

TRANSLATION

“IN THOSE DAYS THERE WAS NO KING IN ISRAEL”

by

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A. The formula “in those days there was no king in Israel” recurs, as is well-known, four times in the Book of Judges: twice in each of two tradition clusters considered to be additions to the book, the tale of Micah’s temple and the Danite migration (Jud. 17:1–18:31), and the story of the concubine at Gibeah (Jud. 19:1–21:25). The phrase appears twice in its short form, as a statement: “in those days there was no king in Israel” (ib. 18:1; 19:1), and twice in its expanded form with the appended phrase “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (ib. 18:6; 21:25). This latter expression has been taken as indicating the shortcomings and faults which its author thought to be characteristic of the period in which the events described in these two tales occurred.

Most interpreters maintain that the formula is an editorial addition rather than an integral component of the book.¹ Many are of the opinion that it was not even penned by the authors of the appendixes to the book, viz. the tales of Micah’s idol, the Danite migration and the concubine at Gibeah, but rather is an addition to the appendixes.²

The appendixes themselves are not considered to be of one cloth but rather are taken to be composed of several sub-traditions.

Modern interpreters concur in the opinion that the formula post-dates the period of the judges and the Book of Judges. They disagree, however, as to how much later it is, and for what purpose it was appended. Scholars who prefer an early date place it in the time of David³ or the Divided Kingdom.⁴ Gray tends to the opinion that in all likelihood it reflects a

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¹ M. Z. Segal ascribes the formula to the second of the authors of the book, whom he designates “B”. (“Studies in the Book of Judges”, *Tarbiz* 1, 1930, p. 17, Hebrew.)

² See, e. g., A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebraeischen Bibel*, vol. 3, (Leipzig 1909), p. 145.

³ B. Z. Luria, “The Incident of the Concubine in Gibeah”, in *Studies in the Book of Judges*, Israel Society of Bible Studies (Jerusalem 1967), p. 477 ff.; pp. 489-490.

⁴ Kuenen, Driver, Budde, Corneill, Moore and others ascribe the formula to REJ who, they believe, lived in the days of Manasseh. See G. F. Moore, *Judges, ICC* (Edinburgh 1895), p. 369; S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh 1913), p. 170.

priestly tradition of the royal sanctuaries in Beth-el and Dan.⁵ Those who tend to date the formula rather late ascribe it to the redactor of the Priestly Code (R^p) who lived after the Babylonian Exile.⁶ One view assumes that the author of the formula wanted to advertise the deuteronomistic ideology of a unified and centralised cult in opposition to the plurality of sanctuaries reflected in the above tales — Mount Ephraim, Dan, Beth-el, Mizpah and Shiloh. Another opinion holds that since the author of the formula obviously takes a dim view of periods in which there was no king, his negative attitude implies that he held in high esteem the monarchical period which, as it were, was not affected by such anarchistic trends.⁷

The opinion in which modern interpreters concur is that the formula "in those days there was no king in Israel" evidences a monarchistic tendency. This in fact already becomes apparent in the ancient translations which render the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ (*melekh*) as מַלְכָּא, *rex*, βασιλεύς i. e., king; monarch. All these are based on the premise that the noun *melekh* in the formula carries the same semantic value as it does in the majority of its occurrences in the Bible.

It is therefore almost *a priori* determined that in our formula as well *melekh* refers to a monarchic ruler and to monarchic government, which are presented as superior to and more desirable than the leadership of the judges from which the book derives its name. Because the formula appears only at the end of the Book of Judges, chs. 17-21, both ancient and modern interpreters were of the opinion that whoever interpolated it into those traditions had meant to present it an introduction to the monarchic period which followed the comparatively less-laudable period of the judges.⁸ This understanding of the text had to deduce that the appendixes to the book, and especially the formula under consideration, present a viewpoint favourable to the institution of kingship. This is in contrast to the anti-monarchic attitude which characterises most of the Book of Judges, *viz.* the cluster of traditions pertaining to the period of the Conquest (Jud. 1:1-36), the historiosophical introduction (ib. 2:1-3:1) and the body of the book which consists of the individual saviour-judges episodes. The praise of kingship which many scholars discern in the formula "in those days there was no king in Israel" stands in contradiction to the tone of ridicule which pervades the portrayal of kings and their officers in the Book of Judges, and which reflects on the appreciation of monarchical government as such. This trend is evident, for example, in the description of Adoni-bezek and the seventy kings whose thumbs

⁵ J. Gray, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (London 1967), p. 239.

⁶ C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (London 1920), pp. 410-411.

⁷ R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*² (New York 1948), p. 321; Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 382; Burney, *ib.*

⁸ O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*⁸ (Tuebingen 1964), p. 179.

and great toes he had cut off, and who gathered food under his table (ib. 1:6-7), Ehud's killing of Eglon, king of Moab (ib. 3:20-22), the death of Sisera at the hands of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite (ib. 5:24-27), and the killing of Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal, by means of a millstone thrown by a woman from the tower roof in Thebez (ib. 9:51-54). To these one must add the deprecatory tone evident in Gideon's command to Jether his first-born to slay Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian: "But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared because he was yet a youth" (ib. 8:20). All this is epitomised in the open rejection of Abimelech's kingship and of monarchic rule in general which, according to some, is the main tendency of Jotham's parable (ib. 9:7-20). This piece may echo his father Gideon's refusal to establish in Israel a government which is transferable from father to son (ib. 8:22-23), which by definition would be monarchic or would tend to develop into a monarchy.

In contrast to the ridiculed, scorned figures of kings, the courage and success of the judges is extolled. Men such as Ehud the son of Gera, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson vanquish their royal enemies and subdue kingdoms and their rulers. The dualism reflected in the evaluation of monarchy in the diverse components of the book gave birth to a theory, developed especially by Martin Buber, that the Book of Judges is composed of two conjoined sources, one anti-monarchistic and one pro-monarchistic.⁹ The latter is epitomised in the extended formula "in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes". This literary-historical source attempts to present the period of the Judges as one of both ritual-religious and socio-political anarchy. For Buber, the conjunction of the two ideological strands in the Book of Judges evidences the controversy between those loyal to a "primitive theocracy" led by a "charismatic leader", in the phraseology of Max Weber, upon whom the spirit had descended, and a "monarchistic-calculating" faction supporting dynastic monarchistic centralistic government, which stands in complete opposition to non-mediated, direct theocracy.

B. We can see that discussion of the formula which recurs in the appendixes to the Book of Judges transcends the limits of linguistic-literary research, and touches upon societal issues and problems of socio-political thought in Israel pertaining to the transition period from the rule of judges to monarchical government. Thus it is only logical that we turn our attention to the meaning of the pivotal term מֶלֶךְ (*melekh*) in that formula. We must determine whether its connotation here is indeed necessarily identical with its connotation in those books of the Bible which date from the period of the Kingdom, as maintained – almost axiomatically – by commentators.

⁹ M. Buber, *Koenigtum Gottes* (Berlin 1932), esp. ch. 2, W. Richter, *Traditions-geschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch* (Bonn 1963), pp. 338-339.

Concurrently we should consider another possibility: that the noun *melekh* carried several denotations distinct from one another to a greater or lesser degree, either synchronically or as the result of a diachronic semantic development. The examination of this second possibility is especially significant in view of the fact that we are discussing a formula which epitomises, as it were, a critical juncture in the history of Israel – the transition from rule of the judges to monarchy. Its interpretation therefore may be derived either from subsequent semantic developments, as is in fact posited by most interpreters, or from earlier, hypothesised ones, as will be done here.

Before entering into this discussion, we should point out that there is no basis for an interpretation which not only views the formula as indirectly laudatory of the monarchy but also as critical of the institute of rule by a judge. The formula occurs in the two appendixes of the book dealing with social anarchy in a period in which no judge is mentioned, and thus it is impossible to conclude that the formula is concerned with contrasting rule by a judge with that by a monarch, or with giving preference to the latter over the former. It rather gives expression to the desirability of an orderly government, as opposed to the anarchy that prevailed in a leaderless Israel.

The absence of an authoritative leader is not only indicative of the episodes recorded in these two appendixes but also characterises the cluster of conquest traditions in Jud. 1:1-2:5 and distinguishes it from the saviour-judges traditions which form the bulk of the book. Precisely in that first chapter the anti-monarchistic trend reverberates its strongest, viz. in the report in which Adoni-bezek the conqueror of kings is held up to mockery and scorn. Concurrently, that same cluster illustrates the disintegration of the unity of Israel which, according to tradition, had been forged by Moses and was perpetuated into the time of Joshua. Now the tribes, we read, fight individually among themselves, with only Judah and Simeon co-operating in the common war against the Canaanite inhabitants of the land (Jud. 1:3). The salient theme of these traditions is the history of non-success, the description of the failure of the tribes to conquer the promised land. That period too could be characterised by the caption "in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes".

Who then is the *melekh* of which the scriptures speak? In view of the foregoing remarks, we surely must decide that in the formula under discussion it should not be translated *rex*, 'monarch' or 'king'; rather must it be concluded that the term *melekh* is here fully synonymous with שופט (*shofet*), the common denotation for the leader in the Book of Judges. The criticism expressed in this formula refers to those periods in the history of Israel "in which there were no judge, overseer or ruler", in the words of the medieval commentator Abarbanel.¹⁰

¹⁰ Interpretation of the Former Prophets, *ad* Jud. 17:1.

E. A. Speiser says of the judge that he was "originally someone with authority to decide what administrative action was needed, and, when necessary, to issue warnings and mete out punishment. He was arbiter or punitive officer, as the case might be..."¹¹ This implies that in that period the judge performed functions which in the future the king was to perform. In effect there is no great difference between the two words in terms of this significance; the distinction is one more of degree than of essence. Thus only at a time when there was no king/ruler or judge/leader in Israel could deeds be perpetrated such as those described in the appendixes to the Book of Judges. Again we can only concur with the understanding of the crucial formula by a medieval interpreter, David Kimhi (*ad* Jud. 18:1): "In all the days of the judges no man would do what was right in his own eyes; only of these three episodes – of Micah, the tribe of Dan and the concubine of Gibeah – is it said that there was no king in Israel. These events occurred between [the days of] Samson [who was a judge of Israel] and [those of] Eli; the time between them was as it was, when there was no judge in Israel and each man did as was right in his own eyes."¹² Abarbanel presents a similar interpretation which identifies *melekh* with *shofet* (*ad* Jud. 18:1): "There were many days [*viz.* in the pre-monarchic period] when they had no king; what they were missing and lacking now were the *judges*. Therefore Scripture should have said, 'when there was no *judge* in Israel'."

In contrast to the opinion of Kimhi and Abarbanel – that the events described in the appendixes occurred between the time of Samson and that of Eli – other traditional interpreters hold that the episodes should be dated to the early period of the judges. Rashi concurs with the interpretation of the Sages: "From here [*i. e.*, from the formula 'in those days there was no king in Israel'] we can deduce that this event happened at the very beginning [of the period] of the judges." Likewise Gersonides (Ralbag): This incident occurred after the death of Joshua and before the rule of Othniel [the first judge – Jud. 3:7-11] the son of Kenaz. The Danite tribe sought a territory to settle after the death of Joshua because at that time the tribes fought each individually for their lots." This dating has been accepted by some modern scholars as well.¹³

This view is utterly convincing. As noted, the absence of a judge is common both to the cluster of traditions in chapter one – which is not part of the main body of the Book of Judges¹⁴ – and to the appendixes at the end of the book. According to biblical historiography, during that period

¹¹ E. A. Speiser, "The Manner of the King", in *The World History of the Jewish People – Volume 3: Judges*, ed. B. Mazar (Tel Aviv 1971), p. 281.

¹² Cf. also Bab. Tal. Hul. 57b.

¹³ See A. Aharoni, *Israel in the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem 1962), p. 207ff.

¹⁴ See S. Talmon, "Judges, Chapter one", in *Studies in the Book of Judges* (Jerusalem 1967), p. 15ff.

Israel found itself under the unstable leadership of the "elders" who came after (literally - "outlived") Joshua (Jos. 24:31; Jud. 2:7). Only in the period of time between Joshua and Eli, described in the first chapter of the Book of Judges, and in the appendixes, when there was no judge, did priests officiate in Israel. No mention whatsoever of a priest is made in the body of the book, i. e., not in the introduction nor in the traditions of the saviour-judges (Jud. 2:1-17:31). In the appendixes priests are expressly mentioned (ib. 17:5; 18:4), and even by name: Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron (ib. 20:26-28) and Jonathan the son of Gershom the son of Menasseh/Moses (ib. 18:30). Likewise, mention is made of holy places and of holy objects (ib. 17:4-5; 18:17-20, 24, 30; 20:26-27, etc.). Only in the appendixes and in chapter one do we find reports of oracular inquiries in matters of public interest, concerning the tribe of Dan (ib. 18:5-6) or all the tribes of Israel (ib. 20:27). In the instances set in Beth-el where "the ark of the covenant of God [was housed] in those days, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it..." the opening phrase of the request for divine advice is: "And the children of Israel asked the Lord" - exactly as in Jud. 1:1, where Israel inquiries of the Lord which tribe should lead the onslaught on the Canaanites. It is logical to assume that there too it was addressed to a priest, and perhaps that same Phinehas the son of Eleazar, in the same sanctuary at Beth-el. Moreover, the phrasing of the request and of the divine oracle recurs in both instances almost word for word:

Jud. 1:1-2 - "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" The Lord said, "Judah shall go up..."

Jud. 20:18 - "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the Benjaminites?" And the Lord said, "Judah shall go up first".

The socio-religious similarity and the literary parallelity between chapter one and the appendixes to the "Book of the Saviours" leads us to the conclusion that the story of the Danite migration, and by analogy also that of Micah's sanctuary, as well as the tale of the concubine of Gibeah and the report of the tribal war against Benjamin, had been placed originally together with chapter one at the beginning of the Book of Judges.¹⁵ A hint to this effect is still evident in the present text of the book: Jud. 1:34 tells us that the tribe of Dan was forced to migrate to the north of the country because of Amorite pressure. It may be surmised that because of the comparative length of this narrative unit, which expanded into what

¹⁵ See S. Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 27 ff. A. Malamat has also discussed these similarities recently, but he explains them exclusively in terms of style and motif, and does not interpret the recurring mention of priests of the third generation after the Exodus historically and chronologically. See "The Danite Migration and the Pan-Israel Exodus-Conquest: A Biblical Narrative Pattern", *Biblica* 51 (1970), pp. 1-16.

amounts to a novella (Jud. chs. 17-18), quite disproportionate to the relatively short notes on the other tribes (ch. 1), the arranger of the Book of Judges moved the novella to the end, in the form of an appendix, and retained only a brief reference to it – a sort of *custos* – in its one-time proper place at 1:34, after having mentioned the wars waged by the tribes of Zebulun (1:30), Asher (1:31-32) and Naphtali (1:33).

The same can be said for the story of the war of Benjamin and the tale of the concubine at Gibeah. In content and character – an inter-tribal war during a period in which there was no leader – the proper place of these items is within the framework of the tradition cluster pertaining to the early days of conquest and settlement. And indeed it would seem that in a preceding redactorial stage this present appendix as well constituted a component of the cluster. Again, the editor of the Book of Judges has left an indication to this effect in the mention of **הבכים** (lit. “The Weepers”), apparently an epithet of Beth-el, in Jud. 2:1. The name probably was given to the city after the Gibeah war, playing on the incidents related in Jud. 20:26 – “Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came to Beth-el, and *wept* **ויבכו** and sat there before the Lord . . .” (cf. also v. 23) – and again in 21:2 – “And the people came to Beth-el and sat there till even before God, and lifted up their voices and *wept* sore (**ויבכו בכי גדול**)”.

Thus the Danite migration which is associated with the episode of the theft of Micah’s idol and the Gibeah war occurred in the days of, respectively, Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Menasseh/Moses, both being of the third generation after the Exodus from Egypt. The proper literary context of these tales is the cluster of traditions which constitutes the first chapter of the Book of Judges. Incidents are related there which predate the early days of the “saviours”, that is, they are set in the interregnum after Joshua, in a period in which there indeed was not *yet* a *king-judge* in Israel – at least in the view of the editors of the Books of Joshua and Judges, and also of the arranger of the Former Prophets.

We conclude therefore that the formula “in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes” actually praises the rule of Israel by the judges and epitomises the transition from the period of the *elders* who followed after Joshua, when Israel was without an individual leader, to the new era of successive “charismatic” leaders who saved Israel through the spirit of God which descended upon them. A last echo of this positive approach to the institution of the judging can be discerned in the words of the representatives of the people to Samuel when his own sons were recognised to be unsuited to assume the leadership over Israel (1 Sam. 8:5-6): “Give us a *king* to ‘judge’ us

(לשפטנו) like all nations".¹⁶ These words herald a new era in the socio-political history of the Israelite society and its government. Even in his abdication speech Samuel makes positive mention of some of the judges, the pre-monarchic leaders of Israel: "And then the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies round about, and ye dwelt in safety" (1 Sam. 12:11). His words comprise an interesting juxtaposition of a salient term from the Book of Judges – which amounts almost to a quotation from Jud. 8:34: "And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, *who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies round about*" – with a formula characteristic of the literature of the monarchic period: "And Israel *dwelt safely*, every man under his vine and under his fig tree" (1 Kings 5:15; cf. Mic. 4:4; Jer. 32:37; Ez. 28:26; 38:14; Zech. 14:11 etc.).¹⁷ This juxtaposition may be taken as another linguistic indicator of the transition from the period of the judges to the period of the monarchy.

C. We now wish to adduce some corroborative evidence to strengthen our hypothesis that in the formula with which we are concerned the denotation of the term *melekh* differs from that which developed in Israel after the time of David, and that it denotes here a form of government which preceded classical monarchy. We submit that the non-dynastic, non-monarchistic denotation of *melekh* can still be discerned in other early biblical texts which, because of the current interpretation, have been classified as anachronisms or later additions, for example, the difficult verse which introduces the Blessing of Moses: "There was a *king* in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together" (Deut. 33:5). Many scholars surmised that the text refers to Saul, the first king of Israel, and that the word was out of place in the pre-monarchic context.¹⁸ Rashi, Abarbanel, Maimonides and several modern interpreters see in the word *melekh* a reference to the God of Israel. Ibn Ezra, however, presents an interpretation which seems more likely to be correct: "It is Moses from whose mouth the heads of the people heard the Torah interpreted, and who was like a king".¹⁹ This interpretation establishes a proper connection with the preceding verse – "Moses commanded us a law, an inheritance of the con-

¹⁶ Cf. 1 Sam. 8:19-20.

¹⁷ The phrase also appears in literature which is not necessarily monarchic in outlook, e. g., Lev. 25:18-19; 26:5; Is. 47:8.

¹⁸ The antiquity of the Blessing of Moses has been stressed by I. L. Seeligman, "A Psalm from Pre-Regal Times", *VT* 14 (1964), pp. 75-92.

¹⁹ For Moses as a royal figure, see J. R. Porter, *Moses and Monarchy: A Study in the Biblical Tradition of Moses* (Oxford 1963); Joh. Pedersen, *Israel*, vol. 3-4 (Copenhagen 1940), pp. 662-666; G. Widengren, "King and Covenant", *JJS* 8, 1 (1957), p. 18.

gregation of Jacob", so that there is no need to consider Deut. 33:5 to be a secondary interpolation.²⁰

The term *melekh* in the sense of a non-dynastic ruler appears in the Bible not only in reference to Israel but also to other nations. It is employed in Gen. 36 in the context of an Edomite tradition which can be defined as a condensed version of the history of Edom, which parallels the much more expanded and detailed account of the history of Israel as unfolded in the Pentateuch and in the Former Prophets: the development from the nuclear family of Esau (Gen. 36:1-4) to the league of the Edomite tribes (ib. 15-19) and their settling in the mountains of Seir (ib. 8-9, 20-21). As is known, this chronicle concludes with the roster of "kings that ruled in the land of Edom before there reigned a king over the children of Israel" (ib. 36:31-39; cf. 1 Chron. 1:43-53).²¹ The list is not the record of a royal dynasty but rather a schematic enumeration of the names of eight rulers – none of whom is the son of his predecessor nor the father of his successor, and none of whom reigns in the city in which his predecessor reigned.²² The socio-historical picture that emerges is very similar to that revealed in the Book of Judges: a discontinuity from judge to judge in matters of family, tribal relations and seat of government.

There is much to recommend Noeldeke's suggestion that the first king, Bela the son of Beor (ib. 36:32-33) should be identified with Balaam the son of Beor²³ who lived in the days of Moses (Num. 24 *passim*), and that the first Hadad on the list, the son of Bedad, who was the fourth Edomite king and who smote Midian in the field of Moab (Gen. 36:35-36), was a contemporary of Gideon, who also vanquished the Midianites (Jud. 6-8).²⁴ One may further presume that the second Hadad, the last to appear on the list (Gen. 36:39), immediately antedated or was a contemporary of Saul. It follows that, according to biblical chronology, the period during which the eight kings of Edom reigned coincided with the period of wars in eastern Transjordan in the days of Moses and with the period of settlement when the judges ruled until the early days of the monarchy. Thus,

²⁰ See Seeligman, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79. It is methodologically unsound to solve an exegetical crux by high-handed textual emendation.

²¹ The linguistic similarity between **לפני מלך-מלך** (Gen. 36:31) and **בימי שפוט השופטים** (Ruth 1:1) was discerned already by Rashi in his comment on Gen. 36:31.

²² The historical import of Esau's genealogy has been discussed in detail by Ed. Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstaemme* (Halle 1906), p. 328ff., esp. p. 370ff. The first part of the list is found also in the Greek addition to Job 42:17(d) where Job is identified with Jobab (Gen. 36:33), an identification which is rabbinic in origin. See H. M. Orlinsky, "The Tribal System of Israel and Related Groups in the Period of the Judges", *OA* 1 (1962), p. 17.

²³ Speiser, *op. cit.*, p. 280, proposes that the similarity between the names Bela and Balaam is coincidental.

²⁴ See Ed. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

in context and meaning the term *melekh* employed in the roster of Edomite kings is synonymous with the term *shofet* as used in the Book of Judges, and is equally identical in denotation with *melekh* in the formula under consideration.

The semantic similarity – even interchangeability – of *melekh-shofet* (king - judge) is evident also in their occasional use as synonyms in biblical parallelisms, e. g., in Hos. 7:7; 13:10; Ps. 2:10 (cf. Dan. 9:8, 12). Similarly, the two terms appear as synonyms of *sar* (Ex. 2:14; Hos. 13:10; Amos 2:3; Mic. 7:3; Zeph. 3:3; Ps. 148:11; Prov. 8:16; cf. Amos 1:15; Jer. 49:3, etc.). This stylistic-pragmatic rather than etymological synonymy appears primarily in the non-historiographic literature.²⁵

In summary, we can say that:

(a) The noun *melekh* in the formula “in those days there was no king in Israel” in the appendixes to the Book of Judges does not require the formula to be dated later than the early days of the monarchy, because the term *melekh* does not necessarily and exclusively refer to monarchic-dynastic rulers. Its denotative equivalent approaches that of *shofet*.

(b) The above formula therefore refers to a period in the history of Israel during which there was no ruler at all. It is reasonable to assume that the notation refers to the time between the leadership of Joshua and the beginning of the period of the judges. Thus we can conclude that the author of the formula was of the opinion that the events described in the appendixes occurred not long after the death of Joshua. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that the passages mention priests of the houses of Aaron and Moses who are of the third generation after the Exodus from Egypt.

(c) Because the author of the formula lays the blame for the political and religio-cultic anarchy which marked those times on the absence of a king-judge, we can infer an implied measure of indirect praise accorded by him to the rule of Israel by judges.

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²⁵ This synonymy can be substantiated from Ugaritic, Akkadian and Phoenician literature.