

*The Northern Patriarchs*

*No resident people ever made a myth of themselves as coming from outside. Canaan has not one but two such myths: one of a peaceful entry from the north, one of a warlike entry from the south. This section is about the northerners. Great efforts were later made to link them with the intruders from the south, to construct what we call the Promise Narrative. The first steps in that process are taken in these tales of the Northern Patriarchs.*

(11) Abram / Abraham. After many wanderings he buys a burial ground, and the Land is promised to him by its resident god, El.

(12) Isaac. Parts of his story seems to have roots elsewhere, but he does inherit the Promise of the Land which was given to his father Abram.

(13) Jacob / Israel. With him, the Promise of the Land to Abram is rewritten to support the Promise Narrative of the Yahweh southerners.

(14) The Dinah Affair. This late addition to the Jacob story preserves an early detail: it remembers the original four sons of Jacob.

(15) The Joseph Story. It tells how the family of Jacob went to Egypt and prospered there. It is the key link in the Yahweh Promise Narrative.

(16) The Twelve Tribes. An expansion of the four sons of Jacob. They play a major part in the Conquest myth, but disappear in later centuries.

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*The next part of the Bible Story is taken up in Exodus, where we meet the enigmatic leader Moses. We also meet Aaron, nominally his brother, but also his rival, eventually regarded as the ancestor of all priests. And we also meet Yahweh, the god of the Hebrews, with his ritual center at Midian.*

*Moses too is linked to Midian. Which of these Midian links is the earlier?*

*That is the kind of question which this book consistently asks. Not that it can always be answered, and many of the details are surely gone beyond recovery. But even partial answers can lead to a better understanding of what remains.*