סדר השבטים בדברי הימים א ב–ח לדעת מחבר הפירוש לדברי הימים המיוחס לתלמיד של רס"ג

The Order of the Tribes in I Chronicles 2–8 according to the Commentary on Chronicles Attributed to Rasag’s Student

ABSTRACT

The list of the Israelite tribes is mentioned a few times in the Bible, however the order of the genealogical lists of the tribes in I Chronicles 2–8 is unique. Modern scholars, who have tried to explain this unusual arrangement, have suggested that the author placed those tribes that he perceived as being important at the top of the list, in the middle of the list and at the bottom of the list, while the other tribes were placed according to their geographic locations (this suggestion requires further clarification and conjectural emendations). Among the entire corpus of medieval Bible commentators, only the author of the anonymous commentary on Chronicles attributed to Rasag’s Student (early 11th, Provence?) offered a systematic explanation regarding the arrangement of the genealogic lists. He presumed that the author composed the lists according to a number of structural principles: topical, geographic and chronological principles. This appears to be the earliest attempt in the history of critical study of the Book of Chronicles to offer a solution to the question of the arrangement of the tribes.

[A]

Clarification of the structure of the Book of Chronicles and the order of its subjects is an essential starting point to understand the book, which is why modern scholarship has devoted so much attention to these matters. Modern Bible scholars usually divide the book into two groups of chapters: I Chronicles 1-9, which are made up mainly of genealogical lists, and from I Chronicles 10 until the end of the work, which is mainly composed of continuous historical narrative. In each section the scholars noted subsections and subunits.[[1]](#footnote-1) Many view the first nine genealogical chapters that open the book as essential background information for the chapters that follow,[[2]](#footnote-2) but not all agree on this point.[[3]](#footnote-3) These nine chapters can be divided into genealogical sections and subsections, and it is clear that they are drawn from different sources – both biblical and extra-biblical[[4]](#footnote-4) – that were incorporated next to each other and within each other based on complex principles that can usually be reconstructed. At the same time, in some cases the logic behind the arrangement is not clear at all.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The first chapter of I Chronicles serves as a preface to the genealogical chapters, and we find there a review of human history from Adam until Jacob and his sons. The twelve sons of Jacob are enumerated in I Chronicles 2:1-2 in the following order: “These are the sons of Israel:[[6]](#footnote-6) Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.” The list follows the order of the mothers: First we find the six sons of Leah according to their birth, followed by the two sons of Rachel, then the son of Bilha, Rachel's maidservant, and finally the two sons of Zilpa, Leah's maidservant. Dan is the one who deviates from this order; even though he was born to Bilha, he appears between the sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Later on, in chapters 2-8, genealogical lists of the tribes appear, but according to an alternative arrangement, as follows:

1) Judah (I Chronicles 2:3 – 4:23); 2) Simeon (4:24-43); 3) Reuben (5:1-10); 4) Gad (5:11-17); 5) Half of the Tribe of Menasseh (5:23-25); 6) Levi (together with the lists of Priestly and Levite cities 5:27 – 6:66); 7) Issachar (7:1-5); 8) Benjamin (7:6-12); 9) Naphtali (6:13); 10-11) Menasseh and Ephraim (7:14-29); 12) Asher (7:30-40); 13) Benjamin (8:1-40).

Chapter 9, which closes out the section of genealogical chapters, is made up of three different topics: 1) Verse 1: Concluding words on the genealogical lists;[[8]](#footnote-8) 2) A list of the early settlers of Jerusalem (verses 2-18) and the service of the Levites (19-34); 3) A review of part of the list of Benjamin that appeared in the eighth chapter (35-44).

Lists of the tribes of Israel appear several times throughout the Bible, but there is no parallel to the arrangement that appears in I Chronicles 2-8.[[9]](#footnote-9) Many modern scholars have deliberated the question of this unusual ordering of the tribes.[[10]](#footnote-10) Generally speaking, scholars have associated the ordering of the tribes with the pronounced Judean orientation of the author of the Book of Chronicles[[11]](#footnote-11) and his desire to emphasize the important work of the Levites.[[12]](#footnote-12) The author arranges the tribes according to his perspective of their importance, placing the important tribes in significant points of the list. Thus we find Judah at the top of the list, Levi in the middle of the list and Benjamin (which assimilated into the tribe of Judah) at the bottom of the list. In concert with this suggestion, we find scholars who attribute placement on the list to the tribes' geographic locations, a proposition that requires clarifications and conjectural emendations. Beginning with Judah in the center of the country we go south to Simeon, from there we turn to the east and north to the tribes on the East Bank of the Jordan River, from there westward to the northern tribes, and finally to the tribes dwelling in the center of the country. The tribe of Levi, which did not receive a portion of land, appears in the middle of the lists. The tribe of Zebulun does not appear in the lists, although it is possible that the first list of Benjamin was originally the list of Zebulun.[[13]](#footnote-13) The tribe of Dan is also missing, and it is possible that I Chronicles 7:12 is a remnant of Dan's list.[[14]](#footnote-14) The tribe of Asher, which appears among the tribes in the central part of the country, deviates from the geographical suggestion, and it is worth considering whether it originally appeared among the northern tribes. Alternatively, it is possible that placement here represents an historical period when a branch of the families of the tribe of Asher travelled south and settled in the center of the country.[[15]](#footnote-15) According to this approach, the arrangement of the tribes in I Chronicles 2-8 is the result of two considerations – the first, most decisive reason is the desire to place the important tribes in prominent spots on the list, together with a secondary geographic consideration.

The changing arrangement of the tribes as they appear in different places in the Bible, was a matter of concern to the rabbinic sages,[[16]](#footnote-16) and even more so to the medieval commentators, some of whom attempted to uncover the principles that stood behind the different arrangements.[[17]](#footnote-17) It is, therefore, unsurprising to find that most of the commentaries to the Book of Chronicles addressed the issue of the order of the tribes in I Chronicles 2-8.[[18]](#footnote-18) Nevertheless, none of them succeeded in presenting a systematic and comprehensive approach and it ultimately appears that no attempt was made to reach a complete resolution to this question.

An exception to this rule is the anonymous commentary on the Book of Chronicles attributed to a student of Rabbi Sa'adia Ga'on (Rasag), whose work is among the earliest extant commentaries on this book.[[19]](#footnote-19) It appears that the author of this commentary was active at the turn of the eleventh century as one of Rasag's disciples. The commentary itself is a combination of Eastern and European elements, affected specifically by Latin European influences. It is possible that the author grew up in a country under Muslim rule, although the commentary was written in the domain of French culture, apparently in Provence.[[20]](#footnote-20) This commentator devoted some level of attention to literary matters, including questions of structure and composition, but he does not usually reveal his views in a systematic and explicit manner. This stylistic pattern also characterizes his treatment of the issue of the arrangement of the tribal lists in the genealogical chapters. In order to understand his position on this matter, we must gather the relevant statements that are scattered throughout his commentary, and connect them to each other in order to arrive at a comprehensive picture. In the following pages, I will present an analysis of these statements. As will become clear, some of the suggestions made by the commentary attributed to the student of Rasag are very similar to suggestions made by modern scholarship, yet others are very different in spirit from those of modern philological-historical research. In any case, the comments of this anonymous commentator are the earliest attempt to offer a systematic explanation to the question of the arrangement of the tribes in the genealogical chapters in Chronicles. As such, he has secured a special place in the history of research of this book.

[B]

In his commentary to I Chronicles 2:1 the commentator notes that the author of the book, Ezra the Scribe,[[21]](#footnote-21) did not arrange the tribes in chapters 2-8 according to the birth order of the tribal patriarchs, rather he begins with Judah, continues to Simeon, and only afterwards lists the children of Reuben:

"These are the sons of Israel – 'The sons of Judah' [verse 3], they should have been arranged according to their birth order, but Judah was placed first in order to open with the matter of the monarchy, followed by Simeon, since that tribe was absorbed into the territory of Judah."

According to the commentator, the author places Judah before Reuben for a topical reason: Monarchy. It is the importance of the tribe of Judah throughout the generations that prompted him to place that tribe at the very beginning of the list of tribes. In a number of places the commentator emphasizes that the desire of the author of Chronicles to praise notable personages influenced the content and arrangement of different elements in the book,[[22]](#footnote-22) and it appears that giving Judah precedence over Reuben can be attributed to this phenomenon. Simeon is juxtaposed with Judah for reasons of geography – the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon is an enclave within Judah's territory.[[23]](#footnote-23) From his statements it is clear that the basic arrangement of the family tree is the birth order of the tribal fathers. Nevertheless, this principle is less dominant than topical or geographical concerns that dictate an alternative arrangement.

We hear these considerations again in the commentary on I Chronicles 4:24:

"In order to give honor to the monarchy, Judah is placed first, with Simeon following afterwards, since the inheritance of Simeon is an enclave within the territory of the tribe of Judah, and they share a single area."[[24]](#footnote-24)

Conversely, in his commentary on I Chronicles 5:1 we find:

"'The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel' – the genealogy should have begun with Reuben, however, 'When he defiled, etc.'."

From this it appears that there was an additional reason to place Reuben after Judah and Simeon. It was not only Judah's greatness throughout the generations and Simeon's geographic location that demoted Reuben to third place, rather it was the immoral behavior of Reuben, father of the tribe, as described in the Book of Genesis (35:22; 49:4).

The geographic concern appears again in the commentary on I Chronicles 5:13 where we find the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Menasseh are arranged in the forth and fifth positions:

"Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Menasseh are listed together because they settled in proximity to one another on the East Bank of the Jordan River."

The tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Menasseh are listed next to each other and the tribe of Reuben because of geographic considerations. All three settled in one area. The commentator repeats this position in his commentary on I Chronicles 7:1, where he also discusses the placement of the tribe of Issachar:

"And the sons of Issachar – Now we return to ordering the tribes according to their birth order, since Issachar was born to Leah after Judah. Had the author not turned his attention to the geographic concern, he would have placed Issachar immediately after Judah, but Simeon took precedence because of the position of his territory [within that of Judah]. At that point he returned to Reuben since he was the firstborn, and the tribe of Gad and half the tribe of Menasseh took precedence because they received their inheritance together with Reuben on the East Bank of the Jordan River. Only then is the tribe of Issachar discussed."

With this, the commentator summarizes the considerations of the author of the Book of Chronicles up to this point. In explaining the placement of Issachar he notes that he is the child who was born to Leah after Judah and had it not been for the geographical and topical considerations he would have been placed immediately after Judah. Given the fact that Jacob had four sons between Judah's birth (Genesis 29:35) and Issachar's birth (Genesis 30:18) – Dan and Naphtali, born to Bilha (Genesis 30:5-8), and Gad and Asher, born to Zilpa (Genesis 30:9-13) – the order of Jacob's sons as they were born to the matriarchs is the most basic principle of arrangement, and it is implemented whenever there are no more powerful considerations. This explanation also indirectly clarifies why Levi, Leah's third-born son, appears before Issachar who was her fifth son, an idea that is implied is other places in the commentary, as will be noted below.

Another significant statement relating to the principles of the arrangement of the tribes appears in the commentary to I Chronicles 7:12:

"After Benjamin, his brother, Dan, is chronicled, together with his son, Hushim. Dan is referred to as Aher, as we find written 'So that his rider is thrown backward [*ahor*]' (Genesis 9:17). After that Naphtali is chronicled. Just as we find in the Book of Numbers, they appear after the sons of Rachel since they are the children of Bilha, Rachel's handmaiden. Half of the tribe of Menasseh appears with the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and now we find that the other half of the tribe [Menasseh] is chronicled."

The commentator is referring to "Hushim the sons of Aher" (I Chronicles 7:12) when he says that the author chronicled the tribe of Dan after the tribe of Benjamin. He believes that many people and places that appear in Scripture are referred to by more than one name, an idea that appears dozens of times in his commentary.[[25]](#footnote-25) Generally speaking, the alternative names are similar to one another, but that need not be the case. The phenomenon of multiple names appears in this case, as well. Hushim is an alternative name for Shuham.[[26]](#footnote-26) We can conclude that Aher is an alternative name for Dan, father of Hushim/Shuham, which the commentator believes is implied by the blessing given by Jacob to the tribe of Dan in Genesis 49:17.[[27]](#footnote-27) He suggests that the author chronicles Dan and Naphtali after Benjamin in the ninth and tenth spots because they are the sons of Bilha who was Rachel's handmaiden.[[28]](#footnote-28) Here we discover an additional ordering principle: the author gives precedence to the sons of the mistresses over those of the handmaidens. According to this logic, however, Menasseh and Ephraim, who were Rachel's grandchildren, should have appeared immediately after the tribe of Benjamin; they should have appeared before the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilha. The commentator therefore explains that "since they are the sons of Rachel's handmaiden, Bilha, they are acknowledged as descending after the sons of Rachel." His intention is to suggest that the handmaiden's sons are considered the children of the mistress, which is why they are placed together.[[29]](#footnote-29) The commentator does not clarify what the author's interest might be in including the sons of the handmaiden with Rachel's sons.[[30]](#footnote-30) Nevertheless, this is a topical consideration, and as we learned from the case of Judah, topical considerations carry more weight than any other considerations in arranging the order of the tribes. It is a stronger consideration than the birth order of the tribes and it is stronger that the geographic consideration. The preference for the topical consideration over the geographic consideration is implied by his commentary on I Chronicles 8:7:

"The inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin was an enclave within the territory of the tribe of Ephraim."

Thus, it appears that were it not for the pattern of the author of the Book of Chronicles to arrange the sons of the handmaidens in between those of the mistress, the tribe of Benjamin would have been placed next to the tribe of Ephraim because of geographical considerations.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The tribe of Asher appears in the twelfth spot, which leads to the conclusion that Leah did not merit the same honor that was given to Rachel, inasmuch as the sons of her handmaiden are not considered to be her offspring.[[32]](#footnote-32) The commentator notes that "this was the practice of the Book of Numbers," and it appears that he is referring to Chapter 26, but the point of comparison is not clear. He may be referring to the division between the sons of Leah and the sons-grandsons of Rachel, or this might be a reference to some distinction between the sons of the mistresses and the sons of the handmaidens,[[33]](#footnote-33) or this may refer to the question of where the tribe of Dan is placed, as discussed above.

In addition to the genealogical list of the tribe of Benjamin that appears in I Chronicles 7:6-12, we find an additional list of the tribe of Benjamin in I Chronicles 8, which partially overlaps the first list, but adds much more detail, concluding with Saul's grandchildren. In his commentary on I Chronicles 8:1 the commentator explains this repetition in the following way:

"'And Benjamin begat Bela his first-born' – He was chronicled above with three sons [I Chronicles 7:6] without mention of the two others, since the first three had many descendants and these two did not. The chronicling is repeated here in order to bring the family lineage of Saul, who came from the tribe of Benjamin."

In his commentary on I Chronicles 8:7 he writes: "He repeated his chronicling of Benjamin because of his interest in Saul, as I mentioned above." It appears from his words that the author of the Book of Chronicles divided the list into two parts because he wanted to chronicle Saul's ancestry in this place.[[34]](#footnote-34) The commentator does not make this point directly, but we can be almost certain that he believed that the author did so because Saul's lineage serves as an appropriate segue to Chapter 10, which offers a concise description of the sins and ultimate death of Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. This approach is also implied by the commentary on I Chronicles 9:35:

"'The father of Gibeon lived in Gibeon' – since the author skipped, ending the discussion of the story of Saul and continuing with the story of all the tribes, their exile to Babylonia and the people who returned first to resettle, therefore he now begins anew with the story of Saul, his genealogy and his death so that his story can be juxtaposed with that of the monarchy of the House of David who served as king after him."

A mention of the exile of the tribes (I Chronicles 9:1) and a list of the first settlers in Jerusalem (I Chronicles 9:2-34) appears between the second genealogical list of Benjamin in I Chronicles 8 and the story of Saul in Chapter 10. He explains that the desire of the author of the Book of Chronicles to juxtapose Saul's genealogy with the story of his death is what caused him to repeat the end of the second list of Benjamin.

[C]

From the overall approach of the commentator we can understand that the most natural principle for the arrangement of the tribes is the birth order of the children of Jacob according to their mothers, with the sons of the mistresses taking precedence over the sons of the handmaidens.[[35]](#footnote-35) There are, however, a number of principles that carry more weight than this one. The topical principle is the most significant, and it is because of that principle that Judah claims Reuben's spot at the beginning of the list. Next comes the geographic principle, a result of which Simeon is placed next to Judah, and Gad and half the tribe of Menasseh are juxtaposed with one another and with Reuben. According to the birth order of the sons of Leah, Levi and Issachar are mentioned in the sixth and seventh spots, followed by Rachel's children – her son, Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, who were born to her handmaiden but are considered her offspring, and then her grandchildren, Menasseh and Ephraim. After them, in the thirteenth spot, we find Asher. The arrangement of the sons from Levi onwards is the outcome of two somewhat contradictory considerations. On the one hand the author of the Book of Chronicles established the order of the sons according to the status of their mothers, with the sons of the mistresses taking precedence over the sons of the handmaidens. On the other hand, he placed Bilha's sons together with the sons of Rachel, apparently as part of his desire to honor the notable personages of the story. Just as we find in the case of Judah, this consideration is given more weight than the consideration of arranging the sons according to the status of their mothers, and it is given more weight than the concern with geographic proximity. The list closes with the second list of the tribe of Benjamin, which serves as an introduction of sorts to the story of Saul.

The commentator does not clarify why Zebulun is omitted from the genealogical lists, but he does make reference to it in his commentary on I Chronicles 8:7: "All of the tribes are chronicled together with their genealogy and descendants with the exception of the tribe of Zebulun, about whom neither his genealogy nor his exile is mentioned[[36]](#footnote-36) […] but even though the tribe of Zebulun is not chronicled here, his genealogy is detailed together with that of the other tribes in the eight prophets."

In his commentary on I Chronicles 6:62 the commentator clarifies that "that which is not explicit here [in I Chronicles 6], he lets us know there [Joshua 21], and what is missing there he lets us know here, and this is what is regularly done [*ha-minhag*]." This approach by the author of the Book of Chronicles appears to be in operation in the case of the tribe of Zebulun; although they do not appear in Chronicles, they are mentioned in one of the list of tribes that are brought elsewhere in the prophetic books ("the eight prophets"[[37]](#footnote-37)). It is possible that he is referring to the division of the land among the tribes in the Book of Joshua, chapters 13-19 (see also Joshua 19:10-16). At the same time, the commentator does not explain why this "common practice" of the author was applied specifically to the tribe of Zebulun and not to any of the other tribes.

As I noted at the beginning of this essay, modern scholars of the Book of Chronicles discuss the placement of the genealogical chapters at the beginning of the Book of Chronicles in some detail, including the arrangement of the tribes that appears in these chapters. These scholars often present the history of the scholarship, referring to the positions of the scholars who preceded them. The statements made by the author of the commentary attributed to a student of Rasag that are discussed in this essay are the earliest systematic examination of these issues, and it should be seen as a landmark in the history of the study of the Book of Chronicles and its commentaries. His position, which posits that the author of the Book of Chronicles was directed by a number of ordering principles, each of which carries different weight, diverges from the approach common to modern critical scholarship that views the arrangement of the lists as based on just two principles – placement of the tribes of Judah, Levi and Benjamin in prominent places on the list and the geographic principle. Understandably, the methodology of interpretation that he used is incompatible with modern philological-historical research principles. Nevertheless, it is worthy to note the very attempt to systematically resolve the question of the structure of the genealogical chapters based on the assumption that the considerations guiding the book's author could be established.

1. This division is found repeatedly in many modern commentaries to the Book of Chronicles, in scientific surveys of the book in encyclopedias, and in introductory works on the Bible. For bibliographic details see: Kalimi, Classified Bibliography, pp. 34-40, 45-52. For critical studies devoted to the composition of the book, see *ibid*, pp. 78-79. For a list of recent studies devoted to the genealogical chapter at the beginning of the book, see Klein, Chronicles, pp. 20-21, n. 172, and below in the notes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Welch, for example, claims that the two parts of the book are not connected at all and that the genealogical chapters were added at a later stage. See Welch, Work, pp. 185-186. For a less extreme positions, see Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche, p. 122. For a comprehensive bibliography of the different views see Kalimi, Book, p. 388; Klein, Chronicles, pp. 11-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It appears that most modern scholars are in agreement that the genealogical lists in the Book of Chronicles are based also on extra-biblical works, even though in his influential essay Wellhausen disagreed, see Wellhausen, Prolegomena, p. 222 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Chronicles consistently refers to Jacob by the name Israel. See Williamson, Israel, p. 62, pp. 102-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Among others, these twelve studies (according to the order of their publication)… [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For a comprehensive bibliography, see Kalimi, Classified Bibliography, pp. 97-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Levin, Galilee, pp. 122-125, and *ibid* in the previous bibliography. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Kirchheim, Commentar. All quotes from the commentary that appear below are taken from this edition. Kirchheim made use of Rostock manuscript 32 (Or. 32 Universitaetsbibliothek) for the interior edition, while in the commentary itself and in the notes he inserted supplementary material from the Munich manuscript 5 (Cod. Hebr. 5, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, col. 165f.) and from the Torino manuscript 124 (damaged in the fire of 1904). Regarding new fragments that have been uncovered recently, see Emanuel, Fragments, p. 131.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Regarding the question of the time and location of this commentator, as well as his influence on literal commentary in Northern France and Ashkenaz, see Viezel, Anonymous, where the minimal bibliographic material available has been collected. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Regarding the commentator's position on the question of authorship of the Book of Chronicles, see Viezel, Haggai.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Among other instances, compare: "In order to honor of Shem who was pious, he was placed before his brothers" (commentary on I Chronicles 1:4); "Isaac precedes [Ishmael]…due to his honor and importance" (I Chronicles 1:24); "The chronology begins with Ram in order to give honor to David" (I Chronicles 2:9, and again in his commentary to v. 26).

    [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. It appears likely that his position regarding the placement of Simeon influenced the commentary attributed to Rashi on I Chronicles 4:24 – "Since Simeon had settled within the inheritance of Judah, his genealogy and the discussion of his tribal cities appear before those of Reuben." See also Radak's commentary on this verse. On the influence of the commentary attributed to the student of Rasag on the commentary attributed to Rashi, see Viezel, Commentary, pp. 44-47.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See the methodological note in his commentary on I Chronicles 7:19. For a detailed discussion, see Viezel, Ksharim. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See, also, the commentary on I Chronicles 8:7: "And now the tribe of Dan is mentioned, as we explained 'Hushim the sons of Aher'." A similar approach is mentioned in Radak's commentary on I Chronicles 7:1, and in his commentary on verse 12, Radak explicitly rejects this suggestion. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Compare this with his commentary on I Chronicles 27:24 where he explains the placement of Naphtali and Dan between Rachel's sons in the list of the princes of the tribes of Israel: "He placed Naphtali between the sons of Joseph as I explained in the beginning of the book, since he was the first-born of Bilha, Rachel's handmaiden." The commentator erred on this point, since Dan was born before Naphtali (Genesis 30:6, 8), but for our purposes this points to his belief that the author of the Book of Chronicles systematically adhered to his principles of arrangement of the tribes.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The commentator is explaining "descending after" as being "considered as." See Even-Shoshan’s dictionary, v.s. y.h.s., and Ben Yehuda’s dictionary, 4:2026 and compare: "One whose seed is legitimately descending from him [*meyuhas ’aharayv*]" is considered to be a priest like his father, "excluding this one, whose seed is not legitimately descending from him [*meyuhas ’aharayv*]" who is not considered to be a priest (B. Ketubot 13b). Alternatively, it is possible to consider that the meaning of the word "after" could be "together with," see Scott, Secondary, pp. 178–179, but I am not familiar with such usage in medieval Hebrew. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. It appears likely that the commentator assumed that the author did so to honor Rachel who merited many offspring; compare to his commentaries on I Chronicles 2:9, 26 (quoted above in n. 22). The idea that the author of the Book of Chronicles arranged the genealogical chapters in a manner that would emphasize how the paragons of the book merited many offspring, repeats itself in the commentary attributed to Rashi on Chronicles, which was heavily influenced by the commentary attributed to the student of Rasag. See, in particular, the introduction to his commentary and his commentary on I Chronicles 14:3 (repeated in I Chronicles 3:6, but that appears to be an addition made by a student). See, also, Viezel, Commentary, pp. 245-255.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. In his commentary on II Chronicles 10:17, the commentator writes: "'The Israelites who lived in the towns of Judah,' for there were many whose inheritance was situated within the territory of Judah and Benjamin, as we explained regarding Zebulun and Naphtali." According to this, it is possible that Naphtali was placed next to Benjamin also out of geographic considerations, and the commentator is being meticulous when discussing the proximity of the territories in his commentary on I Chronicles 8:7.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. As noted, Gad, who was Zilpa's other son, is placed next to Reuben and half the tribe of Menasseh due to geographic considerations. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. It should be noted that this is not an exact analogy. Just as we find the sons of Bilha amongst the sons-grandsons of Rachel in Chronicles, so Numbers 26 has Asher, the son of Zilpa, amongst the sons of Bilha. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. According to his approach, the differences between the two lists derive from topical considerations. Two of Benjamin's sons mentioned in I Chronicles 8:1-2 are not mentioned at all on I Chronicles 7:6 because they had few descendants. He repeats this consideration below, as well. See his commentary on I Chronicles 7:6 and on I Chronicles 2:6. Similar considerations are found in contemporary commentaries, see for example, the commentary attributed to Rashi on Nehemia 11:4.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Similar to the arrangement of the tribes in I Chronicles 2:1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. As is apparent from subsequent passages in the commentary, the commentator's understanding was that Zebulun and Naphtali were both exiled by Nebuchadnezzar together with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, an idea that he repeats in his commentary on I Chronicles 9:1.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The eight (books of the) prophets refer to the series of books from Joshua through the Twelve Prophets. For the source of this expression, compare, for example, Rashi on Bava Batra 13b (s.v. be-Baytus Shemona Nevi'im), and it serves as an alternative title for the work authored by R. Judah Hayyuj, the Kitāb al-Nutaf – Kitāb Nukat al-Tamāniya, or The Book of Studies of the Eight (Prophets). See Basal, Kitāb, pp. 12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)