

Expansion and exile in the Chronicler's narrative of the two and a half tribes (1 Chr. 5.1-26)

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journals.sagepub.com/home/jot**Itzhak Amar**

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Abstract

Discussion of Exile in the book of Chronicles is generally limited to questions regarding its duration, scope, and comparisons of its portrayal in Chronicles with that in parallel books (Kings and Jeremiah). The prevalent approach to these questions in scholarship is that the Chronicler does not perceive this exile as a permanent state and usually downplays its duration or the number of people exiled. This is not the case, however, in regard to the two and a half tribes in 1 Chr. 5. Their exile is mentioned no fewer than three times in the genealogical lists of these tribes. I will attempt to explore why the exile of these tribes is relatively prominent in the text and how this contributes to the Chronicler's perception of 'all of Israel'.

Keywords

Chronicles, exile, expansion, Transjordan, two and a half tribes

I. Presenting the problem

1 Chronicles 5 consists of two clearly distinguishable parts. The first part (5.1-26) deals with the two and a half tribes that settled in Transjordan (Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh), while the second part (5.27-41) deals with the genealogical list of Kehat, the son of Levi. There is no apparent connection between these two parts, a fact that may explain why in certain English translations chapter 5 ends with v. 26 and the genealogical list of Kehat is placed at the beginning of chapter 6.¹

1. This division was also adopted by Japhet in her commentary, see S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), p. 143.

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The unit dealing with Reuben (5.1-10) is in many senses a continuation of the preceding chapter, which deals with Simeon (4.24-43).² Only in connection with these two tribes does the Chronicler deal with the same three issues and in the same order: a genealogical list, settlement in the land, and a war in the wake of which the conquerors came to dwell in the place of the conquered.³ In connection with Simeon, the Chronicler begins with the genealogical list of the tribe of Simeon (4.24-27), then describes their settling in the land (4.28-37), and concludes with a description of two wars fought by them, one against Ham and the other against the remnants of Amalek. The outcomes of these two wars are identical—disinheriting the original inhabitants and settling in their place: ‘Then they settled in their place, because there was pasture for their flocks’ (4.40); ‘and they have lived there until this day’ (4.43). The same structure is found in the unit dealing with Reuben. The Chronicler begins with the genealogical list of the tribe of Reuben, then deals with the place of their settlement, and concludes with a description of the war against the Hagrites, which had the same outcome as the wars of Simeon: ‘And they occupied their dwellings throughout the entire region east of Gilead’ (5.10).

After having completed its treatment of the tribe of Reuben, the Chronicles turns to the tribe of Gad, who settled next to Reuben (לנגדם; cf. Gen. 33.12).⁴ The treatment of Gad consists of three components: settlement, a genealogical list, and a historical census conducted in the days of Jotham the king of Judah and Jeroboam the king of Israel (5.11-16). Subsequently, between the descriptions of the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh, an additional and broader description of the war against the Hagrites is found.⁵ At the end of this broadened war description, the aforementioned outcome is noted: ‘And they settled in their place’ (5.22).

Apart from the identical structures of the units dealing with Simeon and Reuben, these units are also characterized by common motifs which further strengthen the connection between them:

- Both Reuben and Simeon are compared to Judah (4.27; 5.2).
- The expression עד היום הזה (‘until this day’) appears within the genealogies only in these two units (4.41, 43; 5.26).

2. Many commentators have indeed viewed 1 Chr 4.24-5.26 as a single literary unit. See for example J.T. Sparks, *The Chronicler's Genealogies: Towards an Understanding of 1 Chronicles 1-9* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2008), p. 163.

3. Rudolph was among the first to identify the similarities in the descriptions of Reuben and Simeon. See W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1955), p. 46. See also H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), p. 63; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, p. 130; G.N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 12; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2004), p. 394; P.B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), p. 85. To this similarity Sparks added settling in the place of the conquered peoples. See Sparks, *Chronicler's Genealogies*, p. 174.

4. In my view, there is no need to explain לנגדם here as meaning “opposite them” or “against them”, as did Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, p. 387, and Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, p. 128.

5. Most scholars hold that it was the Chronicler who created the extended account of the war against the Hagrites, since it employs the style and content so evidently characteristic of his theological writing in numerous places throughout the book. See for example M. Oeming, *Das wahre Israel: Die “genealogische Vorhalle” 1 Chronik 1-9* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990), pp. 135-141.

- Both units use the appellation נָשִׁיךְ—‘prince’ (4.38; 5.6).
- Both units describe an increase in population and livestock (4.38-40; 5.9-10, 23).
- Both units mention different kings (4.31, 41; 5.17).

Despite their many shared characteristics, there is also an important difference between these two units. A close reading of chapter 5.1-26 reveals that the theme of exile appears in it no less than three times (5.6, 22, 26), a fact in need of an explanation!⁶ Why did the Chronicler deem it important to mention specifically the exile of the two and a half tribes, and to do so no less than three times?⁷

This question has seldom been raised by scholarship, which has focused mainly on questions concerning the nature of the materials of which the story consists. Which materials are the Chronicler’s *Sondergut*, and which materials reflect sources used by him? Are these sources pre-exilic or post-exilic?⁸ Was the chapter written by a single author or perhaps by several authors?⁹

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6. The exile of the two and a half tribes is mentioned in 2 Kgs 15.29. This is in effect the first evidence of the deportation of an Israelite population to another land. This event is mentioned in the inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser III that were found at Nimrud (Kalḫu), the Capital of Assyria. From these inscriptions we learn that in the years 734-732 BCE, Tiglath Pileser waged battle in Syria and the land of Israel and deported citizens from Aram-Damascus and from the land of Israel. The captives were taken from Transjordan, the Upper Galilee, the Beit Netofa Valley, and the Lower Galilee. See B. Oded, *The Early History of the Babylonian Exile: 8th–6th Centuries B.C.E* (Haifa: Pardes Press, 2010), pp. 28-29 [Hebrew]; P. Dubovský, ‘Tiglath-pileser III’s Campaigns in 734-732 B.C.: Historical Background of Isa 7; 2 Kgs 15-16 and 2 Chr 27-28’, *Biblica* 87 (2006), pp. 153-170. On the inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser III, see H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria: Critical Edition, with Introductions, Translations and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), pp. 138-139. It seems, though, that the apodosis of v. 26, which counts the places to which the exiles were brought, does not refer to Tiglath Pileser III but rather to Sargon II, cf. 2 Kgs 17.6. It is worth noting the position of Avishur, who thinks that the exile mentioned in connection with Be’era, the prince of Reuben, does not refer to Tiglath Pileser III but rather to Tiglath Pileser I at the end of the twelfth century BCE, see Y. Avishur, ‘Literary fictions and historiographical descriptions in 1 Chronicles 5: Which Tiglath Pileser deported Be’era the prince of the Reubenites?’, in Y. Avishur and R. Deutsch (eds.), *Michael; Studies in History, Epigraphy, and Bible in Honor of Prof. Michael Heltzer* (Tel Aviv: Publications of the Archeological Center, 1999), pp. 5* - 18* [Hebrew].
 7. This question becomes even more crucial in light of the fact that the two and a half tribes were not the only deportees from the campaign of Tiglath Pileser III, since people from other regions in the kingdom of Israel were also deported. See for example J.W. Wright, ‘The Fight for Peace: Narrative and History in the Battle Accounts in Chronicles’, in M.P. Graham et al. (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1997), p. 155.
 8. See P.T. Williams, ‘Israel outside the Land: The Transjordanian Tribes in 1 Chronicles 5’, in V.P. Long et al. (eds.), *Windows into Old Testament History: Evidence, Argument, and the Crisis of Biblical Israel* (Grand Rapid: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 147-160.
 9. The story contains a number of difficulties. For example, it would have been proper to provide the genealogical list of half the tribe of Manasseh before supplying the expanded version

As mentioned, we have found no discussion on the recurring theme of the exile of the two and a half tribes. But before we turn to this issue, we shall enumerate the places in the book dealing with exile.

2. Places in Chronicles mentioning exile

The book of Chronicles mentions the exiles of Israel and Judah explicitly seven times. I quote the verses verbatim:¹⁰

1. ‘Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria took into exile (אשר הגלה תגלת פלאסר), he was a prince of the Reubenites’ (1 Chr. 5.6).
2. ‘And many fell slain, because the battle was God’s, and they occupied the land until the exile (עד הגלה)’ (1 Chr. 5.22).

of the war against the Hagrites. Also, a certain degree of obscurity surrounds the war itself, which is first mentioned in the context of the tribe of Reuben and afterwards in the context of the two and a half tribes. Two approaches have emerged in response to these difficulties: some hold that a single author wrote the chapter while the difficulties arose from some later additions. See H.G.M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 73-81; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, pp. 129-132. Others hold that the chapter is not the composition of a single author and that its final version is the work of a number of authors and editors. See Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*; pp. 43-51; R.L. Braun, *I Chronicles* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1986), pp. 72-75; M. Kartveit, *Motive und Schichten der Landtheologie in 1 Chronik 1-9* (ConBOT 28; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990), pp. 65-69; Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, pp. 392-393.

10. There are additional verses referring to exile, see 1 Chr. 16.35; 2 Chr. 34.24-25. In contrast to these two references, which were copied from their *Vorlage* almost verbatim (Ps. 106.47; 2 Kgs. 22.16-17), all seven references supplied above are unique and without parallels. It is worth noting the position of Ehud Ben-Zvi, who holds that these references to exile, which seem very few compared to the considerable length of the book, were meant to minimize the readers’ attention to this issue and in this way to downgrade the importance attributed to it among the people. In the eyes of the Chronicler, the exile changed nothing, since he saw the continuity between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic periods, wherefore he aimed to minimize its influence as much as possible. See E. Ben-Zvi, ‘Toward A Sense of Balance: Remembering the Catastrophe of Monarchic Judah/ (ideological) Israel and Exile Through Reading Chronicles in Late Yehud’, in P.S. Evans and T.F. Williams (eds.), *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), pp. 247-265. Schweitzer presented a similar approach. In his opinion, the Chronicler aimed to remold the memory of the exile: indeed, it took place, but there is no reason to live as if it still exerted an influence. On this issue, the book of Chronicles differs from the books of Samuel and Kings, because it presents an alternative to the exile, a kind of utopian reality, in contrast to the books of Samuel and Kings, which mainly constitute “negative writing”, writing which is perpetually under the influence of the exile, see S.J. Schweitzer, ‘Exile, Empire and Prophecy Reframing Utopian Concerns in Chronicles’, in S.J. Schweitzer and F. Uhlenbruch (eds.), *Worlds that could not be: Utopia in Chronicles, Ezra Nehemiah* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), pp. 89-90.

3. 'But they were unfaithful (וימעלו) to the God of their ancestors . . . So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria and the spirit of Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, who took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh into exile (והגלו את יהודה וירושלים) (ויגלו לראובני ולגדי ולחצי שבט מנשה), and he took them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan, where they are to this day' (1 Chr. 5.26).
4. 'Jozadak was deported when the Lord sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile (בהגלות ה' את יהודה וירושלים) by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar' (1 Chr. 5.41).
5. All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel, and Judah were taken captive to Babylon (ויהודה הגלו לבבל) because of their unfaithfulness (במעלם) (1 Chr. 5.9.6).
6. 'People of Israel, return to the Lord . . . that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria . . . If you return to the Lord, then your fellow Israelites and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will return to this land' (2 Chr. 30.6-9).¹¹
7. 'Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful (הרבו למעול מעל) . . . He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into his hands. . . He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant (ויגל השארית מן הארץ) . . . until the kingdom of Persia came to power' (2 Chr. 36.14-20).

We shall make a number of comments on these seven passages:

- Passages 1, 2, 3, and 6 can with certainty be said to refer to the exile of Israel, and 4 and 7 to the exile of Judah. Passage 5 is uncertain. It may refer to the exile of Judah only, but it is also possible that the verse has been disrupted and refers to the exiles of both Judah and Israel.

According to the first understanding, the verse should be read in the following way:¹²

וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל הִתְיַחֲשׂוּ וְהָגָם בְּתוֹבִימַי עַל-סִפְרֵי מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְיִהְיֶה הַגְּלוֹ לְבָבֶל בְּמַעַלְמָם

'All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

And Judah were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness'.

11. The words of Hezekiah's emissaries are extremely reminiscent of the words of Hezekiah himself about the period of his father, Ahaz, see on this I. Amar, 'The Characterization of Rehoboam and Jeroboam as a Reflection of the Chronicler's View of the Schism', *JHS* (2018), pp. 26-27.

12. See R.W. Klein, *1 Chronicles* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), p. 259 n. 1.

Or:¹³

וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַתִּיחֲשׂוּ וְהָנָם כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה
וְיְהוּדָה הִגְלוּ לְבָבֶל בְּמַעֲלָם.

‘All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.
And Judah were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness’.

According to the second understanding, the phrase *ישראל ויהודה* has been omitted due to haplography, and the verse should be read in the following way:¹⁴

וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל הַתִּיחֲשׂוּ וְהָנָם כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר מַלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה הִגְלוּ לְבָבֶל בְּמַעֲלָם.

‘All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.
And Israel and Judah were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness’.

- Four of the seven passages provide the theological rationale so often provided by the Chronicler: the root *מע* (“to be unfaithful”).¹⁵ In passages 3 and 6, this rationale is provided in connection with the kingdom of Israel, and in passage 7 in connection with the kingdom of Judah. With regard to passage 5, it may relate to both exiles or perhaps only to the exile of Judah, as explained above.
- All passages except 6 contain the root *גל* (“to be exiled”).
- Passages 1 and 4 deal specifically with an important person who had been exiled. In passage 1, Be’era, the prince of the tribe of Reuben, is exiled by Tiglath-Pileser, and in 4, Jozadak the Priest is exiled together with Judah.¹⁶ The remaining passages divide into two groups: 2 and 3 deal with the exile of the two and a half tribes only, while 5, 6, and 7 deal with the exiles of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel in general.
- In passage 3, the Chronicler integrates the two descriptions of exile found in the book of Kings. The exile of the inhabitants of Transjordan was carried out by

13. See Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, p. 82; Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, p. 480.

14. Brown, *I Chronicles*, pp. 129-130. I find it difficult to agree with this emendation.

15. See W. Johnstone, ‘Guilt and Atonement: The Theme of 1 and 2 Chronicles’, in J.D. Martin and P.R. Davies (eds.), *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (Sheffield: Bloomsbury, 1986), pp. 113-138; idem, ‘The Use of Leviticus in Chronicles’, in J.F.A. Sawyer (ed.), *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 243-255.

16. According to Cogan, the Chronicler learned about the deportation of Be’era from the description of the sons of Nevo who returned from the exile together with the returnees to Zion (Ez. 10.43), see M. Cogan, ‘The Men of Nebo — Repatriated Reubenites’, *Israel Exploration Journal* 29 (1979), pp. 37-39.

Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kgs. 16.29), while the re-settling of the exiles in the places mentioned here was carried out during the second exile—the exile of Samaria 10 years later—probably by Sargon II (*ibid.* 17.3).¹⁷

The above comments seem to underline the importance of the question we raised at the beginning of our discussion. Three out of the seven places dealing with exile throughout the book of Chronicles deal specifically with the exile of the two and a half tribes. This is an interesting fact because we know that additional tribes from the kingdom of Israel in the area of the Upper and Lower Galilee were exiled together with the deportation of the two and a half tribes by Tiglath-Pileser III, but surprisingly the genealogical lists do not allude to these deportations. Thus, the question remains: why did the Chronicler deem it important to emphasize the exiling of Israel by Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II specifically in connection with the genealogical lists of the two and a half tribes?

An additional fact is that the theme of exile appears four times in a single chapter, meaning that more than half of the book's references to exile are found in chapter 5.

An additional observation concerns the direct connection apparently existing between the exile of Be'era, the prince of the tribe of Reuben, and the exile of Jozadak the Priest from the family of Kehat. As mentioned, these are the only two of the book's seven references to exile that refer to the exile of a single person and not to an entire family, tribe, or kingdom as in the remaining references. This shows that there is a certain connection between the two parts of the chapter, since an *inclusio* is formed between the exiles mentioned at its beginning and at its end. This connection between the two parts of the chapter also indirectly supports the division found in the Hebrew Bibles, which joins together the lists of Kehat and the lists of the two and a half tribes within the framework of chapter 5.

Before we try to answer the aforementioned question, I would like to closely examine the first part of the chapter that deals with the two and a half tribes.

3. The two and a half tribes (5.1-26)

The story of the two and a half tribes in its present form consists of five units:

- The tribe of Reuben
- The tribe of Gad
- The war against the Hagrites
- Half the tribe of Manasseh
- The exile of the two and a half tribes

17. In 2 Kgs. 17.3 and 18.9 it is related that it was Shalmaneser V who conquered Samaria in the ninth year of King Hosea. Commentators have, indeed, struggled with the question of who conquered Samaria: Shalmaneser V, or perhaps Sargon II? See for example A. Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons ii: aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier, 1994), pp. 457-458. For additional reading, see Oded, *The Early History*, p. 30, n. 11. Oded holds that although Shalmaneser began the siege, it was Sargon who conquered Samaria and exiled the kingdom of Israel in 720 BCE.

Units 1 and 2 are almost identically structured, each unit containing three elements: a genealogical list, settlement, and a historical event. The difference between them lies in the order of the elements. In unit 1, we find the following order: genealogical list—settlement—historical event, while in unit 2 the order of the elements is settlement—genealogical list—historical event. The historical event described in unit 1 is the war against the Hagrites, and in unit 2 it is the census. The common denominator of the two events is that they both refer to a king. Saul is mentioned in connection with the tribe of Reuben, while Jotham the king of Judah and Jeroboam the king of Israel are mentioned in connection with the tribe of Gad.

Unit 3 deals exclusively with the war against the Hagrites initiated by the two and a half tribes. The description of this war gives expression to a number of the Chronicler's theological views as reflected throughout the book, including, for example, crying out to God for assistance and putting one's trust in Him during a battle to help one defeat the enemy. Furthermore, crying out to God may ensure one additional reward apart from victory: in this case, plenty of booty.¹⁸

Unit 4 is the shortest one, and it deals with half of the tribe of Manasseh. As opposed to units 1 and 2, the description here consists of only two elements: settlement and a genealogical list. A close examination of the locations settled by half the tribe of Manasseh in Transjordan reveals that they spread out over a very broad area.¹⁹ The expansion of the tribe of Manasseh northwards is mentioned in the end verse 23: *המה רבו* ('they multiplied'), meaning that the population growth enabled and made necessary their expansion northward. Through this expression, the Chronicler in fact connects half the tribe of Manasseh to the tribe of Reuben in the beginning of the chapter: 'Because their livestock had increased in Gilead' (10). The expansion of Reuben due to their numerous livestock and the expansion of half the tribe of Manasseh following a growth in population create an idyllic impression of complete control over the entire Transjordan from North to South and from East to the river of Euphrates (5.9).²⁰

Unit 5 again deals with both the two and a half tribes, but unlike the idyllic picture previously presented, the Chronicler now rebukes the tribes harshly and accuses them of being guilty of causing their own exile: 'But they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors and prostituted themselves to the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them' (25).²¹ Similar to unit 3, this unit is replete with some of the characteristic themes of the book of Chronicles. The use of the root *למעלו*—'they were unfaithful'—is one of the Chronicler's identifying marks. The phrase *ויער אלהי ישראל את רוח . . . מלך* ('So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of . . . king') resembles the declaration of Cyrus at the end of the book: 'God stirred up the spirit of . . . king' (2 Chr. 36.22).²²

18. For an additional example, see W. Johnstone, *1 Chronicles – 2 Chronicles 9: Israel's Place among the Nations* (JSOTSup 253; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 78.

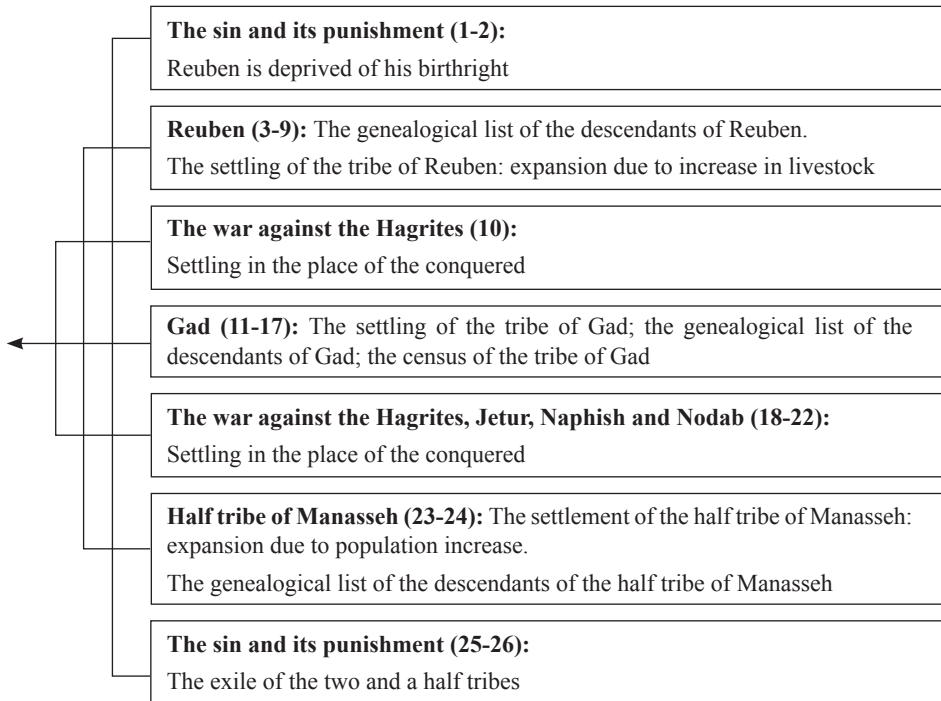
19. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, p.140.

20. See Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, p. 85.

21. See B.E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 66-67.

22. See also 2 Chr. 21.16.

All the units of the story form a chiasmic structure:



The story begins with the sin and punishment of Reuben and ends with the sin and punishment of the two and a half tribes. Both punishments constitute a kind of deprivation: Reuben is deprived of his birthright, which is now bestowed upon Judah, and the territories of the two and a half tribes are violently taken from them by the king of Assyria.

Afterward, the Chronicler deals with the genealogical list and settlement of the tribe of Reuben, on the one hand, and with the genealogical list and settlement of half the tribe of Manasseh, on the other hand. In both cases, an increase is mentioned: the increase in livestock of Reuben and the growth in population of half the tribe of Manasseh ('they increased in the land of'; 'they increased'). It is likely that this increase also caused territorial expansion.

The war against the Hagrites appears twice in the story, in parallel locations. The two descriptions are not equal in length (the character of the participants is different), but their outcome is identical: 'and they occupied their tents'; 'and they settled in their place'.²³

23. The most common opinion among scholars is that these descriptions refer to the one and same war. Avishur, is of the opinion that they refer to two different wars that took place at different times. See Avishur, 'Literary fictions', p. 12*.

The center of the chiasmic structure is occupied by the unit dealing with the tribe of Gad.²⁴ The most interesting detail in this unit is the synchronic reference to Jotham the king of Judah and Jeroboam the king of Israel. Some scholars, relying especially on 2 Kgs. 15.32, hold that these two kings did not rule at the same time,²⁵ while others are of the opinion that the reigns of these two kings did indeed overlap, although for a short span of time.²⁶ Nevertheless, the question arises whether this synchronic reference serves some kind of purpose. It is possible that the Chronicler hints at the fact that during the reigns of these two kings the territories of the land were expanded northward and eastward. According to the book of Kings, Jeroboam the king of Israel 'was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea' (2 Kgs. 14.25). The book of Chronicles relates that Jotham the king of Judah defeated the Ammonites (2 Chr. 27.5). It is possible that the conquests of Jeroboam and Jotham caused the tribe of Gad to settle also in the Northern Gilead and the Bashan. In other words, the synchronic reference to Jotham and Jeroboam may hint at the territorial expansion of the tribe of Gad. If we indeed interpret the synchronic reference in this manner, then it turns out that references to expansion are found in all of the story's first four units:²⁷

- 'Since their livestock increased in the land of Gilead' (5.9).
- 'And they occupied the tents of the Hagarites throughout the entire region east of Gilead' (5.10).
- 'All of these were enrolled by genealogies in the days of King Jotham of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam of Israel' (5.17).
- 'Because the war was of God. And they lived in their territory until the exile' (5.22).
- 'They multiplied from Bashan to Baal Hermon, and to Senir and Mount Hermon' (5.23).

Against the background of this general orientation, the fifth unit comes as a surprise. The recurring descriptions of expansion are now suddenly replaced by the diametrically opposed description of these two and a half tribes being uprooted from their settlements, which they had expanded over the years.

Although the description of exile with which the story concludes at once overturns the idyllic picture, it is important to notice that the two references to this exile have already appeared earlier on in the story. As a matter of fact, the first reference to the

24. Most scholars view the war against the Hagarites as the center of the chapter, where the Chronicler for the first time reveals his views and attitudes towards war in an orderly fashion. The assumption that the lists of the descendants of Gad specifically are in the center is rather surprising. Cf. Avishur, *ibid.* p.13*, who also posited a structure with Gad in the center.

25. See J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: Reimer, 1883), p. 222, and cf. also the chronological dating of Thiele: E.R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapid: Kregel Academic, 1983), p. 117.

26. Knoppers holds that their reigns overlapped for four years, between the years 750-746 BCE. See Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, p. 388. According to the chronology of Galil, it is possible that the overlap lasted even longer than that, for seven or eight years, see G. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel & Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 147.

27. See Sparks, *The Chronicler's Genealogies*, pp. 165-166.

exile appears before the description of the expansion of the tribe of Reuben, meaning that this description and the reference to the exile are meant to be read together. Hence, a delicate balance is in effect created between the many descriptions of the tribes' territorial expansions and the references to the exile. The purpose of this balance is to convey the message that although the territories in Transjordan have been expanded, these expansions are only temporary. In this way, the Chronicler promotes two opposite orientations at one and the same time. On the one hand, he repeatedly emphasizes that all of the two and a half tribes expanded their territories in Transjordan, but on the other hand he balances this emphasis by referring to their deportation from the places where they had settled.

This raises the question as to the purposes of the Chronicler for doing this. Why did he desire to create such a balance especially in his description of the two and a half tribes? It seems to me that in order to answer this question it is necessary to explore the way these two and a half tribes are described in the books of Numbers and Joshua.

4. The two and a half tribes: Numbers 32; Joshua 22

The expanded version of the story about the two and a half tribes appears twice in the Bible. The primary story is found in Numbers 32, and its continuation in Joshua 22.²⁸ Zakovitch has already shown that the stories in effect parallel each other.²⁹

| Numbers 32 | Joshua 22 |
|---|---|
| Eleazar and the Princes head the people (v. 2) | Phinehas son of Eleazar and the princes head the people (v. 13 ff.) |
| The tribes desire to separate from the rest of the tribes (v. 10 ff.) | The erection of the altar creates the impression that they desire to separate from the rest of the tribes (v. 10 ff.) |
| The request of the tribes to remain on the other side of the Jordan River arouses the anger of Moses (vv. 6-15) | The erection of the altar arouses the anger of the people (vv. 15-20) |
| A reference to the sins of the past: the sin of the spies (vv. 8-15) | A reference to the sins of the past: the sins of Pe'or and Achan (vv. 17, 20) |
| The tribes express readiness to assist the people (vv. 15-19) | The altar does not express separation, rather it expresses the contrary (vv. 21-29) |
| Their explanations are readily accepted (vv. 20-24) | Their explanations are readily accepted (vv. 30-33) |

28. See also the reference to this issue in Josh. 1.12-18; 13.8-32. The stories about the two and a half tribes in the books of Numbers and Joshua contain, most probably, more than one layer of editing. Generally, scholars agree that the two stories contain a priestly layer of editing alongside additional layers: in Joshua – Deuteronomistic layers, and in Numbers – more ancient layers (E and J). See J.S. Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), pp. 141-150.

29. Y. Zakovitch, *Joshua* (O'lam Ha'Tanach; Tel Aviv: Revivim 2000), p. 200 (Hebrew). For another comparison between the two stories, see P. Pitkänen, *A Commentary on Numbers: Narrative, Ritual and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 190.

Despite the apparent similarities between the two stories, the story in Joshua seems to reflect a generally more stringent attitude toward the two and a half tribes than the story in Numbers:

- In the book of Numbers, the request of the tribes arouses the anger of Moses only, while in the book of Joshua, the erection of the altar arouses the anger of the entire people.
- In the book of Joshua, the reaction of the people to the altar built by the tribes was no less than a willingness to wage war: 'The whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them' (v. 12).
- In the book of Joshua, the root מֵעַל appears no less than seven times, expressing the severity of the treason committed by the two and a half tribes.
- In addition, the root מֵרֵד ('to rebel') appears five times.
- As opposed to the story in Numbers, which mentions only a single sin of the past (the sin of the spies), in Joshua the people mention two sins of the past, the sin of Pe'or (Numbers 25) and the sin of Achan (Joshua 7).
- The story in Numbers concludes with Moses himself distributing inheritances to the two and a half tribes in Transjordan, while in Joshua the story concludes with the fact that the people did not wage war on the tribes, a conclusion which does not teach anything about the animosity that may have remained between the tribes after the issue had been settled.
- Additional harsh expressions in Joshua such as 'the land of your possession has become defiled' (v. 19) strengthen the impression of the criticism leveled against the two and a half tribes.

What was the Chronicler's attitude toward the story about the two and a half tribes? Did he view their settlement outside the borders of the land favorably? Or did he perhaps find the fact that they detached themselves from their brethren in the land worthy of condemnation, despite the fact that they acceded to the request of Moses to enter the battle before the people and also kept this promise? Which version of the story had the deepest influence on him, the one in Numbers or the one in Joshua?

The Chronicler presents the dwelling of the two and a half tribes in Transjordan as a given fact without providing details about how they arrived there in the first place.³⁰ Does this not show that he viewed their presence in Transjordan favorably? Moreover, it seems that in his eyes this situation was so desirable that he was meticulous to describe, in each of the story's units, how these two and a half tribes expanded and how they succeeded in their war against the Hagarites until they settled in their place.

30. Knoppers prepared a list in which he counts the various biblical sources relating to the two and a half tribes, sources to which we have not even alluded. See Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, p. 393. Japhet holds that the Chronicler purposefully ignored certain events of the past, such as the conquest and settling of the land, in order to create a direct and continuous line between Jacob and his sons and between the period of David, without even hinting that important historical events took place in the intermediate period, such as the emigration to Egypt, the exodus, the return to the land of Israel and the settling there. See S. Japhet, 'Conquest and Settlement in Chronicles', *JBL* 98 (1979), pp. 205-218. Japhet's study completely ignores the settling of the two and a half tribes in Transjordan.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the story about the tribe of Reuben, the Chronicler interweaves a clause about the increase in livestock: ‘Because their livestock multiplied in the land of Gilead’. This clause seems to be a paraphrase of the opening clause of the story about the tribes in the book of Numbers: ‘Now the people of Reuben and the people of Gad had a very great number of livestock’ (Num. 32.1). Also the titles ‘heads of their father’s house’ and ‘prince’ found in our story (vv. 6, 12, 24) match the two versions of the story in Numbers (32.2) and Joshua (22.14). The Chronicler emphasizes twice that the two and a half tribes were ‘experienced in warfare’ and heroes, men of valor (vv. 18, 24). This special emphasis possibly echoes the promise of these tribes to pass before the camp and fight together with their brethren.³¹ Finally, the fact that the Chronicler adjoined the genealogical list of Kehat, which mentions Eleazar and Phinehas, to the unit of the two and a half tribes may allude to the role of these two priests in the two stories (Num. 32.2; Josh. 22.13).

All these hints and allusions seemingly lead to the conclusion that the Chronicler purposefully created a connection between our story and the two stories about the two and a half tribes, and even more so that he desired to express his approval of their settlement in Transjordan. There is no apparent reason why he shouldn’t approve of this settlement, since both versions of the story, in Numbers and in Joshua, conclude with the solving of the dispute and the approval of the settlement in Transjordan. This is why the Chronicler seizes every opportunity to relate how these tribes expanded on the eastern side of the Jordan River—numerically, economically, and territorially.

It should be stressed, in this context, that our conclusions rely on the assumption that the Chronicler was well acquainted with the two stories about the two and a half tribes. Apart from his comment on the increase in livestock, which resembles the exposition to the story in Numbers, there is a clause in the genealogical list of Judah which seems to have been taken from Joshua 22. While murmuring about the erection of the altar, the people mention the sin of Achan:

הָלוֹא עָכָו בֶּן-זֶרַח מְעַל מְעַל בַּחֶרֶם

‘Did not Achan the son of Zerah act unfaithfully in the things under the ban’ (Josh. 22.20).

A close formulation appears in the genealogical lists of Judah:

עֶבֶר עֹזֵבֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מְעַל בַּחֶרֶם

‘Achar, who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban on taking devoted things’. (1 Chr. 2.7)³²

31. The book contains additional references to the courage of the two and a half tribes. See for example 1 Chr. 12.15-16, 38. Some of these expressions are rather unusual, see for example *ibid.* 9.

32. The name Achar is also found in the Septuagint (B) and in the *Peshitta* on the book of Joshua. It is possible that the use of Achar instead of Achan alludes to the hidden meaning of the name, and it is also possible that this was the name found in the Chronicler’s source. See Brown, 1 *Chronicles*, p. 29; Klein, 1 *Chronicles*, p. 93; Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9*, p. 297. On the meaning of the reference to the sin of Achan, Er, and Saul, see N. Klein, ‘Between Genealogy and Historiography: Er, Achar and Saul in the Book of Chronicles’, *VT* 66 (2016), pp. 217-244.

Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the Chronicler was influenced by the formulation in Joshua 22.³³

However, there is an important detail which overturns the impression of the Chronicler's positive attitude toward the two and a half tribes. As shown above, the root ל"מ"ע appears no less than seven times in the story in Joshua with reference to the erection of the altar, which constitutes a *leitmotiv* in the story. Moreover, in our story, the two and a half tribes are accused of unfaithfulness: 'They were unfaithful to the God of their fathers', and this is in effect what caused their deportation. Does this mean that the Chronicler once again creates a connection between the two stories but this time in a negative manner?

Although one may argue that the frequent use of the root ל"מ"ע does not teach anything since this is one of the book's general features, it is still possible that alongside the ordinary use of this root in the book as a grave expression of sin, here it also takes on the meaning of treason (see Num. 5.12), as it clearly does in Joshua 22.

This 'negative' reading is supported by the three references to exile found throughout the story. The expansion of the two and a half tribes is, as we have seen, only temporary. The perception of this settlement as being only temporary may stem from the basic assumption that any settlement outside the borders of the land, in what the people call 'the impure land' (Josh. 22.19), is viewed as an expression of unfaithfulness—that is, treason—the gravity of which cannot be eradicated even by providing military assistance to the people.³⁴

Moreover, the story about the tribe of Simeon and the story about the two and a half tribes are, as shown above, closely connected. In both stories, the Chronicler makes unique use of the expression 'until this day' in the genealogical lists. But the two appearances of the expression are found in completely different contexts. This expression occurs twice in connection with the tribe of Simeon—after the war against Ham and after the war against Amalek: 'And they destroyed them until this day and settled in their place' (1 Chr. 4.41); 'and they have lived there until this day' (ibid. 43).³⁵ In the story

33. Auld discussed the connection between the descriptions of the episode of Achan in Chronicles and Joshua, but for some reason he did not include the quote from Josh 22.20 in his discussion, see A.G. Auld, *Joshua Retold: Synoptic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), pp. 113-114.

34. Certain scholars attribute this outlook to the priestly worldview (especially the Shiloh circle). They hold that the land of Israel that was given to the people of Israel includes those regions that had previously been under Canaanite rule and Egyptian protection. Albertz, for example, holds that Josh. 22.7-34 belongs with certainty to the priestly source; see R. Albertz, 'The Canonical Alignment of the Book of Joshua', in R. Albertz et al. (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 289, 298-299, and see above, n. 28. Another view regarding the status of the territories east of the Jordan River is expressed by the book of Deuteronomy, which considers the borders of the land to stretch "from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea" (Deut. 11.24). See for example M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* (Olam HaTanach Series; Revivim: Tel Aviv, 2002), pp. 186-187.

35. See for example M. Augustin. 'The Role of Simeon in the Book of Chronicles and in Jewish Writings of the Hellenistic-Roman Period', *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 16-24, 1989* (Vol. 2; Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1990), pp. 141-142.

about the two and a half tribes, however, the expression appears in the context of exile: ‘He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan, where they are until this day’. This teaches that the tribe of Simeon lived for a long time on the inheritances they conquered, while the two and a half tribes lived for a long time in the exile that replaced their inheritances, as testified by the Chronicler: ‘And they settled in their place until the exile’ (5.22). Hence, the very close connection between the two chapters takes a sharp turn, and it seems that all these connections serve a single purpose—to contrast the continuous dwelling of the tribe of Simeon with the transient dwelling of the two and a half tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan River and their continuous living in exile.

Finally, Knoppers holds that our story reflects a positive attitude toward the two and a half tribes. In his opinion, the fact that these tribes were exiled due to their unfaithfulness does not necessarily diminish the positive attitude toward them, just like the exile of the kingdom of Judah did not diminish the Chronicler’s positive evaluation of it.³⁶

In addition, according to Knoppers,

The authors of Chronicles do not share the sentiment of earlier biblical writers, who distance the Transjordanian tribes from the rest of the Israelite tribes by reference to dialect, polity and religious practice. Quite the contrary, the two and a half tribes exhibit polities similar to those described for other tribes.³⁷

I do not agree with Knoppers. Sarah Japhet has examined the significant difference between the exile of the two and a half tribes and the exile of the kingdom of Israel as reflected in 2 Chr. 30.6-9. In her opinion, the conclusion ‘until this day’ with reference to the exile of the two and a half tribes expresses a complete and irreversible exile. On the contrary, the exile of the kingdom of Israel west of the Jordan River was temporary and did not include the entire population, as can be learned from the verses that report the speech of the emissaries of Hezekiah to the remnants from the exile of Israel.³⁸ Thus, the fact of the exile being temporary is expressed in connection with the exiles of both Judah and Israel.

Albertz, in his book on the exile, has discussed the significant differences between the view of exile found in the book of Chronicles and the one found in the book of Kings. According to the book of Kings, the exile of Israel is final and absolute: ‘So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day’ (2 Kgs. 17.23), and the exile of Judah is described as the (temporary) end of Israelite history.

According to Albertz,

The summary in 25:21b reads: ‘So Judah went into exile out of its land’. In other words, the exile spelled the end of everything. It marked the loss of everything that had made Israel and Judah what they were: the land, the capital, the temple, the monarchy. Through his absolute judgment, Yahweh had brought Israel and Judah to naught . . . In this theological conception, there could be no further history of Israel without land, temple, and king; in the account of

36. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, p. 398.

37. *Ibid.* pp. 399-400.

38. Although Japhet pointed out the differences, she does not explain why the Chronicler acted this way; why did he change the facts that he found in his source and describe precisely the exile of the two and a half tribes as a long and complete exile, and not the exile of Sargon II (2 Kgs. 17.6)?

the books of Kings, therefore, the history of Israel ceases with the exile. The exile is God's absolute judgment, the annulment of all that once constituted Israel; it could be mourned but not described. Yahweh had removed Israel and Judah out of his sight (2 Kgs. 17.23; 23.27; 24.20); there was no sense to be made of any subsequent history

In contrast, the book of Chronicles views exile differently: exile does not express finality but only an interruption lasting for 70 years, like the Sabbatical year that occurs once every seven years:

He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. (2 Chr. 36.20-21)³⁹

Albertz holds that the Chronicler's description of the exile is based on the assumption that all of Judah was exiled to Babylon and the land remained desolate for 70 years until the declaration of Cyrus.⁴⁰ In this way, he wishes to convey the idea that after the nation has been found at its lowest point, its renewed national revival is possible only through the exile, that is to say, through those who will return from Babylon and rebuild the land under the rule of Cyrus.

A slightly different opinion is presented by Jonker. According to him,

2 Chronicles 36 is not an attempt to show that all or only some of the people went into Exile—it is rather about showing that the old divisions of the past have been restored by the Sabbath rest of the Exile, and that a New Israel emerged which had the opportunity of a fresh beginning under Persian rule.⁴¹

According to Jonker, everyone agrees about the need for a renewal in the wake of the exile under the rule of Persia, but this renewal depends not only on the returnees but also on those who remained in the land.

39. See R. Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Trans. by D. Green; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2003), pp. 8-15.

40. This is not the place to enter into two long and complex discussions: one of them concerns "the myth of the empty land", while the other concerns the question when the counting of these seventy years begins. On the first discussion, see H.M. Barstad, 'After the "Myth of the Empty Land": Major Challenges in the Study of Neo-Babylonian Judah', in O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), pp. 3-20. See also the article of Oded Bustenay in the same anthology, pp. 55-74. For a discussion of the second question, see M. Leuchter, 'Jeremiah's 70-Year Prophecy and the *lb kmy/ssk Atbash* Codes', *Biblica* 85 (2004), pp. 503-522. On the adoption of this period in biblical and post-biblical literature, see recently S.M. Bryan, 'The End of Exile: The Reception of Jeremiah's Prediction of Seventy-Year Exile', *JBL* 138 (2018), pp. 107-126.

41. L.C. Jonker, 'The Exile as Sabbath Rest: The Chronicler's Interpretation of the Exile', in B. Becking and D. Human (eds.), *Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa OTWSA/OTSSA, Pretoria August 2007* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 226.

In any event, it seems that the description of the exile of the two and a half tribes in our book is closer to the severe view of the exile of Israel and Judah reflected in the book of Kings, than to the more moderate view reflected in the book of Chronicles.⁴² What is the explanation for this incongruence?

It seems to me that in our story the Chronicler adopts a complex position. On the one hand, and in light of his inclusive worldview that is characterized by the expression ‘all Israel’, he repeatedly mentions the expansion of the two and a half tribes in Transjordan and views any expansion achieved by the tribes of Israel as a positive phenomenon.⁴³ But, on the other hand, he does not seem to have completely accepted the approach expressed by these tribes before Moses: ‘Let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Do not take us across the Jordan’ (Num. 32.5).

It is possible that the Chronicler adopts the uncompromising view of the Transjordan presented in Ezek. 47.18, according to which the Jordan River constitutes the eastern border of the land of Israel, and any territory east of it is not part of the land.⁴⁴ In the eyes of the Chronicler, the optimal reality of ‘all of Israel’ is best realized when everybody settles within the borders of the Promised Land. Although trespassing these borders, and all the more so being physically separated from the rest of the tribes, may sometimes bring about blessings such as conquest and expansion, it is in the end only a temporary blessing which is destined to disappear as quickly as it came.⁴⁵

42. I am not dealing here with the question of who was responsible for the exile, another question on which the book of Chronicles and the book of Kings are divided. The book of Kings attributes the exiles solely to the many sins of Manasseh, which made the cup overflow, while the Chronicler, who viewed retribution as something that is always meted out instantly, accused the last generation, the generation of Zedekiah. On the books of Kings, see B. Halpern, ‘Why Manasseh is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition’, *VT* 48 (1998), pp. 473-514; S. Lasine, ‘Manasseh as Villain and Scapegoat’, in J.C. Exum and D.J.A. Clines (eds.), *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 143; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 163-183; O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 279-280. On the book of Chronicles, see S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), p. 128; E. Ben Zvi, ‘Reading Chronicles and Reshaping the Memory of Manasseh’, in P. S. Evans and T. F. Williams (eds.), *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), pp. 121-140.

43. Many scholars have attributed the lengthiness of the description of the two and a half tribes to the Chronicler’s “all Israel” worldview. See for example S.L. McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), pp. 88-89; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, p. 171. Jonker holds that the “all Israel” worldview presented in our story is unique because it relates to tribes that in the time of the Chronicler were no more distinguishable as separate tribes. Through this approach, the Chronicler, in effect, “kills two birds with one stone”: on the one hand, he reminds the generation of the returnees to Zion about these tribes that had once been a part of the people; and on the other hand, people who in the distant past had had a certain connection to these tribes find comfort in the fact that they are mentioned by the author. See L.C. Jonker, *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles: Multi-levelled Identity Negotiation in Late Persian-Period Yehud* (FAT 106; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), p. 155. A similar position was presented by Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9*, p. 399.

44. See Y. Levin, *The Historical Geography of the Chronicler* (PhD Diss.; Bar Ilan University, 1999), p. 316 (Hebrew).

45. Cf. Ben-Zvi, “Toward A Sense of Balance”, p. 260, n. 40.

An expression of this view may be found in 1 Chr. 13. David sent a message to all ‘our brothers who remain in all the lands of Israel’ (13.2) to come to Jerusalem and bring back the Ark of the Covenant. Many indeed heeded this calling and came: ‘All Israel from the Shihor of Egypt to Lebo-hamath’ (13.5).⁴⁶ The borders of the land from the North to the South mentioned here do not even allude to the territory east of the Jordan River. Let us not forget that shortly before that, when the Chronicler counted those who came to enthrone David in Hebron (chapter 12), he also mentioned the two and a half tribes ‘on the other side of the Jordan River’ (12.38). But here, in chapter 13, only three verses later, he remains silent. To his mind, only those who live between the North and the South west of the Jordan River are in effect included in the definition ‘the lands of Israel’.

This complexity thus narrows down the inclusive outlook of the chronicler. Although he views the two and a half tribes as an integral part of ‘all of Israel’, he nevertheless insists that the optimal realization of this idea is achieved only within the borders of the Promised Land.⁴⁷

Thus, his outlook divides the people of Israel into three different classes: the kingdom of Judah, the kingdom of Israel, and the two and a half tribes. Both the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel will experience a national revival after the exile since they settled within the borders of the land, but the two and a half tribes are exiled in order never to return.

1 Chronicles 5 contains two allusions to these different classes:

- A parenthetical clause in the chapter’s opening verses mentions the status of Reuben before the sin (‘because he is the first-born’) and his status after the sin (‘his birthright has been given to Joseph’). After the sin of Reuben, a new hierarchy emerges within the tribes: Judah leads ‘because Judah was the strongest of his brothers’, and after him comes the sons of Joseph—‘and the birthright was given to Joseph’, while Reuben occupies a lower status than both of them.
- An additional allusion to these different classes seems to be found in the synchronic reference to Jotham the king of Judah and Jeroboam the king of Israel. The formulation of this synchronic reference is very reminiscent of the reference in 1 Chr. 9.1:

כלם התיחשו בימי יותם מלך יהודה ובימי רבעם מלך ישראל

‘All of them were registered in the genealogies during the reigns of Jotham the king of Judah and during the reigns of Jeroboam the king of Israel’. (1 Chr. 5.17)

וכל ישראל התיחשו והנם כתובים על ספר מלכי ישראל ויהודה הגלו לבבל במעלם

‘All Israel was registered in the genealogies that are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. But Judah was exiled to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness’. (1 Chr. 9.1)

46. On the unique expression “from the Shihor of Egypt” as well as the borders outlined here, see Japhet, ‘Conquest and Settlement in Chronicles’.

47. I do not agree with the words of Klein, *1 Chronicles*, p. 159 in this context: “for the Chronicler these two and one-half tribes – and perhaps their land – were part of Israel in the past and possibly would be so again”.

On the one hand, the tribe of Gad—and according to some, all of the two and a half tribes—is compared to the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. They are all included in the ideal of ‘all of Israel’. On the other hand, it is more than hinted at here that each class has a genealogy of its own: the genealogy of the two and a half tribes is mentioned in one verse, while the genealogy of Judah and Israel is described in another verse. This separation became final and permanent after the exile. Judah and Israel returned to the land, while the two and a half tribes remained in exile ‘until this day’.

It seems to me that this outlook is directly connected to the generation of the Chronicler. It is to be assumed that in the time of the Chronicler these two and a half tribes were already a distant memory. But the Chronicler nevertheless makes double use of them. He revives their memory in the context of wars against post-exilic enemies, and in this manner he promotes the general orientation of his book to praise all those who fight for their freedom.⁴⁸ And at the same time, he also remains faithful to his view that it is improper to settle outside the borders of the Promised Land, since this prevents the realization of the utopian reality of ‘all of Israel’.

A national revival must necessarily take place after the exile whether we accept the position of Albertz that it must come only through the returnees from Babylon, or the position of Jonker that the remnant is also obligated to restore the land and the ruined city. But how does one rebuild what has been destroyed? How does one restore the golden age of the unified kingdom? It seems that the repeated references to the exile in the context of the two and a half tribes contain two messages: one of them concerns those who remained in exile, while the other concerns those who are on their way to the province of Yehud or have already arrived there. Those in exile should keep in mind that although their dwelling there is momentarily prosperous, all prosperity is doomed to cease in the end. And those who leave the exile and come to settle in Yehud should keep in mind that they are obligated to settle within the borders of the Promised Land, since only this will ensure the renewed prosperity of the land after the great crisis of the exile and especially the continuity of its settlement—all this in order to give new meaning to the expression ‘all of Israel’.

5. Conclusion

Research on the attitude toward exile in Chronicles has mostly been limited to questions about its extent, time span, and the relations between its description in Chronicles and descriptions found in parallel literature (Kings, Jeremiah). According to the widespread opinion on these questions as formulated by Japhet, Jonker, and others, the Chronicler does not view exile as expressing finality, and he describes it mostly as being limited in time and extent. On this point, the reference to the exile of the two and a half tribes is significantly different. This exile is mentioned no less than three times in the genealogical lists dealing with them (1 Chr. 5.1-26), and it seems that here the descriptions of the temporary exile are replaced by descriptions of an exile that is final and complete, as expressed through the recurring expression ‘until this day’. We

48. See I. Amar, ‘Saul and Josiah’s Deaths in Chronicles (1 Chr 10; 2 Chr 35.20-27)’, *Beit Mikra* 62 (2017), pp. 80-108 [Hebrew].

have shown that this is no coincidence. The Chronicler's inclusive outlook, expressed through the phrase 'all of Israel', also contains a restrictive aspect which limits this outlook to the territory of the Promised Land.

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