K of the mound contained sherds which may reflect the LBA II, the archaeologists who re-examined the finds from the initial excavation caution that these sherds may alternately reflect the continuation of these traditions into the Iron I period. See, Daniel M. Master, John M. Monson, Egon H.E. Lass and George A. Pierce, eds., *Dothan I: Remains from the Tell (1953-1964),* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 65.

[279] On the western side of the mound in Area L, the archaeologists examining the reports of the original excavators note that while, "there may be considerable twelfth-tenth century remains in this area, we are not confident that any of the architecture should be placed in these periods." Master et al., *Dothan I,* 115.

Two Iron I cult sites have also been identified in the region: Mt. Ebal (el-Burnat) and the so-called Bull Site (Dhahrat et-Tawileh). Bloch-Smith and Nakhai note that the features of these sites are consistent with features of the indigenous MBA and LBA cult and caution against making sharp distinctions between "Canaanite" and "Israelite" cultic practices during this time.[280]

At Mt. Ebal (el-Burnat), a four dunam area remotely situated on the northeastern slope of the mountain, the excavator Adam Zertal found two Iron I strata. The mid-13th century Stratum II was an enclosed site consisting of a round installation in which large quantities of ash and bone were found, and a building with the features of a four-room house. The Stratum I site, dated to the first half of the 12th century BCE, featured a large, rectangular structure (9 x 4 m.) of unhewn stones adjacent to two paved courtyards. A double "ramp" led to the top of the rectangular structure, which was filled with layers of stones, earth, and ash deposits containing burnt animal bones. A number of stone structures containing metal artifacts and pottery, some with punctured handles, were found in the courtyards and around the complex and a second enclosure wall was added. At the end of Stratum I, the site was peacefully abandoned and the area was buried under a layer of stones.[281] Zertal interpreted the rectangular structure as an altar and identified the site as a sacred high place associated with the early Israelites, in some cases linking it to "Joshua's Altar" in light of the biblical mention of an altar at Mt. Ebal (Deut 27 and

[280] Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 76-77.

[281] Zertal, "'To the Land of the Perrizites and the Giants,'" 61-65.

Josh 8:30-35).[282] While a number of scholars now agree that this Iron I site had a cultic function, they prudently do not support Zertal's Israelite or biblical interpretation of it.[283]

Dhahrat et-Tawileh or the "Bull Site," so-named after the discovery of a small bronze bull statuette (17.5 cm long and 12.4 cm high), is located in the hills near Dothan. The excavator Amihai Mazar interpreted the place as an open-air cultic site.[284] It consists of a circular stone-wall (21 x 23 m) inside of which was a large upright stone that has been interpreted as an altar (*mazzebah*). In front of this stone, Iron I pottery sherds (cooking pots and bowls), animal bones, flint tools and a scrap of bronze were found on pavement. While Mazar suggested that Manassite tribal members built the site, this theory has not been universally accepted.[285] The site appears to have existed only during Iron I.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Josh 17:11-13 indicates that Manasseh inherited several "Canaanite" cities that lay outside its borders (Dor, En-dor, Megiddo, Tanaach and Beth-Shean in the MT) although the Manassites were unable to dispossess their inhabitants. The material culture of these cities during much of the Iron I differs from

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[282] Adam Zertal, "Has Joshua's Altar Been Found on Mt. Ebal?" *BAR* 11/1 (1985): 26-43; idem, "The Iron Age I Culture in the Hill-Country of Canaan," 243-245.

[283] See Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 348-350; Michael D. Coogan, "Of Cults and Cultures: Reflections on the Interpretations of Archaeological Evidence," *PEQ* 119 (1987): 1-8; 1990. Contra Zertal's cultic identification of the site, Kempinski and Dever suggested the rectangular structure is not an altar, but rather a watchtower or a foundation for another structure. See Aharon Kempinski, "Joshua's Altar: An Iron Age I Watchtower," *BAR* 12/1 (1986): 42; William G. Dever, "How to Tell a Canaanite from an Israelite" in *The Rise of Early Israel* (ed. Herschel Shanks; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1992), 32-34. Finkelstein also disagrees with Zertal's interpretation of the finds. See Finkelstein, "The Great Transformation," 351.

[284] Amihai Mazar, "The "Bull Site" – An Iron Age I Open Cult Place," *BASOR* 247 (1982): 27-40.

[285] Gösta Ahlström, "The Bull Figurine from Dharat et-Tawileh," *BASOR* 280 (1990): 77-82.

that found in the highland regions, which reinforces the biblical idea that these cities were somewhat separate from the rest of the tribal territory, if they were part of it at all. According to Robet D. Miller, the hill country north of Jerusalem was "bounded on the north by a line of municipal principalities running from Dor to Beth-Shean (Dor, Ein Haggit, Yoqneam, Megiddo, Tanaach, Ibleam, Afula, Beth-Shean)….which exhibit material cultures distinct from the highland unit until the late 11th century."[286]

Although the biblical text situates the towns of Taanach and Ibleam outside of Manasseh's borders (Josh 17:11-13) and several scholars note that their Iron I material culture differs from that found in the central hill country, Zertal nonetheless includes these towns within his *Manasseh Hill Country* survey area.[287] Taanach (Tell Ta'annek), located on the southwest side of the 'Iron Hills in the western part of the northern central hill country, appears to have been minimally occupied, if at all, during the end of the LBA.[288] During the Iron I period there was a fortified settlement at the site in which excavators identified two stages of occupation separated by a destruction level. Although the dating of these two Iron I levels is debated, Period IA featured pottery that still reflects LBA traditions while Period IB contained pottery characteristic of the Iron I

[286] Robert D. Miller, "A Gazetter of Iron I Sites in the North-Central Highlands of Palestine," in *Preliminary Excavation Reports and Other Archaeological Investigations: Tell Qarqur, Iron I Sites in the North-Central Highlands of Palestine* (ed. Nancy Lapp; AASOR 56; American Schools of Oriental Research, 1999): 143.

[287] Miller, "A Gazetter of Iron I Sites in the North-Central Highlands of Palestine,"143; Bloch-Smith and Nakhai include Tanaach within their description of the Jezreel and Beth-Shean Valleys and note "Egyptian authorities asserted their strength in this region early in the LBA and retained control well into the twelfth century BCE." See Bloch-Smith and Nakhai, "A Landscape Comes to Life," 83.

[288] Albert E. Glock, "Taanach," *NEAEHL* 4:1432.

period.[289] Archaeologists note that the material culture from both these periods shows similarities with that found at Megiddo. The remains from Period IB include substantial structures/houses containing numerous installations on the southern and western edges of the mound including the so-called, "Drainpipe Structure."[290] In the public section of the town, a cuneiform tablet containing a receipt for grain shipment from the city (TT433) was discovered.[291] While the economy appears to have been largely agrarian, there is also evidence of a metalworking industry in the city. The Iron IB settlement was destroyed ca. 1125 BCE, after which point there was an occupational gap that lasted for most of the 11th century BCE.

Other Views on Iron I Northern Samaria

In *Chieftains of the Highland Clans* (2005), Miller argues that the northern central hills featured three distinct zones of Iron I occupation.[292] Two zones were squarely located within the region the Bible defines as Manasseh: one centered around Dothan and one around Tell el-Farah (N) although Miller finds the nature of their social/socio-

[289] Frank S. Frick, following Walter Rast, dates Period IA to the first half of the 12th century and Period IB to 1150-1125 BCE. See Frank S. Frick, *Tell Taannek 1963-1968, Vol 4/2: The Iron Age Cultic Structure* (Palestinian Institute of Archaeology, 2002), 19-28; Walter E. Rast, *Ta'anach I, Studies in the Iron Age Pottery* (Cambridge, 1978). Contra Rast, Israel Finkelstein has argued that Period IA should be dated to the mid-12th century, or ca. 1000 BCE and Period IB to the 10th century BCE. See Finkelstein, "Notes on the Stratigraphy and Chronology of Ta'anach," *Tel Aviv* 25 (1998): 208-18. Daniel M. Master, however, holds that Finkelstein's arguments are unconvincing and follows Rast's dating. See Daniel M. Master, "State Formation Theory and the Kingdom of Ancient Israel," *JNES* 60/2 (Apr. 2001): 120-21.

[290] Glock, "Taanach," 4:1432.

[291] Glock, "Taanach," 4:1432.

[292] Note that Miller identifies six zones in total in the greater highlands region. In addition to the three zones in the northern central hills, he claims three zones existed in the southern portion of the area.

political organization equivocal.[293] He suggests that the third zone, which was centered around Shechem (Tell Balatah), was a complex chiefdom. This zone, which was incidentally the largest of the three, straddled the border between northern and southern Samaria such that it covered the southern portion of biblical Manasseh and the northern portion of biblical Ephraim. Although he acknowledges that his conclusions are tentative and theoretical given the nature of the archaeological data and the applicability of the anthropological models he uses – a view with which several other scholars concur – at the very least his analysis should caution us against automatically viewing the biblically defined region as a monolithic or homogeneous social entity.[294]

We must also address the nature of Iron I northern Samaria's "Israelite" status. Finkelstein suggests this region was not initially part of the early Israelite polity ascribed to king Saul but rather that this Israelite polity gradually expanded into the region.[295] In other words, he suggests that the "west Manassite" territory was likely non-Israelite during much of Israel's "tribal" period. Pointing to the biblical evidence and the Egyptian Karnak inscription – which lists the Canaanite cities pharaoh Sheshonq I conquered during the 10th century – Finkelstein holds that Saul's kingdom initially controlled an area in the central western highlands around Gibeon and in the east Jordan

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[293] Miller, *Chieftains of the Highland Clans,* 82.

[294] Eveline van der Steen, for instance, offered a fair if highly critical review of Miller's methodology and book. See Eveline van der Steen, *Journal of Semitic Studies* (2009), 265-68.

[295] Contra many scholars, Finkelstein dates Saul sometime during the 10th century BCE and the Egyptian Pharaoh Sheshonq I's attack to the mid-late 10th century BCE. He notes, however, that the traditional dating which places Saul in the late 11th century BCE and Sheshonq's campaign to c. 926 BCE does not stand in the way of his study. Israel Finkelstein, "The Last Labayu: King Saul and the Expansion of the First North Israelite Territoriality Entity," in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (ed. Yairah Amit; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006): 173-174.

Jabbok region. He views northern Samaria's absence from Sheshonq's list (and attack) as signaling that this region was likely still under Egypt's sphere of influence. To his mind, one way in which the emerging "Israelite" entity under Saul could have threatened Egyptian interests – and thus precipitated Sheshonq's attack – was by "attempting to expand into northern Samaria and areas near Jezreel."[296] Finkelstein's suggestion not only reinforces the historiographical nature of the Bible's conceptualization of Israel's tribal origins and organization, but also should remind us that early Israel was likely a patchwork of myriad groups of various types, including tribes, who ultimately came to be (viewed as) a wider polity over a period of time.

4.2.3 Iron II Northern Samaria (1000-722 BCE)

During the Iron II period, when the kingdom of Israel reached "full-blown statehood,"[297] the northern central hills region flourished. Settlement expanded throughout the area and evidence seems to point away from a tribal context to one of growing complexity and stratification/ranking. Ranking can be discerned from settlement patterns as well as certain archaeological features in some of the larger towns, including public buildings constructed of ashlar masonry, the increased size of select domestic dwellings, and the presence of luxury goods such as fine "Samaria ware" ceramics, engraved seals, ivories, and foreign objects.[298] The elaborate Israelite capital

[296] Finkelstein, "The Last Labayu," 176.

[297] Finkelstein argues that the northern kingdom reached full-blown statehood no later than the first half of the 9th century BCE. Israel Finkelstein, "State Formation in Israel and Judah: A Contrast in Context, A Contrast in Trajectory," *NEA* 62/1 (1999): 40.

[298] See William Dever, "Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II Period on the Eve of Destruction," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas Levy; New York:

of Samaria was located in the heart of this region and the 8th century BCE "administrative" ostraca from this city may possibly point to a developed system of regional public administration.[299]

Iron II Survey Results

Iron II settlement in the northern central hills increased to 326 sites from 205 Iron I sites, and as in Iron I this region was the most densely populated highland unit.[300] Based on data available in 1992, its Iron II population was estimated at 65,000, although this number is undoubtedly too low in light of the number of sites that have since been discovered. By way of comparison, the population of the southern central hills (the region of the tribe of Ephraim) was estimated at 33,000.[301]

181 of the Iron II north Samaria sites (or 56%) were newly founded, a phenomenon Zertal attributes in part to the economic prosperity of the Israelite kingdom during 8th century BCE. These new sites appear in each of his four survey areas although settlement was generally centered in three regions: one around the capital city of Samaria, one surrounding the Dothan valley, and one in the eastern valleys region.

Facts on File, 1995), 421-25; Avraham Faust, "Socioeconomic Stratification in an Israelite City: Hazor VI as a Test Case," *Levant* 31 (1999): 179-90.

[299] Finkelstein, "State Formation," 40.

[300] Calculations independently derived from combining numbers in Vols. 1- 4 of Zertal's *Manasseh Hill Country Survey*; in the Shechem Syncline region settlement rose from 56 Iron I sites to 84 Iron II sites; in the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringes region from 47 Iron I sites to 86 Iron II sites; in the 'Iron-Shechem region from 42 Iron I sites to 53 Iron II sites; in the Bezek-Sartaba region from 60 Iron I sites to 93 Iron II sites.

[301] See, Magen Broshi and Israel Finkelstein, "The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II," *BASOR* 287 (1992): 47-60.

Evidence points to a hierarchical settlement pattern of large, medium and small sites that "attests to the existence of regional administrative and/or trade centers surrounded by peripheral secondary villages."[302] According to Zertal's calculations in a 2001 article, at which point 262 Iron II sites in the region had been analyzed, Samaria was the only site characterized as a metropolis .[303] Its area is thought to have covered 70 hectares with an estimated population of 17,000. 49 settlements (18%) that were either greater than 2 hectares in size or were fortified hilltop sites were defined as towns. These towns were dispersed equally throughout most of the wider survey area – in the central and western zones as well as the in the eastern valleys/desert fringes region. Very few, however, were found in the Jordan valley. 82 Iron II settlements (31%) were unfortified villages 1-5 acres in size, estimated to have had approximately 200 - 250 inhabitants each. 131 (50%) sites were small settlements (farms or 'family farmsteads') roughly half a hectare in size, consisting of a house or houses and their associated structures. A high proportion of these sites were found in the desert fringes region and Zertal notes that "this is indeed the first time that the 500 sq. km. of the desert fringes and Jordan valley are almost entirely settled, mainly by family farms."[304] Numerous enclosures, cave sites, and seasonal sites were also uncovered in the desert fringes/Jordan valley region. Finally, Zertal defined 20 sites as fortresses, towers, and/or camps, including 14 sites around the capital of Samaria, which points to increased administrative presence in the region.

[302] Finkelstein, "State Formation in Israel and Judah," 42.

[303] Zertal, "Heart of Monarchy," 42-57.

[304] Zertal, "Heart of Monarchy," 42.

Iron II Excavations

The city of Samaria, which became the capital of the Israelite Kingdom during the 9th century BCE, is now recognized as the site of a 10th century BCE (Building Period 0) oil and wine industry.[305] Norma Franklin argues that the 9th century BCE capital city (Building Period 1) is in fact a continuation and expansion of this earlier wine and oil industry.

> The newly established capital of the northern Kingdom of Israel was not just an isolated palace. Samaria during Building Period 1 was the hub of a highly specialized and lucrative oil and wine industry that flourished throughout southern Samaria (Eitam 1987, 23-27), and must have been an important element in the state economy (Finkelstein 1999, 42).[306]

The so-called Palace of Omri, the largest palace in the region, was constructed during this time, using Phoenician-style techniques and fine this ashlar material.[307] During Building Period II (likely early 8th century BCE), the palace remained in use and a massive casemate perimeter wall was added which extended the area of the acropolis. The 63 Samaria ostraca were discovered in an administrative building on the new acropolis extension and seem to point to a developed system of public administration in the region.[308] In the area north of the palace, a large cache of Phoenician style ivory-

[305] These installations were initially dated to the Early Bronze Age by Kathleen Kenyon. Lawrence Stager and Norma Franklin's more recent re-evaluations of Kenyon's work argue that the installations belong to the Iron Age. See Norma Franklin, "Samaria: From the Bedrock to the Omride Palace," *Levant* 36 (2004): 189-202; Lawrence Stager, "Shemer's Estate," *BASOR* 277/278 (1990): 93-107.

[306] Franklin, "Samaria: From the Bedrock to the Omride Palace," 201.

[307] Two rock-cut tomb chambers below the palace and the fragmentary remains of another monumental building also date to this phase. See Franklin, "Samaria: From the Bedrock to the Omride Palace," 196, 201.

[308] *ANET*, 321. For analysis of the ostraca, see I. Kaufman, "The Samaria Ostraca: An Early Witness to Hebrew Writing," *BA* 45 (1982): 229-39 and Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family

decorated furniture and decorative items was uncovered which further attests to the opulence of the city and to trade and cultural relations with some of the powerful Phoenician city-states.[309] A number of Iron Age tombs were found northeast and below the acropolis.

At Tirzah, there are two Iron II strata. Evidence from the *(*11th) – 10th centuries BCE Stratum 3 (period VIIb) suggests that the town underwent a period of renewal during this time, further developing the plans of the preceding Stratum 4.[310] The MBA gate and fortifications were rebuilt and a network of roads divided the houses into blocks, which suggest centralized planning and mobilization of manpower. Most houses of this stratum followed the same tripartite plan. The pottery of this stratum was mostly domestic in character although a clay model of a temple (dated to the 10th - early 9th century BCE) with parallels in Megiddo, Cyprus and east Jordan was also found, likely indicative of long-distance trade of some kind. The town was destroyed, perhaps in the late 10th or early 9th century BCE, and subsequently abandoned for a time.[311] The 9th – 8th century BCE Stratum 2 (period VIId) shows evidence of a well-built, well-ordered town. A large palace was constructed and within its compound, 150 storage jars as well as a number of terra-cotta "bathtubs" and basins were uncovered. The Stratum 3

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in Ancient Israel," 24.

[309] Ron E. Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992): 491-530. See also Philip J. King, *Amos, Hosea and Micah: An Archaeological Commentary*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988): 36-37, 139-146 and Dever, "Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II Period on the Eve of Destruction," 424.

[310] Chambon, "Tell El-Farah (N)," 2:349.

[311] In period VIIc, dated to the ninth century (note: a stratum number is not assigned to this period), there is evidence that a complex of high quality public buildings was begun, but never completed. See Chambon, "Tell El-Farah (N)," 2:349.

installation was reconstructed on a larger scale. A wall divided the well-built houses of the wealthy from those of the poorer inhabitants, although both followed the plan of the residential structures in Stratum 3. Large quantities of 8th-century pottery, including fine Samaria ware, were also discovered. The town was burned and badly destroyed during the mid-early 8th century BCE, most likely due to the Assyrian conquest of the region.

At Shechem, following the 11th-century BCE settlement abandonment the 10th century Stratum X shows evidence of a modest, unwalled town. This town, however, was destroyed in the last quarter of the 10th century (presumably in connection with Sheshonq's raid). The late 10th –9th century BCE stratum IX, shows evidence of revitalization.[312] The fortification wall from the MBA IIC was rebuilt and expanded, the layout of the city shows a planned use of space, and although the house walls are narrower, they are built of select stones. Strata VIII and VII both date to the 8th century BCE, although little remains of Stratum VIII. In Stratum VII, a four-room house (1727) was found with a large hearth in its central room, which Campbell suggests might relate to lime production or something requiring a large fire.[313] This stratum ended in destruction during the time of the Assyrian invasion (c. 724 BCE), the dating of which is supported by an Assyrian seal found in the debris of house 1727.

Dothan experienced a period of expansion during much of the 10th – 9th century Iron II A period (General Stratum IX). On the southwest side of the mound (Area A), the four-room house compound from Iron I continued, a city wall was constructed, and large quantities of Iron Age IIA-B pottery were found. On the western side of the mound

[312] Campbell, "Shechem," 4:1352.

[313] Campbell, "Shechem," 4:1353.

(Area L), excavators uncovered a 20-room administrative building partly constructed of ashlar masonry together with the remains of 14 residences that were variations on the four-room house. It seems that at least two of the houses were reserved for specialist activities based on the installations and finds uncovered therein. The archaeologists analyzing finds from the initial excavations maintain that the primary construction and use of this area was the 9th century BCE.[314] Both Area A and most of Area L were destroyed during the late ninth century. Following this destruction, occupation in Area A ceased until the Hellenistic period; in Area L, there is evidence of minimal occupation in the early eighth century BCE (General Stratum VIII). Although excavators discovered an 8th-century BCE jar handle with an inscribed Hebrew seal impression reading, settlement during this time.

At Taanach, following an occupational gap that appears to have lasted for much of the 11th century, a new unfortified village (Stratum IIA) appeared ca. 1020 BCE.[315] This settlement, however, was abandoned and partially destroyed ca. 960 BCE. A new settlement (Period IIB) arose after this, but it too was destroyed, ca. 918 BCE.[316] In the Period IIB destruction levels excavators uncovered a trove of cult objects that shares many features with the indigenous MBA and LBA cult. Among the objects was an elaborate, 50 cm. four-level cult stand decorated with human, leonine and cherubim

[314] Master et al, *Dothan I*, 115. While they note that Iron I pottery recovered from this level is similar to that found in Iron I Area A and that there is no evidence of an occupation break or destruction between Iron I and IIA, they nonetheless maintain that the activity in this area should be dated to the 9th century BCE.

[315] This follows Rast's dating. Finkelstein dates Stratum IIA to the early 9th century. See Finkelstein, "Notes on the Stratigraphy and Chronology of Iron Age Ta'anach," 216.

[316] This also follows Rast's dating. Finkelstein dates Stratum IIB to the first half of the 9th century. Finkelstein, "Notes on the Stratigraphy and Chronology of Iron Age Ta'anach," 216.

figures and topped with an image of the deity – depicted as a stylized winged sun disk on top of a horse figure – between two trees or columns. Following this early 10th-century destruction, occupation in the city appears to be limited to a tower on the northern end of the mound (the Northeast Building) dating to the 9th century BCE.[317]

4.2.4 Iron III Northern Samaria (722 – 535 BCE)[318]

Following the Kingdom of Israel's defeat by the Assyrians in 722 BCE, its western territory was divided into three Assyrian provinces: Samaria, Megiddo and Dor. Although the boundaries of these provinces are not clear, the majority of the northern central highlands region appears to have belonged to the new province of Samaria, whose capital was the city of Samaria. While this area experienced significant settlement disruption in the aftermath of the Assyrian conquest, the evidence from this period is difficult to interpret since it is not clear that surveys have correctly identified all the Iron III sites in the region and thus it is problemtic to establish "tribe". Most of the Iron II towns that appear to have been attacked by the Assyrians were rebuilt and/or continued to exist in Iron III though on a smaller and less prosperous scale. The settlement continuity, however, suggests that the Assyrians did not deport all the inhabitants of these areas as the biblical narratives suggest.

[317] Glock, "Taanach," 4:1432.

[318] In recent years, a number of archaeologists have labeled the period from 722 BCE to the start of the Persian era (c. 535 BCE) as the Iron III period. While the distinction between late Iron II and Iron III distinction is more observable in stratified, excavated sites, there is disagreement among scholars as to whether it is possible to identify Iron III in survey collections. Zertal does identify the Iron III period in the Manasseh Hill Country Survey.

Iron III Survey Results

According to Zertal's data from the *Manasseh Hill Country Survey* volumes there is a marked decline in Iron III settlement in the northern central hills region, from 326 Iron II sites to 74 Iron III sites. Zertal's method of Iron III ascription, however, is uncertain[319] and he acknowledges that "many [other] Iron II sites may have continued to exist in these two centuries as well."[320]

Both the eastern and western areas of the region saw the most significant drops in settlement while in the center of the region the decline was notable, though not as severe.[321] Whereas many of the Iron II villages and farmsteads were destroyed and/or abandoned, most of the Iron II fortified towns in the region remained, although on a smaller scale.[322] We also find that 12 new settlements appear in the Shechem Syncline

[319] Zertal's identification of an Iron III site appears to be primarily based on the presence of wedge-decorated bowl sherds discovered in the region since he also notes that, "most of the Iron Age III ceramic inventory remained local, and continued from the 8th into the 7th-6th centuries BCE, with some modifications and additions." See Zertal, "The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age (Iron III)," 397. See also Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline,* 43, where he notes that the Iron II 'type D' cooking pots and ridged jars continue into the following periods. For more information on his discussion of the wedge-decorated bowls, see Zertal, "The Wedge-shaped Decorated Bowl and Origin of the Samaritans," *BASOR* 276 (1989): 77-84; Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline,* 58; *The Eastern Valleys and Fringes of the Desert,* 84.

[320] Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline,* 58; cf., Zertal and Mirkam, *From Nahal 'Iron to Nahal Shechem,* 48; Zertal, *From Nahal Bezek to the Sartaba,* 74. Note that Finkelstein and Silberman are less equivocal than Zertal on this issue. They note that the other pottery types Zertal assigns to Iron III are also found in the 8th century BCE, and that the, "presence or absence of a single pottery type in survey sites…can be random and misleading. Zertal's interpretation of the situation in the seventh century is therefore based on very shaky grounds." See Israel Finkelstein and Neil Silberman, "Temple and Dynasty: Hezekiah, The Remaking of Judah and the Rise of the Pan-Israelite Ideology," *JSOT* 30/3 (2006): 268, n. 9.

[321] In the eastern areas of the region (Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringe and Sartaba regions), settlement dropped from 186 to 25 sites; in the western area ('Iron-Shechem region) it dropped from 53 to 8 sites; in the central area of the Shechem Syncline, settlement dropped from 87 to 40 sites.

[322] Zertal, "The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age (Iron III)," 400.

region, nine of which were located in the area around the capital, Samaria.[323] Zertal claims that there appears to be a system of "Mesopotamian-like centers" constructed during this time, primarily around the capital, that may relate to the organization of Samaria as an Assyrian/Babylonian province: three so-called 'administrative complexes' and two military camps or fortresses.[324]

The wedge-decorated bowls that Zertal uses as his primary marker of Iron III are largely concentrated between Shechem, Tirzah and Dothan (in the Shechem Syncline region and in the northwest and central areas of the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringes region).[325] Seven bowl fragments were also discovered in the northeastern area of the Southern Samaria survey (the area south of Shechem), as well as two in the northern Jordan Valley.[326] While these bowls are local in origin, Zertal notes that their design is similar to first millennium Mesopotamian pottery found in the Habur Valley and at Kish and Nippur, among other places. Since this type of bowl does not appear in the northern central hills before the Assyrian conquest, he suggests that these sites should be associated with Cathean people settled by the Assyrian authorities.

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[323] Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline*, 58.

[324] Zertal, "The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age (Iron Age III)," 386-95. The administrative complexes: Kh. Merajjim, Jellamet Wusta, Kh. Umm Qatan; the military camp/fortresses: el-Qa'adeh, Kh. Meras ed-Din. Note, however, that most of the pottery in the 'administrative complex' of Kh. Merajjim (site no. 119) dates to the Persian period, and thus its Iron III ascription is not certain; see p. 390.

[325] Zertal, "The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age (Iron III)," 397-404; Zertal, "The Wedge-shaped Decorated Bowl and the Origin of the Samaritans"

[326] Zertal, "The Wedge-shaped Decorated Bowl and the Origin of the Samaritans," 77.

Iron III Excavations

Samaria: Although the Assyrians captured the capital of Samaria, the archaeologist Ron Tappy claims that the city exhibits relatively few traces of destruction.[327] While some new types of pottery were found from this time, as was a fragment of an Assyrian stela, there are not large quantities of Assyrian material remains.[328] This likely suggests some degree of continuous Israelite settlement in the capital between the periods preceding and following the Assyrian conquest.[329]

Shechem: Following the destruction of the mid-8th century Stratum VII (750-724 BCE), Stratum VI (724-600 BCE) shows evidence of limited occupation.[330] In this stratum, however, a seventh-century BCE Hebrew seal inscribed, "(belonging) *to mbn*" was found.

Tirzah: The 7th century BCE Stratum VIIe shows signs of reoccupation following the destruction of Stratum VIId, although remains were found only in the area of the palace and gate. Chambon notes that while the ruined gate was blocked and the rebuilt palace shows no signs of major alteration, the basin and *masseba* installation was enclosed in a large, crudely paved square area in front of the palace courtyard during this time.[331] Carinated Assyrian bowls were discovered in this stratum, suggesting some

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[327] Ronald Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria, I: The Eighth Century BCE,* 351-441. See also Nahman Avigad, "Samaria (city)," *NEAEHL* 4:1306.

[328] Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria, I*, 572.

[329] Knoppers, 165.

[330] Campbell, "Shechem," 4:1352-53.

[331] Chambon, "Tell El-Farah (N)," 2:440.

degree of Assyrian occupation. It seems that the town gradually declined in importance after the 7th century, and was slowly abandoned in the 7th to 6th centuries BCE.

Dothan: At Dothan, there is minimal evidence of occupation following the late ninth century BCE destruction of the town. However, a number of late 8th –early 7th century BCE burials accompanied by Assyrian pottery were found in Areas A and L (General Stratum VII), including a pottery coffin burial and several infant jar burials. This suggests some degree of Assyrian occupation and/or that the town was used as a burial site during this time.

At Taanach, there is fragmentary evidence suggesting some degree of occupation during the 8th century BCE, although the remains are very eroded. A 'Neo-Babylonian' seal featuring a worshiper and the symbols of the deities Marduk and Nabu has tentatively been dated to either 750-732/722 BCE (Period IV) or ca. 700-650 BCE (Period V), which might point to the presence of Assyrian troops and/or exiled Mesopotamians at the site during this time.[332]

At Shechem, remains from the 7th century BCE Stratum VI attest to limited occupation during this period.

4.2.5 Persian Period Northern Samaria (538 – 332 BCE)

During the Persian period, archaeological evidence suggests a mixed picture of prosperity and decline in the northern central hills. While the central and western areas of the region seem to have flourished, in the eastern areas the decline and/or abandonment that began during the Iron III period continued.

[332] A. D. Tushingham, "A "Neo-Babylonian" Seal from Tell Taanach" *BASOR* 286 (1992): 15-18.

Persian Period Survey Results

There is evidence for occupation at 256 sites in the region during the Persian period.[333] This represents a much greater degree of settlement than that in the neighboring southern Samarian hills, where only 90 sites were occupied during this time (roughly half the number of sites of the prosperous Iron II period).[334] The settlement pattern of the region shifts, with sites mainly concentrated in two areas: one around the city of Samaria and the other around the Dothan Valley/margins of Jezreel Valley. The western mountainous areas were also heavily populated during this time. In fact, in both the central and western areas of the region the settlement numbers exceeded the highs of the Iron II period: in the Shechem Syncline region there were 137 Persian sites (vs. 84 Iron II sites); in the 'Iron-Shechem region there were 80 Persian sites (vs. 53 Iron II sites). In contrast, the eastern areas of the region were relatively sparsely occupied and did not play an important role during this time.[335] Zertal notes that from an economic standpoint, this settlement map suggests an economy primarily based on the production of wine and oil/orchard cultivation.[336] The high percentage of storage jars for oil and

[333] The dramatic increase in the number of sites from the Iron III to Persian periods may suggest that Zertal has not correctly identified all Iron III settlements, as he himself acknowledges.

[334] Finkelstein, Lederman and Bunimovitz, *The Highlands of Many Cultures: The Southern Samaria Survey*. During the Iron II period, there were 190 sites in the region. The authors note that major recovery in Southern Samaria occurred in the Hellenistic period.

[335] In the Eastern Valleys/Desert Fringes region there were 23 Persian sites (vs. 86 Iron II sites); in the Bezek-Sartaba region, there were 16 Persian sites (vs. 93 Iron II sites).

[336] Zertal, "The Pahwah of Samaria (Northern Israel) during the Persian Period. Types of Settlement, Economy, History and New Discoveries," *Transeuphratene* 3 (1990): 13; Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline*, 59; idem, *From Nahal Bezek to the Sartaba*, 74.

wine from this period in the Shechem Syncline region seems to support this theory.[337] In terms of settlement continuity, not only did most of the Persian era sites continue from Iron III, but in the Shechem Syncline and 'Iron-Shechem regions, most Iron II sites continued into the Persian period as well.[338]

With respect to site size, according to a 1990 article, at which point only 235 Persian period sites had been identified, Zertal classified 32% of the sites as cities, fortified tells and/or large sites; 27% as villages up to 10 dunams in size; 41% as small sites, mainly farms.[339] Somewhat confusingly, in contrast to his figures above, he maintains that the typical site of this period was a 10-12 dunam highland ruin that "appears to have been no more than a flourishing rural settlement to judge by its size and the quantity of pottery left on the surface."[340]

Persian Period Excavations

Samaria: Samaria appears to have been continuously occupied from the Iron III to the end of the Persian period. Due to the Hellenistic era destruction of the city and subsequent rebuilding during Herodian times, the remains from this period are minimal although they seem to suggest a wealthy and likely diverse population. Finds from the 6th

[337] Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline*, 59.

[338] Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline*, 59-60; Zertal and Mirkim, *From Nahal 'Iron to Nahal Shechem*, 48-9. Two of the three Iron III 'administrative' complexes in the vicinity of Samaria continued into the Persian period while the third might have existed during this time. Zertal also theorizes that the two Iron III military camps continued into this time. See, Zertal, "The Province of Samaria (Assyrian Samerina) in the Late Iron Age," 390-392.

[339] Zertal, "The Pahwah of Samaria," 13.

[340] Zertal, *The Shechem Syncline*, 59; cf. Zertal and Mirkim, *From Nahal 'Iron to Nahal Shechem*, 49.

– 4th century BCE (Stratum VIII) include a few building remains, Persian era pottery, a large amount of Attic ware, a number of local coins and a late Achaemenid coin, and ostraca in both paleo-Hebrew and Aramaic scripts.[341]

Shechem: Although there are few remains from the Persian period (Stratum V, 600-475 BCE), Campbell notes that the artifacts suggest a cosmopolitan and relatively well-to-do population.[342] The finds include 158 sherds of imported Attic black-glazed pottery, a late-sixth century coin from Thasos, a seal impression of a roaring lion typical of Judean sites in the Persian period, and a Persian seal impression of the king as archer that contains Ahura Mazda's symbol behind him.

Tirzah: During the 6th-5th century BCE Stratum VIIe1, the town (further) declined. The palace was subdivided by poorly built partitions and the cultic installation was abandoned. Chambon suggests that a farming community occupied the site based on the discovery of a silo and large threshing floor.[343]

Taanach: There is evidence of minimal occupation, suggested by some 5th century BCE pits and two rooms.

Having now set the foundation to examine possible connections between west and east "Manasseh," we will now turn to the east Jordan evidence.

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[341] See Gary N. Knoppers, "Revisiting the Samarian Question in the Persian Period" in Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming, *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006): 270 and the references cited therein.

[342] Campbell, "Shechem," 4:1353.

[343] Chambon, "Tell El-Farah (N)," 2:440.

4.3 East Manasseh – Archaeological Examination

The biblical materials broadly situate east Manasseh in northern Gilead and often in the Bashan although both of these regions are hazily defined. As discussed in the previous chapter many scholars identify northern Gilead as the area between the Jabbok River in the south and the Yarmuk River in the north, which approximates the northern east Jordan highlands region or northern Jordan. This area consists of two distinct topographical zones: the well-watered plateau of Irbid in the north (from the Yarmuk River in the north to the northern portion of the Ajlun mountains in the south), a moderate region suitable for agriculture and settlement, and the rugged and hilly 'Ajlun region south of Irbid and east of the Jordan Valley. Siegfried Mittmann's 1963-66 archaeological survey of this area allows us to draw some general, and important, conclusions about its Iron I and Iron II settlement patterns.[344] The survey, however, revealed a dearth of Persian period remains, which hampers our understanding of the region's development during that time. For the purposes of data analysis, Mittmann divided the survey region into four compass units – north, south, east and west. Finkelstein, in his examination of Mittmann's data, re-divided the region into two larger units based on the topographical features of the land: the Irbid plain in the north and the Ajlun region in the south.[345] In the sections below, we will use Finkelstein's divisions

[344] Siegfried Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordlandes* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970).

[345] Mittmann's northern area is bounded by Irbid in the south (sites 1-90); the western area is centered around Jabesh-Gilead or Tall al-Maqlub (sites 91-200); the southern area of the Wadi Kifrinjeh-Jerash regions (sites 201-310); and the eastern area (sites 311-335). For a summary of the findings see Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordlandes*, 256-264. See also Magnus Ottosson, "The Iron Age of Northern Transjordan" *VTSup* 50, 90-103. In Finkelstein's redivision of the survey area, the northern Irbid plain region extends further southwest than does Mittmann's northern area, and thus includes part of the

since they correspond more carefully to the geographical contours of the land and allow us to compare the regions more easily. While a handful of archaeological excavations have been carried out in northern Jordan, it is unfortunately not possible to draw definitive conclusions from them due to their relatively small number, the limited amount of material remains they have unearthed, and the slow publication of the excavation results.

The biblical materials vaguely situate Bashan north of Gilead and while its extent is unclear many scholars assume that it broadly corresponds with the modern day Golan and Hauran regions. A limited number of archaeological surveys have been carried out in these two areas although their utility for our purposes is rather limited. While these surveys provide basic information on "Iron Age" settlement they do not distinguish between Iron I and Iron II nor do they include Persian period remains. Excavations in southern Golan have greatly contributed to our understanding of that area during the Iron I and II periods although very few sites have been excavated in the Hauran. We can therefore offer only brief summary notes on this latter region. At the same time, as discussed in Chapter 3, we must bear in mind that east Manasseh's relationship to Bashan is tenuous from both a textual and historical perspective. Not only is there significant textual confusion over whether the region belonged to the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah during the pre-monarchic period and to Aram or Israel during the monarchic period, but scholars widely agree that the Israelites never controlled the northern, Hauran portions of this area at any time in their history. In the end, scholars widely

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latter's western area. Finkelstein's southern 'Ajlun region contains part of Mittmann's western area as well as his southern area. See Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 116-117.

acknowledge the biblical ascription of these territories to Manasseh as a historiographical maneuver rather than a social reality.

4.3.1 Iron I Northern Jordan

During Iron I, northern Jordan was more densely occupied than were the other areas of the greater east Jordan highlands. While there is a notable shift in its settlement pattern during this time, the region nonetheless exhibits a greater degree of settlement continuity with the preceding LBA period than do the other eastern highland units, a phenomenon similar to that in Iron I northern Samaria.[346] Its transition from the LBA II to Iron Age I is generally characterized as peaceful since all the LBA II sites continued in use and the number of new sites increased.[347]

Northern Jordan Iron I Survey Results

From 15 LBA II sites, the number of Iron I sites in northern Jordan rises to 73.[348] The pattern of settlement also changes. During the LBA, 12 sites were located in the agriculturally rich, northern Irbid plains, while there is evidence for only three settlements in the hilly Ajlun region. During the Iron I in Irbid, all the LBA II settlements continued to be occupied although on a somewhat smaller scale and 19 new,

[346] Larry Herr and Muhammad Najjar, "The Iron Age," in Burton MacDonald, Russell Adams, and P. Bienkowski, eds., *The Archaeology of Jordan,* Levantine Archaeology 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001): 323.

[347] Chang-Ho C. Ji, "Iron Age I in Central and Northern Transjordan: An Interim Summary of Archaeological Data," *PEQ* 127 (1995): 128-130.

[348] Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordlandes,* 256-264; Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement,* 116-117. Note that Mittman ascribed most of the new Iron I settlement in this region to the Arameans; see. 226-228.

small sites appeared, which extended the settlement area throughout most of the plain. In the Ajlun hills there is evidence for 39 new sites during this period, most of them very small and exhibiting limited remains. Thus, during Iron I we find growth in Irbid as well as a notable expansion in the southern Ajlun region for the first time.

Northern Jordan Iron I Excavations

At Tell el-Fukhar, close to the modern Jordanian-Syrian border, the LBA palace was abandoned toward the end of the Late Bronze II and replaced by a village during the Late Bronze/Early Iron I transition period (late 13th –early 12th centuries BCE, or Early Iron IA period).[349] Ottosson notes that there is no evidence of cultural or demographic change during this time; the pottery repertoire contains a mixture of Late Bronze and Early Iron I types (including collar-rim jars) and the inhabitants kept the same domestic areas as the previous occupants.[350] The Iron IA town, however, was larger than that of earlier periods and its inhabitants extended the previous city wall. The excavators uncovered a pillared house above a LBA II pavement and numerous mortars, pestles and grinding stones, which suggests that the town's inhabitants were agriculturalists. There appears to have been a gradual abatement of settlement during Iron I, followed by a long-term occupational gap.[351]

At Tell Irbid (perhaps biblical Beth Arbel), excavators identified two phases of occupation: Phase 2 dating from 1300/1200-1150/1100 BCE and Phase 1 dating from

[349] Strange, "The Late Bronze Age," 283.

[350] Ottosson, "The Iron Age of Northern Transjordan," 97-103.

[351] Ottosson, "The Iron Age of Northern Transjordan," 99-103; see also Ji, "Iron Age I in Central and Northern Transjordan," 125-126.

1150/1100-800 BCE.[352] The Phase 2 settlement featured a strong, basalt fortification wall, a tower and a two-story structure containing cultic vessels. A destruction around 1150/1100 BCE seems to be limited to the northwestern end of the site. The affected buildings were immediately reconstructed in Phase 1, however, and the ceramic repertoire following the destruction remained the same as that before it pointing to settlement or cultural continuity. In Phase 1, a domestic building associated with an industrial installation was found, which the excavators suggest was for wine. A number of Iron Age tombs were unearthed near the tell whose finds sugges the area was continuously occupied from the end of the Late Bronze Age through the Iron II period.[353]

At Jerash, Iron I pottery finds include collared-rim jars, S shaped bowls, large coarse plates and cooking pots. The excavator, Frank Braemer, maintains that close stratification between floors dating to the LB/Iron I period indicates continuity in settlement during this time.[354]

4.3.2 Iron Age Golan and Hauran

As noted above, archaeological surveys from the Golan and Hauran regions do not distinguish between the Iron I and II periods, but simply denote the presence of 'Iron Age' remains. In the sections below, we will first discuss the general picture of Iron Age

[352] C.J. Lenzen, R.L. Gordon, A.M. McQuitty, "Excavations at Tell Irbid and Beit Ras, 1985," *ADAJ* 29 (1985): 151-159; C. Lenzen, "Tell Irbid and Its Context: A Problem in Archaeological Interpretation," *BN* 42 (1988): 31.

[353] Dajani dated Tomb A from 1000-850 BCE; Tomb B from the second quarter of the thirteenth century to the end of the ninth century BCE, Tomb C from 900-800 BCE; and Tomb D from 1350 to 1100 BCE. See, R. W. Dajani, "Four Iron Age Tombs from Irbid," *ADAJ* 11 (1966): 88-101.

[354] Frank Braemer, "Two Campaigns of Excavations on the Ancient Tell of Jarash," *ADAJ* 31 (1987): 527.

settlement in these regions afforded by the data and then break out Iron I and II information available from excavations as applicable.

Iron Age Golan Survey Results

Settlement in the Golan increased during the Iron Age, and both survey and excavation data suggest a degree of continuity from the LBA period. From approximately 23 LBA sites, there is evidence for Iron Age occupation at more than 60 sites. Whereas the LBA settlements were mostly fortified settlements along the main routes in southern Golan,[355] the Iron Age sites are found throughout the wider Golan region: 22 in southern Golan, 14 in central Golan and 30 in northern Golan.[356] Most of the Late Bronze sites remained in use during this time, likely pointing to a relative degree of stability in southern Golan. Due to the nature of the survey data, however, it is not possible to determine whether the increases should be attributed to the early or late part of the Iron period. In this southern region, we also find that a number of fortified settlements and small forts were newly established at strategic locations in the Iron Age.

[355] Claire Epstein, "Golan: Chalcolithic Period to the Iron Age," *NEAEHL* 2:533.

[356] Epstein, "Golan: Chalcolithic Period to the Iron Age," 2:534.

Iron I Golan Excavations[357]

At Tel Soreg, a small settlement (< one acre) in the souther Golan Heights overlooking the 'En Gev River, pottery finds suggest that the site was occupied during the LBA and Iron I periods. Iron I finds include a collared-rim jar the excavators described as "of the type common then in the Gilead," which suggests some type of relationship between these two regions. [358]

At Tel Hadar, a 2.5-acre mound on the eastern shore of the Galilee, pottery sherds suggest that the site was occupied during the LBA although this stratum has not been examined. The impressive Iron I site (11th century BCE, Stratum II) featured massive fortification walls and a large public building containing both a tri-partite pillared hall and an above-ground granary complex. Pottery finds include both local wares (e.g., egg-shaped jars, cooking pots, bowls) and foreign objects (e.g., Phoenician bichrome flasks and jugs; bowls with incised rims similar to those found at Irbid and Tell el-Hammah in the central Jordan Valley).[359] The excavators hold that the site was a royal citadel of kingdom of Geshur that served some type of defensive, economic and commercial function. While their attribution of this site to the kingdom of Geshur seems biblically inspired, the material evidence is nonetheless distinct from that in west Jordan.[360] At

[357] A few scholars have argued that during the Iron I the Golan belonged to the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah and thus should not be considered part of Bashan. For this view, see Benjamin Mazar, "Geshur and Maacah," *JBL* 80 (1961): 16-17; Moshe Kochavi, Timothy Renner, Ira Spar and Esther Yadin, "Rediscovered! The Land of Geshur," *BAR* 18:04, Jul/Aug 1992.

[358] Kochavi, "Soreg, Tel," *NEAEHL* 4:1410.

[359] Kochavi, "Hadar, Tel," *NEAEHL* 2:551.

[360] Kochavi, "Hadar, Tel," 2:551.

some point during the 11th century BCE, the site was destroyed by a strong fire and was subsequently abandoned for at least 100 years.

Iron Age Hauran Survey Results

It is not possible to provide more than summary notes on Iron Age settlement in the Hauran although evidence from archaeological soundings suggests some indication of LBA – Iron continuity. Iron remains have been found at four sites, and possible Iron remains at 11 sites.[361] The majority of these sites are located in western Hauran, near or along wadis in the southern part of the region; most were fortified and 10 are described as villages or tells. In the eastern part of the Hauran, there are very few LBA or Iron remains.[362]

Iron I Hauran Soundings

The city of Ashtaroth is widely identified with Tell 'Ashtara, located north of the Yarmuk River 34 km east of the Sea of Galilee.[363] Ashtaroth appears to have been an important settlement in ancient times, as it is mentioned in both Egyptian and Ugaritic

[361] Frank Braemer, "Prospections archéologiques dans le Hawran (Syrie). III." *Syria* 70/1-2 (1993): 166-70. While Braemer's summary chart suggests that there were no LBA finds, elsewhere he does refer to LBA sites.

[362] Braemer notes that insufficient surveying and an inability to recognize LBA ceramics may partially explain this finding. Braemer, "Prospections archéologiques dans le Hawran (Syrie). III"

[363] See Macdonald, 152 and the sources cited therein; William Albright, "Bronze Age Mounds of Northern Palestine and the Hauran: The Spring Trip of the School in Jerusalem," *BASOR* 19 (1925): 15; Edward Lipinski, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches*, 228.

sources.[364] William Albright's 1925 sounding of the site revealed pottery from the Late Bronze Age and "the first two phases of Early Iron."[365]

Biblical Edrei is identified as modern Dera'a, a town located on a tributary of Wadi Yarmuk on the modern Syrian-Jordanian border roughly 100 km south of Damascus.[366] Albright's 1925 sounding of the site revealed sherds from the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages.[367]

4.3.3 Iron II Northern Jordan

The Iron II evidence in northern Jordan is difficult to interpret. While survey evidence points to a mixed picture of settlement increase and decline in the region's two areas, the data covers a nearly 500-year period from 1000 to ca. 550 BCE and it is not possible to determine the chronological relationship between the increase and decrease. Excavations using a narrower time frame for Iron II, however, indicate that a number of towns were destroyed or abandoned during this period. It is also unclear whether Israel or Aram Damascus controlled the region. The biblical text, which is one of the major

[364] Macdonald, *East of the Jordan,* 152 and the sources cited therein; see also Lipinski, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age,* 228; cf, Lipinski, *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture and Religion,* 365 and references cited therein.

[365] Albright, "Bronze Age Mounds of Northern Palestine and the Hauran," 15; Macdonald, *East of the Jordan,* 152-153.

[366] See Macdonald, *East of the Jordan,* 108 and references therein.

[367] William F. Albright, "Bronze Age Mounds of Northern Palestine and the Hauran," 16; cf, Macdonald, 108. It should, however, be noted that according to Frank Braemer's summary of sites surveyed in the Hauran region, there were no Iron finds at Edrei. See Braemer, "Prospections archéologiques dans le Hawran (Syrie). III," 166.

sources of information on Damascus during this time,[368] describes warfare between the two nations in northern Jordan (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:6-22; 20; 22; 2 Kgs 6:8-7:20).[369] Ceramic evidence points to an Aramean presence in the area although this presence does not necessarily indicate hegemony. Many scholars maintain that Damascus' reach extended to northern Jordan in the mid-8th century BCE in light of a text from the Assyrian ruler Tiglath-Pileser III.[370] The text in question, however, is a modern (re)construction, created by cutting and pasting portions of several extant inscriptions into one. Since it is

[368] For example, understands the biblical texts as historical literature and relies on them in his reconstruction of Aram-Damascus' history from its creation through 8th century BCE. See Lipinski, *The Arameans,* 50; see also Wayne T. Pitard, *Ancient Damascus: A Historical Study of the Syrian City-State from Earliest Times until its Fall to the Assyrians in 732 BCE* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995).

[369] The Tel Dan Stela, a mid-9th century BCE text describing Aram-Damascus' victory over parts of northern Israel (the northern Galilee), seems to support the biblical accounts, though it does not tell us anything about the extent of Damascus' reach in the Transjordan.

[370] The text in question is Tadmor's reconstruction of a Tiglath Pileser III text. This reconstruction reads, "The widespread [land of Beth] Hazael in its entirety from M[ount Leba]non as far as the town of Gilead and the town of Abel-Beth-Maacah which are on the borderland of the land of Beth Omri I restored to the territory of Assyria." See Hayim Tadmor, "The Southern Border of Aram," *IEJ* 12 (1962): 115-18. However, this text does not exist; Tadmor has combined three individual texts to form the single continuous phrase above. Lines 6-7 of Text III R 10,2, a summary inscription from Nimrud, read, "the town of Ga-al-a-[za] [ ] Abil-May[ ] which are on the border of the land of Bet-Omri.....the widespread [land of ……]li in its en[tirety] I brought back within the border of Assyria." Lines 3-4 of a summary text known as ND 4301 + 4305 read, "the widespread [land of Bet-]Hazael in its entirety from…… [which is on the bor]der of the land of Bet Omri, into the territory of Assyria [I brought back]." By combining these with K 2649 rev. lines 3-4, Tadmor comes up with his full text. Yet the individual texts do not necessarily have anything to do with one another. While it is possible that the text mentioning the annexation of the land of Bet-Hazael (aka, Damascus) does refer to the area extending south to Gilead, this is pure conjecture. This point has been well articulated by S.A. Irvine, "The Southern Border of Syria Reconstructed" *CBQ* 56 (1994): 21-41. Based primarily on this reconstructed Tiglath Pileser III text and the biblical texts (e.g., II Kgs 10:32-3), Lipinski claims "It should be stressed here that a large part of the concerned area [Gilead] belonged in the 8th century B.C. to Aram-Damascus, not Israel, and that this was the prevalent situation since the reign of Hazael, with only a short interval of Israelite occupation under Jeroboam II, in the second quarter of the 8th century." Lipinski, *The Arameans,* 354. In light of the comments above, Lipinski's certainty seems rather overstated. Ahlström also relies on the reconstructed text in his comments on Damascus' territorial holdings; see Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine*, 639.

problematic to draw definitive historical conclusions from a hypothetical text, we must be aware that this ascription is tentative.

Iron II Northern Jordan Survey Results

In his northern Jordan survey, Mittmann's Iron II designation spans the period from 1000 – ca. 550 BCE. According to Finkelstein's re-division of Mittmann's survey area (described above),[371] Iron II settlement in the northern Irbid region increased to 34 sites. 20 of these sites continued from previous Iron I settlements, suggesting a relative degree of settlement continuity and stability in this region, while 14 of the sites were newly founded during this period. In the southern Ajlun region, the number of sites decreased to 15 (from 42 Iron I sites), pointing to settlement abandonment although again over a roughly 500 year period. 12 of the 15 Iron II sites continued from previous Iron I sites, while 3 were newly founded. Yet Thomas Thompson notes that the Ajlun settlement appears to be centered in larger villages "in ecological areas that support extensive terracing and which are more accessible to water resources."[372] C. H. Ji argues that settlement patterns in northern Jordan during late Iron I/early Iron II differed from those in the more southerly east Jordanian highland regions. Whereas the southern regions appear to have experienced increased settlement in early Iron I followed by a

[371] Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs-und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordlandes,* 256-64; Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*, 116-117.

[372] Thomas L. Thompson, *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 295.

period of abatement in late Iron I/early Iron II and settlement recovery in Iron II B and II C, northern Jordan shows no sign of this late Iron I/early Iron II abatement.[373]

Iron II Northern Jordan Excavations

At Irbid, Phase 1 extends from 1100 – 800 BCE and therefore includes the Iron II period; see the summary of Irbid above. The site was apparently abandoned after 800 BCE.

At Tell Fukhar, no remains from the Iron II A-B periods were discovered. It therefore appears that the site was abandoned following the settlement abatement in Iron I.

At Jerash, Braemer notes that Iron II pottery is represented by cooking pots with profiled rims, large globular bowls, hole mouth jars, and fragments of red slip burnished ware. While he maintains that settlement expanded during the "Iron Age period," (by which he presumably means the Iron II period?) he does not provide more detailed information.[374]

At Tell er-Rumeith (possibly biblical Ramoth-Gilead), the excavator Paul Lapp identified four Iron Age II strata dating from the 10th – 8th centuries BCE.[375] In the 10th century Stratum VIII, he identified a walled structure (approx. 37m x 32 m) as a fort and

[373] Ji, "Iron Age I in Central and Northern Transjordan."

[374] Braemer, "Two Campaigns of Excavations on the Ancient Tell of Jarash," 527.

[375] This identification follows that proposed by Paul W. Lapp, *The Tale of the Tell*, Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series Number 5 (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1975), 116; cf, Ottosson, *Gilead*, 32-34. Others however, argue that Tall al-Husn located south of Irbid is a better choice for Ramoth Gilead. See Macdonald, *East of the Jordan*, 202 and the references cited therein.

uncovered a small amount of pottery he described as "a typical Palestinian repertory."[376] Larry Herr and Mohammed Najjar, however, suggest that the structure was likely a small fortified settlement, primarily domestic in nature, noting that the wall is relatively thin.[377] This fort/fortified enclosure was destroyed by fire near the beginning of the ninth century BCE. It was rebuilt in Stratum VII, at which point an outer wall was added. The pottery from this stratum reflects a Syrian tradition, which suggests Aramean occupation of the site. This settlement was destroyed in the mid-ninth century BCE. In Stratum VI, dated to around 800 BCE, two-room houses were found beyond the fortified enclosure, in the southeast area of the site. Although Lapp does not specifically identify the pottery from Stratum VI as Syrian, he labels it as a Syrian stratum. In Stratum V, occupation to the southeast of the fort continued, and a copper-refining kiln was discovered. The destruction of this stratum has been assigned to the Assyrian campaigns in the region ca. 733 BCE.

4.3.4 Iron II Golan Excavations

Excavations in Golan primarily have been carried out in the southern part of the region and the Iron II evidence suggests that most of this area was occupied, if not controlled, by Arameans. The small Iron II site of Tel Soreg appears to have continued from Iron I. The excavators posit it was an agricultural settlement based on the nature of

[376] Lapp, *The Tale of the Tell*, 116.

[377] Herr and Najjar, "The Iron Age," 318.

the small finds. During the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, a small casemate fort was built on the northeast portion of the site.[378]

At Tel Hadar, following an occupation gap in the 11th century that lasted nearly 200 years, settlement resumed in the 9th- 8th centuries BCE (Stratum I) although on a smaller scale and according to a completely different plan. The excavators suggest this settlement was a village occupied by farmers and fishermen. Finds from this stratum include a Semitic (Aramaic?) inscription that appears to contain part of a name and a nude female figurine holding a tambourine. The site was abandoned sometime during the mid- 8th century BCE.[379]

'En Gev (Kh. Al-Asheq, possibly biblical Aphek), a 7-8 acre town on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, appears to have been a major administrative center in the region during Iron II. Built during the 10th or 9th century BCE, this fortified city featured both a lower residential section and a northern citadel. Moshe Kochavi and Akio Tsukimoto suggest it was probably part of a wave of Aramean settlement on the northeastern shores of the Galilee during this time.[380] Outlining its stratigraphy is difficult since recent excavations, though incomplete, suggest a different dating than that proposed in Benjamin Mazar's 1961 sounding.[381] One of the strongest casemate walls in

[378] Kochavi, "Soreg, Tel" 4:1410.

[379] Kochavi, "Hadar, Tel" 2:551-2.

[380] Moshe Kochavi and Akio Tsukimoto, "'En Gev: Renewed Excavations," *NEAEHL* 5 (Supplementary Volume), 1725-6.

[381] Mazar identified five Iron II strata in the lower city and four in the citadel; more recent excavations in the citadel revealed five strata, two of which date to Iron II, one to the Persian period, and the rest to periods thereafter. See, Benjamin Mazar, "'En Gev: Excavations on the Mound," *NEAEHL* 2:410; Moshe Kochavi, "'En Gev: Recent Excavations," *NEAEHL* 2:412; Kochavi and Tsukimoto, "'En Gev," 5:1725-6.

the region surrounded the lower city in what Mazar labeled Stratum IV (mid-10th – early 9th century BCE by his dating). Finds from his Stratum III city (886-838 BCE) include an Aramaic inscription and a mixture of Syrian pottery and pottery with parallels in central and northern Israel. Iron II remains from the citadel (Strata V and IV) include three large, tripartite pillared buildings. The city appears to have been destroyed during the Assyrian invasion of 732 BCE.

Iron II Hauran Soundings

Ashtaroth: Albright's sounding of the site appears to have revealed Iron II remains although he maintained that there was no indication of an important settlement here after the early part of the first millennium.[382] The city is depicted on a mid-8th century BCE Assyrian relief from Tiglath-Pileser III's palace at Calah as a fortified town from which Assyrian soldiers are deporting residents and their cattle, a depiction which seems to support Albright's findings.[383]

Edrei: As noted above, Albright's sounding suggests that Edrei/modern Der 'a was occupied during this time.

4.3.5 Iron III Northern Jordan and Golan (732-586, Assyrian Period):

Between 734-732 BCE, the Assyrian ruler Tiglath-Pileser III led a number of campaigns against the kingdoms of Damascus and Israel, including the east Jordan

[382] Albright, "Bronze Age Mounds of Northern Palestine and the Hauran," 15; cf, Macdonald 152-3.

[383] See Lipinski, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age,* 228 and the references cites therein; cf. Lipinski, *The Arameans,* 365.

region, which ultimately which resulted in Assyrian control of these territories.[384] A number of scholars have proposed that Gilead subsequently became an Assyrian province although Na'aman notes that here is no textual evidence to support this idea.[385] It is not possible to determine the settlement patterns in northern Jordan, the Golan, or Hauran during this time due to the nature of the survey data although evidence from excavations suggests that the two former regions experienced significant decline during this time.

Iron III Northern Jordan Excavations

At Tell Fukhar, following an occupation gap that appears to have lasted from the end of the Iron I A period to Iron IIB (9^{th} -8^{th} centuries), there is evidence of a threshing floor and several stone dressed silos in the Iron II C (or Iron III) period. However, there was no town on the site during this time.

At Jerash, it appears that the town was abandoned after the seventh century BCE and remained without settlement until the middle of the second century BCE.

[384] While Tiglath-Pileser III's inscriptions contain no direct evidence of Assyria's annexation of the Transjordan, K. Lawson Younger, Jr. argues that there are nonetheless several reasons to assume this was the case. See K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "The Deportations of the Israelites," *JBL* 117/2 (1998): 203. Younger he notes that Tiglath-Pileser's Summary Inscription 13 (lines 17'-18') states that the ruler had devastated Israel in his former campaigns and "isolated Samaria," which he views as an allusion to the king's capture of the areas outside Samaria. He also notes that the inscriptions of Sargon II refer only to the annexation of Samaria, which would imply that the rest of the Israelite kingdom was already under Assyrian control. He further argues that given Tiglath-Pileser's habit of annexing territory to Assyria, it seems unlikely that he would have not have followed this practice following his campaigns in Transjordan.

[385] Nadav Na'aman, "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of Gilead," in *Ancient Israel and its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction, Collected Essays, Vol. 1,* ed. Nadav Na'aman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005): 46 n.10. See also, Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, 331-332; Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 332-333; Bustenay Oded, "Observations on Methods of Assyrian Rule in Transjordania after the Palestinian Campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III," *JNES* 29 (1970): 177-186.

At Tell er-Rumeith, following the ca. 733 BCE destruction of Stratum V, it appears that the houses were re-used for a short time thereafter.

Iron III Golan Excavations

There is no evidence for the Iron III period in this region.

4.3.6 Persian Period Golan Excavations

There is some evidence of minimal occupation at both Tel Soreg and ‘En Gev during the Persian period but we cannot speculate further on the nature of the region during this time.

4.4 Relationship Between the East and West Regions of Manasseh

The relationship between the areas the Bible describes as east and west Manasseh is unclear, if in fact it existed at all. On one level this is a problem of data. Not only is the biblical information on east Manasseh extremely vague, so that we can only offer a rough estimation of its territory, but also the nature of the archaeological remains in northern Jordan and the Hauran prevent us from drawing definitive conclusions on the material in these regions.

That being said, both Manassite units are located in topographically similar regions – the northern central hill country of west Jordan and the northern east Jordan highlands – that contain moderate, agriculturally fertile areas such that they share at least a broad physical likeness. The two regions feature similar Iron I settlement patterns: both witnessed a notable degree of continued occupation from the LBA into Iron I periods,

though this is perhaps more pronounced in northern Jordan, and both were more densely settled than were their neighboring southern regions during this time. Pottery finds from some east Jordan Iron I sites (e.g. LBA/Iron I Jerash, Tell el-Fukhar, Tel Soreg) appear to show similarities to Iron I pottery in the west Jordan northern central hills region although most of these ceramics (collared-rim jars and S-shaped bowls) are characteristic of other parts of the greater west Jordan highlands as well. While the Iron I ceramic repertoires of Mt. Ebal and the "Bull Site" in west Jordan show some similarities to finds from the Deir 'Alla region and the Baq 'ah Valley in the Central East Jordan Valley, both of these latter regions are located south of the northern Jordan highlands and therefore do not speak to any connection between the "Manassite" regions.[386]

It is difficult to discern a connection between the eastern and western halves of Manasseh during the Iron II period although again some of this difficulty stems from the nature of the east Jordan data. Both northern Jordan and the Golan show evidence of settlement disruption as well as some degree of Aramean presence although when during the Iron II is not clear. Indications of Aramean presence, if not hegemony, are especially pronounced in southern Golan, which appears to have thrived for a time. In the northern central highlands of west Jordan while there appears to be some degree of settlement disruption in early Iron II, the region flourished during the later part of this period.

The east and west regions appear to have experienced decline following the mid-8th century BCE Assyrian conquest although the west Jordan northern central highlands revived during the Persian period. Due to the nature of the available data from east Jordan, however, it is not possible to offer comparisons of the two regions beyond Iron II.

[386] Eveline J. van der Steen, "The Central East Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages," *BASOR* 302 (1996): 61.

CHAPTER 5

MANASSEH AS TEXT

While Chapters 2 through 4 focused on Manasseh as a tribe and as a territory, this chapter examines Manasseh as a textual or literary construct, looking at the ways in which it is portrayed and functions in the biblical materials. As a tribe often described as spanning the eastern and western sides of the Jordan, Manasseh is an entity whose very makeup challenges the bifurcation, if not dichotomy, between territory east and territory west of the Jordan River frequently expressed in the biblical texts. Since Manasseh is a site in which east and west meet, the tribe should ostensibly mitigate some of the tension the biblical writers feel toward east Jordan, at least from a conceptual point of view. However, the manner in which the tribe is portrayed often, if somewhat paradoxically, reinforces the distinction between east and west and at the same time re-inscribes the ambiguity of the eastern region. The biblical traditions about Manasseh fall into two distinct thematic categories. One group of traditions focuses on Manasseh's relationship with the tribe of Ephraim. In these materials Manasseh largely appears as a western entity or at the very least in those instances when it seems to be conceived as an east-west tribe there is some tension over its eastern status. A second group of traditions relates to Manasseh as an eastern, and therefore east-west tribal entity, although there is a degree of ambiguity over its eastern status in this material.

5.1 Manasseh's Close Relationship with Ephraim

One of the main Manassite traditions centers on its close relationship with Ephraim, a relationship that distinguishes these two from the other tribes in the wider Jacobite/Israelite family although one that occasionally appears contested. The texts articulate the two tribes' ties in differing ways although the varying manifestations tend to conceptualize and highlight Manasseh as a western entity rather than an eastern one, just as Ephraim is located only in the west. Certain texts emphasize Manasseh and Ephraim's geographical proximity (Josh 16-18). Others frame the tribes' connection in genealogical terms and variously cast their eponymous ancestors as brothers descended from Joseph or depict them as subgroups of a wider Joseph tribe. Still others texts treat the two tribes as a pair without specifying the nature of their connection to one another.

The frequency with which Manasseh is linked with Ephraim is particularly striking since many scholars today agree that the tribes were initially independent entities.[387] The processes through which they came to be associated with one another and with Joseph, however, are unclear. Since the dating of the biblical texts is such a fraught undertaking, it does not seem possible to reconstruct the diachronic development of these relationships with any certainty. I will therefore discuss the varying manifestations of the tribes' relationship thematically, addressing historical-critical issues when necessary.

[387]The Song of Deborah (Judg 5:14-18), which is often considered among the oldest biblical texts, mentions Ephraim but neither Manasseh nor Joseph. Although many scholars assume that the mention of Machir (5:14) is intended as a reference to Manasseh, as discussed in Chap. 1 I do not find the arguments behind this assumption compelling. However, even if we accept Machir as a substitute for Manasseh, aside from the fact that Machir and Ephraim are among the entities who fought the Canaanites, there is still no indication within this text that they have a special relationship with one another.

5.1.1. Geographical Proximity

As noted in Chapter 3, Joshua 16-17 describes Manasseh and Ephraim as neighboring, contiguous tribes with the former situated immediately north of the latter. This material further casts the two tribal territories as a single, wider geographical unit that broadly corresponds to the northern half of the greater highlands region (Josh 16:1-4, 17:14-18; cf. 18:11 and possibly 1 Kgs 4). I will discuss the phenomenon of this joint Manasseh-Ephraim tribe in more detail below and will here simply point out that the depiction of the tribes' composite territory highlights their close ties.

5.1.2 Genealogical Connection: Eponyms as Full Brothers

Another expression of Manasseh's close ties to Ephraim is the casting of their ancestral eponyms as full brothers descended from Joseph, a genealogical tradition contained within the Joseph novella (Gen 37-50). Gen 41:50-52 briefly recounts the births of Manasseh and Ephraim to Joseph and his Egyptian wife in Egypt while Joseph was serving in Pharaoh's administration (cf. Gen 46:8-27).[388] The etymologies of the ancestors' names in these verses explicitly connect them to Joseph and implicitly to Egypt, and that provided for Ephraim arguably links him to Manasseh. The elder Manasseh's name (*mĕnaššeh* from the root *nšh* "to forget") is said to derive from

[388] The information in Gen 41:50-52 is recast within a more comprehensive genealogy of Jacob's family in Gen 46:8-27, which lists his descendants who migrated to Egypt. This genealogy, which is widely accepted as a late Priestly composition, explicitly connects the Manasseh and Ephraim with Jacob in contrast to the implicit connection between these figures in chapter 41. It also offers a concise snapshot of the ancestors' position within the wider Jacob family. V. 20 reads "The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin; and to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenat, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore him." Notably, Joseph's wife, Asenat, is the only mother named among the generation after Jacob in 46:8-27, which highlights her non-Israelite origin and by extension may allude to the mixed background of her sons.

Joseph's desire to forget his father's house in Canaan ("God has made me [Joseph] forget all my toil and all my father's house" (Gen 41:51). The younger, Ephraim (*'eprayim* from the root *prh,* ""fruitful"), is named because "God has caused me [Joseph] to be fruitful in the land of my suffering/affliction" (Gen 41:52). While scholars widely understand "Ephraim" as a geographical name that derives from the territorial region of Mt. Ephraim in which the tribe was situated, in this unit the name is related to Joseph's fecundity in Egypt. [389] If we take the dual ending on *'eprayim* as suggesting that Joseph has been doubly fruitful since he has not one son but two, we find that Ephraim's very name ties him to Manasseh.

This understanding of the ancestors Manasseh and Ephraim as brothers also underlies Gen 48, a narrative that recounts Jacob's blessing of the two and essentially legitimates the status of the tribes descended from them. In this text, the figures' sibling relationship serves an etiological function that explains the close relationship between their respective tribes. At the same time, the story's emphasis on how the younger Ephraim came to supplant the elder Manasseh possibly points to some degree of stress between the two tribes, a phenomenon I will discuss in the following section.

The chapter unfolds with a notice that the patriarch Jacob lay ill and dying, which leads Joseph to bring his sons Manasseh and Ephraim to him for blessing (Gen 48:1-2). On their arrival, Jacob recalls the divine promises he has received of progeny and land and then declares that he is "adopting" Manasseh and Ephraim as his own sons, thereby

[389] See Noth, *The History of Israel,* 60. Claus Westermann notes that the etymology following *p.r.h.* could be relevant to Ephraim as a territorial name. See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37-50,* trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1986), 84 n. 52a.

giving them equal status with his natural-born sons (vv. 3-7).[390] After Joseph formally presents Manasseh and Ephraim to Jacob for their blessing (vv. 8-13), Jacob switches the position of his hands so that the younger Ephraim will receive the blessing intended for the first-born Manasseh (v. 14). Jacob's blessing, which curiously begins as a blessing of Joseph (v. 15a), explicitly links Manasseh and Ephraim to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (15b-16). [391] Although Joseph attempts to correct the position of his father's hands so that Manasseh will receive the blessing for the firstborn (vv. 17-18), Jacob insists that his positioning is intentional: "he [Manasseh] also will become a people and he also will be great; but truly his younger brother (*'āḥîw haqqātōn)* will be greater than he and his seed will become a multitude of nations" (v. 19). V. 20 contains what many consider a second blessing of the boys "By you will Israel bless, saying 'May Elohim make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh'" and then states that Jacob "set Ephraim before Manasseh." The final two verses of the narrative contain Jacob's instructions for his burial and a somewhat obscure note that he has given Joseph one more *šekem* (perhaps "portion"?) than his brothers.

While the redaction history of this chapter is debated, scholars widely agree that vv. 3-7, 15-16 are later Priestly additions to the narrative.[392] Leaving the Priestly

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[390] It is widely accepted that the text is here referring to formal recognition rather than literal adoption. As Claus Westermann notes, this act is "meant as legitimation because the sons remain with their parents, and it is a subsequent legitimation which refers only to their future as fathers of tribes." Westermann, *Genesis 37-50,* 185.

[391] The MT text of v. 15a reads "And he [Jacob] blessed Joseph and said….", which implies that the blessing is, at least in part, intended for Joseph. The LXX, Syriac and Vulgate read "And he [Jacob] blessed them." Since the MT has the more difficult reading, the other versions likely reflect an emended text.

[392] See e.g. Westermann, *Genesis 37-50,* 178-92; 213-14; David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 112-13.

materials aside for the moment, we are left with a text in which the portrayal of Manasseh and Ephraim's familial standing justifies the existence of and relationship between their future respective tribes. Both figures receive Jacob's special blessing because of their status as the sons of his (favored) son Joseph and are plainly cast as tribal ancestors since each will "become a people" (v. 19). The characterization of Manasseh as the elder brother and Ephraim as the younger is a key motif of the story (vv. 1, 13-14, 17-18) that ultimately serves as a foil explaining Ephraim's precedence over Manasseh (vv. 19-20).[393] Interestingly, however, even though Ephraim is granted precedence, Jacob's second (?) blessing treats the two as a pair, if not as equals, indicating that when future generations invoke a blessing they will name both tribes/ancestors ("May Elohim make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh" v. 20). This pairing of the two, which emphasizes their close connection without specifically describing the nature of their relationship, recurs in several other texts (e.g. Deut 34:2; Deut 33; Is 9:20; Ps 60:8, 108:9).

The final Priestly form of the narrative, which includes Jacob's "adoption" of Manasseh and Ephraim as his sons (vv. 3-7), more explicitly legitimizes the (Israelite) status of their tribes since Jacob' sons are portrayed as the progenitors of the Israelite tribes in other Pentateuchal materials. In fact, vv. 15-16, which tie Manasseh and Ephraim to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, cast them, and by extension the tribes descended from them, as the inheritors of the patriarchal promises.

At first glance, the casting of Manasseh and Ephraim as brothers is not necessarily surprising since the other Israelite tribal ancestors are conceptualized through the

[393] Indeed, the narrative tension of the story is simply and elegantly heightened through the manner in which the protagonists variously relate to the boys – while Joseph presents Manasseh first (vv. 1, 8-13, 17-18) Jacob repeatedly inverts the order by placing Ephraim first (vv. 14, 19-20; cf, 5).

metaphor of brotherhood (Gen 29-30). Yet the idea that the two are connected through Joseph rather than Jacob is striking since it situates them within a somewhat different genealogical framework than the other ancestors, a maneuver that simultaneously signals and reinforces the distinct and particularly close ties between the tribes descended from them.[394] Especially when read against the backdrop of the wider Genesis story, Gen 48 and 41:50-52 emphasize Manasseh and Ephraim's unique relationship over against that of the other tribal founders: they are full brothers descended from Jacob's son Joseph whereas the other tribal ancestors are depicted as Jacob's immediate sons. Furthermore, while Jacob's other sons are described as having been born in Paddan-Aram or Canaan (Gen 29-30 and 35, respectively), Manasseh and Ephraim are the only two tribal eponyms whose origin is tied to Egypt and whose mother is Egyptian. Thus, not only is their ancestry distinct from the others but so too is their place of origin. At the same time, Manasseh and Ephraim ultimately occupy a special place within the wider Jacobite family. They are the sons of Jacob's favorite son Joseph, who himself was born to Jacob's favored wife Rachel. They are also the only two "grandsons" or third-generation members of Jacob's family to receive his blessing and to become "a people" or a tribe.

Yigal Levin suggests that these genealogical traditions about Manasseh and Ephraim are related to, if not a function of, the tribes' geographical proximity. To his mind "[I]t is…clear that the two most important tribes of the central hill country were not considered to be 'brothers', sons of Joseph, arbitrarily."[395] While Levin is undoubtedly correct that the tribes' physical proximity plays a role in their eponyms' putative

[394] While the idea that the other tribal ancestors are variously descended from one of four mothers (Leah, Rachel, Zilpah and Bilhah in Gen 29-30) allows for some degree of distinction between them/their respective tribes, these ancestors are all nonetheless portrayed as Jacob's direct sons.
[395] Levin, "Understanding Biblical Genealogies," 21-22.

genealogical relationship, proximity alone does not sufficiently explain this particular relationship since the ancestors of other neighboring Israelite tribes, although conceived of as brothers, are not full brothers like Manasseh and Ephraim. For example, Reuben and Gad are cast as half-brothers and Judah and Benjamin similarly appear as half-brothers (Joseph and Benjamin, however, are cast full brothers). Rather, Manasseh and Ephraim's particular genealogical connection suggests that their tribes have closer ties to one another than to most of the others.

Dating and Historical Setting of the Genealogical Material

The dating and provenance of the genealogical traditions about Manasseh and Ephraim are debated, in large part because of differing views on the dating of the wider Joseph story (Genesis 37-50) of which they are a part. Many scholars ascribe this story as a whole to the post-exilic or Persian period because of its "novella"-like structure,[396] and its mention of Persian (if not Ptolemaic) era Egyptian customs and habits,[397] among other arguments. A number of other scholars, however, posit that the story's narrative core and/or underlying traditions stem from a northern Israelite milieu and suggest that some of these genealogical traditions were known by the 8th century BCE or at least by the exilic period.[398] Those who hold this line of thought agree on the following: that

[396] Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, 3rd edition, MLBS (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 381-82; Friedemann W. Golka, "Genesis 37-50: Joseph Story or *Israel*-Joseph Story?" *Currents in Biblical Research* 2/2 (2004): 153-177 and the sources cited therein.

[397] Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Study of Joseph (Genesis 37-50)* VTSupp 20, (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 242-250.

[398] Although von Rad viewed the Joseph novella as a Solomonic period wisdom narrative, more recently scholars have argued that this wisdom narrative hypothesis untenable. See Gerhard von Rad, "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom,* ed.

Joseph was a northern ancestral figure, that some early version of the Joseph novella circulated in the northern kingdom prior to the 8th century BCE, and that this early Joseph tradition was combined with an early, independent Jacob tradition, the composite of which formed the basis for the greater Jacob-Joseph story found in Genesis. They differ, however, in where in this process they situate the traditions about Manasseh and Ephraim. Westermann sees 41:50-52 as part of an independent Joseph narrative dated to the early monarchial period and holds that chapter 48 is a separate, composite text of unclear origin that was woven into the Joseph-Jacob complex at some late(r) point.[399] David Carr views Gen 41:50-52 and Gen 48:1-2, 8-14, 17-20 as the first layer of tradition that bound the initially independent Joseph and Jacob narratives into a comprehensive whole, a process he dates to the early years of the Northern Kingdom.[400] To his mind then, these genealogical traditions are relatively speaking early and foundational. Rainer Albertz dates the Joseph novella to the eighth century BCE and argues that by the exilic

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James Crenshaw (New York, 1976), 439-447; Michael V. Fox, "Wisdom in the Joseph Story," *VT* 51 (2001): 26-41; Golka, "Genesis 37-50," 153-177. With respect to Gen 48 specifically, Raymond de Hoop argues that it contained a "pro-Joseph" layer dated to the Late Bronze or Early Iron I (48:1a, 2b, 8-11, 12, parts of 14 and 15, 21-22) and a "pro-Judah" layer dated to the United Monarchy (including 48:3-7, 9 and parts of 14 and 15) the latter of which sought to delegitimize Joseph's position by elevating Manasseh and Ephraim in his place. See Raymond de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context,* OTS 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1999). De Hoop's Late Bronze dating, however, is generally not accepted.

[399] Westermann, *Genesis 37-50,* 15-30, 178-92, 213-214. While Westermann holds that the Joseph story encompasses chapters 37-50, he argues that the dating and source of chapters 46-50, which contain Priestly materials, is unclear.

[400] Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis,* 302; cf. his wider discussion on the northern origins of the Joseph traditions, 277-89, 300-302. Carr sees this original ch. 48, in which the younger Ephraim supplants the elder Manasseh, as forming an inclusio with Gen 27, which describes Jacob's supplanting of his elder brother Esau. With respect to Gen 41:50-52, Carr notes that other scholars have isolated these verses as a later addition to the Joseph story and acknowledges that "Alternatively, it is possible that the author of 41:50-52 did insert this material into the Joseph story, and indeed did it partly to fill a perceived gap in the presentation of Joseph as an archetypical hero figure." 280, n. 140.

period, it had long circulated in its expanded form in which it was combined with the Jacob complex although his views on the Manassite-Ephraim material are not clear.[401]

While I do not necessarily agree that these materials can be dated to the early monarchic period, at least in any written form, it is likely that these genealogical traditions about these northern ancestral figures stem from a pre-exilic if not pre eighth-century BCE northern Israelite setting. To begin with, the notion of some type of close relationship between Manasseh and Ephraim recurs in biblical texts of myriad genres – narrative, prophetic and even the psalms, some of which may stem from a northern milieu. While in some texts the precise nature of their relationship cannot be ascertained, the fact that others envision the two tribes as subgroups of a wider Joseph tribe (as I will discuss below) seems to presuppose that they were already understood as connected to one another via Joseph. That is, the idea of "Joseph" as an umbrella term for the two tribes, which plays an important role in several of the Bible's tribal lists, seems based on some pre-existing conceptualization of the tribes as kin through Joseph. While it is conceivable that the casting of this familial relationship between Manasseh and Ephraim is simply a reflex of the parameters of the twelve-tribe system – in which the "need" to limit the number of tribes to twelve necessitated reorganizing the various tribal entities in some way – this explanation does not quite explain why the two are linked via Joseph rather than through Jacob as are all the other tribes. Furthermore, it is unclear why later southern authors/redactors responsible for the collation, editing and creation of the biblical material would invent traditions about the close relationship between two northern tribes that do not appear to relate to southern Judahite concerns in any way.

[401] Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (trans. David Green; SBL3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 263.

Rather, in broad strokes these traditions appear to reflect some type of cultural-historical memory about the strong link between these two northern groups.

5.1.3 Genealogical Connection: The Composite Joseph Tribe

Manasseh's close ties with Ephraim are also expressed through the conceptualization of the two as a composite group/tribe described under the rubric "Joseph" or "sons of Joseph," a characterization that most often appears in the Bible's various tribal lists. As noted in Chapter 1, the biblical texts contain (at least) two differing twelve-tribe systems: one system that features Manasseh and Ephraim but not Joseph, and a second system that features Joseph in place of Manasseh and Ephraim and includes Levi (e.g., Gen 29:31-30:24; Gen 35:23-26; Gen 49). Both systems operate within and maintain a twelve-entity framework although they include different members and possibly express different emphases. Whereas scholars up through the 1970's viewed the Joseph tribe as the original entity from which the subgroups Manasseh and Ephraim later emerged, many now agree that the idea of Joseph as a substitute or umbrella category for Manasseh and Ephraim is in fact the later development, which speaks to the constructed nature of Manasseh's image and/or portrayal.

There are certain textual and conceptual issues with the idea of the composite Joseph tribe that point to the constructed/ideological nature of the concept. First, the nature of this entity vis-à-vis that of the individual tribes themselves is not always clear. In certain tribal lists featuring Manasseh and Ephraim, the tribes are categorized under the rubric "Joseph/sons of Joseph" in what appears to be either an inadvertent mixing of the two list systems or possibly an attempt to correct the former in light of the latter;

within these particular composite lists, "Joseph" appears to be secondary administrative category, if not a somewhat meaningless one. For example, in the description of the first wilderness census in Num 1:20-46 after enumerating the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, vv. 32-35 describe "the sons of Joseph"/Manasseh and Ephraim as follows:

> of the sons of Joseph: of the children of Ephraim: the registration of the *mišpāḥôt* of their fathers' house, as listed by name age twenty years and older, all who were able to go out to war; those enrolled from the tribe of Ephraim were 40,500. Of the children of Manasseh: the registration of the *mišpāḥôt* of their fathers' house, as listed by name age twenty years and older, all who were able to go out to war; those enrolled from the tribe of Manasseh were 32,200.[402]

It is clear from this unit that Manasseh and Ephraim were considered distinct, independent tribes since from a mathematical standpoint each must be counted individually so that the census list features twelve entities. Manasseh and Ephraim are also described as formally similar to the other tribes enumerated in the text: like the others, each is labeled a tribe (*maṭṭeh* v. 33 and 35), and each is described as being comprised of *mišpāḥôt* and "fathers' houses" (*bêt 'bôt*).[403] While the inclusion of this information under the heading "sons of Joseph" signals some type of link between the two individual tribes, it is not clear what (other) purpose the Joseph designation serves in this context. A similar phenomenon occurs in Numbers 26, which forms an inclusio with

[402] For an overview of the various theories regarding the large numbers listed in the Numbers chapters, which most scholars view as unrealistic, see Eryl W. Davies, "A Mathematical Conundrum: The Problem of the Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI," *VT* 45 (1995): 449-69. Davies allows that the Priestly writers of these chapters intentionally used such large numbers to demonstrate the tribes' incredible, if not, miraculous growth during the Wilderness period. Mendenhall, however, argues that the numbers are not actually as large as they appear but that they represent later biblical writers' misunderstanding of earlier terms. In his view *'.l.p.* refers to a military unit. See George E. Mendenhall, "The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26," *JBL* 77 (1959): 52-66; see also Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh*, 270-76.

[403] For a discussion on the meaning of these terms, see Ch. 2.

Num 1.[404] While vv. 28 and 37b label Manasseh and Ephraim as the "sons of Joseph," the text otherwise treats the two as independent entities and the delineation of their respective constituent groups (Manasseh in vv. 28-34 and Ephraim in vv. 35-37a) is no different than that of the other tribes. Thus although their categorization as the sons of Joseph points to a connection between them, the rationale for and precise meaning of such a categorization in this context are unknown.

The two tribes are also cast as a composite Joseph entity in Joshua 13-19 although here too there is tension reconciling these varying images. As discussed in chapter 2, the descriptions of Ephraim's and Manasseh's tribal allotments in Josh 16 and 17, respectively, are bound by references to "the sons of Joseph" in 16:1-4 and 17:14-18 such that the outlines of their individual territories are cast within a framework describing the wider, combined Joseph entity. This notion of the Josephites as a geographical entity also recurs in Joshua 18, which describes Benjamin's territory as being situated between the "sons of Judah" in the south and the "sons of Joseph" in the north (Josh 18:5, 11). Yet as Richard Nelson notes, in Joshua 16 and 17 "the inclusive entity of Joseph exists in unresolved tension with the concept of two individual tribes…" insofar as certain details about the individual territories do not meld with the idea of a composite tribal group.[405] For example, while 16:1 and 17:14, 17 describe the children of Joseph as having received a single lot, 17:1 states that a lot went out for the tribe of Manasseh. The description of

[404] Interestingly, in both Num 1 and 26 one of the two Josephite members appears in the seventh position in tribal list, a position that generally appears to signal some type of prestige or honor. Ephraim appears in the seventh slot in Num 1:20-46 while Manasseh appears seventh in Num 26:28-34. See Jack M. Sasson, "A Genealogical 'Convention' in Biblical Chronography?" *ZAW* 90 (1978): 180-84.

[405] Nelson, *Joshua,* 201-05.

Manasseh as Joseph's first-born in 17:1b is awkward in its immediate context (and within the wider context of Josh 13-19 as a whole) and seems unnecessary unless it is intended to account for Manasseh's position within the greater Joseph tribe. In the description of Manasseh's northern border in 17:10, the use of the pronoun "they" is abrupt and unclear since up to this point Manasseh's borders have been described in the singular; this usage appears to have been intended to signal that Manasseh's northern boundary was also the boundary of the wider Joseph group. It therefore seems as though information about the individual tribal territories has been combined with, or perhaps overlaid with, the idea of a joint territory even though these two concepts do not necessarily dovetail on all points.

5.1.4 Joseph as a Western Tribal Entity

Another conceptual issue with the notion of the composite Joseph tribe is that it occasionally appears to represent solely a western entity, a phenomenon that stands in tension with the idea of Manasseh as an east-west tribe. In Joshua 16-17, the status of "sons of Joseph" is equivocal. Although Josh 17 ostensibly focuses on west Manasseh's territory, the chapter nonetheless opens with details about the tribe's west and east Jordan *mišpāḥôt* and regions (vv. 1-6) so that it ultimately appears as an east-west tribe.[406] It would therefore seem that the Joseph tribe, of which Manasseh forms a part, was also an

[406] We should, however, bear in mind that these opening verses appear to be a later addition to the details on the Manassite territory in 17:7-13 although their chronological relationship to 16:1-4 amd 17:14-18 is unclear. As noted in Chapter 2, Manasseh's eastern boundary is not explicitly described in Josh 17. Although its territorial allotment is included among those west of the Jordan River, which suggests that its eastern border lay somewhere west of the Jordan, the eastern boundaries of all the other western tribes that border the Jordan in some way are given: Judah (Josh 15), Ephraim (Josh 16), Benjamin (Josh 18) and Naphtali (Josh 19). The description of Manasseh's territory is anomalous in this respect and it is thus plausible that its eastern border was thought to correspond with the eastern border of east Manasseh.

east-west entity. The geographical information about the Joseph group, however, suggests otherwise. The boundaries of the "sons of Joseph" extend from Ephraim's southern border in the south (16:1-4) to west Manasseh's northern border in the north (Josh 17:10; likely the Jezreel Valley). Although the texts do not specify east Manasseh's borders, there is no indication that this group/region was bound by these particular northern and southern markers. Rather, these geographical limits apply to the western tribes only which suggests that the biblical writers viewed the "sons of Joseph" as a western entity.

A similar tension over the Josephites' relationship with east Jordan surfaces in Josh 17:14-18 in which the sons of Joseph request additional territory from Joshua since they believe they are too numerous for the single lot they have been granted. To begin with, the very idea that these tribes have been given only the single lot of Mt. Ephraim contradicts the idea that certain Manassite groups had already received land in east Jordan from Moses (Num 32). The unit also contains two different views on the extent of the Joseph territory and its connection to the east. In v. 15, Joshua suggests that if the (western) hill country of Ephraim was too narrow for the Josephites, they could go up and clear the forests "in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaim" to expand their holdings.[407] The referent of the expression "the land of the Perizzites and Rephaim" unfortunately is unclear: while the Perizzites are strongly affiliated with west Jordan (e.g., Josh 3:10; 9:1; 12:8; 24:11), the Rephaim are often, though not consistently, associated with Bashan

[407] The phrase "in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaim" is not clear and is missing from the LXX. While the shorter reading is generally preferred, the MT nonetheless contains the more difficult reading, such that it is difficult to decide between the two options from a text critical standpoint. Richard Nelson suggests that the mention of "Rephaim" could be a dittography for "hill country of Ephraim" *hrp'ym* from *hr'prym,* in which case the verse would clearly refer to the western hill country. See Nelson, *Joshua*, 200.

(e.g., Deut 2:20; 3:13; Josh 12:4; 12:12, but see Josh 13:8 where they are associated with west Jordan). It is therefore possible that in v. 15 Joshua is suggesting that the Joseph group expand its territory in part by heading to east Jordan. In vv. 16-18, however, the Joseph group complains that the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for them *and* that there are Canaanites in the Beth-Shean and Jezreel Valleys preventing their expansion, and Joshua assures them that they will clear the forest and dispossess the Canaanites to solve their problem. Since the Beth-Shean and Jezreel Valleys are located west of the Jordan, these verses imply that after clearing the forests in the (western) highlands, the Josephites will overtake the adjacent western valleys such that their expansion is envisioned within the limits of west Jordan. While commentators generally agree that this unit consists of two initially separate narratives that were combined into one, we still have two possibly differing notions of what or who the "sons of Joseph" are.

In Joshua 18, which describes the territorial allotments of the seven tribes who had not yet been granted land, the "House of Joseph" unequivocally refers to a western entity. In a brief retrospective of the territory that had already been distributed, v. 5 notes that the "House of Joseph" was located north of Judah while v. 7 notes that Gad, Reuben and half-Manasseh had taken their territory in the east. These verses thus make it clear that half/east Manasseh was not considered part of the "House of Joseph" but rather that the two represent distinct territorial entities.

A similar distinction between the Josephites and east Manasseh appears in Numbers 34, which describes the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim as "the sons of Joseph" in a list of the tribal leaders who will assist Joshua and Eliezer in the upcoming division of Canaan ("Of the sons of Joseph: the *nāsî'* of the tribe of the children of

Manasseh: Hanni'el son of Efod; and the *nāsî'*of the tribe of the children Ephraim: Qemu'el son of Shiftan" vv. 23-24). Here the designation seems to indicate solely a western group since the text only lists the leaders of the ten western tribes; the eastern tribes are presumably excluded from the roster because they had already received land from Moses (Num 32). It is possible that the Manassite *nāsî'* was thought to represent both the tribe's eastern and western halves – so that the "sons of Joseph" are an east-west entity – since there is no mention of the Manassite leadership during the eastern allocation, contra that of Reuben and Gad in 32:1-32. Yet the wider focus of Num 34 is on the western groups only, which suggests that "the sons of Joseph" and Manasseh were conceptualized as western entitites.

Other Interpretative Issues with the Composite Joseph Tribe

There are other interpretative issues with the concept of a composite "Joseph" tribe vis-à-vis the individual tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim since the biblical usage of the term is a bit slippery. Not only does Joseph represent an ancestral/patriarchal figure and an umbrella term for the combined Manasseh-Ephraim entity, but occasionally it also seems to signify the northern tribes and/or northern kingdom (in part or?) as a whole, in both early and later texts.[408] For instance, in Amos 6:6, a passage often dated to the 8th or

[408] Nadav Na'aman holds that references to "Joseph/House of Joseph" in the biblical literature almost exclusively refer to Ephraim and Manasseh, though he acknowledges that in the prophetic literature (Ez 37: 16, 19; Am 5:6, 15; 6:6; Ob 1:18; Zech 10:6) as well as in the Book of Psalms (e.g., Ps 77:16; 78:67-69) it refers to the Northern Kingdom, which is referred to by the name of its most prominent tribes -- Manasseh and Ephraim. See Nadav Na'aman, "Saul, Benjamin and the Emergence of 'Biblical Israel' (continued, Part 2)," *ZAW* 121 (2009): 335-337. Na'aman's argument, however, seems to conflate the issue with the explanation. Cf., David Carr, who argues that "Joseph" often stood for the Northern Kingdom -- the "House of Joseph" (2 Sam 19:21; 1 Kgs 11:28; Amos 5:6, 15; 6:6; Obad 18; Zech 10:6) while "Judah" represents the Southern Kingdom. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis,* 274. Knauf argues that the 'House

7th century BCE, the term "Joseph" appears to refer to the northern kingdom.[409] Similarly, in the post-exilic text of Ezek 37:16-19, "Joseph" stands in contrast to "Judah" and therefore appears to be a metynomic reference to the northern tribes/northern kingdom.[410] In Judges 1, which scholars widely view as a late introductory text that postdates the narratives that follow it, the "House of Joseph" appears distinct from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.[411] According to the chapter, Manasseh and Ephraim were unable to defeat the Canaanites in their territories (1:27-28 and 1:29, respectively), and were thus unsuccessful, or only partially successful, in their settlement conquests. The "House of Joseph," in contrast, successfully captures Bethel (vv. 22-26) and forces the Amorites into servitude (vv. 35-36). In her doctoral dissertation, Sara Milstein suggests that the "House of Joseph" here refers to an entity centered around Beth-El whose members include the tribes mentioned within this inclusio of vv. 26-36: Manasseh,

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of Joseph' (Josh 17:17; 18:5; Amos 5:6; Obad 18 (// Jacob); Zech 10:6) has a different referent than 'Joseph' as an ethnonym (Ezek 37:15-19; Amos 5:15, 6:6; Ps 77:15 (// Jacob); 78:67 (// Ephraim); 80:1 (//Israel); 81:5 (=Israel)) although he sees both terms as deriving from the exilic or postexilic period. He argues that 2 Sam 19:21 and 1 Kgs 11:28 are difficult to date. See Ernst Axel Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschitz and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 327-328, n. 186.

[409] See for instance, Hans W. Wolff, *Joel and Amos: A Commentary on the Books of the Prophets Joel and Amos* (trans. Waldemar Janzen, S. Dean McBride, Jr., and Charles A. Muenchow; ed., S. Dean McBride, Jr.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977): 240; Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Minneapolis: Hermenia, 1991): 165-66, 178.

[410] The references to "Ephraim" in these two verses – "the stick of Ephraim" in v. 16 and "the hand of Ephraim" in v. 19 – is somewhat problematic. BHS suggests that the first reference may have been a later addition (?) and that the second reference is a gloss that should be deleted.

[411] See, e.g., A. Graeme Auld, "Judges 1 and History: A Reconsideration," *VT* 25 (1975): 285; Boling, *Judges*, 29-38; Sara J. Milstein, "Reworking Ancient Texts: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2010), 158-159.

Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naftali, and Dan.[412] If the "House of Joseph" did in fact include these six groups then it would have been an entity comprised of those northern Israelite tribes located west of the Jordan rather than the northern tribes in their entirety. Although it is not clear why the western tribe of Issachar is not mentioned in this list, none of the eastern tribes is included. While the mention of Manasseh arguably could refer to both the eastern and western portions of the tribe, the cities that the Manassites are described as not having conquered (vv 1:27-28; cf the parallel text in Josh 17:11-13) are all located in the western region of the tribe such that the Judges reference appears to signify only the tribe's western half.[413] Curiously, outside of these Judg 1 verses there is no mention of the "House of Joseph" within the wider book of Judges. This designation, therefore, is utilized only in a unit that antedates much of the material that follows it – material in which both Manasseh and Ephraim appear – which reinforces the idea that "the House of Joseph" concept developed after that of the individual tribes.

In the end we find that it is not always possible to reconcile the concept of "Joseph" or "the sons of Joseph" with that of Manasseh as an eastern-western tribal entity, suggesting that these two traditions evolved independently of one another.

5.1.5 Manasseh and Ephraim as a Pair, Possibly Related

Two texts bridge the portrayals of Manasseh and Ephraim as genealogically connected via Joseph with those that simply feature the two as a pair: Isaiah 9:18-20 and

[412] Milstein, *Reworking Ancient Texts,* 158-59.

[413] As noted in chapter 2, the relationship between these Joshua and Judges texts is not clear. A number of commentators have suggested that the Josh 17 material was edited in light of Judges 1, although regardless of the trajectory of the literary dependence, the material concerns only the western portion of the tribe.

Deut 33. Manasseh's geographical status in these materials, however, is ambiguous. While a number of commentators maintain that Is 9:18-20 casts Manasseh as an east-west entity, I do not find their arguments convincing; its territorial nature cannot be determined in the Deuteronomy text.

Deuteronomy 33

Cast as Moses' final blessing to each of the Israelite tribes before their entry into Canaan, the tribal list of Deut 33 (the Blessing of Moses) contains a highly praiseworthy blessing for Joseph (vv. 13-17) that specifically mentions Manasseh and Ephraim at the end.[414] While Manasseh is here paired with Ephraim and the pair is linked to Joseph, the nature of the relationship between these three entities is not entirely clear.[415] While on the one hand it seems that the rubic of Joseph is emphasized over that of Manasseh and Ephraim, on the other hand, in order for this tribal list to include twelve entities Manasseh and Ephraim must be counted as individual tribes rather than as a single unit.

[414] There are differing opinions on the number of tribes that are listed – an issue that largely revolves around whether Manasseh and Ephraim are to be counted as individual tribes; Jeffrey Tigay, along with most commentators, holds that there are ten blessings covering twelve tribes. See Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy = [Devarim]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 521. Sparks argues that the original version of the poem, which did not mention Levi, included eleven names within ten tribal blessings, a feat which was accomplished by combining Ephraim and Manasseh into a single Joseph blessing. In his view, once the eleventh tribe of Levi was added to the poem, the Joseph blessing was read as a two-tribe blessing for the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim such that the list was seen as including twelve tribes. See Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel," 329.

[415] There is a vast amount of scholarship on Deuteronomy 33, which is often viewed as one of the most complex texts of the Hebrew Bible. For a concise overview of some of the more recent scholarship on this topic, see Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel," *ZAW 115* (2003): 328-30 and the references cited therein.

The Joseph blessing, the longest and most laudatory of the wider poem, highlights his/the group's preeminence among the Israelite tribes. It opens with a blessing of his land, includes wishes for divine and natural fertility, and signals his status over his brothers (perhaps the other tribal eponyms?) (vv. 13-16b).[416] The final verse of the blessing (v. 17) reads

> The firstborn of his herd, grandeur is his and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he will push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

This verse clearly envisions Manasseh and Ephraim as a closely connected pair, picturing them as the two horns of an ox and thus as the strength and power behind Joseph. Insofar as the horn symbolizes prestige and influence in other biblical texts (e.g., 1 Sam 2:1; Jer 48:25; Ps 75:10), this imagery reinforces the notion of Joseph's standing among the tribes. The verse also emphasizes Ephraim's status over that of Manasseh (cf. Gen 48) by associating Ephraim with "ten thousands" as opposed to Manasseh's "thousands" and by reversing the usual order of the comparative expression "x thousands and y ten thousands" (e.g., Deut 32:30, 1 Sam 18:7; 21:12; 29:5) so that Ephraim is listed before Manasseh. At the same time, it is unclear precisely how Manasseh and Ephraim are connected to one another or how they are related to Joseph; while the two are cast as parts of a wider entity, their relationship is unspecified.

While commentators debate the redaction history of the poem, they widely agree that the individual tribal blessings in it are older and of different origin than the present context in which they are contained. Given the length and overwhelmingly positive tenor

[416] V. 16b reads "Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph and upon the head of him who was separated from his brothers."

of the blessing for the northern entity Joseph, most suggest that it is of northern provenance and therefore dates to the eighth-century BCE or earlier.[417]

Isaiah 9:18-20

Manasseh and Ephraim also feature as a pair in Isaiah 9:18-20, a unit that is part of the proclamation of divine judgment against the northern kingdom in Isaiah 9:7-9:20 or 10:4 (see below) that most commentators date to the 8th century BCE. The unit clearly presupposes a close relationship between the two who appear to be in conflict with one

[417] Sparks suggests this poem is of northern origin and notes that the recent studies of Beyerle, Schorn and Maachi also support its northern provenance. See Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel," 328 and n. 2 therein. See also, Tigay, *Deuteronomy,* 521; Gary A. Rendsburg notes that the blessings of Joseph and the other northern tribes contain Israelian Hebrew (IH) or northern terms whereas those of Levi, Judah and Benjamin do not, suggesting that the blessings/sayings originated among the tribes themselves. See Gary A. Rendsburg "Israelian Hebrew Features in Deut 33," in *Mishneh Today: Studies in Deuteronomy and its Cultural Environment in Honor of Jeffrey H. Tigay* (ed. Nili Sacher Fox, David A. Glatt-Gilad and James Michael; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 167-83. Richard Nelson notes that the perspectives of northern Israel are evident in these blessings and suggests that the collection was assembled between the political breakup of Judah and Israel and the Assyrian conquests of 732 and 722 BCE. See Richard Nelson, *Deuteronomy,* 387. Note however, that André Caquot dates the collection no earlier than the 6th century BCE. See André Caquot "Les bénédictions de Moïse (Deuteronome 33,6-25)," *Semeia* 32 (1982): 61-87; 33 (1983): 59-76.

Curiously, in Genesis 49 (the Blessing of Jacob) – a tribal list comparable in form and content to that of Deut 33 although one in which Judah's status is highlighted together with that of Joseph's – the Joseph saying (vv. 22-26) contains no mention of Manasseh and Ephraim. This is a striking omission insofar as this saying is otherwise remarkably similar to the Joseph blessing in Deut 33. Both highlight Joseph's status among the tribes/tribal eponyms: Gen. 49:25 is strongly evocative of Deut 33:13-15 and Gen 49:26 parallels Deut 33:16, suggesting that that they are either drawn from a common source or that one is based on the other. Yet whereas as Deut 33 explicitly links Joseph with Manasseh and Ephraim, the latter two tribes/eponyms are not included in the Genesis text. Due to the poem's many similarities with Deut 33, most commentators assume some type of relationship between the two; while Genesis 49 is generally viewed as postdating Deut 33 its dating is nonetheless debated. Raymond de Hoop dates Gen 49 in its entirety to the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age though such an early dating is widely dismissed. See, de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context.* Sparks views this tribal list as an 8th-century BCE text that originally highlighted the preeminence of Joseph but that was subsequently edited in the 6th century BCE to reflect a pro-Judahite stance. See Sparks, "Genesis 49 and the Tribal List Tradition in Ancient Israel," 328-345. Golka dates it to the exilic or post-exilic period. See Golka, "Genesis 37-50," 159.

another; while the nature of their connection is not specified it is possible that they were understood as kin in some way. Although a number of commentators suggest that Manasseh here represents an eastern entity, I find several weaknesses with this argument and in the end view its geographical status as ambiguous.

The poem as a whole describes the word of the Lord that "has fallen/will fall on Israel" and is divided into four units separated by a refrain.[418] The reference to Manasseh and Ephraim appears in the third unit, vv. 18-20, which highlights the peoples' wickedness:

> 18 Through the fury of YHWH Sebaot the land has been darkened/scorched; and then the people became like devouring fire; no one spared his brother.
> 19 He snatched on the right but remained hungry; he ate on the left but was not filled. Each devours the flesh of his seed/neighbor;[419]
> 20. Manasseh with Ephraim and Ephraim with Manasseh;[420] together they set against Judah. In all this his anger has not turned and his hand is still stretched out.

The dating and literary development of the poem are uncertain. The refrain suggests that the poetic unit extend from 9:7-10:4 while formal and thematic considerations suggest that it consists of two distinct sections: vv. 9:7-20, which arguably appear to reflect 9th – 8th century BCE events in the northern kingdom,[421] and

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[418] The poem contains a mixture of past and present/future verbal tenses (perfects and imperfect consecutives and imperfects and perfect consecutives, respectively) and it is not always clear whether a particular form should be translated as past or present/future. See Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 81-87; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 218-226.

[419] MT reads *zĕro'ô* "his arm"; the Targum and LXX A read *rē'ô* "his neighbor"; BHS suggests reading *zar'ô* "his seed"

[420] The text reads *mĕnaššeh 'et-'eprayim wĕ'eprayim 'et-mĕnaššeh*

[421] Many suggest that the references in the first unit (vv. 9:8-11) to YHWH's raising the "enemies of Rezin" and to hostilities between Israel and Aram and the Philistines reflect historical events

vv. 10:1-4, which appear to extend the divine judgment to Judah.[422] While scholars hold differing views on the dating and origin of these two sections, most agree that vv. 9:7-20 stem from the 8th century BCE.[423]

Most commentators read 9:20 as referring to a conflict between Manasseh and Ephraim. A number claim that this conflict reflects a specific historical event although they disagree over which event in particular is at issue. The most widely accepted theory holds that it alludes to the events described in 2 Kgs 15:25 which mentions strife associated with Pekah's usurpation of the Israelite throne from king Pekahiah.[424] As

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during the 9th-8th centuries. The mention of "Rezin," however, is debated. The MT reads !ycr yrc though BHS suggests reading this as wyrc "his enemies." At issue is the logic of YHWH raising Rezin's enemies against Israel, since the two were allies in the so-called Syro-Ephraimite conflict (2 Kgs 16:5-9). Many commentators view this verse as corrupt, either omitting "Rezin" as a gloss or occasionally changing rc "adversaries" to rv "princes."

[422] The first section (vv. 9:7-20) features finite verbs, is addressed to the northern audience and appears to reflect 9th-8th century BCE events in the northern kingdom. However, scholars hold differing views on the specific events referenced in this section. For a concise summary of this issue, see, Childs, *Isaiah*, 85-86; cf, Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 188-96; Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 226-238. The second section (vv. 10:1-4) is a woe oracle that appears to extend divine judgment to Judah and features participle forms.

[423] Some commentators acknowledge the formal differences among these sections but nonetheless view 9:7-10:4 as a cohesive unit dated to the eighth-century BCE, in some cases linking it to the prophet himself. For instance, Marvin Sweeney dates the poem as a whole to 732-724 BC; see Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 188-96. Brevard Childs broadly dates it to the eighth-century prophet himself; see Childs, *Isaiah*, 2-10. Others date vv. 9:7-20 to the eighth-century BCE but see vv. 10:1-4 as a later addition to this material. See Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 218-45, though note that he does not speculate as to when 10:1-4 was joined with 9:7-20. Antoon Schoors suggests that the two sections were combined as part of the mid-7th century BCE Josiainic redaction of Isaiah. See Antoon Schoors, "Historical Information in Isaiah 1-39," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A.M. Beuken* (ed, J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1997): 84-5. More recently Matthijs J de Jong does not include 9:7-20 in materials that he views as stemming from the 8th and 7th centuries BCE although this view does not appear to have gained wide support. Matthijs J de Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[424] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 196; Schoors, "Historical Information in Isaiah 1-39," 85; John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, *Isaiah, the Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 184-94. Schoors notes that Herbert Donner sees these verses

Marvin Sweeney explains, "Manasseh" is a reference to Gilead (the eastern territory associated with Pekah) and "Ephraim" to the central hill country of Israel west of the Jordan (the territory of Pekahiah). Sweeney further argues that once Pekah gained control of the Israelite throne, Israel attacked Judah thereby sparking the so-called Syro-Ephraimite war (2 Kgs 16:5-9; Is 7:1), which explains why both Manasseh and Ephraim are described as "against Judah" at the end of the verse.[425]

While the broad outlines of the theory Sweeney sketches are perhaps possible, I find the arguments that Manasseh represents an eastern entity problematic. First, Gilead's role in the 2 Kgs 15:25 episode is unclear. The text mentions that Pekah son of Remalyahu overthrew King Pekahiah with (the help of) 50 Gileadites.[426] This does not, however, necessarily imply that Pekah himself was a Gileadite, nor does this necessarily suggest conflict between Gilead and Samaria.[427] Second, nowhere else in the biblical text is "Manasseh" used solely as a reference for Gilead; rather "Manasseh" either

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as reflective of tribal strife following Hoshea's usurpation of the Israelite throne. See Herbert Donner, *Israel unter den Völkern*; *die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda* (VTSup 11; Leiden: Brill, 1964), 73, n. 8. Wildberger appears to view this event as historical although he argues that we do not have enough specific information to identify the actual events that may have been at issue. See Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12,* 238.

[425] Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39,* 196.

[426] 2 Kgs 15:25 reads "But Pekah son of Remalyahu, a captain of his, conspired against him and killed him in Samaria in the palace/stronghold of the king's house (the Argov and the Arye) and with him were fifty Gileadites; And he killed him and he ruled in his place."

[427] Many commentators maintain that Pekah was a Gileadite although this idea is not necessarily substantiated by the text. For instance, in Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor's explication of this verse in their commentary on 2 Kings the authors suggest that Pekah, like other usurpers before him, may have been a Gileadite himself; in their comment on the chapter, however, this suggestion is taken as fact and they write that Pekah (and the other usurpers) "all hailed from the Gilead." See Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 173 n. 25, 178; cf B. Oded, "The Historical Background of the Syro-Ephraimite War Reconsidered," *CBQ* 34 (1972): 162 who argues that Pekah was from Transjordan on similar grounds.

designates the western tribal entity or the east-west entity, while "Half-Manasseh" (or possibly "Machir") designates the eastern portion of the tribe alone. Furthermore, even if we understand v. 9:20 as an allusion to the Syro-Ephraimite war it is still not clear that we should view Manasseh as an eastern entity.[428] The biblical information on this war is brief and vague, and while 2 Kings 15 suggests that the northern kingdom experienced a great degree of instability and political turmoil prior to it, there is no overt indication that this turmoil represented a conflict between the eastern and western halves of the Israelite kingdom.

Other scholars understand the conflict between Manasseh and Ephraim in 9:20 as one of the metaphoric examples of chaos that characterizes the wider unit.[429] William Brown notes that the imagery in v. 20 "slides into a horrifying description in which the social arena is reduced to an orgy of carnivorous chaos."[430] He claims that this picture of social cannibalism is not unusual as an invective description, noting that similar imagery is used in one of the neo-Babylonian ruler Nabonidus' descriptions of his people.

> But the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Ur, Uruk and Larsa… acted evil, careless, and even sinned against his great divine power…they disregarded his rights and there was much irreligious and disloyal talk. They devoured one another like dogs, caused disease and hunger to appear among them. He (the god Sin) decimated the inhabitants.[431]

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[428] It is feasible that 9:20 refers to the Syro-Ephraimite conflict given the wider focus on this conflict in other sections of Is 5-10 and given that 9:20 ultimately refers to conflict between Manasseh and Ephraim and between these two and Judah.

[429] Childs, *Isaiah*, 85-86; William Brown, ""The So-Called Refrain in Isaiah 5:25-30 and 9:7-10:4," *CBQ* 53 (1990): 439.

[430] Brown, "The So-Called Refrain in Isaiah 5:25-30 and 9:7-10:4," 439.

[431] ANESTP, 562; cited in Brown, "The So-Called Refrain in Isaiah 5:25-30 and 9:7-10:4," 439.

Regardless of whether one views the conflict between Manasseh and Ephraim as historical or metaphoric, the poet has deliberately chosen the image of tension between these two entities to highlight the idea that hostilities are being carried out against close peoples in an unnatural manner. The poetic imagery of the preceding verse suggests that violence is being perpetrated against kin – "no man spares his brother" in v. 18b and "each devours the flesh of his children" in v. 19b (if "seed" in v. 19b refers to ones progeny or as others translate it "the flesh of his neighbor") – in a manner that runs contrary to normal expectations. The notion of conflict between Manasseh and Ephraim must not only tie in with this theme but also convey and reinforce this meaning to the poet's audience. Although the text does not specify the two tribes' relationship, it clearly presupposes a very close, and possibly familial, connection between them such that idea of their being in conflict signals something unnatural if not a sign of utter depravation. At the same time, we should not assume that this unit understands Manasseh and Ephraim as actual blood kin. The reference to "brother" in v. 18b does not necessarily signify a blood relation since the term is widely used idiomatically in ancient Near Eastern literature to designate or demonstrate a close relationship between two people(s).

5.1.6 Manasseh's Contested Relationship with Ephraim

While Manasseh's relationship with Ephraim is generally cast as a close one, Judg 6-8 and Gen 48 suggest the relationship between these two was occasionally contested.

Judges 6-8

The Gideon narrative of Judges 6-8 finds Manasseh and Ephraim at odds with one another. Tension between the two tribes flares up when the Ephraimites rebuke Gideon for having gone into battle without them, an issue that appears to center on the Ephraimites' desire for a share of the battle spoils. In contrast to some of the other traditions described above, the nature of the tribes' relationship is not clear in this material. There is no indication that the two were connected to or through Joseph; while they do appear to have some type of tie to one another it is uncertain whether this tie differs from those they have with other tribes. Although Manasseh's geographical status is not explicitly identified in this text, as I argued in Chapter 2 it is largely characterized as a west Jordan entity.

According to the admittedly disjointed narrative, after the Midianites take up position in the Jezreel Valley, Gideon musters troops from his clan of Abiezer, "all Manasseh" and the neighboring tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali to attack them (6:33-35). The attack itself, however, is ultimately carried out by a force of 300 men chosen by YHWH so the deity could claim credit for the victory (7:1-22). After these 300 attack the Midianites, the "men of Israel" from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher and "all Manasseh" are mustered and begin pursuing the enemy (7:23), at which point Gideon sends messengers to the tribe of Ephraim requesting their aid (7:24a). The Ephraimites join the chase, kill the Midianite generals and bring their heads to Gideon (7:24b-25), and then harshly rebuke him for having gone to battle without them (8:1). Gideon diffuses their anger through flattery. He first offers an aphorism that curiously contrasts the Ephraimites' status with that of his clan of Abiezer rather than with the tribe of Manasseh

(8:2)[432] and then highlights their prowess in the battle (8:3). In this way, he prevents the tension from escalating.

The tenor of the Ephraimites' complaint suggests that their not being called out to battle represents a grievous violation of their relationship with Gideon/Manasseh. First, the phrasing of the complaint itself "What is this thing you have done to us…. (8:1)" is often used in the biblical material as a formal accusation of wrongdoing (e.g., Gen 12:18; 20:9; 26:10; Ex 14:11; Num 23:11).[433] The manner in which the Ephraimites confront Gideon also points to the severity of their claim. The text describes them as having "rebuked/contended with him [Gideon] sharply" (:8:1) using the term *r.y.b.* which is often employed in legal disputations (e.g, Is 50:8; Jer 2:9).[434] Although there is no indication that the two entities had any type of formal agreement with or obligation to one another, the use of terminology that can convey such a meaning is tantalizingly suggestive and may allude to the gravity of the situation. At the same time, this terminology is a play on Gideon's other name, Jerubaal, which he acquires after destroying his father's Baal altar (6:25-32). In that episode, Gideon's father defends his son's actions against the townspeople who seek his death by challenging them to "contend '*rîb*' for Baal" (v. 31) if they are so inclined; the reference to this challenge is

[432] "Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?" (Judg 8:2). Many scholars consider this phrase as a well-known aphorism, though generally without explanation. See Assis, *Self-interest or Communal Interest,* 89 n. 141 and the references cited therein.

[433] Susan Niditch, *Judges*, 102, note a.

[434] See for instance, J. Limburb, "The Root *rib* in the Prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL* 88 (1969): 289-304.

then adopted in Gideon's new name, Jerubaal "Let Baal contend with him" (v. 32).[435] Susan Niditch notes that the use of technical disputation language in the Baal altar episode enhances the quality of the contest between the parties, a comment that seems applicable to its use in the scene between Gideon and the Ephraimites.[436] Interestingly, despite the Ephraimites' expressed hostility toward Gideon, their actions nonetheless imply an implicit recognition of his leadership.[437] They respond to Gideon's battle call, carry out his order to pursue the Midianites, and then bring his enemies' heads to him, suggesting that on some level they accept him as a leader.

Dating and Historical Setting of Judges 6-8

It is difficult to date the Gideon narrative since it consists of numerous seemingly fragmented units. Contemporary commentators agree that the story is the product of southern, Deuteronomistic editing. While many believe that portions of the narrative stem from a northern, pre-Deuteronomistic milieu, most do not consider Gideon's conflict with the Ephraimites to be among the oldest layer of the northern tradition.[438] Beyond this, the dating of the narrative unit is unclear.

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[435] In fact, the verb *ryb* is used four times in vv. 31-32, signaling its key role in the climax of the unit.

[436] Niditch, *Judges*, 91.

[437] Jack M. Sasson notes that this episode also serves as a contrast to Jephthah's reaction when Ephraim challenges him in victory (Judg 12:1-6). Personal communication.

[438] Soggin suggests that the passage is a relatively late, though still pre-Deuteronomistic composition in which an earlier tradition describing conflict between the Abiezerites and Midianites underwent a pan-Israel redaction. See Soggin, *Judges*, 147-48. de Pury and Römer do not include this unit in their discussion of the possible pre-Deuteronomistic Gideon materials. See, de Pury and Römer, *Israel Constructs its History*, 120, n. 418.

From a literary perspective, the description of Gideon's conflict with the Ephraimites stands rather awkwardly in its narrative context, suggesting that its placement, at least, is the result of later editorial maneuvering.[439] While the Ephraimites' complaint that they have been excluded from battle with the Midianites seems appropriate with respect to the second muster (7:23) – in which they were called out to pursue the fleeing Midianites only after the other tribes had been mustered – curiously they are not described as taking issue with their exclusion from the initial muster (6:33-35). Yet the second muster assumes the first since the fleeing Midianites in 7:23 must be fleeing from something. If the Ephraimites are in fact referring to their absence from the initial muster – a unit which itself is situated awkwardly in its narrative context – then their complaint stands in tension with the pericope of 7:1-22 in which YHWH deliberately winnows the number of Israelite troops who will fight the Midianites to 300.[440] In either case, the role of Ephraim and the other tribal troops in the wider narrative is ultimately unclear since following Gideon's confrontation with the Ephraimites (8:1-4) they all disappear from the storyline. In the subsequent narrative unit describing Gideon's pursuit of the Midianite kings (8:5-24), he is accompanied only by the 300 troops from 7:1-22 and there is no further mention of the wider tribal force.

[439] Boling suggests this is a transitional unit bridging the stories about "Gideon at home " and "Gideon abroad" that "sits loose in its context." Boling, *Judges*, 152.

[440] The brief description of the first muster (6:33-35) is strangely sandwiched between the narrative focused on Gideon's tearing down of his father's Baal altar in 6:25-32 and Gideon's request to YHWH for additional signs that he will prevail against the enemy in 6:36-40. The description of the battle itself picks up in 7:1-22. Boling suggests that vv. 33-35 "apparently have a separate source from the bulk of the Gideon traditions" though he does not provide any explanation for this suggestion, and holds that this stratum picks up again in 7:23-8:3. See Boling, *Judges*, 138, 150.

The episode between Gideon and the Ephraimites also shares certain similar motifs with the story of the deliverer-judge Jephthah's conflict with the Ephraimites in Judg 12:1-6, suggesting that we are possibly dealing with a type-scene. In the latter story, the Ephraimites confront a tribal leader (the Gileadite Jephthah) for having excluded them from a battle against a foreign enemy (the Ammonites) and again their rationale appears to stem from the assumption that they have some degree of control over the actions of a neighboring tribe.[441] The motif of "holding the Jordan against an enemy" also recurs in both of these episodes.[442] In the Gideon narrative, the Ephraimites hold the Jordan against the Midianites (7:24)[443] while in the Jephthah narrative the Gileadites hold it against the Ephraimites (Judg 12:1-6). Although the Ephraimite confrontation in the Jephthah narrative escalates into intertribal war whereas that with Gideon is resolved peacefully, both episodes nonetheless seem motivated by similar concerns.

Genesis 48

As discussed above, Genesis 48 both presupposes and highlights the close relationship between Manasseh and Ephraim. Yet the narrative may also point to some

[441] The Ephraimites taunt the Gileadites by describing them as "fugitives in/from the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh," (12:4) suggesting that the Ephraimites did not view them as an entity of equal status but rather felt some degree of superiority over them. The mention of Manasseh in this verse is often regarded as a secondary insertion since the tribe plays no role in the wider narrative. See p. 69-70 above.

[442] For a thoughtful analysis of this issue see David Jobling, "Structuralist Criticism: The Text's World of Meaning," in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Gale A. Yee; New York: Fortress Press, 1995), 110-115. Jobling notes that the motif of 'holding the Jordan against an enemy' also appears in the Ehud narrative, where the Ephraimites hold it against the Moabites (Judg 3:27-29).

[443] Verse 24b is widely understood as corrupt since the phrase " [and they seized their access to] the waters as far as Beth-barath, and also the Jordan" does not make sense.

degree of stress between the two insofar as it takes pains to explain how and why Ephraim came to supercede Manasseh, a phenomenon that inverted the expected order of things according to both the story itself and other biblical narratives that describe Manasseh as the first-born (e.g., Gen 41:50-52, c.f., Josh 17:1). We can understand this aspect of the narrative in one of two ways. It is possible that it alludes to some type of real world situation between the two tribes wherein Ephraim ultimately came to dominate Manasseh; in this case the narrative partially serves an etiological function that explains Ephraim's position vis-à-vis Manasseh. To the extent that the text describes this state of affairs to the patriarch Jacob, it not only attempts to legitimate the situation but also casts it as having existed since ancient times. Mark Zvi Brettler adopts this view, suggesting that the narrative is likely a "typological" episode that refers to events in later Israelite history. He proposes that the elevation of Ephraim's status may reflect the fact that the northern kingdom's first king, Jeroboam I, hailed from the tribe of Ephraim, or, "the general prominence of Ephraim, which is seen in the use of that term for the northern kingdom as a whole" (e.g., Is 7:2; Jer 31:9; Zech 9:10).[444] Since archaeological evidence suggests that Manasseh would have been the more populous, fertile and prosperous of the two regions throughout the LBA – Persian periods, it is difficult to pinpoint a time when Ephraim would have dominated it. If, however, we accept that an early Israelite polity centered around Ephraim gradually expanded into territory that came to be viewed as Manassite – territory that had been under Egypt's sphere of influence – then it is possible that Ephraim was remembered as having "usurped" its neighbor. In fact, from a narratival perspective Ephraim appears more frequently in the texts than does Manasseh,

[444] Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 57, n.76

especially in Judges, and appears to have had more interactions, however contested, with other "Israelite" and neighboring entities. It is therefore conceivable that at some point it did exert more influence among these various groups than Manasseh did, which might have influenced the nature of this portrayal.

On the other hand, given the prevalent biblical motif of "the younger supplanting the elder" (e.g, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over his brothers, David over his brothers, etc.) it is possible that the brothers' relationship has been structured to conform to a well-known biblical model. David Carr seems to agree with both these theories. He is among others to view Ephraim's elevation over Manasseh in Gen 48 as forming an inclusio with Jacob's elevation over Esau in Gen 27 and thus understands this episode as serving an important literary function in the combined Jacob-Joseph narrative cycle. At the same time, Carr views Gen 48 as both reflective of and affirming a particular political order in the northern kingdom and specifically as articulating "Northern intergroup power relationships."[445]

5.2 Manasseh as Eastern Entity

The second group of Manassite traditions conceives of the tribe as an eastern and therefore east-west tribal entity. This is a notable characterization that seemingly destabilizes two problematic and unresolved issues for the biblical writers: the notion of the Jordan as a boundary and the legitimacy of those peoples and regions that lay east of it. The concept of east Manasseh, however, is beset by several difficulties. Despite the group's genealogical connection with the west, the biblical writers generally portray it in light of its geographical location, treating east Manasseh and the eastern tribes of Reuben

[445] Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis,* 302.

and Gad as a unit that stands over against the western tribes. This maneuver in turn leads the eastern portion of the tribe to become entangled in the issue of eastern legitimacy that plagues the biblical literature. At the same time there is some degree of tension over the group's identity as an eastern tribe, or at least the biblical writers' understanding of it as an eastern tribe, such that in the end east Manasseh is a rather liminal concept.

5.2.1 East Manasseh as Part of the "Eastern Bloc"

The biblical writers largely treat east Manasseh and the tribes of Reuben and Gad as a unit – an "eastern bloc" of tribes distinct from the western tribes. While this treatment echoes and reinforces the differences between east and west Jordan that pervades much of the biblical literature, it also casts east Manasseh as largely unconnected to its western counterpart, or no more connected to west Manasseh than are the other eastern tribes. For the biblical authors, Manasseh's geographical affiliation is strong enough to trump its genealogical identity.

This notion of east Manasseh, Reuben and Gad as a discrete regional entity is particularly emphasized in the settlement traditions, in which east Manasseh's settlement is tied to Reuben and Gad's, and is wholly distinct from that of west Manasseh.[446] Despite the discrepancies over how east Manasseh came to possess its territory – whether through personal conquest (Num 32:40-42; Deut 3:14) or through "official" grant (Num 32:33, 39; Deut 3:13, 15; Josh 1:12-18; 13:8-13, 15-32) – its territory is generally associated with Moses, as is Reuben's and Gad's. In contrast, west Manasseh's territory

[446] These materials refer to the two and a half tribes together so often (e.g., Num 32:33; 34:14; Deut 3:12-20; Josh 1:12; 4:12; 12:6; 13:7-8, 15-33; 18:7; 22; 1 Chron 5:18, 26) that the mention of one of these entities calls to mind the other two.

and those of the other western tribes are connected to Joshua. Whereas the western tribes' territories are determined by lot (e.g., Num 33:50-51; Num 34:14, Josh 14-19), the process(es) by which Moses grants and divides the eastern territory is not always clear although it does not involve lots.[447] From a conceptual perspective, this latter phenomenon casts west Manasseh's allotment as a more divinely sanctioned, if not deliberate, process than that of its eastern group. As the Israelites prepare to cross the Jordan into Canaan, Joshua specifically addresses east Manasseh, Reuben and Gad, reminding them of their pledge to aid their kin in the upcoming conquest and instructing them to precede the other tribes' entry (Josh 1:10-15).[448] While the eastern tribes are here cast as a model of piety, promising to obey Joshua just as they did Moses (Josh 1:16-20), this pericope nonetheless singles them out as a distinct group within the wider Israelite community. This unit also signals that the greater tribe of Manasseh was not expected to ford the Jordan together, which reinforces the idea of its two sections as separate entities.

Knight has shown that this conceptualization of the eastern tribes as a unit is also occasionally expressed through the semantics of designation. During the actual River crossing, east Manasseh, Reuben and Gad are described as traversing ahead of the

[447] David Jobling makes a similar observation. He notes that although in Num 26 YHWH instructs Moses that the land should be divided among the twelve tribes according to both the tribes' size and by lot, the manner in which the eastern tribes' inheritance was determined in Num 32 "was certainly not by lot." He further notes that Num 33:54, a text that follows Moses' division of territory to the eastern tribes (in Num 32), repeats the instructions from Num 26 although in this case it is clear that the use of lots applies only to the west Jordan tribes. See Jobling, "The Jordan a Boundary," 115.

[448] As I will discuss below, in Num 32 it is only Reuben and Gad who officially make such a pledge since east Manasseh is not part of the narrative at this point. In Moses' retelling of this episode in Deut 3:18-22, however, it is assumed that east Manasseh has taken part in this pledge.

"Israelites" (Josh 4:12).[449] This language establishes a sharp dichotomy between the eastern and western groups indicating that solely the west Manassites were considered Israelite; the eastern portion of the tribe, which by extension is rendered non-Israelite, is therefore cast as "Other." Similar language use characterizes Josh 22, which I will discuss in more detail below, in which a misunderstanding about an altar brings the eastern tribes and the "Israelites" to the brink of war.

Jobling holds that another link between the eastern tribal groups is the similar characterizations of their eponymous founders: each figure experienced a "loss of precedence" and was connected with a concubine.[450] For Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son, these two attributes go hand in hand; Reuben loses the rights and privileges of the firstborn after sleeping with his father's concubine, Bilhah (Gen 35:22; 49:3-4; 1 Chron 2-8). Manasseh loses precedence after Jacob sets his younger brother Ephraim before him (Gen 48) and is said to have fathered a son with an Aramean concubine (1 Chron 7:14. In the case of Gad, Jobling points to Deut 33:20-21 (the Blessing of Moses) as indicating that Gad at one point enjoyed a prominent position among the tribes since his blessing is greater than even that of Judah's. Since there are few other biblical traditions about the figure/tribe of Gad, however, he suggests that this position was subsequently lost. Gad's connection to a concubine is admittedly weaker; although he is the firstborn son of Jacob's concubine, Zilpah, since Jacob has other sons through concubines this connection is not a particularly unique attribute. Interestingly, Jobling suggests that the characterization of Machir, Manasseh's firstborn son, also fits this pattern. The eastern tribal group descended from Machir is ultimately overshadowed by its western brethren

[449] Knight, "Josh 22 and the Ideology of Space," 55.

[450] Jobling, "The Jordan a Boundary," 108-09.

such that Machir may be viewed as having lost precedence, and he is described as the son of Manasseh's Aramean concubine (1 Chron 7:14).

5.2.2 East Manasseh's Ambiguous Eastern Status

Although the biblical materials generally treat east Manasseh as part of the "eastern bloc" of Israelite tribes, this group's eastern status is nonetheless somewhat nebulous. In two key texts focused on the legitimacy of the east Jordan tribes and lands, Num 32 and Josh 22, east Manasseh inexplicably drifts in and out of the narrative and arguably seems to have been included as an afterthought.[451] The liminal position of the tribe in these narratives, neither fully part of the action nor fully absent from it, ultimately renders east Manasseh an ambiguous concept.

Numbers 32

Numbers 32, which describes how and why the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half-Manasseh settled in east Jordan, is a multi-vocal text articulating varying views on the legitimacy of this settlement and the settlers themselves. The tribe of Manasseh, however, is only intermittently present in the narrative and was likely not originally a part of it. While this absence may somewhat obviate the issue of the group's legitimacy, it also leads to questions over the biblical writers acceptance of and/or understanding of Manasseh's eastern status. At the same time, since Manasseh is ultimately included in the narrative, its settlement and members are inevitably colored by the tension surrounding the notion of eastern settlement that characterizes the wider chapter.

[451] Havrelock makes a similar observation. See Havrelock, *River Jordan,* 118.

Numbers 32 opens with an arguably obtrusive notice explaining why the tribes of Reuben and Gad wanted to settle in the east: because the lands of Jazer and Gilead were good for livestock and they possessed livestock (v. 1). The heads of these two tribes approach Moses and the community leaders pointing out that YHWH had smote this land for Israel, that it was suitable for their livestock, and then formally petition to settle in it: "if we have found favor in your eyes, let this land be given to your servants as a possession" (vv. 2-4). Moses angrily responds to their request, fearing that their settlement will dissuade the other tribes from crossing the Jordan (vv. 6-15). The Reubenite and Gadite leaders begin negotiating with him and over the span of the next 15 verses the text twice recounts the stipulations of their arrangement: the two tribes will be permitted to remain in east Jordan on the condition that they join their fellow tribes in the upcoming battle for Canaan (vv. 16-32).[452] Moses then officially grants the eastern territory to the tribes of Reuben and Gad as well as half-Manasseh, the latter of whom has thus far been absent from the narrative (v. 33). Reuben and Gad's territories are outlined in the following verses (vv. 34-38) and east Manasseh's constituent groups and their holdings are delineated in the final verses of the chapter (vv. 39-42).

There are several indications that Manasseh was not initially part of this storyline. To begin with, the bulk of the story is focused solely on the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Manasseh is unexpectedly and abruptly mentioned for the first time in v. 33 and the description of its territory and membership fall at the very end of the narrative. Curiously

[452] In these verses there is a distinction between the Reubenites and Gadites on the one hand and the "Israelites" on the other, as is the case in Josh 22 where all three eastern entities are set over against the "Israelites". For example, in 32:7 Moses asks the Gadites and Reubenites "Why do you dishearten the Israelites from crossing over to the land that YHWH gave them?"; in 32:17-18 the Reubenites and Gadites state "we will go armed before the Israelites until we have brought them to their place…we will not return to our houses until each Israelite has inherited his inheritance."

the terminology used for the group differs in these two brief sections, possibly suggesting that they stem from different hands. The group is labeled "half-Manasseh" only in v. 33; the verses describing the settlement itself (vv. 39-42) mention specific, individual entities linked to Manasseh through patrynomic designation ("x son of Manasseh"). Together with its incongruous appearance and inconsistent designation, the description of Manasseh's settlement differs in tone and content from the rest of the narrative. In contrast to the lengthy description of Reuben and Gad's settlement, Manasseh's is tersely recounted in four verses. Whereas the Reubenites and Gadites ask permission to settle and then negotiate with Moses, the three Manassite figures/eponyms (?) – Machir son of Manasseh, Yair son of Manasseh and Nobah – are simply described as conquering their respective territories. While Moses plays an important role in the Reubenite/Gadite settlement, his role in the material relating to Manasseh is mixed. Although in one of the two traditions relating to Machir's settlement he is said to have given Gilead to Machir (v. 40), Moses is not mentioned in conjunction with Machir's conquest of Gilead (v. 39) nor with Yair and Nobah's conquests (vv. 41-42). Rather, these latter conquests are presented as a *fait accompli* that have nothing to do with the leader.[453] Furthermore, while Moses requires that the Reubenites and Gadites cross the Jordan with the other tribes and participate in the battle for Canaan in exchange for their eastern territory, no such stipulation is imposed upon the east Manassites.[454] In a strange way, then, Reuben and Gad's settlement is ultimately tied to the western settlement while east Manasseh's is

[453] Interestingly in Deut 3:15 although Moses explicitly states that he assigned Gilead to Machir here Machir is not overtly connected with east Manasseh; the two entities are, however, implicitly connected in light of the wider passage and the context of the wider settlement tradition.

[454] This discrepancy is "cleaned up" in Moses' retelling of the story of eastern settlement in Deut 3:18-20 where all three eastern entities are described as participating in this agreement.

not –a seemingly odd phenomenon since the latter is ostensibly the eastern group most directly connected to the west.

As discussed in earlier chapters, commentators widely agree that the Manassite material in vv. 39-42 originated independently of the wider narrative and was then interpolated into it although it does not seem possible to determine its provenance with any certainty.[455] Manasseh's initial absence from and subsequent presence in the narrative, however, brings up two interrelated issues. First, it is not clear why east Manasseh was not originally part of a narrative focused on eastern settlement unless perhaps this group had not yet come to be affiliated with Manasseh, or possibly even the Israelites, at the time the Reubenite and Gadite tradition arose. In fact, although the biblical materials often treat these three groups as a distinct bloc, both this text and Josh 22 indicate that Reuben and Gad's settlement was understood somewhat differently than that of east Manasseh's.[456] Secondly, it is unclear who was responsible for adding the Manassite material to the narrative, when it was added, or why, since the redactional development of Numbers 32 is uncertain. While the late Priestly writers were obviously responsible for the final version of the text, commentators widely understand it as a multilayered work. Noting that it betrays an awareness of Num 13-14, 21 and Deuteronomy 1-3 among others texts, Baruch Levine suggests that the "author braided and even rephrased earlier versions to compose Numbers 32 as we have it…" so that it does not seem possible to unbraid the work with certainty.[457]

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[455] See note 117.

[456] Jobling also notes that there is some distinction between Reuben and Gad as a unit and east Manasseh. See Jobling, "The Jordan a Boundary," 107-08.

[457] Levine, *Numbers*, 479.

Although the information on east Manasseh's membership and territory (vv. 39-42) in and of itself appears in a straightforward, neutral manner, this material is nonetheless colored by the tension surrounding the legitimacy of eastern settlement that characterizes the opening of the narrative and thus frames the story as a whole. On the one hand, the Israelites conceivably should have every right to settle in the east since YHWH smote the regions of Jazer and Gilead for them (v. 4). At the same time, "the land that YHWH had given them [the Israelites]" (v. 7, 8) is clearly understood as lying west of the Jordan so that the eastern region is not the land in which YHWH intends them to reside. In fact, Moses responds to Reuben and Gad's request to settle in the east by rebuking them as "sinful men" who will bring "YHWH's wrath on Israel" (v. 14) since he fears their actions will dissuade the other tribes from crossing the Jordan. Likening these two to the spies of the earlier Wilderness generation who discouraged the Israelites from entering Canaan (Num 13-14), he casts eastern settlement as well as the tribes that want to reside there as a dangerous lure that could potentially unsettle the lives of the Israelites as a whole. While the Reubenites and Gadites are able to convince Moses that their settlement will not be disruptive, the seed has nevertheless been planted that the eastern tribes pose a possible threat to the integrity of the people and that their settlement is not entirely in line with YHWH's plans.

It is against this backdrop of conflicting ideologies about the east that Manasseh enters the storyline. The fact that the Manassites are described as conquering their territory, which includes Gilead, would seem to point to the legitimacy of their settlement insofar as it echoes the sentiment expressed in v. 4. Interestingly, however, there is no mention of YHWH playing a role in the Manassite conquest but rather the individual

groups simply take territory for themselves.[458] In this regard, Jobling's suggestion that the east Jordan territory north of the Jabbok was not (as) problematic for the biblical writers as was territory south of the Jabbok might possibly explain why the legitimacy of the Manassite territory is not subject to a similarly lengthy explanation. As briefly noted in Chapter 3, Jobling holds that while the biblical texts generally show tension over the Israelites' right to possess east Jordan territory south of the Jabbok River – which in certain cases is understood as rightfully belonging to the Moab, Edom, and occasionally Ammon – the issue of their holding territory north of the Jabbok is not questioned in the same way. It is therefore conceivable that the biblical writers did not view Manasseh's conquest of what is ostensibly the northern part of Gilead as requiring the same divine sanction as did Reuben and Gad's settlement in the southern part of this territory. Of course, it is also possible that the differing attitudes towards the legitimacy of these two regions is the result of the east Manassite material having been simply tacked on to the end of a narrative of which it was not initially a part.

Joshua 22

Joshua 22 is a fascinating narrative about communal unity and division, inclusivity and exclusivity, and contested ideologies of identity. Ostensibly intended to reinforce the notion of pan-Israelite solidarity despite the geographic division created by the Jordan River, it nonetheless does so by highlighting differences between the eastern and western Israelite tribes and their respective territories. The narrative assumes both a distinction between these two regionally based groups and a simmering hostility between them, although such hostility would not have had time to emerge according to the timing

implicit in the wider narrative. As in Num 32, half/(east-) Manasseh unexpectedly drifts in and out of the storyline and is noticeably missing from key scenes in it. Thus although by its very nature the greater tribe of Manasseh could have bridged the social and geographic gap the story highlights, in the end there is ambiguity, or at least inconsistency, over this group's eastern status.

Joshua 22 presupposes both the eastern tribes' arrangement with Moses that they participate in the conquest of Canaan in exchange for the right to settle east of the Jordan (Num 32 and Deut 3:18-20)[459] and the subsequent conquest and settlement of Canaan (Josh 1-21). The narrative opens with Joshua addressing the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half-Manasseh. Commending these groups for their loyalty to Moses, YHWH, himself, and their western brethren, Joshua blesses them and sends them back to their territory east of the Jordan (vv. 1-6). V. 7 abruptly and rather awkwardly notes that Moses had given the half -tribe of Manasseh the Bashan while Joshua had provided for the other half of the tribe in the west, and in v. 8 Joshua instructs the eastern tribes to share their spoil with their kin.[460]

As the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh (again?) take leave of the western tribes – the latter of whom are described as the "sons of Israel" (or "Israelites") from this point in the narrative onward[461] – they build a large altar by the

[459] There is, however, discrepancy between the tribes' arrangement in these two texts.

[460] Very strangely the region of Gilead is not associated with half-Manasseh in these verses as it is in all other biblical texts.

[461] See Knight's excellent treatment of this issue in Knight, "Joshua 22 and the Ideology of Space," 55-59.

Jordan (vv. 9-10).[462] Upon hearing about this altar the "Israelites" gather at Shiloh to go to war against the easterners (vv. 11-12). Phineas the priest and the leaders of the ten "Israelite" tribes are dispatched to Gilead where they rebuke Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh for their actions. Charging the three eastern groups with apostasy, and somewhat surprisingly suggesting that the easterners' land might be "unclean," they claim that their actions will bring YHWH's wrath on the people as a whole (vv. 13-20). The eastern tribes defend themselves, claiming that the altar is not in fact intended to serve as a functional altar but is rather a sign of their loyalty to YHWH. Its purpose, they argue, is to ensure that in the future their descendants will be recognized as legitimate members of the Yahwistic community (vv. 21-24). In v. 25 of the MT, half-Manasseh inexplicably disappears from the narrative and the eastern tribes, who aside from v. 7 had been treated as a single entity, now appear to consist only of Reuben and Gad.[463] Continuing (or perhaps duplicating?) the explanation of the altar's purpose begun in the previous verses, the two eastern groups note their fear that the western tribes will one day claim "YHWH has made the Jordan a border between us and you, children of Reuben and children of Gad; you have no part in YHWH….." such that they envisioned the altar as a preemptive demonstration of their Yahwism (vv. 26-29). East Manasseh briefly

[462] The location of the altar is unclear and is a matter of dispute among both the ancient textual witnesses and modern scholars. V. 10 of the MT indicates that the eastern tribes built the altar at the "Gelilot of the Jordan" in the land of Canaan. V. 11, however, suggests that the altar was located across from *('el mûl)* the land of Canaan in the "Gelilot of the Jordan," across from (*'el 'eber*) the children of Israel; while the prepositional phrases may be translated differently than I have suggested here, the sense of the verse nonetheless seems to be that the altar was located somewhere outside of Canaan. In contrast to the MT, the LXXB and Syriac read *Gilgal* in place of *Gelilot* in v. 10, which more firmly establishes the Canaanite location of the altar in this verse. See Nelson's brief comments in Nelson, *Joshua*, 264, n. f; cf. N. Snaith, "The Altar at Gilgal: Joshua 22:23-29," *VT* 28 (1978): 330-335.

[463] Half-Manasseh does not disappear from v. 25 in the OG or Syriac, and thus in these traditions, the tribe would be included in the explanation of the altar in vv. 26-29.

reappears in the following two verses, in which Phineas and the western tribal leaders accept Reuben, Gad and "the sons of Manasseh['s]" explanation about the altar (v. 30-31).[464] The Manassites are notably absent, however, from the culminating scenes in the MT.[465] Here Phineas and the western leaders return home "from the Reubenites and Gadites in the land of Gilead" (v. 32); the "Israelites" decide to call off their war against the easterners that was intended "to destroy the land where the Reubenites and Gadites were living" (v. 33); and most significantly, the Reubenites and Gadites (alone) name the altar as a symbol of solidarity between east and west (v. 34).

The historical and redactional backgrounds of the narrative are unclear. Opinions about the historical setting range in date from the period of the Judges to the Persian era, with commentators generally pointing to the presence of the altar by way of explanation.[466] Commentators generally agree that the present form of the text is made up of two distinct units: vv. 1-6 and vv. 9-34, separated by the bridge of vv. 7-8. Among other issues we find that while Joshua is the main character of vv. 1-6, Phineas the priest is the main character of vv. 9-34; vv. 1-6 (or 1-8) give no indication of the issues in the rest of the chapter whereas vv. 9-34 can be read as a complete story without the initial verses; the gentilic used for Reuben and Gad in v. 1 is replaced with the expression "sons of" from v. 9 onward.[467] Most agree that vv. 1-6 are Deuteronomistic because of their

[464] Here the group is described as "the sons of Manasseh" as opposed to "the half tribe of Manasseh" as in the earlier verses of the text.

[465] The half-tribe of Manasseh is included in all these verses in the LXX. Since the omission of Manasseh is both the shorter and more difficult reading, the LXX appears to be a corrective gloss.

[466] For a brief outline of the various opinions on the dating of this chapter, see Assis, "The Position and Function of Jos 22 in the Book of Joshua," 528-530.

[467] Nelson, *Joshua,* 246-48.

linguistic, thematic and theological similarities to other parts of the wider Deuteronomistic corpus.[468] Opinions on the source of vv. 9-34, however, vary. Noth viewed them as Deuteronomistic but with Priestly editing. Similarly Nelson points out that they reflect Priestly interests and language, which likely indicates that later Priestly redactional interests played a role in the final form of the narrative, although he also maintains that the relationship of this narrative to the Pentateuchal P source is not absolute.[469] Jo Ann Hackett argues that although the chapter demonstrates signs of Priestly editing, the final form of the story is not one with which the Priestly circle would have been happy since it ultimately concludes that Phineas and the leaders of the western tribes were in the wrong. She maintains that in its final form, the story most likely represents the interests of a group opposed to the Priestly circle who viewed the eastern Israelites as a legitimate part of Israel.[470] Following Assis, I do not think it is possible to determine with certainty the sources of these verses or development of wider narrative as a whole.

East Manasseh's uneven presence within the MT version of the narrative is perplexing.[471] The obtrusive, or at least awkward, note highlighting the tribe's presence

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[468] Nelson, *Joshua*, 247; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 332-36; Robert Boling and G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (ABD 6; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982): 508-9; Assis, "The Position and Function of Jos 22 in the Book of Joshua," 529-30.

[469] Nelson, *Joshua*, 248. See also Boling and Wright, *Joshua*, who argue that these verses are not P but rather a caricature of some major Priestly preoccupations, including tribal identity.

[470] Hackett, "Religious Traditions in Israelite Transjordan," 125-136.

[471] This is not an issue in the LXX, where half-Manasseh is mentioned in all the verses in question. However, since the MT offers both the shorter and more difficult readings, it is likely to be the original text that the LXX has subsequently corrected.

in v. 7 stands in striking contrast to its notable absences at the end of the text although both features suggest that this group was not originally part of the narrative. That is, while there seems to be a deliberate attempt to emphasize Manasseh's presence or function as a bridge between east and west at the beginning of the story, somewhat strangely this group is missing from the end of it in which the altar serves as a symbol of solidarity between east and west. If, however, we view vv. 1-6 +7-8 and vv. 9-34 as originally independent narratives we find that they follow a similar story arc although with different emphases: in both cases the eastern tribes return to their territory following the conquest of Canaan although unity is maintained between east and west. In the first narrative it is maintained through the tribe of Manasseh; in the second it is maintained through the altar.

Insofar as many commentators view the altar tradition as the core on which the wider narrative was based, east Manasseh's sporadic appearance in the verses related to the altar is notable. This in turn leads to the questions of why the Manassite group was not fully part of this tradition and when it came to be understood as an eastern entity, similar questions that arose with respect to east Manasseh's position in Num 32. Since Reuben and Gad ultimately claim that the altar was intended to counterbalance the division between east and west created by the Jordan River (vv. 25-29), it is tempting to explain Manasseh's absence from this material as the result of its particular geographic situation as an east-west tribe. That is, since its tribal affiliation bridged the geographic divide, this particular tribe did not need recourse to the altar. Of course this theory does not explain why east Manasseh is described as taking part in the altar's construction or the group's presence in other parts of the narrative. East Manasseh's erratic depiction

also introduces a distinction between half Manasseh and the two other eastern groups as in Num 32. In both texts we find that while on one level east Manasseh is understood as connected with Reuben and Gad, it is nonetheless not fully part of the traditions focused on these two tribes.

In addition to Joshua 22's inconsistent mention of east Manasseh among the eastern tribes, the narrative does not quite consider the group to be "Israelite" either which renders its status even more ambiguous. As Knight has insightfully shown, the "Israelites" in this text are consistently equated solely with the western tribes.[472] For example, the Reubenites, Gadites and half-Manasseh leave the "Israelites" to return to their territory (Josh 22:9), the "Israelites" are informed of the altar they have constructed (Josh 22:11), and the "whole community of the Israelites" gathers at Shiloh to wage war against the eastern tribes (Josh 22:12). Therefore east Manasseh, despite its Manassite pedigree, is not considered "Israelite." This point is further articulated in the description of the "Israelite" delegation sent to confront the eastern tribes which includes the priest Phineas and the leaders of the ten western tribes (Josh 22:13). The idea that there are ten "Israelite" or western tribal leaders – out of what the Bible generally describes as a twelve-tribe system – stands in tension with the idea of the "nine and a half western tribes/two and a half eastern tribes" paradigm found in Deuteronomistic and possibly Priestly (?) writings. While there obviously cannot be half of a leader, this unit suggests that Manasseh is envisioned (only) as a western tribe, which in turn leads to the question of how, or if, its leadership extends to the tribe's eastern members.[473]

[472] Knight, "Joshua 22 and the Ideology of Space," 55-59.

[473] See similar comments in Knight, "Joshua 22 and the Ideology of Space," 54.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

In the end, it is plausible that Manasseh was a tribe that existed historically. The overarching biblical characterization of Manasseh as a segmented descent group affiliated with a localized region corresponds with the flexible view of tribe in contemporary anthropological discourse and archaeological data from the regions the Bible loosely designates as Manassite allow for the existence of an Iron I tribe. At the same time, this general correspondence does not mean we should automatically equate the entirety of the biblical portrait with a historical entity. The descriptions of Manasseh's genealogy and territorial affiliations in Num, Deut, Josh and 1 Chr are highly stylized and schematic, and simply because the Bible situates Manasseh in regions that appear to have been tribally organized at one point, we cannot assume that these regions' Iron I inhabitants were all Manassite. Furthermore, the tribe's connection to east Jordan appears to be a matter of literary convention or possibly socio-political idiom rather than a socio-territorial reality.

A potentially fruitful way to overcome this impasse and engage both history and the texts is to explore Manasseh through the lens of cultural memory.[474] This approach

[474] In recent years a number of scholars have applied the theories of cultural memory to the Bible. See for instance, Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel;* Ronald Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory and History in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Philip R. Davies, *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History – Ancient and* Modern (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008); Ronald Hendel, "Cultural Memory," in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods* (ed. Ronald Hendel; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 28-46.

ultimately focuses not on what Manasseh was but rather on how and why the tribe was remembered and (re)constructed by later biblical writers.

This concept of cultural memory is first associated with the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who spoke of "collective memory" as the way in which people "reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of society."[475] Halbwachs posited that memories arise within a collective context and that they are selective – whether deliberately or inadvertently – so that in the end it is the needs and realities of certain groups at particular periods of time that determine how they remember the past. Building on Halbwachs' theory, the Egyptologist Jan Assmann advanced the idea of what he describes as mnemohistory. According to Assmann, mnemohistory "is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered. It surveys the story-lines of tradition, the webs of intertextuality, the diachronic continuities and discontinuities of reading the past. Mnemohhistory is not the opposite of history, but rather is one of its branches or subdisciplines."[476] In other words, mnemohistory focuses on the interplay of historical events and their recollection. It is a culturally determined reference to the past transmitted through various media, including writing and in this way texts often serve as the vehicle for cultural memories that in turn help shape or maintain a group's identity. Pierre Nora has also emphasized the collective nature of memory and the various forms of its construction and concretization. Nora argues that collective memory resides in *lieux de mémoire* or "sites of memory" that

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[475] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 40.

[476] Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8-9.

serve as reference points for such memories*:* "A *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community (in this case, the French community)."[477] Included among Nora's "sites" are concepts that help preserve memory. While Nora generally views *lieux de mémoire* as a modern phenomenon, his argument seems applicable to the ancient Israelites' idea of a twelve-tribe system, if not the individual tribes themselves, insofar as these concepts serve as a 'symbolic element of the memorial heritage' of the Israelites that shapes their sense of identity and nationhood.

Cultural memory, then, recognizes that the past is continually being remade with an eye toward the present needs of particular groups and that memories of the past are mobilized to define and determine identity whether or not they are entirely historically accurate. Applying these concepts to the Israelite tribes in a general sense we may say that while the biblical depictions of the tribes and tribal period are not historical, they build on history as frame. That is, they seem to include some degree of historical detail and cultural memory. The basic notion of "Israel," or those groups that eventually came to comprise Israel, as having a tribal past resonates with a wider ancient Near Eastern socio-cultural phenomenon and with conditions in the east and west Jordan highlands during the Iron I and possibly later periods even if the actual details of this past have been (re)shaped over time to accommodate the needs of the later Israelite people or nation(s).

[477] Pierre Nora, "From *Lieux de mémoire* to Realms of Memory: Preface to the English-Language Edition," in *Realms of Memory*: *Rethinking the French Past.* Vol. 1: *Conflicts and Divisions* (ed. L.D. Kritzman; New York: Columbia University, 1996), XVII; see also Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.

It is from this wellspring of history and memory that the traditions about Manasseh likely emerged and evolved.

Manasseh is remembered and (re)constructed as an integral part of the Israelites' early history – a member of the twelve-tribe coalition descended from Jacob out of which the nation ostensibly emerged. At the same time there is a degree of inconsistency over both its intra-tribal position and its inter-tribal composition. Its status as one of the twelve is somewhat malleable since Manasseh together with its neighbor, Ephraim, are occasionally swapped out of the tribal listing in place of the composite Joseph tribe. Although the notion of the Joseph tribe does not necessarily negate that of Manasseh as an independent entity, it does lead to questions over issues of identity, autonomy, and designation. From an inter-tribal perspective, Manasseh's characterization as the sole east-west Jordan entity is hampered by both textual and conceptual tensions that ultimately render "east Manasseh" a liminal concept.

In the end, then, the texts offer differing views of what Manasseh was – views that I hope to have demonstrated reflect distinct bodies of tradition. One set of traditions conceives of Manasseh as a western tribal entity. Within this body of material Manasseh is invariably connected to Ephraim, which frequently translates into the idea of the two as the constituent members of the greater Joseph tribe although these latter concepts do not appear identical. The casting of Manasseh as an eastern entity represents still another tradition. While the conceptualization of Manasseh as an eastern entity is obviously tied to the notion of Manasseh as a western tribe, it is in many ways incompatible with the idea of Manasseh as part of the Joseph entity. The tension between these two ideas – Manasseh as part of the composite Joseph group and Manasseh as an eastern tribe –

suggests that they arose independently of one another. At the same time both ideas best make sense within the twelve-tribe framework since each helps maintain the twelve-entity scheme although they nonetheless appear to be differing concepts within the same overarching paradigm. The notion of Joseph as either a composite Manasseh-Ephraim entity or an ancestral stand-in for Manasseh and Ephraim allows the twelve-entity tribal lists to include the priestly group of Levi. The idea of east Manasseh gives the territory and people(s) of this eastern region an Israelite tribal pedigree. Such a pedigree not only allows them to be considered, or perhaps claimed, as part of the greater Israelite "family" and nation but also legitimizes this relationship by casting it as having existed from the peoples' early beginnings.

It does not seem possible to determine the origin of these varying Manassite traditions with any precision given the difficulties of dating the biblical materials although several observations may help us posit a broad setting in which they developed. The conceptualization of Manasseh's close ties with Ephraim appears to derive from a northern Israelite or at least pre-exilic milieu for several reasons. First, the connection between the two appears in texts of myriad genres – prophetic, narrative, tribal lists – some of whose origins may derive from the 8th century BCE or earlier. It is also unclear why later Judahite authors would invent traditions about the (early) relationship between two northern tribes when such traditions do not seem relevant to southern concerns. Furthermore, this relationship appears to be the basis from which the categorization of the two as a composite Joseph entity arose. Although the dating of Israel's twelve-tribe concept is far from clear, the fact that its constituent members largely consist of northern tribes suggests that many traditions about these groups stem from a northern context.

The time during which Manasseh and Ephraim came to be "replaced" by Joseph in this system, however, is not certain.

Determining the origin of the east Manassite tradition is more complex. On the one hand, the idea that early Israel had a presence in, or at least ties with, east Jordan appears based on some historical kernel as evidenced by the Mesha Stela and the region's very mention in the biblical texts. Although certain biblical writers find Israel's existence in east Jordan problematic, most nonetheless acknowledge it in contrast to the manner in which the Chronicler simply erases the northern kingdom from its presentation of the monarchic period. Yet while the east Jordan groups Machir and Gilead, who are ultimately cast as part of Manasseh, seem to have been affiliated with the early Israelites in some way (e.g. Judg 5; 1 Sam 9), it does not necessarily follow that they were initially, if ever, connected with Manasseh or that their territories corresponded with the areas the Bible ascribes to east Manasseh. The biblical writers do not seem to have had a clear understanding of who or where east Manasseh was but rather offer vague and varying impressions of its composition and location. Although changes in tribal make-up and territory are a natural feature of tribal identity and society, the descriptions of the east Manassite territory in particular do not appear reflective of diachronic social change. Rather, they appear as stylized and idealized assertions of (past) territorial hegemony, or at the very least some sense of presence/ownership, over areas scholars widely agree were not fully, if ever, under Israelite control. Furthermore, since the genealogical idiom frequently expresses social, cultural, political and/or even economic relationships, we need not read the familial connection between the eastern and western Manassite halves described in the biblical texts literally. Just as scholars widely view the "twelve tribes as

Jacob's descendants" concept as a later expression of socio-political identity and cohesion among and/or for the myriad groups that eventually came to be "Israel," so too can we view Manasseh on a micro scale. In other words, "the tribe of Manasseh"/"sons of Manasseh" might well function as an idiom for various types of alliances, connections, or relationships between certain eastern and western groups without necessarily signifying that these groups were actually a single tribe or kin. How or why the connection(s) between these groups came about, however, is not clear.

Why these traditions about Manasseh evolved and persisted over time is of course an important consideration. Since the territory ascribed to west Manasseh eventually formed the heartland of the northern Israelite kingdom, it is likely that the traditions of the people(s) in this region were mobilized and re-cast as this kingdom forged its identity. As the northern kingdom's identity and cultural heritage were, to some extent, subsequently co-opted by the Judahite kingdom or even later religio-political leaders in exile or in Yehud, these memories of the tribe in turn would have become part of the wider cultural narrative of the greater (northern and southern) Israelite people as a whole, defining and delimiting their past so as to give them a sense of identity.

Directions for Future Study

Hopefully this study can serve as a microcosm for other issues of Israelite historiography insofar as it illustrates the difficulties of methodology and working with ambiguous terminology and the ways in which scholars must attempt to tackle these issues. Another avenue for possible study includes the political, economic and religious roles of the tribes in Israel's history and literature, and the problem of topographical and symbolic boundaries, especially with respect to the lands assigned to the tribes. Finally, a

fascinating aspect of Manasseh's connection to east Jordan that this project did not pursue is the nature of Joseph in this equation. The figure of Joseph evinces no connection to the east although this region does play a key role in the early Jacob traditions (e.g. Jacob's wrestling with the angel of God along the Jabbok in Gen 32; his conflict and subsequent agreement with Laban the Aramean in Gen 30-31). Yet curiously Manasseh is more closely tied to Joseph than to Jacob, and some have suggested that Manasseh's connection to Jacob is only realized through the merging of the originally independent Joseph and Jacob traditions.

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