The Book of Joshua is clearly divided into two parts. The first (chaps. i-xii) is engaged with the conquest of the land, and the second (chaps. xiii-xxi) with the division into portions. Jos. i 2-5 is the introduction to the first section, and xiii 1-7, that to the second.

The chapters of the distribution description, especially their historical and geographical aspects, have received a great deal of attention by scholars. One view regards these lists as Utopian planning, but it is generally accepted that the descriptions of the portions have a basis in the reality. Some scholars assign an early date to the lists, while others regard them as of later origin. It is commonly understood that these chapters are centered around their historical and geographical aspects, while theological considerations are marginal, if they exist at all. This article will examine the ideological and theological significance of the territorial depictions.

I thank Prof. Alexander Rofé for reading this paper and for his comments.

3 For the different opinions, see Kallai, Historical Geography of the Bible, pp. 3-15; T.C. Butler, Joshua (WBC, Waco Texas, 1983), pp. 142-144; N. Naaman, Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 84-95.
4 See, e.g., J.A. Soggin, Joshua, A Commentary (OTL, tr. R.A. Wilson, London, 1972), p. 8: “While the groups of material contained in the second part of the book are very
The critical historical approach that is identified with Wellhausen sought to find in these chapters the sources that compose the Torah. Alt and Noth, on the other hand, employed the methodology of form criticism to identify the different materials that compose this group of chapters. They primarily distinguished two types of texts: city lists and border descriptions.

The section is patently constructed of different elements, as is illustrated by the boundary and city descriptions that undoubtedly have their source in written texts, in contrast with the short narrative episodes, that are related to local conquests that unquestionably originate elsewhere (xiv 6-15; xv 13-19; xvii 3-4, 14-18). I do not intend to advance any additional hypothesis concerning the growth of the unit, and, in light of the many possibilities, it would be difficult to draw tangible conclusions regarding the development of this complex unit and its dating. Scholarly research has paid less attention to the redaction of the unit, that left its mark both on the formation of the passages and on the composition as a whole. The current essay will seek to examine this redaction.

The two land distributions

Jos. xiii-xix contains two different divisions of the land, one in xiv 1-5, and the other in xviii 1-10. The first division is followed by a listing of the portions of Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh (xv 1-xvii 13), while the second distribution relates to the territories of the remain-