King Saul:
A Re-Examination of his Reign and its Effect on Israel
Down to the Schism

BY

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is King Saul of Israel. Though Saul is depicted negatively in the biblical narrative, careful examination of the Books of Samuel and part of the Book of Judges will not only reveal new clues suggesting a more favourable image of Saul, but will also provide a new insight into his reign as well as its effect on Israel long after his death. In contrast to his biblical image, such clues show Saul to have been a strong ruler who successfully united the various Israelite groups, a unity which was not to be achieved by any later leader. Examination of the relationship between Saul and David reveals that Saul's position was threatened by David, not because David was more successful but because he was ambitious and coveted Saul's throne. While David was pursued by Saul he made a treaty with the Philistines, the Israelites' enemy. I suggest, not only that David was responsible for the Philistines' initiation of the battle at Gilboa, in which Saul died, but also that he himself took part in that battle. Even though David eventually became king of Israel, the people continued to support the House of Saul. The hostility associated with the fragile relationship between David and the people continued under Solomon and contributed to the schism.

Using original methods of research, this thesis re-examines the period from the eve of the rise of monarchy, through the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon; events relating to David and Solomon are dealt with only within the context of their application to Saul. Not only is Saul shown to have been a more positive figure than portrayed in the biblical narrative, but also a new, more realistic account of the history of the period from Saul to the schism is provided.
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List of Abbreviations:

AASOR  Annual American School of Oriental Research
AB  Anchor Bible
ABD  Anchor Bible Dictionary
ANET  Ancient Near Eastern Texts
ASOR  American School of Oriental Research
BA  Biblical Archaeologist
BAR  Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR  Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research
BR  Bible Review
BWANT  Beitrage zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
CAH  Cambridge Ancient History
CUP  Cambridge University Press
EAEHL  Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land
Enc.Miq.  עוניסאידתא יסודיה מקרנאיה
IEJ  Israel Exploration Journal
IES  Israel Exploration Society
JBL  Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS  Journal of Cuneiform Study
JNES  Journal of Near Eastern Study
JSOT  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup.  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
NCB  New Century Bible
OUP  Oxford University Press
PEF  Palestine Exploration Fund
PEFQ  Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly
PEFQS  Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Supplement
RB  Revue Biblique
SOAS  School of African and Oriental Studies
VT  Vetus Testamentum
WCJS  World Congress of Jewish Studies.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis was originally intended to be entitled, simply, 'A Case for Saul'. My early intention was to discover whether Saul, the first king of Israel, deserved such a negative presentation as he received in the biblical text. My hypothesis was, as it still remains, that the historical reality of Saul if re-examined, would be found to be significantly different from the way he is portrayed in the biblical text. My purpose was therefore to demonstrate that Saul's negative presentation was inaccurate in view of the new and more realistic picture of Saul that I have been able to develop.

Although my proposal to write this thesis has been received with general enthusiasm, it has been met with two general objections. The first objection was that Saul, as a subject, could not justify a whole thesis since there is so little material related to him even in the biblical text, i.e. in I Samuel. The second objection related to the whole question of the historicity of the biblical narrative, a crucial and controversial issue inevitably raised by the very attempt to write about Saul historically. Such objections in turn raised further questions: for example, as to the very character and purpose of, in particular, the Books of Samuel, as well as the whole question of what is the best way to approach the interpretation of the narrative there. Moreover, upon examination, all these issues turn out to be related one to another. Yet without at least attempting to define my
attitude on such issues it would have been impossible to undertake adequately my proposed research on Saul. I am indebted to Professor John Barton whose 1994 paper\(^1\) has proved to be invaluable in the context of the issues above.

The paucity of material: The claim that there is insufficient material relating to Saul is a superficial one. Firstly, in respect of the biblical text, although on an initial reading it does appear that Saul received only brief attention from the compilers, more careful examination reveals that this was not because of a lack of significant events during his reign, nor even because of a lack of sources to consult; this cursory attention was simply a consequence of the compilers' implicit bias in favour of David at the expense of Saul. In the deliberate service of this bias the compilers' approach was, firstly, to suppress any information that might give a favourable view of Saul; secondly, to conceal details of David's real attitude towards Saul and especially those details concerning David's accession to the throne; thirdly, and most importantly, to promote David's own reputation. Therefore a careful re-examination of the events surrounding Saul was needed, especially in respect of the Saul-David relationship and David's role during and after Saul's reign. The re-examination of these events, in light of the bias, provides much new information concerning Saul, more than is apparent on the initial reading, and thus reveals a different picture. For example, David played a major role in Saul's downfall (see Chapter IV) and there was a major uprising against David after Saul's death (see Chapter VII). These discoveries led on to further new material relating

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\(^1\) J.Barton, 'Historical Criticism and Literary Interpretation: Is There Any Common Ground?' in *Crossing the Boundaries* (eds.) S.T.Porter, P.Joyce and D.E.Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp.3-15. This paper was also read to The Society for Old Testament Study, winter meeting 1994, Queen Elizabeth Hall, University of London.
to Saul in the book of Judges, chapters 13-16 and 19-21. The new information which was revealed and the direction in which this research was able to be developed made me aware that I was not merely making a case for Saul in defence of Saul's image, but also undertaking a re-examination of both his reign itself, as well as of the events after his death. Hence the change of title to: "King Saul: A Re-examination of his Reign and its Effect on Israel down to the Schism". In this more wide ranging form this thesis not only shows that Saul was a more positive leader than he is depicted, but also provides a new, more realistic view of the period from Saul to Solomon.

Secondly, I have been able to exploit evidence outside the biblical text, including that of an archaeological nature (see Chapters II and VI), and therefore I have been able to expand upon the conventional reading of the biblical text.

The Question of Historicity and the need for a new approach: In approaching the text as an historian I have been necessarily obliged to apply a historical approach, discounting traditional interpretations where necessary, as well as those later supernatural and theological presuppositions that may have influenced the text. I believe that this approach brings to light new information regarding events and activities which has not been considered before, information which would strengthen the claim that there are aspects of genuine history, as well as tradition, within the biblical text.

However although this thesis is primarily historical in its focus, the second objection questions the historicity of the biblical text (see Chapter II). Modern scholars are sharply divided on this question. Indeed, one school of thought would treat the Bible
as little more than fiction, i.e. a collection of legends, a treatment which implicitly questions the origins and existence of Israel in that period (i.e. Iron Age Period). Considering the complexity of the material in I Samuel, I have found it useful to some extent, to use firstly a literary approach, applying literary analysis and then examining whether any historical insight can be deduced. This approach is not favoured by many scholars and has therefore been little attempted. However Barton argues that there is not only "common ground" between these two approaches, but that there are possibilities of such collaboration between the two which it is essential to pursue if biblical interpretation is to make progress. Indeed, Barton claims that 'historical and literary critics meet and even cross, and an ideal student of the Bible... ought to be competent in both' since most texts need 'both historical and literary skill if they are to be adequately interpreted.'

In the context of a literary approach, other issues referred to by Barton are the occurrence of textual incoherence and of thematic complexity. The Books of Samuel are found to be very complex; thus they are both seemingly incoherent and many-themed, rather than coherently single-themed, various sources and compilers having apparently contributed. Barton suggests that where, as here perhaps, there exists an apparently

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4 Ibid., p. 15. Also for example, referring to the view of R. Alter, Barton points out that 'it is literary perceptions that predispose (Alter) to think that he does know the answer to the historical question...'.

casual, unplanned text which nevertheless might not be read as being merely accidental or meaningless, useful interpretations may be available from recent literary criticism.  

The literary-historical collaborative approach adopted by me was applied only when the complexity of the text was such that a historical approach alone could not suffice in terms of providing a full historical explanation. This can be seen, for example, in the discussion dealing with Saul and Samson, and in the section dealing with David's possible involvement in the last chapter of Saul's life (both in Chapter III).

In addition to my collaborative approach to the text, I have also (as mentioned earlier) referred to archaeological material where relevant, especially in Chapter II and Chapter VI. The purpose of exploiting the archaeology is neither to force archaeological data to prove biblical events, nor to use the biblical account to interpret the archaeological data. My aim is mainly to see whether there is a dialogue between the two, and whether that dialogue can shed light on the events discussed within the context of this thesis. A particular feature of this thesis is that it takes into consideration important studies written in modern Hebrew by Israeli scholars, studies which have not been considered previously in the English speaking world.

The Organisation of this thesis: The material in this thesis is organised in seven chapters and a final section of summary and conclusions. Before the development of the main themes, the first two chapters provide the background for the research.

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5 Barton, op. cit. n.1, p.14.
In Chapter I the current arguments among biblical scholars relating to the existence of ancient Israel are presented. For that purpose the external, i.e. extra-biblical evidence for the existence of Israel is considered. This comes from Egyptian and Assyrian documents whose authors were not Israelites, and who therefore presumably had no obvious reason to exaggerate information about Israel. This section is followed by the discussion of the possible reasons why the Israelites themselves apparently left no extra-biblical documents. This deficiency is especially puzzling in the light of the ample references to the activity of writing in the biblical text itself. Since the latter is the main source for the history of Israel, the problems in extracting history from it are discussed. These problems are caused, not only by the long history of compilation, editing and copying, but also by the existence of traditions passed down from one generation to another. Therefore biblical writing came to be influenced by folkloristic motifs; in addition, the material in the text is also religious in character, since Israelite authors presupposed YHWH's involvement in their history.

Chapter I also deals with the debate relating to history and historiography in the biblical text; questions relating to the emergence of historical writing in Israel; the sources for the study of the monarchy, especially the complex narrative in I Samuel; and the methods of interpretation used to isolate new evidence.

Chapter II: The material in Chapter II sets the historical background for the emergence of the new Israelite state in Canaan. This includes the general situation in the eastern Mediterranean region at the close of the Late Bronze Age (end of thirteenth century BCE) and the beginning of the Iron Age I period (early twelfth century BCE).
The discussion also deals with the period in which the Philistines and the Israelites overlap. The Philistines' development and expansion in the region is examined with reference to the archaeological evidence. It is significant that there has been an assumption that the Philistines brought the knowledge of iron-making into the region, and that they retained their monopoly over that knowledge despite the fact there is no evidence for the use of iron in this period; this question will be dealt with in Chapter II.

Until about a decade ago, scholars were limited to the information in the biblical text, and therefore attributed the emergence of the monarchy to pressure from the Philistines. However, the evidence which has now become available from archaeological surveys and excavations in the central highlands of Cisjordan has provided new information, which sheds light on other developments in that region. For example, it shows that the emergence of centralised rule (such as the monarchy), was the result of other, i.e. demographic, economic and social processes.

There are three main themes in this thesis. The first two dealing with Saul's negative image as depicted in the text, one which relates to Saul as an individual; the second to his relationship with David; and the third theme deals with the more positive aspects of Saul's achievements.

**Chapter III:** The first theme dealt with in Chapter III, can be explained in the light of the literary history of I Samuel. Evidently the final redaction of I Samuel, in its negative portrayal of Saul, has affected biblical scholars, who continue to present Saul in

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6 I Sam 13:19-20.
the same light without challenging the text. I have been obliged to analyse carefully the particular negative accounts dealing Saul; two incidents of his rejection by Samuel, and his alleged killing of the Gibeonites, as well as the entire group of priests at Nob. My analysis show that there are no convincing reasons for regarding Saul as at fault in any of these incidents.

**Chapter IV:** The second theme of Saul's negative image, focusing on the relationship between Saul and David, is discussed in Chapter IV. One of the main aims of the narrative describing David's rise\(^7\) is to show David's popularity in contrast to Saul's failures. Moreover, examination of the events surrounding Saul and David indicates that the redactor of the narrative of David's rise attempts to conceal David's usurpation of Saul's throne. David's treaty with the Philistines is to be taken seriously, since there are indications which hint at David's involvement in the battle at Gilboa in which Saul died. These aspects of the presentation of their relationship are carefully examined.

**Chapter V:** The third theme in contrast to the first two, is concerned with the more positive historical reality possibly associated with Saul and is dealt with in Chapter V. Despite the sources being silent about his origin and achievements, there are a number of clues which portray Saul as a strong and successful ruler and military leader.

**Sub-themes: Chapter VI:** The material in Chapter VI is mainly archaeological My aim is to establish a firm identification of Gibeah with modern Tel el-Ful, and to

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\(^7\) I Sam 16-II Sam 5.
discuss the relevance of that identification to the discussion of the incidents described in Judges 19-21.

**Chapter VII**: This chapter is entitled 'From Saul to the Schism'. My aim is to show how the events surrounding Saul and David affected the politics in Israel, contributing to the eventual schism. The account of the civil war in Judges 19-21, and the Saul-David-Ishbaal chronologies are considered in this context.

The discussion referring to the various new chronologies has been deliberately omitted since it deserves treatment outside the confines of this thesis.
I

ANCIENT ISRAEL: FICTION OR HISTORICAL REALITY?

It has been mentioned in the Introduction that the historicity of ancient Israel in
the Iron Age Periods is a subject of much debate among biblical scholars.\(^1\) Since this
thesis is about Saul of Israel, some of these debates should be included in this chapter;
Attempts should also be made to identify possible historical events within the biblical
text. Therefore the following issues will need to be discussed: a. the external evidence for
the existence of Israel; b. the textual evidence for writing in ancient Israel; c. the
problems in using the biblical text to extract historical data; d. the modern debate
concerning history and historiography in the biblical text; e. the emergence of historical
writing in Israel; f. the sources relating to the study of the monarchy; g. the complexity of
the source material in the Books of Samuel; h. the methods to be employed in this thesis.

a. External Evidence for the Existence of Ancient Israel

There is a wealth of relevant documents available from the ancient Near East.
They are non-Israelite, and therefore their authors had no reason to exaggerate
information about Israel. These documents provide numerous references of which the
following are only a few examples. The oldest reference to 'Israel' comes from the

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\(^1\) See also P.R.Davies, 'Introduction', in *The Origins of The Ancient Israelite States* (eds.) V.
Fritz and P.R.Davies (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 228, 1996), pp.11-17.
Memeptah Stele, which was discovered at the funerary temple of Memeptah in Thebes.²

The stele tells of Memeptah's campaign in Canaan where he defeated a people called 'Israel' in Canaan's central highland. In this text the word 'Israel' is preceded by a sign which indicates that the term 'Israel' refers to people and not to a geographical area³ and that the region in which this Israel is located is the central highlands.⁴ The fact that Pharaoh's scribe bothered to include 'Israel' on the stele must surely be quite significant. It could indicate perhaps that 'Israel' were already settled people in the region long before Memeptah's campaign.

More external references to Israel come from the Moabite Stele,⁵ which refers to Omri (ca. 885-874 BCE) King of Israel who had Moab under his control for a long period of time; in the Black Obelisk of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (ca. 858-824 BCE) there is a mention of Jehu son of Omri who sent tribute to the Assyrian king; again, in the Annals of the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III (ca.744-727 BCE) the king states that he led all the inhabitants of the land of Omri with their possessions to Assyria; in the same annals kings Menahem and Pekah of Israel are mentioned; and also Ahaz = la-u-ha-zi, ca. 740-725 BCE of Judah is mentioned, as bringing tribute; in the Annals of the Assyrian king, Sargon II (ca. 721-715 BCE) boasts that he conquered all the land of

⁵ The Moabite Stele of King Mesha was discovered in 1868 at biblical Dibon, 13 miles east of the Dead Sea.
Omri. Although these documents are much later than the period of Saul it is, in my view, important to mention them, since the existence of such texts implies that Israel must already have existed before that period.

The latest controversial discovery is one which refers to the 'House of David'. This is the Tel Dan Stele, which was discovered in the excavation led by A. Biran in July 1993. Two new pieces of the stele were discovered in the June excavation of 1994. The language of the inscription is early Aramaic and its script may be dated to the ninth century BCE. This discovery and its decipherment provoked a 'war of words' among scholars. However, the significant thing about this stele is that it contains a reference to Bytwd (בֵיתוּד), the first evidence for the 'House of David' outside the biblical text. The reason for the rejection of this decipherment stems from the fact, as P. Davies argues, that each word in the inscription is divided by a customary dot to mark the word-divider. Yet, there is no such dot between Byt and Dwd. Davies claims that Biran and Naveh read these six letters as two words, therefore producing the possibility of translating the second part as 'David'. Davies suggests various possibilities for translating Dwd, such as "beloved" or "uncle". But, although such translations of Dwd are correct in other contexts they do not offer an alternative meaning to Dwd within the context of

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7 A. Biran and J. Naveh, 'An Aramaic Stele Fragment from Tel Dan', IEJ 43:2-3 (1993), p.81. Tel Dan is located at the foot of Mount Hermon in Upper Galilee.
9 Ibid., p.87.
11 Ibid., p.55.
the inscription. G.A. Rensdburg\textsuperscript{12} claims that the word divider is not used in the expression 'House of David' simply because the scribe viewed נֵבְיָהוּדָר בֶּן דָּוִד as one entity not requiring a word-divider.\textsuperscript{13} According to A.Rainey\textsuperscript{14} 'a word-divider between two components in such a construction is often omitted, especially if the combination is a well established proper name'. Such example of a name made of two components exist in the BL'M.BRB'R (Balaam, son of Beor) in the inscription from Deir 'Alla. Although there is a word divider, a dot, between BL'M (Balaam) and BRB'R (son of Beor), there is no word divider between BR (son of) and BR'B (Beor). Another such example is found in the personal name BRRKB (Bir.Rakib) in the ancient Aramaic inscriptions from Zinjirlin in south Turkey. Rainey claims that the same situation occurred in BYTDWD.

b. What is the evidence for writing in ancient Israel?

The lack of sufficient external evidence from Israel in the period we are concerned with raises the question as to when the Israelites did begin to write. Unlike Mesopotamia and Egypt in the ancient Near East, the region south of the Levant, i.e. Syria-Palestine, has produced hardly any epigraphic evidence which could be used for


\textsuperscript{13} Much has been written for and against the translation of the inscription as 'House of David'. For further reading see for example: N.P. Lemche & T.L. Thompson, 'Did Biran Kill David? The Bible in the Light of Archaeology', \textit{JSOT} 64 (1994), pp.3-22; P.R. Davies, 'Bytdwd and Swkt Dwyd: A Comparison', \textit{JSOT} 64 (1994), pp.23-24; E.B. Zvi, 'On Reading 'Bytdwd' in the Aramaic Stele from Tel Dan', \textit{JSOT} 64 (1994), pp.25-32. However, strictly speaking, a reference to someone called David is not evidence for the existence of 'Israel'. But whatever else the inscription proves, it is that there was writing in ancient Israel. In recent publication [H.Shanks, 'Face to Face: Biblical Minimalists Meet Their Challengers' \textit{BAR} 23:4 (1997), pp.26-42,66.] Lemche and Thompson insisted that the Tel Dan inscription is fake.

establishing its history. Most external evidence relating to ancient Israel derives from non-Israelite sources, while the main source of information from within Israel is the biblical text itself. This lack of epigraphic material is caused not by the Israelites not being engaged in writing, but probably because of the material on which they wrote. The Mesopotamians wrote on clay tablets which are practically indestructible: baked or unbaked tablets can withstand any conditions and keep indefinitely.\textsuperscript{15} The Egyptians, on the other hand, wrote on papyrus, but although papyrus is a perishable material, the dry climate preserved it from deterioration. However, it is possible that the Israelites wrote on parchment and papyrus, and that the damp climatic conditions prevented their survival. So far as the Dead Sea Scrolls are concerned; although some of these scrolls refer to earlier events, these were later reproductions.\textsuperscript{16} But it is also important to note that the Iron I Period is a transitional period in the development of writing. This is the transition from cuneiform writing on clay (e.g. the Amarna Tablets) to writing with ink on ostraca. Many of the documents may have easily perished through this process.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} E.Chiera, \textit{They Wrote on Clay} (University of Chicago, 1966), p.17.


\textsuperscript{17} S.Dalley, in discussion at the Oriental Institute, Oxford 5.6.1997. N.Na'amans argument ['Sources and Composition in the History of David' in \textit{The Origins of the Ancient Israelite State} (eds.) V.Fritz & P.R.Davies (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 228, 1996), pp.170-86.] may be of some relevance; i.e.that signs on Israelite and Judean ostraca in the eighth-seventh centuries BCE indicate a high literacy level already at an earlier period. Na'amans takes into consideration the study by O.Goldwasser ['An Egyptian Scribe from Lachish and the Hieratic Tradition of the Hebrew Kingdom' \textit{Tel Aviv} 18 (1991), pp.242-53.] which suggests that Egyptian or Egyptian-trained scribes cut-off from their homeland in the twelfth century educated local Canaanite scribes. These scribes in turn passed their knowledge to the new court of Israel during the united monarchy.
The biblical text testifies to the activity of writing as indicated in the following examples: 'And write them on the doorposts of your gates';\textsuperscript{18} 'When he has taken the throne of his kingdom, he shall have a copy of this law written for him in the presence of the levitical priests';\textsuperscript{19} 'In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah';\textsuperscript{20} and 'So she (Jezebel) wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal...\textsuperscript{21} Isa. 10:19 states: 'The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few that a child can write them down.' We also know from I Kgs. 4:3 that king Solomon had two scribes (דמזריו); and Isa. 8:1 gives a clue to the implements used: 'The Lord said to me, take a great roll (לְקַלֵי) and write on it with a common pen' (הָנַע), where לְקַלֵי probably refers to a parchment or papyrus roll and הָנַע to an etching pen.\textsuperscript{22} Jeremiah 36 provides an interesting account of how a scroll was written by dictation: 'Then they questioned Baruch, tell us now how did you write all these words? ... Baruch answered them, 'He dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them with ink on the scroll'.\textsuperscript{23}

There is also a variety of references in the biblical text which indicates that other books were also composed which were not included in the biblical text, and did not survive. For example, the book of Numbers quotes the 'Book of Wars';\textsuperscript{24} the book of

\textsuperscript{18} Dt.6:9.
\textsuperscript{19} Dt.17:18
\textsuperscript{20} II Sam 11:14
\textsuperscript{21} I Kgs.21:8. See also: Ex.17:14, 31:18, 34:28; Josh 8:32, 18:4,8; and Jud.8:14.
\textsuperscript{22} M.Duvshani, מָשֵׁה מְסִלָּה לְמִלְתֵּי (Tel-Aviv: Yavneh, 1967), p.24.
\textsuperscript{23}Jer.36:17:18.
\textsuperscript{24} 21:14.
Joshua refers to the 'Book of Jashar', I Kgs. 14:19 and II Kgs. 10:34 mention the 'Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel'; I Kgs. 14:29 and II Kgs. 20:20 mention the 'Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah'; I Chronicles 29:29 refers to other sources, stating: 'Now the acts of king David, from the first to the last, are written in the records of the seer Samuel, and in the records of the prophet Nathan, and in the records of the seer Gad'; II Chronicles 12:15 refers to the 'records of the prophet Shemaiah and of the seer Iddo...'; and II Chronicles 20:34 refers to 'Annals of Jehu son of Hanani'. None of these books survived, only these references to them. It could be argued that these sources are imaginary. If this is so, it does not alter the point that the Chronicler was referring to a process that was familiar to his readers.

There is also external evidence for writing activities in ancient Israel. Inscriptional discoveries show that writing was used in Israel for a variety of reasons. A.R. Millard distinguished three such classes: monumental, formal and occasional, of which the last two are much better represented, including e.g. the Gezer Calendar, where the form of the letters have an archaic appearance and scholars date the tablet to the tenth century BCE; the fine engraving on an ivory pomegranate from the eighth century; the Samaria Ostraca, written in cursive Hebrew, dated to the time of Jeroboam II ca. 787-746 BCE; the Siloam Tunnel inscription written to commemorate the building of the tunnel.

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27 McCarter op.cit. n.16, p.103.
by Hezekiah in the eighth century; the Arad Letters, more than a hundred of them, inscribed in Hebrew (also in Aramaic and other languages) dating to the eighth-sixth centuries BCE. Although these inscriptions are valuable for understanding various aspects of life in ancient Israel, they are not documents from which history can be deduced, as it can from king lists, annals, or inscriptions on walls of palaces and temples such as those of the Egyptians or Assyrians. But 'the epigraphic discoveries show beyond any doubt that writing was known in Palestine during the period of Israelite rule'.

The Siloam inscriptions are the nearest to building inscriptions. However, these inscriptions do not give the name of the king under whom the work was carried out. Conversely, I Sam 15:12 states 'Saul went to Carmel where he set a monument for himself', but there is as yet no archaeological trace of this. However, with regard to Saul, it is quite possible that anything relating to him was destroyed during the period of the civil war between the Israelites and the followers of David after Saul's death as we

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28 The dating of this inscription has been challenged recently. Rogerson and Davies suggest the inscription is Hasmonean; see: J. Rogerson and P.R. Davies, 'Was the Siloam Tunnel Built by Hezekiah?' BA 59:3 (1996), pp.138-149, though their argument was strongly rejected by; R.S. Hendel, 'The Date of the Siloam Inscription: A Rejoinder to Rogerson and Davies' BA 59:4 (1996), pp.233-7; and by J.A. Hackett, F.M. Cross, P.K. McCarter, A. Yardeni, A. Lemaire, E. Eshel and A. Hurvitz, 'Defusing Pseudo-Scholarship: The Siloam Inscription Ain't Hasmonean' BAR 23:2 (1997), pp.41-50,68. These epigraphists demonstrated, for example, that the script and the spelling are not Hasmonean but late eighth century BCE.


30 A.R. Millard (1972) ibid., p.98.

shall argue below, since, unfortunately, no such evidence exists at present for the period of Saul.

Generally there is a lack of documentary evidence, especially for the Iron I period, not only for Israel, but also the whole region of the eastern Mediterranean including the Canaanites and the Philistines. One of the reasons is probably the social disruption, which was quite extensive towards the end of the Late Bronze Age. It resulted in the loss of literary documents while other archaeological evidence is difficult to decipher.

c. Problems in Extracting Historical data from the Bible

Having discussed the evidence for writing in ancient Israel and the lack of sufficient historical documents, the remaining problem is that we therefore heavily depend on the biblical text for the history of Israel. One of the difficulties is that literary documents have a long history of compilation, editing, and copying: therefore, the recording of events is hundreds of years later than the events themselves. Traditions were also passed orally from one generation to another over a long period of time in this way, and they were influenced by folkloristic motifs. One example is the motif of the young man or younger brother who becomes a prince or a ruler, which can be detected in the stories of Saul and David. Also there is the motif of a young person in opposition to

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32 See chapter VII below.
33 See Chapter II below.
34 P.M. McNutt, The Forging of Israel (Sheffield: Almond 1990), p.143.
35 1 Sam 9.
his elders described in the stories about Samuel and the sons of Eli,37 and David and Saul.38 Another aspect of folklore is apparent in prominent figures (David, Moses and others) who attract traditions concerning events originally not associated with them at all. For example, the story of David's killing of Goliath39 is based on an earlier story which tells of another hero called Elkhanan who did kill Goliath.40 Because of the folkloristic motifs, all these figures are taken by various biblical scholars to be unhistorical;41 yet the kind of story one often finds in folktales can have an historical character added later as a hero or evil character; and then as stories are handed down, one hero may be replaced by another.

J.Barr42 describes the writing of the Old Testament as a body of literature better entitled story than history; or a story which only in part could be described as history; or, borrowing Hans Frei's term, as 'history like'.

Another difficulty is that where questions as to the history of Israel are most significant, the relevant material in the biblical text is also religious literature.43 Biblical

36 I Sam 16.
37 I Sam 3.
39 I Sam 17.
40 II Sam 21:19.
41 An argument which is rejected by scholars such as J. Rogerson op.cit. n. 38, p.71
authors paid much attention to theological interests which they considered crucial for the understanding of their past (e.g. I Sam 13 & 14).\[^{44}\] On the other hand when it came to events which would be considered by a modern historian to be crucial, these are described very briefly and abruptly (e.g. I Sam 31). Also the biblical authors presupposed YHWH's involvement in human history\[^{45}\] and that He was working out His supreme purpose for the benefit of His creatures, first for His chosen people and then for the rest of mankind. To the biblical writer history could not be the natural progress of civilisation, but the work of divine will fighting with foolish men, promising and warning, yet saving and blessing those who obeyed instruction.\[^{46}\] Furthermore YHWH could act indirectly both through circumstances which, though seeming normal, would have been noticeable only through "eyes of faith", as well as through signs and wonders.\[^{47}\] Examples for these can be found in the book of Exodus, beginning with the account of Moses and the burning bush continuing through the ten plagues and ending with the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.\[^{48}\] These examples demonstrate YHWH's authority over nature. In them YHWH not only controlled nature, but also Pharaoh's heart. YHWH's explanation is logical: His purpose was not only to liberate His people but also to show His supernatural power over nature and human affairs.\[^{49}\] Thus, as far as

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\[^{45}\] Ibid.,15.

\[^{46}\] Burrows, op.cit. n.31, p.128.

\[^{47}\] Miller 1976, op.cit. n.44, p.16.


\[^{49}\] J.M. Miller (1976), op.cit. n. 44, p.16
the Israelite writer was concerned, this involvement by YHWH was very significant. Such imputed significance should be taken into consideration when interpreting and understanding Israel's own account of its history.

A further example can be seen in the 'conquest of Canaan'. One can ask 'why' and 'how' Canaan fell into Israelite hands. The answers would be a) the land was promised to the Patriarchs\(^50\) and b) the conquest of the land was carried out through divine intervention.\(^51\) This example shows how biblical writers tended to disregard human activity and considered the God of Israel to be the determining force.\(^52\)

This approach by the Israelite writers is not unique in the ancient world. Mesopotamians, too, believed in divine intervention. In the Old Testament as in Mesopotamian literature, 'history is a revelation of divine judgement'.\(^53\) Their god Marduk was not limited to the cycle of nature or to magic; he could also reveal his approval or displeasure through historical deeds.\(^54\) The Israelite view can also be compared with that of closer neighbouring nations; while Israel saw YHWH as ruler over nature and human history, neighbouring nations made similar claims about their gods as is evident in the following example from the Moabite Stele:

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\(^{50}\) E.g. Gen.12:7; Josh.1:7.

\(^{51}\) E.g. Josh.2:24; 3:9-10.

\(^{52}\) Malamat, op.cit. n.43, p.12.


\(^{54}\) Arnold, ibid., p.142.
I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-yat, king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father was king over Moab for thirty years, and I became king. After my father I built this high place for Chemosh in [qarho], a high place of salvation, because he delivered me from all assaults and because he let me see my desire upon all my adversaries.

Thus Mesha dedicated a high place to his god Chemosh because he believed that Chemosh granted him victory over his enemies. The modern historian disregards claims of supernatural causation and would deny such claims as being historical. In the above example Mesha's claim, that Israel dominated Moab and that Mesha overthrew the Israelite yoke, is accepted as historical, but Mesha's claim that these events were the activities of his god Chemosh must be rejected as unhistorical.

A.R. Millard explains that Israelite and other writers believed their gods acted on their behalf, and that divine intervention was a historical reality. They believed that their gods had acted and therefore they recorded in their chronicles the occasions when they believed divine intervention had taken place. Also often in the Israelite writing a divinely-given forecast of events was recorded, whereas this rarely occurs in other (i.e. non-Israelite) reports. To the modern historian, these prophecies are 'realizations' created after the events, or theological impressions of Israel introduced by a later school of thought.

55 J.C.L. Gibson, op.cit. n.29, pp.75-76.
56 J.M. Miller,(1976) op.cit. n. 44, p.17.
57 A.R. Millard, 'Story, History, and Theology', in Faith Tradition and History op.cit. n.53, p.64.
58 Ibid.
J. Licht explains that the only aspect of divine intervention in the Old Testament that is different from that found in ancient Mesopotamian literature is that it implies continuity of divine action through many generations, as can be seen in Gen. 15:13-16 and Joshua 24. In this respect, Israel was unique in the ancient Near East in its claim to reveal the 'experience of the Divine in History', and not only in current affairs. The Israelite God is also different from Mesopotamian gods in that He not only reacts to human behaviour but also pursues a deliberate long-term policy.

An additional problem in deducing history from the biblical text, is that the Israelite writers reported the historical events only briefly, giving the impression that the events occupied only an insignificant period of time. Also when writing on the interaction between Israelites and foreign rulers, the biblical writers were not always concerned with dates nor with recording the correct name of the foreign ruler involved. For example, in the book of Exodus we only read of 'Pharaoh' or 'the king of Egypt'. For the Israelite writer all these kings of Egypt merged as 'Pharaoh'. Similarly the king of Tyre is always Hiram. We read of Hiram in the reign of David, and we still read of Hiram during the reign of Solomon, though a distinction is made between Ben-Hadad and Hazael of


60 Ibid., p. 111.

61 Brooks op. cit. n. 48, p. 152.

62 I Sam 5:11.

63 E.g. I Kgs. 5:16, 9:11.
Syria, but perhaps not between several different Ben-Hadads. This approach makes it difficult to establish exactly which Pharaoh or which Hiram these writers were referring to, therefore making it impossible to establish an accurate chronology.

Furthermore, although there are historical events involving Israelite kings which were recorded externally there appears to be no record of them in the Bible. For instance, Omri king of Israel and the founder of the Omride Dynasty had major national and international achievements, some of which are recorded on the Moabite Stele ca. 850 BCE. Not only are the biblical sources silent about his achievements but also his whole reign is condensed into a mere six verses where he is condemned as an evil idolater. Ahab, too, is recorded on the international scene; the Assyrian records show that he was a leader of a coalition in the famous battle of Qarqar against Shalmeneser III, ca. 853 BCE. In this instance the biblical sources are again silent. The possible reason for this silence may not be the lack of evidence but a deliberate omission by the narrator who aimed to omit such information in order to discredit the northern Israelite kingdom.

d. The Debate on History and Historiography in the Old Testament

One of the reasons why a number of biblical scholars today reject the connection between archaeological finds and events in the biblical text is because archaeologists in the past tried too hard to interpret finds in the light of data in the Old Testament. Biblical

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64 I Kgs.20:1; 19:15.
scholars too were prone to use archaeological material as illustrations or even evidence that the biblical account might be regarded as authentic.  

In recent publications various biblical scholars have displayed an increasing tendency to treat the writing in the Hebrew Bible as the product of its authors' beliefs, influenced by their theology; the Bible, they argue, was created to serve those beliefs rather than to give any actual account of events. For example, P.R. Davies argues:

There is no way in which history automatically reveals itself in a biblical text: there are no literary criteria for believing David to be more historical than Joshua, Joshua more historical than Abraham and Abraham more historical than Adam. An additional problem, in fact is that there is no non-literary way of making this judgement either, since none of these characters has left trace outside the biblical text! Even within the text, the David of 1 Samuel is not David of 2 Samuel, literarily speaking. There are two characters, created by (probably) different authors. How can it be possible for an historian to conflate them or choose between them with any degree of assurance or justification?

Although Davies argues that any character or event in the Bible in the first instance is a literary character or event, he also states that 'this does not mean that they are unrelated to history in some way - and the ways are numerous!' but he warns about confusing literature and history.

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67 N. P. Lemche, *Early Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), p.386. Lemche therefore suggests that the biblical account of the Israelite origins should be dismissed as merely legendary [p.415.]

68 P. R. Davies, *In Search of Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 148, 1992), p.12. In opposition to these arguments, I. W. Provan ['Ideologies, Literary and Critical: Reflections on Recent Writing on the History of Israel' *JBL* 114:4, pp.585-606.] asked 'Why at this point in the history of our discipline are story and history found, in so much scholarship, to be heading at speed in opposite directions, torn apart with sometimes violent force?' and asks that the important moral and political questions that arise from this not be missed.

69 Ibid.
T.L. Thompson\textsuperscript{70} goes further and questions the appropriateness of viewing the biblical narratives as historiographical, preferring much more to place them within the categories of traditional stories and other types of imaginative literature. '...Once the specters of literary form and historicity have been raised, there is no as yet discernible characteristic within the biblical tradition alone by which the historicity of any major segment can be ascertained'.

N.P. Lemche\textsuperscript{71} argues that the biblical account of Israelite origins should be dismissed as merely legendary. Also, in discussing the problems of the biblical account, he states:

Some familiarity with the efforts of earlier Old Testament scholars will also serve to illustrate how they attempted for several centuries to make the history of Israel conform in some measure to 'reality'. This 'reality' however, became increasingly problematic for the notion of 'absolute truth' of the Bible, once our knowledge of the history and culture of the ancient orient in antiquity was extended through the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphic and Mesopotamian cuneiform writing in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

G. Garbini\textsuperscript{72} is even more sceptical; he concludes that ideology conditioned Hebrew history writing and that there is nothing which a modern historian could recognise as history. K.W. Whitelam\textsuperscript{73} claims that there is growing unease among scholars because they recognise that it is becoming increasingly difficult to write a history of Israel. He states that 'works produced since the post war period adopt similar


\textsuperscript{71} N.P. Lemche, \textit{Ancient Israel} (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), p.31.


\textsuperscript{73} K.W. Whitelam, 'Recreating the History of Israel', \textit{JSOT} 35 (1986), pp.45-70.
approaches and thereby end up with analogous results'. Whitelam is also critical of biblical history and doubts the value of reliance for historical purposes on the biblical text, which he believes, reflects not a historical reality but merely popular perception of that reality.

The standard treatments of the history of Israel, constrained as they are by the biblical text, are set in the mould of political histories concerned with the unique event and unique individual... However, the continued conviction that the biblical text remains the primary source for all periods of the history of Israel means that many historians perpetuate this unnecessary restriction in their consideration of other forms of potential evidence.

Furthermore, in a more recent publication Whitelam goes further. He argues that 'western scholarship has invented ancient Israel and silenced Palestinian history', in a publication which attracted heavy criticism, especially because 'he used his pursuit of history in service of modern political agenda'.

J. Van Seters, in trying to establish when history writing began, believes that in the Old Testament there were no earlier sources prior to the Deuteronomist:

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74 Ibid., p.48. If Whitelam is correct on this point, then I would argue, that rather than dismissing the whole biblical text as unhistorical, it would be more appropriate to conclude that the approaches to the text are at fault and need changing.


79 J. Van Seters, In Search of History (Yale, 1983).
There is no reason to believe that any other sources, traditional or archival, were at the author's disposal when he composed the various scenes and episodes of his work. They may all be contrived. The notion of an eyewitness account of events has to be abandoned and with it the standard reconstruction of the rise of history writing in Israel. There is no such historiography in Samuel - Kings prior to the Deuteronomist.\(^0\)

Van Seters therefore regards the whole work of the Deuteronomist as primary literature,\(^1\) a view which was rejected by Z. Zevit\(^2\) who claims that 'History indeed is a genre of literature, but is not a type of fiction'.\(^3\) E. Yamauchi\(^4\) too expresses a contrary opinion to those who reject the Hebrew Bible as a historical source. For instance, Yamauchi claims that some scholars have written off eras described in the Bible because they have no convincing corroborative archaeological evidence or extra-biblical confirmation.\(^5\) Thus, for example, in relation to the historicity of the Babylonian Exile or of Pontius Pilate, it was not until 1932 that the Exile in Babylonia of Jehoiachin, the last king of Judah, was attested in a tablet published by E. Weidner; and it was not until 1961 that the first epigraphical attestation of Pontius Pilate was found. More such corroborative may become available in future.

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\(^0\) Ibid., pp. 290-291.

\(^1\) Ibid., pp.322-353.


\(^3\) Ibid., p.78.

\(^4\) E. Yamauchi, op.cit. n.64, pp.1-36.

\(^5\) Ibid., p.26
By rejecting the Hebrew Bible as a historical source we are left at the mercy of
the hypotheses of scholars 'who are assured that they know when and why scriptural
texts were written and what is the best "scientific" explanation of the archaeological data.
Such explanations still require faith, not in the Bible, but faith in the insight of a given
scholar's reconstruction'.

The questions raised by the various scholars mentioned above, have provoked a
fierce debate. Even though one cannot agree with everything said, whether by one side
or the other, their questions should, perhaps, be taken as constructive, and as being a
'contribution' to the development of research into ancient Israelite history. For example,
the literature they have produced has motivated scholars of opposing views to research
more carefully and to find stronger evidence in support of their argument and to be even
less inclined to take the biblical text at face value. Judging by the more positive
publications which the debate has provoked, it would seem that these constructive
questions are already proving to be fruitful. However, it is essential that every scholar
who attempts to write the history of ancient Israel should be familiar with the various
problems discussed above. Without understanding and taking these into consideration,
any historical work about ancient Israel can be criticised as unreliable and 'traditional'. It
is also essential that scholars dealing with ancient Israelite history are aware that no one
can expect to have the last word on the matter. Modern research into ancient Israelite
history, which started towards the beginning of the last century, is relatively young. Even

86 Ibid., p.30.

87 With all respect to the knowledge and expertise of the named scholars, to reject totally any
historicity in the Old Testament without detailed treatment (including comparisons with
Mesopotamian literature, for instance), shows that some of their arguments are superficial.
so, ideas proposed by early scholars are rejected today. With the above considerations in
mind, and by attempting to answer the many questions which are raised, one can begin to
identify material that can indeed be regarded as historical. In a recent publication
R. Coggins asked, 'What is the future for the genre of 'history of Israel'?^ My answer is
that the pendulum swings from one extreme to the other, but eventually stops at the
centre point. This would be the point where scholars will be able to separate sources of
historical value from other material, and be free from traditional beliefs in order to
examine the text objectively.

e. The Emergence of Historical Writing in Israel^9

Dating historical writing in ancient Israel is not an easy task. It has been
mentioned above that the original documents upon which biblical authors based their
writing may have perished. Therefore the emergence of historical writing and the
reconstruction of early sources to which the scribes had access must depend entirely
upon the analysis of the Old Testament.^90

The main argument concerns the question as to when biblical historiography
began. Until a few decades ago the general opinion was that systematic writing began

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^9 Although much has been written about this issue, this section is not the place to enter into a full
discussion of the various arguments. My intention here is to express my personal view on this
subject.

^90 N. Na'aman, 'The 'Conquest of Canaan' in the Book of Joshua and in History',
*מדורות המקרא* (eds.) N. Na'aman & I. Finkelstein (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi & IES, 1990),
p.284.
with the united monarchy or a little later; it was needed for administrative purposes. This assumption is based on II Sam 8:17, 20:25 and I Kgs. 4:3 which refer to the inception of the office of scribe in the royal courts of David and Solomon. N. Na'aman explains\(^1\) that these court writings describe wars and campaigns, building works, administrative systems and cultic regulations; and that therefore writing had already been introduced in Israel in the tenth century BCE in the form of documents which later authors were to use as sources in their portrayal of the history of Israel.

More recently it has been argued that such historiography could not have begun so early because of the long gap between the development of administrative writing and the emergence of historiography in other cultures.\(^2\) G. von Rad\(^3\) explains that for the people to have a historical sense of things they must have a certain way of causational thinking as applied to a broad succession of events. But, he argues that people in antiquity were not motivated to think of their situation in this way. They were not capable of seeing political events in terms of historical possibility. They did not find it was necessary to understand events in a wider pattern of historical cause and effect. Thus despite the fact that these civilizations (e.g. Egypt and Mesopotamia) produced numerous court chronicles, annals, kings' lists, and civic records, these still do not amount to the writing of genuine history. It would seem that such a delay between the development of administrative writing and the emergence of historiography was

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\(^1\) N. Na'aman, ibid., p.286.

\(^2\) The development of writing was slow and gradual; it took a long period of time. This process was crystallised in Phoenicia in the late eleventh to tenth centuries BCE, spreading into the region of Syria and Palestine during the ninth century.

characteristic of all ancient cultures, the case of Israel being no exception. Moreover in any event the writing of historiography could not, of course, have begun until after the prior development of writing. Thus the assumption that widespread writing, including historiography, developed in Jerusalem during the time of David and Solomon cannot be accepted. Na'aman claims that until the eighth century writing was a practice restricted only to a small group of professional scribes in the courts of Jerusalem and Samaria. The spread of writing from the late eighth century BCE indicates that then was the earliest date for historical writing in Israel. This claim, according to Na'aman, correlates well with the analysis of the date of the Deuteronomistic history writing; such a comprehensive history was written either in the late seventh century BCE or immediately after the fall of Jerusalem and the Exile of 586/7 BCE. According to M. Noth the Deuteronomist was looking back at Israel from the Exile. He saw a long history of sin and punishment resulting eventually in the fall of the state. As a result the Deuteronomist collected, organised and extended his sources into a long historical work which reflects this experience.

Noth's hypothesis largely influenced Old Testament scholars in their discussion of Joshua-Kings, though his views were soon challenged; it has been claimed that Noth's hypothesis simplified the problems of Israelite history by not taking enough consideration the various levels and complexity of traditions and the way in which they were revised.

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94 N. Na'aman, op. cit. n. 90, p. 285.

95 Although it could be argued that the material in II Samuel, for example the 'Succession Narrative' is much older than the Deuteronomistic History, there are reasons to think that it is not.


F.M. Cross identifies two editions to the Deuteronomistic history. The first was written in the time of Josiah (i.e. ca. 690-640 BCE) as a documentary programme for his reform as a rival to the Davidic state. The theme in this edition is judgement and hope, which are combined to provide encouragement for the return of the God of Israel and Judah under Josiah. Cross identifies the second edition with Noth's Deuteronomist, and suggests that it was completed about 550 BCE, and that the Deuteronomist attempted to adapt the work as sermons on history addressed to the Judean exiles.

The work by R.D. Nelson provides an important addition to this discussion; it provides criteria for separating the two redactional levels of Cross's argument on the themes in Kings and the Deuteronomistic history. However in my view an important issue has not been dealt with adequately, that is the factor which gave birth to historical awareness and thus to historical writing. Historical awareness in ancient Israel became apparent at a certain time when attention was needed to be drawn to the past in order to understand a contemporary event. That attention must have been sparked off by some remarkable event, one which motivated someone to undertake the task of explaining historically why things should be as they are.

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Following from this discussion, it would be possible to make a new date for J and E. O. Eissfeldt has established that the source L is older than J and E, i.e. between 950 and 850 BCE. In form and content J and E represent a more advanced stage. E is generally assigned to Ephraim, i.e. the northern kingdom and J to Judah, the southern kingdom. Eissfeldt dated both E and J to the middle of the eighth century, explaining that 'in J Israel's departure from Sinai is an advance undertaken joyfully and expectantly into the land of milk and honey'. Such a proud and grateful delight in people, land, cults and kingdom... is quite unthinkable after the disaster of 721.

In my opinion dating J before 721 BCE is quite attractive, but at the same time it might also be misleading. The style representing J could also reflect quite the opposite situation; the trepidation caused by the tragedy in the north and consequently the self-examination created a feeling of nostalgia for the past which is expressed in the J style described above. Thus my suggestion is that J should be dated after 721 BCE. Source E is regarded as slightly later than J. According to Eissfeldt in J 'God and world form a unity, and God's grace is experienced in worldly good fortune' whereas in E this link

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101 The dating of these sources has been argued extensively in the literature though my intention in this section is only to express my view on the beginning of historical writing.


103 Eissfeldt, ibid., p. 198.

104 Ibid., p. 203.

105 Ex. 33:1-3.

106 Eissfeldt, op. cit. n. 102, p. 200.

107 Ibid., p. 201.
between God and earth is weakened. Eissfeldt's comment on the E source is that what really matter for Israel in the end is not the nationalistic elements, but the fact that 'God has appointed this people for himself and has separated it for his own possession'. We can see therefore that both sources contain elements which reflect reaction to the tragedy of Samaria in one way or another and should thus be dated as later than 721 BCE.

f. Sources Relating to the Study of the Monarchy

The monarchy in Israel lasted less than half a millennium. It was a period rich in national and international experience, as well as cultural creativity. Yet this period is poorly documented in the biblical sources. The sources that deal directly with the period of the monarchy comprise only one hundred and fifty chapters, in Samuel ( I Sam 9-31, II Sam), Kings, Chronicles (I Chron. 10-29, II Chron.), supplemented by the additional narratives of Isaiah 36-39 and Jeremiah 51. More material can also be found in the prophets whose reaction to contemporary events are also included. However, on the whole, the sources available for reconstruction of the period of the monarchy are rather limited.

In the books of Samuel, which are the main source for this thesis, the material connected with the monarchy begins with Saul's accession and ends with events under David's reign. Traditionally this period is thought to have lasted approximately sixty years, and is divided into four: 1) I Sam 8-15. These chapters deal with the demand for

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108 Ibid.

109 Sama, op.cit. n.66, p.3.
monarchic rule, and the events connected with Saul; his election as king, his military success and his rejection by Samuel. 2) I Sam 16 - II Sam 1 deals with David's appearance on the scene and his relationship with Saul until the battle of Gilboa, where Israel was defeated by the Philistines, and Saul and his three sons were killed. 3) II Sam 2-8 deals with David's accession to the throne, ruling first over Judah and later over Israel as well; David's consolidation of his kingdom, and the capture of Jerusalem, which became the religious and political centre of Israel; the confirmation of David's eternal dynastic line in Nathan's oracle. 4) II Sam 9-24 illustrates events at David's court, rebellion against him, his wars and conquests. The last four chapters are considered to be accounts of general events, which belong to a later period, i.e. later than the events described in the books of Samuel.

The books of Kings begin with the last days of David and end with the release of King Jehoiachin from prison on the accession of Evel-merodach to the throne in Babylon in 561 BCE. The books of Chronicles are different from Samuel and Kings because, whereas Samuel and Kings offer a continuous history, Chronicles though also continuous, presents reports in an account parallel to the other two books. It contains some passages which duplicate with minor changes in grammar or vocabulary, and other passages which contain additions, deletions or even contradictory material.

From I Chronicles chapter 10 to the end, the book is concerned with the monarchy. It deals mainly with David's organisation of the kingdom, the preparation for the building of the temple, and the kings of Judah; also the kings of Israel, but on a
limited scale. About Saul the Chronicler is very brief,\textsuperscript{110} except to attribute his death to his sins.\textsuperscript{111} There is no mention at all of David's long struggle for the throne, and anything which might damage his reputation is omitted, that is except for the account of David's census in I Chron. 21 which functions to place him under judgement. However, ample information is given in I Chron. 11-12 about David's administration and military organisation. This information does not appear anywhere else.\textsuperscript{112}

The period of the united monarchy, from Saul to Solomon, is dealt with in eighty-seven chapters including Chronicles, and Isa.36-39. The divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah which lasted until the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, a period of over two hundred years, occupy forty-seven chapters. Then Judah alone, between 722 and 587 BCE, a period of 135 years, is covered by sixteen chapters only. Thus, more than half of the source material is allocated to less than a quarter of the time involved.\textsuperscript{113} The assumption is that the united monarchy maintains a place of pride for the historiographers and for the prophets who saw a united Israel and Judah in their messianic vision.\textsuperscript{114}

This imbalance of treatment is consistent. Most of the nineteen Judean kings are described as having reigned for long years. For example, Asa reigned forty-one years,\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{110} I Chron. 10:1-14.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 10:13-14.

\textsuperscript{112} Sama, op.cit. n.66, p.18.

\textsuperscript{113} Sama, ibid., p.10.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{115} I Kgs. 15:10.
but he is given only seventeen verses;\textsuperscript{116} Azariah reigned for fifty-two years\textsuperscript{117} but was given only seven verses.\textsuperscript{118} With David the imbalance is most striking. It is stated that he reigned forty years,\textsuperscript{119} but it seems that his personality forms one of the pillars on which biblical historiography rests. His divine election is stressed\textsuperscript{120} to the extent that it gives him unchallengeable and exclusive rights to the throne for eternity.\textsuperscript{121} David became the ideal model of kingship as well as the symbol of messianic prophetic aspiration.\textsuperscript{122}

In contrast, Saul's biography is so brief that it is difficult to evaluate his place in Israelite history.\textsuperscript{123} There is no clear statement as to how long he reigned.\textsuperscript{124} The dominant impression is that Saul was a failure, but this kind of approach aims to prepare the way for David's accession. Most of the narrative, i.e. three-quarters of I Samuel concentrates heavily on the rivalry between Saul and David, although in reality it probably involved no more than a quarter of Saul's reign.\textsuperscript{125} Only scattered hints give the indication that Saul was a strong military leader of political and religious importance.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{116}Ibid., 15:9-24.
\textsuperscript{117} II Kgs. 15:2.
\textsuperscript{118}Ibid., 15:1-7.
\textsuperscript{119} II Sam 5:4-5.
\textsuperscript{120}II Sam 6:2; I Kgs. 8:15-16, 11:33-34.
\textsuperscript{121} For example II Sam 7:11-16, 25.
\textsuperscript{122} Sarna, op.cit. n.66, pp. 10, 14.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p.15.
\textsuperscript{124} For full treatment of Saul's age and how long he reigned see 'The Time Elapsed Between Saul's Death and David's accession' in Chapter VII below.
\textsuperscript{125}To see how this is worked out, see ibid.
\textsuperscript{126}Sarna, op.cit. n.66, p.15.
These are the only sources available for the reconstruction of the period of the monarchy. The imbalance between what was available and what was transmitted is 'not from lack of availability but from deliberate and selective editing'.\textsuperscript{127} This kind of editing was the result of the writers' didactic purpose in showing that history was divine revelation.

An interesting explanation was offered by Garbini\textsuperscript{128} as to the lack of inscriptions from the northern kingdom. Garbini suggests that this was not because Israelite kings left no inscriptions, but because the ones they did leave were destroyed. Garbini further explains that royal inscriptions were probably found only in the large cities. These inscriptions were systematically destroyed as a result of hatred for the institution of the monarchy, or because the inscriptions contained information which contradicted the historical reconstruction in the sacred text.\textsuperscript{129}

In my view the latter explanation by Garbini is more logical. Taking into consideration the discussion above, on the emergence of historical writing in Israel, one may speculate that the writers in Judah included propaganda against the northern kingdom for various reasons; for example, the old hatred towards Saul, envy towards the northern state which was more successful than Judah, and also the need to serve their theological purposes. Therefore it is possible that Israelite royal monuments had to be destroyed to eliminate the contradictory evidence.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p.11.

\textsuperscript{128} Garbini, op.cit. n.72, p.18.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
We can therefore assume two possible periods in which such destruction may have taken place. The first occurred during the civil war after Saul’s death, and the second, after the fall of Samaria.

g. The Books of Samuel

The sources in the books of Samuel are quite complex. This is one of the reasons why there is little agreement between scholars about the original formation of the material in Samuel. The main figures in the book are Eli, Samuel, Saul and David, and the material about them is quite obviously heterogeneous. There are numerous internal thematic tensions, duplications and contradictions indicating lack of unity. This prevents a straightforward reading of the story. But despite these complications the book is united from the point of view of intention.

A good example to illustrate this complexity can be seen in relation to kingship. In chapter 8 kingship is presented as offensive to YHWH, whereas in chapters 9-10 the first king is anointed at YHWH’s command. Again, in chapter 10:17-27 Saul becomes king by lottery, whereas in chapter 11 he is king by popular acclamation after he defeated the Ammonites at Jabesh Gilead.

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130 See discussion of this war in Chapter VII below.


132 O.Eissfeldt, op.cit. n.102, p.269.

133 S. Abramski, לֹא יֱהִי מָנוּךְ לְמַעֲרֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּמֵמִיס שְׁמָאָל וּלְרוּפָהוּ (1975), p.8.
The way J.Licht resolves this complexity is by drawing an analogy with Greek historians such as Herodotus and Plutarch. These writers often use several sources for a single event, except of course that reference to the divergent sources are not given. Similarly, the stories told about how Saul was made king are combined in a single narrative, for example, Licht suggests the following: Samuel anointed Saul secretly at Ramah because of the Philistines' presence there. Then, after careful preparation, YHWH's choice was made public at Mizpah and general recognition of Saul as king came only after Saul's victory over Ammon, hence the 'renewal of kingship' at Gilgal.

Licht further suggests that speeches expressing the significance of these events are neatly placed as a prologue in chapter 8 and epilogue in chapter 12. Therefore, the whole political process whereby Saul was made king is presented by a combination of sources describing one event. In this way the author did not impose his reconstruction on the material, for example, by taking care of the weak points and by rewriting his

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135 Van Seters [op.cit. n.79, p.8] explains that such an analysis has not been drawn before for two reasons: a. Because for a long period the generally accepted view was that the rise of history writing in Israel was an inner Israelite development independent of Near Eastern influence and was something that anticipated the emergence of Greek historians by five hundred years; b. Biblical scholars were convinced for many years that 'Hebrew thought was to be contrasted with Greek, that the two ways of viewing reality were entirely different'.

136 I Sam 10:1-10,16.

137 Ibid., 10:5.

138 Ibid., 10:17-25.

139 Ibid., 11:14-15.

140 Licht, op.cit. n.59, p.108; see also M.Noth, op.cit. n.96, pp.49-51.
sources. Instead the author used the sources almost as he found them, thus leaving contradiction and loose ends in the story.\textsuperscript{141}

However, the material in I Sam 8 where kingship is presented as offensive to YHWH is a late composition. It probably originated from later prophetic circles and reflects the tension between them. It was inserted by the redactor to show that kingship was negative from the beginning. Beside, the 'law of the king'\textsuperscript{142} cannot be regarded as an anticipation of what kingship will be like.\textsuperscript{143} No Israelite at that time could have envisaged the effect of kingship. This material is based rather on reality already experienced.\textsuperscript{144} McCarter\textsuperscript{145} considers the possibility that this material in I Sam 8 originated in the prophetic history of the origin of monarchy, and was composed in the north at about the time of the fall of Samaria. McCarter further suggests that these prophetic circles may have played a part in the origin of the Deuteronomistic movement.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{141} Licht, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{142} I Sam 8:11-18.

\textsuperscript{143} Within this context see also Dt.17:14ff which is also late.

\textsuperscript{144} I.Mendelsohn ['Samuel's Denunciation of Kingship in the Light of the Akkadian Documents from Ugarit' \textit{BASOR} 143 (1956), pp.17-22.] strongly argues that Samuel's account is an 'authentic description of the semi-feudal Canaanite society as it existed prior to and during the time of Samuel'[p.18]. Mendelsohn bases his argument on data from Alalakh and particularly from Ugarit, dating from the eighteenth-thirteenth centuries BCE; an argument adopted by, e.g. A.D.H.Mayes ['The Rise of the Israelite Monarchy' \textit{ZAW} 90 (1978), p.7.] But although interesting, Mendelsohn's argument cannot be accepted for two main reasons; firstly, Alalakh and Ugarit were both destroyed at the end of the thirteenth century by the movement of the Sea Peoples, long before Samuel and the establishment of the monarchy in Israel; secondly, Samuel's account of \textit{תנוהו הילקית} could not have been an authentic description of the semi-feudal Canaanite society of the time, since prior to the time of Samuel, Canaan was under Egyptian rule which was of a different character than that assumed by Mendelsohn.

\textsuperscript{145}McCarter , op.cit. n.131, p.161.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
In a similar way, the material in chapter 12 described by Licht above as an epilogue, should also be treated as a later addition by the same circle of authors. These additions indicate a considerable tension between prophets and kings. The main purpose of their writing is to maintain prophetic rights in relation to the king.

The other sources which tell of Saul's election by lot and the general recognition of Saul as king are probably the oldest and may also be contemporary material. It is quite possible that some form of election by 'lottery' did take place within the new political-economic situation of the time. Of course, the news of Saul's victory over the Ammonites promoted his reputation and confirmed his suitability for the role. The 'renewal of kingship' at Gilgal may have been the opportunity to celebrate the successful selection of Saul as king and also to celebrate the military victory.

The many duplications and contradictions in the book are characteristic of the author. They are inserted deliberately with specific objects in mind. For instance, the meaning of the name Samuel (שם זאר) is close to Saul's name. It would seem that the author detached Saul's birth story from its original place and attributed it to Samuel. This detachment was deliberate, one of the reasons being not only to give Samuel a Nazirite birth story, but also to distort the information on Saul and his background.

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147 See the sections dealing with this point in Chapters II and V of this thesis.

148 See 'Saul and the Samson Narrative' in Chapter IV.
There is also a number of similarities between Samuel and Eli. For example, they are both in service of YHWH at Shiloh, they both appoint their sons to serve the people and in both cases the sons turn out to be wicked. It is interesting, though, that Eli's role is clearly defined as the priest at Shiloh, whereas Samuel is described as fulfilling several roles: priest, prophet, judge and military leader. This description of Samuel is exaggerated and makes one ask whether it is possible that the figure of Samuel was created by the author with the aim of not only drawing a contrast between Samuel and the sons of Eli, but also of showing that Samuel the prophet is the king maker in Israel and is preferred above the king.\(^{149}\)

There are numerous duplications in the book. For instance, the story of the battle of Aphek\(^ {150}\) is quite similar to the battle at Gilboa;\(^ {151}\) Saul is rejected by YHWH not once but twice;\(^ {152}\) he requires service from David twice;\(^ {153}\) Saul's last battle is also reported twice;\(^ {154}\) David's defection to the Philistine king, Achish of Gath is also reported twice\(^ {155}\) also is his refusal to take Saul's life;\(^ {156}\) chapters 24 and 26 are also similar in content. More such duplication can be found in the loving friendship between David and Jonathan, Michal's love for David, the bad spirit that possessed Saul; David warns

\(^{149}\) See my discussion about Samuel in Chapter III.

\(^{150}\) I Sam 4.

\(^{151}\) Ibid, 31. See also D.Gunn, op.cit. n.38, p.55.

\(^{152}\) I Sam 13 and 15.

\(^{153}\) Ibid, 16 and 17.

\(^{154}\) I Sam 31 and II Sam 1.

\(^{155}\) Ibid., chapters 21 and 27.

\(^{156}\) Ibid., chapters 24 and 26.
several times against hurting the 'Lord's anointed'; twice Saul expresses regret for chasing David and once Saul acknowledges that David will be king.\textsuperscript{157}

The main theme of David's rise to power\textsuperscript{158} relates to two issues; the first is the legitimisation of David's accession to the throne of Israel, and the second is the removal of any suspicion that David was guilty of taking any part in Saul's death. But the text attempts to demonstrate so frequently that David was innocent with regard to Saul's death, that it raises the suspicion that David was not in fact innocent of plotting against him.\textsuperscript{159}

The Deuteronomistic addition to the story of David and Jonathan\textsuperscript{160} foretells events in the Succession Narrative, especially II Sam 9. The Deuteronomist puts clear statements about David's future kingship in the mouth of Jonathan.\textsuperscript{161} Jonathan says to David: 'Do not be afraid, for the hand of my father Saul shall not find you; you shall be king over Israel and I shall be second to you: My father Saul also knows that this is so'.\textsuperscript{162} Again, the insertion of Abigail's speech\textsuperscript{163} transforms her into a prophetess,

\textsuperscript{157} I Sam 24:20.
\textsuperscript{158} I Sam 16 - II Sam 5.
\textsuperscript{159} See the relevant section in Chapter IV below.
\textsuperscript{160} I Sam 20:11-17, 23, 40-42.
\textsuperscript{161} McCarter, op.cit. n.131, p.17.
\textsuperscript{162} I Sam 23:17.
\textsuperscript{163} I Sam 25:28-31.
because she can see the dynastic promise to the house of David, a clear anticipation of the oracle of Nathan in II Sam 7.

The other theme in the book of Samuel is the contrast between Saul, son of Kish and David, son of Jesse. On the one hand Saul founds the monarchy but it is torn away from him, whereas David inherits the throne and is successful in establishing an everlasting dynasty. Saul fails but David succeeds in consolidating kingship. Saul is ridiculed and the slightest mistake causes him to lose his kingship, whereas David is made into a glamorised hero and gets away with committing the most atrocious acts.

From the first appearance of David in the text, the narrative gives hints that prepare the reader for David's inheritance of the throne, for example, the entering of David to the royal court, whether as a musician or as a hero, after he defeated Goliath. As expressed in I Sam 17:11, 33 especially 38-40 the illustration of David as a young boy from Bethlehem, eager to combat the giant Goliath provides a subtle hint in contrast to Saul's fear and inability as king and saviour.

The conclusion of the present research is that the purpose of such accounts dealing with Saul and David, and with David's rise to the throne is propaganda created in order both to convince the reader of the legitimacy of David's claim to the throne, and to absolve David from any responsibility for Saul's death.

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164 Abramski, op.cit. n.133, 92.

165 Ibid., p.91.
Although David is the central figure in the book and is presented as the ideal king, the text contains numerous accounts describing his cruelty and lack of morality. What is interesting about these is that the author not only does not condemn David's acts but justifies them. It becomes apparent in this thesis that David betrays Saul by entering the royal house pretending to be Saul's loyal servant, gaining Michal's love and Jonathan's friendship; yet, at the same time leading a group of outlaws as his personal army. Abramski comments that this activity itself is a sign of plotting against Saul's kingship. Furthermore, David sat at Ziklag as a vassal of the Philistines and was quite willing to join them in battle against Israel. David also anticipates Saul's death in battle, though it is not clear how. Later on, to secure the legitimacy of his claim to the throne through marriage, David forcibly takes Michal away from her husband and has her brought to him. David also kills Saul's descendants. These factors show that David was so ambitious, that he was willing to eliminate any obstacle that could endanger the security of his dynastic line.

The author tries to create an image of David as an ideal king, and his legitimacy for the throne is emphasised. S. Abramski sees support for this legitimacy in Abner's actions in passing the kingship from Saul to David, and in the election of David by the

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166 Abramski, op. cit. n.133, p.92.
167 Ibid.
168 I Sam 29:8.
169 I Sam 26:10.
170 II Sam 3:13-16.
171 Abramski, op. cit. n.133, p.93.
elders of Israel after Ishbaal was assassinated. This interpretation by Abramski is shared by various scholars though not accepted in this thesis.

Reading through the books of Samuel with a critical eye it gradually becomes apparent that the narrative is quite apologetic. Even though David achieved his aim and won the throne, it was at a high cost. Judging by the events throughout his reign, including a number of rebellions against him, it would seem that there were many who remembered David's atrocities against the house of Saul and condemned him for them. His reign was not a peaceful one; and these events must have influenced the way David ruled Israel. Indeed it is quite possible that the events surrounding Saul and David contributed to the eventual schism between Israel and Judah.

h. Methods of Textual Interpretation for Isolating New Material

I have come to this thesis as a historian and therefore approached Saul's presentation in the biblical text primarily from that position with the hope of discovering a more historically reliable picture of Saul. But with that aim it is impossible to avoid the problems, controversies and complexities already referred to in the earlier sections of this chapter, or to avoid the related polarisation of approach to biblical interpretation.

172 I Sam 5:1-3.

173 See my treatment of these points under the heading 'Was there a concubine at Gibeah', in Chapter VII in this thesis.

174 See full discussion in Chapter VII below.
discussed by Professor John Barton already mentioned in my Introduction. Barton points out that there is a strong polarisation within biblical studies between historical criticism and literary interpretation; the former approach tending to stress the search for the single, 'actual', 'real' and 'objective' meaning or truth of the text, while the latter points rather to a plurality of different kinds of possible meaning and assumes the historian's pursuit of objective knowledge to be a hopeless one. Although the two sides seem unable even to agree about the nature of their disagreements, Barton argues that not only does it become clear that there is 'common ground' between the two approaches, but that there are possibilities of collaboration between the two which are 'essential if (biblical) interpretation is to make any progress'.

Yet biblical scholars tend to use a single method of approach to the text rather than the collaborative, combined approach suggested by Barton. As discussed earlier in this chapter, biblical historians have been seriously criticised in recent literature for being traditional and unreliable, with a consequent reinforcement of the opposition of views.

In this thesis it is not possible to employ the single approach. Although the primary focus is historical the complexity of the text in Samuel, already discussed, necessitates the use of the historical-literary collaborative approach whenever a historical approach alone would not suffice in terms of providing a full historical explanation, for


176 Ibid., p.5.
example, as seen in Chapter III in the discussion dealing with Saul and Samson, as well as in the section concerned with David's possible involvement in the last chapter of Saul's life.

An additional reason for not relying only upon the historical approach lies in the scarcity of sources and paucity of material relating to Saul. When the biblical historian is limited in advance by the extent and nature of the sources available to him he has no choice but to go outside the historical approach, for example, by combining literary analysis and historical criticism. I share D.V.Edelman's view that 'one must employ a number of methods developed by the discipline of literary studies': For example textual criticism to help decide on the text to be used; literary criticism in order to recognise internal inconsistencies which might help one in turn to recognise the various layers of later reworking. In my view it is also important to consider the purpose of the presentation of the material in its present form. Historical analysis may then be possible; for example, one discovers that events, especially in the Books of Samuel are not given in chronological order; reconstructing these is essential in order to provide a more realistic picture of events.

In addition to exploiting this hybrid literary-historical approach it has been necessary to exploit theological, folkloristic and archaeological insights. As discussed

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177 Miller, op.cit. n.44, p.19.


179 Barton [op.cit. n.175, p.14] has suggested ways in which the two approaches resemble each other, not only in process, but also possible areas of collaboration in respect of the absence of textual consistency, on the one hand, or unity of theme on the other. Both these features are significant within Samuel.
earlier, in pursuing the historical criticism of the text it is necessary to isolate and exclude the supernatural or theological presuppositions which may have influenced the text, thus bringing to light information not considered before and thereby strengthening the possible historicity of the text. Such exclusion allows one to begin to unravel the complexity of the material and thus reach the root of events which might then have a claim to be considered historical.

Archaeological material is used in this thesis in chapters II and VI. The purpose in using archaeological material is not to force archaeological data to prove biblical events, nor is it to use the biblical account to interpret the archaeological data. The data used in Chapter II is mainly to establish, on the one hand, the Philistine presence in the region at the period in question i.e. Iron I period; and on the other hand to show that there is an expansion of population in the hill country. Although the archaeological research on this population is still in progress, my contention is that this population was most probably Israelite.180

The archaeological material in chapter VI is concerned with Tell el-Ful, identified as old Gibeah of Saul. The data produced from this site in early excavations proved a problem to archaeologists. This was mainly due to Albright's attempt to match his excavation results with the chronological events, as they are described in the biblical text.181 Through my revision of the archaeological data and by my re-examination of

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180 See discussion in Chapter II.

181 First in Judges 19-21 and later with the information regarding Gibeah as Saul's city.
events involving Gibeah, a different and more reasonable picture is produced. It was essential therefore to incorporate this archaeological material in this thesis.
II

INTRODUCTION TO THE EMERGENCE OF MONARCHY

The emergence of the Israelite state in Canaan is one of the most interesting processes in the history of the region. It was probably the first time that the region was controlled by a local power, independent of any other strong power in the Near East, whether Egyptian, Mesopotamian or Hittite. From the point of view of the Israelites, the unification of the various groups in the hill country under Saul was a major achievement. It was a turning point in their development.

This subject has engaged a great deal of attention throughout the history of biblical scholarship. Until about a decade ago scholars were limited by the information provided in the biblical text attributing, therefore, the emergence of the monarchy to an external factor, namely the Philistine pressure. However recent careful archaeological surveys and excavations in the hill country have provided new information which contributes a great deal more to the understanding of Israelite development at that time.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the emergence of monarchy in Israel. It will set the scene by discussing the period in which the Philistines and the Israelites overlap. It then becomes apparent that the monarchy in Israel did not emerge as a result of the conflict with the Philistines as previously thought, but because of demographic, economic and social processes.
a. Background to the Period

The transitional period between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age is generally regarded as a "dark age" owing to the lack of documentary evidence. Much literature has been produced on this period, though a brief summary is presented here only to provide a background for the following discussion.

The Late Bronze Age, ca. 1550-1200 BCE, marks a complete change in the ancient eastern Mediterranean region; it was an extremely troubled period of history. Settlement and demographic change brought about the collapse of civilisation in this region. Until that time the second millennium was characterized by the struggle between the great powers: Egypt, the Hittites, Mitanni and Assyria. This struggle culminated in a degree of balance accorded by the peace treaty (1286 BC) between Ramesses II, ca. 1304-1237, and Hattusilis III, ca. 1265. The Egyptians and the Hittites were equally influential in the region of Syria-Canaan, but by the end of the Late Bronze Age the Egyptian rule in Asia came to an end and the Hittite empire collapsed. This created a power vacuum which brought about major political, economic and structural crises, clearing the way for new people to move in. This was the time when the Sea Peoples took advantage of the situation to move into the region (discussed below). It is assumed that this was also the time when the Israelites migrated into Canaan from the east. The arrival of these groups determined the history and development of the region for many centuries to come. At the same time, in the area east of the Jordan River, other


3 Hittite chronology for this period is particularly difficult to establish owing to a lack of chronological evidence from the Hittite sources. The established dates have been correlated with lists of Assyrian kings (David Hawkins, in discussion, School of African and Oriental Studies, London, 21.3.1996)
groups developed as national states, namely the Arameans, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.\(^4\) There were also Midianites who inhabited the south of Edom and Amalekites in the north-western Negev, though the information about these peoples is sparse. There is archaeological data and a little inscriptive material from these regions, but it is not sufficient to form a clear picture of them. Therefore, the Bible remains the primary source of information for the Transjordanian nations.

At the same time as the collapse of the Hittite and the Egyptian rule in Syria-Canaan, the Mycenean world suffered a wave of disturbances which resulted in the movement of peoples fleeing from their homeland.\(^5\) These peoples are known as the "Sea Peoples". They exploited the power vacuum and invaded areas which were subject to Egyptian and Hittite control.\(^6\) They travelled by sea and land throughout the eastern Mediterranean territory, leaving behind them towns and cities in ruins. These migrations destroyed important urban centres such as Ugarit and Alalakh and affected the international trade between the Levant and the Aegean region.\(^7\) It was only Ramesses III of Egypt, ca. 1194-1162\(^8\) who was able to resist their advance through a number of

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We do not know about the origin of the Edomites or exactly when they arrived in the region. Recent excavations in Jordan, especially at Buseirah produced a cultural parallel with those found at Hazeba and Kitmit, though the research is in too early a stage to draw decisive conclusions (Piotr Bienkowski, at the International Conference: 'The Archaeology of Israel in the Period of the Monarchy', Institute of Jewish Studies, London, April 1996).


\(^8\) Dates for Ramesses are based on the chronological table given by Sandars, op. cit. n.1,p, 203.
battles in the Nile Delta. Although Ramesses was able to defeat the Sea Peoples, their attack was a major blow and Ramesses did not have the strength to drive them entirely away from the region. Therefore, he had no choice but to allow certain groups to settle there as his vassals; they were also used as mercenaries to man his garrisons in both Canaan and Egypt. In the later part of his reign, Ramesses was even less successful. There were repeated wars as well as substantial economic problems which resulted in revolts and strikes. Major dynastic problems and the continuous conflicts in the western border brought about Egypt's decline. Thus, although claims on Canaan continued for a while, they soon came to an end.

This thesis is about a limited period in Israel and Judah between the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE. Prior to this period, during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries in the Near East there were various movements of peoples which created a volatile situation, part of which is reflected in Joshua-Judges. However, a main source for this discussion (the 'period of the judges') is the book of Judges. One of the problems of the book of Judges is that its stories are not corroborated by external evidence, and thus our understanding of the Israelites in this period depends solely on the content of this book.

There is also some isolated material in other books of the Bible, such as the book of

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11 Much has been written about the movement of peoples in this period, though this is not the place to discuss the various arguments relating to the Israelites; whether they conquered or peacefully infiltrated the land. For that matter, this is not the place either to discuss the historical reliability of the text regarding the Israelites in this period.

Numbers and the book of Joshua which supplement the background of events, but this is not sufficient. Sources regarding the Canaanites and other groups are scant. There are no sources which could be used for their history in the way that the Bible is used for the Israelites. Ironically, the Canaanites who contributed to civilisation the early form of the alphabet did not leave behind any documents which tell their history. As a result it is difficult to balance the picture of events, especially since the biblical text is one sided. Therefore, it would be useful to consider in general the historical situation in the region, and also to consider what the archaeological data can provide. The archaeological evidence is also problematic, because on the one hand there is ample evidence for a distinct new culture, that of the Philistines, but on the other hand the archaeological evidence for the presence of the Israelites is inconclusive. According to the text, during this period (Iron I) the Israelites settled on both sides of the Jordan and occupied the highlands. The Canaanites, as well as other ethnic groups occupied the plains, mainly those of Jezreel and Ayyalon, while the Philistines settled mainly in Philistia. But this picture of Israelite distribution has come under fire in recent literature. In terms of archaeology, the Israelite groups are identified with the characteristic ceramic type known as the 'collared-rim' ware. However, more recent archaeological surveys and excavations show that this ceramic type is not restricted to the hill country since it was also found at a number of lowland settlements. R.B. Coote and K.W. Whitelam argue, firstly, that the fact that this type of pottery is absent from sites in the Negev and Upper Galilee is an indication that this kind of ware cannot be identified with the Israelite settlement. Secondly, since large quantities of this pottery has been discovered in Transjordan, at various sites of the thirteenth to twelfth centuries BCE it cannot, be

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14 I. Finkelstein, דאראך אולון עלי התקופהokies הדרומה והמערב (Tel-Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad and IES, 1986).

15 Coote and Whitelam, op. cit. n.2, p. 126.
attributed to a single ethnic group. Incidentally it would also seem that in some cases there is a cultural continuity from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age reflected in the material culture.

Despite substantial improvement in archaeological methods and despite the various discoveries at major sites (such as Hazor, Jericho and Lachish), many questions relating to the Israelites at this period remained unanswered. However in the late 1960's access became available to the sites in the central hill country, allowing several surveys and excavations to be carried out shedding further light on this complex period.

Before discussing the general problem of evidence for the presence of the Israelites in the region, two points should be taken into consideration. The first is that the Hebrew Bible is the same source of information used in reference to the presence of the Philistines. They are associated with the Sea Peoples, as will be discussed below, but it is only from the biblical text that we know that this particular group of Sea Peoples settled in Philistia. There is, of course, archaeological evidence which indicates a foreign culture, with an Aegean background in this region, but we call them 'Philistines' only because the Bible calls them so. The reliability of the biblical text is not disputed here, yet this biblical text is the same source which refers to the Israelites in the same period. Therefore, if we accept the historical reliability of the biblical text in reference to the Philistines why cannot we accept the historicity of the text in reference to the Israelites?

The second consideration relates to an important event dating from a much later period in history, namely that of the Arab conquest of the region early in the

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16 Ibid., pp.126-7.

17 Studies of these have been published and recently translated into English: Finkelstein I. The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement (Jerusalem: IES, 1988); Na'aman N. And Finkelstein I. (eds.) From Nomadism to Monarchy (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi and IES, 1994).
seventh century CE. Throughout Arabia, especially to the north west, there seems to be not one single Islamic-period sherd nor any other physical evidence which could substantiate their conquest or presence there. Yet this deficiency is not taken to suggest that the Arabs did not in fact conquer the region. Likewise, a similar lack of clear physical evidence for the Israelites should not permit the dismissal of their presence in the region. Further support for my argument can be found in a study by B.J.S. Isserlin: in which he refers to the examples of the Arab invasion of Palestine, the invasion of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century, and the invasion of England by the Normans in 1066. For each of those examples there is textual evidence for numerous destructions involved even though the archaeological evidence for these events is extremely sparse if not nonexistent. Does this mean that one cannot believe that such invasions took place?

However, as far as the ceramics of the hill country are concerned, G.W. Dever's research might be of some help. He argues that 'the differences in the Late Bronze and early Iron I ceramic repertoire of Palestine are simply functional, i.e. they show not ethnic distinction but variation in 'life style', in this case between urban and rural populations, presumably of the same 'ethnic group'. Dever is able to argue that a close analysis of ceramic collections from Late Bronze/Iron IA produces significant data which allows us to isolate certain "diagnostic features" of the late thirteenth to early twelfth century BCE country villages, the complex of which A.Kempinski proposes to call "Proto-Israelite". Nevertheless, Dever does not suggest that pottery alone can be

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18 In discussion with Peter J. Parr (18.3.94) Institute of Archaeology, London. Peter Parr has surveyed the region and excavated in north west Arabia.


22 Dever, op.cit. n.20, p.207.
sufficient as a clue of ethnicity. Other categories of independent evidence which reflect aspects of ethnicity and include "settlement type and patterns, subsistence, and demography" are also relevant.  

In treating a few ceramics as a "case-study" in a quasi-system theory approach to ethnicity, Dever noted that all Iron I forms are descended from Late Bronze II forms; they present the normal evolution from the thirteenth century BCE. From this, Dever argues that "the eleventh century BCE, not the twelfth century, witnesses the last gasp of the Late Bronze Age 'Canaanite' transition to the true 'Iron Age'; "it reflects a period of cultural assimilation". Therefore Dever re-dates the transition in the material culture to 1100-1050 BCE rather than to ca. 1200 BCE.

Hence, even if one avoids ethnic labels initially there is still much justification for recognising a new population group in the early Iron I. Together with the evident continuity of material culture from Iron I into Iron II in the hill country, this prompts Dever to use the term 'Proto-Israelite' in recent literature. If the basic material culture that defines people demonstrates a tradition of continuous, non-broken development, then it is reasonable to argue that the core population remained the same. Thus ethnic "Israelites" were preceded by ethnic "proto-Israelites." Dever believes that in time, with

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23 These have been investigated and published in Na'aman and Finkelstein (eds.) op.cit. n.13. See also the discussion below in this chapter.


25 For example: 1. Cooking Pots present the normal predictable evolution from short sharp triangular thirteenth century BCE to the more rounded characteristic rim. These are typical of all sites by the early-mid twelfth century BCE, whether "Canaanite", "Philistine", or "Proto-Israelite". 2. Large Deep Bowls present clear direct continuities between thirteenth century BCE and early-mid twelfth century BCE.

26 Dever, op.cit. n.20, p.207.
further discoveries this tentative term will be abandoned and we will confidently speak of "early Israel." 27

The question still remaining is how an archaeologist can show traces of a new ethnic group in the Iron I. An important component which could be helpful is dietary patterns. What people eat is an important aspect of the process of ethnicity. 28 Finkelstein, using L.W. McKee's work 29 explains that 'food is one of the primary symbols manipulated by people seeking to maintain their cultural identity and group solidarity'. In recent years archaeologists and zoologists collected great data on animal husbandry from Bronze and Iron Age Palestine. The significance of this data is the percentage of pig bones in faunal assemblages. It seems that Bronze Age husbandry was practised in both low and Highlands Palestine. In the later Iron I period, pigs appear in great numbers in the southern coastal plains (e.g. Ekron, Ashkelon) and other lowland sites. But they disappear from the faunal assemblages of the highlands. This data continues also in the Iron II - pigs were not present in proto-Israelite sites in the highlands. But this new picture is not without an obstacle. Using recent archaeological surveys, Finkelstein traces the occupational history of the southern Levant in the fourth to first millennia BCE, and shows that much (though not all) of the Iron I settlement process in both Cis- and Transjordan was part of a cyclic mechanism of alternating processes of sedentarization and nomadization of indigenous groups in response to changing political, economic and social circumstances. But these cyclic processes were influenced by other political, economic and social developments. 30 Such developments included foreign inventions,


29 Ibid., p. 206.

30 Ibid., p. 208.
migration of local and alien groups. These played an important role in the demographic history of Palestine.

Therefore, the emergence of early Israel and other groups in southern Levant was the result of a combination of factors, i.e. a long term of history and short term circumstances and balanced between local development and external influences. Finkelstein suggests that the rise of early Israel was the latest phase in long term, cyclic processes of settlement oscillations and the rise and fall of territorial entities in the highlands. These processes which took place in Cis-Transjordan started in the first millennium BCE and included Israel and Judah.

The ethnic differentiation between the different emerging entities was a slow and gradual development. Thus, even though faunal assemblages from the sites in the highlands show different dietary practice already in Iron I, the material of these sites show ethnic boundaries only in the late Iron II. According to Finkelstein therefore, the "real Israel" cannot stand up before the ninth-eighth century BCE.

31 Ibid., p.109.
32 See also B Hesse and P Wapnish, ['Can Pig Bones Be Used for Ethnic Diagnosis in the Ancient Near East?" The Archaeology of Israel (eds.) N.A.Silberman and D.Small (Sheffield: JSOTS 237, 1997), pp.238-70] who also argue that pig bones can be used in ethnic diagnosis, though not on a straightforward presence, i.e. it is not sufficient to show that people did not eat pork as part of their lifestyle. But it has to be demonstrated how such acts were blended in the social life of those people as part of the larger community of which they were members.
b. The Philistines

Philistine n & a 1. n. member of a warlike people in ancient Palestine; uncultured persons whose interests are material and commonplace. 2. n. Uncultured, commonplace, prosaic.

This is the definition of 'Philistine' given in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. But this modern interpretation of the term does not accord with the material evidence. The facts of Philistine history have got lost as a consequence of the moralising tone of the biblical narrative. Research and archaeological excavations in the past forty years have unearthed a different picture.

The Philistines were one of the groups of the "Sea Peoples" who became established in Palestine, to which region they gave their name. Thus, "Palestine" was itself derived from the Hebrew name of the Land of the Philistines which is Paleshet (philistia), then through ancient Greek Palastine to the Latin Palestina and to the Arabic Filastin. The Philistines developed into an independent political force which came to threaten the disunited city-states in the region.

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33 Archaeological research has made it possible to identify other groups of Sea Peoples such as the Sherden and Shikalu [T. Dothan, 'The Philistines Reconsidered' *Biblical Archaeology Today* (eds.) J. Aviram, A. Biran, J. C. Greenfield (Jerusalem: IES, 1985), p.166.]


35 Dothan & Dothan, op. cit. n. 6, p. 5.

36 The first incident in which we hear about the Philistines is from Ramesses III's contemporary inscriptions on the north wall of the Great Temple at Medinet Habu. They describe the sea and land battles against the Sea Peoples where they are called prst (Akkadian equivalent palastu).

37 Dothan & Dothan, op. cit. n. 6, p. 6.

Very little is known about the language and script of the Philistines. However, a number of Philistine 'anchor seals', miniature in size, have been discovered at various sites in Israel, for example, Ashdod, Megiddo, Lachish, Tell el-Farah(s), Tell en-Nasbeh. These miniature anchors may have served as amulets or votive offerings. One of the seals, from Ashdod, bears the signs that are tentatively related to the 'Cypro-Minoan Script'. More recently an inscribed potsherd was discovered at Ashkelon. According to Cross, the Philistine script and orthography of this period stems from Hebrew and not Phoenician. However, it shows distinctive typological characteristics, and Cross has been inclined to call it Hebreo-Philistine to underline its affinities with Hebrew though eventually he labelled it 'Neo-Philistine'.

The latest discovery of a Philistine inscription comes from Ekron. One of the most significant aspects of this inscription is that it identifies the site, for the first time, as the biblical Ekron. Also the names Ikausu (Achish) and Padi appear in line 1. The name Achish is known from I Samuel 27 and 29, and Padi, king of Ekron is known from the annals of Sennacherib describing his third campaign in 701 BCE. This inscription does not seem to belong to the cursive Hebreo-Philistine branch. Some of the letters are clearly Hebrew in shape (especially waw and taw) but others are similar to Phoenician (b, especially in the word thrkh, in line 3). Yet most of the letters could either be Phoenician

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40 Ibid., p.21.


or Hebrew.\textsuperscript{43} It is possible therefore that the script belongs to neither, but rather to some peculiar local script.\textsuperscript{44}

The Philistines settled in the coastal plain in the region between the brook of Egypt (\textit{Wadi el-Arish}) and the region north of Ekron. In the east this territory bordered with Judah and in the west with the Mediterranean sea. The Philistines formed a confederation of five major cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. Originally they settled there as garrison troops, colonies with mercenaries who were prisoners taken after the defeat of the Sea Peoples. After the Egyptian collapse in Asia these towns became independent.\textsuperscript{45} Gaza, Ashkelon and Ashdod were already important ports before the Philistines' occupation. The site of Gath has not been definitely identified\textsuperscript{46} though the biblical text suggests it was a city of importance in Philistia.\textsuperscript{47} Most Philistine sites were built on previous large Canaanite towns used by the Egyptians as centres of their rule, though Ekron was presumably founded by the Philistines, because it does not appear in any pre-Philistine sources.\textsuperscript{48} Of course, there were other Philistine towns in the region such as Ziklag,\textsuperscript{49} Timnah\textsuperscript{50} and Jabneh\textsuperscript{51} but these had a much smaller role to play.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p.13.

\textsuperscript{44} In a recent publication [\textit{H.Shanks, 'Face to Face: Biblical Minimalists Meet Their Challengers'} \textit{BAR} 23:4 (1997), pp.26-42,66.] N.P.Lemche claimed that the Ekron inscription, like the 'Dan inscription', is fake. When he was asked as to the motivation for the forgery, Lemche replied: 'They're always doing that, simply for fun'. [Ibid., p.37.]

\textsuperscript{45} See de Vaux, op.cit. n.1, p.509.

\textsuperscript{46} S.Yeiven \textit{[Tell Erani'], \textit{EAEHL} II,(Jerusalem: IES, 1970), p.595} identifies Gath with Tell 'Erani, 19 km on the road from Ashkelon to Beth-Guvrin, though A. Mazar \textit{[op.cit. n.7, p.306]} identifies it with Tell Safit..

\textsuperscript{47} I Sam 27:2.

\textsuperscript{48} Dothan, op.cit. n.38, p.17.

\textsuperscript{49} I Sam 27:6.

\textsuperscript{50} Judg.14:1
Later on in the 11th century the Philistines expanded beyond Joppa and north of the Yarkon River, and they also came to control the towns in Jezreel and Beth-Shean and Megiddo XIA.52 This was one of the reasons for the complex relationship between the Philistines and the Israelites. The conflict reached its worst phase on the eve of Saul's accession and continued to the time of David when the Philistines tried to expand their control in the hill country. Therefore, they placed garrisons at strategic sites such as at Gibeath-Benjamin.53 There is also a mention of garrisons stationed near main routes,54 at Bethlehem in the time of David55 and at Beth-Shean.56 During their expansion the Philistines settled at Aphek on the Yarkon, Tell Gerisha and Tell Qasile; the last was the most important providing a unique example of an urban settlement actually founded by the Philistines themselves.57 Philistine settlements are also found in the Jordan Valley such as Tell es-Saudiyeh and Tell Deir-Alla (biblical Succoth). The identification of these sites with the Philistines is based on weapons, anthropoid clay sarcophagi and other artefacts.58

51 II Chron.26:6

52 B.Mazar, Canaan and Israel (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute & IES, 1980), p.162.

53 I Sam 13:3. Gibeath-Benjamin is probably the same as Gibeath ha Elohim in I Sam 10:5, see discussion in Chapter VI of this thesis.

54 B.Mazar, op.cit. n.52, p.162.

55 I Sam 23:14.

56 I Sam 31:10. Beth-Shean may have been the same site in which the Egyptians established a military base under Ramesses III.

57 A.Mazar, op.cit. n.7, p.311.

58 The well known designs of the decorated Philistine pottery are not evident at every Philistine sites, only in Philistia along the coast. Even then, these attractive designs disappeared ca. 1050 BCE. The disappearance of this decorated pottery is probably due to the Philistines' assimilation with the local Egyptian/Canaanite cultures [Singer, op.cit. n.13, p. 364], but despite their assimilation the Philistines managed to reserve their national identity at least until the end of the Iron Age.
It is generally assumed that it was the Philistines who brought the knowledge of iron-working into the country, and that they retained their monopoly of that knowledge. This assumption is based on I Sam 13:19-22 which describes the situation in the reign of Saul: vs.19-20 state: 'Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, the Hebrews must not make swords for themselves. So all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen their plowshare, mattocks, axes or sickles'. But this assumption derived from Samuel is mistaken. Although the Iron Age I period is generally accepted as beginning ca. 1200, the use of iron only came in at a later time. It first appeared during the 14th-13th century in the Hittite Kingdom where it was protected as a monopoly, and it started to spread with the fall of the Hittite empire at the end of the 13th century, but it penetrated Palestine only later. In fact the word 'iron' (ברזל) does not appear in these verses at all, and the word 'smith' (￡זרן) means simply 'craftman' or 'artisan'. These verses do not deal with iron-working; the tools which have been discovered at the Iron I sites were made of bronze. Hence these verses probably refer to metal working in general. Neither is there archaeological evidence for the use of iron in Philistia at this period. In the only Philistine capital that has been extensively excavated (at Ashdod), iron implements were not found. In fact, during the Iron I, bronze was still the most prevalent metal. At Tell Qasile, no iron was found in the Early Strata (XII-XI), except for a single iron blade with an ivory handle in Stratum XII.


60 Aharoni, ibid., p. 406.

61 According to A. Mazar, [Excavations at Tell Qasile, Qedem 20:2 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1985), p. 1] Stratum XII is dated ca. 1150-1100 BCE, a date close to that which is attributed to Albright's period II at Tell el-Ful where an iron plough-tip was discovered.
These early occurrences do reflect the early stages in which iron was used. But an exceptional find has shown that iron was regarded as a precious and rare metal. This is an iron bracelet which was discovered in the temple Stratum X at Tell Qasile. Thus, although iron does appear sporadically in Palestine, it is very unlikely that the Philistines had a monopoly of its production. As to the distribution of iron at the end of the 11th century, this may be related to the intensification of commercial contacts with the north via sea routes as is evident from the appearance of the newly-imported Cypro-Phoenician ceramics.\(^62\) It should also be pointed out that the Philistines did not have a monopoly of bronze either. Evidence suggests that Canaanite metals continued to be used in the northern plains and in the Jordan Valley,\(^63\) but the biblical author probably exaggerated the description of metal monopoly in order to explain the position of the Israelite groups in the highlands who were far from metal sources.

In a recent study, attempts have been made to make a link between the development of iron technology and the impact this had on the period of unrest at that time in the eastern Mediterranean.\(^64\) However, this upheaval and unrest throughout the region was a long process which eventually came to an end at the close of the Late Bronze Age. In the following Iron Age I evidence for iron is sparse as I have already discussed above. Moreover, most iron artifacts in the early period are of inferior quality because techniques of smelting were not sufficiently developed.\(^65\) We are also told that iron implements, not only from ancient Palestine, but also from Persia and Assyria, show that iron tools and weapons were still at a fairly primitive stage. This is apparent in most


\(^63\) Singer, op.cit. n.13, p.380.

\(^64\) P.M.McNutt, The Forging of Israel (JSOTSup. 108, Sheffield: Almond, 1990).

parts of the ancient Near East until the ninth or eighth century BCE.\(^6^6\) Also, it took decades before iron distribution grew, and therefore the iron technology could not be associated with the general upheaval in the region. Iron technology had an impact on the political/social development in the following period when the various peoples were already settled in the region and iron technology, as well as, the trade in iron, was in full swing.

The accumulation of archaeological evidence regarding the scant appearance of iron in the region during the Iron I period, as well as the re-evaluation of its geopolitical distribution would, therefore, indicate that the Philistines did not, as was previously thought, seek to maintain a military advantage over the Israelites by controlling the production and distribution of metal weapons. Therefore, the reasons for this conflict must be found elsewhere.

One of the possible reasons was territory. The movements of people and the chaos at the end of the Late Bronze Age brought about great changes in Palestine in the Iron Age. This change expressed itself in the ethnic make-up and material culture.\(^6^7\) The Canaanite city-state system of the Bronze Age was replaced by an ethno-political structure in which various regions became inhabited by different peoples. Thus, in western Palestine, apart from the indigenous population,\(^6^8\) there were also Israelites, Philistines and other groups of Sea Peoples. In Transjordan there were Israelites, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites and Arameans. At the start of the Iron Age (ca. 1200) there seem to have been no conflicts between these groups. People did not expand beyond their own holdings or try to gain control over other groups' territory. It was only

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\(^6^6\) Ibid., p.129.

\(^6^7\) A. Mazar, op. cit. n. 7, p.295.

\(^6^8\) The indigenous groups included Canaanites, Hivites, Hittites, Jebusites etc., referred to in the literature in general as Canaanites.
later on in the 11th century and probably due to the pressure of an expansion of population, that people were motivated to expand at the expense of others.\textsuperscript{69}

The first evidence of conflict with the Philistines appears in Judges 3:31 where it is stated that Shamgar ben Anath "smote" them. Then later on the Samson cycle is based on the background of the territorial conflict which erupted into open warfare at the battle of Eben-ezer.\textsuperscript{70} In that battle the Israelites suffered a great defeat in which the Philistines also captured the Ark of YHWH.\textsuperscript{71} According to I Sam 9:16 Saul was elected king in order to save the Israelites from Philistine oppression. Saul and Jonathan fought against the Philistines and defeated them,\textsuperscript{72} but the Israelites suffered a great defeat at the battle of Gilboa in which Saul and his three sons were also killed.\textsuperscript{73}

David at first sought refuge with king Achish of Gath and became a Philistine vassal when he was granted the city of Ziklag. But he came into conflict with them when he himself became king over Israel. The Philistines were dealt a major defeat by David\textsuperscript{74} who freed the Israelites from their oppression. I Chron 18:1 states that David defeated the Philistines and took Gath and the adjoining towns from them. He also conquered the northern lowland (Shefela) and the coastal plain and added them to the Israelite state.

Although the expansion of the population on both sides contributed to the hostility between Philistines and the Israelite groups, in my view there was an additional

\textsuperscript{69} This problem and its effect will be addressed in more detail below in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{70} I Sam 4.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 4:11.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 14:31.

\textsuperscript{73} Saul's battles will be discussed in a separate Chapter V below.

\textsuperscript{74} II Sam 5:18, 25.
important economic and strategic factor which should also be considered.\textsuperscript{75} It should be pointed out that the main conflict between these groups took place in the central region of Palestine. Not only was the soil very fertile, but possession of territory gave control over important trade routes.\textsuperscript{76} This central region of the hill country of Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah,\textsuperscript{77} the west-east routes served as 'bridges' between the two main highways i.e. "The Way of the Sea"\textsuperscript{78} or the "Coastal Highway", later to be called the \textit{Via Maris}, and the "King's Highway".\textsuperscript{79} The most important of the west-east routes was the "Way of Beth-horon", mentioned in I Sam 13:18. Unlike the other routes which gradually ascend from the coast, this route climbs up the steep "ascent of Beth-Horon", and thence to Gibeon and Jerusalem on the central ridge\textsuperscript{80} This was an advantage from the point of view of security and commerce. Beth-horon was therefore a key point in the

\textsuperscript{75} The history of Palestine was determined to a great extent by its geographical position [Coote/Whitelam, op.cit. n.2, p. 81]. It comprises an important part of the "Fertile Crescent". Although Palestine was the smallest and the poorest of the whole 'Crescent' its main importance lies in its geographical role as a bridge between the two great ancient civilisations: Egypt in the south-west and Mesopotamia in the north-east (see figs.1&2).

\textsuperscript{76} See figs.1- 4. The central region has a most exceptional climate in which rainfall is reasonably high. This region together with the fertile plain of Moab [see J.W.Rogerson, \textit{Atlas of the Bible} (Oxford: Andromeda, 1985, repr. 1994), p.204] forms a sharp contrast with the barren desert of eastern Palestine.

\textsuperscript{77} With the founding of Samaria, the name of this capital gradually replaced the name Ephraim and Benjamin as a general name for the whole area.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Isa.}9:1.

\textsuperscript{79} Num. 20:17, 21:22. The former runs across the coastline. In Ex. 13:17 it is called 'the way of the Philistines coast'. Many important ancient towns were built along its route. It formed the connection between Egypt in the south and Mesopotamia in the north. It was used by many messengers, caravans and countless expeditions throughout history. This route and all its branches were always a prime objective of great powers in their conquest of Palestine [Y.Aharoni, \textit{The Land of the Bible} (London: Burns & Oates, 1962, 2nd revised edn. 1979), p. 45]. The reference in Isaiah 9:1 is concerned with the conquest of Tiglat Pileser III. The King's Highway extends from Egypt across the wilderness, Edom, Moab, Damascus and Mesopotamia.

\textsuperscript{80} Aharoni, ibid., p.59.
ascent to the hill country of Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah,\textsuperscript{81} within which only a few roads provided essential communication between Transjordan and the coastal area and thus between the two main international trade routes; routes whose commercial importance was ever increasing with the rising prosperity within the whole general region.

In light of this discussion it would seem that the collapse of Egyptian rule which lasted a period of 150 years, left the Philistines as the most powerful force in the region west of the Jordan. The Philistines adopted from the Egyptians their policies, administration and military structure.\textsuperscript{82} They were also much better organised, militarily trained, and in possession of sophisticated armour\textsuperscript{83} probably inherited from the Egyptians. Therefore it could be said in many ways that Egyptian rule took time to dissolve. The Philistines continued the Egyptian-style rule in Canaan for a while. They extracted taxes and even supplied their troops with 'Hebrews'\textsuperscript{84} as indicated in I Sam 14:21. Hence, the Philistines' power continued to grow during that period. At the same time the Israelite groups, although dispersed throughout the highlands, managed to withstand the Philistine pressure. The Israelites also grew in population and hence created an overflow of people who could no longer stay in the highlands and thus were forced to move to the eastern side of the Jordan.\textsuperscript{85} What emerges from this discussion is that there was a power struggle between two strong forces. They fought each other for the control of the region but eventually the Philistines could not keep their troops in the

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid. Whoever controlled the hill country, especially that of Benjamin, could control the whole country. This is demonstrated when studying the routes and tactics used by various military leaders who conquered the country throughout history.

\textsuperscript{82} Singer, op.cit. n.13, p.395.

\textsuperscript{83} I I Sam 1:6.

\textsuperscript{84} B.Mazar, op.cit. n.52, p.162.

\textsuperscript{85} The Israelite growth in population and its contribution for the emergence of the state will be discussed later in this chapter.
hill country indefinitely and were forced to retreat to Philistia in south-western Palestine.86

c. The Israelites in 'the Period of the Judges'

The term 'the period of the Judges' is derived from the fact that almost all the leaders referred to in the book are said to have 'judged' Israel; Judges 2:16 states: 'Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the power of those who plundered them'. According to the text, the 'period of the judges' is an expression used to describe the period of time between the settlement in Canaan and the emergence of the monarchy. Documentary evidence from early in the third millennium from Mari indicates that the term 'judge' (šarru) and the verb judged (šarru) refers to 'a man of power' in the tribal organisation whose authority extended beyond the administration of justice.87 The root špt is Canaanite; in Phoenician as well as in Ugaritic it means 'to exercise power'.88 When it comes to the Israelite 'judges' it is most probable that the term šarru does not indicate merely leadership, but rather a ruler who also exercised the administration of justice.89

Kings could also be regarded as judges, e.g. King Solomon.90

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86 It should be pointed out that relationship with the Philistines was not always hostile. There are numerous incidents in which an impression is created that there was a harmonious relationship between the two. Although biblical sources do not speak of the Philistines after David, it does not mean that they had disappeared from the scene. The extensive excavations especially at Ekron (Tell Miqne) directed by Prof. S. Gitin (Albright Institute, Jerusalem) and Prof. T. Dothan (Hebrew University) give evidence of a flourishing culture and economy for several centuries later. The Philistines developed an impressive industry in olive oil. The amount of oil produced enabled them to trade with nations around the western Mediterranean. Eventually the Philistines became integrated with the Canaanites and gradually lost their cultural distinctiveness.

87 A. Malamat, Israel in Biblical Times (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute & IES, 1983), p.84.

88 See de Vuax, op. cit. n.1, p.755. Carthage was ruled by suffetes, sptm is mentioned in Punic inscriptions from the fourth century BCE onward. By Greek and Latin authors these suffetes are called 'kings'.

89 Malamat, op. cit. n.87, p.84

Before hereditary monarchy, judges in Israel were local chiefs who derived their authority from the elders of the town. But the text does not provide any information concerning the function and the duties of this judicial office. Moreover, these judges had no identical characteristics and none of them attempted to unite the tribes. What they had in common was that they were charismatic leaders: they stepped forward in time of crisis to save the Israelites and thus gave evidence to their people that YHWH’s spirit was upon them to fight their enemy.

The impression, therefore, created by the text is that these judges were national heroes who functioned over all Israel successively. However, on close examination of the events in the book a different picture emerges. Israel does not act as one unit in any of these events. For instance, in Judges 3:13 the Moabites oppressed Israel, yet only Benjamin and Ephraim seem to have been involved in action taken against the king of Moab. Therefore, it is obvious that there were traditions concerning heroes of this period who had saved a tribe or a group of tribes, e.g. Deborah and Barak Judges, 4-5, from attacks by neighbouring peoples, but that these heroes exercised their rule only in that narrow circle and not, as presented in the text, as rulers of all Israel and as predecessors of the kings of the Israelites. These stories, originally referring to the tribe or part of tribes, or perhaps even to a single place, were handed down orally and

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91 Mayes, op.cit. n.12, p.321.

92 On one occasion the tribes requested their leader Gideon to become their king after his successful battle against the Midianites, but Gideon refused saying "...I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you: the Lord will rule over you" (Jud.8:23).

93 Gottwald, op.cit. n.4, p.53.

94 Mayes, op.cit. n.12, p.299.

95 Eissfeldt, op.cit. n.12, p.259; Rogerson, op.cit. n.76, p.29; see especially M.Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, (Sheffield: JSOTSup.15, 1981), pp.42-53.
later on (probably during the period of the early kings) were collected together.\textsuperscript{96} and were subsequently presented as though referring to the prehistory of Israel as a whole. The Deuteronomistic edition at some stage eventually added a list of judges, their function and fixed time span for each, thus creating the impression that they were national heroes who ruled over Israel successively.\textsuperscript{97}

d. Israelite Society in Transition

A special interest has arisen in recent years in understanding state formation and the stages of its development. J.W. Rogerson\textsuperscript{98} argues that the Israelite groups were an association of small chiefdoms, and that, in turn, the emergence of the Israelite monarchy was a result of the eventual dominance of one chiefdom over the others. However, two basic models have been established, the 'pristine' state and the 'secondary' state.\textsuperscript{99} Flanagan\textsuperscript{100} and Frick\textsuperscript{101} suggest that Israelite monarchy was a secondary state\textsuperscript{102}. However, in order to reach such statehood the Israelite groups went through

\textsuperscript{96} de Vaux, op.cit. n.1, pp.688-9.

\textsuperscript{97} According to Noth [op.cit. n.95, p.42] for the material on 'Judges' the Deuteronomist used two basic traditions. One was a collection of stories of various tribal heroes which the Deuteronomist unites by connecting material; the second was a list of 'judges' ('minor judges') with a short account of their biography. Noth proposes that this list was based on old records of an office held by one official after another without any interruption. The duration of each official (like reign of kings) was probably used for chronological purposes, thus the exact figure given for each term of office.

\textsuperscript{98} J.W.Rogerson, 'Was Early Israel a Segmentary Society?'\textit{JSOT} 36 (1986), p.18.


The 'Pristine' state emerges in a political vacuum without any connection to other political entities in the region, e.g. Egypt or Mesopotamia. Whereas the 'secondary' state emerges as a result of the collapse of other states or because of the influence of neighbouring states.


\textsuperscript{101} F.S.Frick, \textit{The Formation of the State in Ancient Israel} (Sheffield: JSOT, Almond), p.32.

\textsuperscript{102} Because of the request made by the elders of Israel that they wished to be ruled by a king like neighbouring nations [I Sam 8:5].
earlier phases of development. The period of transition from chiefdom to state is the most relevant to our discussion, though there is no sharp transition from the late stage of chiefdom to the early state because such transition takes time before it becomes fully effective. But before we develop this discussion it will be useful to explain briefly the various views on the reasons for the formation of the Israelite monarchy.

However, scholars who confined themselves to the biblical text attributed the emergence of monarchy to an external factor, seeing it as the direct result of the conflict with the Philistines. Although Gottwald argues that the prime factor was the Philistines, he recognises technological contributions e.g. iron technology and agricultural terracing and the new technology of plastered cisterns for reserving rain water. The latter was a turning point in the development of settlement patterns because previously the iron age settlements were confined to springs. The use of cisterns, which were rock-hewn and plaster-lined for collecting rain water, was especially useful in the highlands since it enabled settlements to develop anywhere in the highlands,


105 Gottwald, op.cit. n.4, p. 655.

106 Gottwald claims that iron technology and agricultural terracing contributed to the economic prosperity of this period [ibid., p. 297]. The argument for iron technology must be rejected for reasons discussed above in this chapter. With regard to agricultural terracing, this view is expressed by most scholars [for example: Frick, op.cit. n.101,p.138; L.E. Stager, 'The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel' BASOR 260, (1985), pp. 5-9; Coote/Whitelam, op.cit. n.2, pp. 83-84]. This view must be revised since new research shows that while small-scale terracing existed from as early as the 3rd millennium BCE, large-scale terracing in highland environments did not exist before the eight century BCE [S. Gibson, at the International Conference: 'The archaeology of Israel in the period of the Monarchy', Institute of Jewish Studies, London, April 1996].

which promoted intensive agriculture and in turn also promoted the increase in population.

Frick\textsuperscript{108} regards the Philistines as a necessary condition of the emergence of the Israelite monarchy, though not a sufficient one on its own. He claims that Philistines' pressure accelerated the transition from 'chiefdom' to 'state', though the growth in agricultural productivity and the increase in population were also very important factors which needed to be accommodated.\textsuperscript{109} Coote and Whitelam\textsuperscript{110} also argue that the emergence of Israel and the monarchy is the result of numerous processes influenced by adaptation to various social and economic changes.\textsuperscript{111}

At this point attention should be drawn to archaeological data emerging during the past decade which have shed light on the socio-economic situation. As an example, in this context, attention should be focused on the central hill country, i.e. that of Ephraim.\textsuperscript{112} It should first be noted that rainfall in this region tends to decrease from north to south and from west to east. In particular the rainfall increases on the western slopes of the hills and decreases sharply towards the eastern slopes. Also the temperatures increase the further the distance is from the sea but diminish with increase in height.\textsuperscript{113} A rainy year in the central hill country would have up to 200+mm and a dry year between 100-200mm of rainfall. This kind of climate provides reasonable opportunities for grazing as well as helping to sustain agriculture on the slopes. There

\textsuperscript{108} Frick, op.cit. n.101, p.26.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p.138.

\textsuperscript{110} Coote and Whitelam, op.cit. n.2, pp.117-166.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p.164.

\textsuperscript{112} The central hill country of Ephraim is the most relevant and convenient example to use, especially because most events described in the early part of Samuel took place in this region.

\textsuperscript{113} Frick, op.cit. n.101, p.102.
are also many perennial springs on the southern slopes\textsuperscript{114} where olive orchards are dominant.\textsuperscript{115} The opportunities provided by the technology of storing rainfall in plastered cisterns (and hewn cisterns in stones) provided better facilities for water supply, especially significant in drier years. The statistics gathered by Frick\textsuperscript{116} show great deviation in annual rainfall, especially in the highlands (e.g. a deviation of 30% which could occur in consecutive years).

From a topographical point of view, the region of Ephraim can be divided into three areas: 1. areas amenable for cultivation along the desert fringe together with the central range; 2. areas of medium potential on the northern slopes of the foothills, and 3. areas difficult for cultivation on the southern slopes. Economically, this region can be divided into three zones. These are: the desert fringe; the eastern section of the central range; and the western part of the foothills. All these areas are good for farming. Part of this region had horticulture, and later on the area was used for olive orchards and vineyards.\textsuperscript{117} There were also good opportunities for grazing.\textsuperscript{118}

Turning to the archaeological evidence, Finkelstein's survey\textsuperscript{119} shows that about 121 Iron Age I sites (of the middle or end of the eleventh century BC) have been

\textsuperscript{114} Finkelstein, op.cit. n.99, p.14.

\textsuperscript{115} The statistics here are given only to give a general idea of conditions. They are based on statistics gathered by Frick [op.cit. n.101, 103-109]. There are, of course, arguments regarding whether climatic conditions here changed since the Iron Age. But according to Frick the climate has not changed since 6000-7000 BCE [ibid, 101].

\textsuperscript{116} Frick, ibid., pp.103-9.

\textsuperscript{117} Finkelstein, op.cit. n.99, p.14.

\textsuperscript{118} Coote and Whitelam, op.cit. n.2, p.84.

\textsuperscript{119} Finkelstein, op.cit. n.99, pp.3-26. Finkelstein directed a thorough survey in the hill country of Ephraim, between the years 1980 and 1987. See also 'The Iron Age in the Land of Ephraim - A Second Thought', in Na'amani and Finkelstein (eds.) op.cit. n.13, pp. 101-103.
discovered. This survey shows that a high density of sites was located at the desert fringe and along the northern central range. There was also a concentration of sites on the northern slopes (around Bethel) though the concentration on the southern slopes was sparse. But the big villages were found in two areas in the central range upon the northern slopes whereas the small villages were evenly distributed throughout the area. Isolated houses were also discovered but they are regarded as probably seasonal. The pattern produced by this survey shows that there were central sites which were occupied by permanent population, an indicator of the beginnings of socio-economic organisation. The result of this survey indicates that 75% of early Iron I sites were built on the eastern slope of the hill country of Ephraim. The settlement process increased and intensified during Iron I. Later in the phase 62% of the sites were built on the western slopes of the foothills.

This later development of sites westwards shows that the population expanded in that direction. The harsher topography of this region necessitated the development of better social organisation, i.e. a broader social framework than that usually associated with the nuclear family. Thus, according to Finkelstein, the need to become more efficient contributed to the collapse of barriers between the settling groups. No doubt this new trend towards social organisation also facilitated the creation of contact with neighbouring regions which was essential, at least, for balancing the economy. For instance, the agricultural development in horticultural regions encouraged those on the desert fringe and eastern central range to develop the growing of grain crops and animal husbandry. Hence, the population of the desert fringe and central range could exchange some of their surpluses, such as olive oil, grapes and wine for grains and animal products (e.g. dairy products and wool) with the population in the horticultural region. It is likely

120 Finkelstein, op.cit. n.99, p.15.

121 Ibid., p.17.
that in some situations people intensified their efforts in order to produce greater
surpluses.\(^\text{122}\)

The population in the central hill country during Iron I is estimated to have
been about 20,000 whereas by the end of the eleventh century the population is
estimated at about 55,000 due to natural growth, and both figures refer to sedentary
population only.\(^\text{123}\) It is interesting that similar surveys have been carried out in other
regions of the highlands (e.g. Manasseh, and Benjamin) and these have all produced
similar patterns, indicating that the settlement process started mostly in the desert fringe
and in the central range (between Judah and Jezreel). Only later, in the eleventh century,
did the western part of the hill country become intensely settled.

Though the apparent growth in population and the intensification of
agricultural productivity played a vital role in the transformation of the Israelite social
structure, there are also additional factors which should be taken into consideration, e.g.
the character of the family house. Thus, the interior of a farm house built in the highlands
was very small (averaging 50m\(^2\)), and the house in the steppe region was larger but
never more than 75m\(^2\).\(^\text{124}\) In both these examples the group occupying the space could
not be larger than the nuclear family. The most interesting houses are the clusters of
dwellings which were discovered at Raddana, 'Ai and Mashash, consisting of multi-
family compounds made up of two or three individual houses in each case. Each of the
component houses is either completely independent or linked to another by one or two
common walls. Yet each house had a separate entrance though accessed through a
shared courtyard. The dwellings themselves are sometimes separated one from the other

\(^{122}\) Finkelstein supports this information for the Iron I economy by archaeological evidence as well as by data from the Mandate period in Palestine between 1938 and 1945.

\(^{123}\) Finkelstein, op.cit. n.99, p.21.

\(^{124}\) Stager, op.cit. n.106, pp.17-8.
by streets, paths or stone enclosures. It has been demonstrated that this residential pattern denotes the patriarchal family, i.e. where descent and inheritance are usually determined according to patrilineal principle and patrilocal residence. Such a family could include up to three or more generations. Sometimes married brothers and their families continued to live in a single household where the older brother became the head of the family after the father's death.

In ancient Israel the rule was that sons alone were entitled to inheritance and the eldest son had the privileged position. He received a double share of the father's inheritance. The same appear in documents from various parts of Mesopotamia, for example, from southern Babylonia. S. Dalley explains the reasons; except for the fact that 'the first born is the beginning of his father's strength', in Mesopotamia the eldest son was usually expected to be responsible for carrying out the funerary rites responsibilities for the deceased father and his ancestors. Not only would he have the expense of the funeral, but after that, the eldest son would be required to make offerings of food and drink. Therefore, if the eldest was to inherit an equal share as his brothers, in effect he would have less then, because he would have have extra expenses. According to de Vaux it is possible that only movable chattels were shared between the sons, while the ancestral land holding was not divided but given to the oldest son. At the same time, one should remember, the multi-family household continued to grow as it went through the various phases of the domestic cycle, gradually becoming overcrowded.

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125 Stager, ibid., pp. 18-20.


127 I am greatly indebted to Dr. Stephanie Dalley for the discussion of this topic and for the kind generosity in lending me her unpublished paper.

128 As stated in Dt. 21:17.
What becomes apparent from this discussion is that because heads of households and their lineage members exercised rights over inheritance in landholdings, inequalities within the groups in Israel developed long before the monarchy. Hence, in the new economic situation there was unequal land distribution and unequal accumulation of property. Therefore, sub-units of the group could no longer depend merely upon farming for their livelihood but had to change over to barter system in order to supply the necessities for their life.

With the further growth of the population, survival opportunities in the highlands probably became very scarce; there was no chance to acquire land any longer,\(^\text{129}\) consequently giving no alternative for many unmarried young males but to look for opportunities elsewhere. However, the new institution of the monarchy offered just that. Young men were recruited for the military,\(^\text{130}\) government and priesthood. It is quite possible that these young men were rewarded with lands or vineyards after a period of good service,\(^\text{131}\) hence, people became economically dependent on the monarch.

If we refer back to the situation with the Philistines, it would seem that not only territorial expansion and population growth of the Israelites westward threatened the Philistines. The main conflict between the two was in the demand for grain and animal products from the hill country which was beginning to boom. The coastal plain (especially to the south) was not as productive for the Philistines, therefore they had a motive to pressurise the Israelites in order to gain control over the economy. Since the Philistines had garrison troops in the hill country of Benjamin (the centre of Israelite activity and the home of Saul) they could interfere with Israelite activities, therefore

\(^{129}\) Stager, op.cit. n.106, p.1.

\(^{130}\) For example I Sam 14:52.

\(^{131}\) For example I Sam 17:25.
pushing the Israelites further towards centralised rule, and the establishment of the monarchy.

Putting the information gathered above in a different perspective, it would seem that the Israelite monarchy took time to emerge. The conditions described so far indicate that the Israelites were in a process of transition from chiefdom to statehood. The basic feature of a chiefdom is that the population size is large (larger than in the previous stage), i.e. between 5,000 and 20,000 and differences in social status are beginning to develop. These are associated with lineages and the society as a whole is governed by a single chief. Ranking is also determined by how closely one is related to that chief. The early state, on the other hand, though similar to the chiefdom in many ways, had a ruler, a king, whose authority depended either on his 'charismatic' leadership or on some type of religious legitimation. The ranking does not depend on blood ties and society is stratified into different classes. Nevertheless, there is no sharp transition from the late stages of chiefdom to the early state because such a transition takes time before it becomes fully effective, i.e. a community takes time before it becomes dependent on a leader and at the same time this dependency enhances his role of leadership until he becomes fully recognised in an office. The chief is himself in the early stages of becoming 'king'. Later on his rule develops into centralised rule.

To summarise, the following are the elements which brought about the monarchy in Israel. The rise of the Israeliite central rule was not the result of one external situation (i.e. Philistine pressure) as was previously thought, but rather a combination of various internal and external situations. The pattern of Israeliite settlements in the hill country and in the neighbouring areas indicates an expansion of the population, a process

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132 Renfrew and Bahn, op.cit. n.103, p.156.

133 Flanagan, op.cit. n.100, p.50.

134 Saul’s background and the process of his becoming a king will be discussed in Chapter V.
which became intensified in the eleventh century BCE. This expansion forced a large number of people to move into western Palestine. The need to become more efficient in order to combat the harsh topography and to gather the limited water resources, helped to overcome the geographical barriers between the various groups. The specialised agricultural activities encouraged production of greater surpluses, thus establishing strong internal trade. This kind of economy required an organisation which eventually led to an administrative system. The increasing number of unmarried males could be used for positions of this kind, therefore contributing to stratification in the society. Israelite society, thus went through the transformation from a rural society of isolated groups to the beginnings of a larger socio-political system.

135 Finkelstein, op.cit. n.99, p.22.
III

SAUL AND THE DEUTERONOMIST

Part I

a. Introduction

The history of the period of the united monarchy (Saul-David-Solomon) in the biblical text is one part of the so called Deuteronomic History.¹ To a great extent the style of this writing was influenced by the teaching of the Book of Deuteronomy of which the main doctrines are: centralised worship in Jerusalem, obedience to the Deuteronomist law and abstaining from apostasy. This was in accordance with an austere system of reward and punishment. These doctrines related to the main theme of the Deuteronomist presentation of the divine promise of the dynasty to David.² According to McCarter, the most striking aspect of the Deuteronomistic redaction of the books of Samuel is its sparseness; the strict Deuteronomistic structure found in the Book of Judges and Kings is not apparent in Samuel. This is probably due to the sources of Samuel which reached Deuteronomistic circles as narratives of great length, already arranged in accordance with a "proto-Deuteronomistic" view.

McCarter³ has shown that at some pre-Deuteronomistic stage the stories were set in their basic order, and that in the following 'middle stage' they developed into a narrative of considerable importance. It was during that period that the development of the main ideas resulted in the form we know now. This development is prophetic in its

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¹ The so called Deuteronomic History includes the books of Deuteronomy-Kings. This history divides the Israelite development into five successive periods; the Mosaic period, the period of occupation of the west of Jordan, the period of the Judges, the united monarchy, and the period of the divided monarchy: Israel and Judah [M. Noth, The Deuteronomic History (Sheffield: JSOT Sup. 15, repr., 1981)].


³ Ibid., pp.18-23.
viewpoint and suspicious of the institution of monarchy. It reflects an original and ancient stream of writing which existed alongside traditions which were more supportive of kingship. McCarter's analysis of the First book of Samuel supports the argument that there is a connected stratum at this stage of the development of the text. For example, throughout the first half of I Samuel, chapters 1-15, and to a lesser degree the second half of the book, chapters 16-31, the older sources were reworked systematically in order to produce a continuous prophetic history of the origins of the monarchy. Three major sources are identified by McCarter: the account dealing with the capture and return of the ark; the various complex stories of Saul's early career; and the history of David's rise. The prophetic writer incorporated them, improving and enhancing and sometimes exaggerating the stories in order to fit parts of them into his history. In doing so, he introduced everywhere the figure of the prophet Samuel, 'whose activities became the organizing feature of his work'.

The First book of Samuel therefore received its main form from a prophetic history of the origin of the monarchy. Its aim was to present the arrival of kingship in Israel as a compromise with the demand of the people. In addition, the history was written in accordance with the prophetic view of the essential aspects of the new system which would rule Israel. This is why the figure of Samuel was developed, to show that he could be the sole ruler and would continue to be the people's instrument by which they could link with YHWH. In other words, although the king was the head of state, he would be expected not only to take instructions from the prophet, but also to be

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4 Ibid., p.18.

5 For example I Sam 8:6-7a.

6 I Sam 10:8b.
subject to prophetic election and rejection according to the will of YHWH.\textsuperscript{7} Therefore, any man who became king would have to be chosen by YHWH.\textsuperscript{8}

This final version of the period's history, in its presentation of the development of Israel, was a major step in influencing the way people thought (and still think) of the events of this period; this is especially evident in the First book of Samuel, in its presentation of the first Israelite king (Saul) and his reign, where there are descriptions of various events in which Saul's actions are condemned and his image denigrated. The impression which is created is that Saul was a problematic and unfit king in that his rule not only failed to benefit Israel, but brought about a disastrous outcome for them.

The First book of Samuel contains many contradictions and duplications while there is also scattered evidence which creates a positive rather than a negative impression of Saul and the events of his reign, and this suggests that a more positive account may have been suppressed. Therefore, questions must be raised as to the reliability of this final presentation. The aim of this chapter is to examine from the biblical sources the emergence of monarchy in an attempt to recognise some of the difficulties in interpreting the text; thus to understand the compilation of the textual material in the books of Samuel. The second aim of this chapter is to examine carefully the events connected with Saul's reign, and to establish a more objective and balanced picture of Saul. Attention will be paid to the main incidents at the beginning of Saul's reign which are considered to be the main factors underlying his rejection. Later the accusations against Saul, i.e. the killing of the Gibeonites\textsuperscript{9} and the killing of the priests of Nob\textsuperscript{10} will be discussed in an attempt to establish whether Saul can be absolved from such accusations.

\textsuperscript{7} I Sam 9:15-17; 15:10-11, 23.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p.21.
\textsuperscript{9} II Sam 24:1-14.
\textsuperscript{10} I Sam 22:6-23.
b. Sources

The primary source for my discussion of this period is the First book of Samuel. Within Samuel are two sections of material concerning Saul. The first of these, I Sam 9-15, deals with his rise to power, his victories and his rejection by YHWH; the second, I Sam 16-31, deals with Saul's relationship with David (friendly at first, than hostile), and ends with Saul's death in battle at Mount Gilboa. This second section is mainly concerned with legitimising David's accession to the throne; therefore, David is highly idealised and the glamorised stories of him overlay Saul's achievements. In I Chronicles there is only a short passage giving Saul's genealogy. His death on Mount Gilboa is also reported but the author adds his own comments to the effect that Saul died for his sins, he did not obey YHWH, and consulted a witch, an act which was forbidden among the Israelites.

This presentation created such a strong impact on scholars and commentators that they not only accepted these accounts without any challenge, but also produced literature which created an even worse impression of Saul. For instance, in assessing

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11 The book of Samuel was given this name by Jewish tradition [Babylonian Talmud: Baba Batra 14a], based on I Chronicles 29:29, which says that the books of Samuel were compiled by Samuel [See also Josephus, Antiquities 6:66; J.Barton, Oracles of God (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986), pp.287 no.16.] But, in fact they were called by this name because Samuel plays the main role in them, or at least in what is called now I Samuel [See O.Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, an Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p.286].


13 9:35-44.

14 I Chron.10:13-14.


16 See the relevant section on the episode at Ein-Dor in Chapter IV.
Saul's reign Bright surmises that Saul's success was temporary, ending in dismal failure, leaving Israel worse off than before. The Cambridge Ancient History omitted the duration of Saul's reign; thus it dated the period of the Judges from about 1200 to 1000 BCE, which is the year accepted by most as that of David's accession. Recently Saul was described as "A bungler from the beginning"; E.W. Heaton explained: 'Israel's emergence as a fully-fledged state was effected with astonishing rapidity. Saul its first king, hardly provided more than a backcloth for the drama. In addition to the fact that he was a manic depressive, his roots were so firmly embedded in the old tribal tradition that radical change would have been abhorrent'; S. Herrmann stated that: 'Saul did not create any formal apparatus of state; he does not even seem to have made any attempts in this direction...' and that the massacre of the priests of Nob who were on David's side shows that Saul was insecure over domestic politics; elsewhere he was also described as an 'unstable character, suffering attacks of jealousy and hyperactivity...' Also in Christian tradition Saul was unpopular and treated with hostility; this was mainly because early commentators, viewing David as the predecessor of Christ viewed Saul's persecution of David as the symbolical persecution of Christ himself. Even more sympathetic scholars described him as 'dark and problematic', or 'tragic'.

23 D. M. Gunn, The Fate of King Saul (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 14, 1980), 23.
The problem in the text is that it contains a mixture of sources concerning the concept of monarchy. Moreover, sources contradict one another, and it is difficult to date these sources. This problem stems from the fact that biblical literature developed over the course of centuries and reflects the concept of monarchy at various periods, as well as the changing attitudes towards it. Thus I Samuel contains an accumulation of such sources, each representing the view of the monarchy at the time of the particular redactor.

P. Preston suggests that the material about Saul is part of a larger narrative complex extending from I Sam 2-I Kgs.-2. At the surface level the narrative present a political transition in Israel i.e. the rise of the monarchy, though the writer in traditional literary terms is more interested in the persons who are causing this political transition than in the transition itself. Then on a deeper level the writer tells the story of Samuel, Saul and David paying much attention to their lives while using the political transition as a background for their tragedies and triumphs. Preston calls this pattern 'rise of the lowly, fall of the mighty'.

26 S. Talmon, 'Kingship and ideology of State' The Age of the Monarchies WHJP 4:2 (Jerusalem: Massada, 1979) p.3.
28 Ibid., p.28. This pattern suggested by Preston cannot be accepted at least for the reason that Saul was not lowly! And was also rejected by D.V. Edelman [King Saul in the Historiography of
G. Bettenzoli\textsuperscript{29} claims that the stories in I Sam include far more than merely pro-
monarchic and anti-monarchic strands; they are far more complex than this; in I Sam 7:2-17 there are clear redactional elements. For example, 1. vv.2-10a are heavily deuteronomistic and thus represent a different strand from that in vv.10b-17 which is probably an old source with v.6c as its original beginning. Its aim is probably to show that Samuel 'judged' only those Israelites who lived at Mizpah;\textsuperscript{30} 2. I Sam 13:1-17a, 15b-14:52a is an arrangement, with few subordinate clauses, which imitates archival style and probably depends on official documents. These verses reflect the political situation in the time of Saul, i.e. that Saul's accession depends on his military prowess; 3. The tradition about Mizpah in I Sam 10:17-27 is inconsistent with narrative unity. For example, v.18 is an insertion from Judges 6:8b-9a, and thus deuteronomistic, and v.27 is aimed at harmonization and based on I Sam 11:12-13. Here again, Saul's choice for kingship depends on his military prowess.

Bettenzoli therefore concludes that the sections of material in I Sam 7:6c, 10ab-15 comprise the original historical document relating to about Saul's victory over the Philistines and are based on real events. Whereas Samuel operated only at Mizpah, especially since he played no part in the 'ark narrative'; I Sam 13-14 is an alternative story in which the Philistines are already at Gibeah and Saul is called to challenge them.

\textit{Judah} (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 121, (1991), p.34] stating that it is not applicable not to Saul, Samuel or David.

\textsuperscript{29} G. Bettenzoli, 'Samuel und Saul in geschichtlicher und theologischer Auffassung' \textit{ZAW} 98 (1986), p.338.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp.339-43.
In reality, these two accounts deal with events which took place at different periods, and it is unlikely that Saul and Samuel were involved in both of them. The section of narrative in I Sam 10:17, 19-26 seems to have no historical value at all; it only shows the development of narrative which increasingly idealizes Samuel, and although he is linked with Saul in the Mizpah narrative, i.e. 10:17-26, this is a theological account, aimed at incorporating Saul's kingship in the authentic Yahwistic tradition, and thus cannot be historical.

To illustrate further some of the complexities described above, the following examples may be useful. For instance, F.Criusemann showed that in the redaction history of I Sam 9-11, chapter 10:17-27 is a core which is composite. Of this, 10:17-21b is a Deuteronomistic interpretation of the older tradition (thus also Noth in The Deuteronomistic History); also 10:25-27a are composite, with 25 being a Deuteronomistic addition. Thus there is a Deuteronomistic interpretive layer in 10:17-21b, 24, and 25 in which Samuel acts as a prophet; he calls the assembly at Mizpah and YHWH appoints the king by lot. This is very close to the law expressed in Dt.17:14-20: '...You may indeed set over you a king whom the Lord your God will choose...'

Mettinger claims that, historically, Samuel played no role in Saul's investiture at Gilgal, that he does not appear in the basic tradition of Saul and the unknown seer, and that the identification of the seer with Samuel is a development of later tradition.

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The complexities of the material about Samuel, from a literary-critical and tradition-history point of view, raise several questions about Samuel as a historical figure. Thus, M. Noth claims that Samuel's connection with the ark-sanctuary at Shiloh is only apparent in I Sam 1-3, though it should be remembered that stories associated with a hero's youth are usually later fabrication. On examining the pre-history of the various stories about Samuel, Noth suggests, for example, that the story of the house of Eli clearly reflects Jerusalem polemic against the northern sanctuary at Shiloh. This could only have had a meaning once the sanctuary at Jerusalem and its priesthood had been established. But on the other hand, the criticism of Shiloh and the priesthood there could not have lasted a long time since the sanctuary at Shiloh had already been destroyed before the time of the Deuteronomist. Therefore the author of the story could never have been a Deuteronomist who wrote much later.

Saul's choice by YHWH is reported three times, in what must be pro-Saul narrative. The purpose of the repetition must be to provide a basis for Saul's kingship and to demonstrate that it was YHWH's choice. This presentation, according to Crusemann, raises various questions: for example: who needed convincing? and what was the object of the collection of this disparate material? Crusemann suggests that the

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33 I Sam 9:1-10,16. S. Smith [The Books of Samuel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899, repr.1951), p.80] also has the opinion that Samuel had no place in the original document and that he may have been a seer of a single town.

34 M. Noth, 'Saul und Silo' VT 13 (1963), pp.390-400.

35 Noth (ibid.) also questions Samuel's birth story; see Chapter IV below.

36 Crusemann op.cit. n.31, p.59.
story was polemical legitimisation of Saul, written probably between the time of David and Solomon. There are two references to yet there is no clue as to who these men are. What is important and should be emphasised is that Saul knew how to handle these men. One of the reasons for this incident being recorded was probably to contrast him with David and Solomon, who killed their opponents.38

Considering the discussion so far in relation to the complexity of source material in the text, and in relation to Samuel, the following hypothesis may be considered: that we cannot deduce historically Samuel's role in Israel before and after the rise of monarchy. In chapter 8 Samuel is described as a well known judge, though in chapters 9 and 10 he is an unknown local seer.39 Although Samuel is described as nabi, he is also described as a priest, a warrior and a leader; a combination which in my view seems improbable. The biblical sources do not define the functions and authority of the elders of the town, or the role of the head of the before the monarchy. But it must be assumed that their leadership fulfilled the traditional functions which were essential to the needs of their everyday life. These related not only to family and property matters, but also to political, cultural and religious issues. Under the monarchy these functions had to be separated, a process which left elders only a partial role, one more limited than before. Therefore any development that strengthened Saul's position, whether the

37 1 Sam 10:27a and 11:12-13 38 Krüsemann op.cit. n.31, p.59.


40 For most recent studies of the Beit 'ab its structure and function see: S.Bendor, The Social Structure of Ancient Israel (Jerusalem:Simor, 1996); H.Reviv, The Elders in Ancient Israel (Jerusalem: Magnes and The Hebrew University, 1989).
founding of a dynasty, the formation of a standing army or the levying of taxes, or the recruitment of the young men of society into new attractive positions under the new regime, must have represented, on the one hand, fulfilment of a quasi-monarchic office, but on the other, the gradual loss of the elders' authority, a situation which must have resulted in some discontent.

In my view, it is quite possible that Samuel may have been a priest, but it is also quite possible that he was a head of a נֵבֶן and represented the views of the elders who could not accept the challenge represented by the emergent authority of the monarchic office. Saul arrived on the scene when these crucial changes in Israelite leadership were taking place. This was a process which was not accepted wholeheartedly by all the people. Thus the political situation forced centralised leadership upon the Israelites, during a transitional period when the role of the king was not yet clearly defined. When Saul started his rule he did so in a traditional way, perhaps in the manner of a 'judge'. It is possible that the elders believed that Saul would follow in that tradition; rather than as a ruler who derived power more from his own charismatic authority. Therefore, it is quite possible that a later redactor used the image of Samuel to represent the opposition to the monarchy, despite the fact that historically Samuel had nothing to do with Saul directly.

Such views above represent opposition to the monarchy in general. However, there were other opposition forces which were directed against Saul himself. These are expressed by later writers not only from David's court but from prophetic circles who opposed the monarchy, e.g. Hosea 9:9a, 10:9. Now the idea of obeying the unique authority of YHWH was quite strong in ancient Israel. This was a factor which
continued to represent a challenge to Israelite rulers throughout the existence of the Israelite kingdom, for e.g. Hosea 9:1; Isaiah 1:16-20. Thus Saul's rejection by the figure of Samuel may have originated in these later prophetic circles whose intention was to support prophetic authority over that of the king. Furthermore, after the schism opposition to the northern state was expressed not only in anti-Israelite but also in anti-Saul propaganda since he represented the northern Israelite kingdom. This kind of propaganda expresses itself in I Samuel as an anti-Saul and anti-monarchy, though in the book of Kings and Chronicles it is expressed in the form of criticism against the kings and kingdom of Israel.

c. The Rise of the Monarchy

The general impression is that the monarchy began with the election of Saul, though there were earlier attempts to establish monarchy. For example: Gideon, Abimelech son of Gibeon, and Jephthah as described in Judges 8-9, 11.

Even in I Samuel, before Saul, there are two other, albeit subtle, examples of the attempt to establish a monarchy. The first is the account of Eli from Shiloh, who is described as a chief priest. I Sam 4:18 states 'He (Eli) had judged Israel forty years'

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42 I Sam 8-15.

Could this mean that Eli played two roles, religious and political? Furthermore, what is interesting is that he appointed his two sons as priests, though they were corrupt. They too attempted to play religious and political roles but eventually were killed in the battle of Ebenezer. A similar account is found in I Sam 8:5 when Samuel appointed his two sons in Beersheba, they too, turned out to be corrupt.

Considering these examples the striking fact is that succession is undesirable because of the character of the sons. Thus heredity breeds corruption and no one, not even Eli or Samuel, could expect to hand down his authority over Israel to his sons. This pattern has the effect of providing a subtle opposition to the inception of the monarchy even before it began, though in my view, these references are later subtle hints that were inserted into the earlier narrative in order to prejudice the view of the monarchy.

I Samuel does not give clear reasons for the demand to have a king. But there is much emphasis on the opposition to the monarchy. This, it has been suggested, stems from the opposition to the change of the existing rule which is expressed in I Sam 8:7-8; 8:11-18, and in other speeches in I Sam 10:17-9; 12. One can accept that it is quite possible that there was opposition to monarchical rule, but 'the law of the king' and the other speeches are, as indicated above, most probably later additions to the

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44 I Sam 4.

45 McCarter, op. cit. n.2, p.160.

The suggestion that 'the law of the king' was written during or after Solomon's reign is interesting, since the schism came about at that time, but a much later date could also be possible. Other reasons for the rejection of the monarchy have been explained as being the regret at giving up tribal independence; and the concern for the freedom of the individual, but, most of all, commentators see the rejection of the monarchy as an opposition aimed at protecting God's exclusive sovereignty, a rejection which was represented by Samuel, though such a suggestion could not be easily accepted. M. Givati points out that Samuel himself is described as being offended on hearing the demand for a king. It is stated in I Sam 8:6

'ריית הדובר בניו של שמואל', which indicates that it was Samuel and not God who was unhappy at the request. Moreover, if the opposition to the monarchy stems from the preference for 'מלכתי שמך' how is it possible, as P. Ne'eman claims, that there is no law in Deuteronomy which forbids the appointment of a king?

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47 See I. Mendelsohn's response on this issue in Chapter I, n.144.

48 Garsiel, op. cit. n.46, p.326-7. McCarter [op. cit. n.2, p.161] claims that vv.11-19 reflect 'a long and bitter experience with kingship, therefore it must be a later addition, i.e. prophetic.

49 See discussion in Chapter VII.


53 Though Smith [op. cit. n.33] notes that 8:6 is the author's view of the demand for a king which is sinful.

54 P. Ne'eman, 'מלכותך ומלכותו של שמואל', ב (10) (1967), pp.94-110.

55 Note how I Sam 8:7c sounds much like Judg.2:13, 10:13 and I Kgs.9:9.
d. Saul's Accession

There are three versions of how Saul became king. The first is in I Sam 9:1-10:16 which tells how Saul was anointed secretly at Ramah. The second is in I Sam 10:17-27 where Saul was elected at Mizpah by lot, and the third is in I Sam 11:14-15 where he was elected by the whole people at Gilgal after the victory against the Ammonites.

These versions of Saul's rise have provoked much debate among scholars. For instance, H. Jagersma sees these versions as coloured by later views of kingship and theological reflections on it; so that it is difficult to reconstruct precisely what happened. But Jagersma suggests that the account in I Sam 11 gives some insight into how Saul became king. J. Bright also sees these three versions as problematic and difficult to reconstruct, though J. Licht solves the complexity of Saul's election by suggesting that Saul was first anointed secretly at Ramah and later his choice was made public at Mizpah, but the general recognition came only after the victory over the Ammonites.

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56 Saul's background is discussed in Chapter V.

57 See more discussion on this under 'The Books of Samuel' in Chapter I.


59 Bright, op. cit. n. 17, pp. 187-88.

T.N.D. Mettinger\(^6^1\) points out that the general agreement is that Saul's rescue of Jabesh-Gilead contains the oldest and most reliable tradition dealing with the events that preceded his 'coronation'. Before that comes the section in the text\(^6^2\) which describes the lot-casting at Mizpah. Yet these events are not presupposed in 11:1ff. The messengers from Jabesh do not show any knowledge of the fact that Saul had already been made king. The people also seem not to know anything about what is said to have happened at Mizpah, nor does even Saul himself. Mettinger therefore concludes that the tradition in 11:1ff is an independent one which originally had no connection with the Mizpah tradition.

In the light of this discussion it is possible to argue that the sources which tell of Saul's election by lot and the general recognition of Saul as king are probably the oldest and may also be contemporary material and compatible with each other. It is also quite possible that some form of election by 'lot' did take place\(^6^3\) within the new political-economic situation of the time.\(^6^4\) Of course the news of Saul's victory over the Ammonites promoted his reputation and confirmed his suitability for the role. Therefore, the renewal of kingship at Gilgal may have been the opportunity to celebrate the successful election of Saul as king and also to celebrate the military victory.

\(^{6^1}\) Mettinger, op.cit. n.32, pp.83-84.

\(^{6^2}\) I Sam 10:17ff.

\(^{6^3}\) As the term מנה כהן indicate, i.e. selected warrior [see below].

\(^{6^4}\) See the relevant sections dealing with this situation in Chapters II and V. Various scholars have suggested that insertion of the report on lot casting aimed to create a negative tone on Saul's election, especially since this is the tone created earlier, for example, Josh.7 and I Sam 14[ See Polzin, op.cit. n.39 and P.T.Miscall, I Samuel (Indiana, 1986), p.64.] Although this is the general approach to Saul in the narrative, in this instance my believe is the lot-casting probably reflects on a realistic procedure practised in the time of Saul, see my discussion on מנה כהן, below. See also Edelman, op.cit. n.28, p.56.
e. Saul's 'Charismatic' Rule

The character of Saul's kingship has been under debate. The question is whether his charismatic kingship was a continuation of the charismatic leadership known from the book of Judges, or was a new phenomenon. But before explaining the argument, M. Weber's definition of 'charisma' is relevant; he applies the term 'to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or quality.'

This definition suggests the importance of 'charismatic' leadership in ancient Israel, and can readily be applied to the charismatic character of Saul's kingship as described in I Samuel. This kind of leadership characterises the heroes of the Book of Judges. D. V. Edelman thinks Saul's acting as a traditional דביר is consistent with the behaviour of the judges, and belongs to the end of the era of the Judges in the Deuteronomistic presentation of history. But Edelman claims that Saul continues to act as דביר until he is formally crowned king. Hence Saul's testing is accomplished under

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65 See for example Mettinger, op. cit n.32, pp.234-8; Mayes, op. cit. n.41, pp.307-8.


67 D. V. Edelman, op. cit. n.28, p.60.
the direction of the divine spirit, following a procedure accepted in this period of the
annel that will determine his fitness for the royal office.

McCarter\textsuperscript{68} too states that Saul's rescue of Jabesh-Gilead belongs to the type of
stories of the 'major judges' in the Book of Judges, in which an enemy is defeated by an
Israelite hero whom YHWH raised up from among the people. Therefore the account in
I Sam 11 represents a development in the category of the story of a deliverer, showing a
temporary 'charismatic' type of leadership that evolves into kingship. These concepts are
in complete contrast with the idea of dynastic succession and permanent authority in the
Davidic kingship, and can be traced to the northern ideal of monarchy.\textsuperscript{69}

In opposition to the views expressed above, W.Beyerlin\textsuperscript{70} argues that Saul's
leadership was essentially different from his predecessors, and regards it as a new
phenomenon. The basis for Beyerlin's argument is that Saul's leadership is expressed in
'prophetic' terms as can be seen in I Sam 10:9-13:

As he turned away to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all
these signs were fulfilled that day. When they were going from there to
Gibeah, a band of prophets met him; and the spirit of God possessed him,
and he fell into a prophetic frenzy along with them. When all who knew
him before saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to
one another, "what has become over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among
the prophets?" A man of the place answered, "and who is their father?"
Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" When
his prophetic frenzy had ended, he went home.

\textsuperscript{68}McCarter, op.cit. n.2, p.205

\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., p.206.

\textsuperscript{70}W.Beyerlin, 'Das Königscharisma bei Saul' \textit{ZAW} 73 (1961), pp.187-190.
According to Beyerlin this is taken to accommodate a new phenomenon, i.e. charisma which is derived from anointing. Beyerlin strongly suggests that Saul's charisma cannot be treated in the same way as the heroes of the previous period. Although Saul does not have the charisma of the great judges, he has charisma by virtue of his anointing. The most important aspect of this charisma is that it cannot be violated, as is evident in I Sam 24 and 26.71

Interesting though this discussion may be, Beyerlin's hypothesis bears a weakness in that he does not seem to take into consideration the prophetic influence on the narrative of Saul's rise to power which may well mean that the 'prophetic' features identified by Beyerlin belong to the redaction of I Samuel and do not rest on any historical foundation. Mettinger,72 for example, disregards I Sam 10:10-13a as being a late insertion in the text, claiming that this narrative was later expanded to contain Saul's anointing as תַּנְדִי.

If we now return to the discussion of the character of Saul's kingship, we can accept that Saul's rule was different from that of his predecessors, because his position as a leader was a permanent one, and because he founded a dynasty. Although Saul's three elder sons were killed in battle, his infant son Ishbaal succeeded him. With Abner's support, Ishbaal became king over the whole of Saul's kingdom and was recognised as such; he enjoyed substantial support from the people until his assassination some

71Ibid., p.190.
72Mettinger, op.cit. n.32, p.235.
seventeen years later.\textsuperscript{73} Mayes\textsuperscript{74} comments that 'such differences as may have existed between Saul and Ishbosheth derived not from the fact that Ishbosheth was not recognised as king, but simply from the fact that it was not Ishbosheth but Saul who founded the dynasty'. Therefore, Saul's kingship contains a vital element which changes the character of Israelite leadership and should not be seen as a continuation of the leadership of his predecessors. That element does not express itself in the new phenomenon described by Beyerlin, i.e. charisma derived from anointing, but because Saul founded a dynasty, and his kingdom was a national rather than a territorial one.

\textbf{f. The Representation of Saul}

When Saul was first introduced on the scene he was \textit{bahur wa-tob} \textsuperscript{75} meaning a 'good choice';\textsuperscript{76} 'There was not a young man among the Israelites a better person than he, from his shoulder upwards he was taller than all the people'. These qualities indicate kingly stature. Saul clearly stands out among the people\textsuperscript{77}. The list of his ancestors \textsuperscript{78} is an indication of good and respected family,\textsuperscript{79} one who is destined to greatness.\textsuperscript{80} The

\textsuperscript{73} See discussion of this in Chapter VII.

\textsuperscript{74} Mayes, op.cit. n.41, p.308.

\textsuperscript{75} I Sam 9:2

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{ברוך} means 'chosen'. It also means a young man about to enter adult life, one who has not married yet. According to Z.Weisman ['The nature and Background of BAHUR in the Old Testament; \textit{VT} 31:4 (1981), p.443] \textit{ברוך} is a technical term designating a selected warrior. This explanation is convincing and can readily be applied to the way Saul was selected for kingship.

\textsuperscript{77} McCarter op.cit. n.2, p.193. This physical description is a biblical tradition which is unusual in presenting an Israelite hero. See for example how Joseph is presented in Gen.39:6; David in I Sam 16:12 and Esther 2:7.

\textsuperscript{78} I Sam 9:1

\textsuperscript{79} Hertzberg, op.cit. n.24, p.80.

\textsuperscript{80} Edelman, op.cit. n.28, p.43.
asses in the story symbolise royalty\(^81\) and have been an integral part of the quest to turn Solomon into the crown prince\(^82\). The clear statement in 14:47 indicates that Saul not only consolidated his kingship over Israel, but also did so within the adjacent territories: Zoba to the north, Moab and Ammon to the East and Edom to the south.

From that point on in the text there is a noticeable change in attitude towards Saul. First, he is strongly rejected\(^83\), and David is anointed\(^84\) as the future king; second, the text seem to focus especially on the rivalry between Saul and David, and every action of Saul seems to be connected with David. What emerges as a result is a contest for the throne between the two candidates. Saul is shown to be very jealous of David\(^85\), he is possessed by an evil spirit, and tries to kill David\(^86\).

The text contains other very subtle devices which influence how we view Saul. For instance, the length of Saul's reign is not clear. The verse in 13:1 states: 'Saul was one year old when he began to rule and he reigned two years',\(^87\) whereas David and Solomon are each given forty years;\(^88\) I regard this text as not corrupt, but expressing a joke on Saul's background. The term \(\text{יך נו} \) (prince) appears for the first time in the book of I Samuel\(^89\) which McCarter\(^90\) interprets as 'one who is made known', 'singled out',

\(^81\) Ibid.
\(^82\) This is not the only instance in the Bible in which asses form a symbol of royalty. See also I Kgs. 1:33-5, 38-40; Zech. 9:9.
\(^84\) Ibid., 16:13.
\(^85\) For example, ibid., 18:9.
\(^86\) Ibid., vv.10-11.
\(^87\) For full treatment of Saul's age and reign see Chapter VII.
\(^88\) II Sam 5:4; I Kgs. 11:42.
\(^89\) 9:16.
'designated for particular office' either priestly\(^91\) or military\(^92\) and a variety of other offices. But in each one the \textit{nagid} is an individual chosen among others as a leader. In most cases, Mettinger\(^93\) argues, the \textit{nagid} is a title given to a future king before he begins to reign.\(^94\) This term implies that the person must be made king because he is divinely designated. \textit{Nagid} comes in connection with Saul in his early days, and is attributed to him only twice. The first instance YHWH tells Samuel to anoint Saul \textit{nagid} over Israel. The second instance occurs after Samuel had anointed Saul.\(^95\) He said to him: 'The Lord anointed you to be \textit{nagid} over his inheritance'. From then on, Saul is called \textit{nagid} whereas the term \textit{nagid} applies only to David.

It has been rightly suggested\(^97\) that the term nagid is archaic. In my view this term also has a favourable connotation and is pro-monarchic. Whereas the term \textit{melekh} has a negative connotation and is possibly anti-monarchic. In the two instances with Saul in which \textit{nagid} is used, it occurs early in Saul's appearance on the scene. Bearing this in mind one must look at two identical verses addressed to David: one in II Sam 5:2 and


\(^91\) For example, Jer.20:1; Neh.11:11; I Chron.9:11,20; II Chron.31:12, 13, 35:8.

\(^92\) For example, I Chron.12:28, 13:1, 27:4

\(^93\) Mettinger, op.cit. n.32, p.87. In H.Jagersma's view, [op.cit. n.58, p.89] the nagid has a more theological use of the term and comes from a later period of which main purpose is to stress the divine designation of the future king.

\(^94\) For example, I Sam 9:16, 10:1, 25:30; II Sam 6:21; I Chron.17:7. When it refers to a reigning king it refers to his designation before becoming king. See McCarter, op.cit. n.2 p.179. This suggestion could not be fully accepted since I Kgs.1:34 contradicts it; David instructs Zadok to anoint Solomon \textit{melekh} not \textit{nagid} over Israel.

\(^95\) I Sam 10:1

\(^96\) The term \textit{malku} is a west semitic term meaning 'chieftain'. In Akkadian \textit{malku} means advisor, and in Phoenician it means provincial or elected governor. This meaning could be applied to the list of kings, about 31 of them, which appears in Joshua 12. Since they were not kings but chieftains or governors of various tribes. Note the negative connotation and meaning to \textit{melekh} in the fable of Yotham, Judges 9:8-15.

\(^97\) McCarter, op.cit. n.2, p.178.
the other in I Chron 11:2. They each state: 'In the past while Saul was melekh over us, you were the one who led us... and the Lord said to you: you will shepherd my people Israel and you will be nagid over my people Israel'. The terms melekh and nagid appear in the same verse. The negative term melekh is given to Saul, and the favourable term nagid is given to David. Though this distinction makes the contrast between the two clear, it is one which is biased in favour of David. ⁹⁸

An additional example of how Saul's negative image is created in the text can be seen in II Sam 2:8, 15; Saul's only surviving son is called Ish-boshet, meaning man of shame. This name must have been used deliberately by the redactor or later reviser of the book of Samuel against the House of Saul. This is because the correct name is revealed in I Chron. 8:33; 9:39 as Ish-baal, 'the follower of Ba'el'. Although it has been explained within the literature that the purpose behind the renaming of Saul's son was merely to delete this reference to the god Ba'el, which is a Canaanite God, in my view at least the redactor's intention was to go much further; thus the name Ish-boshet ('man of shame') carries with it a strong message: 'a man of shame' could not surely be considered worthy to be king of Israel.

g. The Rejection of Saul

There are two main incidents which brought about Saul's downfall. The first one is recorded in chapter 13, and took place during one of the major conflicts with the Philistines before the battle of Michmash. Saul was supposed to await the arrival of Samuel who in turn would offer sacrifices and give his instructions. ¹⁰⁰ Yet Saul and his

⁹⁸ This assumption is also based on the consideration that we cannot be certain that the people actually said so to David. It is more likely to be the work of the narrator, whose aim was to draw such a distinction between Saul and David.


¹⁰⁰ 10:8 V.P.Long [The Reign and Rejection of King Saul (Atlanta: Scholars Press, SBL Dissertation Series 118, 1989), p.1] comments that Saul was first elected by YHWH and later
army were obliged to wait seven days. So when Samuel failed to turn up after seven days the situation became desperate; soldiers began to desert and Saul could not go out to battle without sacrifices having been offered. Therefore before doing so, Saul took it upon himself to make the offerings that Samuel was meant to have made. Thus when Samuel eventually arrived and saw what Saul had done, he strongly condemned him.\(^{101}\)

At first glance it seems that Saul's rejection is justified in that he failed to obey God's (or Samuel's) explicit order to wait, as commanded in 10:8 'Go down ahead of me to Gilgal, for I shall come down to you to offer holocausts and to make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you must wait until I come to you and show you what you are to do'. Yet on close reading of the whole incident it seems, on the contrary, that in general Samuel's commands were ambiguous and confusing. Nevertheless, commentators have always struggled to interpret the text in terms of a single answer.

Two possibilities which were proposed by Gunn\(^{102}\) will be used here: 1. If Saul was being instructed, in particular, to wait seven days until Samuel would come to offer sacrifices, then Saul's misdemeanour lay in that he did not obey the prophet, and hence the word of YHWH; 2. On the other hand, if the instruction was, instead, more concerned with cultic practice, then Saul was wrong in intruding on the priestly duties, rather than in relation to his disobedience.

To deal with the second possibility relating to cultic practice: there is no law which restricts a king from performing sacrificial rites. David and Solomon also offered sacrifices. Moreover, Saul was the only king to prophesy among prophets.\(^{103}\) In 10:10 rejected by him. Also one would expect clarity in the narrative for Saul's rejection, though the text appear to be quite complex on this issue.\(^{104}\)

\(^{101}\) 13:13-4.

\(^{102}\) D. Gunn, op.cit. n.23, p.34.

\(^{103}\) R. Polzin, op.cit. n.39, p.128.
the divine inspiration rushed upon Saul and he was empowered by virtue of YHWH's spirit which found expression in his prophetic ecstasy. Saul does not become a prophet but he becomes a 'sacred person', meaning that he had power to perform religious functions such as sacrifice. Also, in 9:24 Saul receives part of the sacrificial animal which is usually reserved for the priests and their families. Saul therefore did not need to intrude on the priestly duties. After all, R. De Vaux\textsuperscript{104} argues, offering a sacrifice is seen as the principal function of the priest only in later theology.

As with regard to the first possibility, that is, Saul's disobedience; the text indicates clearly that Saul waited for Samuel seven days,\textsuperscript{105} the time which was stipulated by Samuel. In v.11 Saul protested saying: '...you did not come in the appointed number of days'. Thus as far as Saul is concerned no sin was committed.\textsuperscript{106} Therefore so far there seems to be no convincing explanation to show that Saul was at fault. Now at this point attention should be focused on Samuel. Where was he? Why was he late arriving when the situation was so desperate? Was he trying to test Saul's abilities in such circumstances or was he doing it out of spite because he was jealous of Saul? In this context one cannot ignore the fact that there was a lot of tension between Samuel and Saul.

**h. Chapter 13 & Chapter 15 'Doublets' of a Single Tradition**

The second situation in chapter 15, in which Saul failed, is similar to the first one. Saul is commanded by YHWH (or Samuel) to go on a 'holy war' to execute the *herem*


\textsuperscript{105} 13:8.

\textsuperscript{106} Ackroyd [ op.cit. n.15, p.106] and Hertzberg [op.cit. n.24, p.106] both explain that Saul was condemned because he showed no faith. But my view is that this is trying hard to create a reason to justify one particular statement in the text. See also discussion in Gunn, op.cit. n.23, pp.37-40.
against Amalek. This war against Amalek was in retaliation for the attack on the Israelites when they were on the way out of Egypt. It was therefore expected to be the king's responsibility to exterminate Amalek.

Saul, although he was quick to react, does not execute the ban to the full. He spared Agag the Amalekite king and, under pressure from his soldiers, brought back with him as booty the best of the Amalekite livestock to Gilgal for sacrifice. Samuel confronts Saul accusing him of disobeying YHWH's commands. Saul protests that he has carried out the instructions, that he went where YHWH sent him, and that he had destroyed Amalek as commanded. But Samuel declared '...because you have rejected YHWH's command, He has rejected you from being king. At this point Saul admits his mistake and pleads for forgiveness, but Samuel refuses to listen.

W. Dietrich's claim that the story in I Sam 15 is probably old, must be supported; since by the time of the Deuteronomist the Amalekites could not have been one of the nations whom Israel was meant to put under the ban. It could also be that Saul was trying to expand southwards by protecting Judah against the Amalekites. In

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1. The meaning of 'holy war' in ancient Greece or in Islam (jihad) has a strong connotation and should not be confused with 'holy war' in our discussion. 2. The term herem generally means taking something out of its profane use and reserving it for a sacred use. In other words things which are separated in this way are forbidden to man and consecrated to God [de Vaux, op. cit. n.104, p.260]. Nevertheless the precise use of the term varies in different texts. Thus in chapter 15 its particular meaning implies that all living things had to be exterminated.

107 Ex.17:13; Dt.25:17-9.

108 I Sam 15:20.

109 Ibid., 15:23b.

110 Ibid., 15:26.


112 See Saul's expedition against Amalek in Chapter V.
my view chapter 15 is a good example of how original material was changed and developed at a later date in order to create anti-Saul propaganda. For example, what started off as an original document reporting Saul’s victorious campaign southwards was changed, not only showing Saul’s expedition to have been a failure, but also depicting him as a sinner.

It has been suggested by Mayes\textsuperscript{114} that the two traditions of Samuel’s rejection of Saul originate in later prophetic circles. The purpose of these circles was to maintain prophetic rights in relation to the king. The story in chapter 15 has the structure of an independent narrative unit forming a single ‘ring story’ by virtue of its allusion to its end at the beginning; i.e. at the beginning of the story, in 15:3 Samuel commands Saul to destroy Amalek, and to spare neither people, nor animals. The action occurs, and at the end of the story, in 15:8 what we have is Saul destroying Amalek though he spares Agag (the Amalekite king) and livestock.

A comparison between chapters 13 and 15 will show that these are two versions of the same story; in both these stories the dispute takes place at the sanctuary at Gilgal; the one account is associated with the Philistines and the other with the Amalekites; Saul is under pressure to carry out these activities; they are concerned with disobeying the word of YHWH; they are connected with sacrifices; and in both versions Saul is rejected.

Hertzberg\textsuperscript{115} however explains that the argument in chapter 13 is not as sharp as in chapter 15. Hence in chapter 13 Saul would not have been rejected since he continues to be a king; instead he is told that his kingdom will not continue. His actual rejection comes only in chapter 15. In Hertzberg’s own words: ‘for the compiler of the whole

\textsuperscript{114} Mayes, op.cit. n.41, p.330.

\textsuperscript{115} Hertzberg, op.cit. n.24, p.106.
work, the details of chapter 13, which has no express mention of the rejection, represent the lightning, while the storm breaks in chapter 15.\textsuperscript{116} Significantly, it has been noted by Wellhausen\textsuperscript{117} that these two disputes between Samuel and Saul are doublets, reflecting a single tradition in two separate sources. He regarded chapter 15 as older and as 'original' and chapter 13 as the copy. However, producing the same story twice could have two objects in mind: First, to ram home in the reader Saul's fault, and second, to enforce an important theological message, i.e. that though sacrifices to YHWH are important, it is even more important to obey YHWH.\textsuperscript{118} Somewhat similarly in this story-structure relating to Samuel and Saul, Samuel plays the central role as YHWH's official spokesman; therefore, to obey Samuel is to obey YHWH. These Samuel-Saul confrontations most probably reflect a perception from the time of the redactor, that kingship was some form of a threat; it could be tolerated only if subject to the controlling authority of the prophet\textsuperscript{119} In short kingship is important but the over-riding authority of the prophet is more important.

The confrontation between Saul and Samuel in chapter 15 was based on the making of war. When the people took arms they were called the 'troops of God'\textsuperscript{120} or 'armies of YHWH',\textsuperscript{121} and the fighters had to be in a state of ritual cleanliness\textsuperscript{122} This is because, according to I Sam 18:17; 25:28 the wars of Israel were the wars of YHWH hence 'holy war'. Also before they went out to battle they offered a sacrifice to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p.124.
\item\textsuperscript{117} J. Wellhausen, \textit{Prolegomena to the History of Israel} (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1885, repr.1994 as \textit{Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel} of the 1957 repr.), p.258.
\item\textsuperscript{118} Echoes of this can be found elsewhere in the Bible; see for example, Jer.7:21; Ps.51:18; Hosea 4:1-7, 8:13; Isaiah 1:10-13.
\item\textsuperscript{119} McCarter, op.cit. n.2, p.230.
\item\textsuperscript{120} I Sam 17:26.
\item\textsuperscript{121} Ex.12:41.
\item\textsuperscript{122} Josh.3:5
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
YHWH,\textsuperscript{123} and YHWH was always consulted.\textsuperscript{124} Though the fighters often went to battle with the certainty of winning, mere victory was not to be the last act of the war; \textit{herem} was to be applied. This meant putting the enemy to the ban, i.e. completely destroying them: both people and possessions.\textsuperscript{125} Commentators in this instance have no difficulty in determining that Saul was at fault; he failed completely to destroy Amalek, and attempted to put the blame on his men\textsuperscript{126} But was this such an outrageous sin?

In Gunn’s own words:\textsuperscript{127}

Saul did sin. But there have been countless others who sinned in a far more ugly and hideous way than he whose lives ended in glory and in victory. Saul was never so guilty of any sin half so detestable as the sin of his successor, who came to be a man after God’s heart.

It is interesting that Saul was expected, in destroying Amalek, to carry out the ban to the full. Yet David, on the other hand, was allowed not only to take the Amalekites’ possessions, but also to share these between his men and distribute the rest amongst the elders of Judah\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 7:0; 13:9.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 14:37.

\textsuperscript{125} See de Vaux, op.cit. n.104, p.259.

\textsuperscript{126} I Sam 15:24

\textsuperscript{127} Gunn, op.cit. n.23, p.43. J.Blenkinsopp ['The Quest for the Historical Saul' \textit{No Famine in the Land} (eds.) J.W.Flanagan and A.W.Robinson (Montana: Scholars Press, 1975), pp.75-99.] noted that ‘in one of the two versions of Saul’s rejection by Samuel (1 Sam 15) we may note that the outcome is very different from the encounter of David with another prophet, Nathan. Both kings confess their fault... but while David is pardoned, Saul is not’ [Ibid.,p.76].

\textsuperscript{128} I Sam 30:26-31.
Part II

a. Saul and the Gibeonites\textsuperscript{129}

The two occurrences discussed in part I were considered to be the main reasons for Saul's rejection, and are supposed to have happened earlier in his reign; whereas in this part attention will be drawn to other incidents assumed to have occurred later in his reign, which do not form part of his rejection but reinforce the negative picture given of Saul. These incidents are: a) Saul's presumed killing of the Gibeonites,\textsuperscript{130} by doing this, Saul violated the treaty made with them earlier on in the time of Joshua; b) Saul's killing of the entire group of priests of the town of Nob.\textsuperscript{131}

The text in I Samuel dealing with Saul's accession and reign does not refer to any interaction between Saul and the Gibeonites yet II Sam 21:1-14 describes a serious incident in which Saul is accused of the killing of the Gibeonites. Apparently there was a famine in the land which went on for three consecutive years. David, after having consulted the oracle, found out that the famine was caused by Saul's bloodguilt: his attempt to exterminate the Gibeonites; in doing so Saul broke the oath by which the Israelites were obliged to protect the Gibeonites.\textsuperscript{132} The famine could only end by putting to death those responsible for breaking the oath. Thus, seven male members of Saul's

\textsuperscript{129} The 'Gibeonites' is the term used for the group of Hivites assumed to have lived in Gibeon and hence their name [see discussion of this in Chapter V]. They were non-Israelites, part of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan. In Gen.34, the time of the 'Patriarchs', the most influential family in Shechem was Hivite. Three additional towns near Gibeon are attributed to them namely, Chephira, Beeroth and Kiria-th-jea'rim [Josh.9:17]. Gibeon is identified with modern el-Jib 9 km (5.5 miles) north of Jerusalem. This identification was confirmed after the discovery (in excavations in 1956, 1957 and 1959) of thirty-one jar handles inscribed with the name gb'\check{n} [J.B.Pritchard, 'Gibeon' EAEHL 4 vols (ed.) M.Avi-Yonah, (Oxford, 1976), II, p.446.

\textsuperscript{130} II Sam 21:1-14.

\textsuperscript{131} I Sam 21 and 22.

\textsuperscript{132} Josh. 9:3-27.
family had to be executed at the hands of the Gibeonites; therefore, David took the two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and the five sons of Michal, Saul's daughter, and handed them over to the Gibeonites.

b. A Treaty or an Oath ( Shibboleh) With the Gibeonites?

The story in Joshua 9 is not like the other stories in Joshua which deal with the wars between the Israelites and the inhabitants of Canaan. Chapter 9 deals with a specific event in which a treaty is agreed between the Israelites and the Gibeonites. The tradition tells about the negotiation, in which the Israelites were deceived. But despite this deception, the treaty could not be broken because it was formed under oath in the name of YHWH. This account is formed from complex material. It has been edited by the Deuteronomist, but even after excluding the Deuteronomistic additions, the logic of the material and the order of events are quite complicated, as has been discussed by various commentators. For instance, one of the difficulties is that it is not quite clear with whom the Gibeonites are dealing in the treaty. On the one hand in v.7 the Gibeonites are dealing with the 'men of Israel', on the other with Joshua in v.8. Later in v. 21 they are dealing with the leaders of the community (רמשיאים); in v.15 Joshua makes peace with the Gibeonites but the leaders make the oath. When the Israelites find out that they were deceived, the leaders decide that the Gibeonites are to be wood-cutters and water-carriers, though in vs. 23 & 27 it is Joshua who binds them to this punishment.

133 See Chapter VII for the confirmation that the sons executed in this episode are the sons of Michal and not Merob.

134 Josh. 9:19

135 For instance J.Livor, 'Investigations in the Gibeonites Account' Studies in Bible and Judean Deser Scrolls (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1971), pp.66-70; idem 'Joshua Chapter 9' Enc.Miq. 3 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1958), pp.553-556; McCarter, op.cit. n.99, p.443; R.de Vaux, The Early History of Israel (2 vols. London:Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), II, p.621. The fact that there are so many different conclusions regarding this chapter shows the extent of the complexity of the problem, whether seen in the context of literary criticism or in that of the history of tradition. However, it is not the concern of this paper to explore these difficulties here.
The Gibeonites are described as pretending to be people from a far away land, who heard of the heroic stories of the God of Israel, and who therefore came to make a treaty in which they offer themselves as vassals; they plead for survival, presumably in the context of the herem law, described in Deut 7:2 which obliges Israel not to enter any covenant with the inhabitants of the land. Although there is no mention of this particular legislation in Joshua, it is possible that, as suggested by G.Mitchell, events did occur in accordance with the Gibeonites' interpretation of the law. Yet there is an additional difficulty: if the Gibeonites were 'people from far away land', surely the herem would not apply to them in any case since they are not inhabitants of the land, and therefore they would have not required protection from the Israelites.

It is also difficult to believe that the Israelites were deceived by this trick of the Gibeonites, since the author of the narrative does not believe it himself: 'perhaps you dwell among us and how shall we then make a covenant with you?'. Because this account cannot be regarded as historical there were some who saw this story as a later tradition from the time of the redactor, in order to explain why the Gibeonites were wood-cutters and water-carriers down to 'the present day', the narrator's own time. Though in my view this story was added later,

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137 See de Vaux, op.cit. n.135, p.623. This herem legislation as stated in Dt. 7:2 is of no historical value in terms of the period in question, i.e. Joshua, since in reality Canaanites continued to integrate into the Israelite system and indeed were protected gerim [See de Vaux, op.cit n.104, pp.74-6]. Moreover, Dt.7:2 contradicts Lv.19:33-34 and Dt.10:18-19 where the Israelites are, on the contrary, told to help them and to love them, remembering that they themselves were once slaves in Egypt. Furthermore, what is interesting about Dt.7:2 is that it might well represent a reaction to the level of integration between the Israelites and the Canaanite groups; not in the time of Joshua, but in the redactor's own time. Legislation of this kind is known in the post-exilic period, i.e. time of Ezra. It is possible that the redactor was so anxious to enforce this legislation, he inserted it in its present place i.e. in Dt.7:2. See also the treatment of the Edomites in the next section below.

138 Josh.9:7

139 The historicity of the book of Joshua is questionable, a subject which has received much attention in the literature, in my view however, there is no intention to develop such discussion in this thesis.

140 Josh.9:27.
after the events in II Sam 21:1-14 in order to provide a background for the execution to Saul's family.

Commentators such as Livor\(^{141}\) suggested that the entire story was aetiological. Yet although there are some aetiological elements in the story, they are not convincing enough to allow treatment of the whole story as aetiological. The rest of the story is based on the historical background of the period of the settlement. This is the treaty between the Israelites and the Gibeonites as is suggested in Jos.10. There Joshua answers the call of the Gibeonites for help in fighting the kings of the 'hill country' who staged a war against Gibeon.\(^{142}\) The account in Jos. 10 does not mention the Gibeonites as vassals to the Israelites. Therefore one can assume that there was a treaty between the two parties, but not as described in Jos. 9. It was more of a treaty between two equal partners. Treaties of this kind are well known in the ancient Near East.\(^{143}\) It is possible to speak of a treaty between the Israelites and other groups in Canaan at that time; these can be compared with those of the Hittites. But one must be careful not to go too far in the interpretation of the treaty in Josh.9.\(^{144}\) It is essential that we should remember that, after all, the Israelite groups were still in the process of settling down in the land, and in that process they could not have imposed a treaty on the Gibeonites or any other ethnic group in the region, in the same way as the Hittite kings imposed treaties on their vassals.\(^{145}\) The term הַעֲבֵד in our story has been wrongly translated as 'covenant' when it

\(^{141}\) Livor (1971), op.cit. n.135, pp.72-3.

\(^{142}\) Ibid.


\(^{144}\) See F.C.Fensham, 'The Treaty Between Israel and the Gibeonites' *BA* 27:3 (1964), pp.96-100.

\(^{145}\) See de Vaux, op.cit. n.135, p.625.
should be translated as 'an oath which contains a promise'. The text repeats again and again that there was an oath. The Gibeonites wanted a promise that they would stay alive and Joshua granted them by oath a promise to make with them.

c. Did Saul Break the Oath with the Gibeonites?

How does this episode link with the story of Saul in II Sam 21 and how does it help us further our understanding of the events? Although there is no mention of this 'treaty' anywhere else in the Bible, one can accept that there was a *brit* with the Gibeonites, even though its connection with Saul in II Sam 21 is dubious. Thus, firstly, if Saul had really committed such extermination a reference to it would have been made earlier, especially when considering the general anti-Saul approach in the text. Secondly, II Sam 21:1-14 does not stand in its proper context, i.e. with the rest of the conflict between David and Saul's descendants. As it stands at present it has no direct relationship with what precedes or follows it.

To explain the chronological position of the episode of the Gibeonites, McCarter suggests that chapter 9 was probably a sequel or conclusion to 21:1-14 before it was edited by the Deuteronomist, whereas Gunn argues that chapter 9 was a

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146 E.W.Nicholson [God and His People (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), p.92.] explains that there is no equivalent in Akkadian for the term *berit*. Though referring to one of the Mari texts, Nicholson shows that the Akkadian term *salimum* can provide an analogy; it is translated as 'agreement'. The phrase in the Old Testament 'to make peace with' is associated with 'to make *berit*' where 'a third party is effecting an obligation upon two other parties mutually, in this instance, a non-aggression pact'.

147 For example, Josh.15, 18; II Sam 21:2.

148 Compare this with the oath between Abraham and Abimelech in Gen.21:24, 27 and between Isaac and Laban in Gen. 31:53-54.

149 Josh.9:15.

150 McCarter, op.cit. n.99, pp. 263,443.

151 D.M.Gunn, The Story of King David (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 6, 1978), p.68.
sequel not to 21:1-14 but to chapters 2-4, especially in connection with the death of Ishbaal. One could agree that 9:1 "And David said 'is there still anyone left of the house of Saul'...?" presupposes 21:1-14 which therefore probably precedes chapter 9. But my suggestion is that 21:1-14, with the addition of 9:1, probably belongs after chapter 4, and the redactor has deliberately placed 21:1-14 late in II Samuel in order to distance it from the events which are connected not only with rivalry for the throne between David and the descendants of Saul, but also with David's attempt to make sure that his successor would be derived from 'David's body'.

David was anxious about the possibility of a successor having blood relationship with the family of Saul, a possibility he wanted therefore to eliminate. This explains why David regarded the return of Saul's daughter as a necessary condition for the agreement with Abner (3:13). By keeping Michal in his court, he made sure she would not conceive; that David was successful in keeping her barren is made clear in 6:23 where it is stated that Michal remained childless until her death.

David must have manipulated the oracle in favour of his way of handling Saul's family, because David had to get rid of them to secure his dynasty on the throne. It is impossible not to detect the initiative of David in the execution of Saul's sons. Thus in II Sam 21:4 the Gibeonites say ואן לון אשה להמאת ירושלים, which Driver

152 II Sam 7:12.
155 T.Ishida, The Royal Dynasties of Ancient Israel BZAW 142 (De Gruyter, 1977), p.77. It is remarkable that majority of commentators failed to recognise David's intention in this occasion, for example; J.Blenkinsopp [Gibeon and Israel (Cambridge: CUP, 1972), p.67.] states 'it is not impossible that Saul, at the hight of his short-lived enthusiasm of Yahwism, would have taken such action'; see also J.G.Baldwin [1 and 2 Samuel (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1988), pp.282-4; J. Mauchline [1 and 2 Samuel (London: Oliphants, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, NCB,1971), pp.300-304.]
translates: 'and it is not open to us to put any man to death in Israel' and de Vaux offers: 'we do not have the right to carry out blood vengeance in Israel'. Now whichever translation we take, the indication is the same; that the Gibeonites had no intention of killing anyone from Israel; it was only after David almost insisted that the Gibeonites then required blood for their revenge and thus, David handed to them the seven surviving sons of Saul. Hertzberg explains that the number seven is chosen as being a 'holy number', also Malamat explains that the Gibeonites asked David for some 'symbolic reason' to deliver to them seven sons of Saul in order that they might kill them. Neither of the scholars considered the more realistic explanation that the number 'seven' was merely a number of convenience since it matched the number of the surviving sons of Saul (two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and the five sons of Michal, Saul's daughter), in line to the throne. Obviously, as far as David was concerned, they had to be executed in order to remove the threat to his own dynastic line. Although David

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157 de Vaux op.cit. n.135, p.625.
158 II Sam 21:4b
159 Ibid., 21:4-6
160 Hertzberg, op.cit. n.24, p.383
161 Malamat, op.cit. n.143, p.8.
162 This could give the impression of a contradiction with the references in I Sam 14:49, 31:2, which state that Saul had three sons. But the first reference could relate to the earlier part of Saul's life when he only had the named children, and Ishbaal was born later. There is no reason to assume that Saul could not have had other infants afterwards. Moreover, by tradition every child in Saul's family could be regarded as 'son of Saul' for example, the sons of Michal.
163 By so doing David broke two laws. Firstly, he punished the sons for an alleged sin committed by the father, an act which is forbidden according to Dt. 24:16 'Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death'. Secondly, David forbids their immediate burial as instructed in Dt. 21:22-3 'When someone is convicted of a crime and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree, you shall bury him that same day...'; instead their corpses are left to rot in the fields [II Sam 21:9-10], from the time of the harvest (April) and until the coming down of the rain (October-November), a period of about six months. David of course could have not read Deuteronomy, but it is quite possible that public opinion was quite critical of David at the time. The Deuteronomist must have read and heard the stories about David, and thus wrote his laws in connection with David's actions. Thus, it is possible to deduce that, although
seems generous towards Mephibosheth (also called Meribbaal), Jonathan's son, by offering him a seat at the royal table, he only does so because Mephibosheth is lame; he was five years old when the news of the defeat at Gilboa was received; his nurse picked him up and fled, while in a hurry she dropped him and thus he became crippled.

However there still remains the question why Mephibosheth was saved from execution. Now in ancient Israel the king was sanctified by his being anointed and adopted by YHWH; he thus became a sacred person who had the power to perform religious functions i.e. as a priest, but, according to Lev.21:16-24 a man could not qualify for priesthood even if he were of priestly descent if he suffered from a physical disability. Furthermore, one of the main functions of the king, his leading of an army in battle, would also tend to disqualify a disabled candidate. Therefore it is obvious that Mephibosheth represented no threat to David. Yet despite this fact, Mephibosheth was kept at the royal court probably so that a watch could be kept on him. Thus there is the further question of Meribbaal's son, Micha. But Micha could not even have been born at the time of the execution: It must be remembered that David and Jonathan were about the same age; when Jonathan was killed in battle, Mephibosheth was a baby; by the time he grew up as a cripple, and became a father, David was by now an old man. It is

the Deuteronomist contributed to the anti-Saul propaganda, he was not so favourable towards David either [a topic which will be developed in a separate study].

164 II Sam 9.

165 II Sam 4:4. According to S.Smith, [The Books of Samuel (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899, repr. 1951),p.283.] this is another insertion, aiming to hint at the fall of the house of Saul, since the last heir was crippled.

166 De Vaux, op.cit. n.104, p.113.

167 Ibid., p.346.

168 II Sam 9:12.

169 II Sam 4:4
also possible that David's attention was so diverted by the various internal political problems\textsuperscript{170} that he did not notice Mephibosheth's son.

Having discussed David's intention in the episode in II Sam 21:1-14 it will be useful to examine the following: There are several reasons why it is unlikely that Saul would kill the Gibeonites. To support this discussion A.Demsky's\textsuperscript{171} study should be considered, since it shows that Saul had a blood link with the Gibeonites. Demsky has demonstrated the link between Saul's genealogy lists in I Chronicles\textsuperscript{172} and the names inscribed on the jar handles from el-Jib. A close study of these genealogies provides further help. It explains some aspects of the Benjaminites' (Saul's tribe) settlement in their territory. The treaty of the Gibeonites with the incoming Israelites may have taken place because of their association with the Shechemites, the only other group in the Bible\textsuperscript{173} regarded as Hivites.\textsuperscript{174} After the Benjaminites' penetration there must have been a considerable integration with the local inhabitants, mainly through marriage, the results of which are reflected in the genealogical lists in Chronicles. These lists are not concerned with the Gibeonites of Gibeon, but with a Benjaminite group which came to settle at Gibeon in the course of time. The eponymous ancestor is called 'the father of Gibeon' in I Chron. 8:29-40 and its duplicate in 9:35-44. In the first list his personal name is not given, whereas in the second list he is named Yehiel\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{170} See Chapter VII below.


\textsuperscript{172} I Chron. 8:29-40, 9:35-44.

\textsuperscript{173} Gen.34:2.

\textsuperscript{174} S.Yeivin, 'The Benjaminite Settlement in the Western Part of Their Territory' IEJ 21 (1971), p.145.

\textsuperscript{175} ibid., p.151.
The most interesting aspect of these lists is the naming of the wife of 'the father of Gibeon' as Maachah. This name does not appear as an Israelite name, but is the name of an Aramean principality in the Golan. When it appears as a personal name it always represents a non-Israelite. This reference to the non-Israelite Maachah may indicate one element of the penetration into Gibeon which expressed itself in intermarriage with the local women. Such intermarriages probably resulted in acquisition of rights of heritage and property. Yeivin suggests that these may have created tension between the local Gibeonites and the Benjaminites. I believe that Yeivin's explanation is probably an attempt to explain the background of the events in 21:1-14. My argument would be in opposition to this suggestion because we are not dealing here with a 'political marriage', but with marriages among ordinary people who welcomed these marriages and everything that went with them. Saul was a third generation after Yehiel and by then one would expect deeper integration. Therefore, one would doubt that Saul, who was apparently in favour of integrating minority groups within the Israelite system, would find it necessary to exterminate or even evict the Hivites.

Another reason for thinking that the account of Saul's killing of the Gibeonites is a later insertion is the reference in 21:2 to 'Israel and Judah'; these political terms do not apply in the period of Saul. Again, Saul's killing of the Gibeonites would have contradicted the image of him in I Sam 15:9 where it is stated that Saul did not kill Agag the Amalekite because he 'had pity' (רイメージ) on him. This perhaps provides a good example of how the author successfully attempted to manipulate Saul's image in accordance with the needs of the different stories. At this point it would be difficult not to draw a contrast between 21:1-14 and chapter 24. In the latter David commits the sin of taking the census; there David and his family are apparently excused and instead, it

176 Ibid.

177 See full treatment of this in Chapter VII.
is the people who are punished with a plague. On the other hand in chapter 21 it is regarded as appropriate that Saul's family pays the penalty for Saul's alleged crime.

**Part III**

**a. Saul and the Priests of Nob**

The aim in the following section is to discuss the episode of the priests of Nob in a similar way to that which the Gibeonites have been discussed, to see how far Saul could be accused or exonerated. The episode of the priests of Nob in I Samuel is divided into two parts.\(^{178}\) The first in I Sam 21:2-11 provides the background; where it is told that David, while on the run from Saul, went to Ahimelech the chief priest at Nob. There David received help not only with food and weapons but also in consulting the word of YHWH.\(^{179}\) In the second part\(^{180}\) it seems that the help for David resulted in bringing about the slaughter of the entire group of priests, except for Abiathar who managed to escape.\(^{181}\)

As with the episode of the Gibeonites, the incident of the priests of Nob is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. Therefore, commentators\(^{182}\) associated the two episodes; they based their views on early commentators (Yebamoth 78b) who interpreted

\(^{178}\) McCarter op.cit. n.2, p.358 comments that this separation occurred during the process of compilation of the material of David's rise to power. The compiler inserted miscellaneous traditions which stand in I Sam 21:11-22:5.

\(^{179}\) I Sam 22:10.

\(^{180}\) Ibid., 22:6-23.

\(^{181}\) According to I Sam 14:3; I Kgs. 2:27 Abiathar was a descendant of Eli the high priest at Shiloh: he was the son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub the great-grandson of Eli. Abiathar's ancestry could not be traced any further in pre-exilic texts. The names of Eli's sons: Hophni and Pinehas show that the family was of Levitical origins [See de Vaux, op.cit. n.104, p.372. See also I Sam 2:27.

\(^{182}\) Hertzberg, op.cit. n.24, p.328; McCarter, op.cit. n.99, p.441.
the oracle in II Sam 21:1 in a way which suggests that since the Gibeonites were 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'\textsuperscript{183} the death of the priests of Nob indirectly caused the death of the Gibeonites.

Though rabbinic commentators saw a connection between the Gibeonites and the priests of Nob, the connection may be found elsewhere. Hence, my hypothesis is that the place named Nob which is described later\textsuperscript{184} as a 'city of priests' indicates a sanctuary of a significant size and importance\textsuperscript{185} and may be associated with what is called the 'tent of YHWH'; the tent tradition being from the time of the wilderness.\textsuperscript{186} The only such sanctuary with the tent tradition can be found at Gibeon and its great sanctuary, the 'high place at Gibeon'\textsuperscript{187} as described in II Chron 1:3,13 and in I Chron 16:39; 21:29. Also the reference in II Sam 21:1 does not mention the name of the place where David sought 'the face of the Lord', therefore, according to Hertzberg,\textsuperscript{188} there is no reason why that place could not be identified with Gibeon as well. David, probably like Solomon later, went to the 'great high place of Gibeon' where he could consult the oracle as stated in II Sam 21:1. Nob of the episode in I Sam 21 & 22 cannot be situated where Nob is later located\textsuperscript{189} a short distance north of Jerusalem and south of Gibeah. There is no site in the vicinity which could fit the description of this town, or produce any archaeological

\textsuperscript{183} Josh.9:23, 27.

\textsuperscript{184} I Sam 22:19.

\textsuperscript{185} Ackroyd, op.cit. n.15, p.170.

\textsuperscript{186} Hertzberg, op.cit. n.24, p.179.

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p.382.

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., p.380. J.Blenkinsopp [op.cit. n.155, p.67] does not identify Nob referred to in Isa.10:32; Neh.11:32 with Nob in I Sam 21 & 22, but with the sanctuary at Gibeon.

\textsuperscript{189} Isa. 10:32; Neh. 11:32.
evidence which could suggest a sanctuary. It is therefore possible that that town of priests was located at Gibeon and for unknown reasons was renamed Nob.

Having examined the possible connection between Nob and Gibeon, other aspects should be examined more closely. The most important section of the account of the priests is found in I Sam 21:2-11. The rest in I Sam 22:6-23 is mainly a repetition of these events, except that chapter 22, describing Saul's execution of the priests, requires a few comments.

It should be noted that in 21:19 where it seems that not only the priests are punished, but that the whole town was put under the ban: 'And Nob the city of the priests he put to the sword, both men and women, children and suckling, oxen, asses and sheep he put to the sword'. Miscall comments that 'Saul does against the Israelites what he did not do, but certainly should have done against the Amalekites'. Although this was probably precisely the impression which the author of the narrative was trying to achieve, it does not necessarily mean that is what really happened. One of the reasons is because v.19 matches almost word for word with 15:3b where Saul is instructed to destroy Amalek. It is quite possible that v.19 have been copied by the same author. The way chapter 22 is written makes it unconvincing, but the last few words of the chapter gives an important clue to the reason for the whole event. Abiathar the son of Ahimelech was the sole survivor of the massacre. David says to him:

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191 It is not known where the name Nob comes from or what it means. A connection has been suggested between Nob and Nebo, but there is not enough evidence to support this view. However, Nebo is a town in Transjordan (Num. 33:47) and is a Babylonian god whose name in Akkadian is nabu and is mentioned in Isa. 46:1. In my view, a connection with the Babylonian god is quite likely since it can be argued that this whole episode was a post exilic addition [see the discussion below in this chapter]. Thus Nob did not exist in the time of Saul.

192 Miscall, op.cit. n.64, p.136.
It is this statement that should be regarded as the focal point of the whole event, as will be discussed below.

b. David at Nob

It is quite clear that David deliberately tricked the priest into helping him. David conceals the fact that he is a fugitive; he lies by saying that Saul had sent him on a mission. When David arrived at Nob, according to Ackroyd,\(^{194}\) Ahimelech 'hurried out' at the coming of the king or else the priest was unconsciously offering homage to David. But, this explanation is unlikely; on the contrary, Ahimelech was very afraid, "ירדה" to meet him; Ahimelech was trembling.\(^{195}\) His apprehension was because he suspected that David came as a fugitive because he came without his usual retinue.\(^{196}\) Moreover, had Ahimelech really thought that David was the future king, he would have not hesitated to offer him the 'holy bread' and would have not commented on the ritual cleanliness of his men as stated in v.5.

David asks for bread but the priest does not have ordinary bread only 'holy bread', 'לחם קדש', which is needed for cultic purposes.\(^{197}\) On first reading these verses it would seem that David went to the priest simply to get supplies. But on close examination of the text it becomes apparent that there was another, more important reason for David's visit and for requesting that bread. The ritual of eating the holy bread

\(^{193}\) I Sam 22:23.

\(^{194}\) Ackroyd, op.cit. n.15,p.170.

\(^{195}\) Was Ahimelech afraid of what David might do to him? This brings to mind the incident with Nabal and Abigail in I Sam 25.

\(^{196}\) McCarter, op.cit. n.2., p.349.

\(^{197}\) This 'holy bread' consisted of twelve loaves of pure wheatflower which was arranged in rows on a table in the sanctuary. The offering was renewed only on the Sabbath. The old bread was then eaten by the priests only [McCarter, ibid., p.349]. See Lev.24:5-9.
must have had a serious implication, otherwise David would have not deceived in order to receive it. Yet, according to Lev. 24:5-9 only the priest could eat such bread. Although the reference in Lev. is late, it still gives an idea about the importance of such bread. In the case of Saul, he was twice given sacrificial portions of food which is usually served for priests. Saul was offered these portions because he was YHWH's anointed and as such he had an important priestly position and was entitled to sacral privileges. The priesthood was the recipient of certain significant privileges which were therefore well worth seeking and which therefore provoked rivalries.

Before the events at Nob, David received Jonathan's robe which is part of the princely dress and a symbol of kingship. Here, eating the holy bread given to him by the priest symbolically gave David rights for priestly privileges, something which David was very anxious to achieve. It would therefore seem that David, in order to secure his position for the throne had not only to undermine the position of Saul as a king but also to gain access to the priestly office, a clue for which is found in II Sam 8:18 stating

David was clever and must have considered the consequences of his action, had Saul found out about his visit to the priest. Also, David most probably realised that Saul's response would alienate him from the priestly order. After the execution of the

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198 The deception of David in this instance brings to mind Jacob's deception of Isaac his father so that he could 'steal' the blessings intended for his brother Esau in Gen. 27.

199 I Sam 9:24, 10:4.

200 McCarter, op.cit. n.2, p.186.

201 Coggins, op.cit. n.12, p.133.

202 I Sam 18:4


204 See also David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, discussed in Chapter VII.
priests David accepts the blame, but as Miscall noted, this comes as a statement of fact, not an admission of guilt. In I Sam 22:22 David says to Abiathar: 'I knew on that day when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I am responsible for the lives of all your father's house'. What is interesting about it is that here, where a whole group of priests is involved, David does not cry, nor tear his clothes as he does in II Sam 1:11; 3:31. And even more interesting is the fact that the author does not comment on the behaviour of David; behaviour which should have brought upon him a charge of bloodguilt. On the contrary, the author expresses only his admiration of David. Therefore, the deception by David does not damage his reputation. Instead it is Saul who is criticised not because he attempts to destroy some of David's supporters, but because they are priests.

Given the redactor's prejudice against Saul a question must remain as to why this tragedy of the priests is not recorded anywhere else in the Bible i.e. in I Samuel or Chronicles. It is quite possible that the account of the killing of the priests of Nob was the work of the Deuteronomist; his intention was to show that by this act of killing the priests, Saul lost ties with the priestly order. It has been suggested that since the sole survivor escaped to David, symbolically, Saul pushed the priesthood into the arms of David. The fact that this act by Saul is not even mentioned in Chronicles could be an indication of the possibility of it being written after Chronicles was already compiled. According to Eissfeldt, Chronicles was compiled in the middle or in the second half of the fourth century BCE. Is it possible that the episode of Nob was written after that?

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205 Miscall, op.cit. n.64, p.137. There is no way in which we can tell what David thought, but we can deduce his intentions from the narrative.


207 Ibid.

208 Bright, op.cit. n.17, p.193.

There is another clue which may help explain this late dating of the account of Nob. In I Sam 21:8 the author presents Doeg, Saul's chief herdsman as an 'Edomite'. Now in Josephus Doeg is Syrian rather than Edomite. The animosity to Doeg because of his Edomite background is expressed by almost every commentator. In the text, Doeg is first supposed to have revealed to Saul what he witnessed at Nob, and second, he was the only one who was willing to carry out the execution. It has been suggested that Doeg's attitude fits well with the general attitude to the Edomites in the Old Testament, where there are hostile exchanges between Edom and Israel recorded earlier. Although it is true that there are such recordings during the wandering in the desert, there are also contrasting ones as well; Deut.23:8-9 instructs: 'You shall not abhor any of the Edomites for they are your kin...'. The point is that the real animosity against the Edomites developed much later; during the period of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (587 BCE). It was then that the Edomites launched a campaign in south Judah, and by so doing exacerbated the destruction. The Edomites also took over Jewish settlements and settled in them. This created hostility towards the Edomites, and is recorded in various ancient documents. Later during the Jewish revolt against Rome, Roman rule was referred to as 'the wicked government of Edom'. Obviously, therefore Josephus, during the writing of his Jewish history whilst at the

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210 *Antiquities* 6:12

211 Hertzberg, op.cit. n.24, p.180.

212 For example, Num.20:14.


214 *Antiquities* 13:9

215 For example, *Jewish Wars; Maccabees*. Though more recent studies dispute this accusation of the Edomites.
Roman court, could not be seen to write that Doeg was an Edomite. He therefore chose to write 'Syrian' instead.\footnote{The Edomites were not the only group to receive such treatment in the biblical text, the Canaanites too suffered such condemnation. See R. Mason \textit{Propaganda and Subversion in the Old Testament} (London: SPCK, 1997).}

Taking this background into consideration might well provide the reasons for attributing to an Edomite the execution of the priests of Nob. At the same time such attribution may also help in supporting the dating of the account of the events at Nob; after 586 or in the late fourth century BCE. Now accusing Saul of such an atrocity as late as this, shows just how serious and controversial the rivalry was between David and the supporters of Saul. Moreover, in the absence of any relevant archaeological or other evidence for the existence of Nob as a town, one must doubt its very existence as early as the time of Saul; most probably its building date from post-exile times. This is probably the reason why it does not appear among the Levites' cities in Joshua:21.

To conclude, given the various discussions throughout this chapter, Saul did not commit any sin that would justify such condemnation. Saul is also unlikely to have perpetrated either of the atrocities against the priests of Nob or against the Gibeonites. Rather it appears more likely that, firstly, the Deuteronomist successfully discredited Saul by portraying his strength and virtue as madness, and failure. Secondly, the figure of Saul as the first king of Israel was used by later prophetic circles to emphasis that the Power of God (or that of the prophet), is greater and more important than that of the monarch.
IV

SAUL AND DAVID

a. Saul and David Contrasted

The section of narrative in the books of Samuel, from I Sam 16:14 to II Sam 5:5 describes David's rise from his appearance on the scene to his accession over the whole of Israel, and has been termed 'The History of David's Rise'.¹ In this narrative, the main purpose is to show David's great popularity; having first appeared in the text as a young servant of Saul, David is shown as becoming popular among the people, through his military exploits, and influential within the royal family itself; David marries Michal, Saul's daughter and also forms an intimate relationship with Jonathan, Saul's eldest son. So by the time David escapes from the 'jealous' Saul, he is popular not only as a military leader, but also as the husband of Saul's daughter.

During the time of his flight from Saul, as given in I Sam 19:8-17, David is first described as a leader of a group of outlaws and then later, as a Philistine mercenary. David was a fugitive throughout that time until the death of Saul in battle, in I Sam 31:1-13. The material which follows in II Sam describes a struggle between David and the

¹ Not everyone agrees that this is an independent narrative unit because on a closer study a different picture emerges. See for example, H.Jagersma, *A History of Israel in the old Testament Period* (London: SCM, 1982), p.239, no.32; K.P.McCarter, *I Samuel* (New York: AB 8, Doubleday, 1980a), pp.14-17, and 'The Apology of David', *JBL* 99:4 (1980b), pp.492-3; T.Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), p.55. Nevertheless, it is unified in theme and purpose. The most likely alternative explanation of this unit is given by McCarter who suggests that it shows the presence of underlying, more or less unified composition by an author whose view is quite clear. But to that narrative, secondary materials have been added including that which is by the Deuteronomist.
house of Saul\(^2\) which ended after the death of Abner, Saul's uncle and general, and the death of Ishbaal, Saul's son.

Within that complex theme, the dominant feature is theological, emphasising the relationship between Saul and David in light of the relationship of each to YHWH. After Saul was rejected by YHWH in I Sam 15, David became the 'chosen' future king.\(^3\) Therefore when YHWH's spirit departed from Saul\(^4\) David received it, and YHWH was always with him.\(^5\) In contrast Saul was denied the divine oracle.\(^6\) David is often described as innocent\(^7\) whereas Saul repeatedly tries to kill him\(^8\) though David is good to him.\(^9\) David is described as successful in everything he does:

\[...יודע דוד שלל דוד משלך...\]^10 whereas Saul is described as a failure:

\[ברכש א₽ר ימדד ורשינ\]^11 and disobedient.\(^12\) Saul is also described as being afraid of Goliath\(^13\) and of the Philistines\(^14\) and being mad due to possession by an evil spirit.\(^15\)

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\(^2\) See full treatment in Chapter VII.

\(^3\) I Sam 16:1-13.

\(^4\) Ibid., 16:13-14.

\(^5\) For example, ibid., 16:18; 17:37; 18:12, 14,28; 22:5, 10; 23:2, 4, 10-12.

\(^6\) Ibid., 28:6, 15.

\(^7\) For example, ibid., 19:4; 20:1, 32; 24:10-16; 26:18-20.

\(^8\) Ibid., 18:11, 17, 21; 19:1-2, 5, 10-11; 26:3.

\(^9\) For example, 24:18; 26:9-11, 21, 23.

\(^10\) I Sam 18:14.

\(^11\) Ibid., 14:47. Most commentators seem to ignore this reference, though P.R. Ackroyd [The First Book of Samuel (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), p.120] interprets it as 'Saul acted wickedly', and explains that רָשֵׁי (did badly) is almost identical to רָסֵי (was victorious), seeing it as a possible copying error. McCarter (I Sam., op.cit. n.1, p.254) holds a similar view and reads רָסֵי on the basis of LXXιν \(\textit{esozevo\)}}. McCarter's view is that corruption seems quite possible,
Finally, because YHWH became his enemy Saul fell in battle. What emerges as a result of this presentation is not only a verdict on Saul as a villain but also a depiction of him in contrast to the guiltless David. David is described as not resisting Saul but merely fleeing from him, and even when Saul fell into David's hands, as described in chapters 24 and 26, David was good to him in sparing his life.

T. Seidl, in explaining the literary strata in I Sam 16-18, claims that there are three conflicting accounts of how David came to be chosen instead of Saul. These accounts, are found in: 16:1-13; 16:14-23; 17:55-18:2. There are many tensions between these. Furthermore, linguistic analysis of the various units shows, for example, that a. In 16:14-23 Saul is presented as passively depending on his servants for information, the whole story being focused on Saul's jealousy of David. There is also an apologetic since the letters י and י were especially liable to be confused in script of the third and second centuries BCE. Now although such explanations are possible, in my view the following are the most likely explanations: First, the root of רע meaning 'wicked'. But within the context of this verse, the writer means that Saul 'did badly' in all his activities. Second, the error that both Ackroyd and McCarter mention is an error made deliberately in order to play down Saul, especially to contrast him with David. It is interesting that these errors do not seem to occur in the narrative referring to David himself.

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12 See the discussion in Chapter III.

13 I Sam 17:11.

14 Ibid., 28:5.


16 Ibid., 28:16.


motive in the story, that is, to attempt to defend David against any blame for having usurped Saul's throne. b. The section in 16:14-23 emphasises David's human qualities, and 16:1-13 stresses his election by YHWH, aiming at proving that David, like Saul, was chosen by YHWH.

Seidl concludes that the author in I Sam 16-18 aimed at providing justice to two central aspects of the monarchy: firstly, the king's human competence and secondly his election by God; though in the final redaction the second element is given greater prominence. The narrative also aims to show that David was fated to be king from an early age and that he had not taken the monarchy from Saul by violence or by plotting against him. Even though the narrative dates from soon after David, much of it is a later addition and comes from circles in which David has been idealised into the model of the messianic king. Seidl further concludes that the acceptance of human and divine justifications for David causes within the final redaction a tension between a mythologized concern for YHWH's actions and a more secular approach to the realities of political history, a tension with which the redactors are quite happy.

Although the narrative of David's rise as we have it is thus clearly pro-David, it also contains a contradictory account of David's image from which we may be able to reconstruct a very different historical reality from that implied by the redactors. For instance, David gathered around him a group of outlaws, David joined the Philistines' army as a mercenary and insisted on taking part in the campaign against Israel at the

Gilboa,\(^{20}\) which indicates that his aim was to get rid of Saul at all costs. Moreover his role in the death of Abner and Ishbaal\(^{21}\) supports the view that David was a usurper.

Despite the theological theme describing Saul in contrast with David, it should be observed that Saul emerges as a strong ruler in Judah as well.\(^{22}\) The various traditions of David's flight from Saul\(^{23}\) indicate that David and his men were not welcomed in Judah whose population was loyal to Saul. Even David's family was not safe there\(^{24}\) since the inhabitants of Maon, Carmel and Ziph were hostile to David. Saul enjoyed a strong alliance; the inhabitants of Judah were willing and attempted to surrender David to him. According to A.Ofer\(^ {25}\) the inhabitants of the Judean hill-country had a stronger alliance to the monarchy and Saul than to the local 'tribe of Judah'.

It could be argued that the rejection of David by the inhabitants of the Judean hill country was because they were afraid of Saul rather than because of their loyalty to him. But this is not likely because, had they been in favour of David they could have supported his struggle against Saul and even aided him economically. The fact that David had to remove his family to Moab\(^ {26}\) is an indication of genuine rejection of David.

\(^{20}\) I Sam 28:1-2; 29:2-10.

\(^{21}\) See the discussion in Chapter VII.


\(^{23}\) I Sam 20-27.

\(^{24}\) I Sam 22:1-4.


\(^{26}\) I Sam 22:3-4.
and support for Saul. Also the account describing the incident between Nabal and David in I Sam 25, strongly suggests that the hostility to David was also due to him leading a group of outlaws.²⁷

The cause of the discord between Saul and David is attributed to Saul's jealousy²⁸ and to his supposed mental sickness,²⁹ though one must be sceptical of the historicity of such information. Since the final redaction of the material took place in circles which were very much in favour of David, what is presented is 'not so much David the man, as the idealised figure of David'.³⁰ What clearly emerges from the narrative is that Saul was far from being unpopular with the people, and Saul himself had considerable influence.³¹ Why then should Saul, king of Israel who was strong and popular, have become so madly jealous of David?

Saul was not insane. His attitude towards David as recorded in I Samuel was a reasonable response to David's manipulative and devious behaviour. The information revealed points to the fact that David worked his way up through cunning; thus he was guaranteed a high military position and became a personal friend of Jonathan, the heir to the throne, as well as becoming involved with Michal, Saul's daughter. This is an

²⁷ Ofer, op.cit. n.27, pp.170-1. For further discussion on the support in Judah for Saul rather than for David, see Chapter VII.

²⁸ I Sam 18:6-9.


³⁰ Jagersma, op.cit. n.1, p.91.

³¹ See Jagersma, ibid.; Ishida, op.cit. n.1, p.57.
example of how shrewd David was; by getting so involved with Saul's family he was already undermining its unity, since they came to be on David's side. Also David's leading of a group of outlaws is significant since it implies that David had his own soldiers at his disposal. This action in itself is an indication that David rebelled against Saul. Furthermore, David led his own military warfare against the Amalekites\textsuperscript{32} and Philistines\textsuperscript{33} without Saul's approval. This indicates again that David was involved in a power struggle against Saul.

Jonathan and Michal apparently did not understand that David was a potential menace to Saul's dynasty, though Saul himself was fully aware of this danger and therefore tried to get rid of David. But one should be aware, that in the first instance, David had fooled Saul too, otherwise David would have not been allowed the opportunity to reach the position from which he could begin to undermine Saul's position. By the time Saul became aware of David's ambition, it was too late. Saul then tried in vain to get rid of David and protect his family and his kingship from him.

b. Who Dared to Put Forth His Hand to Destroy the Lord's Anointed?

The suggestion has been made that the theme of David's rise to power\textsuperscript{34} is not only concerned with legitimising David's accession to the throne of Israel, but also with removing any suspicion which might imply in any way that David was guilty of taking

\textsuperscript{32} I Sam 30.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., chapters 19 and 23.

\textsuperscript{34} I Sam 16-II Sam 5.
even the slightest part in Saul's death. This view is supported by a number of further considerations. The author, firstly, removes David from the scene of the battle and, secondly, he shows that the news of Saul's death was brought to David, with the royal insignia, by an Amalekite. The aim of this section is to examine the record of these events more closely in order to try to establish how far David can be absolved from responsibility for the last chapter of Saul's life.

At the outset, two points need to be seriously considered. In the first point David's treaty with the Philistines was made during the period in which the Israelites and the Philistines were implacably hostile to one another. In that treaty David was granted the city of Ziklag. Yet it must be noted that, in the ancient Near East, land was usually only granted to servants in return for service, for high military achievement or as part of a dowry; land was never given at random. Therefore, David must have returned some military service to King Achish of Gath in exchange for the city he received. The second point is that at the time of the battle of Gilboa, David was in the service of Achish. Moreover, on the eve of that battle, David was ready to join the Philistine army

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36 I Sam 30.


40 I Sam 19:1-2.
and was, or at least appeared to be, reluctant to quit until he was rejected by the Philistine commanders.\textsuperscript{41}

In the following chapter\textsuperscript{42} the author deliberately disrupts the flow of the story and order of events: instead of proceeding with the events leading to the battle at Gilboa (in the north), as one expects, attention is diverted to the episode at Ziklag (in the south). In David's absence, the Amalekites are reported to have burnt Ziklag and taken all the property; they also took all the people captive without slaying any of them. The author describes grieving and bitter men who in their despair almost stoned David to death.\textsuperscript{43} But, the author continues, David maintained control (ךְָּֽמָּ֔רֵּ֖ד), and gradually overcame the Amalekites. By the end of the next day David recovered the women, children and property of his own group as well as that of the Amalekites. It was a triumphant victory for David who shared the booty with the elders of the cities of Judah.

Now there are two details in chapter 30 concerning this episode which make it suspicious in the context of previous events. The first is concerned with the Amalekites.\textsuperscript{44} According to I Sam 15, Saul was ordered to exterminate the Amalekites and he carried out this order\textsuperscript{45}; 'He captured Agag, king of Amalek alive, though he put all the people under the ban with the edge of the sword'.\textsuperscript{46} The Amalekites were

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 29:8.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., chapter 30.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 30:6.

\textsuperscript{44} The meaning of the name Amalek is not yet clear, but the Amalekites are thought to have been a tribe of looters who dwelled in the desert region between southern Judah and Egypt [McCarter, 1980a, op.cit. n.1, p.434].

\textsuperscript{45} Saul did not fail to eradicate the Amalekites and David had not 'picked up' where Saul 'left off' as suggested by Edelman [op.cit. n.39, p.235]. In I Sam 30:17 it is actually David who let some of the Amalekites get away. In the same incident, David is allowed to get away with taking booty, whereas Saul is rejected because of it, forming yet another example of how the redactor manipulated Saul to create the image required for his purpose.

\textsuperscript{46} I Sam 15:8.
therefore exterminated, except for Agag, who was slain by Samuel himself. This would suggest that the Amalekites should not have been in existence by the time of the story of Ziklag. The second point is that in II Sam 1:1 David is dwelling in Ziklag. If the story was true and Ziklag was indeed burnt, one would expect a mention of its being destroyed previously by the Amalekites and a reference to David's rebuilding of it. The fact that the Amalekites do not kill any of the people is also surprising. All this considered together with the context within which the story is placed, indicates the possibility that the story was fabricated to create an alibi for David at the time of the battle.

There are three versions of Saul's death; the first is in I Sam 31, the second in II Sam 1 and the third is in I Chronicles 10. Although the three all describe Saul's death, they are written in different styles, have some contradictions among each other and convey different messages. Thus the third version, that in Chronicles, is similar to the first, that in I Sam 31, albeit with subtle changes. For instance, the Chronicler arranged 10:6 in such a manner that the word 'died' appears at its beginning and at its end. Moreover, he replaced 'his armour-bearer, and all his men' with 'all his House', thus claiming that Saul's whole dynasty came to a complete end! The version in II Sam 1 is open to some difficulties. In this version the Amalekite becomes the central figure and his report contradicts the earlier account in I Sam 31. There, we are told that Saul committed suicide, whereas the Amalekite says that he killed Saul. In I Sam 31 three

47 It could also be countered that Ziklag need not have been rebuilt in order that David could return there. However, the way Ziklag is mentioned in this verse (II Sam 1:1) is as if it had no connection with David's encounter with the Amalekites.

48 Y.Amit, 'בִּית מִיתָא שָלָשָׁא שָׁלְשָׁא אֱלֹהִי מַלְאךָ, נָשָׁא שָלְשָׁא יְהוֹ' 100:1 (1985), p.92

49 Ibid.

50 I Sam 31:6.

sons are listed among the dead, whereas in the Amalekite's report there is no mention of Saul's other sons, nor is there any mention of the armour bearer; only Jonathan is said to have died. The Amalekite reports that the 'chariotry and cavalry' officers overtake Saul but in I Sam 31 it was 'the archers' who overtake him. One additional question is how this Amalekite just chanced to be on Mount Gilboa in the midst of the battle.

Since the biblical text tells us nothing about Saul's later life apart from his pursuit of David, it is important to go back and re-examine previous chapters in I Samuel, which contain details relevant to the content in the Amalekite report.

1] The most striking saying comes from David when he says to the Amalekite: 'How is it that you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?' This verse is reminiscent of earlier similar passages in I Sam 24 & 26. They speak about Saul pursuing David in the wilderness (though the locations are different). But in both stories the situation changes and David, from being pursued becomes a pursuer. One could even suspect that David deliberately planted conflicting messages concerning his whereabouts that would lure Saul to exhaust himself before the battle at Gilboa even began. At all events, in both chapter 24 and chapter 26 David has the opportunity to kill Saul, yet does not do so. In both these stories David is portrayed as innocent, a loyal subject, whereas Saul is ridiculed, and is depicted as completely degraded. Then there are several occasions in which David demonstrates his respect for YHWH's anointed, emphasising that he should not be harmed. Yet in I Sam 26:10 David's words admit the possibility of killing Saul at another opportunity as shown

52 II Sam 1:14.
54 I Sam 26:10.
55 Abramski, op.cit. n.22. p.59.
below. Towards the end of both these chapters Saul openly acknowledges David as his successor, and then Saul and David each go their own way.

The close similarities of chapters 24 & 26 suggest that they are versions of the same story. They could also represent the events that took place near the Gilboa before the battle, though the stories told about David as a hero shifted the location from the Gilboa to Ein-Gedi and Hachila. McCarter\textsuperscript{56} suggests that chapter 24 does not belong to the older history of David's rise to power, but to a series of later expansions; that it is a revised version of chapter 26.\textsuperscript{57} What is emphasised quite strongly, and perhaps would explain the reason for the duplication, is that the main concern of the narrative is again to demonstrate David's innocence with regard to Saul's death. Thus the text seems to protest too much, and thus to raise the possibility that David was not innocent of plotting against 'the Lord's anointed'.

One may suspect that if there were an occasion in which David spared Saul, as indicated in chapters 24 & 26, he did so, not because of his generosity toward his 'beloved' king, but because that would be killing Saul openly. Now it was much safer to allow this to take place within the turmoil of a battle, so that it would pass unnoticed. David attested this with his own mouth; he anticipated Saul's death in such a battle. David said: '...it must be YHWH himself who strikes him down, whether his time comes and he dies or he goes down into battle and is taken'.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56} McCarter, \textit{I Samuel}, op.cit. n.1, p. 386.


\textsuperscript{58} I Sam 26:10.
2a] I Sam 15:27-28 states 'As Samuel turned to go (Saul) caught hold of the hem of his robe and it tore away. Samuel said to him: 'YHWH tore the kingship of Israel away from you and gave it to your neighbour, who is more worthy than you'. And in I Sam 24:4b '... David arose and cut off the hem of Saul's robe'. In the first of these references, Saul's tearing away of the hem of Samuel's robe represents the tearing away of Saul's kingdom. On the other hand in the second reference it is David who tears away the kingship from Saul.59

2b] In II Sam 1:10b the Amalekite says: 'I took the diadem (כַּפָּר) from his head and the bracelet (נרֶם) from his arm and brought them to my lord'. According to McCarter,60 the diadem and the bracelet are the royal insignia in ancient Israel.61 Without them Saul could not have been recognised as a king. The diadem was given to the king at the time of investiture, and it was not a crown but an emblem worn on the forehead. With reference to the bracelet, A.Salvesen62 claims that it was not an item usually worn by an Israeliite kings; in Num.31:50 and Isa. 3:20 it is an item of jewellery. Thus Saul, as well as wearing the diadem also wore the bracelet on his arm by which he was recognised.

2c] In I Sam 26:11b David takes two important objects from Saul; his spear and his juglet. Without these items neither Saul nor any other man could have much chance of survival in the wilderness of Judah.

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59 In 24:21 Saul pleads for mercy on his family so that his 'seeds' will not be 'cut off', but David had already done just that. See discussion of this in Gunn, op.cit. n.53, p.93-5.

60 McCarter, II Samuel, op.cit. n.35, p.60.

61 II Kgs.11:12; Jer.13:18; Ezek. 21:31.

In all these examples Saul is being stripped of the most important symbols of survival, whether as a king or as a man. The message which is hidden beneath that is that David removed from Saul the symbols of existence in every way.

3] There are conflicting descriptions of scenes at the end of chapters 24 & 26. On the one hand there is a distance between Saul and David, but on the other, they seem as if they were near each other. For example, in chapter 26 David is described as being distant from Saul, on the top of the hill. David calls loudly to protest his loyalty to Saul, though Saul, on the other hand, is described as weak, feeble and weeping while asking; 'Is that your voice, David?' Saul's weeping sounds like that of someone who knows that the end is near, and that there is no longer hope of rule for him nor for any of his descendants. The one thing that is on his mind is the only thing he had left to care about; his own family. Saul, as if it were his last wish, pleads mercy for his family '...swear to me by YHWH that you will not destroy my descendants after me or wipe out my name from my father's house.' The tension created by the redactor is therefore an indication that the redactor is subtly trying to convince the reader that David was distant from any violent action against Saul.

Now it would be more natural if this scene were placed on Mount Gilboa after Saul had been injured. It is quite possible that David and his men did not go back to Ziklag as ordered by Achish of Gath at Aphek. Now it is known that David was not willing to quit the battle; thus possibly, he made his way secretly up to the north where he and his men waited for the battle to take place the next day. David had six hundred

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63 I Sam 24:16; 26:17.
64 Ibid., 24:21.
65 I Sam 29.
66 See ibid.
men whom he divided between two locations, four hundred men returning to Ziklag in partial fulfilment of Achish's command. The remaining two hundred men (the task force) accompanied him to Gilboa; this would explain why these two hundred men were too exhausted to chase the Amalekites; by that point they had already travelled three days in covering the distance of 140km (90 miles) from Gilboa to Ziklag.

It is difficult to judge to what extent David got involved in the battle. But, David must have had a clear idea not only of the Israelite vulnerability in fighting on the plain; but also that the Philistines' move to the north would provoke Saul to react because of his responsibility for the Israelite groups in Galilee. The battle started in the plain, at the foot of Mount Gilboa. According to M. Gichon Saul's move to reposition his army at the foot of the mountain was a good tactic, giving himself the possibility to retreat to the mountain should the situation arise. It would have worked in Saul's favour because the Philistines' chariots would not have been able to cope with the slope. It seems that at the

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67 Ibid., 30:9

68 Ibid., 30:9-10

69 It is not clear as to whether they travelled on foot or on backs of donkeys or camels (horses were not in use at this period; there is no mention of them in the text in which we are dealing. It is interesting that horse bones are uncommon in Iron I sites; see the discussion at the end of Chapter VI). Although horses are mentioned in II Sam 1:6 they belonged to the Philistines who inherited them from the Egyptians. Otherwise horses are in decline in this period as is apparent from the text and the archaeological data. However, a typical journey on foot was probably about 20 miles a day. Travel by donkey or horse was faster; 25-30 miles a day without much difficulty [D.A. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1991), pp.12-13]. In any case, David's task force were not ordinary travellers; they were comprised of his elite men, moreover one in a state of war and under severe pressure to fulfil their objective. So no doubt under these conditions they could have travelled 30 miles a day. Also we know that the distance between Gilboa and Ziklag could indeed be covered in three days because the Amalekite took that long to travel that distance (see II Sam 1:1). Moreover, messengers and couriers could travel even faster. For instance, Hammurabi of Babylon ca.1700 BCE, expected an official, 120 miles away (at Larsa) to travel day and night and arrive at Babylon within two days! [See Dorsey, ibid., p.13].

70 See full account of the battle at Gilboa in Chapter V.

start of the battle the Philistines had the upper hand, forcing Saul to retreat, though a surprise awaited him. According to Gichon, the Israelites were surprisingly attacked from the rear by the archers. Gichon further suggests that Saul's situation would not have been so bad had he been attacked from the front. The reason why the Israelites suffered such heavy casualties was because they were ambushed by a stream of arrows from the rear while retreating. My hypothesis at this point is that those archers were not Philistines at all, but probably David and his men. It is possible that David made his way secretly to the back of the Gilboa behind the Israelite forces, and waited for the right moment to act. It is also possible that after Saul was wounded from an arrow and on his last breath that David and a task force joined in because David wanted to make sure that Saul did not survive. Thus it might have been then that Saul recognised David, and knowing that he was not going to survive, pleaded for his family.

To support this hypothesis further it is to be noted that in v.13, the Amalekite who came from the battle described himself as *ger*, meaning resident alien, or protected alien; one who was probably integrated into Israel. In v.2 it is said 'A man arrived from Saul's camp', and in v.3 'I escaped from the Israelite camp'. Furthermore, in v.2 this man is in mourning for Saul; his clothes are torn and he has put dirt on his head. Within the narrative, the narrator expects the reader to think that there was nothing odd about an Amalekite bringing in the sad news. But this does not sound like an ordinary Amalekite who is trying to carry favour with David, as suggested by McCarter, but more like a man loyal to Saul, someone who has some form of relationship to the Israelites. When he arrived, he said that Saul and Jonathan were dead. He did not

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73 One of Saul's policies was to integrate the minority groups within the new structure of Israel, as was the case with Doeg the Edomite in I Sam 22:18.

74 McCarter, II Samuel, op.cit. n.35, p.59.

75 Edelman, op.cit. n.39, p.299.
say initially that he himself killed Saul but simply that Saul was dead. David did not inquire how they died but rather, was interested to know how the Amalekite came by this information. To this the Amalekite replied "I chanced to be there." However the Amalekite did not chance to be at the main battle scene; rather it is more likely that he chanced to be at the scene of Saul's death. Only later does the Amalekite claim to have killed Saul, at Saul's own request. David did not continue to investigate the Amalekite precisely because he did not want the truth to be discovered! However, the man was so outraged with David that he came to protest, despite facing the possibility of being killed. The Amalekite's admission that he himself killed Saul is then a later addition to the text.

Now having examined the connection between I Sam 24 & 26 with the story of the Amalekite and David's role in the last scene of Saul's life, one should not assume that David aimed to destroy Israel in the manner attempted by the Philistines. David was using this conflict as a platform for his own political ambition. He wanted to get rid of Saul, but did not want to do this openly. Therefore, David used the Philistines; by aiding them his aim was achieved. It was a dangerous strategy as it could have resulted in the destruction of Israel, yet David achieved his aim successfully. Although David had won the throne from Saul, it was at a high cost; there must have been many who still condemned him. It took years before he could establish his kingship over Israel and

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76 II Sam 1:4.

77 II Sam 1:4, 4:10.

78 נקֶפֶר (niph.) probably requires correction, i.e. ל. The only other occurrence of this word in the Old Testament is in Esther 4:11.

79 Ibid., 1:6.

80 That truth is hinted by David's words: 'your mouth testified against you, saying I killed the Lord's anointed'. Normally "I" is taken to refer to the Amalekite. Alternatively, however, one could also take "I" to indicate David himself!
Judah¹ and his rule was not a peaceful one. Consequently, the redactor edited the material in such a way as to make David look both innocent and successful. But despite such bias in the narrative, much of it, nevertheless is quite apologetic.²

c. The Narrative of David's Rise as an Apology

The narrative in the books of Samuel attempts to make it clear that the transition from Saul to David is in accordance with the will of YHWH. David is presented as a man who is blessed with divine favour, whereas Saul is a man who is rejected by YHWH.³ However, the various discussions in this chapter have demonstrated that this narrative is part of political propaganda, supported by theological interpretation of events, showing that David's accession was lawful and guided by YHWH. Such propaganda is noticeable at several points in the development of the biblical text. McCarter⁴ suggests that such a document must have been composed in Judah, in pro-Davidic circles, and must have been written at the time when the throne had been transferred from the house of Saul to the house of David.

McCarter considers the possibility of dating the story of the rise of David to the reign of David himself. McCarter⁵ has demonstrated that this narrative of David's rise is

¹ See discussion of the civil war in Chapter VII.

² See the treatment of David in this matter: R.Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist* (Indiana, 1993), pp.2-10] who argues that the narrator of II Samuel introduced the Amalekite as the narrative double for David 'who represent a set of complex human factors surrounding the fall of Saul and his house' (Ibid., p.6); M.Malul, ['Was David involved in the Death of Saul on the Gilboa Mountain?' *RB* 103:4 (1996), pp.517-545.] also argues that David was involved in Saul's death. He bases his hypothesis partly on clues in the report of Saul's death, especially the word כַּלְפַּת in I Sam 31:3. Malul suggests that כֲּלַפַת hints at David's men, a group of established men in Saul's court.


⁴ McCarter, ibid., p.495.

⁵ Ibid., pp.489-504.
similar to the Hittite apology called 'The Apology of Hattushillish III' which was written for the Hittite king Hattushillish III who usurped the throne in the thirteenth century BCE. It was written to justify his accession by force after murdering his nephew and predecessor Urhi-teshub who was already on the throne.86

Hattushillish insists that he did not act selfishly, having helped to install Urhi-teshub as great king. But Urhi-teshub did not respond kindly, being jealous because Ishtar favoured Hattushillish. Thus Hattushillish claims that Urhi-teshub deprived him of all his possessions, and emphasises that there was no palace rebellion but a contest. Then, Ishtar having promised Hattushillish the kingship, Urhi-teshub was defeated and banished.

There are various similarities between the apology of Hattushillish and the story of David's rise. In the latter there occur for example, the jealousy of the previous ruler, Saul, provoked by David's early success, the change of attitude towards him, the charges against David, and the major rebellion against David after Saul's death.87

McCarter88 claims that 'The Apology of Hattushillish is a narrative testimony to the power of the king's patron deity, to whom Hattushillish ascribed his success. It is addressed not to a divine but to a human audience. Its purpose is to legitimise Hattushillish's accession; to show his ability to rule through his administrative and military success; and to show that he rather than his nephew was preferred; to show that he never acted out of self-interest even when the opportunities arose; and to remove any suspicion that would imply that Hattushillish played any part in his nephew's death.


87 See discussion in Chapter VII.

But the careful study of the 'apology' by McCarter shows that this writing is also an attempt to demonstrate Hattushillish's innocence. This attempt is very similar to the redactor's work on the Story of David's Rise in the books of Samuel. But against the claim of the redactor, McCarter concludes that seven charges can be made against David of which the most important are the following: David acted out of strong self-interest at Saul's court; he was an outlaw and a Philistine agent and on the eve of Saul's last battle, he was in the Philistine army; he was involved in Abner's and Ishbaal's death. However, in reference to Saul's death, McCarter still excuses David, stating that if David had been at the battle of Gilboa he would have fought with Saul rather than against him.

In conclusion D.M. Gunn and D.N. Fewell's query is relevant.

...When he (David) laments the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17-27) is he truly expressing his personal grief or is his lament for the benefit of the people who had followed Saul but who he now hopes will turn their political allegiance to him? When he asks 'Is there still anyone left in the house of Saul, that I may deal loyally (kindly) with him for Jonathan's sake?' (2 Sam. 9:1) we might wonder if he is truly interested in dealing loyally or if he wants to unearth any potential contenders to the throne.

d. Saul at Ein-Dor

Having discussed the battle at Gilboa, one cannot ignore the account in I Sam 28:7-25 describing the episode of Saul at Ein-Dor. The text describes, that on the eve of the battle at Gilboa Saul was 'frightened' and was anxious to call upon YHWH for guidance, though the oracle was silent. Therefore, in desperation, Saul was forced to

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89 Ibid., pp.499-502.


91 Ein-Dor is mentioned three times in the Old Testament; in Josh.17:11; I Sam 28:7; and in Ps.83:11. There is a debate concerning the exact location of Ein-Dor, but it is generally accepted that it is located north-east of the Jezreel Valley [See McCarter, 1980a, op.cit. n.1, p.420; K.Kallai, "כַּפַּת אֲרוּם, כַּפַּת לֹדוֹר, כַּפַּת דָּוִד, כַּפַּת דָּוָּד, Enc.Miq.6 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik,1971), pp.208-9, idem, 'כַּפַּת לֹדוֹר, Eretz Yisrael 5 (Jerusalem: IES, 1959), pp.120-3.
turn to an ṭānāḵ (‘ghostwife’), a woman who communicates with the spirits of the deceased. This episode describing Saul as being abandoned by YHWH and desperate for guidance is in complete contrast to his introduction in I Sam 9 as the one chosen by God, has the aim of showing that Saul’s decline has reached its lowest ebb. M.Kleiner claims that the original narrative was more sympathetic towards Saul, and that only the final version turns against him. Kleiner also points out the fact that Saul was not condemned in the story for consulting the dead, since a genuine prophecy was involved. Later, the story changes from being a Saul story into a Samuel-Saul story, due to the Deuteronomistic redaction: within that redaction, v.19 was deliberately added to show that Saul was responsible for Israel's downfall. Furthermore, v.3 serves to place the Ein-Dor story correctly in the Deuteronomistic narrative with a pro-David and anti-Saul slant.

According to H.A.Hoffener the correct translation of ṭānāḵ is 'ritual pit', and has parallels in Hittite and Assyrian. These ritual pits provided for consultation with the dead and deities. The time of day for these rituals was quite important. Before the pit was dug the practitioner had to decide upon the correct spot, since it was important to find just the right location, though there is no mention in chapter 28 of the witch's activity to

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92 For the various comments provoked by the image of the witch of Ein-Dor, and for the meal she prepared for Saul see, P.T.Reis, 'Eating the Blood: Saul and the Witch of Endor' JSOT 73 (1997), pp.3-23.


95 It was the Chronicler (I Chron.10) who attributed Saul's death to his sins, and one of them is his consulting the witch.


locate such a pit. In opposition B.B. Schmidt argues that 1 Sam 28 is a late composition. One of the reasons is that it contains parallels to similar necromantic tales characteristic of late antiquity. Greek and Latin texts dealing particularly with the art of necromancy offer parallels to the major motifs found in 1 Sam 28, for example; the necromancer being a woman; the ghost's reproach of the inquirer; and the act of fasting. Schmidt also rejects the dating of the origins of the woman at Ein-Dor to the second millennium Hittite and Mesopotamian sources, since this approach not only inadequately dates the passage in chapter 28 but also misunderstands the Hebrew 'Ob as meaning 'pit'. The mention of אֲבָבָה לְדָנְטָי does not refer to a class of professional manics, but to the ghosts, 'the ones-who-return' and the 'Knowers'. Thus in v.7 the witch is entitled אֱזֶזַת בְּנֵלָה אֱב 'a woman, controller of the one who returns'.

The author of the episode in 1 Samuel 28 failed to report details of the method used by the witch to call Samuel. But this is not the only instance in the Old Testament where knowledge of supernatural activities is lacking. For example, the process by which prophets acquired their supernatural information is vague. Even though distinctions have been drawn between the various kinds of 'vision' and attempts were made to correlate them with the Hebrew terms רָאָזִים, רָאָזָה, בְּבֵית, בְּאֶבֶן, Barton claims that such distinction and correlations remains quite speculative; although there are instances in which inspiration does occur (such as the vision in our story in 28:13), it is difficult to find any one case of great significance or to describe the mode in which the revelation comes.

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99 Ibid., p.209.

100 Edelman suggests [op.cit. n.39, p.244] that the possible reason for this is the decision not to say much about a practice which may have been regarded as illegal.


102 Ibid., pp.116-7.
However, the object of this ritual was to tempt the spirit or the deity out. In 28:15 Saul sought an interview with Samuel's ghost. When the spirit finally appeared, the form was supposed to be recognisable to the living loved one. When the witch of Ein-Dor first sees 'Samuel' she is terrified and, only after Saul managed to calm her, he asked her what she had seen. The witch replied:

The spirit then is able to communicate to the client, but the voice is eerie and supernatural.

Discussion

Whether I Samuel 28 is a late addition or not, the motive of the narrator is clear. Brueggemann noted that the author wants to show that Saul is, in fact, not king; that he is frantic, with no resources. Saul does not appear as his royal self; he goes disguised, and even more so, he requests a 'spirit', an act which he himself prohibited. Fokkelman noted that the act of Saul's removing his royal gown in itself gives a symbolic message; it hints at Saul's end as a king. Polzin associates this action by Saul with Jonathan's removal of his robe in I Sam 18:4. Polzin also relates Samuel's apparition from the

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103 Centuries later Isaiah mocked such practices: 'Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?' [8:19].
104 I Sam 28:13.
105 Ibid., v.14.
106 Hoffener, op.cit. n.97,p.398.
107 Brueggemann, op.cit. n.35, p.193.
108 Fokkelman, op.cit. n.53, p.600.
109 Polzin, op.cit. n.82, pp.270-1.
110 Ibid., no. 7.
underworld to David's appearance from the cave in I Sam 24. There David bowed down before Saul, the one who ought to be dead, and now Saul bows down before Samuel, the one who is really dead. Edelman,\(^{111}\) also noted that the witch replies to Saul in v.9:

\[\text{בש trắng ידעת את אָדָם כַּעַל...} '\]

This echoes David's earlier statement to Achish in 28:2 '...טְנַחְנָה אָדָם וְדִבְרִים אָדָם יִרְאֶה...'. According to Edelman, this results in a contrast between David's 'doing' and Saul's 'doing' which involves the key term 'משה' used elsewhere to express God's 'doing' on Israel's behalf by His performing an act of deliverance.

These literary connections between the episode at Ein-Dor and other references associated with David, are in my view, significant. An additional reference can also be added; Samuel's predicting Saul's fate is also an echo of David's anticipation of Saul's death in battle in 26:10. Furthermore, the woman does not say she saw Samuel, but that she saw אָדָם. I Sam 28:14 does not state that Saul saw Samuel, but that Saul knew it was Samuel.\(^{112}\) However, since we are dealing with Saul, one wonders who was the voice speaking on behalf of Samuel?

e. The Samson Narrative as Camouflage for Saul's Story\(^{113}\)

The discussion in this chapter has shown that both the relationship between Saul and David and David's role in Saul's downfall have been possibly suppressed by the various redactors of the books of Samuel. In the following section I would like to propose a new hypothesis; that such suppression can also be found in the book of Judges.

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\(^{112}\) This is another example of how Samuel is introduced into the story in which he played no part originally.; see McCarter, 1980b, op.cit. n.1 p.492.

\(^{113}\) Also appears as 'Saul and the Samson Narrative' *JSOT* 71 (1996), pp.19-25.
The Samson narrative in Judges 13-16 is a unique account, different from that of the other judges. To a great extent it is made up of legends which make Samson a super hero, though his naivete is criticised. There is no mention of the Israelites' participation in elevating him to power, nor of their taking part in fighting against the Philistines. Also there is no incident in which Samson is described as ruling Israel. Yet, Judg. 15:20 and 16:31 conclude by insisting that Samson judged Israel twenty years.

The aim of this section is to draw attention to the close resemblance of the Samson story to that of Saul in the book of Samuel. Samson's undoing came through Delilah, and Saul's through David, and these processes deserve comparison. It is important to compare these two stories in other aspects also, and consider what, if any implication arises for the way we understand the events surrounding Saul's reign.

There is a striking similarity between Judg. 13:2 (Samson Story), 'And there was a certain man of Zorah...' (רִודֶרֶא אֶשֶר אֱוֶדֶר), and I Sam 1:1 (Samuel's story), 'And there was a certain man of Ramathaim-Zophim...' (רִודֶרֶא אֶשֶר אֱוֶדֶר). These are the only instances in which this formula occurs in the Hebrew Bible.114 However, a very similar verse115 can be added to these (Saul's story) which says 'And there was a man of Benjamin' (רִודֶרֶא אֶשֶר מָבוֹן יְבֵנֵי), in which only the word "יתד יד" does not appear. In all three introductory verses the fathers are introduced first, starting with a general term, 'certain man' (אָדָם אֶשֶר) or 'a man (אָדָם), followed by the place name (or tribe's name), and again followed by the name of the person.116 These three occurrences are especially interesting since they share similar historical background and deal with heroes whose mission was to save the Israelites from the Philistine yoke.117

115 I Sam 9:1.
117 Ibid., p.391.
Samuel's and Samson's birth stories are clearly illustrated in the text, whereas Saul's birth story has been lost. It has been argued that elements of it were incorporated into Samuel's birth story. This argument stems from the repeated wordplay on the root of the verb יָאָלָה in I Sam 1 '...and called his name Samuel, saying, 'Because I have asked him שָאָלָה of the Lord'; יָאָלָה 'Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant you your petition שָאָלָה of him', יָאָלָה 'For this child I prayed and the Lord has given me my petition שָאָלָה of him. Therefore also I have lent him שָאָלָה to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent שָאָלָה to the Lord', יָאָלָה 'And Eli blessed Elkana and his wife and said, 'May the Lord give you the seed of this woman for the loan שָאָלָה which he lent שָאָלָה to the Lord'. This wordplay on the root יָאָלָה provides a clue to the probability that Saul's birth story was originally included in the text before the story in I Sam 9:1-10:6 and that it was lost or edited out before the final form of the book.

This argument has been strongly challenged. It has been argued that even if there was a connection between Samuel's birth story and Saul's name, it does not necessarily mean that the birth story originally belonged to Saul. If Saul's birth story had been adapted for Samuel, the author would have tried to hide his traces by avoiding

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118 See McCarter 1980a, op.cit. n.1, p.62.

119 I Sam 1:20

120 I Sam 1:17

121 I Sam 1:27-8.


direct references to Saul's name. Alternatively, Amit suggests that it is also possible that the author deliberately used the connection between Samuel's birth story and Saul's name in order to hint from the start at Samuel's involvement with Saul. Thus the sounds which connect the name שָׂעַל and שֵׁמָאָל as well as the fact that their fates are connected later on caused the author to allude to the connection already in Samuel's birth story.

Amit further argues that the wordplay on the root של ש is not related to Saul, at least primarily, but is connected to the plot of the story which contains a request to YHWH, by a vow (דָּרֶך) and the loan of the child to YHWH and his dedication to the temple. The story which follows depicts Samuel's positive image in contrast with that of the sons of Eli: Samuel grew in the temple at Shiloh and was loved by YHWH and the people. This story develops gradually to illustrate Samuel's central role as a prophet.

Scholars who share similar views are mainly concerned with the literary structure of the text. Within this structure there is a strong theological theme: the prophet is not an ordinary man, but a holy man. His power is stronger than that of the king in that he is YHWH's instrument through which he speaks to the people. Any attempt to connect Samuel's birth story with Saul will undermine not only the literary structure, but also the theological message which is so strongly expressed in this text.


125 Ibid., p.240.

126 Amit, op.cit. n.124, pp.240-41. The theme preferred by the redactor throughout the books of Samuel is that Samuel the prophet was much preferred above Saul the king. The purpose of this writing originated in later prophetic circles; their purpose was to maintain prophetic rights in relation to the king (A.D.H. Mayes, 'The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy' (eds.) J.H Hayes and J.M Miller, Israelite and Judaean History (London: SCM, and Westminster 1977, repr. 1990), p.330.
However, the question which still remains unanswered is why I Sam 1 ends as it does. The author could have ended the chapter by saying, for instance, 'I have also lent him to YHWH for ever'), therefore forming a simple and final ending to the story, whereas he chose to say (v.28), 'he was asked [שאול] of YHWH'), making the final and the strongest link to Saul's name. This closing formula was probably deliberate and provides the climax towards which the wordplay was aiming.

Moreover, if we go back to the comparison with the Samson story, it will be clear that in a birth story such as this one, where the motif of Nazirite birth and dedication appears, one would expect the child to be born to be a warrior like Samson, not like Samuel, the prophet from Ramah. Samuel fights against the Philistines (chapter 7), but the story is highly generalised and probably a production of later prophetic revision. Samuel is not essentially a warrior.

Saul and Samson share other similarities. They both emerge as a result of a similar political circumstances, namely the Philistines' oppression of the Israelites, and Samson's role, like that of Saul, was to liberate the Israelites from that oppression. About Samson Judg.13:5 says, 'and he shall begin to liberate (שָׁאוּל) Israel from the Philistine's power'. Similarly, about Saul it is said, 'and he shall liberate (זָדוֹף) my people from the Philistines' power'. Saul and Samson are both empowered by the divine spirit to

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127 H.W.Hertzberg [I and II Samuel (London: SCM, 1964), pp.25-6] agrees that this wordplay is not far from the word Samuel, but that it is without doubt more reminiscent of שאול 'he who is asked for'.


129 Ibid., p.65.

130 Ibid.

131 I Sam 9:15.
perform heroic wonders. Note I Sam 11:6-7: 'And the spirit of God rushed upon Saul in power (רוח אלהים על שאול) he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them into pieces...' A similar story of Samson's behaviour occurs in Judg. 14:6, 19: 'And the spirit of YHWH rushed upon Samson (רוח יהוה על שמואל) and he tore the lion apart... In I Sam 11:6 Saul became enraged (יירד אפר מאר), whereas in Judg. 14:19 Samson became enraged (יירד אפר אב). For Saul and for Samson rage is a symptom of inspiration; they both experience a surge of strength and tear the beast apart.

Samson fights the Philistines because they provoke him, not because he is fulfilling his role to deliver the Israelites from their oppression. Samson acts from his own power. His life ends in tragic death as a result of his affair with Delilah who betrays him by giving away his secret to the Philistines. In that final chapter there is no longer a mention of YHWH's spirit. In the later part of his career Saul, like Samson, likewise acts for his own personal reasons, chasing David as a traitor. The narrative about Saul no longer mentions support by YHWH's spirit: 'Now the spirit of YHWH departed from Saul...' Saul's career also has a tragic end.

Saul's weakness was that he gave in when under pressure, which contributed to his downfall. In I Sam 13, after seven days of waiting, Saul was pressurized by the desperate military situation to go ahead and offer the sacrifice despite Samuel's instruction not to do so. A similar story appears in chapter 15 in relation to the battle against the Amalekites. This behaviour applies to Samson; he too was twice weakened under the pressure which was put on him by his Philistine wife and by Delilah. As a result Samson revealed the secret of his power, a situation which brought about his downfall.

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132 I Sam 16:14.


134 Ibid., 16:16-17.
Now how are these comparisons to be understood? I suggest that it is quite possible that the story of Samson\textsuperscript{135} is written as a legend-like riddle, not only to camouflage the Saul-David saga, but also with the hope that the riddle would be solved. This had probably been hinted at in Judg. 13:6 where it says, 'I did not ask (נָתַן לְמִמְבוֹן) whence he came, and he did not tell me his name', and again in v.18: 'Why do you ask (שַׁמָּל) after my name seeing it is hidden?' This sounds like an echo of the wordplay on מֵאֲלָה discussed earlier.

The narrative of Samson and Delilah is succinctly presented in Judges 16, whereas the Saul-David is quite complex. It has been extensively edited by the Deuteronomist as his particular presentation of the history of Israel. David's glamorised stories overshadow Saul and his heroic position. Saul's downfall is associated with the appearance of David on the scene; it seems that his rise in military power and popularity brought about Saul's jealousy. On the other hand, another strand suggests that David was anxious to legitimise his claim by marrying Saul's daughter, thereby linking himself to Saul's dynastic line.\textsuperscript{136} There is no doubt that David was extremely capable militarily. But this was not the only reason why he achieved such success. David joined Saul's army when very young and became successful through gallantry and cunning.\textsuperscript{137} With similar cunning David entered the royal household, married Saul's daughter and gained Jonathan's friendship. Therefore, rather than Saul being, as depicted, pathologically ill it is far more likely that Saul recognised David's ambition for the throne and his building Israeliite support. Therefore, David was forced to flee and was pursued by Saul as a traitor.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 13-16.

\textsuperscript{136} I Sam 3:13-16.

It was during this period that King Achish of Gath granted David the city of Ziklag. Land was usually granted to servants in return for service. It is true that David had won the confidence of his overlord by raiding different tribes and bringing back booty. But it is also possible that David had also revealed, before the Philistine's lords, Israelite vulnerability in fighting in the plain. By opening a new battle front on the plain the Israelites would surely be defeated. It is unlikely that David aimed to destroy Israel in the manner attempted by the Philistines, since he was using this conflict as a platform for his own political ambition. David wanted to get rid of Saul, but did not want to do this openly. Therefore, David used the Philistines; by aiding them his aim was achieved; Saul died, and thus David's way to the throne was cleared. This strategy was dangerous, as it could have resulted in the destruction of Israel, yet he achieved this successfully.

If we accept the Saul-Samson parallel, then we must also accept the comparison between Delilah and David. Delilah pretended to be Samson's lover, but actually acted for the Philistines. The position of David and Saul was similar. The pro-Saul writer of the Samson story was so enraged with David as to portray him as a Philistine woman and a seducer who pretended to be on the hero's side yet was really a Philistine agent. It was Delilah who cut off Samson's hair and handed him over to the Philistines. In the same way David revealed the secret of Saul's military disadvantage to the Philistines. The verse in Judg. 14:18 may apply in this situation: 'If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would have not found my riddle'. In this verse is probably indicated the principal theme within the Saul-Samson and David-Delilah parallels, where trust lies on the one hand and betrayal on the other. Thus both Samson and Saul came to a tragic end; they

138 The Israelite army did not possess chariots, and therefore could not fight in the plain against the sophisticated armour of the Philistines. It must be noted that until the battle of Gilboa all major battles between these two groups had taken place further south, where Saul could carry out a guerilla-like warfare. The battle at the Gilboa was initiated by the Philistines.
committed suicide. Despite knowing their end was near, they still continued their battle and died as heroes.

Another point of interest must be noted; Samson and Saul's name both begin with S (ש) and also, David and Delilah's name begin with D (ד). To summarise the parallels, the following may be useful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saul-David</th>
<th>Samson-Delilah</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Birth story; Nazirite</td>
<td>1. Birth story; Nazirite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spirit of YHWH</td>
<td>2. Spirit of YHWH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fighting Philistines</td>
<td>3. Fighting Philistines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Betrayed (by David)</td>
<td>4. Betrayed (by Delilah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Commits suicide</td>
<td>5. Commits suicide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parallels that have been drawn so far represent an attempt to show that the whole Samson account was written as a metaphor for the Saul/David story. However, the question which still remains is, how are we to deal with the Timnite woman and with the Gaza episode? Perhaps the easiest explanation is that the Saul/David riddle became inserted into the Judges cycle, and later writers who missed its true significance embellished it in further episode in reference to Samson's weakness for women. The nagging and perfidy of the woman is a pale reflection of Delilah as is the harlot in Gaza. Indeed, the Timnite woman is surely a prototype of Delilah.

If one is to accept these parallels, another question remains as to why the story of Saul and David had to be concealed in this way. There are several possible answers: 1) It is obvious that the redactor of I and II Samuel, and even more of Chronicles, is biased in favour of the House of David. Ironically, the camouflaged story of Samson remained
unedited, while the Saul story is deliberately mutilated, with the birth story detached and attributed to Samuel. 2) The pro-Saul author did not dare to write an openly true account of Saul, and therefore was obliged to conceal Saul's story behind the heroic image of Samson. 3) The rivalry between the House of David and the House of Saul was intense and dangerous. There is evidence of bitter fighting between the two camps. Therefore it was important to sustain the Israelites as one people, not only at that time of political tension, but also for future generations to come.

139 A continuing admiration for Saul is still apparent in the book of Esther (2:5), whose hero, Mordechai, is, like Saul, a son of Kish.
KING SAUL: ORIGINS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Saul's origins and reign have been seriously neglected and the sources are also silent about his achievements. My intention in this chapter is to examine the sources carefully in order to find out whether it is possible to extract any information which might then bring to light some aspects of his life. There are some scattered hints which may imply that Gibeon was Saul's hometown, from which he emerged to kingship: others indicate that he may have come from a priestly background. These possibilities will be explored in this chapter. Later, his military and political achievements will also be discussed; but it would be important to first look at the tribe and the territory of Benjamin in order to gain some insight to Saul's background.

a. The Tribe of Benjamin

Saul, son of Kish, was from the tribe of Benjamin. According to the biblical tradition, Benjamin was the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob, and Rachel's second and last son. Benjamin was the only son of Jacob who was born in Canaan, his birth caused his mother's death. R. De Vaux points out that the story in Gen. 30:24 suggests that Joseph was the last son to be born in Mesopotamia. Also everything in the story of

1 I Sam 9:1.
2 Gen. 35:16-20.
3 Ibid.
Joseph in Gen. 37, especially Jacob's love for Joseph, points to the fact that in one tradition at least, Joseph is the last son. This forms the basis for De Vaux's view that the presentation of Benjamin as the last son is a hint to the fact that the tribe was a late comer in the land.

The name Benjamin (בנימין) is interesting because it has a parallel in the Mari texts from the eighteenth century BCE. In the Akkadian transliteration it appears as DUMU.MES - yamina and symbolises the people of the south. In these texts there is also a reference to DUMU. MES - sim'al symbolising the people of the north. Each of these corresponds to the place where the respective groups lived. The tribes of bin-jamin of the Mari text caused the kingdom of Mari extensive troubles but they were eventually defeated by Zimrilim king of Mari, in the first half of the eighteenth century BCE. Their name indicates that they were west-semitics, therefore some attempts have been made to associate these tribes with the tribe of Benjamin in the biblical text. But Malamat sees no connection between the two except for their name.

Benjamin together with Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, are sometimes referred to by the collective name Beth Yoseph because of the biblical tradition that describes them as the sons of Rachel. They were also connected geographically because

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6 It was also thought that the Benjaminites received their name 'sons of south' because they settled south of the Ephraimites. See also S.Yeivin, 'בנימין' Enc.Miq.2 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), pp. 264-255.

7 As in op.cit. n.5.

8 E.g.Jud. 1:35
they were settled in the land successively and adjacent to each other. Thus, all the region in central Canaan was in the possession of the tribes of Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh.⁹

The territory of Benjamin is succinctly described in Joshua.¹⁰ No other tribe's territory, except for Judah, received such detailed description. This description¹¹ is divided into two sections. The first contains a detailed description of the borders of that territory¹² and the second¹³ lists the various towns of this territory. However, the second presents a problem because some of the towns listed are beyond the border line described in the first section, for example, Bethel, Ophrah and Chaphar-ammon. Furthermore, the list of towns consists of twelve whereas the concluding verse suggests fourteen towns.

It should be pointed out that the territory of Benjamin comprises a narrow strip, only about 38km from east to west and about 15km from north to south. However, the census in Num. 1:37 and 2:23 indicates that the tribe of Benjamin numbered thirty-five thousand men above the age of twenty and able to take up arms. This puts Benjamin in the eleventh place in population among the tribes. A later census in Num. 26:41 puts

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⁹ Later these three elements became integrated into one unit. It is worth considering this integration when trying to understand the importance of the role played by Benjamin who had produced the first Israelite king from this region. It is significant that after the schism this region became the most important part of the Israelite kingdom. It is also significant that in the prayer for the restoration of Israel [Ps.80:2-3], Joseph, Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh again represent Israel.

¹⁰ Josh. 18:11-28. See fig. 4.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Josh. 18:11-20.

Benjamin in seventh place because it increased to forty-five thousand and six hundred men above the age of twenty. When considering this number of young Benjaminites, not including women, children and old people, the allocation of such a small territory to them is dubious, even so a territory of that size might support the population stated in the text. Thus when considering the blessing of Benjamin as in Gen.49:27\(^\text{14}\) and as in Dt.33:12\(^\text{15}\), one may ask whether it is likely that the tribe of Benjamin, which produced the first king of Israel, would be allocated such a small territory? By comparison, Judah is described as comprising about forty-seven towns.\(^\text{16}\) Though in actual fact, archaeological surveys have not produced any support for this claim and A. Mazar\(^\text{17}\) states that only very few remains of Iron I settlements were discovered in the territory of Judah.\(^\text{18}\)

Given that comparison, it is possible that the relative size of Benjamin has been deliberately minimised in order to diminish its status. Such a presentation of Benjamin would not be surprising since it would be in line with the general presentation of anything associated with Saul (in this case, the Benjaminite' territory), in comparison

\(^{14}\) 'Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil'.

\(^{15}\) 'Of Benjamin he said: The beloved of the Lord rests in safety - the High God surrounds him all day long - the beloved rest between his shoulders'.

\(^{16}\) Josh.15. N.K.Gottwald [The Tribe of Yahweh (New York: Orbis, 1979, repr. 1993), p.253] rightly claims that the territorial lists in Joshua 13-19 do not represent territorial group in pre-monarchic Israel, since these are administration lists used by David and Solomon.


\(^{18}\) See also A.Ofer, 'All the Hill Country of Judah: From a Settlement Fringe to a Prosperous Monarchy', in (eds.) Na'am an and Finkelstein, ibid., pp.198-202.
with David (Judah). Alternatively, were there to have been no such playing down, the
date of the book of Joshua, compiled much later, must be taken into consideration.  
Thus by that time i.e. 650 BCE or later the territory of Benjamin was indeed reduced in
reality because David had annexed it for members of his own tribe.

There are several references in the biblical text which indicate a close relationship
between the tribe of Benjamin and Jabesh Gilead; for instance, in respect of the absence
of the people of Gilead from the war against Benjamin, the military aid Saul provided
to Jabesh-Gilead, and the rescue of Saul's remains from the wall of Beth-Shean by the
people of Gilead. This close relationship which existed between the two is also
indicated in the genealogical lists where identical family names appear under Benjamin.

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19 M. Noth [The Deuteronomistic History, (Sheffield: JSOTS, 1981), pp.36-37] claims that the
Deuteronomist had access to the material in Joshua which already existed in a fixed literary form,
and was written long before his time. But he took the whole account and altered it only by adding
an introduction and epilogue and some supplementary material. O. Eissfeldt [The Old Testament,
(Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p.220] showed that the Deuteronomist wrote ca 621 BCE, though
M. D. Kasuto [Enc. Mig. 3 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1958), p.546] suggests
that the various sources were compiled together ca 650 BCE, but additions and re-editing
continued to ca. 200 BCE. In my view the main work took place ca 520 BCE, and it was then
that the theme of sin - punishment - and being saved by YHWH was inserted. It was also during
that time that the book was given the name 'Joshua' after יַעֲשֹׁיָ֣הוּ the high priest [see
Zech. 3:1; Haggai 1:1]. This 'Joshua' was not only the high priest but also the religious leader of
the community which had just returned from exile. There are various similarities between the
figure of Joshua the high priest and Joshua in the book of Joshua, as well as similarities between
the events in Judah in the sixth century BCE and those described in 'Joshua' [detailed discussion
of these similarities will be published separately from this thesis].

20 See full discussion in Chapter VII.

21 Jabesh was one of the principal cities of Gilead. It is identified with modern Tell Abu-Kharaz,
approximately 20 miles south-east of the Sea of Galilee.

22 Jud. 20-21.

23 I Sam. 11.

and several Transjordanian tribes. The name *Shuppim and Huppim* both appear in the Benjaminite genealogy. This genealogy, as well as the reference in Obadiah which states that 'Benjamin shall possess Gilead', may wrongly lead to the assumption that Benjamin actually expanded to north Transjordan in territory. But this expansion is more likely to be through inter-marriage with the people of Gilead.

The sources give no clear indication whether the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead were Israelites or not. The impression given in Judges 21 and in I Sam 11 is that Jabesh was an Israelite city. But this assumption cannot be accepted. There are indications which strongly suggest that it was not. Firstly, the inhabitants seem to have been of non-Semitic background. This is evident from the practice of cremation and subsequent burial of the remaining bones of their dead. There is no evidence yet to associate any Semitic group with this practice. Textual and archaeological evidence indicate that it was a custom accepted among two groups, Anatolians and Greeks, and became a dominant

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26 I Chron. 7:12


28 Obadiah 19.

29 Jabesh-Gilead had strong links with Gibeah. According to Judges 21 the inhabitants of Jabesh refused to join the expedition against Gibeah and as a result were almost exterminated by the rest of the Israelite tribes. Saul's rescue of Jabesh has been seen as an act of returned loyalty to Jabesh. In my view these events occurred in reverse order, i.e. Saul's rescue occurred first and the events in Judges 21 occurred much later. See discussion of this under 'Was There a Concubine...' in Chapter VII.


form of burial for adults from the eleventh to the tenth centuries BCE.\textsuperscript{32} Secondly, another clue can be found in II Sam 2:5-7 which tells how David attempted to renew the treaty with the people of Jabesh. David would not have needed such a treaty if the people were Israelites.\textsuperscript{33}

From a geographical point of view the territory occupied by Benjamin has strategic and economic importance. It controls the "Way of Beth-horon". This route is most important strategically\textsuperscript{34} and is the only one mentioned by name in the Bible.\textsuperscript{35} This route is different from the other more southerly routes which generally ascend via 'stream beds', whereas the 'way of Beth-horon' climbs the steep ascent of Beth-horon to Gibeon and then to Jerusalem on the central ridge. Therefore, occupation of Beth-horon and its region were of prime importance in controlling the ascent to the hill country of Ephraim and Judah, and thus in allowing the control of central Palestine. Indeed, it has been shown throughout history that the control of this ascent meant control over Palestine.\textsuperscript{36} Moreover, controlling and securing this particular region was important because it helped to secure the land from invasion by foreign armies.


\textsuperscript{33} See chapter VII below.


\textsuperscript{35} I Sam 13:18.

This route was also important from an economic point of view, not only because it provided access to the various inland routes, but also because it provided the connection between the two major highways; the 'Coastal Highway' in the west and the King's Highway' in the east. This location made Gibeon the centre of trade between Transjordan and Egypt.

b. Gibeon

Gibeon was the largest and best known of the Benjaminite cities, it was described as 'a large city, like one of the royal cities..." The flat land around Gibeon was suitable for agricultural production and the slopes beyond were suitable for vineyards. The karstic character of the soil meant there were many springs of which the largest was at Gibeon. This richness in water sources and agricultural land indicate a flourishing economy as evidenced by the large number of pots found as well as by the frequent occurrences of wine storage rooms.

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37 See discussion in Chapter II.


39 Gibeon has been identified with modern el-Jib, 9km north from Jerusalem. The discovery at el-Jib, in excavations 1956, 1957 and 1959, of thirty-one jar handles inscribed with the name gb'n has confirmed this identification.


41 Karstic topography is a rocky type of countryside found in limestone areas. Ground water makes its way through the rock and dissolves it, and streams flow below the surface [A.Watt, Longman Illustrated Dictionary of Geology, 1982].
The biblical text indicates a number of cultic centres used by the Israelites during this period. These are Shiloh, Gilgal, Mizpah and Bethel. Until the reign of Solomon there seems to be no mention of Israelites worshipping at Gibeon. My suggestion is that, although Gibeon is not specifically mentioned before Solomon, it was probably already the largest place of worship. I Kgs. 3:2 states that: 'The people of Gibeon were sacrificing at the high place, however, because no house had yet been built for the name of the Lord'. Furthermore, Solomon went to Gibeon to offer the sacrifices: 'The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place: Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar'.

This presentation in the text of the importance of that sanctuary at Gibeon has been explained as reflecting a desire to relate the old to the new way of worship about to begin; though others rejected it as a fabrication of the narrator of Kings intended to justify Solomon's inaugural visit to Gibeon and to bring his action in line with the priestly law in Lev. 17:8-9.

These explanations are misleading and Gibeon should be seriously considered as having played an important role in Israelite cultic life. My view is based on several considerations. Firstly, it is implausible that Gibeon was insignificant throughout the period between Samuel and Saul and David; its cultic popularity does not make sense

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42 I Kgs. 3:4.
43 De Vaux op. cit. n.4, p.297.
unless the sanctuary had a long history behind it.\textsuperscript{45} It could not have suddenly emerged as
so important in the reign of Solomon. Secondly, the description of worship at Gibeon
makes sense and is quite convincing since Gibeon is described as a Levite city.\textsuperscript{46}
Moreover, according to the Chronicler the 'Tent of Meeting' (אֲרֵזָת מֵאָרָא) was there.\textsuperscript{47}
Gibeon probably served as a major cultic place from the early days of Israelite settlement
there. The main reason for the lack of emphasis upon Gibeon in the text is probably
because Saul's family is strongly associated with Gibeon and they may have been the first
Benjaminites to settle there.\textsuperscript{48}

Archaeological excavations indicate that the site was not occupied at all prior to
the period of the settlement, i.e. Iron I period.\textsuperscript{49} Coote and Whitelam\textsuperscript{50} argue: 'the fact
that such sites as Jericho, Ai and Gibeon, key cities in the biblical account of the
'conquest', provide no archaeological evidence of occupation during this period
undermines the conquest model, and forces the search for alternative explanations'. It is

\textsuperscript{45} De Vaux, op.cit. n. 4, p. 306.

\textsuperscript{46} Josh. 21:17.

\textsuperscript{47} I Chron. 16:39, 21:29; II Chron. 1:3.

\textsuperscript{48} This can be supported by Blenkinsopp [op.cit. n.40, p.4] who suggests that the sanctuary that
David visited (II Sam 21:1) was at Gibeon. He also argues that the first altar Saul
built (I Sam 14:33) to YHWH was in the Gibeonite region and must be 'the great stone which is
at Gibeon' (II Sam 20:8). According to Blenkinsopp, this stone has cultic significance (Josh 24:26
& I Sam 6:14-16) and may be identified with the altar on which Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon I
Kgs.3:4.

& I. Finkelstein, op.cit. n.17, p.12; R.B. Coote & K.W. Whitelam, \textit{The Emergence of Early

\textsuperscript{50} Coote & Whitelam, ibid.
not my intention to discuss the 'conquest' period here, nor 'Ai or Jericho. But, as far as Gibeon is concerned, here is the alternative explanation demanded by Coote and Whitelam. Thus no trace of Late Bronze Age settlement was discovered at Gibeon because there was no Hivite settlement there, despite the statement in Joshua. In the following Iron I period, Gibeon was first settled by Benjaminites. The name 'Gibeonites' should not be understood as the name of an ethnic group, but merely as a name given to the inhabitants of Gibeon. There was no pre-Israelite group there, i.e. Hivite, as suggested in Joshua 9. This story of the Gibeonites was a later addition to Joshua designed to provide a background to and justify David's slaughter of Saul's family.

The connection between Saul's family and Gibeon has been established by A. Demsky and S. Yeivin who demonstrated the link between Saul's genealogical lists in I Chronicles 8:29-40; 9:35-44 and the names inscribed on the jar handles from el-Jib. A close study of these genealogies provides some evidence relating to Benjaminites'

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51 This problem concerning the 'Ai is discussed in chapter VII under the heading 'Was There a Concubine...'

52 This would be the same as calling the inhabitants of London 'Londoners' or those of Jerusalem 'Jerusalemites', jerushalmim in Hebrew.

53 See discussion under 'Saul and the Gibeonites' in Chapter III.

54 A. Demsky, 'The genealogy of Gibeon (I Chronicles 9:35-44): Biblical and Epigraphic consideration' BASOR 202, (1971), pp.16-23. S.D.Walter ['Saul of Gibeon', JSOT 52 (1991), pp. 61-76] points out that Saul is the only person whom the Chronicler does not connect to one of Jacob's twelve sons. Instead he is linked with Gibeon which is regarded in tradition as Canaanite, suggesting, therefore that this is the reason why Saul cannot be king and David is the futur king. Though it is obvious that the Chronicler had deliberately presented Saul in that way in service of his bias in favour of David.


56 This is fully discussed in Chapter III under 'Saul and the Gibeonites'.
settlement. The Benjaminite group at Gibeon was associated with the Shechemites, the only other group in the Bible regarded as Hivites. After the Israelite penetration there must have been a considerable integration with the local people through marriage. This is reflected in the genealogical lists in Chronicles. These lists relate only to the Benjaminites who settled at Gibeon, their eponym being called ‘the father of Gibeon’. This title could indicate a head of a large family, probably quite wealthy and influential. Three generations after settling there that family produced Saul, the son of Kish as the first Israeliite king.

There are scholars who reject the connection between Saul and Gibeon because, they claim, the reference in Chronicles is late and unreliable. But that argument stands on weak ground. The argument by A. Demsky and S. Yeivin using the epigraphic material from Gibeon is much more convincing.

If we return to the reference in Joshua, in which Gibeon is listed as one of the Levite cities, a question would be raised as to the involvement of the Benjaminite group, i.e. Saul's family, with the sanctuary. The sources for the list of the Levitical cities are not clear. Joshua lists forty-eight towns divided equally among the tribes, though this list is repeated with some variations in I Chron. 6:39-66. On the one hand, Deuteronomy describes these Levites scattered throughout the land as depending on the charity of

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57 Gen. 34:2.

58 In I Sam 9:1 Kish, Saul's father is described as כְּבָרוֹ שֶׁם לְאָדָם which is taken to mean a man of wealth.

59 See also Williamson, op.cit. n.44, p.85.

60 21:17.
those who possessed wealth. On the other hand Levite towns are described as important centres, where the Levites controlled the land around. It is therefore difficult to assert exactly what the Levite system was based on and how it functioned, but this should not exclude the possibility that the Kish family was involved in the cultic centre at Gibeon. This hypothesis can be regarded as strengthened by the reference to the incident I Sam 13, where Saul offered the sacrifice without waiting for Samuel and thus was regarded as doing so illicitly, as well as by the reference to Saul taking part in ecstasy rituals in I Sam 10:9-11. With the emergence of the monarchic office there may have been demands to separate it from the religious institution, a problem well expressed in the tension between Saul and Samuel.

An additional reason as to why the sources are silent about Gibeon as a major cultic place could be that the intention is to draw attention away from David's action regarding the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem. But the reference to the location of the ark at Kiriath-jearim is dubious and needs careful examination.

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61 De Vaux, op.cit. n.4, pp.366-367.

62 See also the point made about Abinadab, below. Within the context of this discussion, Dt. 33:12 states: 'of Benjamin he said: the beloved of the LORD rests in safety - the high God surrounds him day long - the beloved rests between his shoulders'; see also Ps. 68:27-8 (Hebrew) which might give an insight into Saul's possible cultic background.

63 K. Van Der Toom, 'Saul and the Rise of Israelite State Religion' VT 43(1993), pp.519-42 argues that the rule under Saul meant a break from the old order; the religion of the Saulide state began in the army, since warfare in the ancient world was not purely a secular matter[p.528], and also that Saul chose YHWH as the patron god of the state[p.541].
In Joshua 9:17 Kiriath-jearim is cited as one of the four Gibeonite cities and located about 10km north west of Jerusalem. Kiriath-jearim is also referred to in the incident described in Joshua 10; again, in I Sam 6 Kiriath-jearim is associated with the return of the ark from the Philistines, after the battle at Ebenezer. It is stated:

So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim saying, 'the Philistines have returned the ark of the Lord. Come down and take it up to you. And the people of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the Lord, and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill.

It should be noted that there seems to be a contradiction in connection with the location of Kiriath-jearim. From the story in Joshua 9-10 and 18:14 Kiriath-jearim is located in Benjamin. Yet the Chronicler (probably as part of his tendency to Judaize everything) places Kiriath-jearim in Judah. This cannot be correct, because the Chronicler based his location on I Sam 6:2, which in itself is a distorted verse and does not, in any case, indicate with any clarity that Kiriath-jearim is in Judah. Moreover, it is illogical to suggest that such a place existed in Judah. Why would the ark be located in such an unknown place in Judah, south of Jerusalem? Jerusalem at the time was still Jebusite and had not yet been captured by David. Finally, the Israelites gathered for worship at several cultic places such as Gilgal, Mizpah, Bethel and most probably Gibeon as well. Why then would they want to place the ark in an unknown place in Judah?

Significantly, the editor of Joshua 18 was probably aware of the contradiction and therefore, in an attempt to correct it, added that Kiriath-jearim is a town belonging

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64 The other three cities are; Chephirah, Beeroth and Gibeon. They are close to each other in distance and are situated in Benjaminite territory.

65 I Sam 6:21-7:1a.

to Benjamin. On the other hand L.Rost tries to solve this problem by suggesting that Baalat-judah is another name of Kiriath-jeearim. However, K.Yamada raises doubts as to whether the author of the story of the ark (I Sam 4-6 especially 6:21-7:1) spoke about the transfer of the ark to Kiriath-jeearim (though this particular passage shows that the people of Kiriath-jeearim were involved in the transfer of the ark to the house of Abinadab).

By rejecting the location of Kiriath-jeearim as being in Judah, and placing it instead near Gibeon, I would still argue that the ark could not have been placed at Kiriath-jeearim. The issue which still remains is that Kiriath-jeearim does not play any role in the life of the Israelites. After all it was a Hivite settlement, not an Israelite one. My suggestion is that it is possible that the ark had been placed at the great cultic centre that was at Gibeon. It is stated that the ark was placed in the house of Abinadab ba-gibeah = in gibeah. Although gibeah has been translated literally as 'hill', it is also possible that gibeah (גבעות), in this instance, is a misspelling of Gibeon (נגב). And

67 This method of amending contradictions within the text is perhaps a form of early 'midrash' and can be traced elsewhere in the biblical text [see 'The battle in the Valley of Elah', below].


70 II Sam 6:3.

71 I shall come back to this point again in the discussion below.

72 A.Bartal 86:3 (1981), pp.305-8.] locates this not at Kiriath-jeearim but near it; the only such place near Kiriath-jeearim is Gibeon. J.Blenkinsopp [Gibeon and the Gibeonites from the Settlement to Solomon (Oxford: Bodleian Library, Ph.D Thesis, 1967), p.214] claims that Gibeon is not mentioned as a cultic centre in the time of Saul due to topographical error in the text, thus 'Gibeah' in II Sam 5:25 and 21:6 should be read Gibeon instead.
since Gibeon was such a great cultic place as described in I Kgs. 3:2-4 it is surely more logical to suggest that the ark was housed there. There is no other more suitable place for it. This claim can be supported by the following two quotations:

a. 'For the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon.

b. Then Solomon and the whole of the assembly with him went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for God's Tent of Meeting, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness, was there. But David had brought-out the ark of God up from Kiriyath-jearim to the place that David prepared for it...\(^73\)

Most commentators overlook the significance of David's removal of the ark from Kiriyath-jearim, and instead focus their attention on its destination, Jerusalem.\(^74\) The answer to this approach might be understood by considering Williamson's comments on II Chron. 1:1-9.\(^75\) Williamson explains that the Chronicler's work on Solomon's reign is dominated, more than is the case in I Kg.1-11, by Solomon's building of the temple. But, in my view, from the last verse with its reference to David, as one must realise, readers would expect the ark to be at Gibeon because the high place and the Tent of Meeting (אמונהם) were there. Therefore it is more logical that the ark should be there too.

The Tent of Meeting and the ark are inseparable, as can be seen in the following discussion.

\(^73\) II Chron. 1:3-4.

\(^74\) See for instance G.H. Jones, 1 & 2 Chronicles (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), p.36; Williamson op.cit. n.44, pp.192-194; Eissfeldt, op.cit. n.19, p.537.

\(^75\) Williamson, op.cit. n.44, p. 192.
In order to understand fully the significance of David's action relating to the ark, it will be useful to evaluate the importance of the ark as a cultic object, and its connection with the Tent of Meeting.

The ark of the covenant (ארון הברית) was a chest made of acacia wood, measuring four feet long, two and a half feet wide and two and a half feet high. It could be carried by poles passed through rings on either side. The chest and the poles were both covered with gold. According to Dt.10:1-5 Moses built the ark at YHWH's command and put inside it the tablets of the law. It was called the ark of the covenant because it contained the tablets of the covenant which YHWH made with His people. But this was not the only important aspect of the ark. Moses was commanded to make a cover for it of pure gold so that two cherubs could be fixed on it, one on each side. But according to G.von Rad this cannot be regarded merely as a finishing touch, because this cover forms a very special part of the ark. It was the secret place where YHWH spoke to Moses directly, where personal contact is kept between God and the people. The place from which God speaks is fixed exactly:

\[ ...מִצְבַּתְךָ מִשְׁמַר הַכֶּרֶבֶּנֶשׁ מֵאֶשׁר תֶּעַנְתָּ בַּשִּׁירָת הָעָדָר ...\]

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77 De Vaux, op.cit. n. 4, 297.
78 Dt.9:9
79 Ex.25:17.
81 Ex.25:22.
This shows, that the ark did not function merely as a safe place for the tablets. It may safely be said that although the מִשְׁכָּב is part of the ark, it is in fact of greater significance than the ark itself.\(^2\)

G. von Rad showed that the relationship between the 'Ark of YHWH' and the 'Tent of Meeting' is very close. The notion that YHWH dwells in the tent is clearly found in P. This is mainly because of the frequent use of the phrase 'before YHWH' in cultic activities, for example, offering sacrifices, slaughtering, making atonement and laying shew-bread. All these activities take place 'before' the God who is thought of as being in the tent.\(^3\) According to Lev. 4:7 the altar of incense stood before YHWH. There is an opposing view to this which suggests that YHWH does not dwell in the tent, but appears there from time to time.\(^4\) But whether YHWH dwelt in the tent or appeared there from time to time, the close connection between the ark and the tent remains. This connection shows why the ark could not be placed separately in Kiryath-jeearim and that it is more likely have been situated at Gibeon with the tent.

As far as Deuteronomy is concerned, however, the ark has no cultic significance, nor any relation to sacrificial worship, nor is it the dwelling place of YHWH.\(^5\) Consequently, every trace of magical belief is omitted and the ark becomes merely the place where the tablets were kept. Moreover, what is striking in Deuteronomy is the

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\(^2\) De Vaux, op. cit. n.4, 73.

\(^3\) For example; Lev. 1:5, 14:23.

\(^4\) For example; Ex. 16:10;

\(^5\) De Vaux, op. cit. n.4, p.106.
absence of the tent and its association with the ark. There is however one mention of the
tent in Deuteronomy,⁸⁶ but it is attributed to the Elohistic commentators. In my view,
these accounts regarding the ark and the tent should not be seen as a contradiction but as
a development in the religion of Israel. The ark and the tent played a major role in the
cultic life of Israel for many generations. Evidently this changed later, possibly after the
building of the temple, or by the time of the Deuteronomist when their function was
unknown, except for the ark which merely provided a safe place for the tablets of the
law. One may also assume that Dt. 31:14 was written after the exile, in which case the
ark would have been lost anyway. However, the description of the ark and an
understanding of its function and place in Israelite cultic practice in the period of Saul
and David, would give great insight as to its significance and would explain why it was
so important for David to remove the ark from Gibeon (or Kiriath-jearim). David wanted
complete control over Israel through both monarchic and religious office.

If we return to the Tent of Meeting at Gibeon, it would seem that the ark and the
tent are inseparable. The ark could not in any way be located at Kiryat-jearim, but only
at Gibeon. Thus the reference in II Chron. 1:4 which suggests that David brought the ark
from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem, is intended partly to justify this transfer and to diminish
Gibeon as an important cultic Benjaminite city.

Earlier in this discussion mention has been made of the ark’s being at the house
of Abinadab.⁸⁷ This account does not give any clue as to the identity of this Abinadab,

⁸⁶ Dt. 31:14.

⁸⁷ II Sam 6:3.
though it is stated that his sons Uzza and Ahio carried the ark. Now to help identify Abinadab, one reference in I Sam 16:8 states that he was David's eldest brother. But Abinadab appears in I Sam 31:2 as one of Saul's three sons who was killed at Gilboa.\(^\text{88}\) The names Uzza and Ahio also appear in the genealogy of Benjamin in I Chron. 8:7, 14. But this does not help when trying to establish their identity. However, all the clues lead to a connection with Saul; i.e. Abinadab being Saul's son, and the house of Abinadab being at Gibeon. It would be plausible to assume therefore that Saul's son, Abinadab, was in charge of looking after the ark.\(^\text{89}\)

It has been explained\(^\text{90}\) that striking Uzza expresses YHWH's anger against members of Saul's family who looked after the ark, since they symbolised the old rule. Instead He chose the new members from David's family to carry out that task, thus representing the transfer of the ark from Saul's old rule to David. This is expressed in David's words to Michal: '... it was before the Lord who chose me in place of your father and all his household, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord...\(^\text{91}\) If the ark was transferred from Saul's home city, then the placing of Michal in the story is not accidental, but an expression of the bitter feelings among Saul's family towards David's action which was looked upon as an act of theft from king Saul.\(^\text{92}\)

\(^\text{88}\) The same is stated in I Chron. 8:33, 10:2, 9:39. In I Sam 14:49 the name Abinadab does not appear, instead Ishvi is mentioned. Therefore, it is possible that Ishvi and Abinadab are the names referring to the same son (?).

\(^\text{89}\) See also Yamada, op.cit. n.69, p.27.

\(^\text{90}\) Ibid, p.28.

\(^\text{91}\) II Sam 6:21.

\(^\text{92}\) See discussion in Chapter VII.
David usurped the throne but was not satisfied merely with that. He eliminated Saul's family and rushed to renew political relations with Saul's allies. But even that was not enough. David also wanted to eradicate Saul's memory from people's minds, as well as to control the cult. As long as people went to the high place at Gibeon for worship they would remember Saul because Gibeon was his home city. One of the ways to erase Saul's memory was to transfer the place of central worship to another city. Thus David moved the ark to Jerusalem, the new worship centre.

Considering the discussion in this chapter so far, it has become apparent that Gibeon was a Benjaminitc city and that it is quite likely that it played important political, economic and religious roles in the life of the Israelites. Indeed, J. Blenkinsopp, in attempting to explain Saul's actions against the Gibeonites, argues that Saul's zeal for the people of Israel and Judah was due to religious, political and strategic considerations. The Gibeonite cities, which formed an alien enclave, cut across the centre of his kingdom. Therefore Saul wanted to integrate this section into his kingdom and by doing so alienated the Gibeonites. But considering this and my earlier discussion, I would argue instead that Saul had no need to make Gibeon his capital. It is quite possible that Saul grew up in Gibeon and after he became king moved to Gibeah.

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93 Ibid.

94 Blenkinsopp, op. cit. n.40, pp.1-7.

95 Ibid, p.3.

96 See 'Saul and the Gibeonites' in chapter III.
where he took over the earlier Philistine post; then Gibeah not Gibeon became his capital city which he renamed after himself as Gibeah of Saul.\footnote{See discussion of Gibeah in chapter VI.}

The discussion has so far shed light on the reasons for Saul's election to kingship. It would seem that Saul came from one of the most prominent families in Gibeon. Kish, Saul's father, was the son of the 'Father of Gibeon', and so must have been regarded as a man of high status. The family might well have had great influence and political skills from both of which Saul must have benefited a great deal. Thus it would not be surprising that he was regarded as the best choice for the monarchical office. But that was not enough. Saul had to prove his leadership militarily, a task at which he showed remarkable skill.

c. Saul's Battles and Military Achievements

Before entering this discussion it is important to explain that the accounts dealing with Saul's activities are either clouded by the various traditions relating to Saul's 'sins' or overglossed with the heroic stories of David and his accession to the throne, with a consequent underplaying of Saul's positive achievements, whether political, social or economic. Except for that against Ammon, every successful battle in the account is distorted either by its association with Saul's sins, for which he is severely condemned,\footnote{For example, the success over the Philistines, chapter 13, and over Amalek, chapter 15.} or by virtue of that success being attributed to someone else.\footnote{Chapters 13-14 to Jonathan, chapter 17 to David.}
with Saul's battles in this chapter, my aim is to examine the sources and bring to light the possible political and economic reasons which may have motivated Saul to campaign. Such an examination will help to illuminate the general situation in Israel during Saul's reign.

According to I Samuel, when the people demanded a king, they not only wanted to be like other nations\textsuperscript{100} but they also wanted a king who would go out before them to fight their wars.\textsuperscript{101} Although Saul possessed all the qualities of a king and was initially accepted by the people, he still had to prove his military abilities before his kingship was consolidated and completely accepted.

The impression given in the book of Samuel is that the Philistines were the most threatening enemy of Israel and therefore one would expect that Saul's first battle would be carried out against the Philistines. But as has already been discussed,\textsuperscript{102} the emergence of monarchy in Israel was not the result of the Philistines' oppression but rather the result of various socio-economic developments. N. Na'am\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{an}}\textsuperscript{103} claims that there is no evidence to indicate that the Israelites were subjugated by the Philistines, and that Saul's rise and his coronation are associated with the battle against the Ammonites rather than with the Philistines.

\textsuperscript{100} I Sam 8:5b.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 8:20.

\textsuperscript{102} See chapter II above.

\textsuperscript{103} N. Na'am\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{an}}, 'The Pre-Deuteronomistic Story of King Saul and Its Historical Significance', \textit{CBQ} 54:4 (1992), p.657.
According to Na'aman\textsuperscript{104} this successful war against the Ammonites represented an important stage in the development of the unification of the tribes on both sides of the Jordan, but at the same time created tensions with the Philistines who dominated the coastal plain. Therefore, the Philistines' attack was intended to extend control into the hill country. It was only by reaction to their advance that Saul's war of liberation against the Philistines began. It would therefore seem, as Na'aman concludes,\textsuperscript{105} that the Philistines' occupation of the hill country was the direct result of the emergence of the Israelite state and not the reverse. My views are similar to those of Na'aman, except that I would argue that Saul's rise was the result of the socio-economic changes, including those affecting social stratification and administrative organisation, and not the result of the battle against Ammon. Thus the people of Jabesh-Gilead sought help from Saul, the most logical explanation for this being that Saul was already an established king of known reputation in Cisjordan, with a strong military force.\textsuperscript{106} The result of the victory over the Ammonites gave Saul the opportunity to prove his military skill, an important factor which helped to consolidate his rule. This achievement led to his coronation by the people.

In further support of Na'aman's claim that the Israelites were not subjugated to the Philistines, in my view there was no confrontation at all with the Philistines prior to Saul's accession. The narratives describing these conflicts show that they are not in an appropriate chronological order. This has been demonstrated earlier in this thesis with

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, p.656.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, p.657.

regard to the events in Judges 13-16. It is also quite possible that the event described in I Sam 4:1-18, i.e. the battle of Ebenezer, is part of the 'ark narrative' and does not belong in its present place in Samuel. As to the story in I Sam 7:5-12, it was most probably composed by the Deuteronomist not only to elevate Samuel's image but also to depict him as a warrior not less worthy than Saul.

d. The Battle Against The Ammonites

The first opportunity in which Saul could prove his military skills arose at the time of the conflict between Nahash king of Ammon and Jabesh-Gilead (fig.5). According to I Sam 11, Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh. Although the men of Jabesh were willing to submit to Nahash by a treaty, his conditions were quite harsh: 'the right eye of each of you be gouged out! Then I shall make reproach upon all Israel'.

An important contribution to the understanding of this passage was made by the discovery of the manuscript of Samuel in Cave 4 at Qumran. The manuscript contains

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107 See Chapter III under 'Saul and Samson...'

108 This will be developed and published separately from this thesis.

109 I Sam 11:2

110 This manuscript (4QSam) was discovered in the excavations of Cave 4 Qumran under the direction of the late Roland de Vaux in September 1952. The fragments (about twenty seven of them) were cleaned, assembled and given preliminary publication in 1953 by F.M.Cross. These fragments are considered to be the most fully preserved of the biblical scrolls from Cave 4. They are dated to ca. 50 BCE. Its text is non-Masoretic and much closer to the Septuagint than to our received text (Frank M.Cross, 'The Ammonite Oppression of the Tribes of Gad and Reuben: Missing verses from I Samuel 11 Found in 4QSamuel', History, Historiography and Interpretation (eds.) Tadmor M. & Weinfeld M. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), p.148.
a long addition which introduces chapter 11 in I Samuel and was restored by F.M.Cross as follows:

6. [And Na]hash, king of the Ammonites, sorely oppressed the children of Gad and the children of Reuben, and he gouged out all their right eyes and struck terror and dread in Israel. There was not left one among the children of Israel beyond Jordan who se right eye was not gouged out by Nahash king of the children of Ammon; except seven thousand men
7. [fled from] the children of Ammon and entered Jabesh-Gilead. About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-Gilead/ and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash 10. [the Ammonite, "Make] with [us a covenant and we shall become your subjects."] Nahash [the Ammonite said to them, "After this fashion will] I make [a covenant with you..."

It would seem that Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been oppressing the tribes of Gad and Reuben, gouging out the right eye of all Israelite men in Transjordan, except for seven thousand men who managed to escape to Jabesh-Gilead. A month later Nahash went and encamped against Jabesh to punish them for sheltering his enemies.

Some textual critics' first reaction to the addition in 4QSam was to propose that this addition is a late haggadic expansion of post-biblical times. But F.M.Cross claims

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111 Ibid, pp.149-150. יִמְצַאָב יבְיָר בָּיֵת נֵבֶד רַבָּב הָאָמוּן מַעָלְוּכָה נָהָשׁ (וּדִמיַר בְּתֹאֵן). According to Cross [op.cit. n.109, p.150] this usage is well known and especially frequent in the seventh-six centuries BCE, for example, Jer.32:44.

112 The Ammonites were a semitic people. They spoke a Canaanite language, similar to Hebrew. They occupied the area of modern Amman in Transjordan. Their capital was Rabbath-Ammon, and it is assumed that they occupied this area between the twelfth to sixth centuries BCE [P.K.McCarter, I Samuel (New York: AB Doubleday, 1980), p.202].
that there is 'no evidence of the extra paragraph originating in haggadic addition.' Cross emphasises that what we have before us is straight historical narrative. The text contains no didactic elements, theological bias, nor folkloristic motifs. One may also argue that the episode as it stands in I Sam 11, without the omitted paragraph, is incomplete. Why should the people of Jabesh be so severely punished? Nahash is not satisfied with the surrender of the city to him and its subjects becoming slaves. He insists on inflicting eye gouging. The material found in 4QSam gives the answer. From Nahash's point of view, Jabesh was giving shelter to an ancestral enemy, Reuben and Gad, from his own domain. Thus the requirement of mutilation as a term of the treaty can be understood from this background. Cross further explains that on the whole, the preserved text from Qumran 'makes excellent narrative and historical sense, as part of the Deuteronomist work'. P.K. McCarter also states that the story about Nahash preserves substantial historical information despite the mixture of legendary features which it contains.

The question is, why did Nahash inflict such severe punishment on Gad and Reuben in the first place? It would seem that the reason for the conflict between Ammon and the Israelite inhabitants in Transjordan is that both sides were fighting for the same territory, i.e. the region between River Arnon in the south and River Jabbok in the north,

\[113\] Cross, op.cit. n.109, p.156. A different view was expressed by A.Rofe [ op. cit. n.109, p.156] who claims that although 4QSam offers an interesting reading supported by another ancient authority, it must still be treated as secondary, though it is significant in that it provides new evidence about late scribal activity in revising biblical manuscript.

\[114\] Ibid, p.157

a region which traditionally once belonged to the Amorites. But the kings of Ammon saw this as their own territory and always claimed that Reuben and Gad occupied Ammonite soil. Even though there is no direct reference to this conflict in our sources in Samuel, a reflection of this can be found in Judges 10:6-9,11. This prolonged tension between the two sides probably lasted a long period of time. It should be remembered that prior to and during the Iron I period, various groups on both sides of the Jordan are in a process of settling down and establishing their own territories. Thus the conflict between Ammon and Israel indicates that the emergence of Israel was concurrent with the emergence of other states in the region.

Josephus's account of the episode with Ammon follows the overall sequence and content of the Qumran manuscript.

For this monarch had settled beyond river Jordan, having invaded their territory with a large and warlike army. Reducing their cities to servitude, he not only by force and violence secured their subjection in the present, but by cunning and ingenuity weakened them in order that they might never again be able to revolt and escape from servitude to him; for he cut out the right eyes of all who either surrendered to him under oath or captured by right of war. This he did with intent - since the left eye was covered by the buckler - to render them utterly unserviced.

Josephus also changes the existing traditions e.g. he omits the reference to the seven thousand men's flight to the north. From a historical point of view, this is an important detail because it explains the motivation of Nahash in encamping against

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117 Cross, op. cit. n.109,p.157.
119 Ibid.
Jabesh-Gilead, which is located far to the north beyond the borders claimed by Ammon.¹²⁰

Josephus¹²¹ further states that Saul killed many of the Ammonites including Nahash, a detail which is omitted from the text in I Sam 11. Furthermore, Josephus adds that Saul was not satisfied with merely rescuing Jabesh and continued his campaign against the Ammonites, conquered their whole land, took much booty and returned a glorious man.¹²²

The details describing Saul's rescue of Jabesh-Gilead prove that he was a skilled tactician. On hearing the news from Jabesh-Gilead, Saul was enraged and summoned the western tribes to meet at Bezek.¹²³ Saul created a false impression in order to make the Ammonites believe that the men of Jabesh would submit to them the next day. But, at the same time, Saul and his men (about three hundred thousand and thirty¹²⁴) made their way throughout the night to arrive at Jabesh by dawn. He divided his army into three groups to surround the Ammonites and take them by surprise, the battle lasting until

¹²⁰ In Judges 11:13 king of Ammon claims that all the land north of the river Arnon and as far as the Jabbok belongs to Ammon.

¹²¹ Josephus, op.cit. n.118, 72-82.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Bezek is identified with modern Khirbet-ibziq, located 12 miles northeast of Shechem on the western slope of the Jordan valley, opposite Gilead [McCarter, op.cit. n.112, p.204]. Bezek was very important strategically; overlooking essential routes from Ephraim to the Jordan valley and Beth-Shean [B. Mazar, כָּמָה Enc.Miq. II (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), p.45.]

¹²⁴ I Sam 11:8.
midday. Cross\textsuperscript{125} concludes that Saul's great victory strengthened the recognition of his kingship throughout Israel and was thus celebrated in a great feast at Gilgal.

It has been suggested by various scholars that the episode of Saul's rescue of Jabesh-Gilead is similar to the type of stories found in the book of Judges\textsuperscript{126}. In these stories an enemy threatens or oppresses an Israelite group, then a deliverer, chosen by YHWH, is raised up to respond to the cry of the people and YHWH, not the deliverer, is the real hero in the war.\textsuperscript{127} But although there are similar elements in the account of Saul's rescue of Jabesh, it is also different from them for two reasons. The first is that even though the region affected by the threat is localised, all Israel is said to have been involved in the activity,\textsuperscript{128} and Saul, unlike the judges, became king. Therefore the temporary situation of the judges and their limited geographical areas became a permanent pan-Israelite institution.\textsuperscript{129} Thus Saul's accession and rule mark a development in Israelite leadership and social reorganisation.

\textsuperscript{125} Cross, op.cit. n.109,p.158


\textsuperscript{127} See A.D.H. Mayes, Judges (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), pp. 18-19; McCarter, op.cit. n.112, pp. 205-6.

\textsuperscript{128} In the book of Judges one finds stories of isolated disputes which develop into isolated battles between individual groups and their neighbours. But, according to M.Noth [op.cit n.19, p.44] this important detail was ignored by the Deuteronomist because he gave each hero the credit of liberating the whole of Israel from a foreign oppressor. Mayes [Ibid] explains further that this framework is clearly independent and secondary to the stories. On the one hand, the stories relate to the exploits of the individuals and groups (or tribes) against their enemy, but on the other hand, this framework introduces a new idea, i.e. the sin of the people brought about the conditions for these exploits. It would therefore seem, according to Mayes, that this framework represents a particular stage in the history of the stories which clearly serves a theological purpose.

\textsuperscript{129} McCarter, op.cit. n.112, p.206.
e. The Battle at Michmash

After the victory against the Ammonites Saul did not disperse his army but concentrated his power in the central hill country. The way in which Saul deployed his army indicates an organised resistance force. It would seem that the first battle against the Philistines was initiated by Saul, possibly with the intention of getting rid of the Philistines' power from within the hill country, thus uniting the Israelites without the gaps created by the Philistines' strongholds there. Saul gathered three thousand fighters and divided them into two groups. The main group consisted of two thousand men and was under Saul's command. It was located at Michmash (north of Gibeah) and in the hills of Bethel.130 The other group of one thousand men was under the command of his son Jonathan and was located at Geba-Benjamin. I Sam 13:3 states that Jonathan131 defeated the Philistine prefect (גְּבָא) at Geba, but it is quite possible, as B. Mazar suggests,132 that the garrison was at Gibeah, not Geba.133 After the defeat of the garrison at Gibeah, Saul made it his capital and renamed it after himself as 'Gibeah of Saul'.

It was obviously anticipated that the assassination of the Philistine prefect at Gibeah would provoke a military reaction from the Philistines. Saul by now was located

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130 I Sam 13:2

131 See further discussion at the end of this section.

132 B. Mazar, 'םיבת' Enc.Miq. 2 (1954) p.413; Na'am an, op.cit. n.103, p.646.

133 There seems to be confusion in the text regarding place names based on the root gb'. These names are variations of the same place name and are discussed in Chapter VI.
at Gibeah and the Philistines moved into and encamped at Michmash. It is not clear whether the Israelites fled before the Philistines because they were genuinely frightened of them or because this was a strategic flight because Saul, knowing his army's military weakness compared with that of the Philistines, was thus playing for time in order to reorganise his men. When the Philistines moved to Michmash they created a situation in which they were almost face-to-face with the Israelites across the Michmash pass. From that site the Philistines sent raiding parties in three squadrons (_children of war_). They were sent to raid fields and collect supplies for their army. It has been explained that the raid by the Philistines did not aim to confront Israelite warriors but to rob and lower the morale of the people.

One of these squadrons went towards Beth-horon, the main pass through which they entered the hill country. They moved in that direction not only to raid Israelite fields, but probably also to secure this pass. The pass was the main route through which they could form contact with their troops in the hill country. The Michmash pass was quite important also because it was in control of the net of routes from west to east (e.g. from Beth-horon to Jericho and Jordan), and from north to south (e.g. from

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134 (See fig.7) Michmash is located 10km north north-east of Jerusalem. It was a Benjaminitite town located on the strategic pass (Wadi es-Suwenit) which stretches from the Jordan valley into the hills of Ephraim and west into Beth-horon. The Philistines controlled the hill that overlooked the Wadi from the north, whereas the Israelites encamped in the south [McCarter, op.cit. n.112, p.238].

135 1 Sam 13:17


137 This activity was not unique to the Philistines. It was a practice carried out by various armies in the ancient world. That was the easiest way to provide supplies to any army on campaign.
Shechem to Jerusalem), therefore providing further explanations, political, strategic and economic, as to why Saul was interested in fully integrating the whole region under his control.

Considering the limitations of the weaponry of the Israelites, Saul knew he could not stand a chance of victory against the sophisticated Philistines' army. I Sam 13:22 states that only Saul and Jonathan possessed swords and spears, whereas in 13:5 the Philistines are described in complete contrast as having chariotry and cavalry. These references may be a little exaggerated, though they might indicate the difficulties faced by Saul when leading his men into battle, knowing in advance the risks that he would be taking. These difficulties were mainly due to the fact that the Israelite army was newly formed. Being aware of these limitations Saul developed tactics by which he could achieve maximum results with minimum losses. These included the element of surprise attack which proved successful in the battle against the Ammonites and in the battle at Michmash against the Philistines as follows:

In the pass, by which Jonathan tried to go over to the Philistine garrison there was a rocky crag on one side and a rocky crag on the other; the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other was Seneh... Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armour-bearer following after him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer, coming after him, killed them... There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and even the raiders trembled; the earth quaked; and it became a great panic.

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138 For full treatment of I Sam 13:19 and the Philistines' alleged monopoly over iron see Chapter II above.

139 Kallai, op.cit. n.136, p.134.

140 See I Sam 14:4-15.
These tactics on Michmash were so successful they were repeated in modern times, when a Brigadier under Allenby's command captured the village of Michmash using exactly the same methods:

In his bivouac, by the light of a candle, the Brigade Major was reading the Bible. When the raid was first discussed the name Mickmash had seemed vaguely familiar, although he could not quite place it. Just as he was about to turn in for the night, however, he recollected and thought he would look it up. He found what he was searching for in I Sam 13 and 14. The Brigade major ... woke the brigadier. Together they read the story again. Then the general sent out scouts, who came back and reported finding the pass, thinly held by Turks, with rocky crags on either side, obviously Bozez and Seneh...

The general decided then and there to change the plan of attack, and instead of the whole brigade, one infantry company alone advanced at dead of night along the pass of Mickmash. A few Turks met were silently dealt with. We passed between Bozez and Seneh, climbed the hillside, and just before dawn found ourselves on the flat piece of the ground. The Turks who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Allenby and fled in disorder.

We killed or captured every Turk that night in Mickmash, so that, after thousands of years the tactics of Saul and Jonathan were repeated with success by a British force. 141

One point of importance already discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the biblical writers' perspective within these accounts of Israelite's victories. The victory battle at Michmash leaves no doubt about the reason for the victory. It was not due to the achievements of Saul and Jonathan in themselves. Nothing could prevent YHWH from gaining victory whether by many or by few. 142 The author of this episode takes pains to make us aware that it is YHWH who is guiding Jonathan, and he shows that the victory was due neither to Jonathan and his armour-bearer's heroism nor even to the


142 See I Sam 14:6
arrival of Saul and his army. But it is the "awesome convulsion" sent by heaven which created the great panic among the Philistines. The author finally concludes that 'YHWH gained victory that day for Israel'.

In addition to the point just made further complications in the text should be emphasized. The information in 13:3 and 13:4 is contradictory. In the former Jonathan defeats the Philistine prefect, whereas in the latter it is Saul. J.M. Miller suggests that both these verses attribute the beginning of the conflict with the Philistines to the defeat of the prefect, though Jonathan is credited in the first with the deed, while the second credits Saul. Miller hesitates to disregard 13:3 or to amend the text to read "Saul" rather than "Jonathan", because of the focus on Jonathan in chapter 14, and also because of the strikingly similar incident which credits Jonathan with the victory at Michmash. D.Edelman's view on the incident with Jonathan in 13:3 is that it is probably a 'literary fiction' because Jonathan would have been a child in his early teens at this time. In my view Jonathan could have participated in the military activity even though he may have been young. Nevertheless it is still quite possible that Jonathan was credited with the victory gained by Saul.

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143 McCarter, op.cit. n.112, p.242.

144 Ibid.

145 I Sam 14:23.

146 Miller, op.cit. n.126,p.162.

N. Na'amān strongly holds the view, which I share, that the entire story in chapters 13 and 14 is aimed at the denigration of Saul. Na'amān points out that Saul is described as retreating to Gilgal and not obeying Samuel's instruction, and, as a result, being rejected by YHWH. He is then described at Geba of Benjamin as taking no initiative but instead 'sitting idly' in the shade of the pomegranate while the outcome of the battle is determined by Jonathan's courage and attack on the Philistines at Michmash.

Na'amān further suggests that this description of Jonathan ignores any reference to Saul as the head of the army, who despite the military crises, is able to keep a force of six hundred men and lead them to a victory whilst all the glory still goes to his son Jonathan. Na'amān attributes this depiction of Saul to the Deuteronomist (or the Post-Deuteronomist) editor who tried to portray Saul as a man who abandoned his God. Saul is described as cutting short the social ritual of consulting the Lord to receive divine guidance in order to join Jonathan in chasing the retreating Philistines. Saul is also accused of making a big mistake by swearing an oath which made the people fast until sunset. Saul's mistake is emphasised not only by the distress which it caused the

\[\text{References:}\]

148 N. Na'amān, 'Beth-aven, Bethel and Early Israelite Sanctuaries' *ZDPV* 103 (1987), p.17; idem *op.cit.* n.103, p.646.


150 *I Sam* 14:2.

151 Na'amān, *op.cit.* n.103, p.646.

152 *I Sam* 14:20.

153 A similar view is expressed by D. Jobling, ['Saul's Rise: Tradition and Redaction in *I Sam* 14:1-46', *JBL* 95 (1976), pp.369-70.] i.e. that Saul's loss is at every point Jonathan's gain and that Jonathan is found fighting Saul's battles.

154 Na'amān, *op.cit.* n.103, p.646.

155 Na'amān, *op.cit.* n.148, p.17.
troops, but also by the effect that the eating of the honey had; Jonathan says: 'My father troubled the land'.

My suggestion is that the same author or editor is responsible for inserting in this episode the conflict between Samuel and Saul. This presentation was deliberate and again aimed to play down Saul's success and popularity with the people. Were we to remove the incident of this conflict from the story, as well as the references attributing the glory and victories to YHWH, we might get a different, more historical account of the events.

f. The Battle at The Valley of Elah

This battle was one of a series of battles between the Philistines and the Israelites, though it was different in style from all others. It took place in a form of representative combat. Both armies camped on hills on opposite sides, probably to insure themselves against a surprise attack, whereas the representatives challenged each other in the valley. Although the real Israelite champion was Elkhanan, the

\[14:29a\]

\[\text{(See fig.8)}\] The valley of Elah is also known as Valley of the Terebinth, in Arabic it is called Wadi es-Sant. It is located south and parallel to the Valley of Sorek in the Shephelah of Judah, about 14 miles (20km) south west of Bethlehem towards Philistia [McCarter, op.cit. n.112, p. 290].

\[\text{Edelman, op.cit. n.147, p.994.}\]


\[\text{I Sam 21:19.}\]
success has been transferred to David by tradition. It has been suggested by J. Bright\textsuperscript{162} that Elkhanan (probably Baalhanan\textsuperscript{163}) and David were the same person, 'David' being his later throne name. But this suggestion is unacceptable in view of the fact that the editor of I Chron. 20:5 had to explain the contradiction in Samuel. His explanation is that Elkhanan killed Goliath's brother. But this explanation is probably an inner-biblical 'midrash' which attempts to correct the contradiction in order to demonstrate that the text is perfect. This story of David has all the elements of a fairy tale, i.e. the young shepherd boy who by courage and cunning overcomes his opponent and brings victory to his people.\textsuperscript{164}

Putting aside the traditional story, the geographical significance of the battle taking place here seems to be that this valley was strategically important to the two sides in the conflict. Through this valley went one of the most important routes from the Shephelah to Judah,\textsuperscript{165} and the purpose of the battle here was to gain control over this valley. After the defeat of the Philistine Goliath, Saul pursued the Philistines to Gath and Ekron.\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{162} Bright, op.cit. n.126, p.192.

\textsuperscript{163} Gen. 36:38; I Chron. 1:49.

\textsuperscript{164} McCarter, op.cit. n.112,p.295.

\textsuperscript{165} Kallai, op.cit. n.136, p.138.

\textsuperscript{166} I Sam 17:52.
g. The Battle Against Amalek

According to biblical tradition the terms 'Amalek' or 'Amalekites' are used to indicate the descendants of Eliphaz, who like Esau are linked to the land of Edom. There is no reference to them in external sources, therefore the Old Testament is the only source of information about them. The Amalekites are described as Israel's worst enemy, they became a symbol of the oppressor of Israel. This hostility began during the Israelite exodus from Egypt. Therefore, according to I Sam 15:2 one of the objects of the first Israelite king (Saul), was to defeat Amalek. Saul was praised for his achievement against Amalek as seen in I Sam 14:48:

ויועם חָלְבָּךְ וְרַכּ הִמָּלֶךְ וְרַכּ הַיִּרְאֵל מְרֵד מַמֵּדָתָהּ.

The Amalekites were nomadic or semi-nomadic people. Scholars usually locate their region between the southwest of Judah and the northeast of Egypt. However a different location has been proposed by D. Edelman, i.e. the hills of western Samaria. Edelman therefore raises the possibility that Saul's Amalekite campaign in I Sam 15 was against that enclave rather than in south Judah. Edelman bases her hypothesis mainly on two references, one in Jud. 12:15 and the second in Jud. 5:14 as well as the reference in II Sam 1:2-26, which deals with the Amalekite at the battle of Gilboa. But none of these

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167 (See fig.6) This section does not deal with the conflict between Samuel and Saul that is connected with Amalek, I Sam 15. That discussion appears in Chapter III above.


170 Ex. 17:8-14.


references offers any firm proof for her claim. Where the verse in Jud. 12:5 identifies the land of Ephraim with the hill country of Amalek, the second verse 5:14 is far from any identification, especially since the term יָמֶם probably could have been misspelled as יָמֵם. However it is possible that a community of Amalekites did settle in the new state of Israel, but that took place only later in Saul's reign. Moreover, there are far more convincing references in the Bible which give a clear geographical location for the Amalekites in the south.

Historically speaking a question should be raised as to what motivated Saul of Benjamin to go so far south in order to campaign against Amalek. This region south of Judah was occupied by the Amalekites who used to raid Judah. According to A. Ofer the victory stele erected by Saul at Carmel is quite significant in this particular case. It indicates not only that the population in the southern hill country was under Saul's protection, but also that Saul had won their loyalty.

Saul's campaign to the south shows that his kingdom was not limited to the central hill country. Saul was interested in uniting and protecting the various Israelite groups regardless of the distance from the centre of his state(fig.10). The extent of the

173 The integration of Amalekites and other minority groups within the new state was one of Saul's policies. About the Amalekite at Gilboa see 'Who Dared Put Forth His Hand...' in Chapter IV above.

174 See for example: I Sam 15; I Sam 30:1-2; Gen 36:16; Num 13:29. It is also assumed that Balaam 'looked at the Amalekites from the top of Peor' (Num 23:28) located south of the Jordan valley.

175 Ofer, op.cit. n.18, 170.
loyalty of the Judahites is clearly expressed by the people of Maon, Carmel and Ziph. They were hostile to David and attempted to surrender him to Saul, actions which show strong alliance to Saul's rule.

Considering the discussion so far about the reasons for the campaign against Amalek, it would seem that there were important political motives. The question arises as to whether there were other motives for that campaign. The sources in Samuel are silent about this, though the following might be of interest. I. Finkelstein carried out an interesting study of the Negev of the Iron I period. His research indicates that the region experienced large scale human activity. In the centre of the Beersheba basin, the large and rich site of Tel Masos emerged, as well as various other sites in the vicinity of the Negev highlands. At that time the coastal plain under the Philistines also prospered. In the past this prosperity was attributed to the expansion of the hill country population, therefore Tel Masos and all the other small sites were viewed as Israelite, with Tel Masos being identified with Horma.

Further research indicates that these views were incorrect. M. Kochavi was the first who not only rejected the identification of Tel Masos as the ancient Israelite site of Hormah but rather identified it with "אֲרֵךְ הַמַּעֲלָם" in I Sam 15. Finkelstein explains that

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176 See I Sam 26:1; 25:2-11; 23:13. See also the episode with Nabal the Carmelite in chapter 25 which supports the view of there being hostility to David.


178 Num.21:3; Josh 15:30.

179 Finkelstein, op.cit. n.177, p.243.
the historical process in the south can be understood by comparing it with the much later Nabatean period which can be used as a model for the emergence of the desert peoples. Finkelstein suggests that a political vacuum made these people participate in the Arabian trade, and possibly even to monopolise it using the local nomads. These activities resulted in a dramatic economic change in the region. Thus these people shifted to trade from a pastoral livelihood based upon seasonal agriculture. This situation led to the emergence of an urban trade centre, with its obvious outcome of social stratification, evolving eventually into a state or chiefdom.

Taking this discussion into consideration, it would be realistic to assume that Saul had additional economic motives in mind when he moved south. By campaigning against and defeating Amalek, Saul could ensure a regular income in the form of tributes, in which case he gained politically and financially. Such practice by Saul would not have been unusual since it was used throughout ancient times.¹⁸⁰

h. The Battle at Gilboa

Saul's last battle was fought at Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa (fig. 9). It was the most fierce battle Saul fought against the Philistines. It ended with heavy casualties; Saul and his three sons and a great number of Israelites were killed.

Before discussing the battle it is important to know that the Valley of Jezreel was of strategic and economic importance. The valley begins near Megiddo and continues

¹⁸⁰ For example, by the Egyptians, Assyrians and Greeks.
into the Valley of Beth-Shean, both providing an important section of the 'Coastal Highway'. This in turn played a crucial role in trade as well as connecting the Israelite groups on either side of the Jezreel Valley. It also led the way to Damascus, the international exchange centre of the times. The valley itself was occupied by a few Canaanite states as well as a few Israelite settlements. Because of its geographical situation and settlement structure the valley formed a barrier between the Israelite groups in Ephraim and those in the Galilee, in the north. Therefore the Philistines' presence in Jezreel could cut off that connection.

The conditions of this battle were most unusual because of its location. It must be pointed out that until then all the major battles between Philistines and Israelites took place further south, in the region close to Saul's base. It has been mentioned already that Saul was aware of the military limitations of his army against the sophisticated armour of the Philistines, but he still managed to keep them at a distance. The geographical condition of the hill country allowed him to do this because the Philistines could not use their chariotry and cavalry, whereas in the valley the Philistines were superior and would definitely have the upper hand.

These unusual conditions indicate quite clearly that this battle was initiated by the Philistines. A few questions are therefore raised and my aim is to try to answer them in this section. First it is difficult to understand how it was that Saul, being the chief of his army and a skillful tactician would allow himself to be drawn into such a battle. Second,
why did he not prevent the Philistines from progressing northwards when they encamped at Aphek in the Sharon and close to his home base?

It has been suggested\(^{182}\) that Saul had to maintain connection between the Israelite groups on both sides of the valley, and thus entered the battle there despite the dangerous circumstances. Even if this was the reason, it still does not explain why Saul did not try to stop the Philistines at Aphek. Others dubiously argued\(^{183}\) that it was Saul who initiated the battle by encamping by the fountain in the Jezreel Valley and only then, in response, did the Philistines gather at Aphek. This argument is not acceptable since Edelman ignores not only the reference in 28:1 where it is clearly indicated that the Philistines gathered their army to campaign against Israel, but also 28:5 where Saul is described as very frightened. This does not sound as if Saul initiated the war, rather that it was imposed on him.

One should also explain that there is a problem in interpreting the narrative in 28-29 due to the incorrect report of the order of events, which can be seen from the geographical location of these places. For instance in 28:4 the Philistines are at Shunem in the Jezreel plain whereas in 29:1 they are at Aphek in the Sharon and only reach Jezreel in 29:11.\(^{184}\) McCarter suggests\(^{185}\) that the right order of the narrative would be if

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the section in 28:4 were read after 29-30. This order of events is more logical, and possibly also gives a clue to the background of the battle. For example, it may be possible to assume that when the Philistines gathered at Aphek Saul probably received information about their intention and hence sent the initial force, which encamped at the spring at Jezreel. Meanwhile, Saul was watching over the Philistine's movements. While doing so, he may then have called for the reserves in his army as stated in 28:4b. But only when he knew that the Philistines had moved further north and encamped at Shunem, did Saul move and encamp at the foot of the Gilboa.

The question that still remains is why Saul did not act at Aphek. David's role and responsibility in connection with these events have already been examined.\(^{186}\) That discussion pointed to the possibility that David took part in planning the battle; Saul was a common enemy of David and the Philistines and both wanted to get rid of him, albeit for different reasons. Therefore, by revealing to the Philistines the Israelites' vulnerability in fighting on the plain, he inspired the Philistines to challenge Saul right there.

When considering the Philistines' move to the north, M.Gichon\(^{187}\) suggests that the Philistines knew very well that Saul would react to their move north, especially due to his responsibility for the Israelite groups in Galilee. It was a trap from which Saul could not escape. In this situation we can also see that Saul could not hurry to Jezreel in order to stop the Philistines from reaching there; because by this move, Saul would have

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\(^{186}\) 'Who Dared Put forth his Hand...', Chapter IV above.

risked a Philistines attack or their penetration through the central hill country, a move which could have proved to be dangerous. As to the reason for Saul's hesitation in attacking at Aphek, it must be remembered that David was there and Saul knew it. During that time Saul was chasing David and one could suspect that David deliberately planted false messages concerning his whereabouts in order to confuse Saul and thus lure him to exhaustion before the battle even began. Saul must have became confused and only when David's journey to Ziklag was confirmed could Saul act. Then it was too late because the Philistines were already on their way to Jezreel.

The next episode took place at Jezreel where the Philistines encamped at Shunem and the Israelites at the foot of Mount Gilboa. M. Gichon\(^\text{188}\) points out that Saul's move to reposition his army at the foot of the mountain was a good tactic, giving himself the possibility to retreat to the mountain should the situation arise. It would have worked in Saul's favour because the Philistines' chariots would not have been able to cope with the slope. It seems that at the start of the battle the Philistines had the upper hand, forcing Saul to retreat, though a surprise awaited him. According to Gichon, the Israelites were surprisingly attacked from the rear by the archers. Gichon further suggests that Saul's situation would not have been so bad had the archers attacked with the advancing Philistines' forces from the plain. The reason why the Israelites suffered such heavy casualties was because they were ambushed by a stream of arrows from behind while retreating:

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\text{189} \quad \text{I Sam 31:3}
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\(^{188}\) Gichon, op.cit. n.187, p.8.

\(^{189}\) I Sam 31:3
It could however be argued, that the Philistines themselves had planted the ambush on the Gilboa. But this would be impossible for several reasons. First, the Philistines went along the Coastal-Highway. Their journey took longer than that of Saul who made his way straight through the central hill country. Second, when Saul reached Jezreel he was geographically closer to the Gilboa than the Philistines. Because Saul arrived early (a day or so) he must have spent the time positioning his army, preparing for the battle and inspecting the whole area. In this situation Saul would have noticed any attempt to move behind him.

My hypothesis at this point is that those archers were not Philistines at all but probably David and his men. It is known that David was not willing to quit the battle.\textsuperscript{190} Therefore it is possible that David divided his men into two groups; four hundred men returned to Ziklag as partial fulfilment of Achish's command, and the remaining two hundred, his task force, joined him secretly to go to Gilboa.\textsuperscript{191} It should be pointed out that we tend to think that Saul hated David but, surely, David hated Saul just as much. Moreover, David anticipated Saul's death in battle as stated in David's own words: '... it must be YHWH himself who strikes him down, whether his time comes and he dies or he goes down into battle and is taken'.\textsuperscript{192} Obviously it was much safer for David to take Saul's life within the turmoil of battle because then it could be passed off unnoticed. It is possible that, after David had examined the position of the two forces, they secretly

\textsuperscript{190} I Sam 29:8.

\textsuperscript{191} These are probably the two-hundred men who were too exhausted to chase the Amalekites in I Sam 30:9-10.

\textsuperscript{192} I Sam 26:10.
made their way to the back of the Gilboa behind the Israelite forces. David and his men waited and later, when Saul's army tried to retreat, David may have given the order to act.

To support my claim further we can now turn to the later verses of chapters 24 and 26 of I Samuel. There David is described as being distant from Saul. In chapter 26 David is on top of the hill calling loudly to Saul. Yet the way Saul is giving the answer does not fit the scene. Saul is described as weak, feeble and weeping 'Is that your voice David? Saul had to shout to David who was standing on top of the hill. Yet in such a weeping and feeble state, surely there is no way in which Saul could actually shout to David. My suggestion is that these scenes described at the end of chapters 24 and 26 took place at Gilboa after Saul was injured and at his last breath. In that state, the only thing on Saul's mind was the safety of his family, and thus Saul pleads mercy for them. Saul says to David: 'Swear to me by YHWH that you will not destroy my descendants after me ...'

The last scene between Saul and David described above was deliberately detached from the description of the events at Gilboa, instead the redactor placed it within quite different contexts earlier in the book of Samuel. By doing so the redactor aimed to destroy the true order of events in order to absolve David from any responsibility for taking part in Saul's death.

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193 See full discussion of these chapters under 'Who Dared....' in Chapter IV.

194 I Sam 24:16; 26:17.

195 I Sam 24:21.
The results of the battle were tragic for Israel, not only because of the heavy losses but also because Saul and his three sons, all in line for the throne, were killed. David achieved the aim of his conspiracy against the house of Saul by his removal of the obstacles between him and the throne. What David did was dangerous for Israel, but it might be stressed again that he did not aim to destroy Israel but only the house of Saul. He used the Philistines only to achieve his aim, and did so successfully, though at a high cost.\textsuperscript{196}

\textbf{i. Saul at Edom, Moab and Zoba}

It is stated in I Sam 14:47 that Saul fought against Moab, Edom and Zoba, but unfortunately the text does not provide any other information about these, and we are left to speculation and hypothesis.

Since the Amalekites were traditionally connected with Edom, one could assume that in stating Edom the narrator meant 'Amalek'. But the problem with this assumption is that the campaign against Amalek was in the western Negev, whereas Edom is in the opposite direction, in the east. Geographically speaking there seems to be no obvious threat from the direction of Edom. The only factor which might be considered relevant is the location of the 'King's Highway', passing as it does through Edom. Although this route had no direct significance for Saul and the new state of Israel, it did play as mentioned earlier, a very crucial role in trade. Since we mentioned the Amalekites

\textsuperscript{196} For treatment of the events after Saul's death see Chapter VII below.
and the flourishing trade in the Negev at that period, one can assume that if there was such a campaign against Edom it may have been, in part, economically motivated.

A similar hypothesis could be offered regarding Moab and the Arameans of Zoba. It should be mentioned again that we are dealing with a period in which people are settling down and marking their own territory and authority in the region as well as establishing ways to ensure livelihood, and Saul at the head of the new Israelite state was no different.

j. Saul's Military Tactics

In the early stages of its formation the Israelite army had various limitations. For example, lack of financial resources, lack of trained soldiers and inferiority in weaponry. Saul was the first leader to found an Israelite army and bring it up to a professional standard.

Within these limitations, Saul used such beneficial fighting tactics as would allow his army to achieve maximum benefit while in combat. Three such tactics were used: a) Element of surprise attack or ambush. This tactic was particularly useful because in that situation it was the attacker who dictated the rule of combat, e.g. place and time of the attack. In that situation the attacked force cannot respond efficiently; for example, in

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197 See 'Saul's battle against Amalek', above.
the battle against the Ammonites,\textsuperscript{199} at Michmash\textsuperscript{200} and against the Amalekites.\textsuperscript{201} b) Fighting in the dark. There was a great advantage in fighting at night because it requires a high standard of combat skills from the individual soldier. The psychological aspect plays an important role here. Usually when fighting in daylight soldiers were encouraged by their fellows, they could see each other, watch the progress of the battle and act accordingly. At night the situation was quite different. Soldiers could not see each other they felt isolated, could not see or interpret accurately the various sounds and noises, and so this affected their level of performance.\textsuperscript{202} Such factors are evident in the battle with Ammon. I Sam 11:11 states that Saul and his men went into Ammonite's camp

\begin{quote}
כמאתות לוחם הפשיִית i.e. in the last part of the night, while the Ammonites were still asleep.
\end{quote}

A similar method was also used at Michmash. c) Chasing the enemy after defeating them. I.Eph'al\textsuperscript{203} explains that chasing the enemy after defeating them has an important value because it prevents the losers from reorganising themselves. It is usually natural for the losers to try and escape, and if given the chance, to reorganise themselves and attempt another attack. History proves that if chasing is not used, the success is temporary.\textsuperscript{204}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[199] I Sam 11.
\item[200] Ibid, 14.
\item[201] Ibid, 15. 'יירה in 15:5 should be read "יירא".
\item[202] I.Eph'al, op.cit. n.198, p. 50-51.
\item[203] Ibid., p.50.
\item[204] Such example can be seen from the battle of Megiddo in 1480 BCE. The battle was fought between Tothmosis III of Egypt and the Canaanite-Syrian coalition at Megiddo. The Egyptians attacked in the morning and defeated that coalition whose army escaped and hid in the city. The Egyptians, instead of chasing their enemy were busy looting thus giving the Cannanites the opportunity to reorganise themselves behind the security of the walled city. The Egyptians had to besiege Megiddo seven months before it was defeated. This battle which could have ended successfully in an hour took seven months. A similar example can be seen at the battle of Qadesh between the Egyptians and the Hittites early in the fourteenth century BCE [Eph'al, ibid, p.53].
\end{footnotes}
This tactic was used by Saul after the battles of Michmash, Valley of Elah\textsuperscript{205} and possibly also after the battle of Jabesh.

**k. Administration**

The establishment and development of civil and military administrative systems for the period under Saul's rule is poorly documented. As far as the army is concerned, it is clear that the way in which the Israelite groups were organised prior to the monarchy had inhibited them from establishing a proper army, training soldiers or applying military discipline. This would have required complex administrative systems which were not present in Israelite society at that time. Before the monarchy, Israelite fighting forces consisted of farmers and shepherds whose livelihood depended on their working the land. Thus they had not only to support themselves, but also to support their families. In that situation it was difficult to organise or keep an army or even train them.\textsuperscript{206}

The emergence of monarchy (Saul) changed all that. Saul was able to organise not only a standing army but also a reserve. In chapter I the developments in Israelite society before the monarchy have been discussed. It became apparent that inequalities developed within families due to the head of the households and their lineage members having exclusive rights over inheritance of land holding. In this situation, the individual could no longer depend merely on farming for their livelihood. Consequently they had to change to a barter system to earn the necessities for their life. With further growth in

\textsuperscript{205} I Sam 14:36; 17:52

\textsuperscript{206} Eph'al, op.cit. n.198, p.56.
population local opportunities became scarce and as a result, many young men were looking for opportunities elsewhere. Of course, the new monarchical office, requiring manpower for administration and military service, offered just that.

Therefore it is likely that some of these landless men formed Saul's standing army. This army gradually increased and became a professional army, where the reserves were called in time of emergency as seen in the call up for the battle of Gilboa.

It is unclear what were the other characteristics of the army. However, B. Mazar suggests that the military and civil services used by Saul and later David were based on an old pre-monarchical local system. This is evident in the reign of Saul, Ishbaal and David when the highest position after the king was that of the chief military commander, and only later kings adopted foreign elements in their systems. One could also assume that in Saul and Ishbaal's time, Abner, Saul's uncle was that commander. In campaigns Abner may have acted as second in command to the king, and as a protector of the interests of the royal family. This is evident after Saul's death when Abner crowned Ishbaal king over Israel.

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207 I Sam: 14:52b.
208 I Sam 28:4.
210 II Sam 2:8-10.
Other features of the royal administration may be discerned e.g. that the royal house had a feast celebrating the beginning of each month.\textsuperscript{211} To this feast the various members of the royal family were invited including Abner and David.\textsuperscript{212} When David was expected he was already Saul's son-in-law. During that feast the king sat on his special seat, probably the 'throne chair'.\textsuperscript{213}

There is also a reference to the 'servants of Saul'\textsuperscript{214} This group of people most probably were dependent economically on the king. But the term 'servant of the king' may indicate attachment rather than hierarchy. It could be that the number of servants was in direct proportion to the ability to keep them by offering them plots of land and privileges in return for their loyalty and service. I Sam 22:7 hints that they were rewarded with fields and vineyards.

Another clue to royal administration can be found in II Sam 9:10 when Saul's servant, Ziba is called $\textit{na'ar}$, meaning a young man, servant or steward,\textsuperscript{215} though in II Sam 13:17 the term could mean specific office of high rank, i.e. superintendent of property. Later in II Sam 19:18 Ziba is called $\textit{נִצְבָּר}$. In 9:10 Ziba's duty is to work in Saul's estate and provide for the family with the produce.\textsuperscript{216} According to II Sam

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[211]{A.Malamat, \textit{Mari and Israel} (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), p.40.}
\footnotetext[212]{See I Sam 20:5,27.}
\footnotetext[213]{I Sam 20:25.}
\footnotetext[214]{I Sam 16:15; 22:7.}
\footnotetext[216]{Ibid, p.262.}
\end{footnotes}
9:2 Ziba was נבון (servant) of the house of Saul, but when David summoned Ziba he was referred to as Saul's נאַר. J. Macdonald\textsuperscript{217} suggests that both terms are proper to use. In 9:2 Ziba is referred to as נאַר because of his specific function as a personal top servant of a great man, but any נאַר is תּוּבָר (subject) of the king and royal house. Thus Ziba was of high courtly rank. Ziba's importance is clearly indicated in II Sam 9:10b where it states that he had fifteen sons and twenty servants. But 9:12 indicates that the master, Meribaal maintained supreme control of the property of his servant\textsuperscript{218}.

There is an interesting mention of Doeg the Edomite\textsuperscript{219} who is described as אביו הרימים, its literary meaning is 'chief of the shepherds' but this has been translated as chief of runners, king's runners or palace guards,\textsuperscript{220} though it becomes more clear in 22:9 that Doeg was the chief of Saul's servants. It is not clear what were his duties, but Doeg may have been an official responsible for providing supplies for the royal household, as well as for supervising a team of servants in the royal house. Doeg's duties could also involve complex activity such as supplying wool, milk, cheese and other foods products for feasts and banquets. Doeg's position may reflect the establishment of a loyal relationship between Saul's administrative office and his non-Israelite subjects, and suggests that Saul emerged as a successful king not only among the Israelites but also among the non-Israelite groups.

\textsuperscript{217} J. Macdonald, 'The Status and the Role of the na'ar in Israelite Society' \textit{JNES} 35 (1976), p.156.

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{219} I Sam 21:8; 22:9

\textsuperscript{220} See McCarter, op.cit. n.112,p.350.
Financial Resources

A special income was needed by the state to maintain the army, the administration, and the royal house itself. In respect of the former, income was especially needed not only to pay the soldiers but also to feed and equip them. It is possible that Saul partly financed the standing army from his own private income. It has been discussed earlier in this chapter that Saul came from a wealthy background, which is also attested in I Sam 9:1-2 where it is stated that Kish, Saul's father was 'בֵּהֶרֶד אָמָל' meaning a wealthy man. Therefore, the standing army was probably closely connected and financially dependent on the king. This relationship was useful not only to the army but also to Saul, since a close bond was formed between them, a situation which encouraged trust and loyalty on both sides. No doubt this kind of atmosphere helped in the achievement of a much better performance in the service of the king himself. A clue which suggests that heroes were rewarded is found in David's question:

There is no indication in the narrative as to the price or value of the reward, but in 18:17 Saul offers his daughter to David in marriage.

There are also indications which suggest that soldiers were supported by their families. For example, in 17:17-18 Jesse sends David to take a supply of food to his brothers in the battlefield. There is also a mention of paying the officer in-charge of that unit 'שֶׁרֶץ אֲמָל' ten portions of cheese. The meaning of this is not clear, but is it possible

221 I Sam 17:26a.
that families also paid some form of tributes to the officer in charge of the unit in which their sons served?

An important aspect of income which should be considered is the booty brought back from campaigns. This booty included not only items of weaponry but also a wealth of personal items, as well as domestic animals (goats and sheep) which must have represented a substantial income to the soldiers. Another form of income came probably in a form of tributes from vassal groups, such as the inhabitants of Jabesh, the Ammonites and Amalekites. This income was probably attributed to the king, government and other state expenditure. There was also other private income to the king from his subjects, in the form of gifts; 10:26 indicates מַעֲמֹנָה. This is similar to I Sam 9:7 where the term מַעֲמָנָה is mentioned, also meaning gift. In that instance Saul and his young servant went to seek help from Samuel, and in that instance had to offer a gift, which may have been accepted as a payment. One can assume that royal subjects offered gifts to the king on festivals or on special occasions.222

Other state income could also come from trade between settlements on both sides of the Jordan, as well as trade between Canaanite cities and Israelites. D.L. Esse223 suggests that the archaeological evidence shows trade and marketing between the latter two, and that these commercial relations were regular, and were cemented by exchange of skilled labour and political alliance.224

222 For example I Sam 10:27.


224 More information about the flourishing internal trade appears in Chapter VI.
m. Saul's Achievements (Summary)

One of Saul's achievements was that he was the first Israelite leader to form a standing army. This achievement in turn formed the main element which helped consolidate royal rule. Saul managed successfully to defeat the Philistines, Ammon and Amalek and preserve the status-quo throughout the reign.

Saul also turned his attention to the Canaanites and other minority groups, and integrated them within the new Israelite state. Saul's task was not only military but also social. He was the first ruler who reorganised the tribes and united them as one people, with newly introduced institutions. Saul had to lead the people into a new life, a process which was irreversible. These were responsibilities that no other later king had to undertake.

Saul managed to absorb back into Israel the Hebrews ( Heb rehab breadcrumbs ) who had become attached to the Philistines after the victory at Michmash. Since the term 'Hebrews' does not appear in the biblical sources after this event, M. Tsevat suggests that they ceased to exist as a separate entity and were absorbed into the generality of Israel.

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225 For example Amalekite, Edomites.

226 See discussion below.

227 I Sam 13:7; 14:21

228 M. Tsevat, 'The Emergence of the Israelite Monarchy' WHJP 4:1, p.69.
The efforts to consolidate the various groups as one nation diminished much of the tribal autonomy. Even if we know only little about this process from the text, the results tell us a great deal about it. After Saul's death, although there was a long period of chaos, the state did not fall apart nor go back to its previous social structure, but remained a political-territorial entity which no longer depended on a charismatic leader to hold it together.

A Note on Hebrews and Habiru/'Apiru

The issue of the identification of the 'Hebrews' with Habiru/'Apiru is complex and has been discussed for almost a century, though unanimous agreement has not been reached. In the 'Amarna letters' the Habiru are mentioned as a cause for trouble and rebellion in many Canaanite city-states. The similarities between the names Habiru and Hebrews, the location of these groups as well as the close chronological relationship between the Habiru, in the Amarna letters, and the Israelites led some scholars to assume that these were one and the same people. However discoveries of other ancient Near

229 See 'Was There a Concubine...' in chapter VII.
230 Ibid, p.70.
Eastern documents in which the term Habiru occasionally appears, sometimes written with the Sumerian logogram SA.GAZ,233 though pronunciation is not clear. These discoveries indicate clearly that Habiru is a term describing a certain social element, i.e. people who left their home town or homeland because they were forced by circumstances, such as famine, heavy taxes, wars etc. to seek livelihood elsewhere234

It should be pointed out that the Habiru came from sedentary populations and not from among nomads. Documents from Mari and other places in Babylonia show that on occasions throughout the nineteenth-eighteenth centuries BCE the Habiru served as mercenaries in armies of established kingdoms. Sometimes they also served in neighbouring countries in the public or private sector, enabling the Habiru to reintegrate into sedentary society again. It would seem therefore, that these Habiru appeared at various places in the western asiatic region at different times, though they had nothing in common except for their social status.235

The latest cuneiform occurrences mentioning the Habiru are dated to the twelfth-eleventh centuries BCE. However, the Habiru as a general western asiatic phenomenon disappeared from the historical scene by the end of the second millennium BCE.236 N. Na'man237 suggests that though these groups of people described in the book of

233 Albright, op.cit.n.32, p.74.
235 Na'am, op.cit. n.232, p.273. For most recent publication which gives more insight on the habiru see; M.Salvini, The Habiru prism of King Tunip-Tessup of Tikunani (Rome: Instituti Editoriali & Poligrafici: Internazionali, 1996).
236 Ibid, p.272.
Judges and Samuel are similar in social terms to the 'Habiru' in the ancient Near Eastern texts, the term 'Hebrews' has ethnic as well as social connotations and as such is used only for the Israelites. The question then is how the 'Habiru' became an ethnic term within the biblical tradition. Na'aman\textsuperscript{238} explains that the 'Hebrews' originated within Israelite society just like all other Habiru in neighbouring societies of the second millennium BCE. In certain historical situations i.e. the fight against the Ammonites and Philistines, groups of 'Hebrews' cooperated with their fellow-countrymen and consequently became re-integrated into Israelite society. Therefore, according to Na'aman, there became some kind of ethnic connection between the 'Israelites' and the 'Hebrews' in which the latter were part of the Israelite tribal society both at the beginning and at the end of their history.

To elaborate on Na'aman's hypothesis, my suggestion is that the 'Hebrews' described in I Samuel refers to those young Israelite males who had no right to inheritance.\textsuperscript{239} Their social status forced them to serve as mercenaries in the Philistines' army though after the establishment of the monarchy Saul was able to help them integrate back into Israelite society. David should not be excluded from these young males. It should be noted that after all, David was Jesse's eighth son.\textsuperscript{240} Being the youngest in a family of eight, David must have had no hope of any inheritance. This could explain how David might have begun his career in Saul's army. Later when Saul realised that David had set his eyes on the throne, he pursued him as a traitor. David

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{239} Discussed in Chapter II and earlier in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{240} I Sam 16:10-11.
joined the Philistines' army as a mercenary, and thus in I Sam 29:3 David himself is called 'Hebrew'.

VI

GIBEAH OF SAUL

The search for Gibeah began in the 1840's and since then its identification with the site of Tell el-Ful has provoked a hot debate among biblical scholars and archaeologists. One of the reasons for the uncertainty of the identification of Gibeah is the story in Judges 19-21 which indicates that Gibeah existed before the monarchy. However the chronology of Gibeah in this story and the later identification of Gibeah as Saul's city does not correlate with the archaeological finds on this site; therefore, scholars attempted to search for Gibeah elsewhere. The aim of this chapter is, first, to discuss the arguments for the identification of Gibeah with modern Tell el-Ful. This is important because Gibeah was Saul's city, and identifying its location would provide the only extra-biblical site relating to Saul. The second aim is to re-examine and reconstruct the archaeological data of Tell el-Ful, data which have been misinterpreted. This may give us a more realistic picture relating to the events at Gibeah. It will also be interesting to understand Gibeah within the context of other contemporary sites in the region, as well as to understand the economy in the region.

a. The History of Gibeah

Gibeah was the central city in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. Gibeah was located on the main road leading from Judah to Mount Ephraim, the northern part of the country. It was near the Jerusalem-Shechem road. The territory of

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1 Tell el-Ful is located 3 miles (5km) north of the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem.

the tribe of Benjamin is characterised by a hilly terrain. Therefore, the biblical sources relating to this territory contain a large number of place names based on the root נַבֶּית, the stem for the Hebrew word meaning 'hill'. These include the place names נַבֶּית (modern el-Jib), נַבְּתֹּת, and נַבָּתָה, thought to be Tell el-Ful. There are also longer terms such as נַבְּתֹּת דְּלַקִּים and נַבָּתָה בְּנֵרִים and are also included in this territory. Although these place names are not based on the same root, they do have a similar meaning; נַבְּתֹּת means 'observation place' and נַבָּתָה means 'high place'.

The modern site of Tell el-Ful (fig.11) is situated on the crest of the watershed, with deep wadis extending to the east and west. The hill rises with steep terraces in the east, south and north, but in the west the slope is more gradual. The slopes have a steepness of about 30° or more, which made travel from north to south quite difficult. The ancient road from Judah to mount Ephraim ran along the base of the tell. This was the main north-south route of central Palestine and the tell, 840m above sea level,

3 E.g. I Sam 14:5.
4 Jud.19:12 & I Sam 14:2.
5 I Sam 13:16.
6 Ibid., 13:2.
7 Ibid., 10:5. According to B.Mazar, Enc.Miq.2 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), p.419] Gibeah Haquelohim in I Sam10:5 is also the place name of Gibeah.
8 E.g. I Sam 10:17.
commanded it. The top is relatively flat, about 150m (north-south) by 90m (east-west). The north-west corner is the highest area of the mound.¹⁰

Tell el-Ful overlooks a wide area in all directions. To the south-east, the Dead Sea is visible on clear days, as well as the mountains of Moab and Ammon. To the north-east Jeba (נְבָשְׁנָה) and Mukhmas (מַכְמָס) are in view. The Ramallah ridge to the north-west is higher and limits the view in that direction. To the west, Nabi Samawil dominates the horizon, and to the south Shu'afat and Jerusalem are located. Because of its height, the temperatures are never very hot and can be bitterly cold in winters. A strong wind blows from the west from midday to the next morning.¹¹ All these natural factors made Gibeah quite important strategically and politically.

Geologically, the top of Tell el-Ful is formed of a thick layer of soft marl called hawwar (meaning pale or white). It is a chalky limestone, not suitable for quarrying since it crumbles. It is not suitable for crops either, but coniferous trees grow on it, e.g. pine (לֵינָה), spruce (אֲשֶׁרְדוֹת) and cypress (בִּרְשָׁם). The latter were used for the woodwork on the first fortress of Gibeah.¹² Stones for the buildings were quarried in the nearby ridges. There are no springs in the vicinity of the hill itself, but the annual rainfall there is about 20-24 inches and was probably collected in cisterns. There is no clear indication as to the size of the population or the area of this ancient city during the early


¹¹ W.F. Albright, *Excavations and Results at Tell el-Ful (Gibeah of Saul) AASOR 4, 1924*, p.2.

¹² Ibid., p.1.
Iron Age. Many occupational remains have disappeared due to wind, erosion, cultivation practices, and recent urban expansion near the site.

b. The Identification of Tell el-Ful With Gibeah of Saul

The science of Palestinian topography was founded by the American biblical scholar Edward Robinson. In his work *Biblical Researchers of 1841*, Robinson identified Gibeah with modern Jeba, but later changed his mind and identified it with Tell el-Ful. Although the majority of scholars accepted the identification of Tell el-Ful with Gibeah, there were, and still are, scholars who argue against this identification. This is mainly because Gibeah belongs to a group of sites where the ancient names have been lost.

C.R. Conder, claimed that Geba was the name preserved in the name of the modern village Jeba, and that Geba referred to the surrounding district. Tell el-Ful, he claimed, may have been the site of Ophni, a town in Benjaminite territory though this identification provoked a debate, and scholars placed Gibeah at one ancient ruin or another.

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13 See Albright (1924), op.cit. n. 11, p.28.

14 For the early discussion of the identification of Tell el-Ful in the late 19th century see Albright, ibid., pp.28-43.

15 C.R. Conder, 'Gibeah of Saul' *PEFQS* (1877), pp.104-5.
About thirty years later W.F. Birch renewed the argument. He argued that Gibeah was located at Kh. Adaseh, two miles northwest of Gibeon. However, the careful examination of Kh. Adaseh did not reveal ceramics from earlier than the Byzantine Period. Birch was not convinced and continued to insist that Kh. Adaseh is the true site of Gibeah. He wrote: 'I am slow to believe that not even one of the 400,000 of Israel, after all the injuries received, broke a single jar on Gibeah's cursed site'. On the following page he wrote: 'It is true Israel was so exasperated with Gibeah that they massacred the people wholesale, smote its cattle and might even have broken a wild oath not to leave sherd unpulverized'. Birch continued to support his argument. He translated Judges 19:14 which reads 'The sun went upon them near Gibeah' as 'the sun went for them by the side of Gibeah'. This he took to mean that Gibeah, like the sun, must have been to the west. Therefore, Gibeah could not possibly have been at Tell el-Ful towards the east, on their right.

More recently, scholars such as J.M. Miller, A.Demsky, and P.M. Arnold have challenged the identification of Gibeah with Tell el-Ful. In reviewing the literary

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18 F.W. Birch, 'Gibeath and Adaseh' PEFQS (1913), pp.38-42.

19 Ibid., p.38.


material and the archaeological evidence, Miller proposes that Gibeah, Geba, Geba of Benjamin, Gibeah of Benjamin, Gibeath of Saul, and probably also Gibeath Haelohim were all identical. He identifies all these names with Geba (modern Jeba). But he distinguishes Geba from Gibeon and Gibeath Kiryat-jearim as separate places. The Geba form of the name is related to the appellative 'Gibeah' (*ha-gibeah*) form in the same way that Ramah relates to *haramah* and Mizpah relates to *hamizpah*. Hence, the inconsistent usage of Geba and Gibeath in Judges 19-21 and in I Samuel 13-14 should be explained on literary and textual grounds rather than supposing that actions shifted back and forth between different Benjaminite villages.\(^2^4\) Miller also argues that the archaeological evidence from Tell el-Ful does not provide specific evidence to identify it with Gibeath of Saul. On the contrary, the pre-conceived idea that Tell el-Ful is ancient Gibeath has influenced the interpretation of the material found there.

Miller\(^2^5\) also claims that the evidence from Josephus and Jerome which place Gibeath close to Jerusalem is based on Judges 19-21 and in particular on 19:10 which identifies Jebus with Jerusalem. In a separate study, Miller\(^2^6\) argues that Jebus is not the pre-Davidic name for Jerusalem. He explains that the name Jerusalem already appeared in the Tell el-Amarna letters from the Bronze Age,\(^2^7\) and in the Exegetical Texts.\(^2^8\) Both

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24 Miller (1975b), op.cit. n. 21, p.165.


26 J.M. Miller (a), 'Jebus and Jerusalem: A Case of Mistaken Identity' *VT* 25 (1975), pp.115-127.

27 Middle of the fourteenth century BCE.

28 Ca.1800 BCE.
of these are from long before David's conquest of the city. Miller places Jebus in the area of Shu'afat, north of Jerusalem.29

Demsky30 had a different approach. He suggested that the various גִּבְעוֹן root place can be reduced to three; Geba, Gibeah and Gibeon. Demsky demonstrates that archaeological excavations at Gibeon, modern el-Jib, revealed a collection of inscribed jar handles.31 Demsky32 explains that these inscriptions are tax or business formulae dating from the end of the Judean monarchy. The comparison between this material and the genealogical lists in I Chron. 8:29-40; 9:35-44 reflects the social and ethnic background of Gibeon at the end of the monarchy. These genealogies show that Saul came from the גִּבְעוֹן clan connected with Gibeon. This hypothesis has since been rejected for several reasons. Firstly, it appears late, in I Chronicles; secondly, Saul's ancestral home is assumed to be at Gibeath Benjamin; and thirdly, it contradicts the view expressed in II Sam 21:1 which suggests that the Benjaminites settled there after Saul's extermination of the Hivite community.33 Demsky34 demonstrates well that these genealogies had been composed before the area was depopulated and therefore must

33 The view in this thesis is that Saul did not exterminate the Hivites at Gibeon. See 'Saul and the Gibeonites' in Chapter III.
reflect the local pre-exilic tradition. Demsky accurately suggests, therefore, that Saul's ancestral home was not at tell el-Ful as generally accepted, but at Gibeon, which was a social, economic and religious centre. Demsky accepted the suggestion by B. Mazar that Gibeath Haelohim in I Sam 10:2-14 was Saul's home area, except that Demsky locates it not at Tell el-Ful as B. Mazar suggests but at Gibeon. Demsky also rejects any claim which locates Saul's ancestral home at Gibeah (Tell el-Ful). However, he claims that it is more likely that after the Philistines had discovered the secret of Saul's coronation, he was forced to remove himself to a new base. Saul therefore chose Gibeath-Benjamin which was outside the Philistine sphere, and there he established his capital city. Demsky suggests that Tell el-Ful was desolate when Saul arrived there as a result of the events in Judges 19-21. He rebuilt it and the city bore his name.

With reference to Gibeath-Benjamin and Geba-Benjamin, Demsky suggests that the author of the Saul cycle used Geba (Gibeath) Benjamin when referring to Jeba. This

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35 Saul's genealogy in I Sam 9:1 is deliberately very brief as part of the general approach to the presentation of Saul (see Chapter III). In my view the genealogies in I Sam 9 and in I Chron.9:35-44; 9:35-44 can be correlated.

36 Demsky (1973), op.cit. n. 22, p.27.

37 See the discussion about Gibeon in Chapter VII.

38 B. Mazar, 'Topographical Research' Yedeot 10 (1943), pp.73-75.

39 Demsky (1973), op.cit. n. 22, p.27.

40 Ibid.

41 See slightly different view in the discussion below.

42 Demsky (1973), op.cit. n. 22, p.29.

43 I Sam 13:3, 16.
is because Geba (Jeba) absorbed part of the displaced population after the destruction of Gibeath (Geba) Benjamin as described in Judges 21:23.

Arnold strongly rejects the identification of Gibeah with Tell el-Ful, suggesting that the name Tell el-Ful originally had nothing to do with 'beans', but is an Arabic corruption of the Benjaminite eleph, mentioned in Josh. 18:28. Arnold's argument very much follows Miller's view. He examines the various forms of the name Gibeah in the biblical text. In chapter 2 he considers the geographical and archaeological situation of Gibeah. He suggests that the evidence produced severely undermines the identification of Gibeah with Tell el-Ful, and suggests that this site probably served as a Judean military watchtower-settlement known as Eleph. Arnold proposes that Gibeah and Geba are two names of the same place located at Jeba. But at the same time Arnold is aware that the surface survey of Jeba revealed ceramics of Iron II as well as Persian sherds, but none of Iron Age I data.

Discussion

In view of the recent debate, Miller and Arnold's proposal that the rooted place names, except for Gibeon and Gibeath Kiryat-jearim, are the various names of the same place, is convincing. However, their proposal that the location of Gibeah/Geba is at Jeba must be rejected for the following reasons: Firstly, Gibeah is one of the many sites which originally lost their ancient names. It is possible that already in ancient times the

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44 Arnold, op.cit. n. 23, p.54

45 Meaning 'hill of beans'.

46 Arnold, op.cit. n. 23, p.60.

name Gibeah was transferred as Geba to the place name known today as Jeba. Secondly, there is no archaeological evidence to support Miller or Arnold in placing Gibeah/Geba at Jeba. In my view, Tell el-Ful not only produced evidence of an Iron I Israelite settlement, but has also shed light on the shadowy account of Saul's story in the biblical text. All the evidence shows that Tell el-Ful was an extremely strong and important site. In addition to the archaeological evidence, the view from the summit of Tell el-Ful covers a very wide area. The strong fortress (or tower) on the summit would have been able to detect approaching danger from over a wide distance. Tell el-Ful is also situated on the main trade routes leading from Jerusalem to the north and from the coast, in the west, to Moab and Ammon in the east. No other proposed site for Gibeah has these advantages.

In view of the archaeological material present at Gibeon, my suggestion is that Demsky's proposal to place Saul's ancestry at Gibeon should be considered seriously. His study also sheds light on Saul's background, family status within the tribe of Benjamin and their influence on the political and economic affairs in the region. This would also help to explain the reason for Saul's election to the throne.

Demsky's view that Saul removed himself from Gibeon because of the Philistine post nearby (i.e. I Sam 10:5) might be slightly corrected. Thus it is possible that after the defeat of the Philistines Saul wanted to establish himself in his new role as a king in a

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48 See the discussion of the archaeological data below in this chapter.
49 See fig. 4.
50 I Sam 13-14.
new and neutral town. Demsky also suggested that Saul rebuilt the desolate Tell el-Ful; my view is that Tell el-Ful was not desolate when Saul arrived there. With the penetration of the Philistines to the hill country, Tell el-Ful may have been one of the sites which fell under their control. It is more likely that after Saul defeated the Philistines\textsuperscript{51} he decided to establish his own city there. After he built the city, it bore his name גבעת שאול. Renaming a city after the royal founder was done later by David, who renamed Jebus, more likely Jerusalem, as the 'City of David'.\textsuperscript{52}

Masterman\textsuperscript{53} noted that the hill east of Tell el-Ful itself has a lower spur. The side which faces Tell el-Ful is full of caves. He believed that these were ancient tombs and quarries. These have been explored only recently. Salvage excavations immediately to the east of Tell el-Ful revealed rock-cut caves, some of which date from as early as the MB IIB.\textsuperscript{54} Iron Age I ceramics on the eastern slope of Tell el-Ful suggest the possibility of an Iron I settlement located below the terraces. The excavation planned for 1996, to be directed by S.Gibson of the Palestine Exploration Fund, may recover further evidence to strengthen the location of Gibeah at Tell el-Ful.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{51} I Sam. 13-14.


\textsuperscript{53} Masterman, op.cit. n.17, p.133.

\textsuperscript{54} S.Gibson, 'Ras 'Amer' *IEJ* 38 (1988), pp.80-2.

\textsuperscript{55} At the time of my visit to Tell el-Ful in autumn 1996, excavations concentrated on the MB II period. However, the abundance of Iron Age I pottery remains on the eastern slope of the hill,
c. History of Excavations

Tell el-Ful attracted a great amount of curiosity and attention amongst early geographers and archaeologists. It was one of the first sites to be excavated in Palestine. On May 15 1838 Edward Robinson, on his mission to survey the ancient topography of Palestine, visited Tell el-Ful. Robinson noted the remains of a square tower, which was the fortress later excavated by Albright.

In May 1868, Charles Warren, who was excavating in Jerusalem, made a number of visits to the site and its vicinity. He sent a small group of labourers to excavate there for a period of a fortnight. They limited themselves to trenches on the north and south sides and a small pit on the summit. As far as Warren was concerned, the results of this work were negative and not worthy of publication. Only a brief description of this work and plans were later published by Conder and Kitchener. These early soundings have had no archaeological value for later excavations of the tell.

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56 Albright (1924), op.cit. n. 11, p.3.
58 C.Warren, 'Tuleil el- Ful', PEF Proceedings & Notes (1868), p.66 [N.B. this is from a series of pamphlets published by the Fund prior to the beginning of the Quarterly Statement in 1869].
c: a. The First Campaign

Albright directed the initial Campaign at Tell el-Ful between 1922 and 1923. In March 1922 Albright began excavating on the summit of the mound. The excavations were carried out over a period of seventeen months, though there were only a maximum of forty days of digging for the entire period. During the Campaign, work was concentrated on the summit, in the area of the fortress ruins. Albright began with five trenches running radially from the fortress at the centre, and a few days later shifted to the fortress itself. The village on the summit was found to be of post-exilic and Hellenistic date. The stratum of the fourth period was cleared off, and later debris from the third period was removed. Soon, sherds of the second stratum began to appear. About two weeks later traces of the first fortress were unearthed under the foundation of the second. The first fortress was unearthed under the foundation of the second. The first fortress appeared with a layer of ashes over its foundation.

c: b. The First Fortress

To this period Albright assigned the walls and other remains which were found under the burnt level, which was obviously older than the second stratum. The walls of

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60 Albright (1924), op.cit. n. 11.
61 Ibid., p.6.
62 Ibid., p.5.
63 Ibid., p.7.
the second period were not cleared away and therefore it was difficult to determine the exact relation between the various sections of the foundation and wall which belong to the first period. The different historical phases of the first stratum were also difficult to distinguish. The massive walls on the southern part of the fortress follow a rectangular scheme which suggest that they belong to the fortress. The masonry of this period is not too distinctive and could resemble the masonry of walls belonging to the third and second millennia elsewhere in Palestine. The stones employed in the first fortress are fairly large; 70x30, 65x45 and 45x35 cm. Owing to their massive character, the walls of rooms A,C1 and C2 remained standing to a height of 180-220cm following the destruction of the first fortress. The weaker walls to the north were levelled off to within a meter from the ground. A layer of ashes representing woodwork was found in the remains of the foundation of the second fortress. This layer appeared at a height of 50 - 150cm from the ground.

Albright stated that no Bronze Age ceramic was found at Tell el-Ful, which would indicate that no culture of the pre-Israelite stage existed at the site. However, Lapp did find MB sherds at the site in a later campaign and a tomb of the MB IIB was excavated on the southern slope of the site. The first fortress at the site however, was built towards the end of the thirteenth century and burnt near the end of the twelfth century as described in Judges 19-20.

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64 Ibid.
65 See ibid., see figs 5-6, p.58.
66 In B,D,H, fig. 13.
67 Gibson, op.cit. n.54, p.82.
c: c. The Second Fortress

The second fortress was more elaborate and carefully constructed than the previous one. Albright suggests that this fortress belonged to a person of importance, and therefore ascribed it to king Saul. The structure was defended only by an outer walls varying from 2 - 2.3 m in width. This fortress also had a massive staircase leading from the first to the second story, and was found resting on the burnt level. The building was entered through the first storey, probably through a narrow hall, about a meter wide. From B, a door 85cm wide, opened at the foot of the staircase and led upstairs. The staircase had two steps remaining, the third was found broken. The steps were 1m wide and 0.25m high. They looked as if they had been demolished by enemy hands. The most characteristic feature of the second fortress were the narrow apertures, which allowed air and light to filter into the cellar rooms. These apertures were found in the south and to the east of A, and in the northern wall of C2. Their diamention are 0.2 - 0.25m in width and 0.3 - 0.35m in height.

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68 See fig. 14, room B.

69 Albright (1924), op.cit. n. 11, p.9

70 The installation of such narrow apertures may have been built for defensive purposes. Similar apertures were installed in towers of much later periods. Their purpose was to serve as look-out windows which could be used to shoot arrows at the enemy without being spotted.

71 See Albright (1924), op.cit. n. 11, figs 10-12, pp.60-61.

72 Ibid., p.9.
The masonry of the second fortress was much better made than that of the first. The stones were hammered into rough oblong shapes and laid in courses. The stones were half the size of those used in the first period. This fortress was not destroyed by fire, but dismantled and abandoned. The walls stood to a considerable height, reaching 3m in the south wall of A and 2.7m at D by the staircase.

Originally, Albright dated the foundation of Tell el-Ful to 1230 BCE or a little later, and the fortress to 1200 BCE. Albright suggested that the fortress was built because a watch-tower on the summit was needed, since the Canaanite city, Jebus, was three miles to the south. Albright was convinced that the archaeological results supported the story as it appeared in Judges 19-20. Albright dated the destruction of Gibeah in this story to 1130 - 1120 BCE. He based this on the assumption that the Benjaminites' war must have occurred long enough before Saul, for the recollection of that event to have been erased. The ceramic evidence covered the passage of time extending more than a century from the destruction of Gibeah to the erection of Saul's fortress. The second fortress was sacked and abandoned. There was an attempt to restore it, but that occupation survived for a short period of only a few years.  

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73 Ibid., p.45.
74 Ibid.
75 This significant point will be discussed later.
d. The Second Campaign

After Albright's second campaign in 1933 a few modifications had to be made. In the first excavation, the walls were left standing; this made detailed planning impossible. However, the violent earthquake of 1927 caused the collapse of all the insecure sections of masonry. Though this was regrettable, it did make the excavation of the interior of the fortress more possible. Since the first excavation season eleven years earlier, knowledge of ceramic chronology had improved; hence the modifications to the stratigraphy of the site.

The first phases of occupation could now be divided into three, as follows:

1) Period I: miscellaneous constructions antedating the foundation of the fortress (which do not belong to the fortress at all), destroyed by fire; 2) Period II: fortress I, the first fortress, also destroyed by fire; 3) Period II: fortress II, a second fortress which was a reconstruction of the first one, following nearly the same plan. This fortress was abandoned without any trace of destruction by fire. There are signs that this fortress underwent a rebuilding phase.

L.Sinclair\textsuperscript{76} dates the occupation of the first phase to the middle Bronze Age, suggested by Middle Bronze Age sherds and mace head discovered there. This minor settlement left little building remains and predates the fortress. Sherds of collar-rim store-jars type were found in the lowest level of the remains of the houses along the edge of

\footnote{\textsuperscript{76} L.A.Sinclair, 'An Archaeological Study of Gibeah (Tell el-Ful)' \textit{AASOR} 34-35 (1960), p.11.}
the mound. These prove occupation in this period, but the house wall remains there are fragmentary. This occupation was destroyed, at least in part, by fire at about 1100 BCE or a little later. Albright\(^7\) assigned this specific destruction to the story of Gibeah in Judges 19-20.

The second period (Period II, Fortress I) was assigned to the time of Saul on the basis of the evidence of potsherds attributed to the last phase of Iron I and before the transition to the Iron II in the tenth century. This pottery is contemporary with the latest pottery from Shiloh of Iron I from about 1050 BCE.\(^7\) Albright\(^8\) concludes that since Tell el-Ful represents Gibeah, this was probably the residence of Saul who reigned between 1020 - 1000 BCE.

Further evidence suggested that the walls and tower of rubble masonry have not actually bonded to the main fortress walls.\(^9\) This could indicate that the tower was not included in the original plan of the fortress. One can speculate that the tower was added later because the builder saw it necessary to do so. It would indicate intensifying security due to change in political and military circumstances.

The pottery of this period is of fine quality and diversity. It includes cooking pots, burnished saucers and bowls, jugs, some painted pottery (one white Cypriot

\(^7\) W. F. Albright, 'A New Campaign of Excavation at Tell el-Ful' \textit{BASOR} 52 (1933), p.8.

\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Sinclair (1960), op. cit. n. 76, p.7
import), a black burnished juglet, and various other vessels, spinning whorls, bone scrapers, two arrowheads, sling stones, a whetstone and an iron plough tip. It is impossible that most of the silos were cut during this period, especially in rm B.

Albright was not able to date the destruction of the fortress precisely. He suggested that it was burnt early in Saul's reign, before the battle of Michmash, or after Saul's death, favouring the first suggestion. Sinclair suggested that it was destroyed by the Philistines after the battle of Gilboa. Later, following B. Mazar, Sinclair changed his mind and accepted Mazar's historical reconstruction, who suggested that the Philistines were the first to fortify the mound as one of a series of fortresses guarding the trade route, and that Saul built Fortress II. It is further argued that the Philistines stopped making their characteristic pottery between 1150 and 1050 BCE. This is therefore the reason why Albright failed to find typical Philistine pottery in fortress I at Gibeah.

The reconstruction of the second phase at Gibeah followed the exact plan of the first fortress, using its wall as a foundation. However, there were major differences in the

\[^{81}\text{Ibid., p.8.}\]
\[^{82}\text{Ibid., pl.28.}\]
\[^{83}\text{Albright,(1933) op.cit. n. 77, p.8}\]
\[^{84}\text{Sinclair (1960), op.cit. n.76, p.6.}\]
\[^{85}\text{B.Mazar, 'Enc.Miq.2 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), p.413. See also idem [Canaan and Israel (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik and IES, 1980), p.164.]}\]
\[^{87}\text{Ibid.}\]
construction techniques. Here the tower was bonded to the main fortress wall and there are straight joints visible in the middle of the two walls. There are no differences in the pottery of the two phases. The duration of this fortress is not known. It was abandoned early in the tenth century, 1000-990 BCE.

Sinclair suggests that fortresses I & II appear to have been constructed according to the casemate plan with room B in the north and in the south serving as chambers in the inner and outer walls of the casemate. The outer wall measured 1.2m thick and the inner wall 1m. A partition such as the one in room B divided the narrow space between the walls into sections. Some of these sections were filled with debris, whereas others were used as store rooms with doors opening into the fortress. The total thickness of the wall was as much as 4m. The building material used was mostly hard mizzi. The exact size of the fortress could not be determined, but it was estimated to have been about 52m in length and 35m in breadth (fig.12). Albright assumed there was a tower at each corner measuring 9x13m, and that these served a defensive purpose. The height of the tower was preserved to over 2m.

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89 Ibid., p.56.
90 Ibid., p.12.
91 See the discussion of Iron I fortification, below in this chapter.
92 Sinclair (1960), op. cit. n. 76, p.12.
93 Local limestone.
95 Sinclair (1964), op. cit. n.86, p.54.
Albright assumed that there were two architectural parallels for this fortress. The first is the fortress of Kadesh Barnea (Khirbet el Qudeirat), and the second is of Hurvat 'Uzzah (Khirbet Ghazza), dated to the tenth century BCE. These parallels are no longer valid since both these fortresses have subsequently been shown to belong to the 9th-8th centuries BCE.

Albright suggested that the casemate type fortification at tell el-Ful was one of the earliest examples dating from the Iron I. The casemate type fortification not only provided maximum protection, but also provided good storage areas.

e. The Third Campaign

The third season of excavation at tell el-Ful was a salvage operation, since King Hussein was planning to build a palace on top of the mound. The excavations were carried out in 1964 under the direction of Paul Lapp, then the director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. It was a joint excavation between the school in Jerusalem and the Pittsburg Theological Seminary headed by L. Kelso. This campaign was enthusiastically supported by Albright.

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96 Albright (1933), op.cit. n.77, p.8.


The result of this campaign confirmed Albright's stratigraphy. To check his conclusions, Lapp excavated a trench from the west against the north-west corner of the tower called by him 'the tower of Saul's fortress'. The foundation of that tower contained pottery of the Post-Philistine phase of Iron I. The chronology of this phase cannot be dated precisely, but Lapp placed it between the late 11th and mid-10th centuries BCE.\textsuperscript{101}

f. The Iron I Fortification at Tell el-Ful

Lapp's\textsuperscript{102} main objection to Albright's earlier result was the suggestion that during Period II at Tell el-Ful an entire fortress was built, and that the tower which Albright had unearthed served as the south-west corner. Also, Albright suggested that similar towers were built on the corners of the casemate fortress. But Lapp argued that as far as the reconstruction went, the contour of the mound precluded the extension of the fort eastwards.\textsuperscript{103}

The other controversial aspect was Albright's suggestion that the rectangular fort was of a casemate type. Lapp's\textsuperscript{104} examination showed that there was no wall in the preserved Iron I debris east of the wall fragment to correspond to the inner wall of a

\textsuperscript{101} N.L. Lapp (ed.), The Tale of Tell (Pennsylvania: Pickwick, 1975), p.84.

\textsuperscript{102} Lapp (1981), op.cit. n.10, p.24.

\textsuperscript{103} Lapp (1975), op.cit. n. 101, p.85.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
casemate, and therefore, Lapp suggested, the view that Saul's fort had a casemate wall must now be abandoned.\(^{105}\)

g. The Casemate Type Fortification

Questions had to be raised by scholars regarding the origins of the elaborate casemate type fortification around Israelite cities of the 10th century BCE. The general opinion was that this type of fortification originated in Anatolia of the 15th century, and reached Palestine through Syria by the eleventh or tenth centuries.\(^{106}\) The casemate at Tell el-Ful (Period II) was thought to have been the earliest casemate found in Palestine.\(^{107}\) However, since this opinion became current other casemate walls have been uncovered, dating from the 16th century BCE, for instance, the casemate at Taanach, and Shechem from the first half of the 16th century, and at Hazor, second half of the 16th century.\(^{108}\) Thus the wall at Gibeah, if it is a casemate type of fortification, was not the earliest in Palestine.\(^{109}\)

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\(^{105}\) This issue has not been resolved and is still under debate. See: R. Chapman, 'Reviews & Reports' *PEQ* 116 (1984a), p.73; 'Masonry in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in the Levant' (London: Institute of Archaeology, unpublished Ph.D Thesis, 1984b.


\(^{108}\) Lapp (1976), op.cit. n.106, p.25.

\(^{109}\) 1) It should be remembered that the casemate type fortification continued to be used after the 10th century BCE in cities such as Samaria (9th century) Hazor, Ramat-Rachel, Gezer and other cities now also at tell Jezreel [Y. Aharoni, 'The Northern Boundary of Judah' *PEQ* (1959), p.36.] 2) Other types of fortification were used during the 10th-9th centuries. This is evident from the excavations at various sites of this period.
More recently it has been suggested\textsuperscript{110} that the casemate wall was developed from the arrangement of dwellings of the four-room type, along the edges of sites in the period prior to the monarchy, which created a line of defence around the settlement.\textsuperscript{111} Even though fortifications have rarely been found in the Iron I Strata in Palestine, settlements in the highlands were already fortified during that period. Sites such as Bethel, Beth-Zur, Gibeon and possibly Shiloh as well, reveal massive city walls associated with this period, as indicated by the 'collar rim' jar fragments.\textsuperscript{112} The enclosure wall of the small village of Giloh, for instance, was, according to Mazar, a type of fortification which demonstrates the extent of the security problem which existed during the process of the Israelite settlement in the region, probably due to the complicated ethno-political situation in this region.\textsuperscript{113} Israelite groups, and Canaanites, such as Jebusites and Hivites, lived side by side, though the numerous Philistines and Midianites raids necessitated the building of fortifications.\textsuperscript{114}

Going back to the excavations at Tell el-Ful and the final publication of the results, J.A.Graham\textsuperscript{115} suggested a reconstruction of a rectangular fortress. He claimed


\textsuperscript{112} A.Mazar, (1981), op.cit. n.110, pp.16-7.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.16.

\textsuperscript{114} The enclosure wall of the small villages, interpreted by A.Mazar as a type of fortification has been challenged recently by S.Gibson [In conversation at the PEF, London: 20.9.95] who claim that these enclosure walls were built to contain animals.

that the fortress measured 62x57m, with four towers, one on each corner. Graham's argument is based on the remains discovered by Lapp, which was considered to be the western wall of the fort. Graham claims further that the fortress wall was not actually a casemate wall, but a 1.5m thick wall instead.\textsuperscript{116} This reconstruction makes the fortress twice the size of the fortress as reconstructed by Albright, and should in my opinion be abandoned.

The tower which Albright discovered stood to a height of 3m and was well preserved. Hence, it is not clear why so few traces of the fort have been discovered elsewhere on the site. All the evidence unearthed so far indicates clearly that there was a massive tower at Tell el-Ful in Period II (the fortress of Saul). It is possible that at the time of Saul, only the tower on the summit was necessary, and that later, walls were added. If future excavations on the eastern slope of Tell el-Ful should reveal the actual settlement, we should perhaps envisage a solitary tower on the summit of the mound.

h. Iron Age I Pottery

The material culture characteristic of the settlements of the hill country has a limited variety of pottery types which were essential for basic subsistence.\textsuperscript{117} These included large storage jars (pithoi) which were probably used as water containers and are a hallmark of this culture, appearing in much greater quantity than any other ceramic.

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\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., pp.345-6.
Smaller storage jars were also found. These were used to store oil and wine. Cooking pots and a selection of other shapes are also known. The pottery did not have painted decoration, and in certain regions incisions were made in simple decorations. The assemblages are generally very different from those of the contemporary Canaanite and Philistine cultures of the coastal plain of the Jezreel Valley. The 'collar rim' pithoi served an important feature for distinguishing regional differences.

The 'collar rim' pithos is a large vessel (about 1.2m high) and ovoid in shape. The rim is thick and folded, and its neck has a ridge or "collar". This vessel was very common in central Palestine during the Iron Age I, on both sides of the Jordan from the Jezreel Valley in the north and Hebron in the south. This widespread use of pithoi led scholars to identify them as distinctive of the material culture of the Israelite settlements. However, this kind of attribution should be treated with caution, since similar pithoi have been discovered at Megiddo Stratum VI, and Tell Qison, where the Canaanite culture continued to exist until the 11th century. However, such pithoi did not reach the Israelite sites in the northern Negev.

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119 A.Mazar (1990), op.cit. n. 116, pp.345-6.

120 See further discussion of this by Zartal and Esse, under 'Subsistence Economy...' below in this chapter.

121 See discussion of this in D.L. Esse, 'The Collared Pithos at Megiddo: Ceramic Distribution and Ethnicity' *JNES* 51:2 (1992), pp.81-103. See fig.15.

122 Located 8km south-east of Acco.

123 A.Mazar (1990), op.cit. n. 116, p.347.
It appears that the Israelite settlers in the hill country lacked their own tradition of pottery making, and so initially they obtained most of the necessary vessels from their Canaanite neighbours. When they began to produce their own vessels, they produced a limited number of forms based on Canaanite prototypes though without adopting the Canaanite decoration.¹²⁴

i. Pottery at Tell el-Ful

The pottery evidence from the Pre-Fortress period shows that occupation at Tell el-Ful in this period was minor. The few potsherds which have been discovered below Fortress I were of a coarser ware with more limestone particles in it, and these were identical with the Bronze Age sherds. A few Middle Bronze sherds and two mace heads were also discovered.¹²⁵ Sherds of the earliest types of Iron I pottery were also unearthed, among these were cooking pots.¹²⁶ Storage jars with long-collared rims dating to the 12th century were found (fig.16). Jars with short collared rims also appeared in the 12th century and continued into the late 10th century.¹²⁷

The pottery from Period II, Fortress II is identical and cannot easily be distinguished. There are rims of the heavy storage jars (pithoi) typical of this period. The

¹²⁵ Sinclair (1960), op.cit. n. 76, p.16.
¹²⁶ See samples in figs.17
¹²⁷ See Lapp (1981), op.cit. n. 10, p.79.
rims are thickened and rounded and have sloping shoulders with little or no neck.\textsuperscript{128} Sherds of the white painted ware import from Cyprus were also found.\textsuperscript{129}

\textbf{j. Contemporary Sites in the Vicinity}

Of the various contemporary sites in the region two are of special interest for the study of Tell el-Ful. The first is Giloh and the second is Khirbet Ed-Dawwara.

\textit{j.a: Giloh}\textsuperscript{130}

The site of Giloh shares common characteristics with Tell el-Ful. Both of these close to Jerusalem, about 5-6km distance from the 'City of David'; both are situated at the height of 840m above sea level with an excellent view over a wide area; at both sites there is no natural source of water nor fertile land for agricultural produce,\textsuperscript{131} though these sites also produced ceramic wares. In the building remains of the Iron I at Giloh, sherds of 'collared rim' jars and cooking pot types from this period were unearthed. After

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p.80.

\textsuperscript{129} It would be inappropriate to discuss the various ceramic types from Tell el-Ful here. Details can be found in Sinclair (1960), op.cit.n.76, pp.16-26; Lapp (1981), op.cit.n.10, pp.79-80. The Tell el-Ful ceramics stored at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, unfortunately, appear to have suffered from inadequate storage thus making it difficult to study the find. However, I must express my gratitude to Nancy Lapp for her kind permission, allowing me access to the Tell el-Ful pottery. I am also grateful to Professor S.Gitin for his kind welcome to the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, and for arranging access to the pottery from Tell el-Ful (April, 1994).

\textsuperscript{130} Giloh is the name of a new modern suburb of Jerusalem. It is situated south of the valley of Raphaim and north of the own beit-Jalah. The site is situated at the centre of this suburb, hence the name. The biblical city of Giloh is most probably located further south as described in Josh.15:51 [A.Mazar (1981), op.cit. n. 110, p.2]. Three seasons of excavations between 1978 and 1979, were directed by Aamihai Mazar, Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

\textsuperscript{131} A.Mazar, (1990), op.cit.n.116, p.136.
the collared rim pithoi fragments, the cooking pot fragments are the most common type of vessel found at Giloh. These vessels also include two distinct types of rim characteristic of the Late Bronze Age.\textsuperscript{132}

The ceramic finds from Giloh date the settlement to the early Iron age or even to the Late Bronze Age where many Canaanite towns were destroyed. A good example of one of these cities is Lachish. The latest excavations there show that Lachish was destroyed during the reign of Ramesses III ca.1194 - 66 BCE i.e. in the first quarter of the 12th century.\textsuperscript{133} It would seem that the settlement at Giloh started during that time. However, it has not possible to determine whether this was a few years before the destruction or after. Some of the vessels which appear at Giloh have parallels at Lachish. But other types, especially the 'collared rim' jars and some of the cooking pots do not appear at Lachish. Therefore the settlement at Giloh probably began after Lachish had been destroyed. The excavations at Giloh indicate that it belongs to the period of the Israelite settlement in the region of the hill country which had not been previously settled. The process began in the 12th and continued to the 11th century until the beginning of the monarchy.\textsuperscript{134} The examination of the finds at sites such as Tell el-Ful, period I as well as at 'Ai and Bethel indicates that these sites do not pre-date the 12th century and are contemporary with Giloh.

\textsuperscript{132} A.Mazar (1981), op.cit. n. 110, p.20.


\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p.39. This correlation of the dating between Lachish and Giloh is useful for dating Tell el-Ful, see below in this chapter.
J.b: Khirbet Ed-Dawwara

This is a site of the 11th-10th centuries, and is a one-phase site, typical of the Iron Age I. The site is surrounded by an oval shaped enclosure which inspired the Arabic name *Khirbet Ed-Dawwara*, meaning, the 'the circular ruin'. The site was abandoned, since there is no sign of destruction or conflagration. The main significance of this site is in its location on the desert fringe of the territory of Benjamin, which was the centre of Israelite activity during the early stages of the Israelite monarchy. But most significant of all is the early date of the fortification wall. This wall was built of very large field stones; it was 2-3m thick and was preserved to a height of 1.2m. It is possible that this is the earliest Iron Age I fortification in the hill country.

The oldest sherds from the site are characteristic of the Iron Age I, but those are not too varied and include: a few cooking pots and 'collared rim' jars, some of which are more similar to the pithoi from the 10th century than those from the early Iron Age I. Neither of these types belong to the early stages of Iron Age I, therefore they should be dated to the second half of the 11th century.

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135 Kh. Ed-Dawwara is located 1.5 km south-east of the village of Mukhmas and 10km north-east of Jerusalem (5km north of Tell el-Ful. It is located in the desert fringe area of the Benjaminitc hill country, situated about 600m above sea level [I.Finkelstein, 'Excavations at Khirbet Ed-Dawwara: An Iron Age Site Northeast of Jerusalem' *Tel Aviv* 17:2 (1990), p.163]. Two seasons of excavations were carried out at this site, in 1985 & 1986, directed by Israel Finkelstein, Tel Aviv University. Finkelstein convincingly argues the identity of this circular ruin with ancient Gilgal, one of the clues being the meaning of both names which is 'circular'; hence the location of Gilgal in figs. 4-6, 10 is adopted from Finkelstein.


137 Ibid.
k. Dating Tell el-Ful Periods I & II.

It appears that the archaeological data from the various excavations of sites in the hill country does not provide enough substantial evidence from which more accurate chronology can be deduced. However, consideration should be made of Mazar's dating of Giloh, discussed above, as a helpful starting point. He proposed that Giloh was constructed following the destruction of Lachish. In this case one can presume that Giloh was constructed some time around 1166 at the latest. Giloh is also contemporary with Period I at Tell el-Ful. There is no clear indication as to how long the Period I settlement survived or how many years elapsed between Period I and Period II.

Lapp's excavation results allowed Period I about fifty years, from ca.1200 to 1150 BCE. I propose a slight modification of this. Since period I at Tell el-Ful is contemporary with Giloh, we should allow fifty years from 1166 BCE, and place the beginning of Period II (Saul's Period), roughly about 1100 BCE.

It is generally accepted that Saul reigned for a period of about twenty years. It has also been established that there was a long civil war, about seventeen years, in Israel before David ascended the throne. Hence, taking away about forty years from ca.

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138 A.Mazar (1981), op.cit. n. 110, p.35. As discussed above, Lachish was destroyed in the reign of Ramesses III, ca 1194-1166. This dating is based on N.K.Sandars, The Sea Peoples (Thames and Hudson, 1978, rev.1985), p.208. See also dating by A.Mazar (1990), op.cit.n. 116, pp.296-7.

139 Lapp (1981), op.cit. n. 10, p.xvii.

140 See chronological table at the end of this chapter.

141 See discussion in Chapter VII.
1100 BCE brings us closer to the date of ca. 1060-1050 BCE, the time which marks the end of the rule of the house of Saul.142

The main reason for the uncertainty in dating the early archaeological periods at Tell el-Ful, and in deducing historical conclusions, stems from the attempt which had been made to correlate the archaeological material with the biblical story in Judges 19-20, the 'concubine of Gibeah' story.143 This story describes a real town with houses, streets and fortifications, whereas the archaeological finds of the Iron Age I have not produced anything at all like this. It is reasonable therefore to agree with Mazar144 that the story may not be historical.145 However, some historical elements can be deduced from this narrative. It does reflect a civil war between the Israelite tribes, though the circumstances in the narrative may have been altered. I shall argue that the civil war described took place between David's followers and the house of Saul, after Saul's death. The hatred between the two groups is reflected in the degree of destruction evident in the first fortress.

Scholars, in an attempt to match the biblical narrative with the finds at Tell el-Ful have allowed an excessive gap of about 100 years between Period I and Period II (the period of Saul). This was in an attempt to allow for the time span between the events in Judges 19-20 and the rise of Saul to power. This length of time was given for two

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142 This dating seemed reasonably acceptable to Professor Amihai Mazar during a conversation, at the Institute of Archaeology, Jerusalem, 26.4.94.

143 See treatment of this in chapter VII.

144 A.Mazar (1990), op.cit. n. 116, p.139.

145 See also Arnold, op.cit. n. 23, chapter 3.
specific reasons; first, it gives the tribe of Benjamin, which was almost exterminated by the events, enough time to repopulate; as claimed by Albright,\(^{146}\) second, 'to allow enough time to erase the keen edge of Israelite recollection of the atrocity'.\(^{147}\)

Taking into consideration the discussion of the civil war\(^{148}\), in my view, the archaeological material would perhaps be better understood as follows: The end of Period I at Tell el-Ful (most possibly, a Philistine post which was defeated by Saul as described in I Sam 13-14), ended some time before or around 1100 BCE, and it ended by fire, but on a very small scale. The site was later taken by Saul, as indeed suggested by B.Mazar.\(^{149}\) It is quite possible that Saul built the big tower, Period II, Fortress I, which ended with a violent destruction after his death on Mount Gilboa, not at the hands of the Philistines, as suggested by Finkelstein\(^{150}\) but by the followers of David. The second fortress, Period II, Fortress II, was built almost immediately after the first one was destroyed, and was a rebuilding of the first fortress. Albright notes that it was closely followed the plan of the first fortress with its walls resting on the walls of fortress I.\(^{151}\) This fortress, according to Albright, survived a short period of about ten years. In my view, because the fortress was built immediately after the first one was destroyed, and the builder followed exactly the same plan, the builder was possibly closely connected

\(^{146}\) Albright (1924), op.cit. n. 11, p.50.
\(^{147}\) Ibid., p.49.
\(^{148}\) See the treatment of these events in Chapter VII.
\(^{149}\) B.Mazar, (1954) op.cit. n. 85, p.415.
\(^{150}\) Finkelstein (1986), see op.cit. n. 106, p.52.
\(^{151}\) Sinclair(1960), op.cit. n. 76, pp.14-15.
with Saul. The only such person was Abner, Saul's uncle and chief commander of his
army. Ishbaal, Saul's infant son was too young to rule at that time.\footnote{II Sam 2:8-9.} Abner who was his
guardian, acted on his behalf. Therefore, Abner probably tried to rebuild Saul's tower in
order to re-settle in Saul's town. But Abner was murdered a few years later\footnote{Ibid., 3:27.} which
might explain why Fortress II was abandoned.

The archaeological evidence shows that Gibeah stood in ruins until the 8th
century BCE. No attempt was made to rebuild or inhabit the site. Perhaps it was during
this period that the story in Judges 19-21 was written to explain why Gibeah had been
sacked. The story was also written as a propaganda against the House of Saul which also
represented the northern kingdom of Israel.

A. Mazar\footnote{A. Mazar, 'Excavations at Tell Qasile' II, \textit{Qedem} 20 (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1985), p.27.} records that the violent destruction of the flourishing Stratum X at
Tell Qasile, from the beginning of the 10th century, was one of a series of destruction in
various parts of the country. This is evident at Bet-Shemesh Stratum III, Tell Masos
Stratum II, Tell Jerisheh and Megiddo Stratum VIA. Rather than attributing these
destructions to the Israelite invasion under King David as B. Mazar\footnote{B. Mazar, 'The Stratification of Tell Abu Huwam on the Bay of Acre' \textit{BASOR} 124 (1951), pp.21-5.} suggests, in my
view, they probably took place during the civil war after Saul's death, and the dating of
the events which led to the destruction of Shiloh, and the abandonment of the settlement
at Kh. Ed-Dawwara should also be revised. Violent destruction by fire also appears at level IV of tell Hadar in the 'land of Geshur', on the northern border of Gilead. M.Kochavi\(^{157}\) dates this destruction to the 11th Century BCE. Is it possible to associate this widespread destruction with the civil war after Saul's death?

I. Subsistence Economy at Tell el-Ful.

Studies of agriculture in the highlands\(^{158}\) show that the geological conditions of the central highlands produce springs throughout.\(^{159}\) For example, in the Judean and Samarian highlands about two hundred small springs are present today, though in ancient times the situation was somewhat different; then there were probably only about one hundred springs but with a few moderate or large fountains.\(^{160}\) Inevitably, springs tended to attract the building of settlements in their vicinity since they provided possibilities for irrigation in order to achieve subsistence. Nevertheless, many new settlements such as Bethel, Kh. Ed-Dawwara, Giloh and Gibeah (Tell el-Ful) had no water sources available to them. Thus most of the settlement in the highlands used

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\(^{156}\) In addition the following should also be considered: A.Mazar [(1981), op.cit. n. 110, p.133] reports such abandonment at Giloh; C.Hauer ['From Alt to Anthropology: The Rise of the Israelite State' *JSOT* 36 (1986), p.10] discusses such occurrence at Ai; and I. Finkelstein ['The Emergence of the Monarchy in Israel: The Environment and Socio-Economic Aspects' *JSOT* 44 (1989), p.61] attributes the destructions or abandonments to the Philistines due to the economic conflict in the region. A number of other destructions of this period are also discussed by R.Coote and K.W.Whitelam [*The Emergence of Early Israel* (Sheffield: Almond, 1987), p.159.]


\(^{159}\) The Cenomanian and Turenian limestones, containing shallow intercalations of impermeable marl, which frequently lead ground water to the surface [Ibid, p.96]. See also the discussion of Gibeon in Chapter V.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., pp.96-7.
cisterns and a very few used reservoirs; cisterns were widely known throughout the highlands in earlier periods as well. Such systems helped accomplish important objectives such as collecting and storing the periodic rainfall.\(^{161}\) But they did not provide for proper irrigation, rather perhaps, only for a garden-type of irrigation. Instead it is most likely that the main objective of these systems was to store water for immediate human consumption or livestock watering within the settlement.

No doubt cistern hewing was a task which must have occupied a great place in the agricultural life in the highlands during Iron Age I, possibly being one of the challenges that gave particular shape to the struggle for agricultural subsistence.\(^{162}\)

It has been mentioned above that Gibeah (Tell el-Ful) had no water source available. In the store room of the ground floor of the fortress tower large pithoi were discovered. Albright\(^{163}\) suggested that these were used to store wine, oil and grains. But more recent agricultural studies by A.Zartal\(^{164}\) proved a different function for these pithoi. Zartal states that of the ninety-six sites surveyed, only 20% of them were near a water source. Almost half the sites were 3km or more from water sources. Furthermore, out of fifteen sites that were properly excavated, only four of them contained reservoirs.\(^{165}\) Even then, they were hewn only in the later phases of Iron I.\(^{166}\) It is

\(^{161}\) Ibid., p.95.

\(^{162}\) Hopkins, op.cit. n. 158, p.266.

\(^{163}\) Albright (1924), op.cit. n.11, p.51.


\(^{165}\) No reservoirs were found at Tell el-Ful in Iron Age I period

\(^{166}\) Zartal, op.cit. n. 164, p.39.
interesting that about a third of the total number of vessels discovered are pithoi.\textsuperscript{167} Thus, Zartal concludes that the pithoi must have been used for storing water.\textsuperscript{168} This would explain why the pithoi are so large: 1.2-1.5m high with a capacity of 80-100 litres. Their walls were thick and crude, and their base was rounded so that they were usually stood in a deep hole in the ground either within the house or outside in the yard. One may speculate as to whether such a kind of storage was also designed to facilitate the cooling of the water.\textsuperscript{169}

A Note About the Pithoi

D.L. Esse\textsuperscript{170} has shown that the collared pithoi were most likely the product of a specific potting tradition. If this is accepted, then judging from the distribution and the significant quantitative evidence from the core highland areas, then they were either Israelites, or, at least, the Israelites were the Canaanites' best customers. Esse\textsuperscript{171} claims that the commerce between these areas which were either predominantly Israelite (highlands) or Canaanite (lowlands) was relatively free and open. The "Song of

\textsuperscript{167} For example at Giloh and Izbet Sarta.

\textsuperscript{168} Zartal, op. cit. n. 164, p. 41.

\textsuperscript{169} It would be interesting to mention that the water was usually carried by donkeys from the water source to the site. The donkey was an essential animal of the agricultural life in the highlands. Donkeys' bones were discovered in most Iron Age I sites. There is no evidence of horses. These were not in use in this period; apparently the horse disappears from the region by the end of the Bronze Age and it is back in use during the Iron Age II [See B. Rosen, 'Subsistence Economy in Iron Age I' (Jerusalem: yad Ben-Zvi and IES, 1990), pp. 403, 406.]

\textsuperscript{170} Esse, op. cit. n. 121, pp. 81-103.

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., p. 100
Deborah\textsuperscript{172} and the "Blessing of Jacob"\textsuperscript{173} reflect the conflict between Canaanite and Israelite groups, a conflict which was based on the economic dependence of the Israelites groups on non-Israelites. These cross ethnic economic ties proved stronger than the ethnic connection between the groups, and were more directly associated with the main Israelite population in the highlands. These economic inter-dependence between Israelites and Canaanites was further strengthened by intermarriage between the two ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{174}

With reference to the economy at Tell el-Ful (Gibeah), the archaeological finds do not produce much evidence for reconstructing the economy of the inhabitants. However, the quantity of pottery found in the debris of Period II does perhaps indicate a measure of rural luxury.\textsuperscript{175} Fragments of about thirty cooking pots, identical in dimension were found. An iron plough tip was also found, and numerous fragments of querns, rubbing-stones and spindle-whorls would reflect domestic activities.

Grain analysis shows that wheat, barley and corn formed the main part of the diet.\textsuperscript{176} Oil and wine were produced but at first on a small scale, though becoming more common during the Iron Age I. The ox was a valuable animal, mainly for ploughing, though most animals were sheep and goats, which were used for milk, cheese and wool.

\textsuperscript{172} Jud. 5:1-31.

\textsuperscript{173} Gen.49:14-15.

\textsuperscript{174} Esse, op.cit. n. 170, p.101. See also my discussion in Chapter III, 'Saul and the Gibeonites'.

\textsuperscript{175} Albright, op.cit. n. 11, p.51.

\textsuperscript{176} Rosen, op.cit. n. 169, pp.405, 408.
The importance of the camel increased. Early in the Iron Age I the latter's introduction affected the military balance between the nomads and the sedentary population. It also played an essential role in the economic, social and political life of the desert dwellers.\(^{177}\)

An ethnographic study by Finkelstein\(^{178}\) in the vicinity of Kh. Ed-Dawwara, for the period spanning the first half of this century, revealed some interesting information. This study showed that the main economy of the two neighbouring villages, Mukhmas and Jeba, was dry-farming and animal husbandry. The total extent of their land was 27,000 dunams (about 6750 acres) of which 74% was regarded as uncultivated land. This was the area to the east, on the desert fringe, which was used as pasture land for the flocks. Only 23% of the land was used for cereal cultivation and only 3% for olive orchard. Both of these villages produced a large surplus of grain; about 60kg of grain per dunam (about 0.25 acre). Finkelstein\(^{179}\) concludes that the 890 inhabitants of the village grew double their annual requirement of grain. It seems reasonable to suppose that the inhabitants also produced a surplus of animal products and that grain and animal products, such as wool and cheese, could be traded in exchange for oil, wine and other products. One can speculate the finds at Tell el-Ful may represent traces of a similar kind of trading economy.


\(^{178}\) Finkelstein op.cit. n. 135, p.199.

\(^{179}\) Ibid.
Chronologies for Tell el-Ful:

Albright's Chronology After the 1922/23 Excavations:

Period I
Foundation of Gibeah 1230 BCE (or a little later).
Fortress I built ca. 1200 BCE (destroyed 1130-1120, story in Judg. 19-20).

Period II
ca. 11030 BCE.
(Fortress II to ca. 990 BCE).

Albright's Modifications After the 1933 Excavations:

Period I Pre-Fortress 1100 BCE
(destroyed by fire)

Period II:
Fortress I 1020-1000 BCE (destroyed by fire)
Fortress II 1000-990 BCE (abandoned).

Lapp's Chronology After the 1964 Excavations:

Period I 1200-1050 BCE (pre-Fortress)
Period II 1025-950 BCE (Fortress I & II)

The New Chronology Being Proposed Here:

Period I Pre-Fortress ends ca. 1100 BCE (destroyed by fire)

Period II:
Fortress I Saul's Fortress I (probably only a tower) ca. 1100-1075 BCE (destroyed by violent fire after the battle of Gilboa)
Fortress II Re-buit by Abner (?)
FROM SAUL TO THE SCHISM

The impression given when reading through I Chronicles is that the transition from Saul's rule to that of David was straightforward without any interruption. But when reading through the early chapters of II Samuel, i.e. chapters 2-4 there seems to be evidence which indicates that there was a struggle between the house of Saul and the supporters of David, though this is briefly reported. The brevity of this presentation by the redactor seems to have influenced commentators on II Samuel. Such commentators are also brief in their treatment, pointing out the fact that there was a civil war after Saul's death yet not attributing much importance to this war. Old Testament historians too, have applied a similar approach. For example, M. Noth\(^1\) comments that 'these battles were only of minor importance and had no special consequences', whereas J. A. Soggin\(^3\) explains that the relations between the groups were often unfriendly. The strangest of all is the claim put by J. Bright\(^4\) who suggests that the relations between the rivals, although unfriendly, never reached the point of open war.

This hasty approach by almost every scholar working on this transitional period, is mainly due to scholars' eagerness to deal with the following period, i.e. David's

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accession to the throne. This approach has also led to unjustifiable assumptions such as, that during those years of conflict David ruled Judah and Israel from Hebron, and that David's reign in Hebron was an important stage in developing a bond which led to the possibility of unification between Judah and Israel under a single rule. What becomes apparent by this approach, is that the Deuteronomist was successful in propagating a pro-Davidic stance, since that stance successfully influenced commentators throughout both ancient and modern times. Thus scholars paid no special attention to the significance of the war after Saul's death, nor to the length of time that elapsed between Saul's death and David's accession. Moreover insufficient attention has been given to the effect the war had on Israel.

The aim of this chapter is to examine carefully the events after the battle at Gilboa, and to show that there was probably a link between the circumstances of Saul's death, the civil war that followed, David's policies and the eventual schism. The unification of the various Israelite groups under the strong central rule of Saul began to show signs of strain under David. David tried to keep the tribes unified, but was unable to do so for long. The tension continued and soon after Solomon's death the inevitable schism came about.

To argue in favour of these claims the present chapter will be divided into three main parts. In part I the events between Saul's death and David's accession will be examined. In my view the events described in Judges 19-21 should be seen as part of the

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5 Gordon, op.cit. n. 1, p.214.

civil war which took place after Saul's death, rather than being placed at the end of the book of Judges. In part II David's actions to secure his kingship will be looked at; attention will also be focused on the policies applied and the rebellions against him. In part III similar treatment of Solomon's rule and the schism that followed after his death will be examined. The study in this chapter will attempt to show that the schism did not occur overnight, but that it was the result of a series of events beginning with Saul's death.

**Part I: From Saul's Death to David's Accession**

**a. Did the Philistines Subjugate Israel After Their Victory at Gilboa?**

The most puzzling question that should be raised is the Philistines' activity after their victory at Gilboa. One would expect to hear of Philistines subjugating or suppressing the Israelites in some way. Yet II Samuel 1-4 is silent about them. The only action taken by them is described in I Sam 31:7 'When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled... they forsook their towns and fled, and the Philistines came and occupied them.' This verse simply describes on the one hand, the Israelites fleeing, and on the other, the Philistines taking over from them. The verse applies to the Israelites in the north and to those in to those in Transjordan, but not to those in the central highlands, the region which was highly disputed between both sides. Yet one would also expect in these circumstances that the Philistines might try to subjugate the Israelites or take over towns

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7 These issues will be discussed from the point of view of tracing policies associated as contributors to the schism. David's rule and general achievements will not be discussed.
in the central regions of the state. But instead, II Sam 2-4 reports heavy fighting between the house of Saul and the followers of David. The only likely explanation is that the eruption of the war between the Israelites themselves could be related to the recent battle at Gilboa: that, David's involvement in the battle provoked angry reaction against him. This might also explain why the Philistines do not interfere with the Israelites' civil war; they see David's reactions as a "continued" support of them. The first time the Philistines do react comes in II Sam 5:17 where it is stated that 'when the Philistines heard that David was made king over Israel they went and encamped against him at the valley of Rephaim.' It was probably only at that point that the Philistines realised what David's intentions were. It is interesting that they do not react to his election at Hebron.\(^8\) The possible explanation for that is that David may have been elected by a small group of people and not the whole of Judah, and so the Philistines saw no significance in that event. It should be remembered that Saul enjoyed support and loyalty from Judah throughout his reign. It is therefore unlikely that they favoured David so soon after Saul's death.\(^9\) The civil war may be seen as a reaction to David's involvement in the war at Gilboa and its outcome.

b. Was There a Concubine at Gibeah?

In chapter IV I proposed the hypothesis that Judges 13-16 contains information which refers to Saul. In the following section I propose to extend this hypothesis to

\(^8\) II Sam 2:4.

\(^9\) For the time gap between Saul's death and David's election by Judah see the discussion below in this section.
Judges 19-21, that is the civil war, so briefly reported in II Samuel, may be supplemented by the material found in Judges.

The book of Judges ends with the episode of the 'concubine at Gibeah' and the civil war which followed as a consequence. This war was against one of the Israelite tribes, that of Benjamin. The Benjaminites of Gibeah had allegedly committed an atrocious crime against a Levite's concubine. But the tribe of Benjamin refused to punish their fellow tribesmen, a situation which provoked a civil war. In that war the tribe of Benjamin was almost exterminated.

A first reading of chapters 19-21, gives the impression of unity and coherence, without the narrative having any points of discontinuity. However, a close reading of these chapters indicates that the narrative is quite complex and contains many contradictions as well as descriptions of scenes which bring to mind other stories in the biblical text. This kind of presentation raises doubts regarding the historical reliability of the story, as well as various questions, for instance: what were the reasons behind the composition of such a story, and can we get to the root of it in order to find out what is hidden beneath?

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11 Chapters 19-21.
14 See also Soggin, op cit. n.12, p.280.
15 The events in Judg. 19-21 are reminiscent of others in the biblical text, and this has been dealt with in the literature, see for example; P.M. Arnold [Gibeah (Sheffield: JSOTSup. 79, 1990), pp.61-86]; S. Lasine, 'Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World' JSOT 29 (1984), p.37-59. Extraordinarily, Hosea, in the eighth century, refers to the evil at Gibeah in 9:9, 10:9.
One of the problems of this story is that the text lacks consistency. For instance: the text implies tribal alliance: 'Then all the children of Israel went out and the congregation was assembled as one...'

But in chapters 21:9 the men of Jabesh Gilead did not join the battle and the text suggests instead a picture of complete anarchy:

In addition, the war against the Benjaminites was presumably undertaken to eliminate corruption, yet the actual punishment of the Benjaminites itself was in fact a corrupt act. It involved the massacre of thousands of innocent people who had no connection at all with the crime: '...go put the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead to the sword...'

Moreover, the text indicates a war against the whole tribe of Benjamin, despite the actual battle being apparently directed against one city only, that of Gibeah. The fall of Gibeah did in fact determine the fate of the whole tribe. Finally, it would seem logical that since the tribes were so united, they would have been organised around one central place of worship, whereas the text actually indicates the opposite.

Thus in chapter 21:1 they are at Mizpah and in 20:18, 26 they are at Bethel, whereas in 21:19 they are at Shiloh...

It is rather odd that Mizpah and Bethel are both towns in the territory of Benjamin, yet the Israelite tribes were gathered there before going out to fight against Benjamin.

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16 Jud. 20:1,11.

17 21:25.

18 21:10.


20 Shiloh was identified by E.Robinson in 1838 with the village of Sailun (A.Kempinski, 'Shiloh', EAEHL (eds.) M.Avi-Yonah & E.Stern 4 vols. (Jerusalem: IES & Massada, 1978) IV, pp.1098; Mizpah is identified with modern Tell en-Nasbeh, situated 12 km north of Jerusalem. Mizpah was identified by E.Raboission (sic) in 1897 and by C.R.Conder independently in 1898. Some scholars reject this identification, preferring to locate it at Nabi Samwil, 8 km northwest of Jerusalem (M.Broshi, 'Nasbeh, Tell en-' ibid, III, p.912). I support the identification of Mizpah with Tell en-Nasbeh since the stories in I Samuel would not suit a site so far to the northwest.
There are further peculiarities within the concubine story itself. For instance, it seems unusual, considering the circumstances, that the Levite set out on his journey in the evening rather than in the morning. The Levite's choice of town as a place to stay for the night is also strange: if he felt reluctant to stay the night at Jebus because it was not an Israelite town, surely he could have stayed in one of the various other Israelite towns located between Jebus and Gibeah, e.g. at Nob or Anathoth. Hence, it seem more likely that it was the narrator who brought the Levite and his concubine to the place of the crime at Gibeah. Also in chapter 19:15 the Levite is said to be at the city gate waiting to be invited in but the men of Gibeah ignore him. When eventually he is offered hospitality, it comes from a man who lives at Gibeah, but who is not a Benjaminite but an Ephramite. 21

These peculiarities makes the whole story incoherent and illogical; even more so when linked to the narrative of a civil war. The aim of this discussion is to show that, first, there was a civil war but one which was not connected to the concubine episode, and, secondly, that this war did not occur prior to the period of the monarchy. In my view, this war has probably taken place after Saul's death and before David's accession to the throne.

Discussion

It has to be pointed out that the description of the battle against Gibeah bears a close similarity to the battle against the town of 'Ai, as described in Joshua 7-8. In both stories the Israelites are defeated in the first attempt, but then plan an ambush, with the cities eventually being burnt and the people there being exterminated. The military tactics

21 B.Z.Luria, יָדַעַת לְהַכֵּנִים (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sepher, 1970), p.170. We can see that in depicting the men of Gibeah in such an atrocious light, surely the Levite himself should not be exempt from guilt. Who was worse, the Levite or the men of Gibeah? After all, it was the Levite himself who threw the woman outside the house because he was thinking of himself.
used in both stories are identical, leading Malamat\textsuperscript{22} to suggest that the description of the battle against 'Ai in Josh. 7-8 was formulated on the basis of the model of the battle against Gibeah.\textsuperscript{23}

Various other features in the story are strongly associated with Saul. The most obvious one is that the actual crime is said to take place at Gibeah, the city of Saul and the Israelite capital at the time of his reign. But there are two other associations. First, in I Sam 11:7, Saul seized a 'yoke of an oxen', cut them into pieces and then distributed these throughout the territory of Israel. However, in the concubine story itself it is the Levite who cuts her up and sends the pieces throughout the territory of Israel.\textsuperscript{24} The people of Jabesh-Gilead do not co-operate with the tribes in their battle against Benjamin and so are punished for this, whereas in I Sam 11, Saul saves Jabesh-Gilead from the Ammonites' oppression. Moreover, after Saul's death on Mount Gilboa it was the people of Jabesh who collected the bodies of Saul and his sons for burial.\textsuperscript{25}

In connection with these associations with Saul, it should be added that in chapter 19 the Levite is said to have received hospitality from his father-in-law at Bethlehem (in Judah), and at Gibeah (in Benjamin) the Levite met with similar hospitality but only that given by a 'pious' Ephramite who lived there, clearly a deliberate contrast is given here to besmirch the local 'wicked' men! In this instance, the author is keen not only to clarify the ethnic situation, but also to emphasize that the 'wicked' territory is that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} A. Malamat, יִשְׂרָאֵל בהכְפַּיֵּים חֲמַרִים (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1983), pp. 72-4.
\item \textsuperscript{23} The battle against 'Ai (25 km north of Jerusalem) and its destruction as described in Joshua has long been a problem for archaeologists. The main reason being that there is not one shred of evidence archaeologically which would suggest destruction by fire at the site, let alone any trace of settlement at the site in the LBA (1550-1200 BCE). Therefore it would seem more logical to accept Malamat's argument that the story of the battle against Gibeah was transferred to 'Ai and was attached to the presumed period of the conquest.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Jud. 19:29.
\item \textsuperscript{25} I Sam 31:11-12.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of Benjamin. Although an impression is created that Israel as a whole fought Benjamin, it seems more likely that Judah took the military lead against Benjamin as stated in chapter 20:18 "Which of us shall go up against the Benjaminites? and the answer is "... Judah shall go up first". Hence, Malamat's argument that Ephraim was the initial force which led the tribes of Israel against Benjamin is invalid. Ephraim is not mentioned in this conflict at all.

Because the episode of the concubine takes place at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin and, therefore, is probably connected with Saul, it has been suggested that chapters 19-21 were written as propaganda against the house of Saul in order to unite the Israelite tribes under David. Kaufman, however, strongly rejects this idea saying that if there was such propaganda it would have appeared in the books of Samuel and Kings. Moreover, he points out that Saul committed an atrocious crime against the priests of Nob yet that event is not used against him; if such propaganda against Saul did exist, the incident at Nob would also have been used. Kaufman further argues, firstly, that the Israelites' response to the crime at Gibeah is evidence of their moral sensitivity; secondly, that they fought to combat corruption; and, thirdly, that the event at Gibeah was an isolated incident. He strongly opposes the idea of any hostility towards Saul or the tribe of Benjamin.

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29 Ibid., p. 278.

30 Ibid., p. 281

31 Ibid., p. 278.
Kaufman's defence of the text cannot be accepted for various reasons. If the tribes went out to punish the guilty men of Gibeah, and by doing so to combat corruption, how does he explain the elimination of innocent people?\(^{32}\) Besides, hostility towards Saul is evident throughout the numerous incidents discussed above. The crime at Nob is neither used nor ever mentioned elsewhere in the Bible probably because it was inserted in Samuel long after compilation\(^{33}\).

A different attempt to defend the image of the tribes has been made by Shnitzer\(^{34}\) who, although aware of the various problems inherent in the text, argues that the concubine episode is probably the oldest example of a literary parody intended to serve political purposes or as psychological warfare aimed at gaining of power. Such a parody is apparent in the narrative dealing with the battle for power between Judah and Benjamin, which was discussed above. However, Shnitzer argues, there was no real battle between the two since it was only a battle of words rather than a war of bloodshed, which eventually came to an end when the tribes abandoned Ishbosheth and then Abner and the tribes of Benjamin followed David.\(^{35}\)

One might be inclined to accept Shnitzer's view that Judges 19-21 is a literary parody, but this can only be the case in respect of the 'concubine episode' and not in respect of the war itself. Thus, it is quite possible that the incident of the concubine was fictional and therefore had no connection with the civil war at all. There is no mention of it after chapter 19:14 or even at the end of the story. Instead, it was conveniently used as a background for the civil war. The reason why the civil war itself cannot be treated as

\(^{32}\) Jud.21:10-11.

\(^{33}\) See Chapter III for the discussion for the hostility towards Saul and the events at Nob.

\(^{34}\) Shnitzer, op.cit. n.19, p.31.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
fiction is that it is not a straightforward narrative. It contains contradictions to which the
answer is more historical than folkloristic. The narrator may have based Judges 19 on
some incident which strongly impressed him, and therefore found it useful to use motifs
of that previous incident in order to write the episode of the concubine and thus to be
able to attach it to Gibeah. It provided a convenient camouflage to conceal what may
have been the possible reasons for that war, as will be explained later on in this chapter.

Jungling^36 claims that 19:1-30a and 21:25 form a unity, one which aims to point
to the chaos of the pre-monarchic period. It was written in the time of David or Solomon
with the intention of winning over those who were suspicious of the institution of the
monarchy. Therefore, the concluding formula in 21:25 is crucial; only the king can
prevent lawlessness. Jungling^37 also claims that the Levite travels the whole length of
Israel, from Ephraim to Bethlehem, indicating that the story envisages an 'all Israel'
which should feel protected by the king in Jerusalem. But the hint that the man would
have been safe had he gone to Jerusalem, compared with Gibeah, the place of the crime,
is an indication that the account may have been an anti-Saul propaganda.

Shnitzer's suggestion^38 that it was a 'war of words' must also be rejected because
there must have been a lot of hatred for almost a whole tribe to be eliminated.^39 This is
expressed not only in the text, but also physically in the destruction level found at Tell el-
Ful (Gibeah) which, as W.F.Albright^40 has commented was 'marked by hatred'. The rest
of Shnitzer's argument cannot be accepted either, i.e. that the tribes abandoned Ishboshet

^37 Ibid., p.292.
^38 Shnitzer, op.cit. n.19, p.31.
^39 Jud.21:10-11
^40 W.F.Albright, Excavations and Results at Tell el-Ful (Gibeath of Saul) [New Haven: ASOR
IV, 1924], p.46.
(or rather Ishbaal). On the contrary, the tribes remained loyal to him for the entire period of time! Abner was in conflict with Ishbaal because he saw himself as a better candidate for the throne. Abner was gaining more power for himself in the house of Saul. Abner was therefore trying to attach himself to Rizpah, Saul's concubine. When Absalom publicly approached David's concubines (while David was away) his action was a way of asserting that he was king, because possession of the harem gave him a title to the throne. In II Sam 12:8, Nathan tells David 'that YHWH, who by establishing David as king over Israel had given him the wives of his master Saul'. Thus, Ishbaal's anger with Abner can now be explained. If she, Saul's concubine, had passed to Ishbaal by inheritance, Abner's action would imply that he had been disputing Ishbaal's power. Following that confrontation, Abner switched sides, abandoning Ishbaal and moved towards supporting David. Abner also tried to influence the other tribes, including Benjamin, to follow David though there is no indication that they actually did so. It was only after Abner and Ishbaal were assassinated that the Israelite tribes eventually followed David, because by then they had no other choice.

There is ample evidence to link this civil war with the events following Saul's death. In II Sam 2:12-31, the rivalry is described as erupting into open warfare. In II Sam 2:17, it is stated that 'The war was very fierce that day and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated before the servants of David'. In II Sam 3:1, one reads: 'And the war was long (יָדוֹר הַמַּלְאָכְיָם אֲרוֹבִים) between the house of Saul and the house of David'.

41 II Sam 3:6-11

42 II Sam 16:21-22.


44 II Sam 3:7.


46 Ibid., 5:1
Furthermore, it is also stated that Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, was lame and that when the news of Saul's death reached the city, presumably Gibeah, Mephibosheth's nurse picked him up to flee with him, but in her hurry he fell and hence became crippled. This scene of panic fits very well with the situation described in Judges 20, especially vs. 40-41 where the men of Benjamin are said to be in a panic: 'But when the beacon began to arise up out of the city in a pillar of smoke, the Benjaminites looked behind them and saw the whole of the city went up in smoke to heaven. And the men of Israel turned and the men of Benjamin panicked...' ( Judges 20 v 40-41). Is it possible, therefore, to assume that this was the very scene from which Mephibosheth's nurse was trying to escape?

The events in Judges 19-21 are quite different from all the other stories in Judges, not only because they deal with a civil war but because the tribes are said to have no leader. Now it has been argued that, chronologically, these events occurred close to and before Saul's reign. But it is possible that these events occurred after Saul's death on the Gilboa. The verses which describe a complete state of anarchy, for example 21:25: 'In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes' could be a description of the period extending between Saul's death and David's accession to the throne over the whole of Israel.

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48 Although there was a conflict between the tribes earlier at the time of Jephthah (Judg. 12), the conflict there involved an external enemy.

49 Malamat, op.cit. n.22, p.85.

50 This phrase does not occur throughout the book of Judges, although it does occurs in 18:1. However, the latter was deliberately ignored in this discussion because this chapter deserves a separate treatment outside the confines of this thesis.
c. The Time Elapsed Between Saul's Death and David's Accession

In order to support this argument further it is important to try to establish the length of time which elapsed between Saul's death and David's accession. Although the impression one gets from reading the text is that there was a straightforward transition without interruption,\(^{51}\) my view is that this transition involved a long break during which there was a power struggle. One way to find out the length of that struggle is to determine, as far as possible, David's age when he first joined Saul's army. In II Sam 5:4-5, we read that 'David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel thirty three years'. But this is only a summary of the whole of David's reign and it does not indicate how many years elapsed between Saul's death and his accession at Hebron at the age of thirty! Even then he was a king over Judah, and Judah alone, for seven years and six months. A useful clue may be found in I Sam 17:33 where David is described as a na'ar. Now the term na'ar has been translated as either a 'child', 'lad', 'young man' or a 'servant', and in a military context it could mean a 'young soldier' or an 'armour bearer'.

In the study of this term, J. Macdonald\(^{52}\) has pointed out that these translations provide a totally false impression of the term na'ar, and that it has a confused meaning because of the variety of contexts in which it appears. For instance, in Jud. 13:5-12, it is the word for a child who has not been born yet, or a child recently born.\(^{53}\) In Gen. 37:2, Joseph is described as a seventeen year old na'ar. In Exod. 2:6 it is used for the infant

\(^{51}\) The assumption is that the transition was straightforward and without any break, underlies every previous chronological scheme proposed for the early monarchy.

\(^{52}\) J. Macdonald, 'The Status and Role of the Na'ar in Israelite Society' *JNES* 35 (1976), pp.147-170.

\(^{53}\) I Sam 4:21.
Moses. This term also applies to persons in domestic service. In I Sam 9:22, Saul is accompanied by a *na'ar*, but in Gen.18:7 Abraham's *na'ar* is involved in the preparation of a meal for special guests. Whereas in I Sam 2:13,15 a *na'ar* priest is in a cultic situation. These variations of the term, as Macdonald has demonstrated, cannot be translated as 'lad', 'youngster' or a 'young man'. However, Macdonald has demonstrated from the various circumstances that *na'ar* was a person of high birth. In later writings, the term can still be understood as referring to a 'young man' of high birth rather than just 'youngster' without reference to social class.

Macdonald's interpretation of the term can generally be accepted, but in relation to our reference in I Sam 17:33, Macdonald suggests that the term may signify David's relatively early career as a military *na'ar*. This interpretation can partially be accepted because the term *na'ar*, in this instance, determines David's age. Within the context of that situation, Saul informs David that he cannot challenge the Philistine Goliath because he, David, is a *na'ar*, not yet ready to take arms. Also the contrast between David being a *na'ar* is clearly contrasted with Goliath being an *ish* meaning man, i.e. an *ish milhama* = man of war; the story does not make sense unless David is thought of as young. Furthermore, chapter 17:12 states that Jesse had eight children and in v.14 and in 16:11 David is described as having been the youngest (יָטָן). The brothers were old enough to join Saul's army but not David, perhaps because they were *bahurim*. This age category applies to the stage between 'na'ar' and 'ish', and means a young man about to enter adult life. Thus the term *na'ar* which applies to David in I Sam 17:33 suggests a young male, approximately say between twelve and fifteen years old. We can, therefore, suppose that David was at the most about fifteen when he began his career in Saul's army. Allowing a

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54 Macdonald, op.cit. n.52, p.148.
55 Ibid., p.149.
56 Ibid., p.160.
57 Pl. of *bahur*. 
period of about three to five years for the conflict between David and Saul, this would make David about twenty years of age at the time of Saul's death.

The chronology proposed for David so far can be correlated with that of Saul as follows. When we first meet Saul he is described as a bahur. Later, the text lists Saul's children and includes three sons, Jonathan, Ishvi and Malchishua, and two daughters; Merab and Michal. However, the name of Ishvi mentioned in the first list is uncertain because, later on, though the names of the sons appear, Ishvi disappears, and instead we have Abinadab. Could it be that Ishvi and Abinadab are names of the same son? Again, Ishbaal's name does not appear in the early list, though in I Chron 8:33 it is the last name on the list. Thus, it is quite possible that Ishbaal was the youngest of Saul's sons-in which case he would have been born later on in Saul's life. Were this the case it would answer two questions: First, the question as to why Ishbaal did not join Saul and the other three sons to go to battle at Gilboa, and second, the question as to why Abner, Saul's uncle, had to act as a guardian for Ishbaal after Saul's death. It would appear that Ishbaal was too young to be able to rule.

An additional point should be made. The impression given in the text regarding the relationship between David and Jonathan, is that they were of about the same age. Thus, if David was twenty at Saul's death, as suggested above, Jonathan would probably have been of that age when he was killed at Gilboa. We might assume, therefore, that Saul was aged forty at his death, i.e. around twenty years for Saul as a bahur prior to his accession, with another twenty years corresponding to Jonathan's age.

58 I Sam 9:2.
59 A young man about to enter adult life, one who has not married yet, i.e. about seventeen - twenty years old [A.Eban-Shoshan, סדרי ימי למד (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1975).
60 I Sam 14:49.
61 Ibid., 31:2.
In light of this discussion, attention should be focused on two important verses:

(a) 'Saul was one year old when he began to reign and he reigned two years over Israel'.  

(b) 'Ishbosheth was forty when he began to reign over Israel and he reigned two years'.

These two statements are obviously wrong, firstly, because it is impossible that Saul was merely one year old at accession, and, secondly, he obviously could not have reigned for only two years. Similarly, Ishbosheht (or Ishbaal) could not have been forty when he began to reign because he was an infant when Saul died.

The reference in I Sam 13:1 is much better applied to Ishbosheht, i.e. he was an infant when Saul and his three sons died. Ishbaal, therefore, became the only surviving heir to the throne. This, then, is the reason why Abner, Saul's uncle, had to act on his behalf. Abner took him over to Mahanaim and made him king over Saul's kingdom. As suggested in I Sam 13:1, Ishbaal did reign but only for two years because soon after he was assassinated.

The confusion between the two chronologies is probably the deliberate work of a later redaction. Its purpose was not only to give a false chronology for Saul and Ishbosheht, but also to ridicule both of them. On the one hand, to belittle Saul by making him a one year old baby, and, on the other, to make Ishbosheht look ridiculous by making him a forty-year old still under the guardianship of his uncle. This is perhaps the reason why he is called Ishbosheht (man of shame) rather than Ishbaal which is his real name.  

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62 I Sam 13:1.

63 II Sam 2:10.

64 II Sam 2:8-9.

65 About these names see Chapter III.
If one refers back to II Sam 5:4-5, it is stated that "David was thirty years old when he began to reign". This would mean that there was about a ten-year gap before David actually became king over Judah. Adding a further seven years and six months before he became king over the whole of Israel, this would make a total of seventeen and a half years, the number of years that may well have elapsed between Saul's death and David's accession to the throne over the whole of Saul's kingdom! I therefore suggest placing the civil war, as described in Judges 20-21 within this phase of transition between Saul and David.

In light of this discussion, two important points emerge. First, the rejection of David by the people suggests a great deal of support for Saul, not only in his lifetime but also after his death. Saul was a strong ruler who organised the tribes and gave them a strong sense of unity. His death must have brought about anger and confusion which expressed itself in the long civil war, a situation well reflected archaeologically, not only at the site of Gibeah, modern Tell el-Ful, but also in the destruction and the abandonment of various sites of the period. The second point is that David's rejection, even by the people of Judah for a long period of ten years, should not be surprising, because the support for David was not as great as it might seem after an initial reading of the text. David was constantly on the run during a period of time when not only did no Israelite offer him refuge but quite the reverse. Nabal the Carmelite also rejected David. David and his men were viewed as outlaws, slaves who had broken away from their master. Moreover, the fact that David and his men stayed with the Philistines suggests

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66 For the discussion of the archaeology of Gibeah, see Chapter VI.

67 I Sam 23:3-12,20.

68 Nabal was from Carmel, but this should not be confused with Mt. Carmel. The Carmel here refers to the town Carmel in Judah which is mentioned in I Sam 15:12 and Joshua 15:55.

69 I Sam 25:10-11.

70 Ibid., v.10.
that David did not establish a strong status among Judaites and therefore, did not feel safe to stay there. During his stay in Ziklag, David tried to draw the people of Judah to his side, but failed no doubt due to the strength of Saul's rule in Judah.

David ascended the throne by force but, in order to legitimise his accession he linked himself to Saul's dynastic line by forcibly marrying Saul's daughter and also by claiming divine election. But even after David had established his kingship there were several uprisings against him.

David's usurpation of the throne can be compared with similar usurpations in the ancient Near East, especially with that of Darius I, 521-486 BCE. Darius too ascended the throne by force after the death of Cyrus' son Bardiya. In the Behistun inscription, Darius claims relationship with Cyrus's family. Like David, he too claims election to the throne but by divine favour: '... By the favor of Ahuramazda I am king'. Darius repeats his providential election thirty four times within four columns! His accession to royal rule was followed by a revolt in the empire which was directed against his usurpation of the throne.

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71 I Sam 30:26-31


73 II Sam 3:13-16

74 II Sam 7:4-17.

75 II Sam 15-18; 20:1-2, 4-22.


However, to conclude this discussion of the civil war in Judges 20-21, it would appear that the recording of the events in the Israelite state must have been done contemporaneously and this is because we have fragments of the record not only in Judges but also within the books of Samuel. However, the pro-David author, in his attempt to distort the reasons for the uprising, detached them from the narrative dealing with the events after Saul's death. Instead, he attached them to the episode of the concubine. It was much more convenient to describe the events as if they had occurred at Gibeah, in Saul's city. He deliberately placed the story within its present place in Judges chapters 19-21, in order to make the events appear as if they had taken place long before the monarchy. The pro-David author represents the people of Gibeah in this way because his intentions were not merely to contaminate the name of Saul's tribesmen, but also to show, in advance, long before the monarchy came into existence, that the people of the tribe of Benjamin would not have been able to produce a candidate worthy of being king of Israel.

d. The Struggle Between Ishbaal (Abner) and David

The long civil war described above, no doubt created a great confusion; there existed a single state in turmoil owing to the power struggle between the existing royal dynasty of Saul led by Abner, David and his private army of outlaws, eager to force control over the state itself as well as to gain international recognition.

Abner, Saul's uncle and chief military commander, had to act in the interests of Ishbaal, Saul's only surviving son. He took him to Mahanaim to make him king. The

79 Mahanaim (מַחָנָאֵים) possibly located at modern tell Hejaj, south of the river Jabok. It was one of the first Israelite towns in Transjordan. According to tradition (Gen. 32:2-3) the angels of God met Jacob there: 'And when Jacob saw them he said, 'This is God's camp (מָחָנֶה) So he called the place Mahanaim' (pl. of מָחָנֶה). In Josh 21:36 Mahanaim is one of the four Levite cities of Gad. It became a temporary royal capital for Ishbaal after Saul's death. David escaped to Manahaim during Absalom rebellion against him (II Sam 17:24, 27). Mahanaim appears on the victory stele
battle for the throne was fierce and Abner had to take immediate action to place the new heir on the throne. Making Ishbaal king may have been quite significant, in that it showed that Saul's dynasty was still in power. The duties of Abner after Saul's death may explain why Abner was not mentioned as taking part in the battle at Gilboa. Noth and Bright interpreted this omission to mean that Abner did take part in the battle but managed to survive it. In my view it is more likely that Abner did not join the battle at all. Taking account of Abner's role after Saul's death, it is possible to assume that Abner was made to stay behind by Saul himself specifically to deal with the royal interests. Saul may have taken into consideration the possibility of losing the battle, and thus it was important to leave behind someone like Abner, a member of the royal family as well as a military commander, who could ensure the safety of Ishbaal.

Taking into consideration the whole situation discussed above would, in my view, indicate that Abner was protecting Ishbaal from David and not from the Philistines as suggested by a number of scholars. Soggin and Bright have also expressed the view that the political centre at Mahanaim became separated from the religious centre in the central highlands. Now we may accept that there was some interruption to the religious practice in Israel during the long period of the civil war, but it would be incorrect to suggest that Mahanaim was separated from the religious centres in the highlands. The Israelites were not confined to a single religious centre, and although Ishbaal was moved to Mahanaim for safety reasons, this does necessarily mean that he stayed there of Sheshonk as one of the towns sacked by him in his campaign in 924 BCE [Y. Aharoni, Enc.Miq.4 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1962), pp.805-808].

80 See Noth, op.cit. n.2, p.183.
81 Bright, op.cit. n.4, pp.195-6.
permanently. Abner who was acting as 'king' on behalf of Ishbaal was constantly on the move between both sides of the Jordan, as is evident from the various activities described in II Sam 2-4. Though the text does not mention religious activities during this period, that does not mean that they ceased to take place.

Within the context of this discussion, a question should be raised concerning the religious rituals that took place during Ishbaal's inauguration as king. There is no mention of his being anointed, an omission which commentators seem to ignore altogether. Therefore, one can only guess that a ceremony at Mahanaim must have taken place; though this could not have been a public ceremony because of the concern for Ishbaal's safety. One can assume that the ceremony was in the presence of a limited number of elders. It is unlikely that Mahanaim was chosen at random, rather that it was chosen because it played an important role in the political life of the Israelites in Transjordan under Saul.\(^83\) Thus according to J.R.Bartlett\(^84\) Mahanaim was thought of as the capital of Gilead and was a good place from which the territory of Geshur and Jezreel to the north and northwest could be controlled. Moreover the relationship between Saul and Gilead could explain why the government, set-up in Ishbaal's name by Abner, was more secure in Mahanaim.

Ishbaal is severely criticised by commentators mainly as a result of their taking the text at face value and their failing to allow for his young age. He was described as no more than an 'ineffectual weakling'.\(^85\) Bright claims that this characterisation of Ishbaal was the reason behind the transfer of rule from Ishbaal to David. Noth\(^86\) describes him

\(^83\) See also McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.87. The relationship between Saul and Gilead has been discussed in Chapter V above.


\(^85\) Bright, op.cit. n.4, p.197.

\(^86\) Noth, op.cit. n.2, p.184.
as 'unwise' to fall out with Abner because Abner took Saul's concubine, and Soggin\textsuperscript{87} comments that Ishbaal's short lived reign was caused by two main factors; firstly, his quarrel with Abner for seeking his own succession to Saul's throne,\textsuperscript{88} discussed above, and secondly, his assassination by two members of his own guards. Although there is no mention in the text of any dispute between Ishbaal and his killers, Soggin suggests that the guards had a feud with Ishbaal over some wrong that Saul had committed against the Gibeonites.\textsuperscript{89}

My response to the points raised by Soggin is firstly, Ishbaal quarrelled, but what choice did Ishbaal have? Up to that point Ishbaal was quite young. When Saul was killed Ishbaal was an infant and thus was unable to respond to matters. By the time of the quarrel he was probably a young adult and mature enough to realise the meaning of Abner's actions. If Ishbaal had not reacted then he would have been again, regarded as weak. It is possible that Abner's behaviour could be explained as follows: he realised that Ishbaal was about to become independent of his guardianship, a position he did not want to lose, and therefore attempted to capture the throne. At the same time Ishbaal too had to assert his authority, though he did not anticipate such an extreme reaction from Abner as the switch to David's side. This may explain Ishbaal's reaction to the news of Abner's murder: 'his courage failed'.\textsuperscript{90}

Soggin's other comment that Ishbaal's murder was a mere exercise of blood feud against the house of Saul stands on weak ground. The historicity of Saul's alleged atrocities against the Gibeonites has been challenged.\textsuperscript{91} The view argued in this thesis is

\textsuperscript{87} Soggin, op.cit. n.3, pp. 347-8.
\textsuperscript{88} II Sam 3:7-11.
\textsuperscript{89} II Sam 21.
\textsuperscript{90} II Sam 4:1.
\textsuperscript{91} See Saul and the Gibeonites' in Chapter III. See also discussion on Gibeon in Chapter V.
that Saul did not carry out any atrocities against the Gibeonites and that Ishbaal's murder is based on different reasons, as will be discussed below in this chapter.

The territory over which Ishbaal reigned is stated in II Sam 2:9: 'He (Abner) made him king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin and over all Israel.' Since there is no exact definition as to the extent of Saul's kingdom, one might imagine that the territory described above must be that of Saul (fig.10), except that Galilee is not mentioned. Obviously one cannot expect serious Israelite control over that region after the battle of Gilboa. It is also interesting that Judah is not mentioned in this reference, probably because the narrator viewed Judah as part of Israel from where Ishbaal (or Abner) enjoyed support. One can infer therefore, that II Sam 2:9 was probably drawn from a contemporary source when Israel and Judah were not yet thought of as two separate entities.

The narrative describing the murder of Abner and Ishbaal forms part of the theme of David's rise to power. This account is not only concerned with legitimizing David's accession, but also with removing any suspicion that David was guilty of Saul's death. This account is also concerned to show that David is not guilty of plotting against anyone in the house of Saul. Thus the author, as with Saul's death, describes David as being in a state of distress when hearing of Abner's and Ishbaal's death. But despite this approach the fact remains that David benefited from these murders. After all Abner and Ishbaal were the most difficult obstacles on David's way to the throne. Furthermore, Abner was killed by Joab, David's highest officer. For these reasons a careful examination of the incidents should be applied.

During the period of negotiations there seemed to be no hostility between David and Abner. Abner sent messengers to David expressing his intention to transfer the

92 I Sam 16 - II Sam 5.
kingdom from Ishbaal to David. But David's first condition of the treaty between them is that Michal, Saul's daughter, would be returned to him. This request by David was a political move, designated to ensure the legitimacy of his claim to the throne. The only surprising factor in this episode is to find that Ishbaal was actually involved in taking part in this process. Ishbaal's role does not make sense, because the purpose of the treaty between Abner and David was to bring Ishbaal's rule to an end, therefore it is difficult to accept that Ishbaal would actually participate in that process. This peculiarity in the text provoked the debate discussed below.

Noth argues that the claim in the text that Michal became David's wife during Saul's lifetime is a later tradition and historically incorrect. Also the reference to this tradition in II Sam 3:14 is shown by its context to be secondary. Thus Noth suggests that the context in II Sam 3:15 requires correction, i.e. Abner instead of Ishbaal as the subject of the sentence. McCarter rejects Noth's claim by stating that involving Ishbaal in such transference serves the apologetic purpose of the narrator, i.e. the further legitimisation of David's reunion with Michal, which otherwise might be seen as having been illicitly arranged, especially since it contradicts the law against violation of marriage in Deut. 24:1-4 which states: 'her first husband, who sent her away, is not permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the Lord...'.

To solve this peculiar problem the following discussion might be of help. It has been shown that there is some historical reality to the demand made by David for the return of Michal to him even though she has remarried. In the study based upon

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93 Noth, op. cit n.2., p.184.

94 McCarter, op. cit. n. 6, p.114.

95 See the same law in Jer.3:1.
Mesopotamian documentation collected from various periods, Z.Ben-Barak\textsuperscript{96} shows that such legalities existed in Mesopotamia. The biblical prohibition against remarrying a former wife after she becomes married to someone else applies to cases where the first husband divorces his wife willingly, though this law does not relate to instances in which the first husband is forced to be separated from his wife. For example, if the husband is forced to leave the country in which he lives and consequently is also forced to leave his wife; she becomes a widow after a period of time, then she can remarry. But, if the husband returns, he can claim her back and she must return to him. According to Ben-Barak,\textsuperscript{97} David comes under this category. Ben-Barak\textsuperscript{98} concludes that David's demand for Michal's return is supported by the basic law and custom of the society. Ishbaal was not in a position to refuse to send her back since he did not want to appear to be in breach of this law of society, lest he became liable to compromise his reputation as king.

Yet the explanation given above still contradicts the law given in Deut. 24:4, for which Ben-Barak has an explanation; the laws in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah are late, that is from the time of the Deuteronomist and they influenced Jeremiah as well.\textsuperscript{99}

It has been established in the above discussion that David's demand for the return of Michal to him was within the law of society and Ishbaal, equally, was forced to act within that law. However despite this fact the issue which still remains is that David cunningly used a law of society to achieve dishonourable objectives. Thus firstly, Ishbaal was forced by the circumstances to return Michal to David, and by so doing, although he fulfilled legal obligations, at the same time this forced him to recognise that he was also

\textsuperscript{96}Z.Ben-Barak, 'The Legal Background to the Restoration of Michal to David' in Telling Queen Michal's Story (Sheffield: JSOTS. 119, 1991), pp.74-90.

\textsuperscript{97}Ibid., p.89.

\textsuperscript{98}Ibid., p.88.

giving David a legal right for a claim to the throne; consequently making David's position stronger and hence 'sealing' his own fate. There is no doubt that Abner played a role in order to show David his serious commitment to the treaty. Secondly, despite David's legal right to Michal, the intention behind David's demand was not to regain a beloved lost wife but rather because his former wife was the daughter of the former king. Hence possessing her did not only link him to Saul, but it also meant that he could make sure that Michal did not bear a child who could claim right to the throne after David.

We can see that Michal received no gain by her return to David. The text does not inform us whether Michal had any children by her husband Paltiel ben-Laish, though Michal is mentioned in II Sam 21:8 as having five sons from Adriel ben-Barzillai the Meholathite. It is generally thought that there is an error in this verse because of the name of the husband. He is said to be the husband of Merob, Saul's first daughter. But according to Ben-Barak the mistake is not in the name of Michal, rather it relates to the name of the husband, since the husband is of secondary importance in the narrative. The name should be that of Paltiel. Ben-Barak further explains that Adriel is the Aramaic version of the Hebrew Paltiel and in any case there are various versions of the name of Michal's second husband. By the aid of documentary evidence of Mesopotamian customs, Ben-Barak proposes that Michal bore sons to her second husband who stayed with their natural father after her return to David. In this case we may conclude that Michal not only did not gain from her return to David but in fact lost those five sons as described in II Sam 21. Moreover she remained childless for the rest of her life as stated in II Sam 6:23.

\footnote{I Sam 18:19.}

\footnote{Ben-Barak, op.cit. n.96, p.87.}

\footnote{For example: I Sam 25:44; II Sam 3:15; 21:8.}
Although regaining Michal made David more legitimate in terms of the throne, he could not proclaim himself king of Israel so long as there was an heir to Saul on the throne. From David's point of view, although Abner was genuine in his negotiation with David, David could not trust him. It should be remembered that fighting and hostility between David and Abner, the protector of Saul's dynasty, lasted many long years, and on that basis David could not really trust him. It is true that Joab seemingly killed Abner. But David must have suspected Joab of having done so at the first opportunity, if not for any other reason than for blood vengence for the murder of his own brother at Gibeon. Having Abner killed before the treaty was completed may have played in David's favour, he received Michal back and was not obliged then to fulfil his part of the treaty. Moreover, Ishbaal was no longer protected, and hence, he too was assassinated.

The narrator describes David as being in extreme distress on hearing the news of Abner's death at Joab's hand. David immediately protests his innocence:

$^\text{105} \text{מְרוֹם} \text{אֲבוֹת} \text{בָּנָיו}$

and later David heavily curses Joab. David orders a state funeral and even laments Abner. This extreme state of distress is not apparent after Ishbaal's death though the narrator insists that the assassins acted on their own initiative, expecting gratitude from David. But despite the narrator's intention to absolve David from any responsibility for these murders, the narrative is quite apologetic in favour of David. The fact remains that Abner and Ishbaal were the main obstacle on David's way to the throne and their murder benefited David's interests; it created the ideal situation for him; there was no king on the throne, thus the way was open for him to step in. The elders of Israel had no choice at this point but to accept David as king over Israel.

$^\text{103} \text{II Sam 2:18-23.}$

$^\text{104} \text{II Sam 4:5-8.}$

$^\text{105} \text{II Sam 3:28.}$

$^\text{106} \text{David and Joab's relationship is discussed in part III of this chapter.}$
e. David's Treaty With Jabesh

While the fighting within Israel was in full swing, David was trying to build diplomatic relations with Jabesh-Gilead, and with the people of Geshur by marriage alliance. By these actions, David set himself in direct conflict with the house of Saul since Saul claimed sovereignty over these states. For example, II Sam 2:5-7 describes how David attempted to renew the treaty with Jabesh-Gilead after Saul's death. In these verses David uses the phrase לַעֲנוֹת אתִּים (make friendship). It has been shown that there is an historical element to this treaty, as follows: the term עֲנוֹת as a 'treaty' is based on terminology concerning treaties in Akkadian texts, especially תְּבֻתוּ סְלוּמָמ (friendship and peace). This terminology is used only when a treaty of friendship is involved, and תְּבֻתוּ to make (a treaty of) friendship. D.R. Hillers demonstrates that there are several examples in the Old Testament to illuminate this, though in this discussion we are concerned with the treaty in II Sam 2:6. There David blesses the people of Jabesh-Gilead for showing loyalty to Saul by burying him. David says to them: לָבֵן אתִּים אֵנְבוֹת אתִּים means .113 corresponds in a sense to תְּבֻתוּ עֵטֶש (to make friendship by treaty). Furthermore, when David says;

107 II Sam 2:4-7.
108 Ibid., 3:3.
109 II Sam 2:9.
112 Hillers, ibid.
113 2:6.
David clearly wishes to take Saul's place as suzerain of Jabesh-Gilead. It was necessary for David to renew the treaty because treaties did not automatically carry on from one king to his successor.  

David's attempts to renew the treaty with Jabesh may provide an example of how fierce David could be in pursuit his aims. If one considers his approach to the people of Jabesh, David is seen not only to set himself in direct conflict with the house of Saul, but also to force the people of Jabesh into a situation of conflict with the house of Saul, because of Ishbaal (or Abner) being still on the throne. Moreover, despite the Jabeshites being very loyal to Saul and Benjamin, the close ties between them were not only political but were also based on marriages. A similar stratagem by David should also be considered here; during this period David also married Maacha, daughter of the king of Geshur. This was a political marriage which may well have been aimed at pressurising and weakening Ishbaal's kingdom in the north; this was because geographically Geshur was close to Jabesh-Gilead and Mahanaim Ishbaal's new centre.

These activities by David show him to be very shrewd and calculating. According to McCarter, David's success was the result of foresight and careful deliberation. This is in contradiction to the image of David as depicted by the narrator, e.g. as when David deals with the people of Hebron or the elders of Judah, or as in reaction to the battle of Gilboa and the murders of Abner and Ishbaal. It is interesting, that when David's activities are concerned with misconduct, it is always justified by showing that it was the work of YHWH or the working out of YHWH's will.

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114 Hillers, op.cit n.111, p.47; McCarter as in note 6, p.85.

115 See the relevant section on this in Chapter V.

116 McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.89.
Part II : Israel Under David

Biblical tradition tends to show that the Israelites were united under David and many falsely see the unification of the Israelites as coming into full accomplishment only under David, with most scholars tending to overlook Saul's responsibility for the inception of that unification. In my view unification began with Saul's rule and ended after Solomon's death. Thus the terms used, i.e. 'Israel' and 'Judah' during this period are anachronistic. Even when the schism came about, the Israelites did not intend to separate from the people of Judah, but rather from the house of Jesse as stated in I Kgs.12:16: 'What share do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse...' It was inevitable that the people of Judah and Israel were separated because the house of David ruled over the region of Judah.

Much has been said earlier in this chapter about the support for Saul during his reign and after his death. However, even though David was finally accepted by the whole of Israel, he was not accepted wholeheartedly as Saul was. For example, about Saul it is stated: I Sam 14:47 meaning that Saul firmly consolidated his rule over Israel. Now taking into consideration the attempt by the narrator to promote David, one would expect a similar, if not stronger statement about David soon after his election by the whole of Israel. There is, however, a reference in I Samuel 18:16, which simply states that Israel and Judah loved David, but this is a general statement, and it comes early in his appearance on the scene rather than relating to his rule.

The possible answer to this lack of presentation of David may be found in the following explanation. Given David's ambition for the throne and his long struggle to become king one would expect from him activities which showed his efforts in working

117 I Sam 14:47.
towards 'embracing' Israel and in convincing the people that he was a better candidate for the throne than Saul; yet they had no stories available to show that he worked for Israel. Instead, it seems that David had ignored important internal political issues; most of his activities were concerned with his own safety and with securing his dynastic line.

**a. David's Private Army**

The circumstances through which David ascended the throne probably made him many enemies, which in turn must have made him feel that he could not trust many people; giving him a great sense of insecurity. This may be observed in his organisation of a private group of bodyguards. In addition to the bodyguards, there was the group of outlaws who gathered behind him during the period in which he was pursued by Saul. He did not merge that group into his army despite men from all Israel being involved in all types of military activity. The sons of Zeruiah, especially Joab, were David's relatives and close allies; Joab held the highest position in the command of the army. But it is possible that David did not fully trust them. David maintained a private army of bodyguards, not from his own people, but from foreign groups. It is quite possible that David trusted neither Joab nor the Israelite army proper.

I. Singer states that the setting up of his private army was one of the first actions David took which shows David to be politically wise and far-sighted. These bodyguards are mentioned, for example, in II Sam 15:19, 22; 20:23. Singer suggests that they were possibly Philistine mercenaries. It is quite possible that Cherethites and Pelethites come from Kreti and Pleti which used synonymously in the Bible. These

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118 The relations with Joab will be discussed in part III of this chapter.

119 Singer, op. cit n.82, p.391.

120 See also W.F. Albright, 'Syria, the Philistines and Phoenicia', *CAH II 2A* (Cambridge, 1975), p.521.
guards were under the command of Benaiah ben-Jehoiada of Kabzeel. It would seem that they were in David's service when David was the servant of Achish. An additional group of mercenaries supported David during the Absalom rebellion; there were six hundred men from Gath headed by Ittai the Gittite. Singer claims that these men should not be seen as a mobilised military unit but rather like a group of 'Habiru' from among the Philistines. Singer further explains that, from David's words to Ittai in II Sam 15: 19-20 there is a feeling of sincere identity with the latter, which stems most probably, from the similar fate of the two. As has been argued above, his keeping a private army of mercenaries whom he trusted most is an indication that David did not trust the general army comprising as it did men of Israel and Judah.

It is also interesting that David does not even contemplate taking refuge anywhere in Judah, which indicates quite clearly that David did not feel safe among his people. This is a further reason why David formed his own private army of foreign mercenaries. However, David was cunning enough to leave behind his own adviser whose advice to Absalom eventually contributed to the sabotage of Absalom's rebellion. While David was in Jordan, he prepared his private army against Absalom and, after a decisive fight on Ephramite territory, Absalom was defeated and killed.

121 Singer, op.cit. n.82. N.Na'aman, ["The List of David's officers (Šališim)" VT 37 (1988), pp.71-9.] also claims that David first crystallised his gibborim while a vassal of Achish of Gath.

122 II Sam 15.

123 See the note on the 'Habiru' at the end of Chapter V.

124 'Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, 'Why are you also coming with us? Go back, and stay with the king; for you are a foreigner, and also an exile from your home'.

125 Singer, op.cit. n.82, p.392.
b. Land Confiscation by David

There are scattered hints in the text that David might have confiscated lands from the northern tribes which he then gave to members of his own family. For example, in II Sam 13:23 Absalom seemed to have sheepshearers at Baal-hazor\textsuperscript{126} Later when Absalom returned from Geshur, David did not want to see him and so he turned to Joab to intercede on his behalf,\textsuperscript{127} but Joab refused. Therefore Absalom ordered his servants to go and burn Joab's field. In 14:30 Absalom says: 'Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there, go and set it on fire.' How is it possible that Joab had fields next to those of Absalom? In I Kgs.2:34 Joab's home is in the desert! These plots of land are not in Judah, but in Ephraim close to Benjamin, regions which belonged to the house of Saul. B.Z. Luria\textsuperscript{128} argues that David took these plots of land from the house of Saul and Benjamin. According to Luria the incident described in I Sam 22:7 supports this argument; Saul says to his servants: 'Hear now you Benjaminites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards... ' Luria suggests that the narrator retrospectively put this verse in Saul's mouth as prophecy.\textsuperscript{129}

There is further evidence for this kind of activity by David. In II Sam 9:7 David wants to show kindness to Mephibosheth for the sake of his father Jonathan; thus he says to him: 'I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul... ' In v.9 David repeats that promise in front of Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant: 'all that belonged to Saul and his house I have given to your master's grandson'. The size of the land returned to

\textsuperscript{126} Baal-hazor is a region rich in water sources and fertile land. It is identified with the modern site of Jebel 'Asur, 2 miles northwest of Ophrah (Josh. 18:23) and identified with Ephraim of John 11:54 [McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.333]. B.Kanel locates it north of Bethel, see 'בצל הַעָרָה' Enc. Miq.2 (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1954), p.268.

\textsuperscript{127} II Sam 14:29.

\textsuperscript{128} Luria, op.cit. n.21, p.15.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., pp.15-6.
Mephibosheth can be estimated from 9:11 where it is stated that '... Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants'. Although this would seem to indicate a substantial estate, surely Saul's estate was large enough to support more than thirty-five people? In the event David never kept his promise. Later, when David returned from Mahanaim, Ziba had cheated Mephibosheth and accused him of betraying David. David does not try to resolve the problem only saying to Mephibosheth: 'I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land'. This incident in itself shows that David did with Saul's property as he pleased.\footnote{130}

\section*{c. David and the Census in II Sam 24}

David's treatment of the seven sons, remnants of the house of Saul, has been discussed earlier.\footnote{132} In this section I shall attempt to explore my hypothesis that David tried to eliminate supporters of Saul's regime. This hypothesis is based on the narrative in II Samuel 24 which deals with the census ordered by David. Since the circumstances of this census seem unusual they should be closely examined.

In 24:1 YHWH is said to be angry with Israel though there is no mention at all of the reason for this anger. The most dubious thing about this is the statement: יְהֹוָה יֶרָד הַכֹּהֵן, meaning that YHWH incited David against them.\footnote{133} David carries out the census so putting Israel in great danger as intended by YHWH. It is interesting that Joab attempts to persuade David to change his mind about the census, \footnote{134} yet David

\footnote{130}II Sam 19:30.

\footnote{131}In II Sam 12:7-8 Nathan says to David: '... I rescued you from the hand of Saul, I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah...'

\footnote{132}See 'Saul and the Gibeonites' in Chapter III.

\footnote{133}In I Chron.21:1 it is 'Satan' not YHWH that incites David.

\footnote{134}24:3-4
insists upon it as as a result of which thousands of Israelites die.\textsuperscript{135} Now why should an activity such as taking a census produce a plague? Furthermore, since it was David who ordered the census, if this were a sin, why should the people suffer the punishment instead of David himself?

Various reasons were given as to why the census was regarded as a sin. Firstly, because it was designed for military purposes,\textsuperscript{136} and may have been the first step towards imposition upon Israel of a compulsory militia. Thus the census violated by implication one of Israel's beliefs, that of voluntary service.\textsuperscript{137} Secondly, the census served to promote oppressive royal bureaucratic, power.\textsuperscript{138} Thirdly, it was a sin to count heads, as implied in Ex.30:11-16.\textsuperscript{139}

In rejecting these explanations, S.Gelander\textsuperscript{140} claims that the census was not seen as a sin initially; rather the taking of such a census might involve danger, as indicated in Ex.30:12: 'When you take a census of Israelites to register them, at registration all of them shall give a ransom for their lives to the Lord, so that no plague may come upon them for being registered.'\textsuperscript{141} A similar situation occurred with Saul before the battle with Amalek; Saul counted people not directly, but with בֵּית אֲמָלָאָו. Yet in opposition to this view, there are other censuses mentioned where this kind of

\textsuperscript{135} 24:15.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., p.227.
\textsuperscript{138} Brueggemann, op.cit. n.1, p.351.
\textsuperscript{139} McCarter, op.cit. n. 6, p.513.
\textsuperscript{140} S.Gelander, \textit{David and his God} (Jerusalem: Simor, 1991), p.56.
\textsuperscript{141} See also Ex.38:25-6.
\textsuperscript{142} בֵּית אֲמָלָאָו is either a place name or young 'goats'.
precaution was not required. For example, YHWH commands Moses: 'Take a census of the whole congregation of Israelites, in their clans, by ancestral houses, according to the number of names, every male individually.'\textsuperscript{143} It is usually accepted that censuses were taken in time of war for military purposes, but we can see that the census in II Sam 24 is not connected with any such situation. Thus it would seem that although the discussion so far does not answer the questions put earlier, it does show that the census aroused that opposition which is represented as YHWH's anger.\textsuperscript{144} Gelander suggests that this opposition contains tension and related to anxiety caused by David's decision to demonstrate his military and political power. The latter explanations especially that of Gelander, though interesting are insufficiently convincing, since it offers no explanation as to the connection between the census and the number of Israelite dead. As to supernatural activity as a cause in history a modern historian would be obliged to reject as historical such a claim as that in II Sam 24:1.

The tension and anxiety found in chapter 24, I accept are realistically attributable to David's decision to demonstrate his military and political power, as argued by Gelander. However the real question is: how such a demonstration is to be connected with the existence of victims, even in small numbers, let alone the huge number stated in 24:15, that is seventy seven thousand?\textsuperscript{145} My suggestion is that, rather than 'YHWH's anger' with Israel being the factor, it would be more likely that this was actually David's own anger. The text does not give a clues to why David should be angry with Israel. But judging by the political situation within Israel under his reign,\textsuperscript{146} it would seem that the

\textsuperscript{143} Num.1:2. See also Josh.8:10; Jud.7:3; I Sam 13:15. The references concerning giving ransom in Ex.30:11-16 and 38:25 make one wonder whether these were given in the context of mere census or whether they were collected as a form of an early tax for the priesthood or for cultic purposes?

\textsuperscript{144} Gelander, op.cit. n.140, p.58.

\textsuperscript{145} Despite perhaps being an exaggeration, such figure may well indicate indicate a great number of victims.

\textsuperscript{146} See the discussion 'The rebellions against David' below.
people did not love him. After all the events described in II Sam 20 show that the allegiance of the Israelites to David was very weak, and that he was trying to maintain loyalty by the use of force.

On the basis of this discussion it is possible to offer the following hypothesis: David, in order to secure a strong and peaceful rule executed not only Saul's sons, but also the followers of the house of Saul. The whole purpose of the census described in chapter 24 was to locate just such supporters. The episode in chapter 24 should have been placed earlier in David's reign, possibly after the events concerning the Gibeonites and the sons of Saul. But here too the redactor deliberately moved it to its present place in the book so that it would not be associated with David's rise to power and thus with his dispute with the house of Saul.

The redactor also edited the text of chapter 24 in such a way that no blame would fall upon David: in this instance the disaster of the census 'leads to a blessing of a special nature; the building of the temple in Jerusalem'. This subtle way of presenting the story serves not only to divert attention from the seriousness of David's crime in Israel, but also on the contrary, to strengthen David's image and thus his position. Yet despite these attempts the truth is revealed at the end. In II Sam 7:4-7 David's proposal to build a House for the Lord is strongly rejected; though there is no explanation for this rejection. The answer comes later, from David's own mouth. On his death bed, David confesses to his son Solomon that he was not permitted to build the temple because he was guilty of bloodshed: 'I had it in my heart to build a house for the name of the Lord my God. But this word of my Lord came to me. 'You have shed much blood and fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my name, because you have shed much

It is hardly an unusual practice for usurpers to consolidate their position by eliminating supporters of the old regime; one does not have to go far for an example: the executions carried out by the new regime after the fall of the Shah of Iran (1979?) is quite vivid in memory.

Hertzberg, op.cit. n.1, p.410.
blood on the earth in my sight'. So as G. Robinson states, 'Unavenged blood cries to God'. David did fight many wars which were approved by YHWH. However, rabbinical tradition associates this sinful bloodshed with the killing of Uriah by David.

d. The Rebellions Against David

It has already been established that one of the aims of the author of Samuel was to show that David was a successful king who created a strong and united monarchy. But despite this attempted presentation, on close reading of the text David does not emerge as the ideal king as depicted, for example, in Psalms, Chronicles, and Kings. Moreover, David's ruthless behaviour is played down by virtue of the author's deliberate failure to condemn David for his actions. Instead the author makes excuses for them. Examples for this can be found, for example, in the contexts of David's killing of Saul's sons, his demand to take Michal from Paltiel, and in the threat to eliminate Nabal the Carmelite.

Later when David became king of Israel, he achieved great success on the international scene but, in contrast, he ignored important domestic political issues. Thus the image of David as a strong ruler has been challenged, showing him to be weak

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150 Robinson, op. cit. n.1 p.264.

151 S. Abramski, אַחְרֵי מֶלֶךְ אֲלֹהֵי הָעָדֵל, בִּכְסָר שֵׁם אָדָם, וְרָכַבְוִי, 60:1, 1975, p.92.

152 II Sam 21.

153 Ibid., chapter 3.

154 1 Sam 25.

and lacking in authority over his family. This resulted in a number of serious problems for him such as those associated with the rape of Tamar, the killing of Amnon, the rebellion of Sheba ben-Bichri, and the rebellion by Absalom.

The text does not give clear reasons for the rebellion by Absalom against David, though the events prior to the revolt may shed light on the background of this event. There is no way of showing that the events described really happened, but the account should still be taken into consideration, because of the obvious bias in favour of David; they may still convey a certain reality, one in which David was not a successful head of family. The way David handled Amnon, Adonijah and the revolt by Absalom indicates that David had failed in terms of his attitude towards his sons. The first serious crisis is described in II Sam 13:1-19 i.e. the rape of Tamar by her half-brother, Amnon. Two years later, in retaliation for the humiliation of his sister Absalom murdered Amnon. After the murder Absalom was forced to escape to Geshur, his mother's hometown, and it was only after Joab's involvement that Absalom was able to return home. Even then, it was another two years before David became reconciled to him. However Absalom was then absorbed for a further four years in preparing a revolt against David.

156 Jagersma, ibid., p.108.


158 For the reconciliation between David and Absalom see J.H. Hoftijzer, 'David and the Tekoite Woman' VT 20 (1970), pp.419-44.

159 II Sam 15:7 'forty' years are mentioned, but it would be impossible for forty years to have elapsed between the previous incident and the Absalom revolt. Since the whole of David's reign lasted forty years. Therefore 'four' is the rather more likely number of years and is generally accepted as such. See for example, P. Ackroyd, The Second Book of Samuel (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), p.138; McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.355. Some commentators use the figure 'four' with no reference to 'forty' in the text; for example, Hertzberg, op.cit. n.1, p.337; Brueggemann, op.cit. n.1, p.301.
Now the narrative prior to chapter 15 gives no clue that Absalom might be planning a revolt against David. There is no mention either that the killing of Amnon was based upon any other motive then to punish Amnon for raping Tamar. Nevertheless most commentators claim that the killing of Amnon is motivated by the competition for the succession \(^{160}\) for the following reason: according to II Sam 3:2-5 Amnon was first in line for the throne. There was a second son named Chileab of whom we know nothing since there is no mention of him elsewhere; Absalom was the third eldest son.

Even though Amnon's death brought Absalom next in line for the throne, in my view it would be wrong to assume that this was Absalom's main motive for the killing. By accepting the claim that Amnon's murder was motivated by Absalom's ambition for the throne, we are yet again underplaying David's responsibility and his mishandling of the events preceding Amnon's murder, i.e. the rape of Tamar.

There are no details in the text which show in any way that David reacts to the crisis within his family. David's lack of reaction to the rape has been related to his own feelings concerning his conduct with Bathsheba.\(^{161}\) It has also been suggested that David's mishandling of the situation between Absalom and Amnon is clumsy, just as the handling of the situation with Uriah and his wife. No doubt David's leaving Amnon unpunished and his later condemning Absalom for his reaction left Absalom feeling quite bitter,\(^{162}\) resulting in his taking actions into his own hands. Hence David failed, not only because his own sins were being re-enacted by his own sons,\(^{163}\) but because he also failed as a king.

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\(^{160}\) See for example, Noth, op.cit. n.2, p. 200-1; Bright, op.cit. n.4, pp.208-9; Hertzberg, op.cit n.148, p.326.

\(^{161}\) Hertzberg, op.cit. n.1, p.326.

\(^{162}\) Bright, op.cit. n.4, pp.108-9.

\(^{163}\) The intrigue, sex and violence in the Bathsheba story repeats itself in the story within David's own family. See D.M.Gunn, *The Story of King David* (Sheffield: JSOTSup 6, 1978), p.89.
Considering the situation discussed above, the question which remains is: what was the reason for Absalom's revolt? The narrator of the text provides his own answer to this, i.e. that the revolt was the result of the conflict between the main characters in the story, and that it was an expression of the ambition and bitterness of Absalom. But these explanations cannot be accepted by the modern historian since they do not explain why Absalom was able to gather so many supporters. Is it not possible to conclude from this that there was a general dissatisfaction with David's rule?

The text does not explain what made David so unpopular, though commentators have offered various explanations. For example, Noth suggested that people were dissatisfied with David's imperial expansion; Jagersma agrees with Noth but adds that the people were unhappy with David's behaviour towards Bathsheba and Uriah; McCarter suggests that there was resentment of the state's intrusion upon tribal independence as well as of the privileged positions of David's followers. There was discontent concerning the administration of justice as a result of the levies being required to serve the empire at small profit to themselves. These reasons are generally convincing, especially in respect of the administration of justice. David was expected to apply justice including acting as a judge in social conflicts. Brueggemann claims, very reasonably, that David's weak position stemmed from his failure to exercise judicial responsibility. Thus one of the reasons for David's unpopularity was the immorality of his own misconduct, rather than a failure to institute a system of justice.

164 McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.358.
165 Noth, op.cit. n.2, p.201
166 Jagersma, op.cit. n.155, p.109.
167 McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.359.
168 Brueggemann, op.cit. n.1,p.301.
We can see therefore, that David's passive attitude, as exemplified within his own family, was also apparent in respect of his internal policies towards the people. This must have left the people feeling embittered, especially since he was seen as the supreme authority and was expected to act accordingly.\textsuperscript{169} It is not surprising therefore that Absalom could usurp David's role, not only as a father\textsuperscript{170} but also as a king over the people, given their reaction: 'So Absalom stole the heart of the people.'\textsuperscript{171}

Absalom is described as judging the Israelites coming for litigation at the city gate.\textsuperscript{172} Hertzberg\textsuperscript{173} interprets the 'gate' as the 'door' to the palace building. But this interpretation is unlikely, since the administration of justice, usually by the elders, took place at the city gate.\textsuperscript{174}

The next point which seems to concern commentators is their uncertainty regarding which section of the population it was that followed Absalom. Hertzberg\textsuperscript{175} seems certain that Absalom was particularly concerned with members of the 'Israelite tribes'; T.N.D.Mettinger\textsuperscript{176} thinks that both Israel and Judah were involved; S.Herrmann\textsuperscript{177} suggests that Judah remained loyal or neutral, whereas McCarter\textsuperscript{178}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{169} Hertzberg, op.cit. n.1, p.336.
\textsuperscript{170} For example in punishing Amnon.
\textsuperscript{171} II Sam 15:6b.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 15:2.
\textsuperscript{173} Hertzberg, op.cit. n.1, p.336.
\textsuperscript{175} Hertzberg, op.cit. n.1, p.336.
\textsuperscript{176} T.N.D.Mettinger, King and Messiah (Lund: Wallin & Dalholm, 1976), 122-3.
\textsuperscript{178} See discussion in McCarter, op.cit. n.6, pp.357-8.
\end{footnotesize}
poses a question as to whether to consider 'the men of Israel' as being of Israel and Judah or only Israel, i.e. the northern tribes. In my view, as I have argued earlier in this chapter, we should not think at this stage in term of 'Israel' and 'Judah', since the use of these terms is anachronistic, therefore the use of 'the men of Israel' refers to all Israel.

To further elaborate the discussion above, it should be noted that Absalom received support not only from people in 'Israel' and 'Judah' but also from people of David's immediate entourage who chose to support Absalom. For example, Ahithophel, David's adviser, a Judahite from Giloh; Amasa, a commander in David's army who was a close kinsman to both David and Joab. Also Hushai's words, although flattery, show that Absalom had such support that he could muster troops from 'all Israel from Dan to Beersheba', this would strongly indicate that Judah too took an active part in this rebellion.

It is interesting to note that David's first reaction on hearing that Absalom had proclaimed himself king, was immediately to escape to Mahanaim. David does not even consider staying in Jerusalem. A.Bartal explains that although Jerusalem, previously Jebusite, was well fortified, the wall was down in places since David was repairing it: 'David built the city all around from Millo inward'. It is possible therefore

179 II Sam 15:12.
180 II Sam 17:25.
181 II Sam 17:11.
182 See McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.358.
183 It is interesting that David's action as a usurper in Hebron are re-enacted by Absalom. Previously David had proclaimed himself king in Hebron [II Sam 2:4] and Ishbaal escaped to Mahanaaim [Ibid, 2:8]. This time it is David's own son, Absalom, proclaiming himself king in Hebron and David himself escapes to Mahanaaim.
184 A.Bartal, ימי מלכי דוד מדבר יהודה (1989), [Jerusalem:Society for Biblical Research ], p.60.
185 II Sam 5:9.
that the work was not yet completed by the time of the rebellion, which explains why David felt that he had to escape. Apparently this work was not completed until the time of Solomon, as indicated in I Kgs.11:27 'Solomon built the Millo, and closed up the gap in the wall of the city of his father David'. Interesting as this explanation may be, 'a hole in the wall' could surely not threaten the safety of David.

In II Sam 18:7 it is clearly stated that the battle was between 'the servants of David' and 'all Israel', and that the fighting spread throughout the whole land, a similar situation to that in the civil war after Saul's death. It is therefore impossible to even suggest support for David by the Judahites as Jagersma suggests. Although the Judaites go to receive David on his return from Judah, this was on David's own initiative, since he approached them and ordered them to summon him to the throne as one of their own. It is possible that the particular Judaites whom David approached were that same small group of Judaites who proclaimed him king in Hebron, that is after Saul's death. This group may have occupied the area between the Jordan and Jerusalem, a small region when compared with the rest of the Judean territory.

e. The Sheba Revolt

Most commentators see a connection between David's invitation to the Judaites to receive him on his return from Mahanaim with the revolt of Sheba ben-Bichri. When the Judaites went to receive David, representatives from the northern Israelite

186 Ibid., 18:8.


188 II Sam. 19:12.


190 See Noth, op.cit. n.2, p.202; Bright, op.cit. n.4, pp.209-10.
tribes complained to him for not calling on them to receive him as well. It was at that
time that Sheba called for a break-away from David's rule. McCarter suggests, I believe rightly, that it is historically plausible that such strife should break out after a national trauma, i.e. the Absalom rebellion.

As further support for the view discussed above, Mettinger claims that David's negotiations with the elders of Judah show the importance attributed by David to his recognition by a popular assembly which could summon him back to the throne. One may add that it is important to note that such an assembly took place at Gilgal where Saul was invested as king. Gilgal is in Benjamin, and therefore it is illogical to assume that David would call the elders of Judah only for the assembly at Gilgal. Hence, the passage in II Sam 19:12-13 was not only inserted later, after the schism, but it was inserted by a Judaite as propaganda in order to favour Judah rather than Israel.

The revolt by Sheba was obviously against David and his dynasty, and was therefore more dangerous than the revolt by Absalom which was only against David himself. II Sam 20:6 states; 'Now Sheba will do more harm than Absalom'. But unlike his reaction to the Absalom revolt, this time David takes immediate action to eliminate

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191 Sheba ben-Bichri is a Benjaminite and assumed to be Saul's kinsman because of the similarity in the name, in I Sam 9:1, Bechorath.

192 McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.431.

193 In my view the style and nature of this episode described in 19:41-44 is reminiscent of the episode described in Judges 12, and could be a later insertion in the text having therefore no connection with the Absalom rebellion.

194 Mettinger, op.cit. n.176, p.119.

195 See McCarter, op.cit n.6, p.431; Jagersma, op.cit. n.155, p.110.
Sheba. Again, David uses his private army of mercenaries and the whole revolt ends with the death of Sheba alone.

The attempt by Sheba to rebel against the house of David, though unsuccessful, was quite significant since it shows that the structure of the kingdom was dangerously weak. It also shows that the allegiance of the tribes to David was weak and foreshadowed the lack of Israelite loyalty to David's dynasty after Solomon's death.

In my view the internal political situation under David shows that David maintained loyalty by use of fear and force only. Thus David not only failed in his attitude towards his sons, as exemplified in the rebellion by Absalom, but he also failed in his role as king of the people. David struggled for many years to take Saul's place, though the length of the civil war until David's eventual accession shows that the support for Saul remained very strong. When eventually David became king, he could not rule the people in the way that he may have wished, since he could not trust the people nor the general Israelite army. Though David organised a private army of mercenaries to protect him, this probably isolated him further from the people. Instead of concentrating on important internal issues such as the continuation of the organisation of the state, work which was begun by Saul, and providing a fair system of justice, David concentrated on securing his seat on the throne by eliminating anyone who could endanger his dynasty. This meant persecuting the house of Saul and massacring their supporters. David also confiscated land and behaved in a way which was unacceptable, e.g. to Bathsheba and Uriah. It appears as if David wanted to enjoy the glamour of being a king but was not interested in doing anything for it.

196 II Sam 20:7.
197 ibid, 20:14-22.
198 See McCarter, op.cit. n.6, p.431.
199 David's administration system will be looked at with the system by Solomon.
Part III: Israel Under Solomon

a. The Last Days of David

King David was old and advanced in years;
and although they covered him with clothes
he could not get warm.\(^{200}\)

This description of David as old and frail brings us almost to the end of the 'succession narrative'\(^{201}\) which depicts David, whether young or old as innocent, in order to draw sympathy to him. Yet such a description is likely to be followed by another showing David in contradictory light i.e. more cruel and brutal. David's contradictory character continues in the same way until his last breath. The Deuteronomist again does not only not criticise David but actually excuses him by introducing a theological narrative, as can be seen in the following discussion. I Kgs. 2:1 states: 'When David's time to die drew near, he charged his son Solomon, saying...keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments...' These 'wise' words to Solomon last over four verses, and clearly are Deuteronomistic. What follows after that is: 'Moreover, you know also what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me...act therefore according to your wisdom, do not let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace...'.\(^{202}\) - Surely the original words to Solomon, which the Deuteronomistic insertion has toned down. Now one would expect David, on his death bed, to be kind, forgiving

\(^{200}\) I Kgs.1:1


and, perhaps, wise too, especially since he was passing the total responsibility of the kingdom into Solomon's hand. But David at his death was as he always had been.

Of the men that David orders to be killed, the case of Joab is most astonishing. There was a long friendship between Joab and David. Joab was David's chief army commander, was always loyal and protective of David's interests, and also helped him establish his kingship. Joab's loyalty to David was unlimited. This loyalty by Joab can be seen, for example, in the account of David and Uriah, in Joab's carrying out of the census in II Sam 24 as well as in other events in David's career. But David suspected Joab: thus Joab could not escape. His loyalty did not count, and Joab had to be killed for supporting Adonijah's accession. Solomon acted swiftly to remove any challenge to his authority. Gevariahu explains that Joab fled to the altar at the sanctuary, relying on its sanctity and hoping he would be pardoned, but obviously there was no escape for him: Benaiah, at Solomon's order, slew him just there.

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204 See H.Gvariahu, *יוסף tâm ישמעאל יבין בירה הדר ואבכה הוורלה של מזר צמחי יאמל* (Jerusalem: Kiryath-Sepher, 1970), 152.

205 I Kgs.2:13-46.

206 Gvariahu, op.cit. n.204, p.154.
b. Administration Under David and Solomon

The administration system under David is a complex topic.\footnote{This topic is not the concern of this research, though it will be referred to only within the context of the discussion of the schism.} The little we know comes from II Sam 8:15-18; 20:23-26.\footnote{There are also lists e.g. in I Chron.26:29-32; 27:16-22, but these require a separate treatment.} In contrast to that of David, the Solomonic administration system is much better documented. I Kgs. 4:7-19 provides a list of twelve prefects ():

Each of these twelve districts notionally supplied the provisions needed by the palace for one month of the year; these would have included provisions for the temple and for members of the king's service. The whole system was under the authority of Azaryahu, son of Nathan, a member of Solomon's ministerial cabinet.\footnote{I Kgs. 4:5} Its central purpose was to ensure the raising of taxes, but the prefects had a wider role, i.e. to govern whole districts.

Most commentators express surprise that Judah is not mentioned in this list and think it odd that that Judah was exempt from taxes. However, de Vaux argues\footnote{De Vaux, op.cit. n.43,p.135} that Judah is actually mentioned as 'the land' which according to I Kgs. 4:14b, had its own governor, and that therefore it would be wrong to conclude that it was exempt from all taxes.

\footnote{See de Vaux, op.cit. n.43, p.133.}
The point made by de Vaux referred to above, is acceptable since one cannot imagine that the whole district of Judah did not pay tax. But there may have been certain privileged cities which were not included in the tax system. These may have been Jerusalem and Ziklag.\textsuperscript{212} Jerusalem was captured by David,\textsuperscript{213} who made it his capital city and then renamed it after himself 'City of David'. Hence Jerusalem not only became the new Israelite capital but also David's personal city. In the case of Ziklag, it was given to David by the Philistine Achish,\textsuperscript{214} and therefore also belonged to the royal house, but there is no evidence that it enjoyed a special status.

According to Soggin\textsuperscript{215} tax collection under Solomon was inadequate and needed to be supplemented. There are clear references to indicate that forced labour, \textit{corvée} was imposed on Israel.\textsuperscript{216} I Kgs. 5:13 states: 'King Solomon conscripted forced labor out of all Israel', and I Kgs.11:28 '...he gave him charge over all forced labor of the house of Joseph'. It is not easy to reach a decision as to who was subject to this service because of the contradiction in the sources. For instance, I Kgs. 9:20-22 mentions 'all the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites who were not of the people of Israel and their descendants... these were conscripted for slave labour, but of the Israelites Solomon made no slave. In opposition to that, I Kgs.11:28 states that the house of Joseph were

\begin{footnotes}
\item[212] It should be noted that Jerusalem, although Jebusite, was situated within the boundary of Benjamin, and Ziklag was on the southern border of Judah.
\item[213] II Sam 5:6-7.
\item[214] I Sam 27:6
\item[215] Soggin, op.cit. n.3, p.378.
\item[216] E.g. I Kgs.4:6.
\end{footnotes}
A.R. Rainey explains this contradiction by suggesting that two forms of labour were used; one was periodical, corvee levy (מְלֹא or מַלְאָא) to which every person was subjected in connection with public works. The other, 'state slavery' (מִסָּה מֵעָבָד) to which only Canaanites were subjected.

However, in my view, it is likely that 9:20-22 is a later addition and an apologetic one. In v.20 a list of all foreigners is given stating that they were subject to forced labour whereas in v.22 the narrator immediately draws a contrast: 'but of the Israelites... Solomon made no slaves.' If that were indeed true the narrator would have had no need to mention the Israelites at all. In this case, I Kgs.11:28 is the more genuine and reliable.

One can suggest that in order to fully understand this problem it is important to look at the general political situation. The contradictions stated above could perhaps be explained in terms of the external affairs under Solomon. There is no evidence for military activities under the reign of Solomon, which is generally regarded as a period of stability and prosperity though this may have applied only to a section of the society. But there are also signs that the 'imperial' structure bequeathed by David was beginning to crumble. Solomon gave land to Hiram king of Tyre, thereby reducing the Israelites'

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219 I Kgs.5:5.

220 I Kgs. 9:11.
territory. Solomon also lost control over Aram Zoba (south Damascus) and Edom revolted successfully against him resulting in the loss of access to trade through the Red Sea. This situation affected internal policies because the demand on the people of Israel must have become more strained, since Edom was also a source of manpower. Thus in the new situation the same demands continued to be made for tax and labour, but on a smaller group of people within a smaller area. This change therefore must have created great bitterness among the people.

The seeming contradiction in the text, therefore, may relate to different phases in Solomon's rule. The forced labour imposed on the Israelites may have come in the later phase of Solomon's reign when he could no longer extract manpower and taxes from neighbouring states because they were no longer under his control.

c. Solomon's Building Works

This period under Solomon is characterised by architectural elements such as ashlar masonry, proto-aeolic capitals, and casemate walls. It is regarded as a period in

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221 I Kgs. 11:23-25.

222 Ibid., 11:14.

223 Ammon and Moab also rebelled soon after Solomon's death. Moab was recaptured later by Omri king of Israel, ca. 880 BCE, but was lost again during the reign of Yehoshphat, ca. 850 BCE, as is evident from the Moabite inscription [Y. Aharoni, *Carta Atlas of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1974), pp.76-85].

224 It is not intended to discuss the archaeological aspect of Solomon's building work, except in so far as this relates to our discussion of the schism. I am aware of the dispute over the attribution of the various buildings currently attributed to Solomon. But it is not the purpose of this thesis to deal with this problem.
which Israelite monumental art was developed. Some of the building projects attributed to Solomon include fortifications, temple-palace complexes and various public buildings. After the temple was completed, Megiddo, Hazor, Gezer and Beth-horon were built. Like the pyramids in Egypt, the size of these structures must have impressed people in all levels of society. Whitelam explains that they displayed the might, power and wealth of the king and his court. The city gates, measuring 19-20m long and 18-20m wide, displayed such strength and power. According to Whitelam, one's very entrance through the gates was a symbolic acknowledgement of the political and economic centre of the region; the gates were a most important focus of urban royal power. In my view, perhaps the gates represent symbolically the relationship between the king and his people, including the distance between them.

In conclusion, during the civil war there was a division between Israel and the house of David. But that hostility did not disappear as a result of the policies applied, first by David and later by Solomon. David applied harsh treatment and tried to gain loyalty by fear and force. Solomon applied heavy taxes and forced labour, and was preoccupied with trade and massive building works. The most fundamental internal needs, for a stable, unified and internally strong nation to be achieved, were ignored. Instead of welding the Israelites into one nation, he did quite the reverse. Perhaps the Israelites would have tolerated the heavy taxes, and would eventually have accepted the rule of the house of David. But neither David nor Solomon moved towards their people

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226 Whitelam, op. cit. n. 174, 166-73.

in order to achieve this. Though the era of Solomon is generally seen as a 'golden age',
this is a one-sided picture of the period. The increasingly harsh treatment made the
people feel there was no hope for them under that regime. After Solomon's death they
attempted to solve the difficulties diplomatically, but their concerns were not
appreciated. The Israelites had no choice but to revert to Jeroboam from Ephraim,
their feelings expressed as follows:

What share do we have in David?
and what inheritance in Jesse's son?
To your tents O Israel
Look to your own House
O David.

228 I Kgs. 5:5.
229 I Kgs. 12:3-15.
230 I Kgs. 11:26.
231 I Kgs. 12:16.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I have attempted to demonstrate that the biblical portrayal of Saul is a negative distortion. I have undertaken to correct this distortion by presenting a new and more realistic view of Saul; not only through a re-evaluation of the accepted evidence but also through an examination of fresh evidence not considered previously. This presentation, as outlined in the Introduction, has dealt with three main themes; the first two themes relating to Saul's negative presentation, and the third theme relates to an alternative more positive historical view of Saul. The conclusions reached within the thesis can accordingly be summarised under three separate headings as follows:

1. Saul's distorted image as depicted in I Samuel is discussed in Chapter III.

The image of Saul was the cumulative product of the work of various authors writing long after Saul's reign. These included not only pre-Deuteronomistic sources, for example, from David's court, but also Deuteronomistic sources, as well as sources from prophetic circles (see the introduction to Chapter III).

The redactional history of the books of Samuel is thus very complex. The analysis of the various chapters, particularly those in the first half of I Samuel, showed that the sources were worked systematically in order to produce a continuous prophetic history of the origins of monarchy; the bulk of I Samuel came from this prophetic history of the origin of the monarchy. That history was written according to prophetic opinions concerning aspects of the new monarchic system which came into being in Israel. In particular the figure of Samuel was developed in order to represent an opposition to the
monarchy, with a strong implication that only the prophet was capable of being the sole ruler of Israel, and thus the only instrument through which the people could link with YHWH. This presentation not only elevates the prophet above the figure of the king, but further depicts him as the king maker.

What has been said above would suggest that the story of Saul's rejection by the figure of Samuel originated from later prophetic circles whose main objective was to support prophetic authority over the king. For that reason it was convenient to introduce the figure of Samuel into the time of Saul, the first Israelite king, despite the fact that in reality Samuel and Saul were not involved with each other.

I have also argued in Chapter III that the additional contribution to the negative image of Saul in I Samuel came not only from David's court and later from the Deuteronomist, but also from sources attributing the opposition to the monarchy to the elders in Israel, who did not welcome wholeheartedly the change in Israelite leadership. This latter opposition was not aimed particularly at Saul personally, but at what he represented as the first king of Israel. Furthermore, after the schism, since Saul represented the northern Israelite state anti-Saulide propaganda also became an expression of anti-Israelite animosity.

In this motivational context I have analysed the particular incidents referring to Saul's rejection, incidents alleged to have occurred though doubtful in reality. These are attributed to Saul's disobedience to Samuel, firstly at Gilgal (I Sam 13), where Saul offers a sacrifice without waiting for Samuel, and secondly (I Sam 15) where Saul fails to
carry out the full ban against Amalek. The results of the analysis show that there are no convincing reasons for thinking that Saul was at fault. For example, Saul did wait for Samuel and no sin was committed by his offering the sacrifice; while the examination of the narrative also indicates that these are versions of the same story, written to enforce a theological message, i.e. although sacrifices to YHWH are important, it is even more important to obey the authority of YHWH (or the prophet).

Later in Chapter III two other accusations against Saul were examined. Thus the treatment of Saul killing of the priests of Nob in chapters 21 and 22 was possibly the work of a later redactor. Since this incident is not recorded anywhere else in the Bible, not even in Chronicles, it is quite possible that it was a post-exilic addition written after Chronicles was already compiled.

With regard to the alleged killing of the Gibeonites, I have demonstrated that it is also unlikely that Saul evicted or killed them, not only because such an atrocity would have contradicted the image of Saul in I Sam 15:9, where he is described as having pity on Agag, but also because of his own genealogical link with the Gibeonites. This incident is not recorded anywhere else in the Bible. It is not mentioned during Saul's reign in I Samuel either, instead it was inserted later in II Samuel 21, with the intention of dissociating it from the rivalry for the throne between David's and Saul's descendants. However, it is impossible not to detect David's initiative in the execution of Saul's sons. I have argued that it is likely that David manipulated the oracle in order to justify their execution.
It seems likely that the Deuteronomist successfully discredited Saul by portraying his strength as failure and weakness. Evidently the final redaction of I Samuel in its negative portrayal has influenced biblical scholars, who continue to portray Saul in the same light without challenging the text.

2. The distorted image of the relationship between Saul and David. This theme is discussed in Chapter IV. The section of narrative from I Sam 16:14 to II Sam 5:5 describing the history of David's rise has as one of its main aims the demonstration of David's great popularity among the people and within the royal family in contrast to Saul. The text describes Saul as being jealous of David and thus pursuing him right up to the time when Saul himself is killed in battle. This thesis has shown that within that complex theme the dominant feature is theological, emphasising the different relationship of each to YHWH. David is often described as innocent, whereas Saul is described as evil; David is successful in everything he does,\(^1\) whereas Saul does everything badly.\(^2\) This theological contrast made by the redactor between Saul and David is evident throughout the narrative aiming, gradually and subtly, to present to the reader a negative image of Saul, in contrast to the popular image of David.

According to the narrative of David's rise, the reason for the conflict between Saul and David was Saul's jealousy and his supposed mental sickness.\(^3\) The reason for that depiction of Saul is that the final redaction of the material took place in circles that

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\(^1\) I Sam 18:14.

\(^2\) Ibid., 14:47.

\(^3\) I Sam 16:14-16; 19:9.
idealised David. I have demonstrated that Saul is unlikely to have been insane, and that
Saul's attitude towards David, as recorded in I Samuel, was a reasonable response to
David's manipulative and devious behaviour. The various discussions in this thesis
suggest the probability that David advanced himself through cunning. David also led his
own military campaigns against the Amalekites\(^4\) and Philistines,\(^5\) but without Saul's
approval, indicating again that David was involved in a power struggle against Saul.

David entered the royal house and formed close friendships with Jonathan and
Michal who apparently did not understand that David was a potential menace to Saul's
dynasty, though Saul himself was fully aware of the danger and therefore pursued David
as a traitor. David had deceived Saul too, but by the time Saul himself became aware of
David's ambition, it was too late. Saul tried, in vain, to get rid of David and to protect his
family and kingship.

The biblical account of David's rise to power is concerned not only with
legitimising his accession to the throne of Israel, but also with removing any suspicion
which might imply in any way that David was guilty of taking part in Saul's death and
the usurpation of his throne. However that account remains quite apologetic. David's
treaty with the Philistines must be taken seriously and I have argued that David was
behind the battle at Gilboa (see Chapter IV). The battle started in the plain, but Saul was
forced to retreat to the mountain, where he was surprised by the archers who attacked
from the rear. I have suggested that these archers were probably David and his men,

\(^4\) Ibid., 30.
\(^5\) Ibid., 19 and 23.
who secretly made their way to Gilboa. However, whatever was the case, it must be stressed that David did not aim to destroy Israel; he was merely using the Philistines to get rid of Saul which he achieved successfully.

There are a few aspects to the bias against Saul. Firstly, it would seem that Saul was depicted negatively not because he was a bad leader, but because he was the first king. It is not surprising that there was much opposition to the monarchy as depicted in I Samuel, given the political tension and the civil war following Saul's death. In addition there was much criticism of Saul by the pro-David redactor who aimed at justifying David's actions in relation to Saul. Later Saul was the subject of further negative prophetic writing and by later propaganda since he represented the northern kingdom.

Finally, although the genuine Saul-David saga has been distorted by bias in David's favour at Saul's expense, and by the redactor's attempt to conceal David's usurpation, the real story has not been totally lost. Chapter IV ends with the argument that this is actually camouflaged behind the story of Samson and Delilah in Judges 13-16. The comparison between the two stories show close similarity between them. For example, Saul and Samson both had a nazirite birth, they possessed the Spirit of YHWH, fought Philistines, both were betrayed (Saul by David and Samson by Delilah), and both committed suicide.

3. A more realistic view of Saul is discussed in Chapter V. Saul's activities and achievements, when referred to in I Samuel are clouded by the bias in favour of David. For example, every success in battle achieved by Saul, except that against Ammon, is
diminished either through its association with Saul's alleged sins, for which he is severely condemned, or through that success being attributed to someone else; despite that bias Saul emerges as a strong ruler militarily, politically and economically.

It was suggested in Chapter V that Saul can now be seen more positively than his representation in the distorted textual image. As is shown in Chapter II, it is clear that during the Iron Age I period, the Israelite population in the central highlands in Cisjordan was developing towards a new socio-economic situation, one characterised by developing centralised rule. This was the background for the emergence of monarchy in Israel, rather than the previously assumed Philistine oppression of the Israelites.

Despite the sources being silent about his origin and achievements, there are a number of clues which portray Saul as a strong and successful ruler. Close examination of the territory of Benjamin emphasises its importance geographically. Gibeon was its largest and most prosperous city. Gibeon was also the most likely place to be Saul's home town, from which he emerged to kingship. This is supported by the archaeological evidence from Gibeon which reveals names similar to those in Saul's genealogical list in I Chronicles 9:35-44.

Saul was elected as a leader and warrior, was a good choice because he united the various groups as one people within secure and stable borders. An important aspect of this chapter is the demonstration that the Judean hill country population were Saul's supporters rather than those of David, as had been previously assumed.
Examination of Saul's battles also brings to light a more realistic account, allowing an easier evaluation of Saul's military and economic achievements. It emerges that Saul was a successful military leader, not only in terms of his organisation of the standing army, but because he was a skilful tactician, a quality which enabled him to lead successful campaigns despite the military limitations of his army.

The material in Chapter VI is mainly archaeological. I have established as far as possible, a firm identification of Gibeah with modern Tell el-Ful. One of the main factors for the uncertainty of this identification so far is the story in Judges 19-21, indicating that Gibeah existed before the monarchy. However, the chronology of the events associated with Gibeah in the Judges story and later in I Samuel does not correlate with the archaeological finds. The Tell el-Ful data has not been re-examined in the literature since its first publication. I have now undertaken this and I am therefore, in this thesis, in a position to reconstruct the chronology of the material. The history of the site probably began in the time of Saul and not in the 'period of the Judges' as previously assumed.

Chapter VII is entitled 'From Saul to the Schism' and my aim has been to show how the events surrounding Saul and David affected the politics in Israel, contributing to the eventual schism.

The discussions in Chapter VII showed that Saul enjoyed strong loyalty from the people; the various traditions of David's flight from Saul indicate that David, on the other hand, was not welcome in Judah. The population there was willing, and indeed attempted, to surrender David to Saul. What emerges, therefore, is that Saul was far
from being unpopular with the people. The strength of his rule and the admiration for him is evident from the situation after his death. The state did not fall apart. The people, rather than making David king, remained loyal to the house of Saul until after Ishbaal was assassinated. I have also proposed, in Chapter VII, the hypothesis that the narrative in Judges 20-21, describing a civil war in Israel, was not the result of the treatment of the 'concubine'; it describes the uprising against David's possible involvement in the battle at Gilboa and his successful attempt to gain the throne by force. This uprising is a further indication that David was not popular among the Israelites, and that the house of Saul continued to have support long after Saul's death. Given that the Israelites preferred Ishbaal, Saul's son. The verse stating

\text{"bim'mos h'mos mi'l Malki Yu'sa'el, A'mi h'mos be't'ni'nu Y'shurun"} most probably describes that period after Saul's death.

Working through the chronologies of David, Saul and Ishbaal, I have argued that Saul ruled for about twenty years. David then struggled for an additional ten years before he was accepted as king in Hebron, and even then he was recognised as such only by a small group of his own people. It was another seven and a half years before he was crowned king over the whole of Israel.

Yet biblical tradition tends to present the Israelites as united under David, and many scholars falsely see the unification of the Israelites as being accomplished only under David. They tend to overlook Saul's role in the unification, which began under his leadership and ended after Solomon's death. Thus the terms used i.e. 'Israel' and 'Judah'

\footnote{Jud. 21:25.}
during this period are anachronistic. Even when the schism came about, the Israelites did not intend to separate from the people of Judah, but rather from the house of Jesse as stated in I Kgs.12:16.

It is not surprising that there was so much opposition to the monarchy as described in I Samuel, given the political tension and the civil war following Saul's death. The rebellions against David during his reign, even though unsuccessful, show that the structure of the kingdom was dangerously weak. They also show that the allegiance to David was weak, and foreshadowed the lack of Israelite loyalty to David's dynasty after Solomon's death. David could not rule in the way that he may have wished, since he did not trust the people nor the general army. He therefore organised a private army of mercenaries to protect him, an action which probably isolated him even further from the people. Instead of organising the state and providing a fair system of justice, David concentrated on securing his dynasty and eliminating anyone who was a threat. This meant persecuting not only the house of Saul but also his supporters.

The monarchy had started off well. It was only David's competition for the throne that sabotaged and ended Saul's successful rule, and neither David nor Solomon could continue the work which was started by Saul. Although David was successful in achieving the throne he failed to achieve popularity. Moreover, the distance that existed between David and the people increased still further under Solomon. David and Solomon both applied a harsh regime resulting in a restless political situation; so though the period under Solomon is regarded as one of stability and prosperity, these may have existed

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I Kgs.5:5
within only one section of society and, anyway, there were signs which indicated that the 'imperial' structure consolidated by David was beginning to crumble.

Finally, it must be stressed again that Saul was depicted negatively not because he was insane or a weak leader, but because he was the first monarch. In addition, much of the criticism of Saul was inserted into the text, not only by the pro-David redactors who aimed at justifying David's actions, but also by prophetic circles who used the image of Saul to pass on their theological message. Later Saul was the subject of further negative propaganda since he represented the northern kingdom.
Fig. 1 The Ancient Near East (The Fertile Crescent)
Fig. 2 Palestine: Iron Age I main and secondary routes.
Fig. 3  The Central Highlands (The territory of Benjamin and south Ephraim) Iron Age I main sites and internal routes.
Fig. 4 The territory of Benjamin according to Joshua 18:11-28.
(adopted with corrections from Aharoni 1964)
Fig. 5 The campaign against Ammon. (adopted from McCarter: 1980; Aharoni: 1964).
Fig. 6 The campaign against Amalek (adopted from McCarter: 1980).
Fig. 7 The battle at Michmash. (adopted from Aharoni: 1964).
Fig. 8  The battle at the Valley of Elah (adopted from McCarter: 1980).

Fig. 9  The battle at Gilboa (adopted from McCarter: 1980).
Fig 10 Saul’s Kingdom (adopted from Aharoni: 1964).

The Extent of Saul’s Kingdom (II Sam 2:9)

Saul’s Wars (I Sam 14:47 - 48)
Fig 11 Topographic map of Tell el-Fül and its vicinity (Is Gabor 1995)
Fig. 12 Reconstructed outline plan of Saul's (presumed) fortress. Preserved part is shown in black. (after Albright 1933:7).
Fig. 13  Reconstricted plan of Albright's Fortress I (after N. Lapp: 1981).

Fig. 14  Reconstructed plan of Fortress II (after N. Lapp: 1981).
Fig. 15  Representative Iron I ceramic vessels from Tell el-Ful, Periods I & II.
Fig. 16 Iron Age I pottery samples from Tell el-Ful, Periods I & II (after Sinclair: 1960, Pl. 21).
Fig. 17 Iron I pottery samples from Tell el-Ful, Periods I & II.
(after Sinclair: 1960, Pl.20).
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