some symbolic or perhaps even real way inhabited by their god, who has again blessed them. For secular Jews, it is perhaps not important at all except as an important archaeological relic of one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world and of course another monumental witness to Jewish ownership of the city many centuries earlier.

The situation, then, is today, as it was 2000 years ago, highly varied with regard to the temple hill of Zion. Basically, it seems to me, the city itself has assumed the symbolic role of the temple as a holy relic to challenge the scroll of the law that held sway for two millennia (and in terms of daily life outside Israel, still largely does). To a lesser extent, this is also true of the 'land of Israel' itself (I mean as defined by the rabbinic texts and not by international law). But the symbols of city and law pull in opposite directions, one universal and one particular. This opposition between a universal spiritual Judaism and a nationalistic and Jerusalem-centred Judaism is not a new one. It is as old as Judaism itself, and it has generated not only the many forms of Zionism, but some forms of anti-Zionism as well.

The Making of the Holy City:
On the Foundations of Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible

Thomas M. Bolin

The rise of urban culture 5000 years ago in lower Mesopotamia can be attributed to the development of sustainable agriculture in the alluvial plain, the division of labor and resources, and consequent social stratification. Cities have always functioned as a means to pool resources and to defend against outsiders. They are distinctively human, among the most visible of markers that separate us from the other animals. They are the tangible aspect of the intellectual and social worlds necessary for sustainable and enduring human life. When Aristotle observes in his well-known remark that human beings are by nature 'political' animals (Politics 1253a), it merits mention that the root of the word 'political' is the Greek πόλις ('city'). Similarly, in that most famous of ancient Near Eastern texts, the Epic of Gilgamesh, the wild man Enkidu is tamed by a woman in a step-by-step process culminating in his being brought to a city, 'Uruk-the-Sheepfold'. In a standard process that seeks to validate cultural constructs, a city is almost always understood as the result of much more than the pragmatic matters of safety, economic efficiency, or social cohesion, being attributed instead to the work of divine or human heroes. In the Hebrew Bible, the authors' important city is, of course, Jerusalem, and for them their metropolis is not simply founded by one great hero from the Israelite past, but by a series of major biblical figures. This essay will look

* An earlier version of this essay was read on 12 November 2001 to the Senior Seminar at the Institut for bibelsk Eksegeses of the Københavns Universitet. I am grateful to the members of the Seminar for their comments and criticism.
1. Detailed discussion of this process is in N. Yoffee, 'The Economy of Ancient Western Asia', in CANE, III, pp. 1387-99.
at the different ways urban foundations were portrayed in antiquity. These data will then be brought to bear on the biblical texts that speak of the founding of Jerusalem. Doing so reveals a wide array of textual strategies that the biblical authors employed in the service of an ideology that sought to exalt Jerusalem’s role among the educated Diaspora of the Hellenistic era.  

Beliefs Concerning the Foundation of Cities

The different traditions concerning the founding of cities in the ancient world may be grouped into two broad categories comprising those stories in which the city is founded by a deity and those that tell of a foundation by a hero.

The City Founded by a Deity

One of the main cultural purposes of ancient cities was to house temples, understood as domiciles of the protecting deities. Thus it is no surprise that many cities developed aetologies attributing their foundations to divine action. There are Mesopotamian traditions that claim that all distinctive aspects of human life, for example, culture, art, technology, were gifts from the gods brought by the apkallu, the sages, semi-divine or divine figures, usually seven in number. In the opening and closing verses of the Epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh the king of Uruk boasts of his city’s walls: ‘Were its bricks not fired in an oven? Did the Seven Sages not lay its foundations?’ Such an exalted pedigree also serves as powerful propaganda in the city’s policies toward either its own citizens or outsiders. A brief look at two of the better-known examples will illustrate the logic at work in this kind of mythopoeis.

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5. Stories of deities choosing to dwell in cities already in existence or commanding cities to be built by their followers are not included here. Strictly speaking, these kinds of stories belong under the category of cities founded by heroes because they carry out the divine will in these traditions. Divine approbation in the story thus serves to validate the role of the hero.  


First is the Babylonian creation story known as the Enuma Elish. Although written in the mid-second millennium BCE, the text achieved prominence in the first millennium BCE, especially because of the rise to prominence of the Neo-Babylonian power in the sixth century. The myth’s new lease on life was doubtless due to its ability to furnish a divine sanction for the dominance of Babylon in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. The text deals with creation in several different arenas. First, the primeval couple, Apsu and Tiamat, begets the first generation of gods. After a cosmic battle between Marduk and Tiamat, the victorious Marduk, now acknowledged as king of all the gods, embarks on a series of creations, beginning with the heavens, which he makes from the bisected corpse of the defeated Tiamat. Next comes the creation of the constellations, the moon, time and the seasons. Then the land of Mesopotamia is made, including the Tigris and Euphrates. Finally, as the culmination of the cosmogony, Marduk decides to create a city in the middle of the new world, and to call it bab-ilu, ‘the gate of god’. Here, Marduk and the other gods will dwell and be served by humankind, newly created expressly for this purpose. In gratitude for his wisdom and beneficence, the other gods proceed to make Marduk’s ‘house’ in the new city: his great temple Esgalig and zigurat Etemenanki, fashioned as counterpart to Esharra [heaven].

The order of creation in the epic runs, then: heavens and earth, the city of Babylon, people, and Marduk’s temple Esgalig.

When one surveys the arrangement of the newly made world at the end of the Enuma Elish the prominence given to Babylon is difficult to


overlook. The city occupies the exact center of the cosmos, between the realm of the gods who dwell below and those who are above. The text’s purpose is obviously to extol the city of Babylon and its patron deity, Marduk. Just as he is the ‘bel, or lord, of all the gods, so too is Babylon the master of all other cities in the world. Babylon is portrayed as the culmination of every divine act of creation in the cosmos, the place chosen by Marduk for his abode and the dwelling place of all the gods as well. Further evidence of the myth’s use in support of this ideology is available in the Assyrian versions of the Enuma Elish in which the Assyrian national god Assur takes the place of Marduk, and the Assyrian capital of the same name occupies the cosmic center instead of Babylon. It is only natural that in an infinite cosmos there can be infinite ‘centers’.

The second example is the Egyptian text known as the Memphite Theology, an Old Kingdom composition (c. 2700–2200 BCE) preserved in an inscription dating from the 25th Dynasty (eighth–seventh centuries BCE). The text seems to combine two separate traditions: one about the supremacy of the god Horus (symbol of Lower Egypt) over his uncle Seth (symbol of Upper Egypt), with another that asserts the primacy of the god Ptah and his city of Memphis. As with Marduk and Babylon in the Enuma Elish, in the Egyptian text Ptah is extolled as creator of cosmos, gods, and proper worship, and then his city Memphis is praised:

He [Ptah] gave birth to the gods; he made the towns... he settled their offerings, he established their shrines, he made their bodies according to their wishes... The Great Throne [Memphis] that gives joy to the heart of the gods in the house of Ptah is the granary of Ta-teten the mistress of all life, through which the sustenance of the Two Lands is provided... Thus Osiris


12. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, I, p. 56. In Egyptian mythology, Horus is the son of Osiris. Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth and his body found at Memphis. Thus, the two stories, while distinct, are related. See J. Van Dijk, ‘Myth and Mythmaking in Ancient Egypt’, in CANE, III, pp. 1702-706, for an overview of the Osiris myths.


15. Livy, Roman History 1.3-6. The traditions surrounding the founding of Rome involve more than the Romulus legend; see the discussion below concerning the competing narratives of Romulus and Aeneas.

16. See the discussion below concerning David’s renaming of Jerusalem ‘the City of David’ in 2 Sam. 5.

17. A city may also be founded and then named after someone important to the founder. Among several such examples provided by Herod the Great is the instance in

came into the earth at the Royal Fortress [Memphis]... His son Horus arose as king of Upper Egypt, arose as king of Lower Egypt. It should be emphasized again that in both the Babylonian and Egyptian texts theology is at the service of social and political needs. The claims to supremacy of Babylon and Memphis are ‘underwritten’, as it were, by their respective divine patrons. The dominant role of these cities is understood to be part of the primal cosmic arrangement. Just as the natural world has been so since the beginning, so too, the texts maintain, has the political realm been fashioned. The prestige and power of these cities is a fact of existence; it is simply the way things are. The city, and its corresponding political, social and cultic roles, is portrayed as a cosmic datum like the stars, the mountains or the sea. To stand against the power of the city is, consequently, madness, as if one were to attempt to defy nature and the elements.
and, in a gesture of insolence, threatens to rename it after himself (2 Sam. 12.28).

Closely related to the foundation of a city by a hero is the practice of colonization. In the period spanning the ninth–fifth centuries BCE many cities sent out groups of citizens to found other cities. This is the case of the famous Greek settlements in Sicily and Magna Graecia on the Italian peninsula. The head of such an expedition merited the title of οἰκιστής (‘founder’). As head of the new colony, the founder was responsible for seeking divine sanction for the new colony from the Delphic oracle. He would then oversee the colony’s foundation and governance, including the proper transfer and institution of the cults from the mother-city. After his death, the founder was often granted heroic honors, among these being the right to have offerings made at his grave. Many new cities were founded in this manner throughout the Mediterranean world during the Hellenistic period as well. Among these foundations were cities that had already existed for centuries, and whose subsequent ‘foundation’ consisted of assuming Greek names and social structures. The ideology used to support such expansionism involved the exaltation of the mother-city and the emphasis on the colony’s connection with both the mother-city and their own legendary founder. The historical reality of city foundations thus easily coalesced with legendary tales about city-founders. This resulted in a continuum in which historical founders would take on heroic qualities, and cities that did not know their origins would create founder traditions. In some instances, cities would change their founders as political expediency demanded.

Existing cities subject to conquest were often portrayed as being founded anew. In Antiquity the conquest of a city was understood as a transfer of ownership. The victor, in a show of his hegemony over the city, was free to destroy the city and rebuild it, to slaughter or exile its inhabitants and repopulate the city, or to replace the local elites with people subservient to him. Whatever course he chose to take, the official explanation given for a conqueror’s action often involves the ideology of improvement. The city

c. 10 BCE when he built a sumptuous city on the site of an earlier Palestinian coastal site and named it Caesarea in honor of the Roman emperor Augustus, who had given the city to him.


was now better, as good as new, or a new thing altogether, possibly with a new name. In an inscription describing his destruction of the city of Samaria in 722 BCE, Sargon II of Assyria claims to have led Samaria’s inhabitants into exile and then to have ‘rebuilt the city, better than it was before and settled therein peoples from countries which I myself had conquered’. Conquest is thus understood as foundation in the fact that it is represented as a new beginning that conclusively breaks with the past. Ancient texts regularly use the dichotomy of order and chaos to illustrate this shift. Before a city is conquered it is ruled by the forces of darkness, evil and chaos, in other words the antithesis of civilization. After conquest, things are put into order, understood as a state of affairs where the right person has power and his subjects are obedient and industrious. Things are then as they should be, according to the nature of reality. The Cyrus Cylinder is a parade example of this type of rhetoric. Babylon has fallen into disarray because of the apostasy of an evil king. At the command of the gods Cyrus comes to restore the proper order and is greeted as the conquering hero. The Assyrian text of Sargon quoted above is also explicit on this point. According to the inscription, prior to Sargon’s intervention the city of Samaria was populated with ungrateful clients who did not know how to show proper respect to the Assyrian king. Afterward, the new city is ruled over by a faithful vassal and peopled by inhabitants who know what is expected of them as Assyrian clients: ‘I placed an officer of mine as governor over them and imposed upon them tribute as is customary for Assyrian citizens’. As with those explanations that attribute the city’s foundation to the gods, so too here the attempt is to claim that a certain political state of affairs, that is, the rule of a city by a particular person or a city’s rule over others, is in fact part of the natural order which stands in opposition to the threatening, disorderly realm of rule by a false king or city. Consequently, to be against the city or a particular ruler is to be an enemy of the civilized human world and an accomplice of the forces

of destruction. Anyone with but a passing familiarity with modern political rhetoric realizes the persistence of this ideology.

Conversely, founder traditions can be used to protect a vulnerable city from destruction by recourse to an implied or explicit threat of divine punishment on any who would dare violate an ancient and revered settlement. This was the rationale behind declaring German-occupied Rome an open city during the Second World War as the Allied armies advanced on it. It worked for Rome, but not for the 1500-year-old Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino south of Rome, which was completely destroyed by American bombs in 1944. Divine protection over a city can also be used to calm an anxious populace facing the possibilities of destruction or siege.22

One may also speak of a symbolic conquest. This is at work in a city’s boast of having been paid a visit by a great hero. These tales lend prestige to the city in question through connection with a famous personage and in turn also enhance the ‘conqueror’s’ heroic stature. Josephus claims that Alexander the Great paid a visit to Jerusalem on his way to Egypt and offered his respects to the high priest and the Jewish god (Ant. 11.325–39, discussed below in relationship with Gen. 14). The Cyrus inscription concerning Babylon mentioned above hints at this in its claim that Cyrus captured the great city without a battle. In the New Testament Gospels, Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem is described as a figurative capture. He rides into the city acclaimed as a king by the people, and then symbolically destroys the city by expelling temple personnel from the sacred precincts and predicting the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans.23 Setting this ‘conquest’ immediately prior to Jesus’ crucifixion, the Gospel writers portray in story the Christian belief that the ignominious death of Jesus is, in fact, a victory.24

As in the case of foundation stories involving the gods, explanations for the founding of cities that have recourse to heroes also exist to serve the political ends of specific groups, helping to justify local or regional preeminence and resultant dominance over neighboring cities. Conquest stories in particular explain the change in political control in terms of the institution or restoration of order and the inauguration of a new city, either on the site of the previous one or quite simply identical with its predecessor in everything but name. That other cities might also have similar origin stories is not a complication here. These differences can be ignored as long as possible and, should this task fail, they may always be sorted out on the battlefield, with subsequent revision to stories an option if necessary.

Biblical Texts about the Founding of Jerusalem

There is no single narrative tradition in the Hebrew Bible about the founding of Jerusalem. This is a curious fact, given the city’s centrality in the overwhelming majority of the biblical texts. Equally remarkable is that none of the biblical traditions explicitly claims primeval divine foundation for the city, as does the Enuma Elish for Babylon and the Memphite Theology for Memphis. The creation story of Genesis 1 bears many resemblances to that of the Enuma Elish: in both myths the primeval waters are defeated by the chief deity of the pantheon and a world is created in the midst of the waters below and above. Yet in the Genesis account there is no city or temple in the center of the newly created world. Instead of being made as a place for the gods to live, the world exists as an exclusively human habitat. One wonders whether the author wrote during the exilic period when the city of Jerusalem and its temple did not exist, or whether the text is a Diaspora polemic against Jerusalem and its temple, or is an extended philosophical critique of all cosmogonies that envision a world that could possibly contain a radically transcendent divinity. In contrast, Isa. 60.3–13 places Jerusalem in the center of the cosmos, but this vision is eschatological rather than primeval. Jerusalem’s centrality leads to the understanding that it is the place where the wealth and honor of the entire world come to be housed. In this manner it is more like the Persian imperial ideology of center and periphery visually expressed in the palace reliefs at Persepolis.25 At best, one could point to Ps. 78.69, which says of Yahweh that ‘he built his temple like the heights, like the earth which he established for eternity’ (‘גֶּדֶר הַיָּהָוֶה מִכְלָאֵל הָאָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשָּׁבֶת לְעוֹלָם’), or Ezek. 38.12, which refers in passing to Jerusalem as ‘the navel of the

22. Cf. also the remark of Poseidon in Iliad 21.446–47 about his having made the walls of Troy impregnable after being tricked by the Trojan king.

23. These elements are present in all four of the canonical Gospels, but are most easily seen in Lk. 19.28–47, where they occur in sequence without any intervening material.

24. The victory of Jesus over Jerusalem, represented in the persons of the chief priests and scribes, is also stressed by the Gospel writers in the many confrontation stories placed in between Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem and his death. In all of these, Jesus comes away the winner. In John, the cleansing of the Temple is placed at the beginning of Jesus’ career (2.13–25). That Gospel stresses the victory of Jesus in his death with different literary elements.

More common is the recurrence in Deuteronomy 12 of the enigmatic phrase ‘the place that Yahweh your god chooses’ (מקים א espaço בר ית בית אליעם), which most, if not all, scholars assume refers to Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{5} There is also the divine endorsement of Solomon’s temple in 1 Kgs 9.3, where Yahweh promises Solomon that he will forever dwell in the temple built for him by the wise king.\textsuperscript{28} However, for the most part there are few occurrences of the divine-founder theme for Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible. This fact is all the more significant given that some biblical texts are hostile to the idea that Yahweh dwells in a city. In addition to Genesis 1’s cosmology, devoid of a city and temple, Yahweh tells David in 2 Sam. 7.5, when the latter proposes to build a temple for him, ‘Are you the one to build me a house to live in?’ (הארחתי הבית)\textsuperscript{29} Yahweh’s resistance to the idea of a temple also allows the author to juxtapose two different meanings of the Hebrew הָבָה (‘house’). It is not David who will build a house (i.e. temple) for Yahweh, but Yahweh who will build a house (i.e. dynasty) for David.\textsuperscript{30} Similarly in

1 Kgs 8.16 Yahweh declares that he did not choose a city (i.e. Jerusalem) but a man (i.e. David). Strictly speaking, the presence of Yahweh in his temple and the exalted status of Jerusalem, while related in the Hebrew Bible, are not equivocal.\textsuperscript{31} This ambiguity in the divine attitude toward Jerusalem is one of the ongoing interpretive cruxes for biblical scholars.

The absence of a clear divine-founder tradition allows for the possibility that the biblical texts substantiate the importance of Jerusalem through the use of hero tales, and that is exactly what one finds in the texts. None of the heroes involved in these stories functions as an eponym referent for the city of Jerusalem as such,\textsuperscript{32} although the alternate name of Jerusalem, the ‘City of David’, takes its name from the famous Israelite king. As mentioned above, cities may be tied to heroes through visitation, conquest or foundation. All three of these explanations are present in biblical texts about Jerusalem. Examination of the relevant passages reveals that the biblical authors’ aim was to validate the importance of Jerusalem not by reference to a single event in the past that could be interpreted as the city’s origin, but rather by constructing a series of such foundation events spanning the entirety of Israelite history as it is assembled in the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{33} Each of these stories is examined here.

Visit by a Hero: Abram

The tale of Abram’s defeat of five kings in Genesis 14 is one of the more enigmatic passages in the Patriarchal Cycle.\textsuperscript{34} The text may be divided into


33. By ‘history’ I mean the intellectual process and resultant literary construct that seeks to create a coherent narrative about a past that can be real or imagined (or, more often, a mixture of both). My use of the term does not mean to imply the historical accuracy of some of the biblical stories under discussion. Indeed, as my remarks below indicate, the biblical stories have more to do with the present of their authors than with any real past. For more on this see T. Bolin, *History, Historiography, and the Use of the Past in the Hebrew Bible*, in C. Kraus (ed.), *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 113-40.

34. A thorough discussion and bibliography concerning the lack of supporting extra-biblical and archaeological evidence for Gen. 14 is in T.L. Thompson, *The
three sections. 35 (1) a legendary passage written in annalistic style of the defeat of a coalition of five rebellious vassal kings by another coalition of four patron kings (vv. 1-11); (2) a story in which Abram assembles a small group of warriors from his household, routs the four patron kings who have taken his nephew Lot captive, and returns both with Lot and a great deal of plunder, the latter which he gives to the grateful king of Sodom (vv. 12-16, 21-24); (3) an episode in which Abram is met and blessed by Melchizedek, king of Salem (i.e. Jerusalem) 36 who in return is given by Abram one tenth of the spoil (vv. 18-20).

The legendary character of the passage is clear. 37 Abram appears uncharacteristically as a military hero, whereas in the remainder of the material about him in Genesis he is a semi-nomadic foreigner wandering to and fro


36. The equation is accepted by nearly all biblical scholars and appears early in the Jewish tradition in both the Hebrew Bible (Ps. 76.3) and the Qumran literature (1QapGen 22.13). For a full discussion, see J. Emerton, ‘The Site of Salem, The City of Melchizedek (Genesis XIV 18),’ in idem (ed.), Studien in die Pentateuch (VTSup, 41; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), pp. 45-71. Melchizedek is only mentioned in one other biblical text (Ps. 110.4), but played a significant role in later Jewish and Christian tradition. See the surveys in J. Fitzmyer, ‘Melchizedek in the MT, LXX, and the New Testament’, Bib 81 (2000), pp. 63-69, and M. McNamara, ‘Melchizedek: Gen 14,17-20 in the Targums, in Rabbinic, and in Early Christian Literature’, Bib 81 (2000), pp. 1-31.

37. Westermann (Genesis 12-36, pp. 196-97) concludes that the story puts forward ‘the impossible notion that Abraham conquered four kings of powerful empires with 318 men and chased them through the whole of Palestine’ (pp. 201-202).

across the ancient Near East. 38 Important to notice is the intrusiveness of the Salem/Jerusalem episode in the story. In vv. 18-20, Abram is met by Melchizedek, the priest-king of Jerusalem who brings Abram an offering of bread and wine and blesses him by the West Semitic deity El Elyon. In response, Abram gives Melchizedek one tenth of the spoil and equates El Elyon with the Israelite god, Yahweh (v. 22). 39 However, Salem is not one of the cities threatened by the four invading kings; nor is it even mentioned in the text prior to v. 18. Abram’s giving of a portion of the booty to Melchizedek contradicts and detracts from Abram’s boast to the king of Sodom in vv. 22-24 that Abram will return to him all but those provisions necessary for his men.

At work in Genesis 14 is a founder tradition that portrays the great hero visiting a city. Abram’s credentials as a hero are established in the first part of the chapter with the account of his stunning defeat over a coalition of mighty foreign kings (arguably the only act of his in the Bible that can be termed ‘heroic’ in the classic sense). Immediately afterwards, Melchizedek, the king and priest of Jerusalem, meets Abram outside of his city and acknowledges Abram’s exalted status. In turn, Abram honors the city by presenting an offering to its god, represented by the god’s broker, Melchizedek. Abram goes further by equating Jerusalem’s god with his own. The intrusiveness of the Melchizedek episode into the battle account of Genesis 14 lends credence to the contention that it is an insertion into


39. Discussion and bibliography in E. Elsner and P. Miller, ‘Elyon’, in DDD (2nd edn), pp. 293-99. The equation of Yahweh and El Elyon does not occur in the LXX of Gen. 14.22. The process whereby the names of other deities are transformed into epithets for Yahweh is common in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Exod. 6:2, 3, which equates Yahweh with El Shaddai). The same phenomenon is present in the final two tablets of the Emmaus Elish which enumerate 50 glorious names of Marduk, many of which are the names of other gods (Foster, Before the Moses, I, pp. 388-400). The epic ends extolling Marduk as the ‘Enlil of all the gods’ (I, p. 400). Enil is also the proper name of the chief deity of the Sumerian pantheon; as such, Enil appears in many texts.
of Abram, five for Joshua (Josh. 10.3-5, but note the coalition of five kings in Gen. 14.8). The hero engages in nocturnal military maneuvers and routs the enemy (Gen. 14.15; Josh. 10.9). The enemies take flight, but are entrapped by some natural impediment, either by rivers (Gen. 14.10) or caves (Josh. 10.16-18). A prominent role is played in the two accounts by the king of Jerusalem, whose names are very similar: Melchizedek in Genesis 14 and Adonizedek in Joshua 10. Joshua 10 does not explicitly state that Jerusalem was taken by the Israelites, however it is assumed in the fact that Joshua kills Adonizedek. Additionally, the list of defeated kings in Joshua 12 includes Jerusalem (v. 10) and the variant account of Judges 1 clearly states that the Israelites took Jerusalem (this time under Judah rather than Joshua): ‘The sons of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it. They put its inhabitants to the sword and fired the city’ (יִלָּחְמו בְּיִוֹדֵה בִּירָשָׁלָם וַיַּהֲוָה נֵחַ לְמִרְצַּׁו שָׂמָה הָאָמָה]).

This seemingly straightforward account of the taking of Jerusalem by the newly arrived Israelites is muddied by the persistent biblical tradition that the city’s pre-Israelite inhabitants, known in the biblical text as the Jebusites, continued to live there. So Josh. 15.63 states that ‘The sons of Judah were not able to drive out the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. So the Jebusites dwell with the sons of Judah in Jerusalem to this day’ (אֶת הָאֹבֶד יְשִׁימַ רֵעֶה לְבֵית יְיָוָהתָּא לִבְּלַא בֵּינֵי יְיָוָהתָּא הַלַּוָּתָא וּמָשַׁא). Similarly, Judg. 19.10—a passage that occurs ostensibly after the Israelite capture of Jerusalem—notes that a traveling Levite chose not to stay in Jebus (identified parenthetically with Jerusalem) because it was a non-Israelite city. The toponym ‘Jebus’ (and the corresponding term ‘Jebusite’) does not occur outside the Hebrew


42. Ps. 48, which extols the grandeur of Jerusalem, also speaks of the defeat of a coalition of foreign kings See the discussion in J. Levenson, ‘Zion Traditions’, in *ABD*, VI, pp. 1099-101.


44. The two Hebrew names, Melchizedek and Adonizedek, have practically the same meaning: ‘my king is righteous’ and ‘my lord is righteous’, respectively. The variant account of the taking of Jerusalem in Judg. 1 gives the name Adonimezek for the king. This is also the reading of the LXX in both Josh. 10 and Judg. 1 and is followed by Josephus, *Ant*. 5.121-24.

45. The parallel passage in Judg. 1.21 speaks of the tribe of Benjamin rather than Judah. This contradicts the statement of Judg. 1.8, quoted above, that the Israelites completely destroyed Jerusalem and its inhabitants.
Bible and its provenance and meaning are unknown. From a literary standpoint, however, the enduring presence of the Jebusites in Jerusalem creates the necessity for taking the city from them again, which David does in 2 Samuel 5. However, the David traditions about Jerusalem are not without their own ambiguity in this respect. 1 Samuel 17.54 states that after killing Goliath, David removed his head and brought it to Jerusalem, implying that the city was under Israelite control even though David does not take the city from the Jebusites until 2 Samuel 5. After capturing Jerusalem, David renames the city after himself: ‘David settled in the fortress and called it the City of David’ (2 Sam. 5.9), the first occurrence of this place name in the Hebrew Bible. Used most often in the burial notices of the kings of Judah found in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, it can refer either to portions of Jerusalem or to the entire city.

The accounts of David’s capture of the city in 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Chronicles 11 in many ways comprise a standard tale of a siege. As in other such tales, there is the taunting of the besieging army by the city’s inhabitants in 2 Sam. 5.6 where the Jebusites boast that their city is so impregnable that even the physically disabled could withstand David’s forces. In 2 Sam. 5.8, David refers to the now famous tzimmor (Hebrew תיזמר), as the way for the Israelites to take the city from the Jebusites. The parallel account in 1 Chronicles 11 does not mention the tzimmor, but does say that David’s lieutenant Joab led the assault on the city, thus earning the right to command David’s army. The parallel accounts of 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Chronicles 11 contain the fragments of the literary motif of the single valiant soldier, in this case Joab, gaining entry into a city due to some structural weakness on its part, this being the water channel. This motif occurs elsewhere in ancient literature, for example in the account of Herodotus (Histories 1.84), which tells of the capture of Sardis by Cyrus the Great of Persia. In this story, Cyrus offers a reward to any of his soldiers who can penetrate the city, which by then had been under siege for 14 days. One of Cyrus’ men observes one of the city defenders clamber down a seemingly impassable sheer rock face to retrieve his helmet that had fallen. Cyrus’ soldier is thus able to climb up the rock himself and finds a way for the Persians to take the city. As in the two accounts of David’s capture of Jerusalem, the story in Herodotus tells of a general rewarding an act of individual bravery on the part of one of his men which involves some feat of physical daring that exploits a weakness in a city’s defenses. Much historical speculation on 2 Samuel 5 centers on the possibility of whether tzimmor refers to the water shaft discovered by Charles Warren in 1867 and dated by archaeologists to the tenth century BCE. However, it is practically impossible for someone to come through this passageway and into the city. On the other hand, another water channel, known as Hezekiah’s Tunnel, allows for relatively easy passage into the city. To this day, tourists in Jerusalem walk through it, beginning outside the ancient city walls at the Gibon spring and ending up inside the city at the Siloam Pool. The possibility that the tzimmor of 2 Samuel 5 refers to this water channel has not been seriously explored by scholars, since most agree that Hezekiah’s Tunnel was built roughly three centuries after the putative time of David, and the assumption of 2 Samuel’s historicity makes it imperative either to identify the tzimmor with a known pre-ninth century archaeological feature in Jerusalem or to translate the term so that its meaning has nothing to do with the topography of Jerusalem.


47. The explanation is different in 1 Chron. 11.7, where Jerusalem is called the City of David because he lived there and not because he renamed it.

48. The translation of the Hebrew of 2 Sam. 5.6-8 has puzzled commentators. P. McCarter (2 Samuel [AB, 9; New York: Doubleday, 1984], pp. 136-40) reads vv. 6-8 so as to understand that the blind and the lame incite the Jebusites to taunt David in v. 6. This explains his hatred of them and their collective exclusion in v. 8. McCarter’s reading is subject to some difficulties. It requires the two occurrences of the phrase ‘the blind and the lame’ to refer to two different groups of people: those already so disabled who urge the Jebusites to resist David and those defenders who may be disabled in the Israelite assault on the city.

49. 1 Chron. 11.15-19 continues with another such heroic story in which three of David’s men enter the Philistine stronghold of Bethelhem in order to fulfill David’s wish to drink water from its well. Upon being presented with the water, David is so humbled by his men’s devotion and bravery that he offers the water to God (cf. a similar story told about Alexander in Plutarch, Alex. 42). S. Holm-Nielsen maintains that Joab did not climb up a water shaft during the siege, but rather captured the source of the water shaft that supplied Jerusalem, thus forcing the city’s capitulation (‘Did Joab Climb “Warren’s Shaft”?’ in A. Lemaire and B. Orzen [eds.], History and Tradition of Early Israel: Studies Presented to Eduard Nielsen [VTSup, 50; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993], pp. 38-49). On water systems in Jerusalem, see Y. Shiloh, ‘Underground Water Systems in Eretz-Israel in the Iron Age’, in L. Perdue, L.E. Toombs and G.L. Johnson (eds.), Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Memory of D. Glenn Rose (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), pp. 215-22.

50. According to McCarter, David tells his men in v. 7 to strike enemy soldiers in the windpipe (McCarter’s translation of תיזמר), presumably so that their wounds
author of 2 Samuel is referring to Hezekiah’s Tunnel anachronistically because he is recounting a legend about a heroic king set many centuries in the past.

The two biblical traditions of the Israelite conquest of Jerusalem have distinct literary forms. The tale of Joshua 10 (with a similar account in Judg. 1) draws upon a theme present also in Genesis 14 of a pitched battle with a coalition of enemy kings that results in a rout and the complete destruction of the city. The parallel stories of David’s capture of the city take the form of a siege tale known in many variants in the ancient world in which the siege is successful on account of an act of individual heroism. Both traditions speak of the continuing presence of the pre-Israelite inhabitants in the city. The evidence for this in Joshua and Judges is discussed above, and in these texts it functions partially as a plot device that provides the motive for the taking and renaming of Jerusalem by David. The further mention of Jebusites in Jerusalem after David’s conquest is more puzzling. As is the case with Josh. 15.63 and Judg. 1.21, 1 Kgs 19.10 refers to the non-Israelite residents of Palestine, among them the Jebusites, whom the Israelites were unable to drive out and who consequently still dwelled in the land. Moreover, 2 Samuel 24 and the parallel text in 1 Chronicles 21 recount how the land for the Jerusalem temple was purchased from a Jebusite inhabitant of the city (called Araunah in 2 Samuel and Ornan in 1 Chron. 21). 51

51. Rendsburg claims that the non-Israelite population was ‘assimilated’ by David’s force after the taking of the city and that the previous king-priest was Zadok, whom David subsequently retained as high priest. Rendsburg reads the psalm name ‘Arananah’ as a title, related to the Hurrian word for ‘lord’. He thus equates Zadok with the man who sold David the land for the temple. Thus Rendsburg’s reconstruction is as follows: David takes the city of Jerusalem from its king-priest Zadok. David retains Zadok as high priest and buys the land upon which Zadok performed cultic functions in order to build a temple to Yahweh (‘Biblical Literature as Politics’, pp. 55-57).

Colonization: Ezra and Nehemiah

The narratives of Ezra–Nehemiah are fraught with numerous unresolved historical questions concerning their date, authorship and sources. 52 Two things, however, are clear from reading the text. First is that, from the vantage point of the author, this story of Jerusalem’s re-founding is something from the distant past. Second is that the figures of Ezra and Nehemiah were once independent of each other and have been brought together secondarily in the narrative. The two men deal with different Persian kings and are only together in the great rededication ceremony of Nehemiah 8–9, appearing not to know of each other in the remainder of the story. This is an odd state of affairs, given their prominence in both Jerusalem and the Persian court. The distinct Ezra and Nehemiah traditions that exist in early Judaism also speak to the artificial nature of their combination in the biblical text. 53

The composite work of Ezra–Nehemiah is an extended foundation story for Jerusalem and contains all the essential elements to describe the colonization of a new settlement in Antiquity as is discussed above. 54 The two main characters share the duties of the founder. Both men lead a group of settlers to found the colony with the blessing of their local leadership. To Ezra is given the task of ritual purification, which involves offering prayers on behalf of the people and giving instruction in the Law of Yahweh. To Nehemiah fall the activities of building fortifications, populating the city with worthy inhabitants, and establishing commercial, cultic and social regulations. The picture in Ezra–Nehemiah is thus one in which a city is built from the ground up, complete with a temple, walls, population and necessary social structures. The twist here is that the


53. Concerning Ezra, there are the variant Greek versions of Ezra, which make only passing reference to Nehemiah. For Nehemiah there is the legend recounted in 2 Macc. 1, along with the famous encomium of Jewish heroes in Sir. 49.13, neither of which mentions Ezra. For a skeptical appraisal of the Ezra traditions, see G. Garbini, History and Ideology in Ancient Israel (New York: Crossroad, 1988), pp. 151-69.

54. Although the martial imagery of Neh. 4 along with the repeated expulsion of foreigners bears resemblance to the conquest narratives discussed above. For another use of Greek colonization stories and their relationship to the Bible, see W. Wilson, Urban Legends: Acts 10,1-11,18 and the Strategies of Greco-Roman Foundation Narratives, JBL 120 (2001), pp. 77-99.
mother-city whose cult must be honored in the colony is not the city from which the colonists have come (i.e. Babylon and its environs or, in the case of Nehemiah, Susa), but is rather the destroyed Jerusalem of the past. Put another way, the mother-city is not remote in distance, but in time. This is all part of the emphasis that Ezra–Nehemiah places on the dynamic interplay between continuity and rupture. The temple to Yahweh is rebuilt in Jerusalem, but it is nothing like the splendid building erected by Solomon (Ezra 3.12). The ancient law of Moses is once again being followed in Jerusalem, yet it has to be re-taught to the people as if it were a new thing because it has been forgotten (Neh. 8). Jerusalem is a city that is empty and deserted after the Babylonian destruction; yet repeated mention is made of indigenous peoples who live there. For instance, according to Ezra 9.1, the Jebusites still dwell in the city. Consequently, both Ezra and Nehemiah are required to purify the population of such foreign influence (Ezra 9–10; Neh. 13), thus creating another literary paradox of a purified people in the midst of the enduring presence of outsiders, parallel to that found in the other biblical stories’ mention of the persistence of the Jebusites in Jerusalem after it becomes an Israelite city.

Outside of the Bible is another tradition that describes the founding of Jerusalem in terms of colonization. The writings of the Greek historian Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 300 BCE) survive only in fragments quoted in the writings of Diodorus of Sicily (c. 50 BCE) and Josephus. In one of these, from a work dealing with the history of Egypt, Hecataeus narrates a story in which, after a plague has struck, foreigners are expelled from Egypt in an attempt to stave off divine wrath.

The greater part of them were sent into what is now called Judea, a land not far from Egypt and entirely uninhabited at that time. The leader of the colony (ἀποικίας) was called Moses, who was famous for his wisdom and courage. After taking possession of the land he founded, in addition to other cities, the one most renowned now, Jerusalem.

After founding Jerusalem, Moses builds the temple and promulgates both cultic and civil norms. Hecataeus is clearly influenced by the colonization process at work in the Greek world, and indeed the Greek word he uses to describe the nascent Jewish settlement (ἀποικίας) is the same term used by Greek writers to talk about colonization. There are also significant points of contact with Ezra–Nehemiah. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, Moses founds Jerusalem, builds the temple, and establishes laws. Each account also tells of the founder enacting land reform. In Neh. 5.13, Nehemiah in his capacity as governor must upbraid the Jewish nobility in Jerusalem for charging exorbitant interest rates on loans to farmers and then appropriating the debtors’ land when they default on the loans. Similarly, Hecataeus writes that Moses forbad the selling of land in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of a few wealthy owners. This story about Moses from Hecataeus is tantalizing in that his source is unknown. Both Menahem Stern and Doron Mendels argue that Hecataeus used elements in his narrative that originated among Jewish circles. This raises an interesting question, because in the Hebrew Bible arguably the single most important hero (i.e. Moses) has nothing to do with Jerusalem. Could an extra-biblical tradition about Moses that connected him with the founding of the city have originated among Egyptian Jews in the Hellenistic age? If so it would provide an interesting analogue to the kind of literary creation at work in the founder stories of the Hebrew Bible.

Conclusion

The multiplicity of founder stories in the Hebrew Bible raises the question of why the biblical authors collected and arranged numerous variants of the same tradition. Simply to say that the stories recount historical events in the order and manner in which they happened, or even to say that the stories preserve historical kernels, does not sufficiently explain the literary similarities and highly stylized nature of the texts, nor does it adequately address the considerable amount of contradictory historical evidence in the archaeological and textual sources. The solution lies instead in the

55. For further discussion of this see T. Bolin, ‘When the End is the Beginning: The Persian Period and the Origins of the Biblical Tradition’, 
56. Greek text, translation and commentary in M. Stern, Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), 1, pp. 20-44.
fundamental purpose of city-founder stories to justify a city’s claim to prestige and dominance. This need, and the means devised to meet it, is the concern of urban elites, the creators of the ‘Great Tradition’, to use the term of sociologist Robert Redfield.\(^{61}\) In the case of the biblical accounts, the repeated foundation of Jerusalem by a series of heroic figures from the authors’ ‘mythic past’ serves to emphasize through repetition Jerusalem’s claim for pre-eminence among ancient Jews. The fact that all but one of these stories is closely related to or contains cultic elements underscores the authors’ desire to enhance the sacred status of Jerusalem as the place where Yahweh’s one true temple stands. Thus Abram is blessed by the priest of Jerusalem and, following the law of Deut. 14.22-23, offers a tithe to Yahweh there. After taking Jerusalem, David transfers the ark into the city and purchases the land upon which his son Solomon will build the temple. The returning exiles in the book of Ezra build the temple and, as soon as it is completed, the priest Ezra arrives to furnish it and make offerings. Both Ezra and Nehemiah preside over re-dedication ceremonies in which the people of Israel swear allegiance to Yahweh and his Torah, an act designed to ensure that a holy people inhabits the holy city.\(^ {62}\)

Related to this emphasis on cult is the Bible’s concern with non-Jewish inhabitants in Jerusalem explicit in all of the tales. The Jewish heroes in the biblical narrative continuously live side by side in Jerusalem with ‘outsiders’, be they Jebusites, Samaritans, faithless Jews, or the יְוָנָאָם (‘the people of the land’). The stories thus represent the reality of the authors’ world as one in which they were required to exist with ‘outsiders’. In this way too, the stories portray the heroes as examples insofar as they persist in their fidelity to Yahweh and his Torah despite the presence of foreigners in their midst or, conversely, despite their being in the midst of foreigners.\(^ {63}\)

The urgency at work in these literary attempts to sustain Jerusalem’s sacred status among Jews by stressing the exclusivity of its temple to Yahweh in the light of significant, extended contact with non-Jews means to fit best with the cultural and historical contexts of the Hellenistic era, when the Jewish Diaspora was settled in renowned and prestigious cities such as Alexandria, Babylon and Sardis. The biblical stories are the temple elites’ attempt to assert to their fellow Jews the sovereignty of Jerusalem over the other cities of the Hellenistic oikouμενα.\(^ {64}\) Rival temples to Yahweh were built in Egypt and elsewhere in Palestine, thus creating the need for the Jerusalem temple personnel to claim religious priority. Also, the extended contact of Jewish intellectuals with the culture and tradition of the Hellenistic world was seen by some Jewish elites as a threat to their cultural and religious identity. Consequently, the stories portray the ongoing presence of non-Jews in Jerusalem, yet also make clear how this fact does not in any way compromise the heroes’ religious and cultural purity. The stories of heroic foundations of a city in general and of colonization in particular, that is, just the kind of tales about Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible, are more typical of Hellenistic rather than ancient Near Eastern literature, which prefers to offer divine origins for cities.\(^ {65}\) As Isaiah Gafni has shown, the same narrative phenomenon as that under discussion in the Hebrew Bible is also present in rabbinic Jewish writings as well, which exhibit ‘a tendency…to attach central issues, events and persons of the early biblical narrative to the city of Jerusalem’.\(^ {66}\) In particular, traditions which claimed that Adam had been created from the earth of Jerusalem,

62. One could here cite the example of Judah Maccabees who, after taking Jerusalem from the foreign general Lysias, cleanses and re-dedicates the temple. On the idea that Jerusalem’s holiness is derived in Israelite tradition secondarily due to the presence of the temple, see Noth, ‘Jerusalem and the Israelite Tradition’.
63. Of course, the presence of other stories in the Hebrew Bible that fantasize about the expulsion of all foreigners from Jerusalem and Palestine, for instance, Ezek. 40-49 and the conquest traditions of Joshua, are evidence of another way of dealing with the presence of outsiders. This viewpoint is intensified in the Qumran literature.
64. D. Schwartz argues that during the Hellenistic period, Diaspora Jews had favorable views of Jerusalem as a Jewish city and that these views had nothing to do with the presence of the temple. Indeed, the temple was viewed negatively by these same Diaspora Jews (‘Temple or City: What Did Hellenistic Jews See in Jerusalem?’, in M. Poorthuis and Ch. Safrai [eds.], The Centrality of Jerusalem: Historical Perspectives [Kampen: Kok, 1996], pp. 114-27). In support of Schwartz’s distinction, one could point to the strong emphasis on cult in the majority of the founder traditions in the Hebrew Bible. Contra Schwartz, Gafni’s discussion shows how the rabbinic tradition (albeit textually later than the Hellenistic period) stressed the importance of Jerusalem precisely because it was the site of the Temple ("Pre-Histories" of Jerusalem, pp. 10-11).
65. For discussion of the Hellenistic dating of the biblical traditions using different yet supporting criteria, see Bolin, "A Stranger and an Alien Among You"; T.L. Thompson, The Bible in History: How Writers Create a Past (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999); and the collection of essays both for and against such a dating in L.L. Grabbe (ed.), Did Moses Speak Aramaic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period (JSOTSup, 317; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).
66. Gafni, "Pre-Histories" of Jerusalem”, p. 6. Gafni also shows how the idea that Yahweh founded Jerusalem at the creation of the world becomes widespread first in the rabbinic period.
and subsequently buried there were prevalent in later Jewish texts, until they were replaced by alternate traditions in light of the growing Christian interest in the city. However, rabbinic traditions did not limit themselves to tales about Adam’s contact with Jerusalem but created ‘a certain conscious continuity in the successive relationship of each biblical figure to the place’. The preservation of multiple founder traditions is not limited to ancient Jewish literary circles, but occurs also in the traditions surrounding the origins of Rome, and these function as a supporting example to the kind of phenomenon being argued for the Hebrew Bible. Several competing narratives about Rome’s foundation were preserved in Antiquity; these may be divided into two categories. The first comprises those stories that attribute Rome’s foundation to the Trojan hero Aeneas who figures in the Iliad. The earliest known occurrence of this tradition is in the writings of the fifth century BCE historian Hellanicus of Lesbos. The second category comprises those traditions that attribute the city’s founding to Romulus. These stories appear in numerous written and pictorial representations beginning in the third century BCE. One of the longer discussions of these multiple foundation traditions occurs in Book 1 of the Roman History of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Writing in the first century BCE, Dionysius notes seven different foundation stories for Rome among Greek authors and three from Roman writers. Most of the Greek authors speak of an eponymous founder, either male or female, named ‘Rhome’ or ‘Rhomus’. In these different aetiologies, the founder of Rome is understood alternatively as the wife, son or grandson of Aeneas. The Latin authors all attribute the city’s founding to Romulus. Dionysius reconciles these competing Greek and Latin founder traditions by means of chronological arrangement, although he was not the first to do so. Thus, Aeneas finds the city of Lavinium after defeating the indigenous population in battle. His son, Ascanius, founds the colony of Alba Longa. Numitor, the thirteenth king of Alba Longa, sends out his grandsons, Romulus and Remus, to found a colony that will be known as Rome (this last element incorporating another tradition that claimed that Rome was founded by colonists from Alba Longa). Note the similarity of this composite narrative to the city-foundation tradition in the biblical texts, which also include conquest and colonization tales. The complex tale of Rome’s foundation became the canonical version, and figures also in the first century CE writers, Virgil and Livy. The specific purpose of the Roman tradition is twofold. First, it provides for Rome the requisite Greek pedigree by linking the city with the Homeric hero, Aeneas. Indeed, Dionysius states explicitly that his aim is to make the reader acknowledge that ‘Rome is a Greek city’ (‘ΕΛΛΑΣ η ΠΟΛΙΝ ΟΥΤΗν), and that ‘no one can find a nation that is more ancient or Greek’ (οὐδεν ευρη τοις έθνοι τοις σερικότεροι ουτη ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΤΕΡΟι) than the Romans. Second, it creates divine approval and patronage for the city. Aeneas is the son of Aphrodite. Rome’s other founder, Romulus, is the son of Mars and he himself becomes divine, eventually being worshiped in Rome under the name of Quirinus.

The biblical authors had different aims from their classical counterparts, yet they employed similar compositional and rhetorical strategies in their repeated use of foundation stories to stress the ongoing sanctity and consequent importance of Jerusalem throughout Israelite history. This series of

68. Gafni, ‘“Pre-Histories” of Jerusalem’, p. 6.
69. A fragment preserved in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman History 1.72. Emilio Gafni (Dionysius and the History of Archaic Rome [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987], pp. 12-13) describes the literary context of the reference to Rome in Hellanicus as ‘an ethnographic framework that is typically Greek and whose aim was to gather centripetally into the Hellenic world whatever new peoples the Greeks encountered’.
70. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman History 1.72-73. W. Donlan (‘The Foundation Legends of Rome: An Example of Dynamic Forces’, CW 64 [1970], pp. 109-14), traces the tradition history of the Greek and Roman founder tales. Donlan demonstrates that the Greeks took up the Romulus traditions, yet set him alongside a brother, Rhomus, who functioned as the eponymous founder of the city. The Romans, wanting to maintain Romulus as the founder, altered the eponymous Rhomus into the ill-fated twin Remus.

71. Already in the third century BCE, the Roman poet Ennius had done so. Concerning the high level of fidelity with which Dionysius utilized his sources, see Gafni, Dionysius, pp. 10-12.
72. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman History 1.53-71; 2.2.
73. Virgil, Aeneid 1.272; 6.756; Livy, Roman History 1.1-2.
74. Greek logographers had already attributed to Aeneas the foundation of the city. The Romans subsequently incorporated this into the canonical version; see Donlan, ‘Foundation Legends’, pp. 110-11; Gafni, Dionysius, p. 12. Similarly, by providing Abraham origins in ‘Ur of the Chaldees’, the biblical authors establish for their Israelite ancestor a connection with the ancient and venerable culture of Mesopotamia.
75. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman History 1.89. See also the remarks of Gafni, which state that the ‘principal aim’ of Dionysius was ‘to establish the Greekness of the Romans’ (Dionysius, p. 134; cf. also pp. 10, 35).
stories involves the pre-eminent figures in the Hebrew Bible, and its intended cumulative effect serves didactic and ideological aims. As did Abram, Joshua, David, Ezra, and Nehemiah, so every good Jew is should acknowledge the primacy of Jerusalem, make offerings to Yahweh there and nowhere else, and maintain strict fidelity to the Torah despite, or because of the presence foreign influence. Moreover, this is so because, of all the cities in the world, only Jerusalem should take pride of place among Jews, no matter what city they themselves would claim for their own. Historical investigation has revealed that in the last three centuries BCE there were ongoing and at times fierce debates among Jewish intellectuals and elites concerning their cultural and religious identity—witness the so-called ‘Samaritan schism’ or the bellicose language of the Qumran sectarianists. Each group involved in this discussion realized that appropriation of the past entailed an effective endorsement of its respective position, a process repeated in the struggle between Judaism and early Christianity concerning both interpretive control of the Hebrew Bible and of Jerusalem as a symbol. The biblical authors portrayed virtually every major figure of the tradition as a proponent of their particular vision of Judaism, and of Jerusalem’s role in it. Such rhetorical ‘overkill’ was do doubt justified by the extraordinarily high stakes of the questions at issue. Struggles such as these are what give rise to religious literature.

76. A similar use of repetition as a literary device in the Hebrew Bible is the recurrence of the motif that tells of the recovery and reading of lost and forgotten law codes. This appears in the stories of Josiah (2 Kgs 22), Ezra (Neh. 8–9) and Judah Maccabee (2 Macc. 2). In each of the stories, the recovery of the laws leads to a renewed fidelity to Yahweh on the part of the people. Again, the didactic aim of the motif is clear in that the reader is to be like the characters in this story, each of whom is a faithful student of Torah.

BROTHERS FIGHTING BROTHERS: JEWISH AND SAMARITAN ETHNOCENTRISM IN TRADITION AND HISTORY

Ingrid Hjelm

With the traditions of the Pentateuch, Jews and Samaritans place their origins in the ancient world’s cultural and political clashes between the kingdoms and peoples of the Euphrates and the Nile. Coming out of Mesopotamia and Egypt, Abraham and Jacob’s descendants are given the task of making fruitful and plenty the homeland given to them, the fertile soil of Palestine, inhabited with various indigenous people, with whom they can choose either to live in harmony or in conflict. While the fathers seek peaceful solutions, their sons and their children are minded to drive out these people, whom they call ‘foreigners of the land’. Based on the Pentateuchal laws about ethnic and religious purity, biblical narratives in the so-called Deuteronomistic History (Joshua–2 Kings)1 about the life within the land are characterized by seemingly never ending internal and external conflicts over sovereignty. The internal conflicts result in civil wars between the tribes and develop a north–south opposition between Israel/Ephraim and Judah, which in biblical tradition finds its solution in Yahweh’s removal of Israel/Ephraim in the eighth-century BCE Assyrian conquest of Samaria. While this sad solution has given impetus to later Jewish interpretations (especially that of the first-century CE Jewish-Roman writer Flavius Josephus), which explain why the Samaritans should be regarded as foreigners, the biblical Prophets and the so-called Chronicistic History (the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles) expose

1. This tradition is not shared by the Samaritans, who have their own, non-canonical, historical tradition, which in its oldest known manuscripts varies with much of the Masoretic material in Judges–2 Kings, having no traditions about the dual monarchy from the reign of Israel’s king Jeroboam to Judah’s king Jehoiachin and the Babylonian exile. Samaritan traditions dealing with the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods are both independent of, and related to, traditions known from the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, Jewish-Christian Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic literature and Josephus. For bibliographical references, see the footnotes to section 3.