

See File XI-70/3.4 G.W. Anderson seems to discount etiological stories

See G. Fohrer Einleitung in Das Alte Testament, pp. 100-101 for an interesting and valuable discussion on Aetiologies.

G. Fohrer Introduction to the Old Testament trans by D. Green, p. 92

Discussion continues, however, over whether etiology has the power actually to create a saga and whether it is possible to arrive at a "real" historical event after removing etiological features. Did etiologies evoke and create the sagas embodying them, so that they must be considered ipso facto historically unreliable? Or is it possible on the contrary to remove the etiological features so as to arrive at a historical narrative? . . . As a general rule, we may conclude that appended etiologies did not produce narratives, but were rather added to narratives already in existence. Narratives that came into being by growing out of etiologies are etiological throughout, and develop their explanations in the course of their presentation.

Thompson, R. J., Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism Since Graf (Leiden: E. J. Brill) 1970 . p. 11

Aetiology does not create the tradition, nor does worship create it. Aetiology presupposes some prior fact to account for traditional ascriptions. "If there had never been a conquest of Canaanite cities one would never have dreamed of explaining such and such a ruin by an account of conquest."⁴ The same must surely be said of Moses and the law.

4) R. de Vaux, "Method in the Study of Early Hebrew History", in J. P. Hyatt (ed.) The Bible in Modern Scholarship, Nashville (1965) p. 24 .

3) "Aetiology" - the telling of a story about a past happening to account for a present condition.