EXCURSUS ONE

COMPILATION, REDACTION AND THE RHETORIC OF JUDGES

In view of the evidence for different regional dialects of Hebrew between various episodes of Judges, it would be naive to suggest that the book was composed throughout by a single author, unless, of course, one were able to demonstrate that this divergence was intended to serve some rhetorical function such as verisimilitude (cf. Judg. 12:6). Regional dialectal divergencies in Hebrew are well attested from Hebrew epigraphic texts. Therefore, an empirical approach must

1 Such regional dialectal characteristics, evident in inscriptions and BH, may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Form</th>
<th>Northern Cisjordan</th>
<th>Southern Cisjordan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different orthography =</td>
<td>מеннא 'recount'</td>
<td>מנן 'repeat, recount'</td>
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<tr>
<td>different consonantal articulation (?)</td>
<td>Ug. ימי; Judg. 5:11 יבנאל; 11:40 יהושע (cf. Ps. 8:2?)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diphthong contraction</td>
<td>סָפִּים (&lt; סָשִּׁים)</td>
<td>יש ע nom. loc.</td>
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</tbody>
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Prose relative pron. -ש, -ש, -ש

Judg. 6:17; 7:12; 8:26;
(poetic in 5:7 יָֽהַעַל [2x]
but 5:27 יָֽהַעַל elsewhere
always poetic (GKC, §§36, 138a n. 1; BDB, p. 979a)

m. pl. termination מ-

Judg. 5:10 מְלָחי 'carpets, blankets' (GKC, §87e)

abs. f. sg ending יש 'year'

N Heb.: יש / S Heb.: יש

Phoen., Moab., N Israel (cf. EHO, p. 36 #6)

2 f. sg pron. יָֽה

Judg. 17:2; cf. 1 Kgs 14:2;
2 Kgs 4:16, 23; 8:1; Jer.
4:30; Ezek. 36:13 (GKC, §32h; BDB, p. 61b)

2 f. sg perf. יָֽה

Judg. 5:7 יָֽהַעַל; 17:2 יָֽהַעַל
(not L); Ruth 3:3, (GKC, §44h n.; EHO, p. 67)

begin by recognizing in Judges the presence of different regional traditions that have been integrated into its composite form. Some type of compilation, therefore, must be at the heart of the literary structure of Judges. For the literary critic the difficulty is to account for the historical and rhetorical processes by which these traditions came into their present literary framework.  

When one discusses theories of the process of Judges’ formation, one needs to distinguish ‘compilation’ from ‘redaction’. The former refers only to a process of selecting excerpts from sources and of combining and arranging them into a coherent framework through prefacing, interposing and appending newly composed material. However, to argue that Judges was initially compiled in this way

41); similarly, m. pl. csr ending *-ay > N Heb. [¬] / S Heb. [¬-], e.g., לְנֹו (Arad 16:5; 49:1, 2, etc.), רְוֹד (Lach. 6:4), רְדֵי (Lach. 6:5) (p. 93); similarly, particle of non-existence יִנ attested only in S Heb. [‘yn] (Silwan B 1; Lach. 4:5, 7/8 [+ pron. suff.]); Arad 40:13/14 [partially restored; + pron. suff.]), whereas N Heb. would have been יָנ (p. 115); (2) aphaeresis of K in S Heb. in the first M. BCE[?], e.g., רָד (Lach. 4:10/11) (pp. 51-52; cf. GKC, §§19h, 32d; BDB, p. 59b; but restored in Judg. 9:28; 19:18); (3) only the 1 c. sg. pron. י is attested and only in S Heb.[?] (Arad 88:1; Beit Lei A 1 [partly restored]) (p. 79; so Judg. 1:3; 6:10; 8:23; 13:11; 15:3; never י in Judges; cf. GKC, §§32c-e; BDB, pp. 58b-59b); (4) only the prose relative pron. ו in S Heb. (Lach. 3:5; Arad 40:5, etc.; Mur. 17 A 2; Silwan B 1.2. etc.)[?] (pp. 85-87) (there is no evidence of the relative pron. ו in Heb. epigraphic texts; evidence of ו from a broken Samaria text [N Heb.] is uncertain, pace E. L. Sukenik, “Note on a Fragment of an Israelite Stelae Found at Samaria”, PEQFS [1936], p. 156); (5) the abs. f. sg ending in N Heb.: כָּר / S Heb.: כָּר [?], e.g., יָר < *sant ‘year’ Phoen. (KAI 19:5; 52; 60; etc.), Moab. (Mesha 2.8), N Heb. (Sam. Ost., passim); וְכִּלְנָה [hà-strit] ‘the tenth’ (Sam. Ost. 1:1, etc.); but S Heb.:כִּלְתָה [ré-b’t] ‘fourth’ (Lach. 29) (pp. 93-94); (6) the 2 m. sg possessive suff. כֹּר attached to pl. nouns and some preps., e.g., כֹּלַי (Arad 7:6), כֹּלַי (Lach. 6:12/13); but כּוֹלַי only from S Heb., e.g., כּוֹלַי (Beit Lei A 1) (p. 106). Some of these dialectal distinctions, evident in Hebrew by the first M. BCE, may already have featured in the latter half of the second M. BCE. Indeed, the linguistically isolative effects of physical geography, religion and politics should be expected to have begun exerting influence immediately after the Israelite settlement (cf. Garr, Dialect Geography [1985], pp. 232-34). Garr refers to וְלָר (Gezer Calendar, lines 1.1.2) as an example of the old nom. case ending in N Heb.[?] (Dialect Geography [1985], p. 63), though this view may founder if the here designates final -ו, which cannot denote the old nom. case ending (contra GKC, §90k.o) as can final -ו. Moreover, there is still a dispute whether the Gezer Calendar is a Heb. (so EHO) or a Phoen. inscription.

3 Despite the difficulty of establishing empirical criteria for a diachronic (historical-critical) analysis of composite texts such as the book of Judges, problems of literary coherence that arise through this approach actually serve to complicate and thereby enhance the interpretative task for the rhetorical critic. Cf. S. Boorer, “The Importance of a Diachronic Approach: The Case of Genesis–Kings”, CBQ 51 (1989), pp. 195-208.