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The M.H.L. dissertation entitled:

"The Historical and Sociological Background of
the Song of Deborah - Judges 5"

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The Historical and Sociological Background of

The Song of Deborah -- Judges 5

The text of the Song of Deborah has been treated in the first chapter in order to clarify difficulties in the text that can be clarified as well as establishing a definite text and a definite translation on which to base the further work in the thesis. Also an analysis of related literary material from the Bible that is directly pertinent to the subject is appended to this chapter.

Chapter two is introduced by a description of the battle, in order to set the scene for the main discussion on the topography of the land of Canaanite as it directly relates to the Song of Deborah and its historical period. The various tribes are geographically located in reference to the Song and additional reliable sources; and they are individually discussed as far as the material on hand can lead. The whole group is also discussed in the same light. ? points

The third chapter first contains a brief outline of Egyptian history in the period preceding the Song. This is followed by an analysis of the historical happenings from 1215 B.C.E. down to the battle in which Deborah participated. Included are discussions of the events and the principal characters involved in each event. The chapter is closed by a section in which the date of the event behind the Song is determined.

The fourth chapter deals with the social background. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first deals with the theological background reflected in the Song, using precise quotations to illustrate the God idea implied. The second section deals with the word "Israel" and its precise meaning in the year 1125 B.C.E. The third section endeavors to picture the political structure of the Israelite tribes. The fourth deals with social customs, mainly dealing with the occupations of the various tribes. The fifth deals with war; its place in society and its outward manifestations. The sixth and last section deals very briefly with cultural reflections in the poetic style and inward reflections of the time.

The thesis is closed with a conclusion presenting an overall picture of the background of the battle and including in it the major conclusions of the thesis as part of the whole story.

THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF
THE SONG OF DEBORAH
JUDGES 5

by
Benjamin L. ¹⁸⁰⁷Marcus

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Master of Hebrew Letters Degree
and Ordination

Hebrew Union College -
Jewish Institute of Religion
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Referee:
Professor Blank

Dedicated to

DR. EUGEN TAEUBLER

whose inspiration has made

the Bible live

and Judaism breathe

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Chapter 1 The Text

A discussion of the background of the "Song of Deborah"¹ must be based almost entirely on the text itself and unfortunately the Masoretic text is full of difficulties. So before we can proceed, it is necessary to clarify the meaning and the form of the text.

This job, if followed to completion by the author, would require a work of much greater scope than a rabbinical thesis. So I have sifted through the leading modern and contemporary scholars who have dealt with the "Song" and I have tried to present a text that as nearly possible represents what I feel is the meaning and the structure of the "Song."

However, proper tribute and reference must be made here to that outstanding scholar, George Foote Moore, for after much research and constant testing, his analysis and translation of the Hebrew text has been relied upon in the main. His translation of the "Song" in his work Judges² has been adopted except in cases where other authorities have presented something that adds too much to our understanding to be neglected. The Hebrew text follows mainly his text published in the Haupt Polychrome Bible Hebrew Texts, and passages which have been considered impossible to translate or are not translated in his Judges have been taken from the English Haupt Polychrome Series.⁴

However, there are many passages whose meaning is so obscured that no translation has been attempted. These passages are usually noted by a series of dots (.....) . .

When an attempt has been made to correct the Hebrew text, the following symbols have been used:

An underlined word _____ or letters represents an emendation of the entire word or the letters underlined. Cf. vs. 4 b and the word appearing in the text is a conjectural word not in the original.

In the translation, the emended word is underlined.

Parentheses () without any space represent a letter that has been removed from the original text.

Parentheses () with one or more spaces represent a word or phrase that has been deleted from the original text.

Parallel lines || represent a change in the vocalization though no emendation of the original consonants has been made.

One last comment before we enter the text proper and that is in reference to the translation of the Tetragrammaton. In all the scientific works we find the Name written in the phonetic pronunciation, however in view of the fact that this is a rabbinical thesis, I have translated the Tetragrammaton according to the general Jewish tradition: "The Lord."

ב- בַּפֶּרֶעַ פָּרְעוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

2. You, as ones who loosen the hair in Israel⁵

בַּהֲחִנּוּב עִם

- . You, as a people that volunteers itself,⁶

בִּרְכֵי יְהוָה:

Bless the Lord!

ג- שִׁמְעוּ מְלָכִים, הִאֲזִינוּ רֹזְנִים

3. Hear, ye kings; give ear, ye rulers;

אֲנֹכִי לַיהוָה, אֲנֹכִי אֲשִׁירָה

I, to the Lord, I will sing,

אֲזַמֵּר לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Will hymn to the Lord, Israel's God.

ד- יְהוָה בָּצָאתָ מִשֵּׁעִיר

4. Lord, when Thou wentest forth from Seir,

מִצִּעְדֶּךָ מִשּׁוֹדֵי אֶדוֹם

When Thou marchedst from the region of Edom,

ה- אֶרֶץ רָעָשָׁה גַם שָׁמַיִם נִמְוָה⁷

The earth quaked, the heavens swayed

ו- גַּם עָבִים נִטְפְּוּ מִיָּם:

The clouds dripped water.

ז- הָרִים נִזְלָו מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה ()⁸

5. The mountains streamed before the Lord,

מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Before the Lord, the God of Israel.

ח- בְּיָמֵי שִׁמְגַר בֶּן עֲנַת ()⁹

6. In the days of Shamgar ben Anath,

חַדְלָה אִין יְהוּדָה

Caravans ceased;

וְהוֹלְכֵי נְתִיבוֹתַי יֵלְכּוּ () ¹¹עַל קְלָיוֹת:

And wayfarers travelled by roundabout paths.

ז- חַדְלָה פְּרוּזָה ¹²בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

7. Hamlets¹³ ceased in Israel,

¹⁴חַדְלָה.....

..... ceased;

עַד שֶׁקָּמָה ¹⁵דִּבּוֹרָה

Till thou didst arise, Deborah,

שֶׁקָּמָה אַתְּ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

Till thou didst arise, a matron in Israel.

ח- יִבְחַר אֱלֹהִים הַדְּשִׁים אֶזְרוֹת שְׁעָרֵים

8.¹⁶

כִּגֹּן אֵם יִרְאֶה וְרֶמֶס

Shield was not to be seen, nor spear,

בְּאַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

Among forty thousand in Israel.

ט- לִפִּי לַחֲזֹקְקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

9. My heart turns to the marshals (?) of Israel,

הַמְּחַנְדָּבִים בָּעַם

Those who volunteer themselves among the people,

בְּרַכָּה יְהוָה:

Bless ye the Lord.

י- רֹכְבֵי אֲהֻנֹת צִהְרוֹת יֹשְׁבֵי עַל מִדִּין

10. Ye who ride tawny asses; sit upon¹⁷

וְהוֹלְכֵי עַל דֶּרֶךְ שִׁירָה:

And walk by the way, sing!

11. 17

There they rehearse the victories of the Lord.

The victories of in Israel: ¹⁷

Then marched down to the gates,¹⁸ the people of the Lord.

12. Rouse thee, rouse thee, Deborah; rouse thee, rouse thee
thee strike up the song;

Up Barak, and take thy captives,¹⁹ son of Abinoam.

13. Then Israel marched down like nobles.

The people of the Lord marched down for Him as heroes.

14. Ephraim ..²³

After thee, O Benjamin, among ^{thy} clansmen. 24

From Machir marched down truncheon-bearers.

And from Zebulun, those who lead with the muster-master's staff.

סו- וְיִשָּׂכָר () יִשָּׁכָר עִם דְּבוֹרָה²⁶

15. And the princes of (?)²⁵ Issachar with Deborah

וְנַפְתָּלִי²⁷ עִן בָּרַק

And Naphtali leal²⁸ to Barak

בְּעֵמֶק שֶׁלֹה בִּרְגִלִי

.....²⁹

בְּפִלְגֹּחַ רְאוּבֵן גְּדִלִים הָקִלָּה³⁰ לָב:

Among the divisions of Reuben were great discussions.

סו- לָמָּה יֹשֵׁב בֵּין הַשֹּׁפְתִים

16. Why didst thou sit still at sheep folds³¹

לִשְׁמֹעַ שְׂרָקוֹת עֶדְרִים ()³⁰

Listening to the calling of the flocks?

י- גִלְעָד בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁכַן

17. Gilead remained beyond the Jordan;

וְדָן לָמָּה יִגְוֵר אֲנִיּוֹת³²

And Dan, why does he seek the protection of the ships?

אַשֶׁר יָשָׁב לְחוּף יָמִים

Asher sat still on the shore of the Great Sea

וְעַל מִפְּרָצָיו יִשְׁכֹּן:

And remains by its landing places.

יח- זְבֻלֹן עִם חֶרֶף נִפְשָׁה לָמוּת

18. Zebulun is a tribe that recklessly exposed itself
to death,

וְנַפְתָּלִי עַל מְרֹמֵי שָׂדֶה:

And Naphtali, on the heights of the open field.

יט- בָּאוּ מַלְכִים וּלְחָמוּ אִזּוּ וּלְחָמוּ מַלְכֵי

קָנָעַן

19. The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of
Canaan,

בְּתַנַּחַךְ עַל מֵי מֶגֶדוֹ

At Tannach, by the waters of Meggido;

בָּצַע כֶּסֶף לֹא לָקְחוּ:

Gain of silver they did not take.

כ- מִן שָׁמַיִם נִלְחַמוּ הַכּוֹכָבִים

20. From the heaven fought the stars,

מִסְלֹחֵם נִלְחַמוּ עִם סִיסְרָא:

From their paths, they fought with Sisera.

כא- נַחַל קִישׁוֹן זָרַפָם

21. The stream of Kishon swept them away,

נַחַל קְדֻמִּים³³ () דָּרַךְ () נַפְשֵׁי יַעֲקֹב³⁴

The stream of antiquity trampled the strong ones.

כב- אִזְוָה לְמַר עֵינֵי סוֹס

22. Then were battered the heels of the horses

מִדְּהִירוֹת הַדְּהִירוֹת אֲפִירֵיו:

From the gallop galloping of his steeds.

כג- אִזְוָה בְּרוֹז אֲמֵר (מֵלֶאכֶר)³⁶ יְהוָה

23. Curse ye, Meroz, saith (the messenger of)³⁶ the Lord

אֲרֵי אֲרוֹר יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ

Curse ye bitterly its inhabitants,

כִּי לֹא בָּאוּ לְעֹזְרָת יְהוָה

Because they came not to the help of the Lord,

לְעֹזְרָת יְהוָה בְּגִבּוֹרִים:

To the help of the Lord, like brave men.

כד- מְבֹרָכָה מְנַשִּׁים יַעֲלֵל ()³⁷

24. Blessed above all women shall Jael be,

מְנַשִּׁים בְּאֵהָל מְבֹרָכָה:

Above all nomad women shall she be blessed.

כה- מִיָּס שָׁאֵל חֶלֶב נָחֵמָה
מִיָּס שָׁאֵל חֶלֶב נָחֵמָה

25. Water he asked, milk she gave;

בְּסֶפֶל אֲדִירִים הִקְרִיבָה חֶמְאָה:
בְּסֶפֶל אֲדִירִים הִקְרִיבָה חֶמְאָה:

In a bowl for lords she brought him sour milk.

כז- יָדָהּ לַיָּתֵד תָּשֵׁל הַפֶּה
יָדָהּ לַיָּתֵד תָּשֵׁל הַפֶּה

26. Her hand to the pin she reached

וַיִּמְיֶנָה לַהֲלָמָה עֲמָלִים
וַיִּמְיֶנָה לַהֲלָמָה עֲמָלִים

And her right hand to the workingman's hammer³⁹

וְהַלְמָה (40) מַחֲקָה רֹאשׁוֹ (41) מַחֲקָה וְהַלְמָה
וְהַלְמָה (40) מַחֲקָה רֹאשׁוֹ (41) מַחֲקָה וְהַלְמָה

And hammers, destroys his head; smashes and
destroys his temples.

כז- בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ פָּרַע נָפַל שָׁכֵב (42)
בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ פָּרַע נָפַל שָׁכֵב (42)

27. At her very feet he sank down, fell at full length,
lay still,

בְּאֶשֶׁר פָּרַע שָׁם נָפַל אֲדֹרָד:
בְּאֶשֶׁר פָּרַע שָׁם נָפַל אֲדֹרָד:

On the spot where he sank down, there he fell, killed.

כה- פֶּעַד הַחֲלוֹן נִשְׁקָפָה וְחִיבָב
פֶּעַד הַחֲלוֹן נִשְׁקָפָה וְחִיבָב

28. Through the window peered and⁴³

אִם טִיטְרָא פֶּעַד הָאֲשֵׁנָב
אִם טִיטְרָא פֶּעַד הָאֲשֵׁנָב

The mother of Sisera through the lattice;

מִדָּנָע בּוֹשֵׁשׁ רֶכֶבּוֹ לָבוֹא
מִדָּנָע בּוֹשֵׁשׁ רֶכֶבּוֹ לָבוֹא

Why does his chariotry fail to come?

מִדָּנָע אַחֲרָי פַּעֲמֵי מְרַפְּבוֹתָיו:
מִדָּנָע אַחֲרָי פַּעֲמֵי מְרַפְּבוֹתָיו:

Why tarry the footfalls of his chariots?

כט- חֲכָמוֹת שְׂרוּחֵיהָ מַעֲנִי בְּנִי (44)
חֲכָמוֹת שְׂרוּחֵיהָ מַעֲנִי בְּנִי (44)

29. The sagest of her princesses reply;

אָף הִיא אֲשִׁיבָה אֲמַרְיָה לָהּ:
אָף הִיא אֲשִׁיבָה אֲמַרְיָה לָהּ:

Yea, she answers her own question.

9
ל- הלא ימצאם יחלקם שלל

30. "No doubt they are finding, dividing booty;

רחם רחמתיים לראש גבר

A wench or two for each man;

45() שלל צבעים לסיסרא

Booty of dyed stuff for Sisera;

47() רחמה 46() לצוארי שגל

A piece of embroidery or two for the neck of the
queen mother.

ל- פן יאבדו כל אויביו יחיה

31. So shall perish all thine enemies, O Lord!

48() ואויביו פצאם השמש מבורחו:

But They friends shall be as when the sun rises in
his power.

10

Chapter 1 Appendix A

Related Literary Sources in the Bible

There is something unique about the Song that is worth noting before we further our investigation. Alone among the early documents the Bible we find an original document, namely The Song, supported by a prose account covering the same event, namely, chapter 4.

There have been many discussions about which version is older but from thorough research there can be little doubt that the Song is the earlier by far. In fact it is undoubtedly contemporaneous with the event, either having been sung by Deborah herself (so Taeubler and Berthau⁴⁹) or by another contemporary (so Moore, Wellhausen, Burney, etc.). But there can be no doubt of its contemporary nature; as Studer said: "Only some one actually concerned, who had experienced the effrontery of an insolent oppressor directed against himself, could express himself with this glowing hatred over a dead foe; not a poet living some centuries later."⁵⁰

In addition to this, the poetic grandeur of the poem, whose very sounds are reflections of the battle field, shows how real the event must have been to the author. The closing section dealing with the scene in the palace of Sisera is an added touch, as Moore calls it "the pitilessness of triumph" which reflects the living spirit of the times within the poem itself.

However, chapter 4 is invaluable as a help in filling out the picture of the times and the situation. S.R. Driver, Burney, Moore, Morgenstern, Taeubler et al, show clearly that we have two

elements in chapter 4; one, comprising verses 2b, 4-9, 10b-22, comes from another tradition of the battle of Deborah that came into the hands of the Deuteronomic historian whose work was in turn confused by a later hand. This later Redactor taking the name of Sisera and Jabin, joined the traditional story with a different story of Jabin and Hazor⁵¹, comprising verses 2a, 3, 10a, 23-24, and when the latest Redactor found it, it was already joined.

However, chapters 4 and 5 contain essentially the same account of the battle of Sisera. When we disregard the elements that have properly no connection with Sisera, i.e. in regard to Jabin and Hazor, it leaves the general representation untouched,⁵² for the variations are minor and are only different in non-pertinent matters. In our later discussions, chapter 4 will be introduced as needed and accepted without extensive discussions.

but it adds a number of details of which you make use of these p. 109 f.

It is also necessary to note among our sources Judges 1. This chapter, though it came into its present position much later, "is manifestly extracted from an older work"⁵³ and "in historical value far surpasses any other source that we possess for this period."⁵⁴ We will also see in the Blessings of Jacob (Genesis 49) a valuable literary source that in part, i.e. with the exception of the blessing of Judah and perhaps Joseph, "reflects the situation after the settlement in Canaan but before the coronation of Saul."⁵⁵ Reference will also be made to Joshua 11.1-9. Which is "the echo that survives in a late text" of the earlier account of the victory of Zebulun and Naphtali over Jabin and Hazor.⁵⁶

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Notes Chapter 1

1. Henceforth to be referred ^{to} as Song in this work.
2. Moore, G. F. Judges (in ICC Series) New York 1910
3. Moore, G. F. The Hebrew Text of Judges (see Bibliography)
4. Moore, G. F. The English Text to Judges (see Bibliography)
5. This translation makes use of the \beth essentiae that is translated:
"As"; suggested by Taeubler in his lectures on the Song, this
also occurs in verse 13 and 23: "as heroes" כַּבְּרִיּוֹת and "as
brave men" בְּגִבּוֹרִים . This translation is also proposed by
Pauline Cassels and M. Vernes (noted in Moore, Judges, page 138)
See further on the use of \beth essentiae in Gesenius-Kautzsch 119b -
page 379.
6. The same \beth essentiae as in note 5.
7. Burney, C. F. The Book of Judges, ad loc; Moore, Judges, ad loc,
agreeing with Budde and following the LXX[?] (Septuagint). ?
8. The gloss $\text{וְהָיָה כִּי יִבְרָךְ}$ has been removed by Moore, Burney, Taeubler
and this seems necessary -- Albright, Song of Deborah and Archaeology
notwithstanding; for it breaks the meter and disturbs the parallelism.
9. Jael's name does not seem to fit here, though Taeubler feels that ^{you might say}
it can remain since he makes Shamgar contemporary, but Moore, Burney
Albright (op cit.) Maisler, et al make him an appressor of the
previous generation(s). See further on Shamgar, below, chapter **III**.
10. Moore's revocalizing of the word אֲרוֹנוֹת "highways" to אֲרוֹנוֹת
"caravans" has been a great help in understanding the social sit-
uation, and has been a generally accepted emendation.
11. אֲרוֹנוֹת - a needless repetition probably coming in from the similar
word of verse 6a; see Moore ad loc.

12. See Moore, ad loc.
13. i.e. unwallled villages. See below, chapter III.
14. Moore suggest that most of the stichos has dropped out and we have just the remaining one beat.
15. The translating of חַנּוּךְ as an archaic second feminine singular has improved the text by removing the personal^{"first person"} element in the exhortation and resounding rather the cry of the warriors. See Moore, ad loc for further confirmation; also Gesenius Kautzsch 44H, page 121.
16. The translation of this verse would be entirely conjectual and has been left untranslated following Moore.
17. This is a tentative translation of this verse as the text is so corrupt that Moore refuses to translate 10 and 11 a, b, in the text of Judges and makes only a provisional translation in his Haupt Polychrome English translation which is here quoted. Pfeiffer in his Introduction to the Old Testament, page 325, agrees that we cannot translate these parts because of the very bad state of the text; and the many attempts at restoring the text, especially Burney's, are not convincing.
18. Probably the gates of the enemies' city: Moore, ad loc. But it is very obscure and difficult to explain precisely, since the former verses are so obscure.
19. If we vocalize the word לְבָנֵי to לְבָנֵי we will get "thy captors" which Moore, Burney, Blank and others approve of and suggest that it adds a flavor of the times of the Judges; cf. the story of Gideon (8.18-21) and his revenge for the death of his brothers by the Midianite Kings (Moore, p. 150).

20. For this translation Moore has made one of his few emendations, but this emendation is not considered irreproachable; see Book of Judges, Hebrew Text, in the Haupt Polychrome series, p. 35. In Judges, Moore does not even attempt to translate this verse, which is significant.
21. As a part of the reconstruction יָרָן instead of יָרָן; -- following verse 11b.
22. Consistent with verse 7 and the removal of the first person, so here. Also וְלִי is more consistent with the thought than וְלִי.
23. We are very unsure of the form of this verse and its meaning; Moore refuses to translate it. The verse definitely refers to Ephraim and is otherwise badly preserved. Even the emendation that changes פֶּלֶא to פֶּלֶא "valley" does not improve our understanding.
24. A full understanding of this verse is difficult to reach in the face of the uncertainty of the previous verse concerning Ephraim; but I feel that Taeubler following the lead of Burney has probably developed the most plausible understanding of the verse. Hosea 5.8 contains the exact same statement: "After thee, O Benjamin" as the war cry: a battle cry that was as meaningful to the people as the shofar and the trumpets. It is likely that this cry came from this first great united battle of Israel when little Benjamin already showed the spunk and courage that was to lead it eventually to the position of leadership under Saul.

very unlikely
of them

We know from the later stories in Judges and from Joshua of the struggle and the near destruction of Benjamin. This constant fighting spirit of this little tribe became legendary from the days of Deborah and it is in this verse that we can see the first use. Deborah is lauding Benjamin; and this war cry that originated here was to echo its way down into the later history of Israel so that it was a byword in the days of Hosea. See Burney The Book of Judges, page 133.

because of which you make of it a later you should have said it here

25. According to Moore, this emendation is dubious for the sentence as a whole is difficult to understand. However, omitting the Δ makes a little more sense of the verse and is grammatically more possible; verse 10 has parallel forms of constructs with Δ but the verse is so uncertain that it is difficult to depend on it. The construct with לֵךְ is not too unusual as mentioned in Gesenius Kautzsch section 130a, but our reconstruction needs the parallel "princes of" to correspond to "Naphtali."
26. If we change the vocalization of this word simply from a hireq to a patah, reading בְּיָ for בִּי , we have the phrase, "the people" of Deborah in parallel to the "leal to Barak" in the following stichos; this is suggested by Budde as quoted by Moore, Jud. p. 153 and is acceded to by Burney. I prefer this translation; but it seems to me to be too much forcing of a poetic pattern on this verse which is so confused anyway, so no emendation has been made.

27. Moore, Burney and nearly all the other authorities agree that the name Naphtali must have dropped out from here; and it is absolutely necessary that we have a reference to the other leading tribe of the coalition. Also we know from chapter four verse 6 that Barak is from Naphtali and that he brought a large number of troops with him.
28. Any attempt at translating this stichos כִּישָׁשָׁכָר as Issachar, so Barak" cannot stand if we accept the previous note; making כִּישָׁשָׁכָר to *changing* נַפְתָּלִי . However, this leaves a problem in regard to the word כִּן, כִּן has the meaning of "support, base etc." And we see this confirmed in the Ugaritic use of a similar word as shown in the new Kohler Baumgartner Lexicon; thus Burney's translation -- 'And Naphtali leal to Barak'
29. Moore has left this verse untranslated in his Judges and he makes an attempt at translating it in his English translation in the Haupt series; but it is nearly impossible to make any sense out of the verse and it is best left alone. To quote Moore: "unintelligibility forbids us to say more than נָלֵךְ is impossible as it stands." (p. 153).
30. This emendation is obvious if we compare the b part of verse 16-where we see nearly all the authorities have accepted this without question, i.e. 16b is a gloss of 15b.
31. Moore has improved on his earlier translation in his

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English Translation of the Book of Judges in the
Haupt Series by accepting the translation: "at the
sheep-folds" which follows the parallelism better
than "the ash heaps."

32. The translation of this part of verse 17 is so dependent on the entire history of the tribe of Dan that a note will ^{be} suffice. See the full discussion below.
33. לְשֵׁנָה לְשֵׁנָה a repetitive gloss of the first two words of the verse; see Moore, ad loc.
34. The reconstruction of the text here presented follows a suggestion of Moore in Judges, p. 161; but he immediately qualifies it by saying that he has no confidence in the reconstruction. "Stream of antiquity" is a lame attempt at best to solve the meaning of the second word; omitting לְשֵׁנָה לְשֵׁנָה the rest of the sentence must be made past instead of future and יִשְׁמְרוּ must be יִשְׁמְרוּ a new change in vocalization. What we have is an explanation of the first stichos by a parallel.
35. An easy revocalization to the passive which fits the description of injured horses. See Moore, Ju ad loc.
36. Contrary to my usual practice, I have left a word in the text though I have surrounded it by parentheses. For Moore felt no problem in the word and has left it in; however,, I must agree with Blank that this is very likely a later addition; an addition that is quite common in the Hexateuch when the appearance of the Deity has been covered over by making it "an angel of the Lord"
37. וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמְרוּ an obvious gloss taken over from Chapter

- 4; see Moore, ad loc.
38. The change from the feminine plural future to the singular with suffix makes a much more understandable text; Moore, Jud. ad loc.
39. The exact meaning of the word is still unknown, but Moore has suggested this meaning himself with reservations; Judges, ad loc.
40. The name of Sisera has been removed by Moore as a later addition, and this certainly helps both the style and the force of the verse by keeping the meter 3/3 and letting each verb smash itself on the listener; Judges, ad loc.
41. The omission of the *vav* follows the previous suggestion and adds to the strength of the sentence by leaving a continuous flow of action without interruption; Judges, ad loc.
42. Moore suggests the removal of the repetitive phrase "at her feet he sank down, fell", though it is tempting to leave it in as a very strong poetic device; see Moore, Judges, ad loc.
43. The meaning of this word is still unknown and it remains the best as untranslated; Moore, Judges, ad loc.
44. The addition of the *yod* and the slight revocalization reading נָפַלְתָּ for נָפַלְתָּ aids us here as it did in verse 26 - Moore.
- 45-46. Without the violent rearranging of this verse as under-

taken by Burney, the best effort is to remove the few repetitive words that seem out of place and the result is a clear, poetically fine verse; Moore, ad loc.

47. The emendation adopted here has been put forward by Ewald and followed by Blank; of all the many suggestions this seems to be one of the best and certainly fits into the wonderfully painted picture; Moore, Judges, ad loc.
48. The exact form of this word is not too important, "His" or "Thy"; but in spite of Moore's offering a paronomasia here, I prefer Burney's accepting of the more consistent readings that we do have in other texts of "Thy"; Burney The Book of Judges, p. 157.
49. Bertheau, E.: Kurzgefasstes Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Vol VI. Richter und Ruth, p. 98.
50. Studer, G. I.: Das Buch der Richter gramatisch und historisch erklart, 1842, second edition, p. 166 -- as quoted by Burney, op cit, p. 78, note.
51. Cooke, G. A.: The History and Song of Deborah, p. 5.
Also see below, chapter III.
52. Burney, op cit, p. 82.
53. Moore, George Foote: Judges, p. xxxii-xxxiii - Kaufman, E.,
Insists that the essence of the chapter is much earlier than Deborah because of the lack of any mention of the Philistines (Toldoth Haemuna Hayisraelit Vol. 1, Book 3, p. 628)
54. ibid. *Which? Moore or Kaufman?*
55. Pfeiffer, Robert H.: Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 275
56. ibid., p. 328

Introduction to Chapter II

The Battle

"The kings came, they fought; then fought the kings of Canaan, at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; Gain of silver they did not take!" Here in precise and striking phraseology do we find a poetic summation of the event that took place at the historic crossroad of the valley of Jezreel. Here is succinctly described the end of Canaanite power; and also, it describes the first¹ united victory of the Hebrew tribes. What brought about this battle and what was represented in it must be the subject of further exploration and discussion.

The battle was a culmination of strategy and planning; and Deborah, or her contemporary, who sang this song, realized the importance of the engagement and may have understood fully its import for the future of Israel. As Maisler puts it: "The very size of the engagement, over 40,000 men who bore arms, shows its importance, and even more important is the fact that these were not trained soldiers in ordered command, but farmers and untrained tribesmen; all in all the implication was that the forthcoming battle was of the greatest importance to the entire Hebrew settlement in the new land."²

This battle was not an engagement between two groups in contest for some historic maiden's hand, nor the honor of a warrior. It was the obvious and necessary conclusion of the economic, social and political turmoil of this age. The fact that six Hebrew

tribes joined arms to fight a common foe, a coalition of Canaanite kings, shows even more clearly that a great deal was at stake. The decline of Egypt and the encroachment of the Hebrews forced the kings of Canaan to make their last desperate attempt to restore their failing position.³ Contrary to the story of the event portrayed by the Redactor (E₂, according to Burney⁴), the Canaanite opposition of the Hebrews was an attempt to stem the tide of encroachment and occupation of the newcomers by those established in the land. The Song in no way represents the exultation of an oppressed group over the downfall of the oppressors as the usual pious historical notes of the Redactor denote; much to the contrary, the paean of victory is the exultation of an aggressive victor over the fallen enemy.

There can be no doubt that there was a long and concerted attempt by the Canaanite kings to break the power of these new invaders.⁵ If we go along with Maisler who accepts the Habiru of the Tel El Armana tablets as the Hebrews,⁶ it is easy to see the strain that was put on the Egyptian masters of the country by these persistent and aggressive tribes. It is little wonder that with the end of Egyptian power, the Canaanite kings would try to break the power of these tribes before they were broken by them. The oppression only drove the entire group together and forced the kings of the Canaanite cities to come out in a concerted attempt to destroy these tribesmen.

(the Habiru) ?

? as on ?
p. 17

As Saul had to attack the invading Philistines on their chosen ground at Gilboa, as the Persians had to attack the Greeks at Thermopylae, as the Syrian Greeks had to attack the Macabbees in their mountains, so the Canaanite kings had to attack Deborah at her chosen place. Though Rowley speaks piously of the power of the spirit that gave the poorly equipped Hebrews victory over the heavily armored foe,⁷ Maisler⁸ and Taeubler contend that the genius of Deborah brought about the victory by her strategic planning and Barak's capable execution.

Maisler contends that the Canaanites had to drive the Hebrews from the strategic control of the trade route that passed by Mount Tabor, for if they were not expelled then and there, they would push into the valleys and cut off the highway. It was a fine strategic position that Deborah had and the heavily armored foe could not reach her. When the rains came, Deborah cried out: "Arise, Barak" and the Canaanite kings, facing an impossible military situation, because of the mud, turned to flee. Then the victory was assured.

Who the contending forces of this battle were is important to note before we go further. The kings of Canaan were undoubtedly from the valleys of Akko and Jezreel with the main pivot at Harosheth/goim, the city of Sisera, which has been identified with Harithiyeh at the main course of the Kishon where it enters the Bay, i.e. near the foot of the Carmel.⁹ In addition to Harosheth goim were the famous cities of Taanach, Meggido, Jokneam, Ibleam, and perhaps some smaller ones. This

coalition was heavily armed with the "tanks" of the day, metal chariots, and it is also likely that the soldiers were well armored.

Against them were arrayed the two coalitions of Hebrew tribes:¹⁰ the northern group of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali and the central Hebrew tribes of Ephraim, Machir (see further in chapter II) and Benjamin; and we know from The Song, verse 8 that these tribes mustered 40,000 poorly armed men ("shield was not seen, nor spear").¹¹

But what can speak better of the battle than the Song itself: the coming of the kings verse 19; defeat "Gain of silver they did not take"; the rain and storm contributing to the rout, verse 20; confusion and drowning in the Kishon's swollen stream, verse 21 and verse 22.

Chapter II

The Topography of the "Song"

Let us now examine the location of the various tribes and turn to Issachar first. Moore feels that at the time of the Song Issachar was dwelling in the hills between the two valleys which descend from the eastern and of the Great plain of the Jordan; and may even have comparatively early occupied a part of the range of Gilboa. To the northwest it reached to the foot of Tabor, where it met both Zebulun and Naphtali. However this is admittedly conjectural since in our principal geographic source of the period, Judges 1, (see above - Related Literary Sources) Issachar is not mentioned, while the boundaries described in Joshua 19.17-23 represent a much later time.¹²

However, the omission in Judges 1 can be the key to lead us to understand a solution proposed by Taeubler and supported with variations by Maisler.¹³ The name Issachar can be construed as אִשָּׂכָר אִשָּׂכָר, the man of hire, and the description of Issachar in the Blessings of Jacob implies precisely this: "Issachar is a large-boned ass, couching between the sheepfolds. For he saw a resting place that it was good. And the land that it was pleasant; And he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a tributary laborer" (Genesis 49.14f) (אִשָּׂכָר אִשָּׂכָר translated in consideration of Joshua 16.10). Maisler asserts that this shows that they were hired laborers to the Canaanite kings. But if they were already under the Canaanite control this would be

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a revolt while it seems obvious that Deborah is leading a battle (against oppression and) for territorial and political aggrandizement.¹⁴ Taeubler suggests that the Issacharites were hired laborers on the vast estates in the valley of Jezreel which were personal property of the Pharaohs. This situation is reflected in one of the Tel el Armana tablets¹⁵ from a prince of Meggido to the Pharaoh concerned with the proper distribution of labor on the fields of the Pharaoh in the Emek.

Thus we have the interesting situation of the Issacharites living in the hills around the Emek and being mainly occupied in tenant type labor for the Egyptian masters of the country.

This location of Issachar clears up the problem of the location of the town of Kadesh in chapter 4, verse 9-11. If the Kadesh is Kadesh Naphtali, it makes Sisera's flight extended and hardly consistent with the fast action of the narrative. But a Kadesh in Issachar has been identified at the modern Tell Abu Kadis,¹⁶ two and a half miles south-east of Meggido, and about the same distance from Taanach. It would be unlikely that an important town of Issachar would be here unless the Issacharites had long been dwellers in the Jezreel region with some ruling power that prevented their subjugation by the Canaanites.

Kadesh

Zebulun and Naphtali were the other members of the northern coalition and lived to the north of Issachar. According to Judges 1.30 and Genesis 49.13, with a later explicit account in Joshua 19.10-16, Zebulun was settled in the western part of

Lower Galilee, in the hills north of the great plain.¹⁷

Naphtali dwelt further north and more to the east, for we learn in Judges 1.31 that Asher was settled north of Zebulun and west of Naphtali.¹⁸ We also know that after the conquest of Hazor by the coalition of Naphtali and Zebulun (see below -- chapter III) the territory of Naphtali extended near to the Huleh for Garstang has proven that Tel el Qedah¹⁹ is the site of ancient Hazor and this location is "four miles west of the foot of the Huleh."²⁰ Also Garstang has located Kadesh Naphtali in the eastern upper Galilee²¹ and this is mentioned in Judges 4.6 as the home of Barak. So bordering the Emek to the north and the north east and lying astride and in partial possession of the main trade routes leading to Syria, we find the two principal members of the northern coalition: Zebulun and Naphtali.

The Joseph tribes that were always so important in the history of Israel earned this position early, for the southern coalition that fought with Deborah was composed of these tribes. The leading tribe was Ephraim which, by the time of the Song, had taken complete possession of the central hill country later known as the "hills of Ephraim."²² We see much of the actual geographic location in Judges 1.22-29: i.e. we see that Ephraim was able to expand to Beth El, but she was stopped in her southern expansion by Gezer. In the Ehud-Eglon story, Judges 3.12-30, we learn of the early cooperation between the large tribe Ephraim and her smaller brother tribe Benjamin (3.27) in driving out a Moabite occupation of the Benjamin country north of Jerusalem;²³

so it is not difficult to generally fix her territory and the territory of Benjamin in the same general area in which these tribes are situated later in Jewish history.

Benjamin was a brave tribe even from these early days and it is a tribute to the coalition that Benjamin came with Ephraim to Deborah's aid.²⁴ However, bravery notwithstanding, Benjamin, and Ephraim, were not likely to go away from their homes in the south to go to the plains of Jezreel unless they had well established themselves and felt safe enough to leave their homes and families to swell the number of Deborah's followers. (See below on the situation of Judah.)

The third Joseph tribe was Machir. According to Burney²⁵ and Moore²⁶, there is no doubt that Machir is Manasseh in verse 14 of the Song. Though Manasseh is later almost exclusively a Transjordanic tribe, it seems certain that Machir was cis-Jordanic at the time of Deborah, and the movement across the Jordan was a reflux movement.²⁷ This seems obvious from the geographic relationship of Manasseh to Ephraim as shown in Judges 1.27f, for this verse leaves no doubt that Machir extended to the edge of the Emek where her progress was halted by the string of Canaanite cities that were to play such a role: ~~in the~~ Beth Shean, Taanach, Ibleam, Meggido. It undoubtedly was Machir, of all the three Joseph tribes, that was putting great pressure on these cities which comprised in part the coalition that all of the tribes opposed under Deborah.

But there were many tribes of the Israelite brotherhood that did not come to Meggido to aid Deborah. As we know from The Song, verses 14 and 15, (the tribes of) the northern and southern

coalitions comprised six tribes. Yet Deborah expected more than these six, for it seems that her idea was that "when Israel is arrayed in arms against Canaan, every tribe and clan is bound to come forward to the support of the National God."²⁸ As we will see later, (below, on Judah etc.) Judah, Simeon and Levi were not in any position to come to the aid of their brethren, but there were four tribes that seemed to be well settled in their tribal locale and were secure enough to be able to send troops to this important battle; but who did not participate.

Two of these tribes are Transjordanic tribes: Reuben and Gad (Gilead in verse 17 of the Song).²⁹ As we see from Numbers chapter 32, from a J source according to Pfeiffer,³⁰ there was an early tendency manifested by the Transjordanic tribes to separate. The story of the altar built by these tribes on the banks of the Jordan, Joshua 22, is a late story, but it reflects the same problem. Though it is clear that the verse in the Song about Gad and Reuben reflect a feeling that these two had a responsibility that they did not fulfill; still we can conclude that they stood as a barrier for the other tribes that prevented any incursions from the desert as we see later in the story of the Ammonites and Jabesh Gilead - (1 Samuel 11).

Though there is no mention of Reuben as specifically Transjordanic, yet it is obviously coupled with Gad "who dwells across the Jordan" and the continuous history of these two tribes seem⁶ to confirm this location. While Judges 1 reflects

the invasions of Judah, Joseph and the northern tribes, there is no mention of these two Transjordanic tribes, so we might conclude that they were already settled in the Transjordanic country. It must be noted, however, that there was a sense of responsibility on the part of Reuben, at least, for the expression, "Among the divisions of Reuben were great discussions" (Song, verse 15) implies that Deborah's messengers had been in the land of Reuben, and Reuben could not make up his mind.

Two matters that have caused a great deal of discussion in the analysis of the Song are the locations of Dan and Asher according to the comments about them in Song, verses 16b, 17a. These two tribes, like the Transjordanic tribes, did not respond to the call of Deborah, and were also held responsible for shirking a duty.

The origin of Asher is unclear, for unlike her neighboring Dan, she did not migrate from the south but seems to have been in her historical location from early times. In the chronicles of both, Seti I and Ramses II, references are found to the Asaru³¹ in the hinterland of Phoenicia. Though this does not prove anything absolutely, yet it is impossible to assume this as correct, for this is the obvious territory of Asher in the days of Deborah a few generations later. Maisler supports this view and even appraises the district in which she settled: "Asher had settled early in a wealthy district and was most successful in acquiring wealth and ample work with the Phoenicians. Also the land was fertile and the markets ample to accommodate

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their production (Asher's wealth is mentioned in the Blessings of Moses - Deuteronomy 33.24-25)." ³²

"Asher sat still on the shore of the Great Sea, And remains by its landing places." (Song, verse 17b); surely we have here the scene of a contented tribe living in a good land and having friendly relationships with ^{its} neighbors, the trading Phoenicians. The Phoenicians did not oppress the new comers but rather took advantage of the strength and eagerness of this tribe to foster the good of the area. Thus it seems likely that they were not actually living on the shore of the Mediterranean, but by the sea in the hills behind the Phoenician towns and probably settling and working among the Phoenicians. ³³

Despite non participation, Asher profited from the victory at Meggido and was able to extend her influence further down the coast toward the valley of Akko. ³⁴ As she came to take an important part in the northern coalition with Zebulun and Naphtali when Manasseh, under the leadership of Gideon, threw back an east Jordan attempt to recover the valley of Jezreel ³⁵ (Judges 6.33-35); so it shows her related geographic position, for it had obviously changed so that the Emek region was of her concern at this time while she was more or less oblivious to the situation in the time of Deborah.

Even more enigmatic than the statement about Asher is that concerning Dan: "And Dan, why does he seek the protection of the ships?" (Song, verse 17a⁴). The vital question in this verse is whether at the time of Deborah Dan had settled in the North at Laish as we are told in Judges 18, or whether she still dwelt ⁱⁿ in the south. Moore, ³⁶ Burney, ³⁷ Taeubler, are certain

that Dan had already migrated north, while Rowley³⁸ and Albright³⁹ maintain that they were still in the south. It seems much more logical and likely that Dan has moved to the north, for at no time was Dan on the sea in the south; and we see in the Samson stories that Dan is pushed into narrow confines about Zerah and Eshtaol (Judges 13-16) in his time. From this we must conclude that the Danites of the Samson stories (deal with a remnant that has not moved north, or are older and preceded the Song). We do know that Laish was under the protection of the Sidonians even though it was a relatively long distance from Sidon (18.7). When a large part of the tribe of Dan moved into the area, it is not unlikely that some migrated down toward the coastal areas. Perhaps like the Asherites they worked for the Sidonians, thus coming under their protection of these sea farers, characterized as "ships".⁴⁰ We might conclude this also from Dan's position in verse 17, i.e. Dan immediately followed by Asher; as Reuben and Gad.

It also seems likely that Dan was in the north and well settled, for Deborah implies a definite responsibility on the part of Dan to come and fight. If Dan were being so pressed by enemies that he was soon to migrate, it is not likely that Deborah would expect help from this source, as we will see later in regard to Judah. But a tribe settled at the headwaters of the Jordan in peaceful country with opportunity for employment and trade with the Phoenicians could be expected to come to the aid of her brethren.

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The testimony of silence has to be introduced in regard to the remaining tribes, for in the entire Song we find no mention of the tribes Judah, Simeon, or Levi. Opinions vary on this subject, Garstang feels the silence implies that Judah (and Simeon) was late in developing political independence and therefore was not even counted among the tribes of Israel.⁴¹ Cooke maintains that Judah had not yet realized corporate existence and had not entered into any close connection with the other tribes.⁴² Moore suggests since there was an amphictyony,⁴³ all tribes were responsible to come and fight: "it is very significant that Judah is not named at all. It is difficult to avoid the inference that the poet did not count it among the tribes of Israel. It was originally a small tribe, which grew into importance by union with clans of different stock (Caleb etc.), and it was separated from Joseph by a Canaanite belt; but these things hardly account for its absence from the song. (Simeon and Levi are also wanting;)"⁴⁴

See below p. 55

Taeubler and Rowley⁴⁵ are more inclined to an opinion that seems to fit logically into the entire picture of the tribes. Their opinion is that Judah did not come, nor was she rebuked for not coming, because she was effectively isolated from the central tribes. If her warriors had left their homes, it would only serve to invite the attack of the Canaanites. Rowley adds that, later on the Israelites could unite against the Philistines despite the Canaanites because the Canaanites had

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come to recognize the Philistines as a greater enemy.⁴⁶

Since Judah could not come, she was neither rebuked nor praised, for her isolation had prevented her from participation in the great victory for the Lord.⁴⁷

Indeed, it would be very difficult to assume that Judah could have been in a completely disorganized state at this time, while occupying the position that is reflected in Judges 1. Simeon is linked with Judah in Judges 1 and also is not mentioned in the Song. We must conclude that the reason is the same.

The tribe of Levi has a most uncertain history. However, the lack of mention of Levi in the Song is very likely not for the same reason as Judah and Simeon, for Levi might easily have disappeared as a tribe much earlier. This we can conclude from the lack of any mention of Levi in Judges 1, and the story of the wandering Levites in the later chapter of Judges, 17 ff. To conclude anything from silence in relation to Levi would be impossible, for no hints even exist that it might have been an organized tribe at this date. We may have further light on the subject from Genesis 49.5-7 and Genesis 34, the Dinah story, in which Levi is a participant in the atrocity against the Schechemites and is cursed by Jacob in Genesis 49. Perhaps one of the results was ostracization by the other tribes or revenge ~~was~~ by Hamor's relatives. Also note Simeon is the other participant.

A discussion of the topography of the Song is not complete without mention of the Kenites. However, in reality what we have is nearly all conjecture, for we have seen above that the mention of Jael as the wife of Heber the Kenite is a gloss in

verse 24 of the Song. However, Jael appears as Heber's wife in the fourth chapter of Judges and both as Kenites. All we actually know is that there was a tent of Kenites located on the edge of the valley of Jezreel, and that these were Bedouins who were not foes of the Canaanites, though they were strongly tied to the Israelites. However, our Kenite heroine defined the relationship by striking a blow for the freedom of the Israelite tribes. Perhaps she was a symbol of the lasting relations between the Israelites and the Kenites, a fact not totally unlikely according to Morgenstern's work on the Kenite Code and the related material,⁴⁸ for Morgenstern has implied that the first prophetic reformation under King Asa was related directly to Kenite influence.⁴⁹

The topographical description has shown that the Israelite tribes were so situated in Canaan that the next logical expansion for the northern and central tribes was into the rich Emek of Jezreel region. The new pressure from the Philistines on the southwestern tribes had blunted development in that direction and the far north had already been well occupied, so this salient that stood between the central and northern tribes had to be squeezed off in order to complete this phase of the conquest and settlement of Canaan. The Canaanite kings must have been well aware of the situation and feeling these pressures tried to stop the inevitable as we will see below.

But it is also important to recognize the location of the tribes that did not come, for indirectly they played a role in the battle of Meggido. The bulwark presented by the well

settled eastern Jordanic tribes to any incursions of the nomadic desert tribes farther east gave added security to the confederation's battle. And it is possible to suggest that Asher and Dan in the north and Judah in the south served similar functions.

So perhaps all of Israel was in a way at Megiddo and Debo~~r~~rah shows this by not cursing the tribes that could have come but did not. The only curse was on unknown Meroz in verse 23, a wonderful parallel to the blessing of Jael. However, much is involved here for most authorities feel that Meroz was an Israelite village that not only did not come out to fight for the Lord, but did not even impede the fleeing Sisera as he passed their gates.⁵⁰ Thus it was cursed and the fulfillment must have come to pass,⁵¹ for the name Meroz has been lost from history. Perhaps the phrase יָדָו נִסָּח "may his name be blotted out" recurrent in later Hebrew literature can be applied here.

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Notes Chapter II

1. In Judges 1, the united efforts of smaller units of tribes, i.e. Judah and Simeon, Joseph, and in Judges 4, the Naphtali, Zebulun struggle mark cooperative efforts, but this is the first inter-clan victory.
In regard to Joshua, it is felt that the book is unhistoric and has expanded tribal efforts to national proportions. Moore (Judges, p. 8) asserts that the Song disproves the entire conquest of Joshua.
2. Maisler, Benjamin, Toldoth Eretz Yisroel, vol. 1, p. 235.
3. See chapter III below.
4. Burney, C.F., The Book of Judges, p. 78.
5. See chapter III below.
6. Maisler, op cit., p. 234.
7. Rowley, H.H., Rediscovery of the Old Testament, p. 97.
8. Maisler, opcit., p. 235.
9. Garstang, John, The Foundations of Bible History, Joshua and Judges, p. 297-8, also concurred with by Burney, opcit., p. 78.
10. Morgenstern, Julian, "~~K~~adesh Naphtali and Taanach," p. 365.
11. Though I must agree with Moore (Judges, p. 145) that this did not mean a total lack of arms as in the days of the Philistines (1 Samuel 13.19).
12. Moore, G. F., Judges, p. 151.
13. Maisler, Benjamin, Toldoth Eretz Yisrael, Vol. 1, p. 232.

14. The gathering together of so many tribes untouched by the situation implies aggression on the part of the Israelites.
15. Tel El Armana Letter RA, XIX, p. 97 - in Pritchard, J., Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 485. The use of the word which is translated as "corvee" in English corresponds to עֲמָלָה in Hebrew which is the expression for Issachar in Genesis 49.15 as mentioned above.
16. Burney, C.F., The Book of Judges, p. 82.
17. Moore, opcit., p. 49. Garstang, opcit., p. 240. The city of Nahalol mentioned in Judges 1.30 has been located by Garstang in the hills on the northwestern boundary of the valley of Jezreel. Reference should be made to Genesis 49.13 where Zebulun is referred to as dwelling "at the shore of the sea, and he shall be ashore for ships, and his flank shall be on Zidon".
18. Moore, opcit., p. 49; the location of Acco, Zidon, Achzib, Aphik, Rehob as mentioned in Judges 1 prove the limits of Asher.
19. Garstang, John, opcit., p. 382.
20. ibid., page 382.
21. ibid., page 390.
22. Moore, opcit., page 133.
23. cf. Judges 1.21.
24. See above, chapter 1, note on verse 14a.
25. Burney, opcit., p. 135.
26. Moore, op.cit., p. 150.

27. Moore, op.cit., p. 150.
28. Driver, S.R., The Book of Judges, p. 132.
29. Moore, op.cit., p. 155.
30. Pfeiffer, Robert H., Introduction to the Old Testament,
p. 146.
31. Burney, C.F., Israel's Settlement in Canaan, p. 82.
32. Maisler, op.cit., p. 233.
33. Moore, op.cit., p. 156.
34. Maisler, op.cit., p. 238.
35. This east Jordanic invasion adds evidence to the contention made above concerning the buffer value of the eastern Jordanic tribes. It seems clear that the Transjordanic area was a constant source of threat to the western Jordanic area, and the well settled tribes of Gad and Reuben were defending the west by their simple settlement in this area. This might also apply to Asher and Dan in the north and Judah in the south, each buffering one section, directly or indirectly.
36. Moore, op.cit., p. 155.
37. Burney, The Book of Judges, p. 143.
38. Rowley, H.H., From Joseph to Joshua, p. 82.
39. Albright, W. F., Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology,
p. 29.
40. Moore, op.cit., p. 155.
41. Garstang, op.cit., p. 276, also p. 306.
42. Cooke, G.A., The History and Song of Deborah, p. 18 note
43. Neither Moore, op.cit., p. 134; nor Albright, The Biblical Period, p. 18, imply a central sanctuary and only Albright

*a reference to
the Egyptian sources
would be more
to the point!*

*albright does speak of
a central sanctuary on p. 18*

uses the precise term "amphictyony" and says only "in some ways".

44. Moore, op.cit., p. 134, note.
45. Rowley, H. H., From Joseph to Joshua, p. 103.
46. ibid.
47. Kaufman suggests this opinion (Toldoth Haemunah Hayisraelith Vo. II, Book 1, p. 397) by stating that Judah and Simeon are not mentioned because of political pressures that held them back. They were omitted intentionally so that there would be no reference to an unpleasant thought in a triumphal song.
48. Morgenstern, Julian, The Oldest Document of the Hexateuch, passim, especially pp. 115f.
49. ibid., p. 116.
50. Moore, op.cit., p. 135.
51. See below, Chapter IV - The Religious Significance.

Chapter III

The Historical Situation

It is to Egypt that we must turn in order to understand the historical background of the Song of Deborah.

Since Egypt's rise to empire, the province of Palestine remained regularly a possession of the Pharaoh's. Thutmose III, ca 1500 B.C.E., spoke of one-hundred-nineteen cities that he had captured in Canaan,¹ and even in 1479, B.C.E. Meggido was sacked² by the same Pharaoh.

The rise and fall of the power of the empire always was reflected in the control of Palestine. For over a hundred years the Pharaohs Amenhotep II and III kept a firm grasp on Palestine as they did on Egypt. However, the religious reformer, Akhenaton, ca. 1375, left the administration of the empire to lesser hands and soon Palestine was beset by invaders, called the Habiru.³ This period is well documented by the Tel el Armana tablets, and they show that Egyptian power was on the wane.

After a period of Hittite domination of Syria and Palestine - ca. 1375-1360, the empire was restored and the first Hittite invasion was blunted. So we may assume Egyptian power was again primary in Palestinian control; though we know that it was the responsibility of the very able Pharaohs, Seti I and Ramses II to destroy the Canaanite towns of Kadesh and Beth Anath, respectively, during their reigns: Seti I, 1314 B.C.E. to 1292 B.C.E., Ramses II, 1292 B.C.E. to 1225 B.C.E. Probably

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as a result of independent revolts.

A new threat to Egyptian power came from the sea peoples who were migrating in force from the Aegean world, newly beset by invading northern peoples. These people first broke upon the Egyptian empire in the later part of the reign of Ramses II; and were a real threat to his successor Merneptah, 1225 to 1215.

However, Merneptah was able to repair the damages inflicted in the waning years of the reign of his aged father, Ramses II, and he decisively defeated the sea peoples and drove them from the gates of Egypt. He also campaigned extensively in Palestine and Syria and his famous stele, ca. 1221 B.C.E.⁴ boasts of his campaigns in the area.

Upon the death of Merneptah ca. 1215⁵ the throne of Egypt was usurped by a Syrian pretender and anarchy reigned in the territory that was formerly under the firm control of Egypt. This anarchy lasted fifteen years until the accession of Set Nekt in 1200 when a vigorous restoration of Egyptian power was made. After a brief reign, Set Nekt was succeeded by the capable Ramses III who strengthened Egyptian power and defeated the sea peoples in a great naval battle. But on his death (1167), no strong successor rose to the Egyptian throne and a decline set in that saw the Egyptian power waning in Palestine; and it was in the year 1160, that the complete evacuation of Palestine by Egypt took place.

The period that is directly related to the battle led

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by Deborah is from the death of Merneptah, ca. 1215, to the end of Egyptian power in Palestine, ca. 1160. Such chaos reigned in Egypt at this time, 1215 - 1200 that, as noted above, a Syrian usurper was able to seize the throne.⁶ As a result, the hold over the empire was temporarily slackened.

To the Canaanite cities this break in effective control by the Egyptians gave them more independence. But the relaxing of Egyptian power meant that these cities then had to contend with Hebrew tribes dwelling in the hills to the north, south and east of the valley of Jezreel. The terror of the Canaanites' chariots seemed to have been effective in keeping the more aggressive tribes from the valley, for the major Canaanite cities lay at the edge of the plain and were concerned only with trade that passed through the valley and the harvests of the valley. (Also) these cities could not be attacked by the poorly trained and ill equipped hill fighters. However, the responsibility had descended to these cities to keep the order formerly enforced by the Egyptians, and the nuisance value of raiding hill tribes became a very trying problem.

To the north along the main trade route from the plain of Jezreel to Syria, lay the city of Hazor, menaced by the new-coming tribes especially Naphtali and Zebulun. The chaos in the Egyptian empire after Merneptah's death and the resultant breakdown of the control over the major trade routes made Hazor face the menace of these tribes, cut off from the main Canaanite power. Exactly what happened is not certain, though we have two

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accounts of the happening. The older account, mixed into the prose account of the battle of Deborah in Judges 4, comprises Judges 4.2a, 3, 10a, 23 and 24. Here we discern the struggles as a conflict between Zebulun-Naphtali and Jabin, the king of Hazor. However, we are provided with a fuller account in Joshua 11.1-9⁷, which Pfeiffer characterizes as "an echo" of the story alluded to in Judges 4.⁸ What must have happened was that the absence of Egyptian control over the main trade route brought increased raids by the hill people, probably Naphtali. Then Jabin, the king of Hazor, set out to subdue these people and open up his lines of communication. If the Septuagint version of Joshua 11.7⁹ can be relied upon, we can see that Jabin went into the hill country after these tribesmen; and he met the Israelite tribesman in battle at Merom, (Joshua 11.5) in the Hebrew text. Garstang has identified Merom's location in the hills of northern Galilee,¹⁰ so even without the addition in the LXX there seems little doubt that the tradition reflects an attack by Jabin into the country of the tribesmen. This was a fatal error for him since his chariots were of no use there, and he was defeated. His defenseless city was then taken by the tribesmen of Naphtali and Zebulun and the power of the Canaanites was broken for all times in the upper Galilee.

Not only was the Canaanite power broken in the area but now the tribe of Naphtali was on the main trade route from the north of Jezreel to Lebanon, though it is not to be inferred that they immediately set about to cut this transportation line,

for it was of great commercial value to the Israelite tribes.¹¹

However, no further action was taken at this time, either by the Israelite tribes or the Canaanite cities in the Emek, as far as we know, for the larger power struggle was ^{urned} resolved, i.e. the Hittite-Egyptian struggle; and the new Pharaoh Set Nekt reestablished much of the Egyptian power in the empire.

We may therefore conclude that another period of Egyptian strength held in check the further ambitions of the Israelite tribes and any repressive action of the Canaanites. Perhaps we may conjecture here that this is the time of the migration north ^{- north of Dan.} Since the generally accepted period of the Philistine invasion of the coast of lower Palestine is ca. 1190,¹² the migration must have occurred after that, ^{and} for as we have seen above,¹³ by the time of Deborah, Dan was already in the north.

However, the period of renewed Egyptian control was short and with the death of Ramses III (1167), Egyptian control of Palestine started to slip completely; and, as we have mentioned above,¹⁴ by 1160 Palestine was an arena, free for internal struggles without external interference.

The Canaanites were quick to sense the danger of the period, for they had seen Hazor and the Canaanite power in the north had fallen in the previous interregnum in Egypt. Also, if our conjecture is correct, the movement of Dan from the south to the north demonstrated the new danger from the

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sea people. This firmer Israelite hold on the isolated north brought about the settlements of Dan, increased the pressure on the Valley of Jezreel and put the Canaanites' trade route to the north in much greater potential danger than before.

It was then that the Canaanite cities took action. "Caravans ceased, and wayfarers travelled by roundabout paths. Hamlets ceased in Israel," (Song, verse 62 b, 7a). From this we may conclude that armed bands went forth from the Canaanite cities with the specific aim of disrupting the development of the Israelite tribes and of blunting their activities before they could become too aggressive. These armed bands probably went up into the area along the trade routes and destroyed the unwallled Israelite villages that were the germ centers for increasing activity against the Canaanites.

There was one particularly aggressive Canaanite leader who terrorized the Israelite settlements so that he is specifically mentioned as epitomizing the period, "In the days of Shamgar ben Anath" (Song, verse 6a),¹⁵ all these events started. It has been suggested that Sisera is the son and successor of Shamgar and a historical succession is shown in the Song. However, there is no certain foundation for this, since the sole basis is on the similarity of the source of their names.¹⁶

However, we can be certain that the Canaanites embarked on an increasingly aggressive campaign against the Israelites as the grip of the Egyptians loosened; and undoubtedly the heaviest

handed effort was turned on to the Issacharites.

The location of the bulk of the tribe of Issachar was in the valley of Jezreel and in the hills about the valley, ^{ide} where the tribe was also working on the royal Egyptian estates in the valley.¹⁷ At first the Issacharites probably continued at their work even though their Egyptian masters were leaving the country. Probably when the Egyptian power collapsed, they continued at their work but became restive. The Canaanites, fearing this restiveness set to subjugate them since the Canaanite cities were left free to dominate and profit from the rich plains. However, the new masters whose weakness was internal struggling in the days of early outside dangers as reflected in the Armana texts,¹⁸ probably did not present a united front in extending their control. On the other hand the increasing numbers and power of the Israelite tribes probably ^{may} encouraged the Issacharites to try to gain this rich valley for their own rather than serve new masters. Common cause had long been made with the other northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali (above chapter II); and the success of the latter two in breaking the Canaanite power in the north probably encouraged the Issacharites to hope for success.

No doubt common cause had been made also with Machir on the southern side of the Emek; and with restricted expansion in the south by the Canaanites and the pressure of the Philistines, Ephraim and Benjamin were also ready to join in picking the ripe plum that fell from the Egyptian tree. However, it

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seems that the immediate casus Belli was the repressive technique of Shamgar and his ilk ; and this repression, having lasted over a period of a few decades gave cause for the Israelites to unite.

The most prominent member of the tribe of Issachar, the prophetess Deborah,¹⁹ sent out emissaries to all of the northern and central Israelites tribes, even to the far north and across the Jordan. The pax Aegyptiaca, having given these tribes a chance to settle comfortably into their newly conquered lands, had ended; now was their chance to drive their local enemy out of his last position. The Israelite tribes already united by a common faith,²⁰ now could complete the subjugation of the rich northern part of the country by aiding their brethren of Issachar to beat back the repressive actions of the Canaanite city lords and establish Israelite hegemony in the valley of Jezreel.

The gathering of the various tribes to aid their brethren of Issachar did not escape the notice of the Canaanites; and Sisera, the king of Harosheth goim, the leading ruler of the Emek, called upon all the lords (Song, verse 192) of the cities of the Emek to come out against this army of 40,000 irregular Israelite tribesmen.²¹ The other lords of the valley were awakened to this great threat and responded with all their chariotry so Sisera mustered "900 chariots of iron"²² and came out against the Israelites headed by Barak, the army commander from Naphtali.²³

? How do you know she is from Issachar?

See to your notes on 5.15 the v. is very uncertain.

cf. Moore ICC p. 113

X

The Date

The battle must have taken place in the latter third of the 12th century B.C.E.. We have seen above that the first blow for freedom came about during the first interregnum of 1215-1200; and that this period was followed by over thirty years of peace until the death of Ramses III (1167). To allow for a generation after the early oppressor, Shamgar, is a conjecture, but reasonable in the light of verse 6 since the implication is a protracted period of aggressive suppression by the Canaanites from ^{after} this early oppressor. If we assume that the Egyptian withdrawal [✓] was completed by 1160, we can place Shamgar at about this time and place the battle between Sisera and Barak about thirty five years later, i.e., 1125 B.C.E.²⁴

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Notes Chapter III

1. Garstang, John, Joshua and Judges, p. 346. *Egyptian*
2. ibid., p. 112.
3. Robinson, T. H., A History of Israel, Vol. 1, p.7;
also Garstang, Breasted; of Tel el Armana Tablets in
Pritchard's Ancient Near Eastern Texts, also his notes
to these letters. *more specific references*
4. Burney, C. F., Israel's Settlement in Canaan, p. 82.
5. This and the following dates of Egyptian history are
taken from the chronological table at the end of Garstang's
Joshua and Judges, p. 344 ff.
6. Garstang, op cit., p. 344.
7. According to Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament,
p. 305, the story related here is an original J, likely
covered over by E, but recorded by D and in its present
form by R^D; so it is not difficult to understand the intro-
duction of an all encompassing conquest by Joshua in place
of the early tribal war with a Canaanite city.
8. Pfeiffer, Robert, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 305.
9. Garstang, John: op cit., p. 193.
10. ibid., p. 195.
11. Maisler, op cit., p. 229.
12. Robinson, op cit., p. 79; Albright, The Biblical Period,
suggests 1187 B.C.E.
13. Chapter II, on Dan.
14. Chapter III on Egyptian history.

15. This conclusion is based solely on verse 6 of the Song: Judges 3.31 must be treated as unhistorical, an insertion that was put into the text later than the Deuteronomic author of 3.20 and 4.1 where the new story starts 'when Enud was dead', refering to chapter 3 (Moore, op cit., p. 143.). If a comparison with 2 Samuel 23.11 f is made, we see that the story of Shammah the son of Age, The Ararite may have been the source of Judges 3.31 for it seems to be a nearly exact copy of the statement about Shamgar ben Anath in 3.31 of Judges. (Burney, Judges, p. 75.). 2 Samuel 23.11 :

ואחריו ענה בן-אנא הררי ויאספו פלשתים לחיה
והעם נט מפני פלשתים: ויך אה

Judges 3.31: פלשתים ויעש יהוה חסועה גדולה:

ואחריו היה שמגר בן-ענא ויך אה פלשתיםש פארה

איש בכללם חסר ויושע גם הוא את ישראל:

Also the use of the name of a Canaanite deity in the name of a Jewish hero is unheard of in the Bible (Moore, *ibid.*). Maisler has shown that the name "Anath" is of Hurrian origin and is the name of a familiar Semitic deity as seen in the Semitic Ras Shamra texts. The name "Anath" also appears as a Hurrian deity both in the Boghazkoi texts and in the non-Semitic Ras Shamra tablets. (Maisler, Shamgar Ben Anath, p. 193)

16. Moore, G.F., Shamgar and Sisera, p. 160. Both names are non-Hebraic in origin and seem to be Hittite (Maisler has proven Shamgar as Hurrian in origin, based on Anath -- see

above note on Shamgar.)

17. See above, chapter II, on Issachar.
18. Robinson, op cit., p. 8; also Pritchard, op cit., on the Armana tablets, passim.
19. See ~~f~~ further on this - chapter IV, part 3 below.
20. See further on this - chapter IV, part 1 below.
21. Song, verse 8b.
22. Judges 4.13.
23. The fact that a Naphtalite is the general of the united forces of the Israelites in the battle instigated by an Issacharite is significant, for it shows that Issachar had the cause, but not the experience and the military organization while Barak represented the victorious Naphtalites who had already distinguished themselves at Merom, again in company with their ally Zebulun (Song verse 18).

It might also be significant that in chapter 4.8f, Barak has to urge Deborah, and perhaps all of Issachar, to join in the fight. This might add to our understanding of the ~~d~~ descriptions of Issachar as "a large boned ass, crouching behind the sheep-folds", Genesis 49.14, "a hired people" whose war experiences had been limited because of their dependent living under Egypt.

24. This date is also suggested by Taubler and by Albright (The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology, p. 29). However, Albright's reversal on this date in 1940 and acceptance of Engberg's dating, after 1050, (BASOR - No. 78, pp. 4-9) invalidated his very interesting and valuable

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thesis on the date of the Song. However, in note 52 to The Biblical Period, he has reversed his stand and again he accepts the date 1125 B.C.E.

His proof offers much to this work, though it is still so much conjecture that I am leaving it as a note. Perhaps when Hazor is thoroughly excavated, the dating from the two cities may present an entirely different light on the historical happenings of this time.

The evidence for his dating is best developed in his article, Further Light on the History of Israel from Lachish and Megiddo (BASOR; No. 68 - p. 69) and should be consulted in conjunction with The Song of Deborah in the Light of Archaeology (BASOR 62 - p. 26-31)

The basis of the dating is the complete break between cities VII and VI of Megiddo. The break is not only a much more complete break than between cities VI and V (Engberg's placing of the Song), but city VII is definitely a Canaanite city and city VI is very likely an Israelite city for it is "a new, relatively crude culture." Further, in the Song, verse 19b "At T^hanack^h by the waters of Megiddo" seems to indicate (to Albright) that T^hanack^h was standing at this time and Megiddo was in ruins, since he refers to his theory that they were complementary cities, never flourishing at the same time (Archaeology of Palestine, p. 117). Since Megiddo VII was destroyed in ca. 1150, and Megiddo VI was active ca. 1100, the approximate time of the battle must have been in between, i.e. ca. 1125.

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However, Taeubler has suggested that the *ḥḥḥ* *ḥḥ* refers to the springs about Megiddo in a small area before the city itself. He maintains this place could have been called *ḥḥḥ* *ḥḥ* and would have denoted this area as a limit of the battle i.e. starting at Taanach and ending at *ḥḥḥ* *ḥḥ*. He also maintains that *ḥḥḥ* *ḥḥ* can be a poetic device that describes a city and an area. In view of the poem as a whole, this is logical and adds weight against Albright's precise dating on this basis.

I might conjecture that Megiddo was destroyed as the Egyptians retired, for its strategic position and the fluctuating political picture might have inspired a revolt in an attempt at seizing authority. Or the date for Deborah might be transferred to ca. 1150 and Megiddo's destruction would be attributed to the victorious Israelites. Though it doesn't seem likely that any cities were captured because of the complete lack of any statement of this fact in either chapters 4 or 5. Another conjecture would be that since Megiddo was in ruins, dominance fell to Harosheth gozim instead. And since Megiddo was always the most important city of the plain of Jezreel, its destruction could have been brought about as a result of an internal Canaanite squabble over power after the Egyptian withdrawal. In conclusion, any direct evidence that may be drawn from archaeology must be tempered by continued patience until enough proof is in the hands of scholars to determine a positive application to a study of this period. However, one thing is clear from this dating and that is the

limits of possible dating of the Song are from ca.
1150 B.C.E. to ca. 1100 B.C.E. which supports the
contentions made above.

Chapter IV Social Background

A. Religious Significance

When the magnitude and the compelling circumstances of the battle between the Israelite tribes and the Canaanites are surveyed, an impelling question must be asked: What force welded these new tribes into a vital, victorious unity? The Song itself gives a very positive answer: The Israelite tribes, both those at "the waters of Megiddo" and those not there were bound together by a common faith, a common God.

Concretely, the Song reflects a God idea that is of primary significance to our subject. The name of the Deity appears fourteen times in the form of the Tetragrammaton יהוה running through the entire Song as its theme. Starting from verse 2, in which the listeners are exhorted to ברכו יהוה "Bless ye the Lord", we see immediately in verse 3 that לה אלהי ישראל, ליהוה "to the Lord", "to the Lord, God of Israel" is this song sung: sung in His praise and attributing to Him the glory and the victory. Verse 4 shows us further that the Lord, Himself, came forth to participate in the battle, and all nature responded to Him

ארץ רעשה גם שמים נמנו וגם עבים נספו מים
"The earth quaked, the heavens swayed, the clouds dripped water."

And in even a more demonstrative way, verse יהוה לפני הרים נוולו מפני יהוה

הרים נוולו מפני יהוה "The mountains streamed before the Lord, Before the Lord, God of Israel." In verse 9, the volunteers are exhorted to

ברכו יהוה "Bless ye the Lord" before the singer continues with the

poem. In verse 11, the "victories of the Lord" *זדקות יהוה* are ^{referred to} related. A new element about the Deity enters in verse 11: here the people engaged in the battle are called the *עם יהוה* "the people of the Lord"; also this expression is repeated in verse 13 *עם יהוה ירד לו בגבורים* (see below on *עם*).

Verse 23 adds more evidence for the God idea in the term *עזרת יהוה* further implying the personal participation of the Deity as seen in verse 5; and in addition, verse 23 starts with the form of a divine curse thus attributing punitive powers to the Deity,

ארוך מרוז אכר יהוה "cursed ye, Meroz, saith the Lord."

Additional evidence appears in verse 31. In this verse ^{to} the Deity ^{are} is attributed "enemies and friends"; and the implication is that the enemies of the Israelite tribes are His enemies; and His "friends" are these confederated tribes.

No God calls upon the people to come to the aid.

Thus far the evidence of the various uses of the name of the Deity shows that *יהוה* was the God of the united tribes at Migiddo, as well as the tribes that did not appear there. And His authority was accepted by these tribes as the Deity.

As mentioned above, in regard to verse 4, the Deity Himself came to the battle at "the waters of Megiddo". This is further supported by the curse given to Meroz who did not come *לעזרת יהוה*

בגבורים "to the help of the Lord like brave men." (verse 23). Certainly to come to the Lord's aid meant that He, too, participated.

Also the power of nature, a natural attribute of the Deity, was against the Canaanite kings -- verse 20 *בן השמים נלחמו הכוכבים*

ממסלותם נלחמו עם סיטרא

The later story in chapter 4 confirms this action by the statement

וַיִּהְיוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי סִיסְרָא , "and the Lord confounded Sisera" (Judges 4, 15), which like Exodus 14.24, Joshua 10.10, 1 Samuel 7.10 et al uses אֱלֹהִים to imply the use of the divine forces in nature against the enemy.

The coming of the Lord is to Jezreel a further manifestation of the divine powers in nature; after the route of His coming, the text continues as we ^{maintained} ~~maintained~~ above (verses 4b, 5) אֶרֶץ רָעָשָׁה וְכוּ - , הַרִים נִזְלָו וְכוּ -
"The earth trembled, the heavens swayed." The earth and heavens responded to His movement and He appeared as a storm. (see also Micah 1.3f). So we may conclude that He has the powers of a storm God as well as Lord of all natural forces.

However the coming of the Lord to Jezreel opens another phase of the God idea implicit in the Song. Verse 4a יְהוָה בּוֹאֵתָךְ שְׁעִיר

יְהוָה בּוֹאֵתָךְ שְׁעִיר implies that the residence of the Deity was not in Canaan but was to the south. This tradition is born out in the incidents of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3.1); and the giving of the Law (Exodus 19.2f and 34.2), both events taking place on a sacred mountain to the south in the desert of Sinai. The later story of Elijah (1 Kings 19.8) bears out this tradition even more completely. It was to a mountain in the southern desert that Elijah fled to seek God -- this mountain was a forty day journey into the desert south of Beer Sheba.¹

So it is clearly shown in the Song that a God idea was current at the time of Deborah and its principle components were:

1. A single Deity יְהוָה accepted by all the confederated Israelite tribes.

2. A Deity personally connected with these people;
so they are known as *אלהי ישראל*.
3. A Deity who fights personally in the battles of
His people by use of natural wonders, such as
storm, earthquake, thunder and lightning, perhaps
volcanic eruptions.
4. A Deity who would inflict (punitive) punishment against
any group that is cursed in His name.
5. A Deity whose residence is not in Canaan, but is
south of Canaan in the desert.

See
above

geographically
limited?

B. The Problem of Israel

The phrase, יהוה אלהי ישראל (verse 3 and 5) is of great importance in the understanding of the Song's background. The name Israel was first recorded outside of the Bible in the stele of Merneptah: ca. 1225 B.C.E.²

"The Hittite land is pacified.
Plundered is the Canaan, with every evil,
Carried off is Askalon,
Seized upon is Gezer.
Yenoam is made as a thing not existing
Israel is desolated, her seed is not.
Kharu (S. Palestine) has become a (defenseless) widow for
Egypt
All lands are united, they are pacified;
Everyone that is turbulent is bound by King Merneptah."

However, the "Israel" here mentioned is probably a district rather than a people as Fritchard³ suggests. Garstang⁴ regards the reference to Israel as referring to Galilee, and possibly including the central plateau⁵.

If we assume that the Israel of Merneptah's stele had no precise national connotation, we cannot conclude from it that Israel in the Song is a national entity. However, the Song does contribute to our knowledge for we do know^{the} united tribes of Deborah were followers of a Deity who was the "God of Israel": in verse 3 "the kings" and "the princes" are called to witness to the fact that the writer sings to "the Lord", who is "the God of Israel". In addition, it should be noted that verses 2 בפרע פרעוה בישראל "Ye as ones who loosen the hair in Israel" alludes to "Israel" as the group involved, also "in Israel" in vss. 7a, 7b, 8b, 11b; and 9a.

Further knowledge is added by the expression, עם יהוה (verses 11 and 13). Certainly the Lord was the Deity of these tribes,

and since He was אלהי ישראל, "the God of Israel", it might be logically concluded that עַם is ישראל. From verse 2 we know עַם pertains to these people involved in the battle במתנרע עַם.

Though a syllogism is hardly a positive instrument in Biblical research, still the deduction of עַם equals ישראל is supported by the use of the term ^{some} in ~~verses~~ ^{verses} 1 and 2 and by the overall fact that Israel was the name for these very tribes a few generations later in the days of Samuel and Saul. In addition to this, the use by Merneptah of Israel, even though a location, adds some evidence. All taken together the conclusion that Israel was the name of the confederation of Israelite tribes is very possible.⁶

C. The Political Organization

Politically, the set up of the confederation seems to be thus: no central authority and each tribe with individual leadership. From time to time to meet emergencies there arose a leader known as a Judge who led the tribes, either singly or in groups.

The spirit of the Song reflects the independence of the tribes from any centralized confederation. Certainly no centrally organized groups would allow four members not to participate, as was the case of Asher, Dan, Gad and Reuben (verses 15b, 16, 17).

What do you mean then by the last sentence on p. 60?

Also the term בְּעַמְּיָךְ "among thy clansmen", applied to Benjamin in relation to Ephraim in verse 14, shows clan spirit, i.e. a feeling of brotherhood between some tribes only. As we have discussed above, Benjamin, a southernly tribe not vitally interested in the Jezreel area, came to the battle as a member of a clan coalition.⁷

What is this term discussed?

In the description of the conquests of the "house of Joseph" in Judge 1.22f more specific mentions of Manasseh and Ephraim follow and there is no mention of Benjamin except in relation to Jerusalem, verse 21. Undoubtedly the clan is mentioned first and then its members. So בְּעַמְּיָךְ adds to the facts of the political structure by showing a clan structure between the level of tribe and over all confederation.

Further the names of various leaders of the different tribes imply local chieftans: verse 14b מַחֲקִים "truncheon bearers". Verse 14b מַשְׁכִּים בְּרֹאשׁ סוּפֹר "those who lead

with the muster-masters staff", verse 15a שרי "princes", and generally חוקקים in verse 9a "marshalls"; however it is interesting to note that מחקקים and חוקקים are both taken from the root חקק and according to Gesenius are words for "Judge" חוקק and "law giver" מחקקים⁸ The word שרים is much commoner and משכילים בשבט סופר can be understood in the light of analogous usage in Jeremiah 37:16, 52:25, 2 Kings 25:19 where the use seems to imply a scribe of the muster rolls⁹; perhaps the chief scribe was the leader.

The use of the terms מחקקים and חוקקים are very important to consider in light of the word שופט Judges 4.4

וְדִבּוּרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה, הִיא שֹׁפֶטת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל
here Deborah is a prophetess, but also she "judges Israel" and in 4.5:
וַיֵּעָלוּ אֲלֶיהָ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִשְׁפֹט
"And the children of Israel went up to her for judgment." In Judges 3.10, the use of שפט is a result of divine action וַתֵּהִי עֲלֵיהֶם יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל
and the general distinction of the Judges was what Albright¹⁰, following Weber and Alt, terms "charismatic", i.e. "some special power about them which was believed to represent the direct outpouring of divine grace"¹¹ (charisma).

Deborah is the spiritual leader of the incident and may be termed "charismatic." However, she did not captain the military enterprise; Barak, the leader of Naphtali, led the army into battle (5.12b, 4.10). Thus it seems that the leadership of Israel was divided thusly: a religious leader who judged and prophesied as a נביאה¹², but in the same capacity as instigator who served to investigate the people to war, and a military leader who led the tribes as a unit in the battle only.

D. Mode of Living

The fact that the people were living in scattered "unwalled villages" פְּרוּזָה of verse 7 (emended) seems to imply an agricultural type of life. However, this may only apply completely to the Issacharites whom we have placed as tenant labor in the Emek and living in the surrounding hills. (see above chapter II). But no doubt all the Cis Jordanic tribes did some farming to fill their own needs for when trade with outside nations started, it was able to develop because of agricultural surpluses.¹³

However, there were other occupations of a non-agricultural nature: verse 6 mention the cessation of "caravans." The implication from this is that Israelites were either tradesmen, mercenaries and carriers for the tradesmen, or plunderers of caravans. The latter occupation must have been what is referred to in Genesis 49.17 -- "Dan shall be a serpent in the way", but the former occupations are merely conjectural. However, the concern over the disruption of travel, verse 6, implies some commercial activities.

To the north the Danites and Asherites, who lived near the Phoenicians, were also engaged in work related to the sea as we see in verse 17.¹⁴ However, the exact nature of their work is not known.

The trans Jordanic tribes are obviously pastoral, according to verse 16 which says: לָמָּה יָשַׁבְתָּ בֵּין הַמִּשְׁכָּתִּים לִשְׁמֹעַ שְׂרִיקָה עֲדָרִים "Why didst thou sit still among the sheep folds, listening to the callings of the flocks?" This is reflected in Numbers 32 when the Reubenites and Gadites are characterized as possessors of "a very great multitude of cattle" (Numbers

The Israelite society at the time of Deborah reflected variations that corresponded to the topography and the condition of relations with the neighboring people. In the western Jordanic region it was agriculturally based, with trade and commerce flourishing only in a restricted way. Labor hired to neighboring rulers, and, perhaps, some forms of raiding, were also common. In the eastern Jordanic country, the society was pastoral and perhaps still nomadic.

It is worthwhile to mention here what must have been the idea of hospitality in the time of Deborah. By the time of the story in chapter 4 of Judges, the earlier desert concept of hospitality had been forgotten and the greatest deed was for religious or national gain; but not so in the Song. In 5.25-27, we see that the writer relates the tale of a traveller who requested refreshment while he was escaping and the Bed^{ou}win woman gave him sour milk to drink; and while he was off his guard, she smote him. However, the version in chapter 4.17-21 tells of Jael inviting him into her tent and putting him to rest and promising him safety. But she violated all the moral codes of the desert when she smote him as he lay asleep within her tent. So, perhaps we may conjecture that the strength of desert morality was still strong in Deborah's time, and the later version has let dramatics make the treatment unnatural and unhistorical.

As it has been shown above, the Deity was considered as if He came in person to fight with the Israelites against their enemies. This leads us to an understanding of war in these terms as a sacred function. The "loosening of the hair" in verse 2 seems to be a symbol of dedication to war. In Deuteronomy 32.42 the expression מִרֹאשֵׁי שָׂרָפִים אֹרִיב "from the long haired heads^{of} the enemy" shows the practice as a war rite. Morgenstern has offered the comparison with the Bedouin practice of women letting their hair flow loose as a stimulant to the warriors.¹⁵

More of a religious tone is added by the term שָׂרָפִים "volunteer oneself"; taken with the long hair, it might be interpreted as the sign of self dedication of one's person. Self dedication is consistent with the sacred character of war. The reflection in Deuteronomy 23.10-15 in which ritual cleanliness is demanded of warriors since יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹכַח בְּמַחֲנֶיךָ לְהַלָּל "The Lord walketh in the midst of your camp to deliver thee therefor shall thy camp^e be holy"; though much later, it shows a very positive attitude toward battle as sacred; and it is likely that the tradition is from much earlier times.

The text shows, however, that all motives were not just for the religious inspiration of the battle or the work of the Deity. There were distinctly material motives in war, motives that continued as an integral part of the battle of war until the concept of "total war" became dominant. The motives were principally booty, "no doubt they are finding, dividing booty;"¹⁶

2. Cultural Background

Song 30a verse 1 -- booty of all types; ~~and~~ precious metals ("Gains of silver they did not take," Song, verse 19b), valuable cloth ("Booty of dyed stuff for Sisera, a piece of embroidery or two for the neck of the queen mother", Song, verse 30b), and female prisoners ("A wench or two for each man", Song, verse 30a).

The Song of Deborah is one of the most important poems of the great cultural heritage. The descriptions of the kings of Israel in the eighth century B.C. have shown that the language of the Hebrews was very similar to the Hebrew of the time of Deborah,¹⁷ and even in Song, verse 11, 12, we have what is called an Armenian, but this only proves that the entire poem was made of a cultured style that is still very beautiful. In addition, the meter and style of the Song reflect a cultural development: the meter of a good part of the Song is similar to the finest epic of ancient Hebrew, and the style is very different from the latter to the former, or a similar development. Also the use of elliptic parallelism shows an advanced literary development. However, the undeniable fact is that the Song of Deborah holds a high place among the literary works of the Hebrews of the world,¹⁸ and it shows a development and growth of the richness of the language for words of practical expression which prove that poetry had long been cultivated among the Hebrews. The fragments of this earlier poetry have now been lost, probably few survived to the earliest time when our Hebrew literature began, but we cannot doubt that the noble forefathers of Israel took the same keen delight in lyric poetry which is so strongly marked a trait of the Hebrew.

F. Cultural Perspective

The evidence of a high cultural level at the time of the Song are important to our understanding of the period. The scene in the court of Sisera pictures an advanced culture: the harem, the queen and her court, the lattice (verses 28-30); that was not inconsonant with the wealth and long influence upon the Canaanite cities of the great cultural empires. The inscriptions of the kings of Yadi in the eighth century B.C.E. have shown that the language of the Syrian area was very similar to the Hebrew of the time of Deborah,¹⁷ and even in Song, verse 11, 11n¹⁸, we have what is called an Aramaism, but this only proves that the entire area was more of a cultural unity than we might have concluded. In addition, the meter and style of the Song reflect a high cultural predecessors: the meter of a good part of the Song is similar to Gilgamesh epic of ancient Babylon,¹⁸ which may reflect either some influence from the latter to the former, or a similar traditional for both. Also the use of climatic parallelisms shows an advanced literary development. However, the undeniable fact is that the Song of Deborah "holds a high place among Triumphal Odes in the literature of the world"¹⁹, and it shows a development and command of the resources of the language for ends of poetical expression which prove that poetry had long been cultivated among the Hebrews. Few fragments of this earlier poetry have come down to us; probably few survived to the centuries with which our Hebrew literature begins, but we cannot doubt that the nomadic forefathers of Israel took the same keen delight in lyric poetry which is so strongly marked a trait of the Arabs.²⁰

Confused

Doubts

(Footnote -- it is an erroneous inference, however, that there must have been an extensive poetical literature before Deborah. Early poetry was not preserved in books, but in the breasts of men. It is quite possible that the Song of Deborah itself was thus perpetuated for generations.)²⁰

1. Though opinions vary on the settlement of Canaan, it seems reasonably certain that one group of the Israelite tribes brought this tradition with them and that it had had extensive currency among the tribes, so that it appears here as a commonly accepted idea.
2. Garstang, John The Books of Joshua and Judges, p. 290-291.
3. Pritchard, J., Ancient Near Eastern Texts p. 376.
4. Garstang, John op.cit., p. 291.
5. "Kharu" would be Judah and southern Palestine if Israel included the central plateau area.
6. We might rightly include Judah in the group "Israel." *some which grounds?*
7. See above, chapter 2, on Benjamin.
8. Gesenius -- Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, p. 801.
9. *ibid.*, page 894.
10. Albright, W.F. Stone Age to Christianity, page 218.
11. *ibid.*
12. These functions are more clearly shown in regard to Samuel who acted both as a ~~g~~ ^g ~~11~~ -- 1 Samuel 3.19f and 9.8-10 and a judge -- 1 Samuel 7.15. Samuel also functioned in the role of leader in a military undertaking (1 Samuel 8.2ff); but he acted in the same capacity as an investigator as Deborah did in her time.
13. Morgenstern, Julian Amos Studies, p. 186.
14. ^I ~~We~~ have discussed their topographical location above and think

that that discussion will add further light.

- 15. Morgenstern, Julian, The Ark, The Ephod, and "The Tent of Meeting" p. 61.
- 16. cf. Exodus 15.10 in the "Song of the Sea"
- 17. Burney, C. F. The Book of Judges, pp. 175-6.
- 18. *ibid*, pp. 97-8.
- 19. Moore, *op cit*, p. 135.
- 20. *ibid*, pp. 135-6.

The poem is one of stately beauty and primitive charm and literally leaps high in world literature. But the importance of this work has been that it is the earliest source of the historical and geographical background of the period ending in 1200 B.C.

Through a thorough study of this poem, I have been led to pay attention to certain details of life of the people of this in early Israel. This study has shown that the Israelite tribes were settled from "Dan to Beer sheva" with a few slight modifications.

In the south, the state of development in Judah is described though this tribe seems to have been settled in the south Judahite hills, probably with the fellow tribe Simeon. However, the southwestern part of Judah was under attack by the Philistines and the northern part contained Canaanite strongholds that limited her activity and put her off from the main body of Israelite tribes in the central and northern hills.

Along the rich valley of Jezreel was crowded by Canaanite cities whose strength of arms was able to keep the Israelite out.

The Conclusion

In approximately 1125 B.C.E. on the plains of Jezreel, a battle between the Canaanite kings of the valleys of Jezreel and Acco and a confederation of the Israelite tribes of Issachar, Naphtali, Zebulun, Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh took place. This battle has been memorialized in a famous poem, known as The Song of Deborah Judges 5.2-31.

The poem is one of stately beauty and primitive charm and literally ranks high in world literature. But its importance to this work has been that it is the original source of the historical and sociological background of the period ending in 1125 B.C.E.

Through a thorough study of this poem, I have been led to ^{see} momentarily behind the curtain of time at the scenes of life in early Israel. This ^{see} play has shown that the Israelite tribes were settled from "Dan to Beer sheba" with a few slight modifications.

In the south, the state of development in Judah is uncertain though this tribe seems to have been settled in the south Judaeen hills, probably with its fellow tribe Simeon. However, the southwestern part of Judea was under attack by the Philistines and the northern part contained Canaanite strongholds that limited her activity and cut her off from the main body of Israelite tribes in the central and northern hills.

Also the rich valley of Jezreel was occupied by Canaanite cities whose strength of arms was able to keep the Israelite out

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of the valley. This applied mainly to Manasseh on the southern side and Zebulun and Naphtali to the north and east of the valley. However, these tribes exerted constant pressure on these cities in control of the plain; and Naphtali and Zebulun had even disposed of the main center of Canaanite power in the north at Hazor.

The only tribe that dwelt in the valley was Issachar. This tribe had long served as tenant labor on the royal Egyptian estates in the valley; and, when the Egyptians left, they became a spear-head directed against the heart of Canaanite power.

Across the Jordan, the pastoral tribes of Gad and Reuben dwelt in relative peace. To the north Asher and Dan dwelt in a seemingly comfortable position and had a good relationship with their Phoenician neighbors. In the center dwelt the great tribe of Ephraim and her younger clan brother, Benjamin, well entrenched in the central hill country.

It was the tribe Issachar that precipitated the war. Since the withdrawal of Egyptian hegemony, these tribesmen had become restive. Not anxious to accept the rule of the Canaanite cities, these tribesmen were oppressed by the local kings in order to keep them in their former servile positions. The tribes in the surrounding country were also raided by primitive expeditions from these cities to keep them from harassing these cities and the valley trade now that there were no Egyptians to stop them.

This ^{early} study oppression continued in the impossible job of stemming the new tribes' natural urge to dominate the rich valley. As this oppression increased, resistance began to form and a prophetess and Judge from Issachar ^{came} set out to organize the

Israelite tribes for a war to free Issachar and turn the valley of Jezreel over to the Hebrew tribes.

Deborah, this Issacharite prophetess, was able to agitate for this war for many reasons. The principal reason was that all these tribes were bound together by a deep tie of religion. They all were believers in the same Deity and felt themselves united in this belief and confident in this God who had been a part of their history even before they came to Canaan.

These tribes were also related on a large scale by a sense of peoplehood and common origin; as well as on a small scale by blood ties and clan relationships.

Also these tribes, on the whole, had been pretty well settled in their new lands and were anxious to remove the largest salient of foreign power in their midst. To remove it in order to open trade and military lines of communication.

And these tribes were still in a state of development that was not averse to plundering the wealth of the valley of Jezreel.

So Deborah was successful in welding six of the Israelite tribes into a confederation that freed Issachar and broke the Canaanite power in the Jezreel valley.

"The kings came, they fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;
Gain of Silver, they did not take!"

Judges 5.19

The victory was decisive and what was to be known as Israel was established and bound together to face the struggles that never ceased to follow.

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