The Meaning of Genesis 14:11-24:
A Syntactical and Redactional Analysis

Janet Lamarche

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ABSTRACT

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As stated in the title, the purpose of this thesis is to determine the meaning of Genesis 14 in its canonical context. This perspective has been lacking in scholarship. While scholars past and present have focused on the understanding of שלם as Jerusalem and thus on the Melchizedek episode; this study, however, intends to demonstrate that the meaning is, in fact, connected to chapter 13. In light if this, an analyses of both the unity within the chapter as well as within the Genesis corpus will be examined. Additionally, the word שלמ will be examined in order to determine whether an association with Jerusalem is certain. Finally, an alternative interpretation will be presented with the aim of opening up new avenues of thought.

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I am also extremely grateful to my husband and family for their love and understanding.

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JOURNAL ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
Bib	Biblica
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
CTSJ	Chafer Theological Seminary Journal
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
StudBT	Studia Biblica et Theologica
TRev	Theological Review
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAR	Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte
ZA	Zeitschrift für Althebräistik

Introduction

Genesis 14 narrates the story in which five kings of the plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela rebel against the oppression of four eastern kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and Goiim. During the course of retaliation, the four eastern kings suppressed the rebellion and captured the people and material possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah. A refugee then reported to Abram that Lot, his nephew who resided in Sodom, was among those who had been captured, thus providing the motivation for Abram's involvement. Abram gathers his men, along with three of his allies and defeats the four eastern kings during a night raid and reclaims the plunder. Upon his victorious return, he is met by the King of Sodom and Melchizedek, who is identified as king and priest, and who was not involved in the revolt nor was he mentioned at all in the preceding account, yet he brings bread and wine for Abram and his troops. Melchizedek blesses Abram, and Abram gives a tenth of the spoils of war to Melchizedek.[1] The King of Sodom proposes that he (Abram) keep the material goods and he will take the people. Abram responds that he has sworn to Yahweh El Elyon that he will not take so much as a thread or sandal thong from the booty so that the King of Sodom will not be able to say that he has made Abram rich, but that his allies have a right to their share. The chapter ends abruptly on this note.

Genesis 14 is considered one of the most problematic chapter in Genesis. There is disagreement concerning almost every aspect, such as the date, source, unity, and meaning. Despite the lack of consensus regarding these issues, there is widespread

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[1] The text only states "and he gave him a tithe from all" 14:20b.

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acceptance of an identification of שלם, in מלך שלם (vs. 18), with Jerusalem. It is upon this association that scholars determine the answers to the above questions.

While reading through the literature concerning Genesis 14 it became apparent that the majority of scholars employed a fragmented approach in determining the purpose and meaning of the chapter. That is to say, they isolated and focused on the Melchizedek pericope (14:18-20). In particular, two factors were highlighted as significant in establishing the meaning of the text:

1. The figure of Melchizedek characterized as priest and king of Jerusalem.

2. שלם as an abbreviated form for the name Jerusalem.

Although it is necessary to establish the meaning of a text in its own particular context, it is equally essential to appreciate the entire framework into which Gn 14 was placed. The meaning of a text includes an understanding of what the narrative is saying taking into account the whole story – in this case it is the Abram-Lot saga. Thus far an understanding of Gn 14 in light of surrounding events has been neglected. At most, scholars perceive the inclusion of Lot in Gn 14 as an attempt from the writer to justify the placement of Gn 14 following Gn 13 and the motivation for Abram's involvement in the battle. These assertions are incidental at best. In what follows, I will attempt to determine the meaning of Gn 14, taking into consideration the events which occurred in Gn 13. I will be focusing on the meaning of Gn 14 outside the current thought that connects the meaning specifically with Jerusalem during or after David's establishment of Jerusalem as Israel's capitol. In order to do so, I will focus primarily on those areas which have been

overlooked in scholarship. These areas include, but are not limited to, the nature of the

relationship between Abram and Lot, the nature of the land division in Gn 13, a certain

identification of שלם with Jerusalem and the significance of the spoils of war in Gn 14.

Chapter 1 - State of the Question and Methodology

1.1 State of the Question

Upon his victorious return from battle, Abram is met by the King of Sodom (vs. 17). Before uttering a word, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, greets Abram and his troops with a meal (vv 18-20), thereby interrupting the flow of the account in vv 17, 21-24. The majority of scholars view this interruption as a literary seam; a visible and awkward insertion made by a redactor. In addition to interrupting the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom, the Melchizedek episode brings with it the only explicit theological aspect to the story.[2] The battle account (vv 1-16) is secular in that there is no mention of God. For these reasons, scholars tend to focus on the Melchizedek pericope as containing the key to the meaning of the chapter. Additionally, the qualities of Melchizedek as king of Salem and priest of El Elyon are emphasized in scholarship as pertaining to Jerusalem; this premise is based on the interpretation of Salem as Jerusalem (vs. 18) and thought either to legitimate King David's reign or to establish the authority of the priesthood in the post-exilic period.[3]

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[2] In the Ancient Near East it was always assumed that the gods were with the people and so an explicit mention of them was not always necessary. In the Bible, however, it is unusual that there is no mention of God or a petition from the warrior to God to be with him in the battle. For example cf. Jos 3:1-10; Jos 8:1; Jdg 1:1-2; Jdg 3:10; Jdg 6:12-21.

[3] See especially, J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle of Genesis XIV" *VT* 21/4 (1971), pp. 403-439; J.A. Emerton, "Some Problems in Genesis XIV" in J.A. Emerton (ed), *Studies in the Pentateuch*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990, pp. 74-102; J. Van Seters, "Victory over the Kings of the East – Genesis 14" in J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1975, pp. 296-311. B. Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading,* Garden City: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1977, p. 198; M.C. Astour, "Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis 14 and its Babylonian Sources' in A. Altmann (ed), *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 69.

1.1.1 Legitimacy for the Davidic Reign

The starting point for the argument that this chapter is related to David's legitimacy as king of Israel is the identification of Salem with Jerusalem and the conciliatory nature of the encounter between Abram and Melchizedek the king (and priest) of Salem. Many scholars suggest that the text was inserted during the reign of David in order to legitimate his role as king and priest of Jerusalem, as well as to justify Jerusalem as the political and religious center for the united nation of Israel.[4]

Scholars, who date this text to the time of David, assert that this text addresses three main issues.[5]

1. It would have promoted religious syncretism between the cult of YHWH and the Jerusalemite cult during the period of David's takeover of Jerusalem, and spoke to both groups (Israelite and Jerusalemite) under David's authority.

2. It would have legitimized David's reign in Jerusalem, for the Israelites and for the local residents as well.

3. This passage can be seen to justify David's role as priest (after the order of Melchizedek - Ps. 110:4) and king.

The argument that Gn 14:18-20 promoted religious syncretism is based on Abram's response to the King of Sodom which fuses together El Elyon, the god of

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[4] Interestingly, most commentaries do not offer any explanation for dating the text to the Davidic period, nor do they provide any clue that there is debate among scholars on this very issue. See L.E. Keck, "Genesis 14:1-24 A Commentary," in J.J. Collins et al (eds), *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Vol. I,* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994, p.439; G. Von Rad, "Abraham's Victory over the Eastern Kings and His Encounter with Melchizedek, Chapter 14," in G. Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary,* Trans: J. H. Marks, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961, p. 174; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15 The Word Biblical Commentary,* Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publ., 1987, p. 322; D.M. Bétoudji, *"El, le Dieu Surpême et des Patriarches (Gen. 14:18-20),* N.Y: Georg Olms Verlag, 1986, p.211.
[5] J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 437, J. Goldingay "The Patriarchs in Scripture and History" in A.R. Millard & D.J. Wiseman (eds), *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives,* Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1980 p. 32, D.M. Bétoudji, p. 211.

Melchizedek, and YHWH. Abram says that he sworn an oath to YHWH El Elyon. The recognition of El Elyon by Abram is seen as promoting religious harmony between the two groups. Bearing in mind the presupposition of שלם מלך as king of (Jeru)Salem and characterization as a priest of the cult of El Elyon, Melchizedek would have represented an authoritative ancestor for the Jerusalemites, while Abram, as progenitor of the Israelites, held influence for the Israelites. The recognition and benevolence shown toward each other would have promoted a similar attitude in the people (Jerusalemite and Israelite) toward each other and the new king (David). Consequently, this passage would have gone far in promoting the political and religious legitimacy of David's reign in Jerusalem by establishing an historical link with current events. Abram's acceptance and recognition of the status of Melchizedek as priest and king demonstrated to the Israelites that this was a valid role. Thus, by anchoring the role of priest-king in the Abrahamic tradition, the writer justified the fusion of the roles during the Davidic kingdom.[6] In all these views the main purpose was to legitimatize the role and policies of the Davidic Monarchy.

In attempting to equate Salem with Jerusalem, scholars often cite a reference to the Valley of the Kings in 2 Sam 18:18, 'Now Absalom, in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar which is in the Valley of the Kings[...].' This valley is mentioned

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[6] L.E. Keck, p. 239; C.M. Laymon (ed), *The Pentateuch: A Commentary on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy,* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983, p.37; J. Goldingay, "The Patriarchs in Scripture and History" in A.R. Millard & D.J. Wiseman, *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives,* Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1980, p. 32; J.D.G. Dunn & J.W. Rogerson (eds), *Eerdman's Commentary on the Bible,* Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdman 2003, p. 50.

in Josephus and said to be two stadia from Jerusalem.[7] Concerning this connection, Emerton states:

> The present form of the text in Gen. xiv perhaps itself implies that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem, for verse 17 refers to the King's Vale, which is also mentioned in 2 Sam. xviii 18, and which is said by Josephus to be two stadia from Jerusalem. While the reference to the King's Vale in Gen xiv 17 is probably a gloss, and verses 18-20 are most likely a later addition to verse 17, it is probably legitimate to draw the conclusion that Salem was identified with Jerusalem at some stage of the tradition.[8]

It is interesting to note that Emerton uses Josephus as a source of support for his argument in favour of the identification of Salem with Jerusalem; interesting because Emerton is a strong proponent in favour of Gn 14:18-20 (which he considers the last passage to be inserted in the narrative) being inserted during the Davidic reign. Josephus, on the other hand, writes that the campaign was launched at a time "[...]when the Assyrians had the dominion over Asia[...]" which would place the date of the text a few centuries later."[9] Against this, other scholars have noted that the intended audience would not have made the connection due to the geography of the land and the most likely route Abram would have taken and that this was not an original association.[10]

Further support for the continuation of the Jebusite monarchy is found in the connection between this pericope and Psalm 110:4, where we see the fusion of the roles

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[7] W. Whiston (translator), "The Antiquities of the Jews 7.10.3 §243" in W. Whiston, *Josephus: The Completes Works,* Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, p 238.
[8] J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 413.
[9] W. Whiston, p. 45.
[10] O. Margalith, "The Riddle of Genesis 14 and Melchizedek" *ZAW* 112 (2000) pp. 506-508; J.G. Gammie, "Loci of the Melchizedek Tradition of Genesis 14:18-20" *JBL* 90 (1971) pp. 389-390.

of king and priest.[11] Psalm 110:4 is often referred to in support of dating the text to the time of David. Verse 2 of the Psalm begins by addressing one in Zion who is the king, i.e. the king of Jerusalem and verse 4 states: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." Thus it appears that the addressee is both king and priest in Jerusalem in the same manner as his predecessor, Melchizedek. Evidence is also found in Psalm 76:3 which explicitly link Zion with Salem. Speaking of God it states "His abode has been established in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion."[12]

One other connection often cited, is the similarity of names in which the common element of צדק is found in Hebrew names. Joshua 10:1. 3 mentions a king of Jerusalem – Adonizedek, and 2 Sam 8:17 places a priest of David – Zadok, in the city of Jerusalem. Concerning this affiliation, Zakovitch states, "moreover, the element *zedek* is inextricably bound with Jerusalem from time immemorial and evokes the image of Adonizedek, King of Jerusalem in the time of Joshua (Jos 10:1); it relates also to Zadok, the founder of the priestly dynasty in Jerusalem and priest in the temple of Solomon."[13] All these interpretations have as a starting point, the association of Salem with Jerusalem and the characterization of Melchizedek as king and priest. Since David was the one who chose

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[11] J.A. Emerton "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 421, eliminates the problematic dating of the text by stating simply "The story implies that David, as king in Jerusalem, had inherited the priestly status of Melchizedek: that appears to be the implication of Ps. cx, when the late dating of Psalm and also Rowley's interpretation of it have been rejected."

[12] J.C. McCollough, "Melchizedek's Varied Role in Early Exegetical Tradition" *TRev* (Near East School of Theology), 1/2 (1978) p. 54; I. Hunt, "Recent Melchizedek Study" in J.L. McKenzie (ed), *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought*, N.Y: Herder&Herder, 1962, p. 24; J. Goldingay, p. 32; H.G. Stigers, *Commentary on Genesis*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1976. p. 151; J.A. Soggin, "The Patriarchs" in J. A. Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1993, p. 101; G. Cornfeld, "Chapters 12-50 of Genesis: The Patriarchal Traditions and the Formative Stages of Early Israel," in G. Cornfeld, *Archeology of the Bible Book by Book*, N.Y: Harper & Row Publ. 1976, p. 20; Contra, J.G. Gammie, p. 389-390.

[13] Y. Zakovitch, ""The First Stages of Jerusalem's Sanctification under David: A Literary and Ideological Analysis" in L. L. Levine (ed), *Jerusalem*, N.Y: Continuum, 1999, p. 29; see also J. J. Schmitt, "Pre-Israelite Jerusalem" in C.D. Evans, W.W. Hallo, J.B. White (eds), *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method*, Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1980, p. 108.

Jerusalem as capital of the nation and initiated new political policies, such as the fusion of king and priest, scholars maintain that the purpose of this pericope was to legitimate David's policies.

In summary, there are many elements contained within Gn 14:18-20 which speak to a Davidic date for their insertion. This theory is further substantiated by the passages in Psalms 110:4 and 76:3, in addition to element of צדק in personal names. Nevertheless, others argue that it is more plausible to connect Genesis 14:18-20 to a later period in Israelite history as David would have accomplished harmony through the act of bringing the ark into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12-16a).[14]

1.1.2 Authority for the Priesthood

While scholars generally agree that Genesis 14:18-20 is the final redaction to Genesis 14, some assign a late dating of post-exilic or the Hasmonean period to the pericope. This theory purports two purposes for the late insertion of the passage: (1) to provide legitimacy to the Zadokite priesthood or (2) to promote legitimacy for the policy of tithing.[15] A late dating of this pericope also assumes Salem to be Jerusalem.[16] No arguments are offered to substantiate this claim, other than its connection to Ps. 76:3 and 110:4. Concerning the dating of the text, various arguments are proposed which emphasizes the use of late vocabulary and concepts. In particular, Van Seters notes that,

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[14] R. Albertz, *A History of the Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period Vol I*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994, pp. 129-130; J.J. Schmitt, "Pre-Israelite Jerusalem" in C.D. Evans et al, *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method*, Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1980, p. 109; S. Japhet, "From King's Sanctuary to Chosen City" in L L. Levine (ed), *Jerusalem*, N.Y: Continuum, 1999. p. 7; M. Cogan, "David's Jerusalem: Notes and Reflections" in M. Cogan, B. L. Eichler, J.H. Tigay (eds), *Tehillah le-Moshe*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997, p. 199.

[15] J. Van Seters, p. 308; J.A. Soggin, "Abraham" p. 283.

[16] For example, J. Van Seters, p. 321 states simply "...Salem, *probably* Jerusalem..." (emphasis mine)

It is significant that although Melchisedek is called "priest of El Elyon" such a title is not used throughout the whole history of the priesthood as recorded in the OT. It is only in the Maccabean Period that the Hasmoneans used the title of "high priests of God Most High [...] more probable that it belongs to the late Persian or early Hellenistic period, when such syncretism became common throughout the Near East, and even the Jerusalem religious community was caught up in it. By the time of the Hasmoneans it was probably a fixed title whose origins were no longer known.[17]

Arguments based on the vocabulary call attention to features which are indicative of a late date, as they are terms attributed to P. For example, the term נפש in the sense of a person as opposed to soul or the living essence (breath) of a being, יליד בית referring to a household slave, and רכש as property.[18] Since it is commonly agreed that P wrote during the Post Exilic Period, the dating of text could only have been post-exilic or later. Van Seters also notes that the use of glosses is intended as a literary devise to provide an archaic sense to the narrative.[19] While this is a plausible explanation for the glosses, it is difficult to confirm as they could just as well have been inserted at a later date to aid the reader in identifying their location. Margalith writes: "The narrator, using the ancient names of the places, had to insert glosses [...] so that the listener/reader [...] might identify them."[20] Anderson, in reference to archaizing states, "If these features are to be

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[17] J. Van Seters, p. 308.
[18] J. Skinner, *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,* Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963, p. 256; G.J. Wenham, p. 302; J. Van Seters, p. 304.
[19] J. Van Seters, p. 297.
[20] O. Margalith, p. 504-505

examples as attempts to imitate the epic language of ancient sources (archaizing), the imitation has been done very unskilfully."[21]

A comparative study into the similarities between the forms of the campaign in Genesis 14:1-17, and the Spartoli Tablets from Babylon provide a basis for attributing (at least some) of the chapter to the (2nd) Deuteronomist, which would place the date to the Exilic period.[22] Van Seters, while accepting the resemblance of the chronistic affinity to the Deuteronomist maintains that in the case of Genesis 14 "its convention is clearly broader."[23] He also claims that the author has borrowed material from the Deuteronomist, such as grouping of Admah and Zeboiim (Dt 29:23). Additional parallels between the author of Genesis 14 and the Deuteronomist include the names of the primordial people of the Transjordon: the Rephaim, Emim and the Zuzim (Zamzumim). This would mean that Gn 14 demonstrates some dependency on the Deuteronomistic material and hence, was a later addition. Additionally, the form of the narrative in Genesis 14, with its mixture of quasi-historical events and combination of heroic and legendary elements can be likened to the Jewish popular stories of the Hellenistic Period, particularly the apocryphal book of Judith. According to Van Seters, "The perspective of these works is

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[21] F.I. Anderson, "Genesis 14: An Enigma" in D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman, A. Huruit, *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom,* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995, p. 503.

[22] M.C. Astour, p. 67, 81, the Spartoli Texts, also known as the Chedorlaomer texts were discovered in 1917. Although they are copies of the original and these copies are dated late (post 142 B.C.E.) the originals are believed to have been written not earlier than the mid seventh century BCE. They are the only extant extra-Biblical parallel to Genesis 14. Regarding the inclusion of vs. 18-20, M.C. Astour, posits a date of circa 550 B.C.E, for the inclusion of vv. 18-20 by the 2nd Dtr., while the Israelites were still in captivity in Babylon. This fact negates his proposal that the purpose of the passage was to ascribe authority to the priesthood and legitimate the giving of tithes (p. 74) as there was no official priesthood and definitely no institution of tithing while the Israelites were in captivity.

[23] J. Van Seters, p. 303, affirms that although there is a chronistic or annalistic element to Genesis 14, the narrative pertaining to the Abram/Lot/Sodom tradition is set more in the genre of a folk/hero story or vignette.

the confrontation of a world empire by very few, the strong sense of individual piety, and the love of a certain archaism by its efforts to reconstruct an elaborate past historical setting."[24]

The purpose of the text, during the post-exilic period or Hasmonean period would have been to establish the authority of the priesthood in Jerusalem. After the return from exile, the Jews had no king. The priests sought to establish their leadership over the people, both those who were allowed to remain in the land during the exile, the people of the land, and those who had returned from Babylon. In Gn 14:18-20, we see Abram submitting to the authority of Melchizedek in his role as priest. His obedience to Melchizedek is made plain through the act of giving a tithe.

On the other hand, some scholars contend that the act of tithe-giving is used to promote the policy of tithing to the Temple in Jerusalem. In the Melchizedek pericope, Abram willing offers tithes to a priest. This would have encouraged the people to give by basing the custom in the past.

Although these scholars admit to the possibility that the tradition may have been old, they nonetheless assert that it was inserted during a later period. It is the late dating of this text that influences the position that the text is meant to support the priesthood in the late post-exilic or early Hasmonean period. Against this position, proponents of an early dating argue that it is highly unlikely that the priests of the post-exilic period would use a Canaanite priest as authoritative.[25]

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[24] J. Van Seters, p. 305.
[25] See, for example, J. Skinner, p. 269-270; J.A. Emerton "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 415.

Upon demonstrating that the interpretation of the chapter is commonly based on the connection between Salem and Jerusalem, then eliminating this association will allow for other interpretations to emerge. In what follows, I will demonstrate that one of the possible meanings of chapter 14, and especially vv 18-20, is to be found in relation to chapter 13 and the narrative of the division of the land. Specifically, this will involve determining the relationship between Abram and Lot, establishing unity within the text and within the Genesis corpus and especially ascertaining the meaning of שלם.

1.2 Methodology

Because of the (seemingly) visible literary seams inherent in the chapter, the majority of scholars approach the text diachronically. After isolating each fragment, they then determine the source and date for each fragment, and interpret the meaning in light of the latest insertion. Concerning Genesis 14, scholars maintain that verses 18-20 are the final insertion and so focus on this pericope to determine the meaning. The difficulty with this approach is twofold. First, scholars have yet to identify the source(s) responsible for compiling the narrative. In fact, it is virtually unanimous that the source responsible for the text is not one of the known Pentateuchal sources: JED or P, although the text is dependent upon them.[26] Secondly, effort to establish the date based on the meaning of the text had also proven problematic. For instance, the majority of scholars have posited that the text stems from the Davidic period. This is based on the characterization of

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[26] Many scholars prior to 1980 do not recognize D as a Pentateuchal source. J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle...", *VT* 21/4, p. 404, S.R. Driver, "Chapter XIV" in S.R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis,* London, Methuen & Co., 1904, p. 155; J. Van Seters, p. 303-304; J.G. McConville,"Abraham and Melchizedek: Horizons in Genesis 14" in R.S. Hess et al (eds), *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12 – 50, 2ⁿᵈ Ed.*, Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1994, p. 106-109; R. Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*, N.Y; W.W. Norton & Co., 1996, p. 58.

Melchizedek as king and priest. The only time that the dual role of king and priest would have been emphasized was during David's reign, and the purpose would be to endorse his political and religious policies. Against this, some scholars postulate that the use of late terms negate this theory.[27]

Both hypotheses, however, fail to take into account the wider literary context of the narrative. In other words, how does Gn 14 relate to Gn 13 and 15? In order to consider all aspects relating to the Abraham-Lot saga, I will be using a variety of approaches that consist of both the diachronic and synchronic view. The following is an outline of the methodological approaches I will incorporate to determine the intended meaning of Genesis 14:18-20 and unity within the Biblical corpus

1.2.1 Textual Criticism and Macro Syntactical Analysis: Genesis 14:11-24

The purpose of textual criticism is to establish, as closely as possible, the original text. Tov succinctly defines the purpose of textual criticism:

> The study of the biblical text involves an investigation of its development, its copying and transmission, and the processes which created reading and texts over the centuries. In the course of this procedure, textual critics collect from Hebrew and translated texts all the details in which these texts differ one form another.[28]

The necessity for this method arises from the availability of numerous manuscripts that may show variant readings. These variations among the manuscripts occurred over time as the manuscripts were copied and re-copied. Given that textual criticism entails an examination of these textual witnesses, this method is therefore diachronic in its

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[27] See especially, J. Van Seters, p. 297.
[28] E. Tov, "The Aim and Procedures of Textual Criticism" in E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 2nd revised Ed.*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p. 290.

approach. In order to critically assess the text, a translation from the original Hebrew is required. Included in this process will be a macro-syntactical analysis of the verbal forms used and their function within the narrative and, where warranted, a structural analysis.

A macro-syntactical analysis will facilitate the identification of difficulties and possibly provide a resolution to what scholars sometimes view as a difficulty. It has recently been recognized in scholarship that the ancient Hebrew language does not function as a tense language along the pattern of European languages. Concerning this difficulty Niccacci states:

> While it is true that Hebrew had only a limited number of verb forms at its disposal, it still seemed odd that, for example *wayyiqtol* could be translated by virtually all the finite tenses of modern languages, as would appear from classical grammars. Nor is it easy to accept the view that *qatal*, which was supposed to be the form for beginning narrative in Hebrew, could have been replaced so often in that position by the *wayyiqtol* by customary misuse[...]translators select the equivalent tenses of modern languages somewhat at random, applying their own interpretation and sensitivity.[29]

In order to resolve this issue, scholars began to analyze Hebrew tenses according their actual use and function in the text. In this way, translation of a text is based on the function of a verbal form in the text instead of simply on the basis of tense. As a result of these investigation scholars have currently determined that the *wayyiqtol* verb form in

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[29] A. Niccacci, p. 9.

narrative advances a story with a series of subsequent *wayyiqtol* constructions.[30] For

example, Jer. 28:10-11:

28:10 ויקח חנניה הנביא את־המותה [...] וישברהו:
28:11 ויאמר חנניה [...]   וילך ירמיה הנביא לדרכו

Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke...and broke it.
And Hananiah said...and Jeremiah the prophet went his way.

Any interruption in the *wayyiqtol* chain denotes a change in the level of

information the author wishes to express, i.e. from foreground to background. These

shifts may also be used to provide commentary on an event, or express simultaneity,

contrast, or antecedent circumstance.[31]

1.2.2 Unity within the Chapter

Although the text may be composite, there must be unity within the narrative in

order for the story to make sense. A macro-syntactical analysis, which studies the text in

its final form, will identify verbal constructs which makes clear the unity within the text,

but that is sometimes lost in translation.

A macro-syntactical analysis will facilitate the identification of difficulties and

possibly provide a resolution to what scholars sometimes view as a difficulty. For

instance, what is commonly deemed a contradiction may, in fact, be agreement.

Additionally, while some may note that the inclusion of repetitions denote a medley of

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[30] A. Niccacci, p. 30; C.H.J. van der Merwe, "Discourse Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew Grammar" in R. D. Bergen (ed), *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994, p. 39.
[31] A. Niccacci, p. 63-65.

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traditions, it is often employed as a literary device by biblical authors. It is often supposed that when information is repeated, what lies between these repetitions is an insertion into an older version of a text. An analysis of the grammatical construction, however, can sometimes explain away the difficulty or it may confirm that there is a syntactical problem which may indicate the composite nature of the text. This type of analysis will also help determine the linguistic perspective, the nuances intended by the writer, and the prominence in the text – that is, what the writer has set in the background and what he places in the foreground. This will help to understand how the different parts of the text hold together.

The Biblical writers also had at their disposal literary devices that they used to highlight important features. Included among these devices were chiastic structures and repetition. A structural analysis of text will highlight these features and may resolve areas of the texts often considered problematic. The main benefit of a structural analysis is that it is not concerned with interpolations or redaction history, or earlier and later forms of the text. As Hayes and Holladay note, "It is the text as a finished product that sets the agenda for the structuralist critic."[32] In this way, we view the structural elements of a text as having a purpose.

Establishing unity within the chapter is especially significant as scholars are currently inclined to focus on the composite nature of the text. Having identified the various traditions, they then endeavour to identify the order in which they were compiled from the earliest to the latest. Thus far, scholars have posited that the order in which Gn 14 was assembled is as follows:

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[32] J.H. Hayes & C.R Holladay, "Structuralist Criticism" in J.H. Hayes & C.R Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook, Revised Ed,* Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987, p. 112.

- The war account (14:1-11)

- The Abraham-Lot cycle (14:12-17, 21-24)

- The Melchizedek episode (14:18-20)

The majority of scholars believe that verses 18-20 were the last to be added in the chapter.[33] Scholars maintain that the battle account forms the background of the story into which the Abram/Lot pericope was added and then the Melchizedek episode was interpolated. The main assertion for this theory is that the integrity of the chapter would not be compromised by the removal of vs. 18-20.[34]

The purpose of establishing unity within the chapter will show, in the final assessment, how all aspects of the story are related to each other and essential to the meaning of the chapter. This means that it will lift the focus from individual fragments and factor into the final interpretation the relevance of all the events related in the narrative. Upon determining the unity within the chapter, it will also be necessary to ascertain whether there is unity within the Genesis corpus.

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[33] R.H. Smith, "Abram and Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20)," *ZAW* 77 (1965) p. 130; F. Cornelius, "Abram and the Four Kings" in R.E. Brown, J.A Fitzmeyer, R.E. Murphy (eds), *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1968, p. 18; J.A. Soggin, p. 288, 291; B. Vawter, p. 197; D.E. Callender Jr., "Melchizedek" in D.N. Freedman (ed), *Eerdman's Dictionary of the Bible*, Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdman's, 2000, p. 882; J. G. McConville, p. 102; D. Elgavish, "The Encounter of Abram and Melchizedek King of Salem: A Covenant Establishing Ceremony," in A. Wénin (ed), *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001, p. 495.

[34] Against this, G.J. Wenham, p. 306-307, states that the resumption of the account between the king of Sodom and Abram would be rendered inexplicable without vv. 18-20. The Melchizedek episode serves to heighten the reader's awareness of the King of Sodom's animosity towards Abram, in addition to the link provided by the "conjoined chiastic clause "Melchizedek brought הוציא linking back to v. 17 "came יצא…King of Sodom."

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1.2.3 Unity within the Genesis Corpus

In order to establish the unity between chapter 14 and the Abraham-Lot saga in Genesis, I will need to confirm cohesive elements, such as themes and events, throughout the Abraham-Lot narrative, as well as the relationship among key figures. While separate traditions may be incorporated into one narrative, the author wove these traditions together to form a whole. What this means is that the meaning is not limited to certain fragments in a text, but rather found in the whole and therefore also approaches the text synchronically. It is to be expected that each narrative should logically follow what precedes it and anticipate what will come after it. Establishing unity between chapters 13 and 14 will factor significantly into the interpretation of chapter 14, as chapter 13 forms the background for chapter 14. In order to understand the message, therefore, one must understand and consider the meaning of the whole. As P.R. Williamson aptly states:

> While the utilization of some such traditions by the compilers of Genesis is possible, the labelling of individual units as different sources or traditions is of limited value in determining the literary and theological relationship between them in their present canonical context...Moreover, in the absence of any extra-biblical documentary evidence, the fruit of such research can never be anything more than hypothetical.[35]

1.2.4 Word Study and Analysis of the Identification of שלם with Jerusalem

In this section, I will be focusing on the use of שלם as an abbreviated form for Jerusalem. Specifically, I will be looking at extra-Biblical designations of Jerusalem and

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[35] P.R. Williamson, "Introduction" in P.R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and its Covenantal Development in Genesis*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, p. 22.

Biblical references that parallel Salem to Jerusalem. Since I will be tracing the history of Jewish tradition that makes this parallel, I will be looking at the development diachronically. As Israelite history progressed, new understandings of the old traditions emerged in order to maintain their relevancy. This section will attempt to trace the Jewish tradition and determine whether the connection between Salem and Jerusalem was made early or if it appeared later in response to cultural changes.

Due to the interpretation of שלם in מלך שלם as denoting Jerusalem, the majority of scholars state that the interpretation is somehow connected to the city of Jerusalem. The purpose of this section is not to determine the location or exact meaning of שלם, but rather to demonstrate that the association of Salem with Jerusalem is tentative, and may therefore not factor into the meaning of the text. This is especially important because it will ascertain whether an identification of Salem to Jerusalem would have been understood by the early readers. It will also determine whether the Israelites themselves had made the parallel between Salem and Jerusalem and if this appellation was particular to them.

Various designations and interpretations of the word שלם will also be considered. For example, some scholars propose that שלם refers not to Jerusalem, but rather to Shechem, as Shechem is a prominent site that has many associations with the patriarchs in the Pentateuch. On the other hand, the customary meaning of שלם in the Hebrew Bible is 'peace'. In light of this, it is plausible that the biblical writer characterized Melchizedek not as a king of a specific location, but rather symbolically, as a king of peace.

1.2.5 צדק in Personal Names

This section will provide an assessment of the use of *zedek* in personal names in Palestine. Therefore I will be approaching this subject diachronically. While this enquiry attempts to trace the use of the element of *zedek* in the A.N.E milieu prior to the conquest of Jerusalem by David, it does not attempt to trace the history or origins of names (onomastics). To facilitate a determination as to whether *zedek* was particular to pre-Israelite Jerusalem or if it was common throughout Palestine, an examination of the use of the element of צדק in non-Jerusalemite sources will be undertaken. This study is necessitated by the Biblical mention of a king (Adonizedek) and a priest (Zadok), both of which contain the element צדק. As these individuals are residents of Jerusalem, scholars attempt to place Melchizedek in Jerusalem in the basis of his name. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether the element of צדק in personal names is limited to Jerusalem and if it supports the identification of Salem to Jerusalem.

In sum, working with the text in its original language will reveal literary devices employed by the writer to establish unity and will also demonstrate where the emphasis is being placed. Additionally, an evaluation of שלם in extra biblical and biblical sources will establish whether an identification with Jerusalem is justified and if the emphasis is to be placed on the Melchizedek pericope (Gn 14:18-20). Included in this evaluation will be an examination of the use of צדק in personal names in Jerusalem. Together, these aspects will facilitate in determining the meaning of the chapter in light of the whole.

1.3 Conclusion

As we can see, the conclusions concerning Gn 14:18-20 drawn by the majority of scholars, presuppose an association between Salem and Jerusalem. They then build upon this connection to determine the meaning of the text and, in particular, the Melchizedek episode. This approach, however, neglects to take into consideration the context into which the pericope is set. Abram joined the battle in response to Lot's capture by the four eastern kings. He recovers not only Lot but all the booty from the kings and refused any share of it. The war and spoils of the war make up the bulk of the narrative and so must hold more significance in the interpretation than is often given. While many of the methods I utilize approach the text diachronically, ultimately the meaning will be found in the final form. In what follows, I will offer an alternative interpretation of the text and in so doing I will provide counter arguments to the current understanding of the narrative.

Chapter 2 - The Text

One of the many problems related to the study of Gen 14 pertains to its translation or more precisely to how scholars understand the different verb forms and divisions in the text. For example, the unity of the pericope in vs. 18-20 to the rest of the narrative of 14 is especially debated in scholarship. As will be demonstrated, while unity may not be apparent in translations, an analysis of the grammatical construction in the original language will illustrate clearly that it is, in fact, unified. As my argument will be based on the syntax of the narrative, I will first present an annotated translation of the text which considers the function of the Hebrew verb forms within their larger unit. As my focus pertains only to verses 11-24, I will provide a translation of 14:11-24. This macro-syntactic approach will help resolve some of the debated issues pertaining to the structure and purpose of Genesis 14.

2.1 The Story Unfolds; 14:11-17

14:11 וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת כָּל־רְכֻשׁ סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה וְאֶת־כָּל־אָכְלָם וַיֵּלֵכוּ (wayyiqtol)

14:12 וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־לוֹט וְאֶת־רְכֻשׁוֹ בֶּן־אֲחִי אַבְרָם‎* וַיֵּלֵכוּ (wayyiqtol)

וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב בִּסְדֹם:(SNC)

14:13 וַיָּבֹא הַפָּלִיט וַיַּגֵּד לְאַבְרָם הָעִבְרִי (wayiqtol)

וְהוּא שֹׁכֵן בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא הָאֱמֹרִי אֲחִי אֶשְׁכֹּל וַאֲחִי עָנֵר וְהֵם בַּעֲלֵי בְרִית־אַבְרָם: (SNC)

14:14 וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיוᵃ וַיָּרֶק (wayyiqtol)

כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו (x-qatal)[37]

וַיָּרֶק אֶת־חֲנִיכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׁמֹנָה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וַיִּרְדֹּף עַד־דָּן:[38] (wayyiqtol)

14:15 וַיֵּחָלֵק עֲלֵיהֶם לַיְלָה הוּא וַעֲבָדָיו וַיַּכֵּם וַיִּרְדְּפֵם עַד־חוֹבָה (wayyiqtol)

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[36] *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia, 5ᵗʰ Printing*, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997, p. 19, MT text reads 'son of the brother of Abram.' Concerning this, the BHS notes that ᵃבֶּן־אֲחִי אַבְרָםᵃ is an addition; the notation is found in the critical apparatus, however it is included in the LXX.

[37] A. Niccacci, p. 30, the interruption of the *wayyiqtol* by the *qatal* verb form in this instance indicates a change in the level of information; in this case it is used to provide commentary – Lot had been captured.

[38] 14:14ᵃ 1 c Samaritan Pentateuch וַיָּדֶק thus perhaps LXX (ηριθμησεη), literally 'the one he *counted* as his own brother' (emphasis mine).

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אשרט משמאל מרע לדמשק (SNC):

14:16 וישב את כל־הרכש (wayyiqtol)

וגם את־לוט אחיו ורכשו השיב וגם את־הנשים ואת־העם: (waw-x-qatal)

14:17 ויצא מלך־סדם לקראתו (wayyiqtol)

אחרי שובו מהכות את־כדר־לעמר ואת־המלכים אשר אתק אל־עמק

שוה הוא עמק המלך: (SNC)

v.11 Then they took all of the property of Sodom and Gomorrah and all of the food and they left.

v. 12 And they took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his property, and they left. And he dwelt in Sodom.

v. 13 And the fugitive came and told Abram, the Hebrew, [who] was dwelling in oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner, [who were] allies of Abram.[39]

v. 14 And Abram heard that his brother[40] was captured. So he mustered his trained servants,[41] three hundred and eighteen, and he pursued [them] as far as Dan.

v. 15 During the night, he divided himself and his servants, and he smote them, and he pursued them until Hobah which is north[42] of Damascus.

v. 16 And he returned all the property and he returned also Lot, his brother, and the property and also the women and the people.

v. 17 And the King of Sodom came out to meet him upon his return from smiting Chedar-laomer and the kings who [were] with him in the valley of Shaveh that [is] the valley of the kings.

Although this section of the text, begins in vs. 5b with a change in the grammatical construction of narrative *wayyiqtols,* as noted above I will begin my translation with vs. 11. This segment consists of a series of narrative *wayyiqtols* which indicates that the story is unfolding. The *wayyiqtol* chain is at times broken with simple noun clauses whose purpose is to provide some comment on the information which precedes it in the *wayyiqtol* construction.[43]

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[39] [...] and they lord (construct state) of a covenant [with] Abram.

[40] I am retaining the literal translation of אחיו, 'his brother' rather than the interpretative translation of 'his nephew' that is often made to maintain harmony with vs. 12. This transition in the relationship will be discussed below.

[41] [..] those born to his servants in his house[...].

[42] The Hebrew expression 'to the left' denotes the direction north.

[43] A. Niccacci, p. 187.

v. 18 וּמַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם הוֹצִיא לֶחֶם וָיַיִן (waw-x-qatal)
וְהוּא כֹהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן: (SNC)
v.19 וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמַר (wayyiqtol)
בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: (SNC)
אֲשֶׁר־מִגֵּן צָרֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ (x-qatal)
v.20 וּבָרוּךְ אֵל עֶלְיוֹן (SNC)
אֲשֶׁר־מִגֵּן צָרֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ (x-qatal)
וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ מַעֲשֵׂר מִכֹּל: (wayyiqtol)

v. 18 At the same time, Melchizedek, king of Shalem, brought bread and wine; he is a priest to El Elyon.
v. 19 Then he blessed him and said,
    "Blessed be Abram by El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth.
    v. 20 And blessed be El Elyon,
        who has delivered your enemy into your hand."
And he gave him a tenth from all.

Verse 18 interrupts the flow of the account of the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom. It begins with a nominal element (X) followed by a *qatal* verb form, thus disrupting the narrative *wayyiqtol* chain. This is to be expected as a *qatal* verb never appears in first position in Hebrew narrative. The nominal element is then considered the x-element in the *x – qatal* grammatical construction. Its function is twofold: (1) to express simultaneous action and (2) to provide information for the proceeding narrative.[44] Additionally, the *qatal* construction provides information which acts as a prelude to the narrative which follows and can sometimes develop into a "short independent narrative." The Melchizedek pericope which is initiated by the *(waw)x- qatal* is then followed by a series of *wayyiqtol* verb forms which continue into the resumption of the meeting between the King of Sodom and Abram. This signifies that there is cohesion between the

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[44] A. Niccacci, p. 63.

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Melchizedek episode (vv. 18-20) and the account of the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom (vv. 17, 21-24) and should, therefore, be viewed as one unit.

2.3 The Encounter between Melchizedek and Abram: 14:18-20

v. 21 וַיֹּאמֶר מלך־סדם אל־אברם (wayyiqtol)
תֶּן־לִי הנפש והרכש קח־לך: (qatal)[45]
v. 22 וַיֹּאמֶר אברם אל־מלך סדם (wayyiqtol)
הֲרִימֹתִי ידי אל־יהוה אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ (qatal)
v. 23 אם־מחוט ועד שרוך־נעל וְאִם־אֶקַּח מכל־אשר־לך (waw-x-yiqtol)
וְלֹא תֹאמַר אני (indicative waw-x-yiqtol)
הֶעֱשַׁרְתִּי את־אברם (qatal)
v. 24 בלעדי רק אשר אָכְלוּ הנערים (x-qatal)
וחלק האנשים אשר הָלְכוּ אתי ענר אשכל וממרא (waw-x-qatal)
הם יִקְחוּ חלקם (x-yiqtol)

v. 21 Then the King of Sodom said to Abram,
    "Give to me the people[46] and take the property for you."
v. 22 And Abram said to the King of Sodom,
    "I have raised my hand to YHWH, El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth,
    v. 23 "I shall not take from you a thread or sandal thong or anything that is yours, so that you shall not say "I have made Abram rich."
    v. 24 "Except that which the retainers have eaten, and the share for the men who went   with me – Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, they shall take their share."

Verse 21 continues the narrative concerning the meeting between the King of Sodom and Abram. Having demonstrated that Melchizedek greeted Abram at the same time as the King of Sodom and that vv. 18-20 relate the events which occurred during that meeting, vv 21-24 merely pick up the episode of the encounter between the King of Sodom and Abram.

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[45] A. Niccacci, p. 41, in discourse the *qatal* verb form always takes first position.
[46] הנפש Although in the singular 'person' I have translated in plural 'people' for a more polished English rendition.

Chapter - 3 Unifying Factors within the Text

Although my purpose is to understand the meaning of the text in its final form, relevant to the interpretation of the text is the relationship among its various parts. The necessity of establishing unity within Genesis 14 is due to the many scholarly debates that revolve around the nature of the text and, that influence its interpretation.[47] While the author/editor may have used various traditions, he did so for a purpose. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the traditions have been carefully crafted and that all the parts relate to each other. To this end, a discussion of scholarly arguments relating to the issue of unity will be explored. The purpose of this discussion will be to establish the connections the various parts have to each other.

While it is generally agreed that the battle account provides the background for the narrative, the presumed insertions of Lot, Abram and especially Melchizedek have led to a various opinions concerning this chapter. Specifically, the main issues are: (1) the repetition of words in vv. 11 and 12, as well as the double introduction of Abram in vs. 12 and then a formal introduction in vs. 13, (2) the apparent death of the King of Sodom in vs. 10 and his re-appearance in vs. 17, (3) the interruption of the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom in vs. 17 with the encounter between Melchizedek and Abram in vv. 18-20, and (4) the apparent contradiction between Abram's giving of the tithe to Melchizedek in vs. 20 and his refusal to the King of Sodom, to take anything from the spoils of war in vs. 23.

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[47] See for example, J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, 403-439; J. Van Seters, p. 296; J.G. McConville, p. 95-99; B. Vawter, pp. 196-197.

It has long been recognized that a variety of traditions were available to the ancient writer/redactors.[48] The biblical writers used these traditions, many of which they blended together, in order to convey a specific message to their community. Hence, it is not surprising that a single narrative be comprised of various units. This does not mean, however, that the author did not have available to him literary techniques with which to establish unity. It should also not be assumed that these traditions reflect a redaction history which occurred over a period of years. Equally feasible is the possibility that one author used various traditions available to him and fused them together. Thus one has to consider the ways in which these units are tied together. In order to determine inner textual unity, a consideration of the literary tools, such as chiastic structures, verbal repetitions, and syntax will be the central focus.

3.1 Vv. 11-12

v. 11 ויקחו את כל־רכש סדם ועמרה ואת־כל־אכלם וילכו
v. 12 ויקחו את־לוט ואת־רכשו בן־אחי אברם וילכו והו ישב בסדם

v. 11 Then they took all of the property of Sodom and Gomorrah and all of the food and they left.
v. 12 And they took Lot, Abram's nephew, who dwelt in Sodom, and his property, and they left.

There are two issues often discussed by authors concerning these verses. The first issue revolves around the use of the same verbal forms ויקחו - וילכו in verses 11 and 12. In vs. 11, the author states that the four kings of the east had taken (ויקחו) the

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[48] O. Margalith, p. 504, "As pointed out already by many scholars, the whole chapter is in the nature of a »hero-story« or legend. Consequently, one cannot expect it to be one well-constructed plot, but rather a badly-cobbled medley of episodes dimly remembered from past traditions, which served as frame and background to an exploit ascribed to an ancestral hero, with echoes of memories of mighty conquerors from a legendary period: a para-myth."

possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and then left (וילכו). Vs 12 repeats this scenario,

except that it specifies that they took (ויקחו) Lot and his possessions and left (וילכו).

While most commentators make note of the repetitious use of verbal forms in vv. 11 and

12, they draw different conclusions concerning the purpose of this feature. In what

follows, I will argue that the repetitious use of verbs is a connective device intentionally

employed by the author.[49]

The main argument concerning the exact repetition of words in vv. 11 and 12

revolve around the issue of secondary insertion. Repetition is viewed by some scholars to

signify that some editing has taken place and that additions have been inserted into the

text. For instance, Emerton, Laymon and Von Rad suggest that the repetition of these

verbal forms in vv. 11 and 12 is indicative of vs. 12 being a secondary addition.[50]

Emerton, in particular, bases his argument on the view that "[...] vs. 12 clumsily repeats

words already found in vs. 11, and makes the invaders capture Lot and his possessions

after they have left Sodom and Gomorrah".[51] Additionally, the mention of Abram in vs.

12 appears to anticipate the formal introduction of Abram in vs. 13.[52] Alternatively, the

duplication of words may be viewed as an intentional literary device employed by the

author, as will be demonstrated below.

Van Seters, arguing against Emerton, states "The argument that since vs. 12 is

largely repetitious of vs. 11 it is secondary counts for very little. The repetition may be

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[49] J. Skinner, p. 265, is a prime example of how a lack of knowledge concerning the original language can be misleading. He notes the repetitious use of verbs in vv. 11 and 12, but explains that "this is a mark of inferior style."

[50] J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 407; see also C. M. Laymon, p. 35; G. Von Rad, p. 173.

[51] J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 407.

[52] This will be discussed fully below.

used for deliberate effect to emphasize the capture of Lot."[53] The content of vs. 11 is quite clearly a general statement, "Then they took all of the property of Sodom and Gomorrah and all of the food and they left." Vs. 12 on the other hand is specific and narrows the focus down to what is important, "And they took Lot, Abram's nephew who dwelt in Sodom, and his property, and they left." Thus, the reiteration of events in vs. 12 can be demonstrated to be unified with vs. 11 as introducing a new element (Lot and his possessions) into the narrative as well as placing emphasis on this element. As a result, not only did the kings leave with all the property of Sodom and Gomorrah; more importantly, they left with Lot and all his possessions as well!

The use of repetition in this instance is also a literary device, which I will term a 'parallel structure' for the sake of clarity. I will further define a parallel structure, for my purpose here, as one in which exact verb form repetition is used in order to highlight certain features of a story, e.g. events or themes.[54] While the use of repetition to place emphasis on a specific element is not unusual in Biblical Hebrew, it is more commonly found in a chiastic structure rather than a parallel structure. The difference between a chasimus and a parallel structure is that while the repeated words are found to be inverted in a chiasmus thereby forming an X structure, in a parallel structure they are placed in identical position within the sentence. Thus, in vv. 11 and 12, we have:

11. Then they took (ויקחו) all of the property and food of Sodom and Gomorrah and they

left (וילכו).

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[53] J. Van Seters, p. 298. See also, G.J. Wenham, p.312, he states "The repetitiveness 'took...property...left" is no sign that v. 12 is necessarily an editorial addition. Repetition at climatic points in the story (cf. 7:18-19, 23; 21:1) is a regular feature of Hebrew epic prose style."
[54] This definition is necessitated by the use of 'parallel structure' and 'parallelism' in English grammar which requires that verbs maintain consistency throughout sentences.

12. And <u>they took</u> (ויקחו) Lot, Abram's nephew who dwelt in Sodom, and his property, and <u>they left</u> (וילכו).[55]

Both verses repeat the verbal pattern and are placed in identical positions, functioning similarly to an inclusio. I believe this to be more than a coincidence, but rather a purposeful inclusion by the author to focus the reader's attention on foreshadowing aspects of the story. The details, as stated above, narrow the general statement that the four kings of the east took the property of Sodom and Gomorrah to the specific – they took Lot and his possessions.

Consequently, the repetition of 'they took...they left' is a deliberate literary device intended to highlight a vital component of the narrative; in this instance it is the goods. The use of the exact verbal repetition, which forms a parallel structure found in both verses, is intended to highlight a feature that is a main component to the text as a whole. In this case, it is Lot and his possessions. The features of unity are thus demonstrated by vocabulary and literary devices such as repetition and a parallel structure. While the subject remains on the property, the narrative is narrowing the focus to the capture of Lot and his possessions specifically. The author is employing literary devices in order to indicate important elements. Accordingly, vv. 11 and 12 should be viewed as unified.

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[55] In the Hebrew the verse reads literally as "And they took Lot and his goods [property], son of the brother of Abram, and they went, and he is dwelling in Sodom." Although the verse ends with the location of Lot, the information relates to the person of Lot rather than the actions and events concerning the Kings of the east. For this reason, I have placed the notation regarding Lot's habitation alongside his identification as Abram's nephew, whereby ending the verse with the verb 'they left'. This translation is also found in the majority of English Bibles. In the translations that retain the phrase 'And he dwelt in Sodom, do so by adding this statement as a separate sentence. For example, cf. NRSV, DBY English Bible.

3.2 Vv. 12-13

v. 12 ויקחו את־לוט ואת־רכשו בן־אחי אברם וילכו והו ישב בסדם
v. 13 ויבא הפליט ויגד לאברם העברי והוא שכן באלני ממרא האמרי אחי אשכל ואחי
ענר והם בעלי ברית־אברם

v. 12 And they took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his property, and they left. And he dwelt in Sodom.[56]
v. 13 And the fugitive came and told Abram, the Hebrew, [who] was dwelling in oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner, [who were] allies of Abram.

The difficulty encountered between vv. 12 and 13 is twofold. First, the phrase

בן־אחי אברם (son of the brother of Abram) in vs. 12 is deemed syntactically awkward in

that this phrase follows רכשו 'his goods' rather than the more natural referent 'Lot.'[57]

Secondly, this phrase appears to anticipate Abram, even though he is introduced formally

as אברם העברי (Abram the Hebrew) in vs. 13.

I would suggest, however, that this phrase בן־אחי אברם is necessary as it recalls

Genesis 11:27, which designates Lot as the son of Haran, Abram's brother. It provides

continuity with the Abram/Lot saga. While the phrase is arguably clumsy, it is

nevertheless indispensable in order to recognize Lot as the same Lot mentioned in

Genesis 11 and 13. As such, its sole function is to identify Lot. The use of the expression

בן־אחי אברם is necessary and provides cohesion within the Abraham/Lot saga.

The second issue is that the expression בן־אחי אברם appears to anticipate the

involvement of Abram, who is formally introduced as אברם העברי (Abram the Hebrew)

in vs. 13. Why would the author introduce Abram twice? Emerton, following Gunkel,

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[56] Although I have omitted the phrase 'בן־אחי אברם' in my translation (see chapter 2), I have retained it here as many arguments pertain to it.
[57] J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 407; J. Van Seters, p. 298.

views the expression בן־אחי אברם as a secondary addition. While Gunkel suggests the

removal of this expression (בן־אחי אברם), Emerton goes further and proposes that the

whole verse (12) could just as well be viewed as secondary and therefore be removed.[58]

Van Seters, responding to Emerton states:

> [...]The same order of vv. 11 and 12 is maintained in vs.
> 16." (He adds fn 7 that) Emerton's suggestion that vs. 12 be
> removed is difficult to understand in light of the fact that it
> would involve a [...] complete reconstruction of the story in
> which Abraham goes to the assistance of Sodom [...][59]

As discussed above, the phrase בן־אחי אברם, however, is not intended to introduce

Abram; its purpose is to identify Lot. The view that the introduction of Lot as Abram's

nephew also appears to introduce Abram is not clear. It functions more as a footnote. It

introduces Lot. Which Lot? The same one who travelled from Haran to Canaan with

Abram; the son of his (Abram) brother mentioned in Gn 11:27. Therefore, the argument

that this phrase is secondary in light of the formal introduction of Abram in vs. 13 is moot

as the focus is not Abram at all.[60] Consequently, I would suggest that the expression

בן־אחי אברם has a purpose and is integral to the narrative unit.[61]

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[58] J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 407.

[59] J. Van Seters, p. 298.

[60] The Biblical text employs the term 'Hebrew' in three ways: (1) during the period that the Israelites spent in Egypt, (2) they are used when an Egyptian or Philistine speaks of the Israelites (Gn. 39:17; 41:12; Ex. 1:16, 22; 1 Sam 4:6, 9; 13:19; 14:11; 29:3) and (3) when an Israelite speaks to an Egyptian (Gn. 40:15; Ex. 1:19; 2:7; 3:18; 5:3; 7:16 9:1, 13). The term is also employed by the editor to distinguish the Israelites from the Egyptians (Gn. 43:32; Ex. 1:15; 2:11, 13). Although, its usage in Genesis 14 falls outside these grouping, a discussion of this term is outside the scope of this paper. See J. Van Seters, "Personal Names, Peoples and Places" in J. Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, p. 55; H. Cazelles, "The Hebrews" in D.J. Wiseman, *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973, pp. 1-24; V.P. Hamilton, p. 404.

[61] G.W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature,* Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1983, p. 119, understands this unit to be part of the larger Abraham-Lot narrative, particularly as a counterpart to chapter 13.

33

Genesis 14:10

v. 10 ועמק השדים בארת חמר וינסו מלך־סדם ועמרה ויפלו־שמה והנשארים הוה נסו
v. 17 ויצא מלך־סדם לקראתו אחרי שובו מהכות את־כדר־לעמר ואת־המלכים אשר אתק
אל־עמק הוא עמק המלך שוה

v. 10 And the Valley of Siddim had many pits of bitumen. And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, while the survivors fled towards the mountains.
v. 17 And the King of Sodom came out to meet him, after he returned from attacking Chedarlaomer and the kings who were with him, in the Valley of Shaveh, that is the Valley of the Kings.

The account of the kings falling into the bitumen pits (vs. 10), but later returning to greet Abram upon his return (vs. 17), has also been identified as problematic.[62] In fact, 'How can the king, who has previously died in the tar pits, later return to greet Abram?'[63] To resolve this dilemma, Driver and Van Seters posit that it was not the kings who had fallen, but rather the people who were with them.[64] Wenham and Alter, on the other hand, note that the verse implies that it was, in fact, the kings who had fallen into the pit. As will be demonstrated, the difficulty concerning who had fallen into the pits can be explained by a macro syntactical analysis of the text[65].

In vs. 10, a shift occurs from the *wayyiqtol* (וינסו, ויפלו) in the first clause to the *waw-x-qatal* (ו X נסו) in the second clause is used to provide contrast between the groups when they came to bitumen pits.

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[62] C.M. Laymon, p. 36-37;

[63] S.R. Driver, p. 163; J. Van Seters, "Abraham's Victory" p. 301; Contra, R. Alter, p. 59, translates vs. 10b "and the kings of Sodom of Gomorrah fled there and leaped into them (the pits)".

[64] G.J. Wenham, p. 312 offers two possible solutions, (1) that it was the kings who had fallen and (2) that it was the people. Although, he offers no conclusion, he does state that the verse appears more to imply that it was, in fact, the kings who had fallen. D.M. Bétoudji, p. 58, states : "Le rédacteur aurait simplement voulu dire qu'une partie des rois rebelles et leur armée était tombée dans les puits de bitume et qu'une autre se serait sauvée."

[65] See section 1.2.1 of methodology.

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"[..]And they fled (וַיָּנֻסוּ), the king of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they fell (וַיִּפְּלוּ) there, (first clause)
while the survivors to the mountains they fled (נָסוּ) (second clause).

The text does not allow for an interpretation that it was the people who fell into the bitumen pits.[66] In the first clause the subject is kings. This subject is maintained by the *wayyiqtol* verb form, while the shift to *waw-x-qatal* introduces a new subject – the people who were with the kings. On the one hand, the kings fell into the tar pits, while on the other hand, the people fled to the mountains.

This in turn leads to a conflicting circumstance. How can the King of Sodom, who fell into the tar pit (vs. 10), have survived the experience to return in vs. 17. Although it is not explicitly stated, it is sometimes assumed that the king met his death in the tar pit.[67] The verb used is נפל 'to fall' and it has two meanings, both of which must be considered. The literal or primary meaning is 'to fall'. The second meaning has a more nuanced connotation of 'to lower', which implies a voluntary action on the part of the agent.[68] For example, Gen. 24:64, referring to Rebekah, states that she 'lowered herself' וַתִּפֹּל [lit., "fell"!] from her camel. As one does not make oneself *fall* when dismounting an animal, but rather *lowers* oneself onto the ground, it provides a precedent for the use of the verb as a voluntary action. It may thus be maintained that the kings had purposely lowered

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[66] Contra D.M. Bétoudji, p. 58, argues that the text does not state that king died (vs. 10) as he reappears in vs. 17. He argues that the narrator is simply stating that a party of kings had rebelled and that their army fell into the bitumen pits, but that some survived. This argument, however, is quite vague and not supported by the text.

[67] G.J. Wenham, p. 313, offers no conclusion but notes that the translation 'he fell in' implies death, but that later reappearance of the King of Sodom on vs. 17 contradicts this understanding.

[68] Y. Muffs "Abraham the Noble Warrior: Patriarchal Politics and Laws of War in Ancient Israel" *JJS* 33 (1982), p. 81fn. 1. V.P. Hamilton, p. 403 cf Gn. 25:18; 1 Sam. 29:3; Jer. 38:19." N.M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis,* Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989, p. 359, cf Gn. 17:3; Gn. 33:4.

themselves into the tar pits and hid there until the danger had passed. Therefore, the

action need not imply certain death. Additionally, the nature of the bitumen pits must also

be taken into account in order to understand why they would have deliberately lowered

themselves into a tar pit. Concerning the physical nature of the bitumen pits in the Dead

Sea area, Nissenbausm asserts:

> The surface occurrences of asphalt in the Dead Sea basin
> are in two major forms: The cement of conglomerates that
> line dry river beds, such as in Nahal Heimar, or as small
> seepages and cavity fillings in Upper Cretaceous rocks as
> in Nahal Heimar and Massad [...] the second, and most
> spectacular, is as large blocks of pure asphalt which can be
> sporadically found floating on the lake and which are
> carried to the shore by winds and currents. The asphalt
> which is found today is quite hard, although some of the
> seepages are very viscous and can slowly flow when the
> ground temperature reaches above 40°C. In any case it is
> difficult to reconcile those occurrences with that of asphalt
> pits into which a person, or animal can sink.[69]

In light of data from research in geology, it is unlikely that they would have died as a

result of being in the tar pit. More plausible is the notion that the kings deliberately hid

themselves in the bitumen, knowing they would not die, until the danger had passed.

Thus, the event of the kings 'falling' into bitumen pits in vs. 10 does not contradict the

later reappearance of the King of Sodom in vs. 17.

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[69]A. Nissenbausm, "And the Vale of Siddim was Full of Slime (= bitumen, asphalt?) Pits" Gen. 14:10 in
R.J. Hill et al, *Geochemical Investigations In Earth And Space Science: A Tribute to Isaac R. Kaplan*, The
Netherlands: Elsevier Science, 2004, p. 360.

Genesis 14:17

ויצא מלך־סדם לקראתו אחרי שובו מהכות את־כדר־לעמר v. 17
ואת־המלכים אשר אתו אל־עמק שוה הוא עמק המלך
ומלכי־צדק מלך שלם הוציא לחם ויין והוא כהן לאל עליו v. 18
ויברכהו ויאמר ברוך אברם לאל עליון קנה שמים וארץ v. 19
וברוך אל עליון אשר־מגן צריך בידך ויתן־לו מעשר מכל v. 20
ויאמר מלך־סדם אל־אברם תן־לי הנפש והרכש קח־לך v. 21
ויאמר אברם אל־מלך סדם הרימתי ידי אל־יהוה אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ v. 22
ויאמר אברם אל־מלך סדם הרימתי ידי אל־יהוה אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ v. 23
בלעדי רק אשר אכלו הנערים וחלק האנשים אשר הלכו אתי ענר אשכל וממרא הם יקחו v. 24
חלקם

v. 17 And the King of Sodom came out to meet him upon his return from smiting Chedar-laomer and the kings who [were] with him in the valley of Shaveh, that [is] the valley of the kings.

v. 18 At the same time, Melchizedek, king of Shalem, brought bread and wine; he is a priest to El Elyon.

v. 19 Then he blessed him and said,

> "Blessed be Abram by El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth.

v. 20 And blessed be El Elyon,

> who has delivered your enemy into your hand."

And he gave him a tenth from all.

v. 21 Then the King of Sodom said to Abram,

> "Give to me the people[70] and take the property for you."

v. 22 And Abram said to the King of Sodom,

> "I have raised my hand to YHWH, El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth,

> v. 23 "I shall not take from you a thread or sandal thong or anything that is yours, so that you shall not say "I have made Abram rich."

> v. 24 "Except that which the retainers have eaten, and the share for the men who went with me – Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, they shall take their share."

The difficulty encountered in vv. 17-24 concerns the presumed interruption of the

Melchizedek episode (vv. 18-20) into the account of the meeting between Abram and the

King of Sodom (vv. 17,21-24). For this reason, most scholars suggest that this indicates a

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[70] הנפש Although in the singular 'person' I have translated in plural 'people' for a more polished English rendition.

composite nature for the text. In what follows I will present the problems one by one and propose counter arguments for each.

The first issue, much debated in scholarship, is the interruption of the Melchizedek pericope (vv. 18-20) into the encounter between Abram and the King of Sodom. In vs. 17, the King of Sodom comes out to meet Abram upon his victorious return from battle. Yet, vs. 18 interrupts the meeting between Abram and the ing of Sodom and introduces a new character: Melchizedek, מלך שלם, a priest to El Elyon, who comes out to meet with Abram. After a brief narrative relating the events of the meeting between Melchizedek and Abram (vv. 19-20), the story returns to the meeting between the King of Sodom and Abram (vv. 21-24).

Most scholars highlight the abrupt appearance of Melchizedek onto the scene as indicative of a later insertion.[71] Not only does he interrupt the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom, he had no previous involvement in the battle. He appears out of nowhere, offers a meal and a blessing to Abram, and disappears from the scene. As noted above, it is not surprising that a book of the Bible is composed of various traditions. Yet, these fragments of tradition were blended together in such a way that the meaning is to be found in the whole.[72] A macro syntactical analysis will demonstrate that unity is, in fact, inherent in this pericope.

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[71] See especially J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 408; J. Van Seters, "Abraham's Victory" p. 299.
[72] N.M. Sarna, p. xvi, "it is beyond doubt that the Book of Genesis came down to us, not as a composite of disparate elements but as a unified document with a life, coherence, and integrity of its own. For this reason, a fragmentary approach to it cannot provide an adequate understanding of the whole."

Bearing in mind that in Hebrew narrative, the *wayyiqtol* is the verbal form used to develop the story proper; it makes the story move forward.[73] Vs 17 opens with a *wayyiqtol* in first position, ויצא 'Then he came out'. Vs. 18 contains a shift from the *wayyiqtol* to the *waw-x-qatal*, ומלכי־זדק מלך שלם הוציא 'And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out.' In narrative, *qatal* never takes first position in a sentence; it is always preceded by a nominal or adverbial element. The nominal or adverbial element becomes the X element in the verbal construction, hence, *(waw)x-qatal* (the *waw* is optional).[74] In vs. 18, it is a nominal element with a *waw*, ומלכי־זדק מלך שלם. The introduction of Melchizedek in vs. 18 into the narrative begins with a *waw-x-qatal* ומלכי־זדק מלך שלם הציא which interrupts the *wayyiqtol* chain in vs. 17. The account relating the events that transpired between Melchizedek and Abram (vv. 19-20) consists of two *wayyiqtol* constructions; in vs.19 ויברכהו ויאמר 'and he blessed and he said,' and then in vs. 20 another *wayyiqtol* construction, ויתן־לו 'then he gave to him'. This denotes a shift back to the foreground. The shift from the *wayyiqtol* to the *waw-x-qatal* in vs. 18 tells us two things: (1) that there is a change in the level of information, from foreground to background and (2) it denotes simultaneous action.[75] The author is using verbal forms

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[73] A. Niccacci, p. 29; C.H.J. van der Merwe, p. 39.

[74] A. Niccacci, "The Syntax" p .35; A. Niccacci, "On the Hebrew Verbal System" in R.D. Bergen (ed), *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994, p. 34, 121, because the qatal construction in narrative is always preceded by a nominal or adverbial element is it considered a compound noun clause.

[75] C.H.J. van der Merwe, p. 29, 33; B.K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, p. 233, posits that 'The Hebrew simply has 'and' suggesting that Melchizedek comes out at the same time as the King of Sodom." D. Elgavish, p. 505 suggests that the shift from *qal* to *hifil* is indicative of "an action being performed simultaneously with the previously mentioned action." G.J. Wenham, p 316, maintains that the chiastic structure 'the King of Sodom came out' and 'Melchizedek brought' as well as the taw-aleph link in vv. 17-18 implies this simultaneity. While the chiastic feature supports the unity of the text, it does not indicate a temporal action. And his argument of a taw-aleph link is based on a connection between use of the word 'king' in last position of vs. 17 and 'king' in first position of vs. 18, could be deemed to be fortuitous as the use of 'king' in vs. 17 is a gloss.

to alert the reader that another event is happening at the same time (*waw-x-qatal*) and then proceeds to recount the event (*wayyiqtol*). The shift from the *wayyiqtol* construction in vs. 17 to the *waw-x-qatal* construction in vs. 18 denotes simultaneity. Accordingly, the King of Sodom came out *(wayyiqtol)* to meet Abram *at the same time* as Melchizedek, who in his role as king and priest, brought out (*qatal*) bread and wine. Rather than vv.18-20 comprising a short self contained story, the author is demonstrating, by the use of the *wayyiqtol* form in vv. 19-20 ויברכהו ויאמר (vs. 19) ויתן־לו (vs. 20), that the narrative is continuing to move forward. Two examples especially illuminate this aspect of simultaneity expressed through a shift in the verbal forms:[76]

Exodus 9:23

וַיֵּט (*wayyitol*) משה את־מטהו על־השמים ויהוה נָתַן (*qatal*) קלת וברד

Then Moses pointed his stick towards the sky and <u>at the same time</u> YHWH sent thunder and lightning.

Exodus 10:13a

ויט (*wayyiqtol*)משה את־מטהו על־ארץ מצרים ויהוה נהג(*qatal*) רוח קדים בארץ

(Ex. 10:13a)

Then Moses pointed his stick towards the land of Egypt and <u>at the same time</u> YHWH sent the east wind on the land.

These examples demonstrate that the interruption of a *wayyiqtol* form with a *waw-x-qatal* construction was a common literary feature used to signify simultaneity. In Gn 14: 17 and 18, it is clear that the arrival of both kings was a concurrent action and this is evident in the Hebrew language.

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[76] A. Niccacci, "The Syntax" p. 63.

The second issue concerns the giving of the tithe to Melchizedek by Abram (vs. 20). After receiving a blessing from Melchizedek, Abram gives to Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils of war. The text ambiguously states that ויתן־לו מעשר מכל 'he gave him a tenth of all'. This ambiguity of who gave whom the tithe has led to some interesting theories concerning the origins of this pericope.[77] In the context of the narrative of Gn 14, however, it is clear that it was Abram who gave the tithe. Melchizedek brought with him bread and wine to feed Abram and his men. He didn't bring anything else. Abram, on the other hand, was laden with the spoils of war, and it was from this that the tithe was given. Yet, in his response to the King of Sodom, Abram refuses any offer of the spoils of war, even so much as a shoelace! Many scholars view this as a contradiction; on the one hand, Abram freely gives a tenth from the booty to Melchizedek, while on the other hand, he says to the King of Sodom, that he has sworn to Yahweh that he will take no part of it. As will be demonstrated, these two events are not, in fact inconsistent, but unified. The giving of a tenth from the spoils of war retains a historical custom of the ANE.

The encounter between Melchizedek and Abram concludes with Abram giving a tenth of the spoils of war to Melchizedek. In the context of Gn 14 (a victor returning from a battle with booty), it may be inferred that in giving the tithe, Abram was not only recognizing Melchizedek's position as priest and king but was also symbolically giving to the deity. Wenham notes the pre-historical custom of tithing in the ancient orient. He concludes that since tithes were given to both sanctuaries and kings, Melchizedek qualifies on both counts.[78] Kitchen supports the act of presenting the gods with booty, as

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[77] See especially R.H. Smith, pp. 129-152.
[78] G.J. Wenham, p. 317.

he explains "Because it was always so in the A.N.E."[79] Elgavish, in his analysis of the

distribution of booty, identifies five main recipients of the spoils of war: (1) Allies, (2)

temples, gods and priests and (3) the king or leader (4) the warriors, and (5) those

remaining with the baggage.[80] He continues that: "An important portion of the prizes of

war was given to the gods, their temples, and their priests, since, according to the

dominant worldview the gods went before the army, fought the enemy, and awarded the

victor his success and the spoils that fell into his hands."[81] This corresponds to

Melchizedek's status and blessing. He is a priest, the first priest in fact to be mentioned in

Genesis, and he ascribes the victory to God "And blessed be, El Elyon, who delivers your

enemy into your hand" (vs. 19). In view of this common practice of according the gods

the first share of the spoils, the most that can be drawn from Abram's action of giving the

tithe, is that he gave a tithe to god (El Elyon, creator of heaven and earth) through the

priest, Melchizedek.

In terms of unity, the subject of the spoils of war is maintained in the conversation

between Abram and the King of Sodom in vs. 21. After Abram had given a tenth of the

spoils of war to Melchizedek, the King of Sodom picks up this subject in his opening of

dialogue, ויאמר מלך־סדם אל־אברם תן־לי הנפש והרכש קח־לך. Note also the use of the

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[79] K.A. Kitchen, "Genesis 12-50 in the Near Eastern World" in R.S. Hess, G.J. Wenham, P.E. Satterwaite (eds), *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50, 2nd Ed.*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994, p. 71-72, fn 14, "In Egyptian war-reliefs, such as the great New-Kingdom sets of scenes (c. 1300-1170 B.C.E.) at Karnak, Luxor, Medinet Habu, Abydos, Abu Simbel etc., the scenes of battle, conquest, and victory always culminate in presentation of booty to the gods [...]"

[80] D. Elgavish, "The Division of the Spoils of War" *ZAR* 8 (2002), pp. 255-262.

[81] D. Elgavish, "The Division" p. 257, "This giving to the gods is denoted during the early Akkadian period by the logograms A.MU.RU. The portion given to the gods was not a symbolic tribute, but rather a generous quantity that reflected their standing as the masters of the earth. The first portion of the plunder, and of good quality, was given to the temples." Melchizedek also adds the epithet "creator of heaven and earth" to El Elyon and this repeated by Abram which further corresponds to this notion of god as 'master of the earth.'

narrative *wayyiqtol* which moves the story forward. This signifies that the encounter between Abram and the King of Sodom is connected to and follows the event of the meeting between Abram and Melchizedek. Having demonstrated that the act of giving a tenth to the temple was a common custom in the ANE, it is safe to assume that this aspect would have been obvious to the King of Sodom.[82] The shift from a *qatal* to a *wayyiqtol* chain (vv. 18-20) indicates that the brief narrative relating the events of the encounter between Melchizedek and Abram function as a prelude to what will follow in the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom.[83] In light of this, one can then presume that the King of Sodom was present during the encounter between Abram and Melchizedek. Therefore he was aware that Abram had given a tithe from the spoils of war to Melchizedek and reference to it during the conversation between Abram and the King of Sodom would have been redundant. The King of Sodom would have also understood the significance of giving the tithe to Melchizedek; that it was a religious convention. The subject of the plunder (vs. 20) is carried forward in to dialogue between the King of Sodom and Abram (vv 21 – 24), thus unifying the passage. That the King of Sodom makes no reference to the tithe given to Melchizedek is further evidence that he was present during the exchange between Abram and Melchizedek. He was aware that Abram had given a tithe from the spoils of war to Melchizedek, accepted as a tithe to the temple and not as a claim that Abram made upon the plunder.

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[82] D.M. Bétoudji, p. 60, states "Ce n'était pas simplement nécessaire de le dire, car le roi de Sodome était présent et devait comprendre que la dîme n'était pas incluse dans le butin que lui remettait Abraham. »

[83] A. Niccacci, "The Syntax" pp. 35, 37, 48-49, 65.

3.5 Conclusion

While Genesis 14 may be comprised of different traditions, these traditions have been carefully crafted together using literary tools and vocabulary to unify the story. It is important to identify the uses of the literary devices in the Hebrew language. As we have seen, some of the problems have arisen due to a lack of understanding of the Hebrew syntax. For instance, the repetition in vv. 11 and 12 is necessary in order to narrow down the focus from the general to the specific, in this case, from the property of Sodom and Gomorrah to Lot and his possessions. It also forms a parallel structure which draws the readers' attention to this and alerts the reader to this aspect Equally important is understanding that words have either a literal or nuanced meaning and therefore can be interpreted in more than one way, in this case the verb נפל 'to fall' (vs. 10). Context, and in this case a knowledge of the nature of the bitumen pits, facilitate the correct interpretation of a word. The return of the King of Sodom in vs. 17 should indicate that he survived the pits rather than denoting that vs. 17 is a secondary addition; the reading of vs. 10 therefore should be emended to 'the kings *lowered* themselves in to the bitumen pits, while the survivors fled to the mountains.' This is especially clear as the same verb is used elsewhere in the biblical text in the sense of 'lower.'

Additionally, verbal forms can be used to provide aspects such as contrast (vv. 10, 17), simultaneity (vv. 17, 18) or the level of information, from narrating events to commenting on those events (vs. 16). Therefore, an analysis of the function of the form is warranted, as opposed to the meaning of the form.[84] In biblical Hebrew, the narrative verb form is the *wayyiqtol;* it makes the story move forward. An interruption of the

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[84] A. Niccacci, "The Syntax" p. 21.

wayyiqtol by a *(waw)x-qatal* denotes a shift in tense aspect. In Genesis 14, this shift occurs three times; once in vs.10, once in vs. 16 and once in vv. 17-18.[85] In vs. 10, the shift is indicating a contrast while in vv. 17-18 it signifies simultaneous action. Correctly interpreting the temporal circumstance, i.e. it happened *at the same time* or so and so did this *but* they did that, establishes the inherent unity of the text. Having determined that Genesis 14 is unified, however, it is also essential to determine the unity of the chapter within the Abrahamic/Lot saga and the Genesis corpus.

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[85] The shift in vs. 16 denotes a change in the level of information; Abram returned all the property including Lot and his possessions. As this is not a shift in tense, I will not include it in my analysis.

Chapter 4 - Genesis 14 in its Literary Context

While the book of Genesis is comprised of many stories, they were blended together in such a way as to form one unit, i.e. one book. In order to link together these traditions, the biblical writer used literary cohesive devices to unify the various parts. The present study will focus primarily on the lexical and thematic links.

There is general agreement among scholars that chapter 14 is justified in its placement in the Book of Genesis.[86] Although there is little debate concerning the links between chapter 12 and 14, and chapter 14 and 15, the views pertaining to the link between chapter 13 and 14 are varied, as will be discussed below.[87] Regarding chapters 12 and 14, there is a strong thematic link between the two.[88] The link between chapters 13 and 14 concerns the Abraham-Lot saga and lastly, there is a vocabulary link between chapters 14 and 15.[89] While the issue of unity between the chapters may not be in dispute, the status accorded by scholars to these connections is varied, especially in relation to determining the meaning of the chapter. For example, if one prioritizes the element of the blessing in chapter 14, then its message relates back to the promise of blessing in chapter 12. In this example, the purpose can be said to be the initial fulfilment of God's promise

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[86] G. W. Coats, p. 119; J. Goldingay, p. 12-14; D.E. Green, "The Abraham Cycle: 12-25," in D. E. Green, *The Promise to the Fathers,* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976, p. 59; T.L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 222; V. Hamilton, p. 412; L.A. Keck, pp. 439; Contra, J. Skinner, p. 256 who states that chapter 14 "[...] is an isolated boulder in the stratification of the Pentateuch."

[87] For example, G.W. Coats, p. 119, posits that the link is to be found in the fact that Lot is a resident of Sodom while J.J. Collins, p. 439 states that the issue is justice.

[88] See for example, W.S. Towner, *Genesis,* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, p. 147. G.J. Wenham, p. 321, although he finds the purpose of the text in Abram's encounter with the King of Sodom, he believes that the text is highlighting the King of Sodom's disdain toward Abram and thus evoking the divine curse of Gen. 12:3.

[89] V. Hamilton, p. 412; G.J. Wenham, p. 306.

of blessings to Abram.[90] As will be demonstrated in chapter 6, however, chapter 14 is an essential feature to the Abraham-Lot narrative which includes chapter 13.

4.1 Thematic Link between Chapter 12 and 13

Chapter 12:1-3 recounts God's calling to Abram to leave his home and his family and לֶךְ־לְךָ 'to go' to the land he (God) will show him. Included in this command is the declaration from God that he intends to bless Abram; he wants to make his descendants many and his name great among the nations, and that he wants to bless those who bless him (Abram), and the one who scorns [Abram] will be cursed.[91] In Genesis 14:19-20 the verb בּרך 'to bless' appears three times. The verb בּרך is a key word in the Abram saga and recalls the original blessings of 12:1-3.[92] Goldingay asserts that it is the theme of the blessing, which initiates the Abrahamic saga and runs throughout the entire (Abrahamic) narrative, which is the purpose of the chapter.[93] It is interesting that chapter 14 contains no explicit theological theme outside of vv. 18-20.[94] Melchizedek, in his role as priest, brings the first mention of a deity (אֵל עֶלְיוֹן) to the narrative and it is in this context that blessings are bestowed upon Abram. The theme of blessing is further enhanced by the

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[90] J. Goldingay, , p. 14; G.J. Wenham, p 317; N. M. Sarna, The Battle of the Kings: Genesis 14" in N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, N.Y: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966, p. 117.

[91] The promise of the land is not present in the original promise of 12:1-3.

[92] G.J. Wenham, p. 316.

[93] J. Goldingay, p. 13-14. See also, G.J. Wenham, "Here is the first fulfillment of the promise, as Melchizedek, one of the families of men, blesses Abram. The expected corollary of his goodwill is that he himself will be blessed. In contrast, the attitude of the King of Sodom seems to be that of disdain, and that has grave implications."

[94] K. Waltke, p. 227. Although the deity was involved in every aspect of life in the A.N.E including war, it is surprising that the Biblical author did not clearly mention YHWH, as was his wont, except in the Melchizedek pericope. Waltke states, "The narrators of sacred scriptures exercise control over their sources and aim to celebrate Israel's God. Here, however, the narrator cloaks God's presence in a straight forward war story. He colors his narrative as precise history by giving precise dates and ancient names, adding in parenthesis their modern names for his audience. However, the cloak is an opaque veil to be lifted at Melchizedek's climatic blessing of Abraham in which he honors God's sovereignty over the enemies."

aspect of the spoils of war. Abram gives a tenth to Melchizedek (vs. 20) who was not

involved in the battle, while the King of Sodom receives the entire share of the plunder

(vv. 22-23). Thus, as Towner concludes, both the King of Sodom and Melchizedek can

be said to experience an economic blessing.[95] Additionally, God's wish that Abram's

name become great is also fulfilled as the encounter with Melchizedek conveys the

impression that his victory had become known to those who were not actively engaged in

the battle. In this sense then, Abram's name had become great. Therefore, the connection

between chapters 12 and 14 is substantiated through a thematic link, the fulfilment of the

promises as related in chapter 12. Having demonstrated the thematic link between

chapters 12 and 14, it remains to determine the connection between chapter 13 and 14.

4.2 Abram-Lot Saga: Link between Chapter 13 and 14

The connection between chapters 13 and 14 pertains to the Abram-Lot saga and,

in particular, the issue of the land.[96] In chapter 13:5-13, conflict arises between Abram

and Lot due to insufficient grazing land for their flocks. In order to resolve this

contentious issue, Abram gives to Lot the first choice of the land. Lot chooses to go east

and he pitches his tent in the area of Sodom. The mention of Lot as a resident of Sodom

(14:12 והוא ישב בסדם) recalls the division of the land in chapter 13:12 (ויאהל עד־סדם).

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[95] W.S. Towner, p. 147.

[96] J.G. McConville, p. 112; D.E. Green, p. 59; Contra, L.R. Helyer, "The Separation of Abram and Lot: Its Significance in the Patriarchal Narratives" *JSOT* 26 (1983), p. 80, posits that the central focus of the Abram-Lot saga revolves around the issue of Abram's heir, particularly the understanding that Lot is initially a contender for Abram's heir. The purpose of the land crisis of Genesis 13 was to firmly place Lot outside the sphere of 'heir'. Against this S.P. Jeansonne, "The Characterization of Lot in Genesis" *BTB* 18, (1988), p.125, argues "Although Genesis 15 is the first reference to an heir, the mentioning of Eliezer at this point does not necessarily imply that for the narrator it is only at this time that Abraham has selected him as such [...] The crisis in chapter 13 is not so much over the question of who is heir, but rather the promise of the land."

It also provides the transition from Lot setting up his tent just outside Sodom (13:12) to his becoming a resident within the city of Sodom, and a member of its society, in chapter 19.[97] Because chapter 14 follows the events recounted in chapter 13, a full understanding of the implication of the separation of Abram and Lot must be examined. This will provide a context for the events of chapter 14. Two issues in chapter 13 will be closely explored: (1) the nature of the relationship between Abram and Lot and (2) the nature of the land agreement.

4.3 Nature of the Relationship

Cross and McKenzie have demonstrated, that in the ANE relationships with individuals or groups were often expressed using kinship terminology.[98] This was a common cultural custom practiced by all Ancient Near Eastern peoples including the Israelites. This could mean that the association between Abram and Lot may have been a covenantal alliance rather than a blood tie. The following discussion will facilitate in determining the nature of their relationship.

4.3.1 Covenant of Brotherhood

Lot is initially introduced in Genesis 11:27 as the son of Haran, Abram's brother. Throughout the narrative, Lot is distinguished as the "son of Abram's brother" (12:5;

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[97] In chapter 13, Lot is depicted as setting up his tent near Sodom. Gn.14 describes him as a resident of Sodom. This justifies Lot living in Sodom in chapter 19, as well as having an important position in that city. Chapter 19 states that Lot lived in the wall near the gate. This location meant that all visitors to the city had to gain admittance into the city through him. This position of 'guard' was an important one in the ANE, the guards protected the cities from spies.

[98] F.M. Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel" in F.M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998, p. 7; S.L. McKenzie, "Family Ties: The Origins of Covenant in Israel" in S.L. McKenzie, *Covenant*, St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000, p. 7.

14:12). Surprisingly, when Abram addresses Lot directly in discourse, he uses the word

אח 'brother' (Gn 13:8-כי־אנשים אחים אנחנו).[99] Cross states,

> As social units become larger, kinship ties become
> increasingly dysfunctional as the basis for the larger group;
> but kinship terminology seems to become *more used* to
> express the new bond that ties the larger group together [...]
> such individuals or groups were grafted onto the
> genealogies [...] kinship-in-law became kinship-in-
> flesh."[100]

In light of this, Lot's relationship to Abram may not have been familial, but rather a legal

association, i.e. an alliance. In order to determine the nature of their relationship, two

aspects must first be determined. First, the nature of the relationship between Abram and

Haran, Lot's father and secondly, the possibility of this alliance being passed on from

father to son, in this instance from Haran to Lot[101]

4.3.1.1 Nature of the Relationship between Abram and Haran

With the discovery of many extra biblical texts relating to covenants, especially

Hittite and Akkadian documents, much research has gone into the relationship between

the Ancient Near Eastern covenant and the Israelite covenant.[102] Significantly, the results

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[99] F. Brown, S. Driver & C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2004, p. 26, 119-120. The BDB defines both בן and אח as containing the nuance of 'nephew' or 'a kindred bond.' However, it is only regarding the patriarchs that אח denotes one's 'nephew', whereas בן is more commonly used throughout the Old Testament.

[100] F.M. Cross, p.7; see also, S.L. McKenzie, p. 7.

[101] If Lot was indeed the son of Haran, then it is conceivable that an alliance between Haran and Abram was reinstated with Lot, after the death of Haran. This would also explain the change in Lot's kinship status from Abram's nephew (son of his brother Haran) to Abram's brother. The distinction between 'nephew' and 'brother' is made clear in Abram's statement "for we are brothers" (13:8), the interpretation of אח as 'kindred' is vague and underscores the interpretive value of the translation.

[102] See, for example, G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition" *BA* 17 (3, 1954), pp. 26-46, 49-76; G.P. Hugenberger, "Covenant and Oath Defined" in G.P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as Covenant: A*

of these investigations have led scholars to demonstrate the historicity of such agreements for the second millennium or the patriarchal period.[103] Additional outcomes of these examinations of covenant forms have determined that covenants establish relationships between people and groups using kinship terminology. Hugenberger, while arguing against identifying covenant synonymously with relationship, does admit that "such as definition for ברית appropriately stresses a prominent aspect of covenants and reflects the wide range of application for this term in biblical texts [...]".[104] Scholars have also illustrated that the use of kinship terms is prevalent in the covenant formulae.[105] In this sense it can be construed as referring to a bond between individuals or groups, but not, as we have seen a blood tie. Regarding Ancient Near Eastern and ancient Israelite covenants particularly, father–son, brother-brother and husband–wife terminology is especially common.[106] In particular, the covenant of brotherhood is found among the Hittite treaty texts discovered in the early 20th century. Included in the documents is a treaty between Hattusilis and Ramses II which establishes peace and good brotherhood between Egypt and Hatti. The terms 'brothers' and 'brotherhood' are interspersed throughout the treaty.

Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage, Developed from The Perspective of Malachi, Leiden: E.J. Brill (VTSup 52), 1994, pp. 168-215; S.-T. Sohn, "I Will be Your God and You Will be My People' The Origin of the Covenant Formula" in R. Chazen, W.W. Hallo & L.H. Schiffman (eds), *Ki Baruch hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine,* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999, pp. 355-372 ; and recently, R. Lopez, "Israelite Covenant in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Covenants (part 1 of 2)" *CTSJ* 9/2 (2003), pp. 92-111; R. Lopez, "Israelite Covenant in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Covenants (part 2 of 2)" *CTSJ* 10/1 (2004), pp. 72-106.

[103] R. Lopez, "Part I", p. 92-93 fn 6, cites Wellhausen's view "that the theocratic covenant did not exist in the time of Moses."

[104] G.P. Hugenberger, p. 168-169. However, most scholars posit that *berith* is synonymous with law and commandment as opposed to relationship. See, for example, M. Weinfeld, "ברית" in G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975, p. 255; G.E. Mendenhall, p. 50.

[105] See, for example, F.C. Fensham, "Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant" in H. Goedicke (ed), *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright,* Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 3-21; S.L. McKenzie, pp. 7-8.

[106] S.-T. Sohn, p. 357-358; F. C. Fensham, 122; F.M. Cross, p. 9-11.

Rea-mashesha mai Amana,[107] the great king, the king of the land of Egypt, has entered into a treaty [written] upon a silver tablet with Hattusilis, the great king, the king of the Hatti land, [his] brother. He is a good brother [to me] and I am a brother to him.[108]

It is this element of kinship language in covenantal relationships that may determine the nature of the relationship between Haran and Abram.

Although no textual evidence exists which explicitly defines the relationship between Abram and Haran as covenantal (as opposed to familial), similarities in other relationships may clarify this issue. For instance, 1 Sam. 20:14-20 recounts the event in which David and Jonathan became brothers through covenant.[109] In 2 Sam 1:26 this covenant of brotherhood is maintained as David laments the death of Jonathan his 'brother' אחי יהונתן. The concept of the covenant of brotherhood, therefore, was not unknown to the ancient Israelites. It was in fact as common in Israel as it was in the ancient Near East.

In light of this cultural custom, it is viable that a covenantal relationship expressed in kinship terms reflects the nature of the relationship (brothers) between Haran and Abram. Having demonstrated the likelihood of a covenantal bond between Haran and Lot, it remains to determine the possibility of this relationship being passed down to Lot.

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[107] In Egyptian cuneiform these characters mean "Ramses beloved of Amon."

[108] J.B. Pritchard, "Treaty between Hattusilus and Ramses II" in J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Relating to the Old Testament 2nd Ed.*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955, pp. 201-203.

[109] F.M. Cross, p. 9; M. Weinfeld, p. 257, although the term 'covenant' is not employed in this text, vs. 16 reads "Then Jonathan cut with the house of David [...]" The term 'covenant' is typically supplied.

4.3.1.2 Lot as Haran's Successor

Although no mention of a successor to a covenant is explicitly found in the biblical corpus, there are implied references. Most notable is Solomon's continuation of King David's treaty with Hiram, king of Tyre. 'Now Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his servants to Solomon when he heard that had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram always loved David" (1 Kgs 5:1). The meaning of the word 'love' in the Bible can be viewed as a political concept as opposed to the modern notion that understands 'love' as a strong positive emotion of affection. This political concept of love "has its basis in the ancient Near Eastern concept of covenant in general and, in particular, in the covenant demands of fealty and devotion that ancient Near Eastern suzerains imposed on their vassals."[110] The narrative of 1 Kgs 5:2-11 continues with an acceptance of Solomon's compliance with Hiram's appeal and a treaty is made in vs. 12b "[...] there was peace between Hiram and Solomon and they cut a covenant (ויכרתו ברית) the two of them."[111] Similarly, the treaty between Hattusilis and Ramses II explicitly recounts the death of Hattusilis and the reinstatement of the treaty with his son:

> Behold, the son of Hattusilis, the king of Hatti land, shall
> be made King of Hatti land in place of Hattusilis, his father,
> after the many years of Hattusilis, the king of Hatti land. If
> the noblemen of Hatti land commit sin against him – lo!
> [Rea-mashesha mai Amana, the king of Egypt, shall send
> foot soldiers] (and) charioteers to take revenge upon them
> [for the sake of the Hatti land. And after they have re-
> established order] in the country [of Egypt].[112]

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[110] S. Ackerman, "The Personal is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*'ĀHĒB, 'AHĂBÂ*) in the Hebrew Bible," *VT* 52, (2002), p. 437.
[111] 1 Kgs 5:26 in the Hebrew Bible.
[112] J. B. Pritchard, p. 203

The assumption that the succession of a son to his father's covenant was a frequent

occurrence is also supported by other ANE documents. For example,

> [...] (Du-Tessub recommends his son as his successor)
> When I die accept my son Duppi-Tessub as your vassal.
> When your father dies, in accordance with your father's
> word I did not drop you. Since your father had mentioned
> to me your name with great praise, I sought after you. [...] I,
> the Sun, put you in the place of your father [...][113]

> And as I took care of you according to the request of your
> father, I have now made you swear an oath to the King of
> Hatti and the land of Hatti, and to my sons and grandson.
> Observe the oath and the authority of the King. I, My
> Majesty, will protect you, Tuppi-Teshub. And when you
> take a wife and produce a son, he shall later be king in the
> land of Amurru. As you protect My Majesty, I will likewise
> protect your son. You, Tuppi-Teshub, in the future protect
> the King of Hatti, the land of Hatti, my sons, and my
> grandsons. The tribute which was imposed upon your
> grandfather and upon your father shall be imposed upon
> you [...][114]

Significantly, a common element contained within both parity and vassal treaties are the

military or defensive clauses.[115] Thus, in times of military invasion the parties involved

are to come to each other's aid. For instance, the original treaty between Ramses II and

Hattusilis stipulates a defensive alliance:

> If an enemy from abroad comes against the Hatti
> land...Rea-mashesha mai Amana...shall send his foot

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[113] J. B. Pritchard, "Treaty Between Mursilis and Duppi-Tessib of Amurru," in J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Relating to the Old Testament 2nd Ed.*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955 p. 203.

[114] B.J. Collins, *The Hittites and Their World*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007, p.106.

[115] A common stipulation in both parity and vassal treaties is the call to arms when needed. In the case of the vassal treaty, only the vassal is obligated to come to the suzerain's aid, while in a parity treaty both parties are required to come to each other's aid in periods of crisis. F.M. Cross, pp. 11-12; G.E. Mendenhall, p. 59; F.C. Fensham, p. 127.

soldiers and his charioteers...If an enemy from abroad comes against the land of Egypt and Rea-mashesha mai Amana, the king of the land of Egypt, your brother, sends to Hattusilis, the king of Hatti land, his brother, saying, "Come here to help me against him." In describing the future relations of the two countries, the treaty stipulates, "And as for [the relationship of] the land of Egypt with the land of the Hatti, they are at peace and brothers like us forever.[116]

Similarly, the relationship between Haran and Abram may be interpreted as a covenant of brotherhood. The plausibility of Lot inheriting the covenant of brotherhood from his father increases significantly in light of the Ancient Near Eastern treaty texts. As we will see below, the clause of aiding one's covenant partner will play a significant part in better understanding Abram's involvement in the battle in Gen. 14:13.

In light of the data and knowledge pertaining to kinship relations in the Ancient Near Eastern, it would appear more likely that the association between Abram and Haran reflects a covenantal, as opposed to blood, affiliation and that this relationship was handed down to Lot. Having also demonstrated that this was a familiar practice in the Semitic world, it would therefore have been recognized by the ancient readers to whom this text was addressed. While the covenantal bond between Abram and Lot is not connected to the nature of the land agreement, it provides a context for Abram's involvement in the battle recounted in Gn 14.[117] As the nature of the land agreement will be vital to the meaning of Gn 14:18-20, it is necessary to establish what type of land agreement Abram and Lot established between themselves. In what follows I will explore the nature of the land agreement between Abram and Lot.

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[116] J. B. Pritchard, "Treaty between Hattusilus and Ramses II," p. 202
[117] This will be fully explained below in chapter 6.

4.4 Genesis 13:2-15 Division of the Land

Genesis 13:5-12 narrates the event of the division of the land between Abram and Lot. In this pericope, conflict had arisen between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot over the lack of grazing land for their herds. In order to resolve this issue, Abram offers to Lot first choice of the land. Although it may be noted that Abram was presumptuous in parceling out land not yet his, it nevertheless underscores Abram's faith in God's promise to him of the land in chapter 12. Should Lot choose the land to left, Abram will go the right; should Lot choose the land to the right, Abram will go to the left. Lot surprisingly chooses the land to the east. The Hebrew perspective on directions is east-oriented; one is assumed to be facing east. Thus, to one's right would lie the south and to the left is the north, behind one is the west.[118] Bearing this in mind, Abram's offer to Lot was a choice of the right (south) or left (north) within the land of Canaan. In offering Lot first choice from the 'whole land' Abram was referring to Canaan, the land promised by God. This is made evident in vs. 12, אברם ישב בארץ־כנען ולוט ישב בערי הככר, "Abram lived in the land of Canaan while Lot settled in a city of the plain." This placed him just outside the border of the Promised Land.[119]

The nature of the agreement between them, as depicted in Genesis 13, most probably represents a contract and was legally binding. A discussion concerning covenants and contracts is warranted due to the lack of attention paid to the nature of the

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[118] L. R. Heyler, p. 79.

[119] F.I. Anderson, p. 500, "[...] but the language of 13:12 ("Abram settled in the land of Canaan") suggests that the *kikkār* was not part of Canaan." L.R. Helyer, p. 79, the boundaries of the Promised Land are established in the biblical text. "[...] the eastern boundary of Canaan at the Jordan River from its exit at the Sea of Chinnereth to the Salt Sea. From the south-eastern end of the Salt Sea the border ran in a south-westerly direction toward Kadesh Barnea and then over to the Mediterranean, along the brook or wadi of Egypt (cf Nb. 34:1-29; Jos. 15:1-14; Ezek. 47:13-20").

agreement between Abram and Lot, as well as the many debates surrounding the covenants and contracts, e.g. are they different? The main difference between a contract and covenant lies in the sphere of Israelite life from which the agreement springs. Contracts arise in the arena of private life while a covenant is political in nature.[120] Concerning the legal basis of a contract, Tucker states:

> Contracts are private, legal and economic agreements, such as conveyances, deeds or work contracts. For the most part they deal with matters which could have come before the Israelite court. Contracts belong to the sphere of activity which in modern times is considered civil law, in contrast, e.g. to treaties which are political agreements.[121]

In light of this definition, a contract, while stipulating obligations for the parties concerned, is immediate. It can be established and concluded at the same moment. A covenant, on the other hand, is carried into the future. It forms a relationship between parties with a set of obligations for both sides that extends into the future. The import of the establishment of a contract between Abram and Lot will prove significant in determining the meaning of Gn. 14:18-20. As it is generally agreed that contracts arise from the legal arena, the conflict that arose between Abram and Lot must be shown to have a legal basis.[122]

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[120] G.M. Tucker, "Covenant Forms and Contract Forms" *VT* 15 (4, 1965), p. 487; M. Weinfeld, p. 265-266, 274; S. Ackerman, "The Personal is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love ('ĀHĒB, 'AHĂBÂ) in the Hebrew Bible" *VT* 52 (2002), p. 437.

[121] G.M. Tucker, p. 487.

[122] R. Lopez, "Part 1" pp. 101-102; M. Weinfeld, p. 265; G.E. Mendenhall, p. 50; G.M. Tucker, p. 487; F.M. Cross, p. 7; S.L. McKenzie, pp. 1-2.

4.4.1 Agreement as Contract

The main difficulty in distinguishing between a covenant and a contract stems

from a modern understanding of the terms, which are currently employed synonymously.

In broad terms a covenant is related to a contract in that they share conditions for all

parties involved. There is, however, a definite distinction between covenant and contract

in the ANE. This distinction is based not only in the *sitz im leben* but also in meaning.

The key differences between a contract and a treaty are: (1) covenants require an oath to

conclude the agreement, and (2) covenants establish long-term relations between parties.

Conversely, a contract can be made in which a transaction is immediately completed, the

oath is not essential to bind the agreement and the parties need have no future contact.

An analysis of the meaning of the term 'covenant' also demonstrates that it is not
to be confused with a contract. Weinfeld states:

> The original meaning of the Hebrew *berith* (as well as of
> Akkadian *riksu* and Hittite *išhiul*) is not "agreement or
> settlement between two parties [...] *berith* implies first and
> foremost the notion of "imposition," "liability" or
> "obligation" [...] *berith* is commanded (Ps. 111:9; Jdg.
> 2:20) which certainly cannot be said about a mutual
> agreement [...] *berith* is synonymous with law and
> commandment (cf., e.g., Dt. 4:13; 33:9; Isa. 24:5; Ps.
> 50:16; 103:18), and the covenant at Sinai in Ex. 24, is in its
> essence an imposition of laws and obligations upon the
> people."

Although both a contract and covenant contain stipulations, it is the *continued* liability

and obligation that are not intrinsic to a contract. While a contract can be concluded

immediately, a covenant contains long–term obligations for both parties.[123] This becomes especially apparent with the underlying nuance of law and commandment in a covenant.

Utilizing Tucker's findings on the structure of a contract as a template, a comparison between Gn 13 and the main elements of a contract form will demonstrate that the agreement conforms to the pattern of a contract.[124] From a comparison of various contracts from Akkadian, Elephantine, Old-Babylonian, Egyptian and Sumerian documents, Tucker has identified five basic elements essential to a contract. These elements are: (1) the names of the parties (2) an 'operative' part describing the transaction, (3) in the case of conveyances, specification of the property transferred, usually as a clause in the operative part, (4) some attestation to the process, almost invariably by several witnesses, though there are examples of royal verification; in effect the king is the witness and (5) the date. Consequently, the agreement between Abram and Lot must contain these five elements: (1) the names of the parties; in our text vs. 8 begins: then Abram said to Lot. (2) An 'operative part' describing the transaction. In vs. 9 Abram says to Lot, "Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." (3) The conveyance factor may be found in the description of the transaction which states that Lot is to choose from all the land. (4) Some attestation to the process. It is not stated whether witnesses were present, however, it could be construed that the herdsmen were witnesses to the agreement as they are included in the 'operative part' of the contract or that Abram, as

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[123] This distinction is plays a significant role in understanding the events in Gn 14 as will be fully demonstrated in chapter 6. Briefly, the obligation of covenant partners, especially the defense clause, pertains to Abram's immediate involvement in the battle, while the contract agreement between Abram and Lot will be relevant to understanding Abram's response to the King of Sodom in Gn 14: 22-24.
[124] G.M. Tucker, p. 497.

the superior, was the witness. Due to the absence of information regarding this feature, any assumptions that could be suggested would be a question from silence. Nonetheless, it is plausible that Abram, as the superior in the contract, acted as witness, and lastly (5) the date. These elements can all be found in the agreement between Abram and Lot, except for the date. As the agreement is presented in narrative, it is not remarkable that the date is not explicitly stated. As Muffs notes, "The narrative quality of the text should not obscure its essentially legal function."[125] Having determined the feasibility of a contract between Abram and Lot, it remains to establish the legal basis underlying the agreement between Abram and Lot.

4.4.2 Strife as a Legal Issue

The term used to describe the conflict in Gen 13 is ריב (strife). In the context of Genesis 13, this term may carry with it a legal connotation. This is significant as contracts arise as a means to resolve legal problems. As will be demonstrated, it is the underlying legal issue that will lead to the establishment of a contract between Abram and Lot. Not all scholars, however, agree that the conflict in Genesis 13 contained a legal issue. Hamilton argues against the agreement as having a basis in law. He posits that, were the conflict a lawsuit, they would have had to turn to a third party to act as adjudicator. Since Abram and Lot were able to settle their dispute between themselves, the situation was not a lawsuit.[126]

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[125] Y. Muffs, pp. 228-237.
[126] V. Hamilton, p. 390.

Conversely, Ringgren posits that the term ריב expresses a quarrel which may involve two or more persons, as would be the case here (cf. Gen. 26:19-21).[127] Additional corroboration for interpreting ריב as denoting a legal matter is found in the biblical text. In particular, corresponding conflicts over insufficient resources for flock rights also employ the word ריב. For instance, Gen. 21:22-32, recounts a similar event where water rights were also a source of contention. Significantly, the resolution to this conflict was achieved through the establishment of a covenant.[128] Consequently, Gen. 21 affirms the possibility of resolving ריב by means of covenant, and, more importantly, demonstrating that a legal resolution to ריב was not uncommon during the period of the Patriarchs. In chapter 13, a lack of grazing land led to a dispute between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. In order to resolve this conflict, Abram proposed an offer to divide the land between them. In so doing, he specified the conditions and boundaries of the contract; should Lot take the land to the right, Abram would go the left, if Lot takes the land to the left; Abram will then go the right. Vawter finds in this 'an *ad hoc* covenant by which civilized life was made possible in a simple, pastoral society."[129] Therefore, it is not improbable that there was a legal issue underlying the dispute between Abram and Lot's herdsmen to which a legal resolution was applied.

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[127] G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, H.-J. Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2004, p. 474.

[128] My argument here is to establish that the strife between Abram and Lot had a legal basis. The treaty between Abimelech and Abraham in Gn 21 was of necessity political. The text explicitly states that Abraham was an alien in the land (vs. 23b) and Abimelech was a commander in the army. In order to establish peace between Abraham and the local residents, Abimelech made a treaty with Abraham.

[129] B. Vawter, 183. Bearing in mind the synonymous use of contract and covenant, it is not surprising that the term 'covenant' is often employed by scholars.

Although the link between Gn 13 and 14 is explicit – in Gn 13, Lot chooses to reside near Sodom and is captured by foreign kings in Gn 14 - understanding the essence of the relationship between Abram and Lot as well as the nature of the agreement pertaining to the division of the land in Gn 13 is vital to interpreting Gn. 14. As we have seen, there is unity between these texts and so each part should be relevant to each other. This aspect will be discussed in chapter 6. Having thus established the link between Gn 13 and 14, there remains to ascertain unity between chapters 14 and 15.

4.5 Vocabulary: Link between Chapter 14 and 15

There is general concurrence among scholars that there is a vocabulary link between chapters 14 and 15.[130] A common literary device used by the biblical scribes was word plays. Word plays are achieved through the repetition of a word which then recalls to the reader the use of the same word in other texts. Word repetition may use the exact word or a variation on the root, in this case מגן. The purpose of repetition is to provide intertextual allusion.[131] Thus the use of the noun מגן in chapter 15:1 recalls the use of the verb מגן in chapter 14:20. Although the majority of scholars identify מגן as the word link, Wenham, commenting on chapter 15, goes further and states:

> "After these things." [...] It indicates that some time has elapsed since the previous incident and presupposes the existence of a cycle of Abraham narratives. The present context and the allusions to chapter 14 in this chapter – "deliver/shield" (מגן), 14:20//15:1; "go out," 14:17-

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[130] G.W. Coats, p. 123; J. Goldingay, p. 14; V. Hamilton, p. 412; G.J. Wenham, p. 306.

[131] P. E. Satterwaite, "Narrative Criticism: The Theological Implications of Narrative Techniques" in W.A. VanGemeren (ed), *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: The Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999, p. 123.

18//15:4-5, 7, 14; "property," 14:11-12, 16, 21// 15:14; cf. שלם ("Salem"/ "complete"), 14:18//15:15:16) – make it likely that "these things" means the events described in the previous chapter.[132]

Melchizedek employs the verb מגן in his prayer of blessing to Abram ובָרוּךְ אל עליון אור־מגן צריך בידך "*And blessed be El Elyon, who delivers (מגן) your enemy into your hand.*" Chapter 15 uses the same root when God comes to Abram saying אל־תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך שכרך הרבה מאד "*Fear not, Abram, I am your shield (מגן) and great will be your reward.*"(15:1).[133] Concerning the varied use of מגן, Goldingay rightly states: "*magen* (15:1) [...], from the same root as the verb *miggēn* in 14:20. These are the only occurrences of either word in Genesis to Numbers, so that the link is hardly coincidental."[134]

4.6 Conclusion

Although there is much disagreement among scholars concerning the source of chapter 14, it is unified with the rest of the Genesis corpus, particularly in relation to the Abraham narrative.[135] Chapter 14 is, in fact, an integral part of the Abram-Lot saga.

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[132] G.J. Wenham, p.327.

[133] Although scholars generally agree that there is a vocabulary link they are varied in their interpretation of the meaning in chapter 15. For instance, T.L. Brodie, p. 227; J. Goldingay, p. 14, posits that the connection concerns the covenant with Yahweh. Whereas in chapter 14 Abram 'has been in covenant with human allies (14:13) [...] now Yahweh commits himself to a covenant relationship with him." J.G. McConville, p. 112 maintains that the focus is on the issue of an heir for Abram. "This first section of the story of Abram and Lot (Gen. 13-14) is the first act, as it were, in the drama of the fulfillment of the promise of a son to Abram. When Lot is excluded the need for an heir in direct line is accentuated. The issue is raised again by Abram immediately after the events of Genesis 14 (in 15:1-6)."

[134] J. Goldingay, p. 41 fn. 2.

[135] J.A. Soggin "Abraham" p. 283 "Genesis 14 is one of the texts that cannot be assigned with even minimal certainty to any of the traditional Pentateuchal sources [...]." J.A. Emerton "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 404, "It is agreed by most scholars that the chapter does not belong to any of the sources [...]"; B. Vawter , p. 185, " It interrupts the natural sequence chapters 13 and 15 by intruding in their midst an Abraham

Cohesion is achieved through the use of connective devices such as vocabulary and theme. Allusion to the theme of blessing בְּרֵךְ, which occurs three times in chapter 14, recalls the blessing originating in chapter 12 and is a common theme that runs throughout the Abrahamic saga. Chapter 13 provides a context for chapter 14 as will be explicated below. Thus, chapter 14 continues and concludes the narrative relating the separation of Lot and Abram recounted in chapter 13. Chapter 15 contains a vocabulary link to chapter 14, yet it recounts events which occur after the conclusion of the battle and the victorious return of Abram. The relevance of establishing textual unity is in providing a wider context for individual events. The editor would have ensured a connective element between the various parts to form one story line. Concerning the importance of unity, Alexander states:

> A common feature of much biblical interpretation has been the fragmentation of the text; that is, the contents of a book are divided into small sections which are often interpreted in isolation from one another [...] While it is important to discover the anatomy of a biblical book by dissection, it is equally important to see how the component parts relate to each other [...] As regards the book of Genesis, modern critical methods have increased, rather than lessened, this tendency to fragment the text [...] Even if one grants that it is possible to identify the different sources, whether oral or literary, that were used in the composition of Genesis, this is of itself only part of the interpretive process. It is still necessary to understand how these different parts relate to each other [...] in this regard it is perhaps helpful to compare Genesis to a collage made of different types of material and colours. Merely to note the origin of the different parts or their particular features is insufficient. We need also to observe the way in which they interrelate and the effect which they produce as a whole.[136]

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quite different from theirs [...]"; G.J. Wenham, p. 306, "Generally it has been held that it does not belong to any of the usual Pentateuchal sources, but that it comes from a special source."

[136] T.D. Alexander, "Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis" *TB* 44 (2, 1993), pp. 255-257.

As we will see in chapter 6, the meaning of Gn 14 surfaces when considered in light of

the events of Gn 13.

Chapter 5 - The Meaning of שלם

While the identification of שלם in מלך שלם with Jerusalem is not certain, the

majority of commentators posit that the association to Jerusalem was the intention of the

biblical writer.[137] This identification with Jerusalem is significant in determining the

meaning of the chapter and is the premise on which most scholars base their

arguments.[138] Yet there appears to be no evidence, biblical or extra-biblical, that supports

this connection. On the contrary, as will be demonstrated, the data is more suggestive of

the improbability of equating Salem to Jerusalem. It is not my purpose here to identify

either the site of Salem or the actual meaning of שלם. Rather, I intend to merely illustrate

uncertainty regarding this interpretation and the implications this will have on

determining the meaning of the chapter. To this end, I will provide arguments pertaining

to the unfeasibility of such an association. Two issues in particular will be addressed

concerning the designation 'Salem' for the city of Jerusalem: (1) extra Biblical and

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[137] For example, J.A. Emerton, "The Riddle" *VT* 21/4, p. 413; R.D. Sacks, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis,* Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990, p. 90; J. Day, "The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy" in J. Day (ed), *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East,* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p. 73; H.H. Rowley (ed), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible,* London: Routeledge, 1999, p. 188; J.J.M. Roberts, "The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition" in J.J.M. Roberts, *The Bible as it Was,* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002, pp. 315-316; contra, J. G. Gammie, pp. 385-396; Gordon, J. Wenham, p. 316, notes the odd use of an unattested form of the name 'Salem'. He admits the possibility of the original tradition being located in Shechem but that the tradition was later transferred to Jerusalem; J.R. Kirkland, "The Incident at Salem: A Re-Examination of Genesis 14:18-20" *StudBT* 7, 1 (1977), pp, 5-10, argues for locating Salem in Shechem; J. G. Janzen, *Abraham and all the Families of the Earth: Genesis 12-50,* Edinburgh: The Handsel Press Ltd., 1993, p. 33, suggests that it is only a possible hint that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem; O. Margalith, pp. 506-508, maintains that Melchizedek is not to be located in Jerusalem and offers many convincing arguments supporting his thesis; D. Elgavish, "The Encounter" p. 496- 498, argues that the ambiguity of Salem was intentional as it reflects multiple meanings. It associates the king of Salem with a covenant as well as geographical locations of the two important cities, Shechem and Jerusalem, which are also connected to the institution of covenants.
[138] See for example, J. C. McCullough, p. 52; J. G. McConville, p. 95; J.R. Kirkland, p. 3; R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmeyer & R.E. Murphy (eds), *Jerome Biblical Commentary,* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1968, p. 18; J. Barton & J. Muddimann, *The Oxford Bible Commentary,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 50.

Biblical attestation for this expression as a hypocorism for Jerusalem and (2) Biblical designations for pre-Davidic Jerusalem.

5.1 Extra Biblical Attestation

Extra biblical documents have established that the city of Jerusalem existed before the conquest by David.[139] References to Jerusalem are found in the Egyptian execration texts which date from 2000 – 1800 B.C.E. The inscriptions, found on bowl fragments and figurines, cite Jerusalem as *'Rushalimum'*.[140] Further discoveries include the Amarna Letters, also Egyptian, which date from the reigns of Amunhopet III and Amunhopet IV (Akhenaten), 1402-1347 B.C.E. These texts identify Jerusalem as *'Urusalim'*, as it is also designated in the Assyrian text of Sennacherib dated to the eighth century B.C.E.[141] This is noteworthy because this provides written data that Jerusalem was never known by the appellation 'Salem'.[142]

The elements that make up the name in the cuneiform and Egyptian are *Uru - salim* and *Ru-shalimum,* while in Biblical Hebrew, Jerusalem is composed of two elements: *Jeru* and *Salem. Uru - salim* may be translated as *'City of Shalim'*, a common construct state which incorporates the name of the deity *Šalim* who was associated with

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[139] L. F. DeVries, "Jerusalem" in L. F. DeVries, *Cities of the Biblical World,* Peabody: Hendrickson Publ., 1997, pp. 197- 200-202; G. H. Jones, "David and Jebusite Jerusalem" in G. H. Jones, *The Nathan Narratives,* Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990, p.119.

[140] J. J. Schmitt, 104-106, remarks that the symbolic shattering of pottery also attests to the importance Jerusalem held for the Egyptian authorities. L. F. DeVries, p. 200.

[141] J. J. Schmitt, p. 104-105; L. F. DeVries, p. 200.

[142] The Hebrew Bible makes only two references to 'Salem': Gn. 14:18 and Ps. 76:3. Of these only Ps. 76:3 equates Salem with Jerusalem.

the city.[143] In the Hebrew, however, it is commonly rendered '*Foundation (yarah) of Shalem* (peace)'.[144] The divine name *Šalim* is consistently found to be a part of the city's name in all the texts.[145] The consonantal vocal change in the Hebrew could be a deliberate attempt to disguise the Canaanite deity's name in favour of the more general '*Šalem*' or 'peace'.[146] The result of this argument demonstrates that while there is continuity in the name of the city from pre-Israelite occupation through David's conquest of the city, at no time, by any people, was Jerusalem known by the appellation 'Salem'.[147] It is unreasonable to assume that the writer of Gn 14 would have designated a city, one that was known and "politically and culturally advanced enough to correspond with a royal court," by an unknown name.[148]

5.1.1 Salem as an Abbreviated Form for Jerusalem: The Tradition

Although the majority of scholars agree that שלם refers to Jerusalem, there are notes of discord with this view.[149] Regardless of how one dates the text of Genesis 14:18-20, at no time in the history of the Ancient Near East, was the city of Jerusalem known as 'Salem'. Interestingly, although scholars mention this inconsistency, none has adequately proposed a reason for obscuring the identity of Jerusalem in the text. If the writer had intended to covertly implicate Jerusalem, the already established designation 'Jebus'

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[143] BDB, p. 436, ref. 3389, citing H. Zimmern, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* and *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* (English Translation of E. Schrader, Keilinschr. u.d. Alte Testament, by O.H. Whitehouse).

[144] G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Vol VI*, Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990, p. 348

[145] J.J. Schmitt, p. 108; W. Sibley Towner, p. 147 states that while A.N.E. texts never refer to Jerusalem as Salem, Jewish and Christian tradition always make the connection.

[146] J.J. Schmitt, p. 108.

[147] J.G. Gammie, p. 389.

[148] J. J. Schmitt, p. 106.

[149] G. Von Rad, p.174; W. Sibley Towner, p. 147;

would have been more fitting.[150] Furthermore, the understanding of Salem as Jerusalem

appears to be a development within the tradition of the Hebrew Bible.[151]

The weakness of basing this argument in tradition is the problem of reading

backwards. While it may be true that later Jewish thought did, in fact, equate Salem of

Genesis 14:18 with Jerusalem, this view appears late in Jewish History, ca. 200 B.C.E

and onwards.

> The King of Sodom heard that Abram had brought back all the captives and all the booty, and he went up to meet him. He came to Salem, that is Jerusalem [...]
> -1QpGenAp col. 22. Line 12-13[152]

> [...] where Melchizedek, king of the city Salem, received him. That name signifies the righteous king [...] however, they afterward called Salem Jerusalem.
> - *Jos. Ant.* 1.10.2 §180[153]

> But he who first built it was a potent man among the Canaanites, and is on our tongue called [Melchizedek], the Righteous King, for such he really was; on which account her was [there] the first priest of God, and first built a temple [there], and called the city Jerusalem, which was formerly known as Salem.
> - *Jos. Wars*, 6.10.1 §438[154]

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[150] Prior to David's capture of the city of Jerusalem, the Bible identifies Jebus with Jerusalem. Jos. 15:8; Jdg. 19:10; 1 Chr. 11:4; 1 Chr. 11:5.

[151] See especially, J.C. McCullogh, pp. 52-66; F. L. Horton Jr., pp. 1-53.

[152] J.A. Fitzmeyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1: A Commentary, 2nd Revised Ed.,* Rome: Biblical Press Institute, 1971, p. 73; J.A. Fitzmeyer, "Genesis Apocryphon" in L. H. Schiffman & J. C. VanderKam, *Encyclopaedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 302, dates this text from the early first century B.C.E., based on its literary dependence to Jubilees and 1 Enoch, to 25 B.C.E through 50 C.E paleographically; B. A Pearson, "Melchizedek in Early Judaism, Christianity and Gnosticism" in M. E. Stone & T. A. Bergren, *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible,* Harrisberg: Trinity International Press, 1998, p. 182, assigns a second century B.C.E. dating for the Genesis Apocryphon.

[153] W. Whiston, p. 45.

[154] W. Whiston, p. 899.

And Melchizedek, the king of Jerusalem [...]
- *Targums Onquelos,* Neophyte Gen. 14:18[155]

The Jerusalem temple was built in his [Melchizedek's] domain, as it says, "And Melchizedek, king of Salem..." [Gen. 14:18] and "Salem" means Jerusalem, as it says, "His [God's] abode has been established in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. [Ps. 76:2].
- *Midrash Ha-Gadol* Gen. 11:10[156]

While these texts make plain the connection between Salem and Jerusalem, it is important to bear in mind that they are Jewish midrash. Midrash is a commentary on the biblical texts that seeks to explain and clarify passages in light of Jewish beliefs and appears towards the end of last era (B.C.E.). Concerning the explanatory note in the Genesis Apocryphon, "that is Jerusalem", there is some question of its originality to the text.[157] Horton posits that,

The identification of Salem with Jerusalem which is to be found in line 13 is a gloss. This fact is obvious from the grammar involved. The addition of the words היא ירושלם cannot be translated as they stand and require subordination to the rest of the sentence as though preceded by די. It is easy to understand how such a gloss written above the word 'Salem; in an earlier copy would be brought down by a later scribe.

Significantly, there is no such gloss in the text of Gn. 14:18. Jewish tradition only tells us what it later came to mean, not what it may have meant to the original readers.

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[155] J. L. Kugel, "Melchizedek" in J. L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to that Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 278.
[156] J. L. Kugel, p. 278.
[157] F. L. Horton, p. 61-62.

Having demonstrated that the name 'Salem' was never used in connection with 'Jerusalem' in the A.N.E., it remains to be determined whether the connection was made in the Biblical text.

5.2 Biblical Attestation

The Hebrew Bible contains thirty references to שלם, all of which are interpreted as 'whole', 'peace' or 'perfect' except for Gn. 14:18, Gn. 33:18 and Ps. 76:2.[158] Yet, many scholars continue to interpret שלם in Gn. 14:18 as referring to Jerusalem and cite Ps. 76:2 as support.[159] This presupposes two things: (1) Salem was a known abbreviation for Jerusalem and (2) that Gn. 14:18 is dependent upon Ps. 76:2.[160] Included in the argument that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem is the association of Melchizedek with Zion (Jerusalem) in Ps. 110: 2-4. As will be illustrated, these Biblical connections are not at all certain.

5.2.1 Psalm 76:2[161]

ויהי בשלם סכו ומעונתו בציון:
In Salem is his lair and his dwelling place in Zion.

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[158] Gn. 14:18; 15:16; 33:18; 34:21; Dt. 25:15; 27:6; Jos. 8:31; 1 Kgs. 6:7; 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; 15:14; 2 Kgs. 20:3; Isa. 38:3; Amos 1:6; 1:9; Nah. 1:12 Ps. 76:2; Prov. 11:1; Ruth 2:12; 1 Chr. 12:39; 28:9; 29:9; 29:19; 2 Chr. 8:16; 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2. F. Brown, S. Driver, C. Briggs, pp. 1022 – 1024. The BDB defines שלם as complete, sound, peace, safe etc, and cites Gunkel and Driver as proponents of the understanding of שלם as an abbreviated form of ירושלם. There is some disagreement whether שלם in Genesis 33:18 should be translated as 'Salem' or 'peace'.

[159] See for example, R. D. Sacks, , p. 89; J. Skinner, p. 267; N.M. Sarna, "The Battle" p. 116; J.A. Fitzmeyer, "Melchizedek in the MT, LXX, and the NT" Bib 81 (2000), p. 65; J. Day, p. 74; H. G. Stigers, p.151; G. J. Wenham, p. 151; J. C. McColluogh, p. 54; Robert D. Sacks, pp. 89-90; W. S. Towner, p. 146-147; R. Davidson, "Genesis 14," in R. Davidson, Genesis 12-50, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 38; G. Von Rad, p. 174; J. Goldingay, p. 32.

[160] S.R. Driver, p. 164; C. M. Laymon, p. 37; H. G. Stigers, p. 151; J. Skinner, p. 268; R. D. Sacks, pp. 89-90.

[161] Psalm 76:3 in the Hebrew Bible.

Many commentators posit, on the basis of the parallel between Salem and Jerusalem in Ps 76:2, that Salem, in Gn 14:18, is in fact to be identified with Jerusalem.[162] While few offer any other premise to support this view, some add that it is an archaic name for Jerusalem.[163] In light of the fact that, except for Psalms 76 and Gn. 14, שלם is always interpreted as 'complete,' 'perfect' or 'peace,' the assumption that Salem, in Gn. 14:18 is to be identified with Jerusalem on the basis of this one citation is weak. Two features, however, tell against this association. First, the use of שלם in Ps. 76:2 could be interpreted as a poeticism and translated as 'peace.' This retains the consistent understanding of שלם in the Hebrew Bible. Concerning the poetic usage, Sarna notes:

> The reference to Salem in Ps.76:3 is followed by a statement about the destruction of the weapons of war. This suggests that the shortened name of the city is a poeticism to produce the effect of *shalom*, "peace." "Jerusalem" has been reinterpreted to mean "city of peace," a symbol that later found expression in prophecy in such texts as Isa. 2:1-5 and Mic. 4:1-4.[164]

Secondly, the use of 'Salem' as an archaic form for Jerusalem, either within the Biblical record or extra Biblical documents, is nowhere to be found. As illustrated above, the full form of the name was used in the second millennium B.C.E. Additionally, both Hamilton and Elgavish note that it was not common for the Hebrews to shorten a

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[162] J. G. McConville, p. 105; G. Von Rad, p. 174; J. Barton, J. Muddimann, p. 50; J. Skinner, p. 268; N. M. Sarna, "The Battle" p. 116; R. D. Sacks, 89- 90; J.A. Emerton, "The Site of Salem, the City of Melchizedek (Genesis XIV 18)" in J.A. Emerton (ed), *Studies in the Pentateuch*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990, p. 57; Y. Amit, "The Sixth Century and the Growth of Hidden Polemics" in O. Lipschits, J. Blenkinsopp (eds), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period,* Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003, p.144; W. Sibley Towner, p. 146-147; John Goldingay, p. 32; Harold G. Stigers, p. 151.

[163] R.D. Sacks, p. 90;C. M. Laymon, p. 37; H.G. Stigers, p. 151.

[164] N. M. Sarna, "The JPS" p. 110; see also, B. K. Waltke, p. 233 for a similar assessment concerning Gn. 14:18.

compound name by dropping the first element.[165] Rather, hypocorism was achieved by omission of the last sound or syllable of a word.[166]

Conversely, Horton notes a chiastic feature in Ps. 76: 1-2 which may indicate that Salem, if a place-name, belongs in the north:[167]

In **Judah** is God known: his name is great in **Israel**

In **Salem** is his lair and his dwelling place in **Zion**
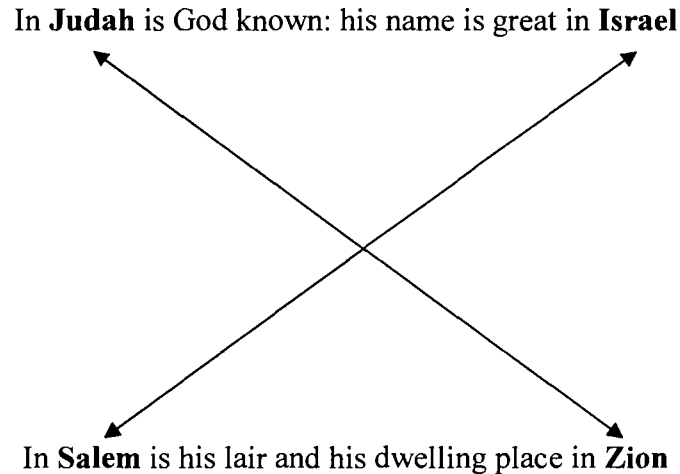
This chiasmus brings out a possible parallel; Zion (Jerusalem) is located in Judah to the south while Salem is in Israel, to the north. Interestingly, many scholars argue that 'Salem' in Gn. 14:18, should be located in Shechem which is north of Jerusalem.[168] The location of Salem in Shechem is made in Gn. 33:18. Upon returning from his meeting with Esau, Jacob "came to Salem, a city in Shechem."[169] It is important to note that while these arguments do not decisively prove that Salem is not to be identified with Jerusalem, they do advise caution to such an association based on the passage of Ps 76:2.

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[165] V.P. Hamilton, p. 409; D. Elgavish, "The Encounter" p. 497.

[166] V. P. Hamilton, p. 409; R.H. Smith, p. 141; J.R. Kirkland, p. 7.

[167] F. L. Horton Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 50.

[168] J.R. Kirkland, p. 8.

[169] J.R. Kirkland, p. 8; J.A. Emerton , "The Site" p. 45; See especially, J.G. Gammie, p. 391. This is the reading of the LXX, Peshitta, Old Latin and Vulgate, as opposed to modern translations based on the Masoretic text which renders the verse "And Jacob came safely to a city of Shechem..."

5.2.2 Psalm 110:2, 4

מטה־עזך ישלח יהוה מציון רדה בקרב איביך:
נשבע יהוה ולא ינחם אתה־כהן לעולם על־דברתי מלכי־צדק:

The Lord shall send forth from Zion your mighty rod; rule in the midst of your enemies. The Lord has sworn and will not repent. You are a priest after the order of Melchizedek.[170]

While there are many difficulties present in the interpretation and *Sitz im Leben* of Psalm 110, my purpose here is to determine whether the mention of Melchizedek in Psalm 110 firmly places the location of Salem in Jerusalem.[171] Many scholars propose that because of the connection of the Melchizedek priesthood to Zion in this Psalm, the Melchizedek of Gn 14:18 is to be situated in Jerusalem and therefore Salem = Jerusalem. Alternatively, if the word מלכי־צדק were to be translated, as opposed to transliterated, the problems with interpretation concerning this psalm are reduced. For instance, Dahood proposes that verse 4 be translated, "Yahweh has sworn and will not change his mind; you are a priest of the Eternal[172] according to his pact;[173] his legitimate king, my lord.'[174]

In his translation Dahood has translated the word מלכי "as a construct chain with the

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[170] I have retained the traditional interpretation of על־דברתי as found in the LXX as opposed to the Masoretic על־דברתי which could be rendered 'because of' or 'for the sake of', both meanings which are uncertain.

[171] Vs 2 appears to address the monarchy, while vs. 4 addresses the priesthood. Some scholars believe that this reflects a lack of harmony within the text. For a discussion on this topic see especially, D.R. Anderson, *The Priest-King of Psalm 110 in Hebrews,* N.Y: Peter Lang Publ. 2001, p. 35; see also J. Van Seters, p. 306; J. C. McCollough, p. 65, fn 22.

[172] M. Dahood, *Psalms III; 101-150 (*AB) Garden City: Double Day & Company Inc., 1970, p. 117 "Parsing the *l͑ōlām* into the *lamed* of property or ownership, noticed in vs. 3, and the divine appellation studied at Pss. 24:6, 7 and 75:10. The most relevant text employing the *lamed* of property occurs in Gn. 14:18...*kōhēn l͑ēl ͑elyōn,* a priest of El Elyon."

[173] M. Dahood, p. 117, "A step toward clarity is taken when the ending of *dibrātī* is isolated as the third-person singular suffix –y, whose antecedent is the eternal, and the substantive given the nuance of *dābār,* 'pact' in Ps. 55:8, 42; Dt. 9:5.: Cf also Eccles 8: 2-3."

[174] M. Dahood, p. 112.

third-person singular suffix –y interposed." Psalm 2:6 also employs the word מלכי in a similar manner, 'But I have been anointed his king..." This is a viable translation and correctly follows the Hebrew grammar. It also casts doubt over the certainty that the Melchizedek of Gn 14:18 was a priest in Jerusalem. The assertion of von Rad that "Since...Ps. 110:4 connects the Melchizedek tradition with the Davidic throne and since Ps. 76: 2 uses the name Salem for Jerusalem, one must here (Gn. 14:18) hold to the identification with Jerusalem" is not at all certain.[175]

While the arguments listed above do not conclusively prove that Salem is not to be identified with Jerusalem, they do offer alternative understandings of the word. Significantly, it weakens the arguments of many commentators that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem in Gn 14:18. The parallelism between Salem and Jerusalem in Ps. 76 has not been established beyond doubt. Neither is the mention of Melchizedek in Ps. 110 clear, as the interpretation by Dahood illustrates. And so, the conclusion that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem, based on these verses, remains inconclusive.

5.3 Salem in Shechem

While the majority of scholars posit that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem, some scholars propose that it was not Jerusalem that was intended, but rather that Salem was a city in Shechem. This connection makes more sense, as opposed to the connection to Jerusalem, for two reasons: (1) in the biblical narrative, the patriarchs, especially Abraham, are associated with the Shechem and (2) the appearance of Melchizedek, as

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[175] G. von Rad, p. 174.

priest, would be more natural in a location long associated with cultic traditions and familiar to the ancient reader.

First, in the patriarchal stories, the writer establishes a connection between the patriarchs and Shechem. The biblical narrative tells us that, after leaving his Haran, Abram built an alter to the Lord at the oak of Moreh, located in Shechem (Gn 12:6, 7). Shortly after this, Abram left Shechem due to a famine and journeyed to Egypt. Upon his return from Egypt, Abram returned "...to the place where his tent had been at the beginning...to the place where he had first made an alter..." (Gn 13:3, 4), i.e. Shechem. Upon the conclusion of a conciliatory meeting with his brother Esau, Jacob arrives safely[176] in Shechem, where he sets up camp on a piece of land that he subsequently buys and he then builds an alter (Gn 33:18). Additionally, Shechem is the site of the covenant renewal ceremony between Yahweh and the Israelites (Joshua 24). Later Biblical narratives tell us that Gideon's son Abimelech sought to establish kingship in Shechem (Judges 9) and that Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was crowned king in Shechem. These passages distinguish Shechem as an important location for the patriarchs as well as continuing the importance into the Monarchic Period.

Secondly, this established association between Shechem and the Patriarchs in conjunction with its cultic affiliation makes Shechem a more plausible location for the Melchizedek blessing on a priori grounds. Kirkland, quoting Landersdorfer, writes:

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[176] There is some debate concerning the interpretation of the word שלם in this passage, as either a place name 'Salem' or an adverb "safely. The translation "Jacob came to Salem, a city in Shechem" follows the LXX, Peshitta, Old Latin and the Vulgate. Many scholars using the Masoretic text, however, have interpreted שלם as an adverb. See especially, J.A. Emerton, *"The Site"* p. 51; J. G. Gammie, p. 391; E. Kautzsch (ed), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* Mineola: Dover Publications Inc., 2006, p. 374, identifies the use of in this instance as an adjective expressing state and therefore correctly *follows* the verb.

It is noteworthy that Shechem appears to have been from the beginning most closely connected with the history of the Patriarchs, particularly that of Abraham and Jacob. First, according to Gn. 12:6, the sanctuary outside the city (which was later made into the central sanctuary for the tribes immigrating into Palestine, from which they pressed outward conquering northward and southward) had already been come across during his (Abram's) immigration from Mesopotamia. He had received in that very place the first appearance from God who promised him possession of the land in the future. Similarly, Jacob, when he returned from Mesopotamia, betook himself first of all to Salem-Shechem and likewise built an alter (Gn 33:20). We must doubtless accept that Abraham identified his God (whom the narrator calls Yahweh) with the God of the sanctuary there, as it follows with certainty from Gn. 14:18ff that he identified Melchizedek's 'Ēl 'Elyôn with his God...[177]

In this view, the site of Shechem as the location for Melchizedek and thus Salem, rather than Jerusalem, appears to be the most fitting. Seldom accounted for, however, is the geography of the area in relation to Abram's return from victory in Gn 14.

5.4 Geography of Abram's Victorious Return

While it is true that Shechem plays a significant role in the narrative for the Patriarchal Period, two details often overlooked concerning the identification of the site of Salem in Gn 14:18 is (1) Abram's habitation and (2) the geography of the area. The end of Gn 13 reports that Abram moved his tent from Shechem and dwelled among the oaks of Mamre, which is in Hebron. Therefore, Abram left his home in Hebron and overtook the eastern kings in Hobah, north of Damascus (Gn 14:15). Assuming he

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[177] J.R. Kirkland, p. 10.

delivered the booty, including Lot and his people to their place of origin, i.e. Sodom, and then returned home, then neither Jerusalem nor Shechem are contenders for the location of the meeting of Abram and the King of Sodom and Melchizedek, because Hebron is to the south of Jerusalem while Shechem is to the north. Concerning the route home, Margalith points out:

> ...the shortest direct route for his return to Sodom and Zoar (vs. 16-17) would be the King's Highway along the east bank of the Jordon to Jericho, and thence either along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea or across the river and along the western shore to Sodom, continuing afterwards to Hebron. Jerusalem lies 50 km west and 1200 meters higher – this route would entail a detour and climb followed by a steep descent of 1200 meters and another 50 km. It is highly improbable that a raiding party returning laden with loot, and accompanied by Lot, his wives and children, retainers and property (Gn. 14:16), would choose this detour for no reason: there is no indication in the Bible that there was a sanctuary of exceptional standing in Jerusalem before Solomon's temple. Moreover, it is even more unlikely that a storyteller in biblical times, familiar with the geography, would recount such a detour, nor would people living in this area in those times believe it.[178]

While this view opposes both understandings that Salem is to be identified with either Jerusalem or Shechem, it does offer another valid option that Salem is not connected with Jerusalem. In light of the above, it would appear that although the argument that Salem is to be associated with Jerusalem is the least feasible, other arguments positing that Salem is a location equally improbable. More likely is that the

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[178] O. Margalith, pp. 507-508.

word שלם be interpreted as a noun meaning 'peace'. This would also be consistent with

the customary understanding of שלם as 'whole', 'peace' or 'perfect'.

Having demonstrated that the argument that Salem is to be identified with

Jerusalem is tentative at best, there remain the presumed association of Melchizedek with

Jerusalem through the common element of *zedek* found in names of people from

Jerusalem. In what follows, I will demonstrate that the element of *zedek* is not limited to

Jerusalem and therefore the association through names is not sufficient to warrant the

conclusion that Melchizedek was an inhabitant of Jerusalem.

5.5 Association through the Element of צדק in Personal Names

Another argument that favors the identification Salem with Jerusalem is cites the

parallel between names, specifically that of מלכיצדק 'Melchizedek' (king of Salem),

אדניצדק 'Adonizedek' (king of Jerusalem) and צדק 'Zadok' (David's high priest in the

Jerusalem court). This argument revolves around the common element of *zedek* in the

personal names of people associated with Jerusalem.[179] As will be demonstrated, this

parallel is far from certain.

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[179] J.J. Schmitt, p. 108; J. A. Soggin, *Joshua: A Commentary,* Philadelphia: SCM Press, 1972, p. 127, notes that while the LXX identifies Adoni*zedek* with Adoni*bezek* of Judg. 1:5, 'it seems better to follow the majority of commentators in regarding them as two distinct persons." Yet, he also points out that no name formed with *sedek* is to be found among the el-Armana document, thus supporting the unfeasibility of identifying the city of Melchizedek as Jerusalem.; G.J. Wenham, p. 316; G.A. Rendsburg, "The Biblical Literature as Politics: The Case of Genesis" in A. Berlin (ed), *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East,* Bathseda: University Press of Maryland, 1996, p.56; J.J. Schmitt, p. 108.

5.5.1 Melchizedek and Adonizedek

Regarding Adonizedek, Gammie explains that the name Adonizedek is not original. It derives from an older tradition found in Judges 1:5-8; the correct appellation would be Adoni*bezek*.[180] Conversely, Vawter posits that it is plausible that Adoni*bezek* is a corruption of the name Adoni*zedek*. He further argues, on the basis of the passage in Isaiah 1:21 which states that *Zedek* once dwelled in Jerusalem, that this personification of justice recalls a former title of Jerusalem: The City of *Zedek* = the City of Righteousness (vs. 26). Therefore, it is appropriate that a king of Jerusalem in the time of Abram would have been called Melchizedek.[181] This line of reasoning, however, is weak. *Zedek* is a Semitic word meaning justice or righteousness, it is a characteristic. According to Koch,

> Isaiah associates the history of salvation with the city and the sanctuary through the election of Zion and the conferral of the community-bound sphere of salvation (Isa 1:21; cf 28:16ff)...Yet the heritage has been wasted...When $s^e d\bar{a}q\hat{a}$ is perverted into its opposite...only the sin-catastrophe relationship remains determinative for the future and will be quickly and completely brought by Yahweh to its fatal conclusion - catastrophe for people and state.

Additionally, צדק has been identified as a deity worshipped in Phoenicia and South Arabia.[182] When used in personal names, however, *zedek* has been identified as a theophoric element. The morphology of the names מלכיצדק and אדניצדק incorporates the י ending, which expresses a genitive relationship. Thus:

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[180] J.G. Gammie, p. 390; J.J. Schmitt, p. 113 fn. 12, the LXX identifies Adoni*zedek* in Joshua 10 as Adoni*bezek*.

[181] B. Vawter, p. 198, he argues that the purpose of the pericope was to bring Abraham and Jerusalem into association.

[182] F. L. Horton Jr. p. 43 fn. 2.

מלכיצדק = king of Zedek (or Zedek's king)

אדניצדק = prince of Zedek (or Zedek's prince)[183]

This shows the common ancient Near Eastern practice of including the deity's name into

a personal name as well as conveying ownership through the use of the genitive case.[184]

While it may be construed that the name conveyed the meaning of righteousness, an

attribute of Israel's God, the fact that צדק was the name of a Canaanite deity must also be

taken into account, especially in light of the obscurity of the location of Salem. The

association between Salem and Jerusalem is not readily made and so the connection

between the City of Righteousness and צדק is also not ascertained.

5.5.2 Melchizedek and Zadok

More commonly cited is the connection between צדק 'Zadok', the high priest in

King David's court, and the second element in the name מלכיצדק 'Melchizedek'. The

basis of this argument is that the passage (Gn. 14:18-20) is intended to support the

Zadokite priesthood in Jerusalem initiated during the period of David's reign in

Jerusalem.[185] This theory, known as the Jebusite hypothesis, states that Zadok, the high

priest in King David's court, was a Jebusite priest whom David retained when he

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[183] F. L. Horton Jr, p. 42. the following scholars interpret as 'my king is Zedek'. Robert Davidson, p. 38; G. Von Rad, , p. 174; G.J. Wenham, p. 316; R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmeyer & R.E. Murphy (eds), p. 19; L. R. Fisher, "Abraham and his Priest-King" *JBL* 81 (1962) , p. 265.

[184] F. L. Horton Jr, p. 42, cf אדניהו (1 Kgs 1:8), אדניבזק (Jdg. 1:5, 6, 7), מלכיה (Jer. 21:1; 38:1, 6), גבריאל (Gn. 46:17; Nb. 26:45), מלכיאל (Dt. 8:16; 9:21), חניאל (Nb. 34:23; 1 Chron. 7:39), צדקיהו (2 Kgs. 24:17, 18, 20).

[185] While the focus of this argument is to demonstrate that Zadok was a priest of the Jebusite cult in Jerusalem, it also attempts to establish Zadok as a descendent of Melchizedek. In this respect, it is pertinent to the discussion of Melchizedek as King of Jerusalem. In a sense, this will entail working backwards, from the Davidic monarchy to the Patriarchal Period.

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conquered the city of Jerusalem.[186] This would have appeased both the Israelite and Jebusite populations regarding the takeover by David as their religious beliefs would have been sustained in the new monarchy. This theory also posits that Zadok was a descendent of Melchizedek.[187] In the books of Samuel two priests of David are mentioned: Abiathar and Zadok.[188] Abiathar is listed as priest (1 Sam. 22:20), before David became king in Jerusalem. Zadok, on the other hand, is mentioned only after David established himself as king in Jerusalem. The assumption here is that Zadok was a Jebusite priest who was already residing in Jerusalem at the time of David's conquest of the city, and thus a priest of the Jebusite religion, while Abiathar was a representative of the Yahwistic religion and descendant of the Shilonite line of priests.[189] Support for this theory is found in the earlier references to Melchizedek and Adonizedek who are associated with Jerusalem and contain the element צדק in their names.[190] Therefore, proponents of the Jebusite theory assert that it was characteristic of the Jebusites in Jerusalem, before and after David, to have the element of צדק in their personal names.[191]

It has been established, however, that the use of the element of צדק in names is not limited to Jerusalem.[192] In fact, this element is found to be common in Amorite, Ugaritic, Canaanite and Hebrew names. Cross lists three patterns into which extant names

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[186] S. Olyan, "Zadok's Origins and the Tribal Politics of David" *JBL* 2 (1982). pp. 177-189; G.A. Rendsburg, pp. 55-59; F. M. Cross, "Priestly Houses of Early Israel" in Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 209-211.

[187] The lack of a genealogy ascribed to Zadok facilitates this assumption. Concerning the genealogy of Zadok and the problems associated with it see especially F. M. Cross, "Priestly Houses" pp. 211-215 and S. Olyan, pp. 181-190.

[188] They are mentioned together in 2 Samuel 8: 17, which is also the first mention of Zadok.

[189] S. Olyan, p. 179.

[190] S. Olyan, p. 178; D. Elgavish, "The Encounter" p. 496; F. M. Cross, p. 209.

[191] S. Olyan, p. 178; G. A. Rendsberg, p. 56; F.M. Cross, p. 209.

[192] G. A. Rendsberg, p. 56, fails to note the widespread use of צדק in names outside Jerusalem.

generally follow. "(1) *ṣidqī-DN*, "the god N is my righteousness (vindicator)," (2) *DN-ṣiduq*, "the god N is (has shown himself to be) righteous," (Ugaritic *'ilṣdq, b'lṣdq;* names in *ṣadaq* (*yahū- ṣadaq*) are by-forms of older *ṣaduq*) and (3) names in which the element *ṣidqu* is a divine name, *bitta- ṣidqī* "the daughter of *ṣidqu, malkī- ṣidqu, 'adōnī- ṣidqu* [Ugaritic *'andṣdq*] 'my lord/king is *Ṣidqu*." Olyan further offers examples of the usage of צדק in Canaanite names. "From Ugaritic texts *b'lṣdq* (Ba'al is righteous), *ṣdq'l, ṣdqšlm, ṣdqn,* and *ṣdqm. Rabṣidqi* is found in the Amarna letters and *ṣidqiya/ṣidqiyahŭ* in the Bible." Thus, the argument which states that Melchizedek is king of Salem based on references to kings and priests in Jerusalem is unfounded.[193] As will be shown, it appears that the association of Salem with Jerusalem is traditional. That is, later Jewish tradition identified Salem, in Gn 14:18, with Jerusalem because the city later became the religious and political center for the Jews. In what follows I will outline the traditional development of Gn. 14:18.

5.6 Conclusion

The interpretation of שלם in Gn 14:18, while one of the most difficult, is also the most important in terms of exegesis. The majority of theories put forward concerning the meaning of the chapter are based on the interpretation of שלם as a place-name and this location is commonly identified with Jerusalem. As demonstrated, however, this claim emerged later in Israelite tradition as Jerusalem became the political and religious center for the Jews. This means that the original (earlier) audience would not have understood

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[193] F.M. Cross, "Priestly Houses," p. 209.

the connection between Salem and Jerusalem and therefore the implication would not have been grasped. Significant to this understanding is the lack of data supporting the belief that שלם = Jerusalem, either biblical or extra biblical. It has also been shown that there are alternative interpretations concerning שלם in Gn 14:18. Included among these are the assertions that Salem is a city in Shechem and the consistent use of שלם as meaning 'peace', 'perfect', 'whole' or 'complete'. Moreover, the premise that the connection between Salem and Jerusalem is corroborated by additional associations in the Psalms is not definite. While none of the above arguments absolutely prove that שלם is not to be identified with Jerusalem, it does cast overwhelming doubt over the association.

In light of the uncertainty concerning the identification of Salem with Jerusalem, Jerusalem as the central focus of the chapter recedes into the background and allows alternative interpretations to surface, as will be demonstrated in the next section.

Chapter 6 - Synthesis and Interpretation

In the previous chapters, I have demonstrated that there are difficulties concerning the interpretation of Genesis 14. These issues center on the unity within the chapter, the unity within the Genesis corpus, and on the understanding of שלם.

6. 1 Synthesis

In chapter 3 I have established that Genesis 14 is a unified text. Although the chapter may be comprised of various traditions, the writer carefully blended these traditions into one coherent narrative utilizing literary devices such as parallel structures, verbal repetitions and syntax. This means that each part of the narrative relates to each other. Therefore, while the battle between the kings provides the background for the story, the events which arise from the battle is also essential to the meaning of the story. Against this view are those who maintain that the chapter is fragmentary. According to this understanding, the narrative should be viewed as composite in nature and each stratum examined individually. As it was, and still is, often believed that the Melchizedek pericope was the final insertion, the key to understanding Gn 14 was through vv. 18-20. The text, however, does not support this notion. It is clear in the original language that the author blended assorted traditions together to produce a unified whole. Consequently, each component of the story sheds light on the meaning of the story as a whole.

Equally important to the issue of unity, is the purpose of the placement of Gn 14 in the Genesis corpus. Although one may ascertain the meaning of individual chapters,

each chapter also has to fit into its surrounding context. As has been illustrated, Gn 14 is connected to chapters 12 and 13 by a thematic link and to chapter 15 by a vocabulary link. Regarding Gn 14 in particular, is its connection to what precedes it; it ought to comprehensibly follow the events of chapter 13, which recounts the division of the land between Abram and Lot.

Finally, I have argued in chapter 5 that the identification of שלם with Jerusalem is a traditional association and not original. I have demonstrated the traditional aspect of the association by showing that Salem was never used as an appellation for Jerusalem either in the Ancient Near East or in the Bible itself. The notion that Salem = Jerusalem appears late in Jewish writings and therefore, it can be concluded that this understanding was not the intention of the writer of Gn 14. As this parallel is the customary interpretation and the basis upon which the meaning of the chapter is established, uncertainty concerning the interpretation weakens the argument linking the meaning of this chapter to Jerusalem.

In what follows, I will offer an alternative interpretation of Gn 14, in light of: (1) the narrative as a unified whole and (2) in the context of its placement in the book of Genesis and the Ancient Near East customs and (3) שלם not being associated with Jerusalem.

6.2 Interpretation

Genesis 13 recounts the division of the land between Abram and Lot. Strife had arisen between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot due to insufficient land to support their numerous flocks. Abram offered Lot first choice of the land in which to settle in, and he

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chose the land near Sodom. Chapter 14 gives an account of a battle into which Abram is drawn due to the capture of Lot. Upon hearing that his covenantal brother was captured, Abram immediately gathered his men and allies and set off to rescue him and his possessions. Although the contract of land between Abram and Lot is a separate issue, as we will see below, both aspects are crucial to the understanding of the events narrated in chapter 14.

6.2.1 Abram and Lot in Covenant

The nature of the relationship between Abram and Lot as covenantal justifies Abram's involvement in the battle far more clearly than a familial relationship. While most scholars view the blood tie as sufficient cause for Abram's involvement, this is a simplistic explanation. Stigers statement "The simple fact that Lot is taken captive is sufficient cause for Abram to go to his rescue" does not adequately explain the motivations for Abram's participation.[194] A covenantal bond, on the other hand, obligates both parties to each other. The military defense clause stipulated in covenants, on the other hand, requires that Abram to go to Lot's rescue. Concerning Abram's involvement in the battle, Janzen notes "in rescuing Lot, Abram acts like any small allied power."[195] In rescuing Lot, however, Abram assumed the rights to all the spoils of the war including the land, thus voiding the contract between Abram and Lot. As will been demonstrated, the biblical writer addresses this issue in Gn 14:21-24.

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[194] H.G. Stigers, p. 149.
[195] J.G. Janzen, p. 32.

6.2.2 Reconfirmation of the Contract Pertaining to the Division of the Land

(Gen. 13:5-12 and 14: 21-24)

Genesis 14:21 recounts Abram's negative response to the King of Sodom's proposal pertaining to the division of the spoils of war. Although there is no mention of land, nonetheless, it is implicit in the victory of Abram over the eastern kings.[196] In conquering the eastern kings, Abram, by ancient law, gained possession of all that had been theirs: material, people and land.[197] Of those involved in the battle, vs. 17 mentions only the King of Sodom. The narrowing down of the focus to Sodom is a literary device intended to direct the reader's attention to Sodom. As we have already seen in vv. 11-12, the writer is highlighting Lot and his possessions. This narrowing of the focus on Lot is evident in vs. 16 as well. Vs. 16 states that Abram brought back all the people and possessions as well as Lot and his possessions. As it is implied that Lot was included among the possessions, the writer would have no reason to state that Lot was also present, unless he deliberately intended to highlight this aspect. As the reason for Abram's involvement was Lot's capture and Lot was a resident of Sodom, it is only logical that Abram's concern be centered on Lot. Therefore, while the King of Sodom's interest was the whole of the booty, Abram was concerned only with Lot and his possessions. As we will see, having rescued Lot and his possessions, Abram then reconfirms the contract pertaining to the division of the land.

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[196] D. Elgavish, "The Division" p. 266, commenting on a declaration by Cyrus states "The philosophy presented in this address is that a conquered city, together with all its property, passes over to the ownership of the conqueror, and that such an action is proper."
[197] R. de Vaux, "The Consequences of War" in R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel Vol I,* pp. 254, states that "The outcome of a victorious war was always conquest by one side and vassaldom for the other"

Having established the veracity of the division of the land as contract in chapter 5, a connection must be made between the events in Genesis 13 and Abram's response to the King of Sodom in Genesis 14. Although it is the King of Sodom, rather than Lot, who approaches Abram and discusses the spoils of war, Abram is referring back to his agreement with Lot.[198] He is, in effect, saying that the former agreement still stands. In his response to the king's offer for Abram to keep the possession while the king would retain the people, Abram replies "I have raised my hand to YHWH [...] I shall not take from you a string or sandal thong [...]" (vs. 22-23). The phrase מחוט ועד שרוך־נעל (string or sandal thong) is based on an older Near Eastern formulaic tradition exemplified in the Elephantine Aramaic as *mihum w^{e}ad hut* "be it blade of grass or piece of string".[199] The Aramaic draws on the even older expression (Akkadian) *lu hāmu lu husābu,* "be it blade of straw or a splinter of wood." Muffs maintains that "these three historically related idioms are but dialectical variants of the same general theme: the complete and total division of property."[200] In other words, it used in a legal context to renounce property rights.

Concrete data pertaining to the legality and intent of the phrase is found in a Ugaritic text in the archive of international treaties, Niqmaddu of Ugarit summons his suzerain, Suppiluliuma to come to his aid after he had been plundered by his neighbours. Suppiluliuma responds by driving out the invaders and recovering the plunder. In

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[198] J.G. McConville, p. 112 "[...] his relationship with his kinsman Lot, the spring of the action in Gen. 14, has as background the wider motif of Lot and Sodom (Gn. 13:18-19), which in turn is connected with Abram's occupation of the land (Gn. 13)."
[199] Y. Muffs, p. 83; V. Hamilton, p. 413; G.J. Wenham, p. 318. G.P. Hugenberger, p. 204, asserts "raise a hand" appears as an oath-accompanying gesture on the part of Abraham in Gen. 14:22."
[200] Y. Muffs, p. 83.

gratitude of his help, Niqmaddu presents gold, silver and copper to Suppliluliuma which the latter declines. "(Although this part of the text is corrupt, what is preserved contains a "declaration in which Suppliluliuma assures Niqmaddu that he does not want *hāmu* or *huṣābu* of Niqmaddu's goods, and most probably his land)."[201]

> [... *hama u*] *huṣābu* [*mimma*]
> [*ša Niqmaddu*] *la* [*ilaqq/iqerrib*]

[...the Great King will] not [touch/take anything, be it straw or] splinter.[202]

This reflects a case where a suzerain comes to the aid of a vassal whose cities have been conquered; in reclaiming the cities, it appears that they have not automatically reverted back to the vassal but rather to the victor, in this case the suzerain. Consequently, he relinquishes his rights to all the plunder, including the cities, using the phrase "be it splinter or straw." The document of reconfirmation would contain an historical prologue describing how the vassal's cities had become lost to him, a declaration that the suzerain refused so much as a *hāmu* or *huṣābu*, a formal re-investiture of the property and a recital of the necessary oaths and curses. The legal motivation for the last and most essential part of the document, i.e. the oath, would be the *hāmu - huṣābu* clause.

Similarly, in refusing to take 'so much as a thread or sandal thong' Abram is effectively re-confirming the contract pertaining to the division of land he had affected with Lot. The points of contact between Genesis 14 and the example provided by the Ugaritic text establish that Genesis 14 is conceivably a re-confirmation of contract. Included in this account would be the recognition that as victor, Abram had gained property rights to the land. This recognition is inherent in the blessing given by

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[201] Y. Muffs, p. 86.
[202] Y. Muffs, p. 86, "The reconstruction [...] is supported by the logic of the context."

Melchizedek (14:20) and the suggestion by the King of Sodom concerning the division of the spoils of war (14: 21). Although the oath is not evident in the pericope, in vs. 22 Abram declares that he has raised his hand to YHWH. Concerning the oath, Hugenberger explains "[...] in oath contexts the upraised hand represents an appeal to the deity to act as a witness against any perjury or infidelity."[203] Consequently, it may be surmised that this utterance alludes to an oath. Moreover, the most vital ingredient, the oath, is present, the *hāmu - husābu* clause discussed above.

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[203] G.P. Hugenberger, p. 204.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to offer an alternative interpretation of Genesis 14:11-24, with a focus on the widely accepted view that Salem is to be identified with Jerusalem, which is the most common connection found in scholarship.

The first step was to provide a translation and to establish the text. In so doing, a macro-syntactical analysis was utilized to demonstrate unity within the text. This is a significant undertaking, since this issue is very much debated in scholarship and interpretation of the text depends upon it being a cohesive unit. In particular, four areas deemed problematic were considered.

First, concerning vv. 11-12, many scholars posit that the use of exact verbal forms in both verses is indicative of a secondary insertion. In this case verse 12. As we have seen, however, the Biblical writers had at their disposal a variety of literary devices including word repetition which they used to highlight certain features. The use of repetition in vv. 11-12, is intentional; it focuses the attention from the general statement that Sodom and Gomorrah had been captured to the specific, Lot and his possessions were also taken.

Secondly, the difficulty with the phrase בן־אחי אברם as it is considered syntactically awkward was addressed. While the phrase is in an awkward position, coming after 'all his goods' rather than the natural referent Lot, it is also necessary as it identifies Lot as the same Lot who travelled with Abram from Haran in Gn 11:27 and as the one who had made a land agreement with Abram in Gn 13.

The third difficulty lies in the apparent contradiction in vv 10 and 17. Vs. 10 states that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah had fallen into a bitumen pit, yet vs. 17

states that the King of Sodom came out to meet Abram upon his victorious return. The argument here revolves around two issues; (1) who fell into the pit and (2) the interpretation of the verb נפל. A macro-syntactical analysis of the verb form in vs. 10 provides a contrast as to who fell into the pit – the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell (*wayyiqtol*) there (in the pit) *while* the survivors fled (*waw-x-qatal*) toward the mountains. Moreover, while the primary meaning of the verb נפל is 'to fall,' there is a secondary meaning of 'to lower oneself' which a volitional action. Thus, the kings purposely lowered themselves into the bitumen pit, while the rest of the survivors fled to the mountains.

And finally, the view that vv. 18-20 (Melchizedek episode) interrupts the account of the meeting between Abram and the King of Sodom in vs. 17. As with vv. 10 and 17, a macro-syntactic analysis provides a resolution to this dilemma. The use of a *waw-x-qatal* construction in vs. 18, which introduces Melchizedek, denotes simultaneous action with the preceding circumstance. Therefore, Melchizedek came out to meet Abram at the same as the King of Sodom (vs. 17). The following verses continue with the narrative *wayyiqtol* signifying a continuation in the events and dialogue which follow vv. 17-18.

Following this, I then established unity within the Genesis corpus and specifically the Abram-Lot narrative as the interpretation of Genesis 14 is dependent on preceding circumstances. In this section, it was demonstrated that the relationship between Abram and Lot was covenantal and this provided the impetus for Abram's involvement in battle related in chapter 14. It was also determined that the land agreement between Abram and Lot was in fact a contract. The contractual agreement between Abram and Lot facilitated the interpretation of chapter 14 in that the dialogue between the Abram and the King of

Sodom was in effect re-establishing the contract. By returning victorious from the battle, Abram had legally gained rights to all the possession regained, including the land. God had promised Abram the land (chapter 12), in refusing to take any of the spoils of war, including the land, 'so that you cannot say 'I have made Abram rich,'' Abram is placing his faith in God's word and that when God gives him the land, everyone will know that it comes from God and not man.

Because the majority of scholars have focused on the Melchizedek pericope and particularly the identification of Salem with Jerusalem, my next step was to explore this connection. This was a crucial component as the majority of scholars interpret the chapter in lights of events following David's occupation of the city. While my purpose was not to determine the location or meaning of the word, I have demonstrated, through an examination of extra-Biblical and Biblical texts, that the connection of Salem to Jerusalem is greatly uncertain. It appears that this connection was made later in Jewish tradition, and therefore may not have been the intention of the writer. Removing the focus from the city of Jerusalem has allowed other possible interpretations to surface.

Genesis 14 recounts a battle in which Abram recovers the plunder of Sodom including Lot and his possessions. His possessions would have included the land he chose when the contract was made between him and Abram. In rejecting any of the spoils of war for himself, Abram is in effect saying that the agreement between himself and Lot still stands. Although he has rights to it as victor of the battle, he will not break his agreement. Additionally, the author is underlining the fact that Lot has been removed as

Abram's heir. This becomes evident in the reconfirmation of the agreement which keeps Lot outside the Promised Land.[204]

While the battle account and the resulting events have received much scholarly attention in the past; the interpretation of the text has commonly been associated with developments in Israelite Jerusalem. This understanding of the text arose from a fragmented approach that looked to one pericope as containing the meaning. In this analysis, I have attempted to understand the account as it relates to the whole of the Abram-Lot narrative by removing the focus from one element (Jerusalem) and seeing how the different parts relate to each other as a whole. The import of this work is that it opens up new avenues of thought regarding this particularly challenging text.

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[204] F.I. Anderson, p. 500 "[...] but the language of 13:12 ("Abram settled in the land of Canaan") suggests that the kikkār was not part of Canaan." L.R. Helyer, p. 79, the boundaries of the Promised Land are established in the biblical text. "[...] the eastern boundary of Canaan at the Jordan River from its exit at the Sea of Chinnereth to the Salt Sea. From the south-eastern end of the Salt Sea the border ran in a south-westerly direction toward Kadesh Barnea and then over to the Mediterranean, along the brook or wadi of Egypt (cf Nb. 34:1-29; Jos. 15:1-14; Ezek. 47:13-20."

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