



The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites Nor Crusaders

Professor David Ohana

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The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites Nor Crusaders Professor David Ohana We claim that Zionism as a meta-narrative has been formed through contradiction to two alternative models, the Canaanite and crusader narratives. These narratives are the most daring and heretical assaults on Israeli-Jewish identity, which is umbilically connected to Zionism. The Israelis, according to the Canaanite narrative, are from this place and belong only here; according to the crusader narrative, they are from another place and belong there. On the one hand, the mythological construction of Zionism as a modern crusade describes Israel as a Western colonial enterprise planted in the heart of the East and alien to the area, its logic, and its peoples, whose end must be degeneration and defeat. On the other hand, the nativist construction of Israel as neo-Canaanism, which defined the nation in purely geographical terms as an imagined native community, demands breaking away from the chain of historical continuity. Those are the two greatest anxieties that Zionism and Israel needed to encounter and answer forcefully. The Origins of Israeli Mythology seeks to examine the intellectual archaeology of Israeli mythology, as it reveals itself through the Canaanite and crusader narratives.



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