

Num. 32:1

The Reubenites and the Gadites owned cattle in very great numbers. Noting that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were a region suitable for cattle, 2 the Gadites and the Reubenites came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the chieftains of the community, and said, 3 “Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon— 4 the land that the LORD has conquered for the community of Israel is cattle country, and your servants have cattle. 5 It would be a favor to us,” they continued, “if this land were given to your servants as a holding; do not move us across the Jordan.”

Num. 32:6

Moses replied to the Gadites and the Reubenites, “Are your brothers to go to war while you stay here?”

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Num. 32:25

The Gadites and the Reubenites answered Moses, “Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26 Our children, our wives, our flocks, and all our other livestock will stay behind in the towns of Gilead; 27 while your servants, all those recruited for war, cross over, at the instance of the LORD, to engage in battle—as my lord orders.”

Num. 32:28

Then Moses gave instructions concerning them to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes. 29 Moses said to them, “If every shock-fighter among the Gadites and the Reubenites crosses the Jordan with you to do battle, at the instance of the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, you shall give them the land of Gilead as a holding. 30 But if they do not cross over with you as shock-troops, they shall receive holdings among you in the land of Canaan.”

Num. 32:31

The Gadites and the Reubenites said in reply, “Whatever the LORD has spoken concerning your servants, that we will do. 32 We ourselves will cross over as shock-troops, at the instance of the LORD, into the land of Canaan; and we shall keep our hereditary holding across the Jordan.”

Num. 32:33

So Moses assigned to them—to the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph—the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, the land with its various cities and the territories of their surrounding towns. 34 The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, 35 Atroth-shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, 36 Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran as fortified towns or as enclosures for flocks. 37 The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, 38 Nebo, Baal-meon—some names being changed—and Sibmah; they gave [their own] names to towns that they rebuilt. 39 The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead and captured it, dispossessing the Amorites who were there; 40 so Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of Manasseh, and he settled there. 41 Jair son of Manasseh went and captured their villages, which he renamed Havvoth-jair. 42 And Nobah went and captured Kenath and its dependencies, renaming it Nobah after himself.

**IBN EZRA:** **The half-tribe of Manasseh.** Since they are only half even of their own tribe, the text has not bothered to mention them until now.

**NAHMANIDES:** **The half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph.** The tribe of Manasseh did not come before Moses at first. But when he assigned this land to Gad and Reuben, Moses saw that it was more than they needed, and he asked whether anyone else wished to join them. Some of the Manassites, perhaps cattlemen, did, so Moses gave them their share of the land here.

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## ***The Settlement of Transjordan* (chap. 32)**

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Nonetheless, it cannot be gainsaid that this Manassite pericope (vv. 39–42) and the phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” (v. 33) are interpolations by a later hand (see the Comments to v. 33 and the introductory Comment to vv. 39–42). A similar situation prevails in the story of the suspected heresy of the Transjordanian tribes in the time of Joshua. That account (Josh. 22) mentions Manasseh alongside of Gad and Reuben, except in verses 25, 33 and 34. That account too probably dealt originally with Gad and Reuben; but later, when Manassite clans entered Transjordan, it underwent interpolation to reflect this fact.

In sum, whereas the Gad-Reuben settlement in Transjordan narrows down to the two solutions mentioned above, the paucity and the ambiguity of the information concerning Transjordanian Manasseh do not allow any solution to be anything but a conjecture.

Joseph Dan, *Encyclopedia Judaica*

**JUDAH BEN SAMUEL HE-ḤASID** (c. 1150–1217), main teacher of the [\\*Ḥasidei](#)

[Ashkenaz](#) movement. Judah was one of the most prominent scholars of the Middle Ages in the fields of ethics and theology. He probably lived some time in Speyer and then moved to Regensburg (he was sometimes called “Rabbi Judah of Regensburg”).

Gen. 48:20 So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you shall Israel invoke blessings, saying: God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.” Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Gen. 48:21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die; but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 22 And now, I assign to you one portion more than to your brothers, which I wrested from the Amorites with my sword and bow.”

Baruch Schwartz, <http://thetorah.com/when-moses-placed-ephraim-before-manasseh/>

Nowhere does the Torah speak of any territory of which Jacob took possession at all, much less “from the Amorites.” Interpretations both traditional and critical abound, but R. Judah HeḤasid is apparently the only commentator to solve this conundrum by disconnecting the two verses and claiming that v. 22 contains not Jacob’s words but rather those of the person who actually did wrest territories from the Amorites with his sword and his bow: Moses. “The Amorites,” in this reading, must refer to Sihon, king of the Amorites (Num 21:25, Deut 2:33-34), as the Torah records no other instance of anyone conquering territory from the Amorites. Moreover, he claims, Moses does, in fact, give this territory to the tribes of Israel, something Jacob never does.

[O]nce Jacob stipulated that Manasseh and Ephraim were to be considered tribes in their own right, Moses began to the process of implementing his will by giving Manasseh a portion of the kingdoms of Sihon and Og.

In other words, this doubling of the territory of Joseph was a necessary result of Jacob’s decision that Joseph, rather than Reuben, was now to receive the birthright.

Gen. 48:20 So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you shall Israel invoke blessings, saying: God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.” Thus he [Moses] put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Gen. 48:21

Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die; but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.” 22 And now, I assign to you one portion more than to your brothers, which I wrested from the Amorites with my sword and bow.

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