



The Emergence of Israel in the Twelfth and Eleventh Centuries B.C.E.

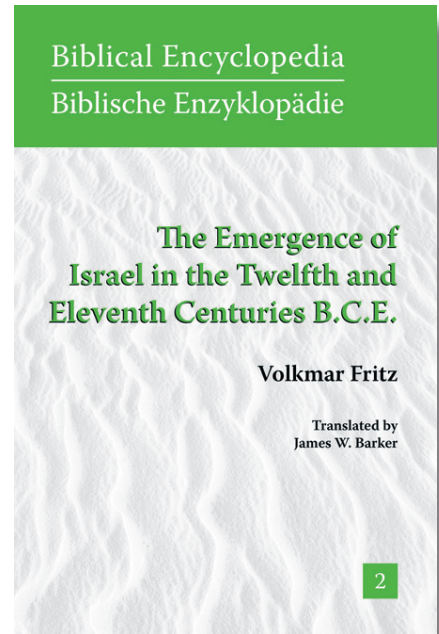
By Volkmar Fritz; trans. James W. Barker

According to the biblical image of Israel's history, the time before the Israelite state can be divided into two periods: the conquest and division of the land (Joshua) and Israel's self-preservation against various enemies in the now-occupied land (Judges). The description of both eras is, to be sure, largely fictitious, since the traditions recorded in these books emerged only during the period of the monarchy. However, the basic kernel of the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) is an authentic text from this period, and in it we discover that, in the eleventh century, ten tribes settled in the region and resisted Canaanite power claims. According to archaeological findings, although some Canaanite cities continued to exist in the eleventh century, the land was largely populated by new people in small nearby towns in which the material culture of the Canaanites was taken over. By carefully separating fact from fiction, Fritz offers an insightful and enlightening depiction of this seminal period of Israel's history.

Volkmar Fritz (1938–2007) was both an experienced archaeologist and a highly respected biblical scholar. In addition to serving as Professor in Old Testament at the University of Giessen, he frequently participated in archaeological digs, such as at Arad, Tel Masos, Tel Kinrot, and Feinan in Jordan. His two most popular written works reflect his passion for and expertise in both fields: *The City in Ancient Israel* (Continuum) and *An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology* (JSOT Press).

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