

PART IV

DEBORAH: MOTHER OF A VOLUNTARY NATION

In this final part of our study, we turn our attention to the Bible's grandest war monument – the Song of Deborah. As we explore the most remarkable features of this impressive piece of poetry, we will treat its relationship to the preceding prose account, which contains another brilliant and important example of war commemoration. Both of these texts reflect the close relationship between war memories, the formation of biblical literature, and the construction of a (new) national identity in the aftermath of defeat.

We begin in Chapter 10 by considering the composition of the prose account and its function in the book of Judges. From there, we turn to the poetic version in Chapters 11 and 12, examining how the song imagines Israel as a people consisting solely of Northern tribes yet without a king ruling over them. These texts celebrate the contributions of women, and in Chapter 13 we study the central role they played in (biblical) war commemoration. Finally, in Chapter 14, we interpret our texts from the perspective of a particular population that posed a problem for the biblical scribes, and we will see how these scribes addressed the problem by supplementing narratives of the nation's past with the same politico-theological strategies on display in many of the other texts we've studied.

