# A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 14

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## *INTRODUCTION*

It was after my conclusions from my last book, *Biblical Origins: An Adopted Legacy*, that I decided to venture off into further unknown territory and identify more details in the authoring of the Pentateuch. My original hypothesis successfully challenged our current understanding of the Documentary Hypothesis by helping to redefine its dating and motives, specifically to the author we refer to as the Yahwist or **J**. All of my research pointed to a time of compilation during the reign of Hezekiah in a timeframe of 701 BCE to the end of Hezekiah's reign in 687 BCE; proposing that the scribe referred to as **J** belonged in the court of Hezekiah and wrote with specific agendas to not only show the history and establishment of the Israelite/ Judahite people but to also show their loyalty to the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. The research was separated into two partitions: one portion focused on the Yahwist's primeval stories of Genesis 2:4b-11:9; while the second researched the ancestral stories of **J** all the way to the establishment of United Monarchy, confirming all the finds of the first portion. I also indicated that **J** was nothing more than a redaction and not an original compilation, as originally identified. **J** worked off of the existing materials of the Elohist or **E** and the lore that circulated throughout the region during the time his writings were finally committed to written form.

With a clear idea of how **J** fit into the biblical scene, again, it was time that I started to focus on the unknown source we find in Genesis 14. What clues were left behind by the author to aid in our search for his origins? Genesis 14 offers a different form of literary style unparalleled throughout the rest of the Pentateuch, which made it extremely difficult for it to be identified by any other source: **E**, **J**, **P** (the Priestly), **D** (Dueteronomist), and **R** (the final Redactor). The narrative of Genesis 14 is also thrown in the middle of the Avraham cycle[1] text without the use of a smooth transition. It was as if right before the final compilation, the author felt it necessary to squeeze his text in whether it belonged or not. Many clues within Genesis 14 pop out attesting to its origin not belonging within the Pentateuch. Such clues are described below.

The first of which was the Rephaim. It is very difficult to speak of the Rephaim because very little literature surrounds them. We find them in the Old Testament Bible to even the cuneiform texts found at Ugarit. Who are these Rephaim? Tradition has held that they were a race of giants to whom descendants had been found by the time of Joshua's Conquest[2] and David's slaying of

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[1] I will be referring to Abram/ Abraham as Avram/ Avraham throughout this article to preserve the original pronunciation of the name.

[2] King Og of Bashan.

Goliath. But the most confusing texts regarding the Rephaim relate to their disappearance from the planet:[3]

> And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim…
>
> *Genesis 14:5*

> That also is accounted a land of Rephaim: Rephaim dwelt therein aforetime; but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim; but YHWH destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead;
>
> *Deuteronomy 2:20-21*

> …all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei--the same was left of the remnant of the Rephaim—for these did Moses smite, and drove them out.
>
> *Joshua 13:12*

This brings up a lot of questions. The nation of the Rephaim was literally wiped off of the planet under three separate hands. (1) Chedorlaomer swept through the land expanding his rule, (2) YHWH needed to make room for the sons of Ammon (**D**), and (3) Moses smote them (**J**). Oddly enough, the confrontation with Moses is never recorded during the Exodus of the Israelites. Whoever wrote this narrative obviously did not pay attention to the other existing stories surrounding the disappearance of the Rephaim.

Another clue is the use of the tetragrammaton or the four letters that make up the divine name for the Judaic God, YHWH. Under **J** man began to invoke the name YHWH as early as Genesis 4:26b, while under **E** it was first revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:15. We now have the case where Avram himself invokes the name YHWH in Genesis 14:22, which is contradicted in Exodus 3:15:[4]

> And God said moreover unto Moses: 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.

**P** confirms **E**'s revealing of the divine name in Exodus 6:3:[5]

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[3] JPS translation.

[4] JPS translation.

[5] JPS translation.

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name YHWH I made Me not known to them.

Since the literary style of Genesis 14 does not relate to any of the other sources, and also does a terrible job of trying to fit into the Avraham cycle, at this point it may be fair to assume that this narrative came much later in Israelite/ Judahite literature and was squeezed into the Pentateuch either just before or during **R** and his redacting process. There is also a possibility that it could have been added much later after the Pentateuch's compilation during a scribal rewriting of the biblical books of Moses.

It is generally believed that the final editor or **R** of the Pentateuch could have been Ezra, right after the resettlement of the Jews back into Judah following the period of Babylonian captivity. Ezra was a priestly scribe who is believed to have led about 5,000 Judahite exiles living in Babylon back to Jerusalem ca. 459 BCE. Many biblical scholars also credit him as the author of both books of Chronicles, the Book of Ezra and possibly even the Book of Nehemiah. I propose a date of compilation for Genesis 14 and its addition into the Hebrew Torah at around the same period in history as Ezra, directing all authorship to a scribe whose works are seen in other Old Testament literature.

This article is broken into four sections: (1) The first covers the translation of the Masoretic version of Genesis 14. The idea for the structure of this section came from a good friend and fellow scholar, Jeff A. Benner.[6] He used the same or similar style in his mechanical translations of the Hebrew Torah. This structure lists the Masoretic Hebrew verse preserving its Tiberian Hebrew form. Underneath the Hebrew text is a more literal translation of the Hebrew text (left) followed by an interpreted translation (right); all translations and interpretation being in my words. I will cite otherwise. The reason why this structure is being used is because Hebrew is not a literal language that can translate properly and therefore needs to be interpreted appropriately to those not familiar with Hebrew understanding. (2) The second section covers a comparative analysis between the Masoretic, Samaritan and Septuagintal versions of Genesis 14. The section ends with a restructuring of what the original text may have looked like when first written. (3) The third section focuses in on unique grammatical details found within Genesis 14. (4) And the research ends with conclusions on what we discovered concerning the author.

There has been much intrigue with Genesis 14 because it is the first case of a biblical battle concerning one of the biblical patriarchs. We see quite a different side to Avram/ Avraham, unlike his descriptions found in any of the other sources. We see Avram as not only the father of the Israelites but also as a military leader who organized an army and fought in a somewhat guerilla type warfare against the invaders from the east (and possibly north). Biblical and

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[6] Jeff A. Benner is a scholar and researcher of Hebrew Studies. You can visit his website at www.ancient-hebrew.org. Many thanks go to Jeff in aiding me with my proofreading of the Hebrew text and their translation.

historical scholars have also wanted to place this battle at a point in time attempting to identify the key characters mentioned in these verses. Who were Amrafel and Kedarlaomer? While I cover some details on these identifications and the foreign nations throughout the rest of this article, we are still left with no distinct and confirmed identity to each mentioned.

One last note to the reader and that is for further information concerning the Documentary Hypothesis it is suggested to read:

Friedman, Richards E. *The Bible with Sources Revealed*. 1st ed. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003.

Friedman, Richard E. *Who Wrote the Bible?*. 2nd ed. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.

Campbell, Antony F., and Mark A. O'brien. *Sources of the Pentateuch*. Minneapolis: Fortress P, 1993.

And as soon as it hits the shelves I would also like to recommend my book *Biblical Origins: An Adopted Legacy*; which holds my interpretation of **E** and **J**.

## THE "ORIGINAL" TEXT AND TRANSLATION

This excerpt of the entire Chapter 14 of the Book of Genesis is taken from the Masoretic Texts (hereafter, MT), specifically the Ben Chayim Tanakh, while right below each verse I provide both the literal and interpreted translation in my own words. Note that this translation will be used as a guideline for the rest of this research.

**14:1**      וַיְהִי בִּימֵי אַמְרָפֶל מֶלֶךְ־שִׁנְעָר אַרְיוֹךְ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּסָר כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם וְתִדְעָל
מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם:

And it was in [the] days [of] *'Amrāfel*, king [of] *Šĩn`ār*; *'Ar^eyôk*, king [of] *'Ellāsār*; *K^edārlā`ōmer*, king [of] *`Êlām*; and *Tĩd^e`āl*, king [of] *Gôyĩm*.

And it was in the days of Amrafel, the king of Shinar; Ariok, the king of Ellasar; Kedarlaomer, the king of Elam; and Tidal, the king of nations.[7]

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[7] *Gôyĩm* translates to 'nations' and is used as a proper noun in the Hebrew text. If this was Modern Hebrew, it would translate to 'king of Gentiles.' The definition may vary depending on what stage of compilation the verse in question was written under the Documentary Hypothesis. For example, the first time the singular form is used in reference to an Israelite is in Genesis 12:2 (written by **J**) when Avraham is promised by God to be given a "great nation." The same term on the other hand is applied to non-Semitic nations in Genesis 10:5; written by the later **P**. If a later date of compilation is given to Genesis 14, which I propose and attempt to prove throughout this entire book, then we are

עָשׂוּ מִלְחָמָה אֶת־בֶּרַע מֶלֶךְ סְדֹם וְאֶת־בִּרְשַׁע מֶלֶךְ עֲמֹרָה שִׁנְאָב מֶלֶךְ אַדְמָה
וְשֶׁמְאֵבֶר מֶלֶךְ צְבֹיִים וּמֶלֶךְ בֶּלַע הִיא־צֹעַר:

<sup>They</sup> made war [with] *Beraʿ*, king [of] *Sᵉdom*; and *Bīršaʿ*, king [of] *ʿĂmōrâ*; *Šīnʾāḇ*, king [of] *ʾAdmâ*; and *Šemʾēḇer*, king [of] *Sᵉḇōyîm*; and [the] king [of] *Belaʿ*, [that] is *Ṣōʿar*.

They made war with Bera, the king of Sodom; and Birsha, the king of Gomorrah; Shinab, the king of Admah; and Shemeber, the king of Tseboyim; and the king of Bela, that is Tsoar.

**14:3**

כָּל־אֵלֶּה חָבְרוּ אֶל־עֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים הוּא יָם הַמֶּלַח:

All these <sup>they</sup> united [ones] [went] towards [the] valley [of] the *Sīddîm*, that [is the] Sea [of] the Salt.

All these allies went towards the Siddim Valley, that is the Salt Sea.[8]

**14:4**

שְׁתֵּים עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה עָבְדוּ אֶת־כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר וּשְׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה מָרָדוּ:

Twelve year[s] <sup>they</sup> served *Kᵉḏārlāʿōmer* and [in the] thirteen[th] year <sup>they</sup> revolted.

Twelve years they served Kedarlaomer and in the thirteenth year they revolted.

**14:5**

וּבְאַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בָּא כְדָרְלָעֹמֶר וְהַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיַּכּוּ אֶת־רְפָאִים בְּעַשְׁתְּרֹת
קַרְנַיִם וְאֶת־הַזּוּזִים בְּהָם וְאֵת הָאֵימִים בְּשָׁוֵה קִרְיָתָיִם:

And in [the] fourteen[th] year came *Kᵉḏārlāʿōmer* and the kings which [were] with <sup>him</sup> and <sup>they</sup> killed [the] *Rᵉfāʾîm* in *ʿAšᵉttᵉrōṯ Qarnayîm* and the *Zûzîm* in *Hām* and the *ʾÊmîm* in *Šāwēh Qīryāṯāyîm*.

And in the fourteenth year came Kedarlaomer and the kings which were with him and they killed the Rephaim in Asheteroth Qarnayim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh Qiryathayim.

**14:6**

וְאֶת־הַחֹרִי בְּהַרְרָם שֵׂעִיר עַד אֵיל פָּארָן אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּדְבָּר:

And the *Ḥōrî* in <sup>their</sup> mount *Sēʿîr*, as far as *ʾÊl Pāʾrān*, which [is] towards the wilderness.

And the Khori[9] in their mount Seir, as far as El Paran, which is towards the wilderness.[10]

**14:7**

וַיָּשֻׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־עֵין מִשְׁפָּט הִוא קָדֵשׁ וַיַּכּוּ אֶת־כָּל־שְׂדֵה הָעֲמָלֵקִי וְגַם אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי
הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּחַצְצֹן תָּמָר:

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possibly looking at a ruler of a non-Levantine nation. We are most likely looking at a nation belonging to either Anatolia or somewhere in the Mediterranean.

[8] This is an older name for the Dead Sea.

[9] i.e. the Horites.

[10] i.e. the desert.

And <sup>they</sup> settled and <sup>they</sup> came to `*Ên Mišpāt* [that] is *Qādēš* and <sup>they</sup> killed all [in] plain [of] the `*Ămālēqî* and also the *'Ĕmōrî* the settlers in *Haṣᵉṣōn Tāmār*.

And they came to and settled at En Mishpat, that is Qadesh, and they killed all in the land of the Amaleqi[11] and also the Emori[12] who settled in Khatsetson Tamar.

**14:8** וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם וּמֶלֶךְ עֲמֹרָה וּמֶלֶךְ אַדְמָה וּמֶלֶךְ צְבֹיִים וּמֶלֶךְ בֶּלַע הִוא־צֹעַר וַיַּעַרְכוּ אִתָּם מִלְחָמָה בְּעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים:

And out [went the] king [of] *Sᵉdom* and [the] king [of] `*Ămōrâ* and [the] king [of] *'Admâ* and [the] king [of] *Sᵉbōyîm* and [the] king [of] *Bela`*, that [is] *Ṣō`ar*, and <sup>they</sup> prepared with <sup>them</sup> war in [the] valley [of] the *Sīddîm*.

And out went the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Tseboyim and the king of Bela, that is Tsoar, and they engaged in war with them in the Siddim Valley.

**14:9** אֵת כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם וְתִדְעָל מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם וְאַמְרָפֶל מֶלֶךְ שִׁנְעָר וְאַרְיוֹךְ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּסָר אַרְבָּעָה מְלָכִים אֶת־הַחֲמִשָּׁה:

*Kᵉdārlā`ōmer*, king [of] `*Êlām* and *Tīdᵉ`āl*, king [of] *Gôyīm* and *'Amrāfel*, king [of] *Šīn`ār* and *'Arᵉyôk*, king [of] *'Ellāsār* four kings [against] the five.

Kedarlaomer, the king of Elam and Tidal, the king of nations and Amrafel, the king of Shinar and Ariok, the king of Ellasar; four kings against five.

**14:10** וְעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים בֶּאֱרֹת בֶּאֱרֹת חֵמָר וַיָּנֻסוּ מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה וַיִּפְּלוּ־שָׁמָּה וְהַנִּשְׁאָרִים הֶרָה נָּסוּ:

And [the] valley [of] the *Sīddîm* in [with] springs [and] in [with] pits [of] slime, and <sup>they</sup> escaped [the] king[s] of *Sᵉdom* and `*Ămōrâ* and <sup>they</sup> fell[13] there and <sup>they</sup> [who] remained at [the] mountain escaped.

And the Siddim Valley contained within it springs and pits of slime and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah escaped and they fell there and those who remained at the mountain escaped.

**14:11** וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כָּל־רְכֻשׁ סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה וְאֶת־כָּל־אָכְלָם וַיֵּלֵכוּ:

And <sup>they</sup> took all possessions [of] *Sᵉdōm* and `*Ămōrâ* and all <sup>their</sup> food and <sup>they</sup> departed.

And they took all possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply and they departed.

**14:12** וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־לוֹט וְאֶת־רְכֻשׁוֹ בֶּן־אֲחִי אַבְרָם וַיֵּלֵכוּ וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב בִּסְדֹם:

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[11] i.e. the Amalekites.

[12] i.e. the Amorites.

[13] This comes from the Hebrew נפל (*nāphal*) which indicates that they have fallen in battle.

And <sup>they</sup> took *Lôt* and <sup>his</sup> possessions, son [of] brother [of] *'Avrām*, and <sup>they</sup> departed, and he settled in *S<sup>e</sup>dōm*.

And they took Lot, son of Avram's brother, who settled in Sodom and their[14] possessions and they departed.

**14:13** וַיָּבֹא הַפָּלִיט וַיַּגֵּד לְאַבְרָם הָעִבְרִי וְהוּא שֹׁכֵן בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא הָאֱמֹרִי אֲחִי אֶשְׁכֹּל וַאֲחִי עָנֵר וְהֵם בַּעֲלֵי בְרִית־אַבְרָם:

And <sup>he</sup> came the refugee and <sup>he</sup> told to *'Avrām* the Hebrew and he settled in [the] plains [of] *Mamrē'* the *Ěmōrî*, brother <sup>of</sup> *'Eškōl* and brother <sup>of</sup> *`Ānēr*, and they [are the] lords [of] a covenant [with] *'Avrām*.

And there came a refugee and told Avram the Hebrew who settled in the plains of Mamre the Emori[15], brother of Eshkol and brother of Aner, and these lords were in a covenant with Avram.

**14:14** וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו וַיָּרֶק אֶת־חֲנִיכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׁמֹנָה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וַיִּרְדֹּף עַד־דָּן:

And <sup>he</sup> listened *'Avrām* that captive [was] <sup>his</sup> brother, and empty [were] <sup>his</sup> instructed [servants], born [in] <sup>his</sup> house, eighteen and three hundred pursued [them] to Dan.

And Avram heard that his brother was captive, empty[16] were his instructed servants, who were born in his house, three hundred eighteen pursued them to Dan.[17]

**14:15** וַיֵּחָלֵק עֲלֵיהֶם לַיְלָה הוּא וַעֲבָדָיו וַיַּכֵּם וַיִּרְדְּפֵם עַד־חוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר מִשְּׂמֹאל לְדַמָּשֶׂק:

And <sup>he</sup> divided them [by] night that [is] <sup>his</sup> servants and <sup>he</sup> killed <sup>them</sup>, and <sup>he</sup> pursued <sup>them</sup> to *Ḥôvâ*, which [is] from [the] left to *Dammâseq*.

And he divided his servants by night and killed them, and he pursued them to Ḥovah, which is on the left of Damascus.

**14:16** וַיָּשֶׁב אֵת כָּל־הָרְכֻשׁ וְגַם אֶת־לוֹט אָחִיו וּרְכֻשׁוֹ הֵשִׁיב וְגַם אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת־הָעָם:

And <sup>he</sup> returned all the goods and also *Lôt*, <sup>his</sup> brother and <sup>his</sup> goods returned and also the women and the people.

And he returned all the goods and also returned his brother Lot and his goods, and also the women and the people.

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[14] Lot's possessions.

[15] i.e. the Amorite.

[16] The Hebrew word used here translates to 'empty.' I am unclear as to its usage. The JPS translation omits this word while the KJV replaces it with 'armed.' The LXX replaces this anomalous word with 'numbered'; as in *numbered were his servants*. Jeff A. Benner had given me a very logical interpretation which may apply in this case: "If you have a bag of marbles and your going to do battle with someone you have to 'empty' the bag to get the marbles out to attack. This is what Avram did with his men; he emptied them out of his camp."

[17] This goes against Mosaic authorship. The mention of territory belonging to an Israelite nation prior to its settlement in the Promised Land would not have been known to Moses.

**14:17** וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם לִקְרָאתוֹ אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבוֹ מֵהַכּוֹת אֶת־כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר וְאֶת־הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ אֶל־עֵמֶק שָׁוֵה הוּא עֵמֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ:

And <sup>he</sup> came out [the] king [of] *S<sup>e</sup>dōm* to meet <sup>him</sup> after [their] return from the killing [of] *K<sup>e</sup>dārlā`ōmer* and the kings which [were] with him in [the] valley [of] Šāvēh, that [is the] valley [of] the king.

And the king of Sodom[18] came out to meet them after their return from killing Kedarlaomer and the kings which were with him in the Valley of Shaveh, that is the Valley of the King.

**14:18** וּמַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם הוֹצִיא לֶחֶם וָיָיִן וְהוּא כֹהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן:

And *Mal<sup>e</sup>kî-Sedeq*, king [of] *Šālēm*, brought out bread and wine and he [was a] priest to *'Ēl `Elyôn*.

And Maleki-Tsedeq, king of Peace[19], brought out bread and wine and he was a priest to El the Most High.

**14:19** וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמַר בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

And <sup>he</sup> blessed <sup>him</sup>, and <sup>he</sup> said blessed [be] *'Avrām* to *Ēl `Elyôn*, possessor [of] heaven and earth.

And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Avram of El the Most High, who possesses heaven and earth.

**14:20** וּבָרוּךְ אֵל עֶלְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר־מִגֵּן צָרֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ מַעֲשֵׂר מִכֹּל:

And blessed [is] *Ēl `Elyôn* which delivered <sup>your</sup> enemies in <sup>your</sup> hand and <sup>he</sup> gave him [a] tithe from all.

And blessed is El the Most High which delivered your enemies in your hand and he gave him a tithe from all.

**14:21** וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם אֶל־אַבְרָם תֶּן־לִי הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְהָרְכֻשׁ קַח־לָךְ:

And <sup>he</sup> said [the] king [of] *S<sup>e</sup>dōm* to *'Avrām*, give me the people and the goods take you.

And the king of Sodom said to Avram, Give me the people and you take the goods.

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[18] This would have been a new king to Sodom. Reference the death of the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah in Genesis 14:10.

[19] This is an interesting piece because here we have the Hebrew word for 'peace' used as a proper noun. This usage could be similar to the previous footnote on *Gôyīm* with it too being used as a proper noun where in reality these locations are not necessarily meant to be taken literally. They were used to tell a story about a Patriarch. Some scholars have taken this to mean Jerusalem, placing Maleki-Tsedeq as the king of Jerusalem but let us also not forget that despite what the archaeological record shows that until Joshua's conquest Jerusalem was known as Jebus, home of the Jebusites. On the other hand the archaeological records, specifically the El Amarna texts (EA 285-290) have revealed the existence of Jerusalem long before the conquest of Joshua.

**14:22** וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ סְדֹם הֲרִימֹתִי יָדִי אֶל־יְהוָה אֵל עֶלְיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

And [he] said *'Avrām* to [the] king [of] *Sᵉdōm* [I] raise [my] hand to YHWH, *Ēl `Elyôn*, possessor [of] heaven and earth.

And Avram said to the king of Sodom, I raise my hand to YHWH, El the Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.

**14:23** אִם־מִחוּט וְעַד שְׂרוֹךְ־נַעַל וְאִם־אֶקַּח מִכָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָךְ וְלֹא תֹאמַר אֲנִי הֶעֱשַׁרְתִּי אֶת־אַבְרָם:

Not [a] thread and to latchet [of a] sandal, and not [I] take from all which [is] yours and not you say I made wealthy *'Avrām*.

Not a thread and sandal latchet will I take, not from all which is yours and you will not say I made Avram wealthy.

**14:24** בִּלְעָדַי רַק אֲשֶׁר אָכְלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וְחֵלֶק הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָלְכוּ אִתִּי עָנֵר אֶשְׁכֹּל וּמַמְרֵא הֵם יִקְחוּ חֶלְקָם:

Besides only which [they] eat the young men and [the] portion [of] the men which [they] went with [me], *`Ānēr, 'Eškōl*, and *Mamrē'* they [they] take [their] portion.

Besides what the young men have eaten and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre, allow them to take their portion.

### COMPARATIVE AND ORTHOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

It is extremely necessary for us to shift our focus from the MT to the Samaritan Pentateuch (hereafter, SP) and the Greek Septuagint (hereafter, LXX). This helps to question and confirm any consistent or inconsistent text existing between all three translations. Some of these interesting inconsistencies are clearly seen in the MT with an attempt to omit and reconstruct words, which in a sense obscure some of the original meanings. To give some background into all these different versions would help the reader understand under what conditions each text came into existence and at what point in time each could have been altered and evolved. The MT is the Hebrew text of the Tanakh approved for general use in Judaism and is also widely used in translations of the Old Testament. This standard was originally compiled, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes approximately between the 7th and 10th centuries CE. Much of the work done by the Masoretes relies upon oral tradition and differences are seen with the MT when compared to earlier sources such as the Greek, Samaritan and Aramaic[20] translations of biblical scripture; as seen above and below. Tradition holds that the SP comes to us from the Abisha Scroll purported to be written by Aaron's son but this obviously cannot be substantiated. With grammatical and historical analysis (even with the Documentary Hypothesis in mind) the Samaritan Pentateuch is generally believed to have been compiled ca. 400 BCE. As

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[20] This is in reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumrân.

for the LXX, it is the first translation of the Hebrew text into Greek believed to have occurred around the 3rd centuries BCE in Alexandria, Egypt; during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (ca. 285-246 BCE). At this point in history during the Hellenistic Period of the Near East, Hebrew and Aramaic were becoming very rarely used languages; Greek being the more common. The everyday citizen needed to speak the now universal Greek language in order to live a normal life and it came to pass that a Greek translation was created to have these Greek speaking Jews continue to maintain their faith.

A great example of some differences between all translations would be from Genesis 14:19 where we read how Maleki-Tsedeq blessed Avram. Both the SP and the LXX seem to agree in a different word usage to accomplish the same end result. Instead of the MT:

וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ

And <sup>he</sup> blessed <sup>him</sup>

The SP reads:

ויברך את אברם

And <sup>he</sup> blessed Avram

While the LXX agrees:

Καὶ εὐλόγησε τὸν Ἀβραμ
And <sup>he</sup> blessed Avram

It is the little things such as this which question the integrity of these copies of scripture over time. It would seem that the MT should be registering what the SP holds. It would also seem that this change occurred sometime after the adoption and translation of the Hebrew Bible into the Greek LXX. I had even pointed an instance of this out in my previous book belonging to my Biblical Origins series, *Biblical Origins: An Adopted Legacy*, where orthographical analysis had revealed that a specific word found in Numbers 13:33 had been altered overtime adapting to the evolution of the *matres lectiones*. Below is an excerpt from that exact conclusion:[21]

In the MT, the word *n<sup>e</sup>philîm* is used twice in this verse, but oddly enough is spelled differently. Many have wondered what this could mean. In the first occurrence we find:

נפילים
NFYLYM

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[21] Reference pages 47-48.

The spelling comes with the *matres lectiones* throwing in an extra ׳ (*yôḏ*) to give us a proper pronunciation of the word *nef-ee-leem*. This is the only instance of this spelling found throughout the entire Old Testament. The second spelling holds (which is consistent with Genesis 6:4):

<div align="center">

נפלים

NFLYM

</div>

This is without the extra *yôḏ*. It is important to understand how these *matres lectiones* (or mother of words) work and Hebrew orthographical analysis to see the evolution of these *matres lectiones*. The purpose of the *matres lectiones* was to preserve the proper pronunciation of words in the consonant only Hebrew language. Specific characters are used to act as vowels. For example, a *yôḏ*, depending on the structure and form of the word can be used to indicate an 'ey' or 'ee' sound. In this case we see the 'ee' forming the second syllable's vowel. Orthographical analysis of the evolution of these *matres lectiones* show that the Israelite script, which evolved from the Phoenician, did not originally use their characters as vowel markers. We do not see this until the 9th century BCE in the surrounding regions.[22] Literary evidence seems to indicate that the role of the *matres lectiones* originated from regions to the south of Phoenicia and Israel, more specifically Moab, Ammon and Judah. Our earliest examples of it come from the Meša` Stela. Scholars studying Hebrew orthography in the Old Testament have noted attempts by many scribes, when copying texts over time, rewriting older words with newer spelling forms so that they may be able to preserve pronunciations for future readings. There have been cases where we have seen that scribes would overlook words to rewrite and it would seem that the verses containing the *n^ephilîm* were no exception. This is why we see a modified spelling in Numbers 13:33. Oddly enough all three occurrences of the *n^ephilîm* in the SP preserve only the latter form of spelling. This may hint at a revision of the spelling taking place during the post-Exilic period and after the Samaritan adoption of the Pentateuch; believed to have taken place ca. 400 BCE.

Taking in all of this does not mean that the SP is a truer translation. In fact, far from it. It too holds many inconsistencies between the MT and the LXX. Another good example can be found in Genesis 14:22, where we read of Avram raising his hand to YHWH, El the Most High. The MT reads:

<div align="center">

יהוה אֵל עֶלְיוֹן
YHWH, El [the] Most High

</div>

The LXX confirms this reading:

<div align="center">

Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν τὸν ὕψιστον

</div>

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[22] It is highly recommended to read the extensive research on Hebrew Orthography under the direction of Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman in their book *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of Epigraphic Evidence.*

[the] Lord the God [of] the Most High

While in the SP YHWH is replaced with Elohim:

האלהים אל עליון
the God, God [the] Most High

    Some interesting things to know about these translations are that it shows a lot of inconsistencies within the old Hebrew and later Greek texts. The other differences between all three versions rest on the omission and addition of a few words while the remaining differences are just an evolution in Hebrew Orthography (seen only in both the MT and SP).

    A third example of inconsistencies would be that according to the Bible (actually **E** and **P**), God's name was not revealed to anyone else until Moses came into the scene; but we read in Genesis 4:26b under **J** that:

…then began men to call upon the name of YHWH.

While both the MT and LXX introduce another anomaly whereas Avram himself invokes the name of YHWH. The Samaritans, seeing this contradiction seemed to have revised the original text and help minimize the questioning against their sacred Torah. Now the Greek noun identified as Κύριος translates to 'Lord' and is shown with multiple spelling variations within the Greek texts: Κύριος, Κυρίω, Κύριον, Κυρίου, and Κύριε. In the Greek language, a noun must agree with its grammatical function in a sentence. To achieve this you address the suffix with variations of spelling. Note that this all stems from the same root of Κύριος.

    Now taking all of this in, a simple reconstruction can be attempted to observe what an original version may have held. I will be highlighting some of the questionable restorations most of which will consist of spelling variations and the assumed orthography held within the proposed timeframe of this chapter.

| | |
|---|---|
| 14:1 | ויהי בימי אמרפל מלך שנער אריוך מלך אלסר כדרלעמר מלך עילם ותדעל מלך גוים: |
| 14:2 | עשׂו מלחמה את ברע מלך סדם ואת ברשע מלך עמרה שנאב מלך אדמה ושמאבר מלך צביים ומלך בלע היא צער: |
| 14:3 | כל אלה חברו אל עמק השׂדים הוא ים המלח: |
| 14:4 | שתים עשׂרה שנה עבדו את כדרלעמר ושלשׁ עשׂרה שנד מרדו: |

| 14:5 | ובארבע עשרה שנה בא כדרלעמר והמלכים אשר אתו ויכו את ²³הרפאים בעשׁתרת קרנים ואת הזוזים בהם ואת האימים ²⁴בשׁוה קריתים: |
|---|---|
| 14:6 | ואת החרי ²⁵בהררי שׂעיר עד איל פארן אשר על המדבר: |
| 14:7 | וישבו ויבאו אל עין משפט הוא קדש ויכו את כל שדה העמלקי וגם את האמרי הישׁב בחצצן תמר: |
| 14:8 | ויצא מלך סדם ומלך עמרה ומלך אדמה ומלך צביים ומלך בלע הוא צער ויערכו אתם מלחמה בעמק השׂדים: |
| 14:9 | את כדרלעמר מלך עילם ותדעל מלך גוים ואמרפל מלך שנער ואריוך מלך אלסר ארבעה מלכים את החמשׁה: |
| 14:10 | ועמק השׂדים בארת בארת החמר וינסו מלך סדם ²⁷ומלך ²⁶עמרה ויפלו שׁמה והנשׁארים הרה נסו: |
| 14:11 | ויקחו את כל רכשׁ סדם וצמרה ואת כל אכלם וילכו: |
| 14:12 | ויקחו את לוט ואת רכשׁו בן אחי אברם וילכו והוא ישׁב בסדם: |
| 14:13 | ויבא הפליט ויגד לאברם העברי והוא שׁכן באלני מרא האמרי אחי אשׁכל ואחי ענר והם בעלי ברית אברם: |
| 14:14 | וישׁמע אברם כי נשׁבה אחיו ²⁸וירק את חניכיו ילידי ביתו שׁמנה עשׂר ושׁלשׁ |

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²³ A Hebrew ה was placed here to follow the original scheme of the list. This scheme is also paralleled with the appropriate ה in the SP, which is also confirmed in the LXX.

²⁴ The SP holds an interesting form to the spelling of Shaveh: שׁבי. This spelling is unfortunately not confirmed anywhere else in the MT literature. It is unique only to the SP. The LXX agrees with the MT form. That is the Greek writes: Σαυή and not Σαβέ or Σαβή. It is very apparent in the LXX that in transliteration the Hebrew ו transliterated to the Greek υ and not the Greek β. Usually the Hebrew ב transliterated to the Greek β. Now what makes this more interesting is that when the Greek υ is combined with an α or an ε such as in αυ or ευ, we get a 'v' sound. This would give us a pronunciation of 'Savi' to the Septuagintal rendering of Shaveh.

²⁵ This can be argued but to me it makes more literal sense for this noun to take on this form with an ending suffix of י holding an 'ey' vocalization; showing the mounts belonging to Seir. This form is seen in the SP. Thankfully pointed out by Jeff A. Benner, there are similarities between an ancient written final *mēm* and *rêš-yôd*, and if a scribe were a little careless one could be mistaken for the other.

²⁶ The Hebrew ו needed to be taken out here to give more literal sense to the phrase. When the MT decided to omit ומלך they had to add the extra ו for an easy transition into the focus of the king of Gomorrah.

²⁷ ומלך was added here because both the SP and LXX hold this translation. It also follows the scheme present here: *the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah…*; this scheme is also present in the opening of verse 14:8.

²⁸ Reference my translation of this word as 'empty' and the footnote corresponding to it in the section titled: *The "Original" Text and Translation*. Note that it is the Targum Onkelos and Pseudo Jonathan that uses the Aramaic term for 'to equip.'

מאות וירדף עד דן:

14:15     ויחלק עליהם לילה הוא ועבדיו ויכם וירדפם עד חובה אשר משמאל לדמשׂק:

14:16     וישב את כל הרכש וגם את לוט אחיו ורכשו השיב וגם את הנשים ואת העם:

14:17     ויצא מלך סדם לקראתו אחרי שובו מהכות את כדרלעמר ואת המלכים אשר אתו אל עמק <sup>29</sup>שוה הוא עמק המלך:

14:18     ומלכי צדק מלך שלם הוציא לחם ויין והוא כהן לאל עליון:

14:19     ויברך את אברם ויאמר ברוך אברם לאל עליון קנה שמים וארץ:

14:20     וברוך אל עליון אשר מגן צריך בידך ויתן לו מעשׂר מכל:

14:21     ויאמר מלך סדם אל אברם תן לי הנפש והרכש קח לך:

14:22     ויאמר אברם אל מלך סדם הרמתי <sup>30</sup>את ידי אל יהוה אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ:

14:23     אם מחוט ועד שׂרוך נעל <sup>31</sup>אם אקח מכל אשר לך ולא תאמר אני העשרתי את אברם:

14:24     בלעדי רק אשר אכלו הנערים וחלק האנשים אשר הלכו אתי ענר ואשׁכל וממרא הם יקחו חלקם:

Now with this reconstruction the overall translation does not change. We still maintain the same interpretation for the text with the translation created from the MT. What this reconstruction does is aid us in our quest for finding the true author of Genesis 14. Part of that aid comes from the evolution in Hebrew orthography; specific to the *matres lectiones*. The introduction of these *matres lectiones* into Hebrew began with representation of the final vowels. While we see the earliest form of a medial *mater lectiones* present as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE in very few cases, it did not become widely used until after the conquest of Jerusalem under the direction of the Neo-Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar.[32] With this in mind we can look back at the MT (leaving the Tiberian Hebrew phonetic renderings out)

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[29] See my earlier footnote on Shaveh.

[30] It is very difficult to determine if this existed in the original text. The SP holds it while the MT does not. I am putting it in as only a precaution in the reconstruction of the original text. It would also be more grammatically correct since the following word is a direct object of the previous verb.

[31] I took out the Hebrew ו which indicates 'and' because it is not seen in the SP and the LXX; both of which agree with each other.

[32] Cross, Frank M., and David N. Freedman. Early Hebrew Orthography. Vol. 36. New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1952. 59.

readings of עשתרת (14:5), חצצן (14:7), to even בארת באראת המר (14:10), and more. The SP variations include the concept of the medial *mater lectiones* which may indicate an original form; but not necessarily in this case, it possibly being an earlier writing. The SP could have added it not too long later as an attempt to preserve proper pronunciations of the words. The goal of the Tiberian Hebrew in the MT was to preserve original pronunciations but it is unsure as to whether the scribes would have also condensed some of the text. A Hebrew ו which at times can indicate a historically long ō could have been removed and replaced with the Tiberian *ḥôlem*, giving us the same result in pronunciation. While I have decided to conform more to the orthography presented from the MT we have additional clues into the dating of this narrative resting primarily on the agreement in the spelling of Ariok (אריוך) whom we find mentioned in Genesis 14:1 and 14:9 and even in the spelling of the Most High (עליון) mentioned in Genesis 14:18-20 and 14:22 of both the MT and the SP.[33] The LXX agrees with its phonetic rendering of Ariok, that is by the time of this narrative being committed to written form the medial *matres lectiones* were used, at least the ו for the historically long ō and the י for the historically long ī. The medial use of the י is also confirmed in its use in the plural forms of the Rephaim, Zuzim and the Emim of Genesis 14:5. With all these results in orthographical analysis we are now able to focus on an origin set specifically in the time of the Babylonian Captivity and afterward; that is the 6th century BCE and later.

### GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

After reconstructing the text in question to what it would have most likely looked like during its time of compilation we are now able to focus on specific features and phrases to help isolate the author and the timeframe the author may have belonged. The best place to start was with the opening phrase of Genesis 14:1:

ויהי בימי אמרפל מלך שנער
And it was in [the] days [of] *'Amrāfel*, king [of] *Šĭn'ār*;

This opening phrase has struck up some controversy leading many to believe in different things about the integrity of this phrase. Is this fragment of text 100 percent preserved and intact as it was originally committed to written form? What these scholars question is how the opening sentence is structured. It reads: "And it was in the days of Amrafel." When they believe it should read: "And it was in the days of <the *name of a patriach*>." Ideally with this story involving Avraham it would make more sense for it to register: "And it was in the days of Avraham: Amrafel, king of Shinar…" Fortunately enough, we are at a point in our lives where computers

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[33] Another example of medial *mater lectiones* usage can also be found in the proper noun *Gôyīm*.

have aided in the study of history one way or another. I had recently started to plug in specific phrases of words into a Bible software program and had it look through the entire Pentateuch for the key phrase containing all the words: "in the days of." The only other verses containing such a phrase with the exact same structure come from Genesis 26:1, 26:15, and 26:18. All verses belong to **J** and oddly enough are structured in the verses a little differently. Instead of preceding the main topic of the verse, it is thrown into the middle of it instead, holding a different purpose. The way the author of Genesis 14:1 structured his, was in a way to introduce the reader that "*all these events occurred in the days of...*" The problem with the idea that this opening phrase is incomplete is that all research surrounding it is just centered around the Pentatuechal writings and not outside of it. It is my belief that the author meant to say: "And it was in the days of Amrafel, king of Shinar…" and I provide all the evidence below.

The next stage of my phrase search was to focus in on the exact structure that the author of Genesis 14 used. That is: "in the days of <name> king of <location>." Where would I find such a structure? The results that came up focused in on the books of 1Chronicles and Ezra. This was a great place to begin because it didn't rest on the biblical patriarchs but all the kings that reigned before and during the chronicler's time. This also included kings outside of Israel and Judah.

A brief background into these books would aid into the understanding of its purpose and time of compilation. Both the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were once regarded as a single volume and they record the events occurring at the close of the Babylonian captivity. As I had mentioned earlier in the introduction, it is believed that Ezra authored his book and the Book of Nehemiah but on top of that it is also believed that he authored the books of Chronicles, due to the ending of 2Chronicles forming the opening passage of the Book of Ezra. Chronicles largely parallels the narratives in the books of Samuel and the books of Kings. It starts from the beginning at the time of Adam and traces its way down to the Judahite return from Babylonian captivity. So a date prior to the 5th century BCE cannot be given to any of these four books.

Moving back to my search results, the first instance we find following this format comes from 1Chronicles 4:41:[34]

> And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the Meunim that were found there, and destroyed them utterly, unto this day, and dwelt in their stead; because there was pasture there for their flocks.

Followed by 1Chronicles 5:17, Ezra 4:2, and Ezra 4:5:[35]

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[34] JPS translation.

[35] JPS translation.

All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

Then they drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' houses, and said unto them: 'Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither.'

And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

If the reader would notice, we see the same theme of Genesis 14 reoccurring in the later books of the Old Testament. This evidence may lead us to believe that the integrity of the opening phrase of the verse in Genesis 14 is more complete than originally expected.

But before I move on I wish to concentrate on another piece of evidence found in the same extracted fragment from the beginning of this section and that is the land of Shinar. It would seem that throughout the entire Pentateuch, the proper noun Shinar, is found in only four instances: Genesis 10:10, 11:2, 14:1 and 14:9; the first two of which are credited to **J**. The term's usage is never seen before **J** in Hebrew literature, just after it. This may lead to a later date of writing than originally thought.[36] Once again citing my previous book in this series regarding Shinar and its location:[37]

> In the past, many have argued with me about the true location of the land of Shinar. I, among a majority of scholars in the same field, have identified this to mean the land of Sumer. While the Sumerians themselves called their land *ki-en-gir* or 'place of the civilized lords', the name Sumer is derived from the Akkadian *Shumer*. *Shinar* is simply a Hebrew rendering of the Akkadian word. It literally translates to '[land/ country of] two rivers,' which could only mean the Tigris and Euphrates when taking into account the cities mentioned above. Ereck/ Uruk, Akkad/ Agade, and Babylon existed nowhere else but the land of Shinar. In times past, early rulers used to differentiate the lands between Sumer and Akkad when boasting of their achievements, making the one the southern kingdom (Sumer) and the other the northern kingdom (Akkad). Collectively this had evolved to one piece of land between the two rivers. Further evidence of its location, outside of Genesis 10:10-11, comes to us from the Book of Daniel:
>
> > **1:1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.
> > **1:2** And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; and he carried them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god, and the vessels he brought into the treasure-house of his god.

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[36] Reference the introduction and my conclusion of **J** and his origins.

[37] Reference pages 89-90.

Nebuchadnezzar, a Neo-Babylonian king to whom Jerusalem fell under, which also resulted in the Jewish Exile, was said to have come from the land of Shinar or Chaldea.

Since we have a place in time to focus more in on and some books from that period to search through, it was time to find more parallels.

The next key phrase I searched for was a repeated phrase found in Genesis 14:19 and 14:22:

לאל עליון ֵ קנה שמים וארץ

…to El the Most High, possessor [of] heaven and earth.

יהוה אל עליון ֵ קנה שמים וארץ

…YHWH, El the Most High, possessor [of] heaven and earth.

The key search was focused to: "God <some variation of belonging to> heaven and earth." The only results throughout the entire Old Testament that came up seemed to have been found only in 2Chronicles 2:11[38] and Ezra 5:11:[39]

> Huram said moreover: 'Blessed be YHWH, the God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with discretion and understanding, that should build a house for YHWH, and a house for his kingdom.

> And thus they returned us answer, saying: We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and finished.

All of these findings cannot be just a mere coincidence. There has to be much more to it, but what? It was in no time that I moved onto the nouns mentioned in this chapter of Genesis; that is the people and more locations.

I moved ahead to verse 14:13. This actually provided some additional clues:

לאברם העברי

…to Avram, the Hebrew

This is the first occurrence of the word Hebrew throughout the entire Pentateuch; but it is the context in which it is used in that I am concerned with. For example, the only other listings holding the noun Hebrew come from Genesis 39:14 and 17 (**J**), 41:12 (**E**), and 43:32 (**J**); Exodus 1:15, 16, and 19 (**E**), 2:6, 7, 11, and 13 (**J**), 3:18 (**E**), 5:3 (**E**), 7:16 (**E**), 9:1 and 13 (**E**), 10:3 (**E**), and 21:2 (**E**); and Deuteronomy 15:12 (**D**). All these references hold completely

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[38] The numbering of this verse varies depending on the Bible referenced. For example, it is 2:11 in the LXX and MT. While it is 2:12 in the King James Version (KJV) and the Latin Vulgate.

[39] JPS translation.

different characteristics to the one found in Genesis 14. Below are some of the translated verses:[40]

> That she called unto the men of her house, and spoke unto them, saying: 'See, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice.
>
> *Genesis 39:14*

> And she spoke unto him according to these words, saying: 'The Hebrew servant, whom thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me.
>
> *Genesis 39:17*

> And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.
>
> *Genesis 41:12*

> And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, that did eat with him, by themselves; because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.
>
> *Genesis 43:32*

> And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah; and he said: 'When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, ye shall look upon the birthstool: if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.'
>
> *Exodus 1:15-16*

> And the midwives said unto Pharaoh: 'Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them.'
>
> *Exodus 1:19*

> And she opened it, and saw it, even the child; and behold a boy that wept. And she had compassion on him, and said: 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter: 'Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?'
>
> *Exodus 2:6-7*

> And thou shalt say unto him: YHWH, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying: Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness; and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened;
>
> *Exodus 7:16*

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[40] JPS translation.

If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

*Exodus 21:2*

Note that Exodus 3:18, 5:3, 9:1 and 13, and 10:3 use the noun in the same context to which is seen in Exodus 7:16. Also Deuteronomy 15:12 is a repeat/ rephrase of Exodus 21:2.

Until the last of the pre-Christian era, the term Hebrew was only used by non-Israelites or by Israelites speaking to foreigners. This is all apparent in extra-biblical literature. When reviewing all of the references to Hebrew outside of Genesis 14, this confirms that original statement. We have the Egyptians calling the Israelites Hebrews and at the same time, when the Israelites speak to the Egyptians, they refer to YHWH, the God of the Hebrews. At first glance, the only verses that may question this comment would be Exodus 21:2 and Deuteronomy 15:12; but remember YHWH was speaking this and He is not an Israelite. He is just the covenantal God to the Israelites. Genesis 14 speaks of Avram, the Hebrew as if they were either an outsider (a non-Israelite) or lived in the post-Exilic period when the term was most commonly used by fellow Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Israelites. Considering the parallels in phrases cited earlier with the post-Exilic books of 1 & 2Chronicles and Ezra, it is more likely for the latter explanation to be the case. It would seem very unlikely that a non-Israelite at an earlier stage of Israelite history would write a positive narrative concerning an Israelite patriarch.

Some additional peculiarities are seen in such references to kings, as in those of Sodom and Gomorrah. The etymological roots of each name seem to imply or hint at Sodom and Gomorrah's fate of destruction. For example we have the names: Bera (*Beraʾ*), king of Sodom and Birsha (*Bīršaʾ*), king of Gomorrah. Where Bera has been translated to 'in evil' and Birsha 'in iniquity.' I have even seen a translation of Bera as 'son of evil' and if that were the situation then we throw a new variable into the scene; that variable being Aramaic word structures. In Aramaic בר (*bar*) translates to 'son.' With רע (*rāʾ*) translating to 'evil', this gives us the compound word of 'son of evil' which grammatically restructures *bar*. If this is the case then it would also force the compound word to take an unknown *dagesh* on the Hebrew ר (*rêš*) giving us a double 'r' sound; which looks like it may have not survived time. Aside from the usual loan words prior to the Babylonian Exile and Captivity, Aramaic was beginning to be seen more frequently in Hebrew scripture from the point of Captivity and afterwards. If the latter translation was the case, would this further imply a much later date of writing? Once again the story is told from the perspective that at least Bera and Birsha were titles given to these kings to indicate the forthcoming destruction on their cities. They were not names meant to be taken literally. It was through sin that YHWH decided to wipe these cities from the planet. In the Avraham Cycle, Avraham is obviously not aware of the fates of Sodom and Gomorrah until Genesis 18 when **J** finally reveals how sinful these locations have become.

# CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHRONICLER

To start off, I would like to give the reader details concerning the authorship of 1 & 2Chronicles and Ezra. Why do scholars link them under the one and same author? First clue, as mentioned in the previous section, lies in the ending of 2Chronicles 36:22-23:[41]

> Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying:
>
> 'Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath YHWH, the God of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people--YHWH his God be with him--let him go up.'

And in the introduction of Ezra 1:2-3:[42]

> Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying:
>
> 'Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath YHWH, the God of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.
>
> Whosoever there is among you of all His people--his God be with him--let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of YHWH, the God of Israel, He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

The Chronicler picks up where he left off from in 2Chronicles in his writings of Ezra.

Second clue comes from the decree of Cyrus in 2Chronicles 36:22, which supports a timeframe close to that of Ezra or of the timeframe to which the Book of Ezra was written. With this clue, we know for sure that the books of Chronicles were not written before this time.

A third clue is the similarities of literary and linguistic features between Ezra and the books of Chronicles. These similarities suggest a single author for these works. Now as for who was actually the author is unknown. While the Jewish Babylonian Talmud identifies Ezra as the scribe who chronicled all of these books, the books themselves do not attest to him authoring it

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[41] JPS translation.

[42] JPS translation.

and therefore we are left unsure. That is why when I speak of the Chronicler I will refer to him as pseudo-Ezra. I gave examples to some of the literary styles between the books of Chronicles and Ezra in the previous section.

Another clue comes from the genealogies found in the books of Chronicles. An example of how the genealogies confirm this come from a section found in 1Chronicles 3:19-24, where the descendants of Zerubbabel are written to the 6th generation and ending at a time around the life of Ezra. Pseudo-Ezra wrote the genealogies unto his time.

More confirmation can be concluded from the fact that this chapter of Genesis is clearly written by the hand of a priest, that priest possibly being pseudo-Ezra. We have to shift our focus to Genesis 14:18-20, when we read of Maleki-Tsedeq, king of Peace (or Shalem). This noun literally translates to 'my king [is] righteous' and a possible interpreted translation would be 'my king is Tsedeq'; with Tsedeq being the proper name for a king. The scribe was mainly concerned with the "establishment" of the first tithe given to a priest of YHWH, as seen in Genesis 14:20:

> And blessed is El the Most High which delivered your enemies in your hand and he gave him a tithe from all.

Upon being blessed from the priest of YHWH/ El the Most High, Avram gave him a tithe from all [the spoil of the battle]. A normal layperson would never be concerned with such a narrative that included the "establishment" of the first tithe and therefore would be less likely to have written it. From the structure and style of not just these verses but the rest of the chapter, we can safely assume that this material was written only by a priestly scribe with a possible distinct motive hinted to above. The previous sections of this article have also grammatically linked this priestly scribe to be the same scribe who wrote the books of Chronicles and the Book of Ezra. Key phrases, words and word structures are unique only to the author of both Genesis 14 and 1 & 2Chronicles/ Ezra.

This raises an additional question: Did the scribe edit or add additional material into the Pentateuch? I do not have any way of proving this hypothesis but I do believe that pseudo-Ezra played some additional roles in the redacting process. Whether pseudo-Ezra is **R** or instead we are looking at more than one **R** is beyond the scope of this research. This belief stems with the usage of a specific epithet. This epithet being יהוה אלהים or 'YHWH God.' Referencing back to the Documentary Hypothesis and the writings of **J**, a distinct peculiarity is seen in the early chapters of Genesis; specifically from chapter 2:4b through to the end of chapter 3 where YHWH is not referenced in the normal יהוה (YHWH) but instead in an out of the ordinary יהוה אלהים. Judging by his characteristics and style, this is not something that **J** would have

done. I recall that Richard Elliott Friedman also questioned this and credited the addition of אלהים to **R**.[43] He gave a brief summary of his interpretation to this anomaly:[44]

> The text now changes, always referring to the deity by the proper name: YHWH, eleven times. In Genesis 2 and 3 the word "God" appears each time after the name YHWH. But this double identification, "YHWH God," occurs only in these introductory chapters and nowhere else in the Pentateuch. It therefore appears to be an effort by the Redactor (R) to soften the transition from the P creation, which uses only "God" (thirty-five times), to the coming J stories, which will use only the name YHWH.

Oddly and coincidentally enough, other than the two Genesis chapters, Exodus 9:30 (**E**) and 2Samuel 7:25 (**J**)[45], we only see this epithet in 1 & 2Chronicles and nowhere else in the Old Testament.[46] Although there is skepticism with the Exodus and 2Samuel verses. In Exodus 9:30 it would seem that whoever added the אלהים did so at a much later date. The LXX does not contain it while the SP writes instead ארני יהוה (Lord YHWH). The same thing may apply in 2Samuel 7:25 because the LXX does not hold the MT rendering of this divine epithet. What does this say about these two verses? It clearly indicates that they are an addition after the time of Ezra. This just leaves us with the opening chapters of Genesis and both books of Chronicles. All occurrences are paralleled between both the MT and the LXX. Is this proof of pseudo-Ezra editing the opening verses of Genesis? We now know of pseudo-Ezra's additions to Genesis with chapter 14. The likelihood of him being responsible for the additions of אלהים is very high.

Now that we have a possible small timeframe of compilation, does this aid in the identification of the characters listed? Probably not. A result of the vague and generic titles to the contradicting alliances with actual history has complicated this. Although some progress has been made with the identification of Tidal, king of nations. Scholars believe that this is a corruption of the Hittite or Neo-Hittite Tudhaliya. But there is a problem, within history ancient Anatolia brought forth more than one Tudhaliya: there was one that existed in the Hittite New Kingdom at around the 14th century BCE; another lived at the end of the Late Bronze Age; while a third reigned during the Neo-Hittite period, at the time of the Aramaean states and just before the rise and spread of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. As for the alliances, such an alliance between

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[43] Friedman, Richard E. *The Bible with Sources Revealed*. 1st ed. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003.

[44] Friedman, Richard E. *The Bible with Sources Revealed*. 1st ed. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003. 35.

[45] Friedman, Richard E. *The Hidden Book in the Bible*. 1st ed. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.

In this book, Friedman extends his search for the identification of more **J** material beyond the Pentateuch and through to the 2nd chapter of 1Kings.

[46] These occurrences are found in: 1Chronicles 17:16, 22:1 and 19, 28:20, and 29:1; and 2Chronicles 1:9, 6:41 and 42, 26:18, and 32:16.

Shinar and Elam along with possibly the Anatolian Hittites/Neo-Hittites never existed. In fact unearthed and translated from ancient documents we see the exact opposite.

*If you have any comments or questions regarding this article please direct them to comments@petroskoutoupis.com. Or just visit www.petroskoutoupis.com.*