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KING DAVID AS TREATED IN A CONTEMPORARY WORK OF  
ISRAELI SCHOLARSHIP: A TRANSLATION OF A. REUVENI'S  
DAVID HA-MELEKH: SECTIONS I - III:5, INCLUDING  
A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.

by JERROLD LEVY

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Advisor: Professor Aaroni

[Author's Dedication]

In memory of my brother, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, President of the  
State of Israel, 5713-5723 (1952-1963).

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### Translator's Introduction

Introductions should follow books rather than precede them, even if<sup>it</sup> meant that they would have to be called something other than introductions. It is manifestly unfair of a writer in the fields of "social science" to subject his readers to mountains of his own prejudices and private perspectives, and then brazenly perpetuate the fiction that what he has written is "non-fiction." It is even more unfair for an "introducer" to make the reader wade through an ocean of the introducer's private judgments before coming to grips with the author. But most unfair of all must be the translator, who, having already filtered the author's words through the sieve of his own perspectives and biases, then proceeds in an introduction either to justify his having done so, or to add insult to injury by showing how, even in translation, the author's ideas could stand some improvement!

### Historical Problems

I am awed by the scope of Reuveni's knowledge, and delighted by many of his profound historical and psychological insights. I am also very much in sympathy with what seems to be one of his most fundamental aims: the understanding of history, whether that of his own people or any other, in terms of a system of objective and immutable principles.

The achievement of an aim is dependent, however, upon the methods used in the attempt. We shall see how Reuveni's methodological inconsistency, as well as his inability to



free himself sufficiently from his own particular perspectives and "causes célèbres," hinder him from attaining a balanced and accurate understanding of history.

One of Reuveni's objective principles of history might be called, for lack of a better name, the "migratory principle."

Movements of desert tribes would no doubt come into existence for a variety of reasons and causes, which would combine into a mighty pushing-and-pulling force: surplus population, drought, famine, inter-tribal wars, the rise of a leader aspiring to conquest who would subdue and unite a number of tribes -- on the one hand; and the decline of the populated lands, and their conspicuous weakness -- because of deterioration of their rulers, internal violence and neglect -- on the other hand (pp.16f. References are to the translator's pagination, not the author's).

Here, we see very clearly an effort to objectify the forces at work in history, removing them from their individual circumstances, and generalizing them into principles which would be operative in all such situations. The author has correctly perceived that history is not a series of static situations, but a dynamic flux, in which an equilibrium is merely the cross-section at any given moment, as viewed by an outside observer.

Although Reuveni realizes that history is dynamic, he sometimes doesn't show a full comprehension of its dynamics. Conspicuous by their absence from his analysis are the economic and power-political factors. He comes frustratingly close to the latter in his discussions of David the fugitive, and the collection of discontented men who gathered around him in the Judean wilderness; and of the Adonijah- and Solomon-factions which struggled for power as David lay on his

deathbed. But in each case, he gets sidetracked by the personalities of the dramatis personae, and neglects to question whom they might be representing. As for the economic factor -- it is implied, although never fully treated, as a motivation of the "outsiders" agitating to invade a country; but it is never mentioned at all as an underlying cause of that "internal violence" which makes the country susceptible to attack.

Another of the historical principles discussed by Reuveni has sometimes been called the "tree principle":

The nationhood of a people is determined by its spiritual form, by the content of its consciousness, and not by its physical source. The Bulgarians were originally a Turkic people, and now they are a Slavic people; while most of Asia Minor's population are, according to their physical source, the descendants of the Hurrians and the Hittites...but today they are a Turkic people. (p.22).

It later becomes evident that the author means to sharpen an axe with the use of the "tree principle." For if nationhood is determined by "content of consciousness," then Israel is truly the only nation which has survived the vicissitudes of history -- the "only kid" of the Passover Haggadah! And who made that survival possible? King David! (Of course, he forgets all about the complete transformation of that consciousness which took place during the years 100 B.C. to 200 A.D., and which is characterized by the word "Jewish" -- a term which the author regrets ((p.246)) has taken the place of "Israelite." Had it not been for that later transformation, and its heroes -- the Tannaim -- all of David's struggles with the Arameans would have been of no avail in

preserving his people beyond 70 A.D.)

Still another of the author's principles is what has been called the "balance principle": i.e., that no course of political action is ever absolutely beneficial or absolutely harmful; the leaders of a group will therefore follow that course of action which, they calculate, involves the greatest possible benefit at the smallest possible cost. (Since each of us makes many decisions on this basis every day, it seems almost tautological to state it as a "principle of history." We would not have to do so, if students of the past were consistent about analyzing the motivations of its denizens in the light of this simple experiential truth!)

The balance principle (or what the author calls "political calculation") is invoked in explanation of David's decree of death for the Amalekite who came to report that he had killed Saul at the latter's own request; also in Joab's murder of Abner; and also in the decision of the King of Moab to grant asylum to David's parents. In the last instance, the author specifically rejects the "reason" supplied by the Tradition (the Tradition, burdened as it is with its own axes to grind, is sometimes a poor analyst of human motivation): namely, that the king of Moab considered himself obligated by family ties, since Jesse and David were descendants of Ruth the Moabitess. But in the instance of Achish's acceptance of David, while the author begins with "political calculation," he later falls into a trap which, as we shall see, he falls into far too frequently: namely, the invocation

of David's personal charm. (p.66).

In other cases, Reuveni's reliance upon personality as a motivating factor becomes even more naive, to the extent that personality takes the place of all rational calculation. David could not kill Joab and Abishai, for instance, because of "family ties." If family ties are the only factor operative here, why not accept "blood vengeance" (Joab's proffered excuse) as sufficient cause for the murder of Abner? Or, conversely, if one looks for political motivations behind Joab's murder of Abner, why not look for political motivations behind David's refusal to put Joab to death? (To be sure, Reuveni mentions the fact that Joab and his brother were great generals; but that factor is minimized alongside the factor of family ties.)

In another such instance, the author supposes that the Philistines attacked David so furiously after his capture of Jerusalem because they were related to the Jebusites. The identification of Jebus with the "Weshesh" of an Egyptian inscription is tenuous in any case; but even if that identification is accurate, does it constitute sufficient cause for the Philistine attack?

We may suppose that if the Philistines had wanted to justify intervention on behalf of the Jebusites, they might have invoked (or perhaps even invented) an ancient alliance. On the other hand, if it had not been in the Philistines' self-interest to intervene on behalf of the Jebusites, no appeal to an ancient memory could have made them do so. That

memory was so dim, moreover, that the Israelites were totally unaware of it; it was a memory so dim that tradition traces the Jebusites -- on the basis of their language and customs, no doubt -- to Canaan!

Reuveni's success as an objective and rational historian depends, of course, as much upon what he leaves out as upon what he includes by way of explanation. He rejects any stories or interpretations which are based on what he believes to be obviously mythical foundations. These include any and all manifestations of supernatural intervention; practically all of the story of David and Goliath, which shares too many of its improbabilities with similar stories from other cultures; and the stories of Saul's and David's secret coronations by Samuel. However, the fact that David's secret coronation forms the crux of another historian's entire analysis of the relationship between David and Saul,\* teaches us that rejection of a source as "mythical" must be done very conservatively.

Like most social scientists who, while trying to maintain objectivity, nonetheless have strong ties to a particular group, Reuveni is ambiguous when it comes to dealing with his own particular group: Israel. On the one hand, he is the anthropologically-oriented historian. Israel is, indeed, no different from any other nation. Her difference in development is to be explained by two factors:

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\* Martin A. Cohen, "The Role of the Shilonite Priesthood in the United Monarchy of Ancient Israel," Hebrew Union College Annual, Volume XXXVI (1965), p.76.

(1) Her location "in the middle" (p.18), which made her a constant target of attack (others say: Her alternating location in hills and valleys, depending upon her relative strength vis-à-vis her neighbors); and (2) the arrival of the right leader (David) at the right time.

But on the other hand, Reuveni didn't sit down to write a book like this because he wanted to prove that Israel was just like all the other nations. Something (perhaps his own personal stake in Israel's continued survival?) motivated him to write about Israel's amazing perseverance in days gone by; and something (perhaps his own contemporaneous sense of identification with Israel's ancient predicament?) about David's victories captured his imagination.

The author sees Israel today as an almost exact parallel of Israel in David's time. Both are surrounded by hostile (Semitic!) enemies; both are in danger of being overrun and thus losing their identity. David's major accomplishment was the prevention of Israel's inundation by the Arameans; Israel's major concern today is to prevent herself from being inundated by the Arabs.

David Ha-melekh is unmistakably the product of an Israeli pen; its hallmarks are (1) presentistic analysis of history, (2) a certain belligerent self-defensiveness, and (3) a totally nation-oriented view of the Jewish people.

(1) An encyclopedia article about David, quoted by Reuveni (p.100), provides us with a typical example of the Israeli tendency toward presentistic analysis. One of David's

outstanding accomplishments, according to the author of this article (Reuveni does not mention his name) was "the fusing of all the separate constituencies within the national boundaries, despite their national and sociological variety, into a single nation with a salient government and culture of her own." Now it is reasonable to assume, on the basis of analogy elsewhere, that David must have done this; Reuveni points out, later on the same page, that every successful ruler will "do as much as he can to break down the traditional barriers separating the various sectors of the population... from one another." But the Bible never specifies details to support this supposition; and indeed, the course of Israelite history during subsequent generations shows that David's efforts at national fusion were not entirely successful. The encyclopedist's primary evidence for this supposition comes not from the Bible, but rather from the work of the modern Israeli government, retrojected into David's time!

The modern "ingathering of the exiles" has necessitated a deliberate effort on the part of the government of Israel to fuse peoples of diverse national and social backgrounds together into a unified nation. We have no right to assume, however, in the absence of evidence, that David made the same deliberate effort, and that the resulting fusion constituted one of his major accomplishments.

(2) Reuveni's belligerent defense, in the face of moralizing by German historians, of David's "aggressiveness" (pp. 228ff.), is really tantamount to a defense of Israel's

right to exist. (Cf., too, his defense of Abraham ((pp. 229-230)) against slander by Russian encyclopedists; and of David's authorship of most of the Psalms against the suspicions of German theologians ((pp. 19f.)).) Indeed, the course of United Nations politics since June, 1967 (and even before) has shown how ready the world is to condemn Israel for aggressiveness, but to look the other way when other nations commit acts of aggression and violence against Israel.

Reuveni, with one eye on the past and the other on the present, uses Israel's history as a weapon in the current debate. (To what extent can this be done, without ruining its value as history? Cf. the discussion of presentism in Israeli historiography, just above). All nations conquer their lands by the sword, he tell us (pp.230-231); this is the way it always has been, and (he implies) this is the way it always will be. Not a very optimistic view of history -- but a good argument for hawkishness on the part of modern Israel.

The cumulative effect of several of the author's carefully developed theories, whether he is consciously aware of it or not, is a bold statement to the effect that Israel's claim upon its territory is as good as anyone else's, and better than most. The Israelites belong to the Hebrews, the earliest of the three Semitic migrations which occupied the land of Israel. So, in a sense, we were there first, at the very dawn of history -- to be followed later by the Arameans, and much later by the Arabs.



And Reuveni's analysis of the peoples currently living in Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, and Transjordan is almost too careful and complete (p.22, e.g.) -- as if he were taking special delight in showing that these people bear no relationship at all to the earlier inhabitants of those lands. If "content of consciousness" is what determines peoplehood, then we are the only ancient people still in existence.

(3) To Reuveni, the Jewish people (he prefers the term "Israelite") is a national entity, whose consciousness was forged during the time of King David, and tempered during the next thousand years of living in the land of Israel to the point where it could "withstand all the pressures of dispersion and exile" (p.3). Those pressures apparently did little to change the basic Israelite consciousness, which has gone unaffected by its intimate contact with the Hellenistic, Christian and Moslem worlds. (p.231). For Reuveni, as for many other Israelis, Jewish history ended in 70 A.D., and began again in the late 19th century. What happened in between was just the "holding operation" of a people waiting to come back.

I have already mentioned the author's occasional retreat from the real issues into a discussion of personality factors. Reuveni's title itself -- King David: His Image and His Place in the History of Israel -- discloses his belief that personality factors are investigable, and form a proper subject of historical examination. I contend that they are not, and do not.

Dr. Martin A. Cohen, in his essay on the role of the Shilonite priesthood,\* says the following about Saul's jealousy of David:

The Bible, to be sure, attributes Saul's animosity toward David to personal motives, particularly to jealousy at David's signal victories over the Philistines. Modern research, bereft of the services of the witch of En-dor, has no way of conjuring up the personalities of the past for the purpose of examining the arcana of their minds.

We must assume, says Cohen, that Saul's actions were not those of a madman, but those of a rational being. We can assume nothing else. Psychoanalysis cannot be done through time or space, but only via a first-hand encounter -- and even then it is none too sure of its conclusions. If we try to use personality-investigation as a critical tool, we will soon find ourselves becoming highly uncritical. For we will have opened a veritable Pandora's box of theories which cannot be proved one way or another, which admit of no restraint or limitation, and which are therefore more useless than no theories at all. For at least an absence of theories will not lead us astray; whereas personality-oriented history engenders a myopia which prevents us from understanding the true dynamics involved in a situation.

Reuveni's analysis of Samuel's withdrawal of support for Saul, for example, rests exclusively on Samuel's jealousy of his own prerogatives and power. So that although Reuveni does go a step beyond the (contrived) naivete of the Biblical account, he does not bother to look behind Samuel, and to

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\* Op.Cit. (footnote, p.ix), p.82

see the institutional power which he represented. Cp. Cohen:

The old guard leadership hoped that by subordinating the monarchy to the priesthood, it might be kept weak, and that if it should seek to increase its strength at their expense, the priests might hear Yahweh's voice dismissing the king from office. This is exactly what happened in the case of Saul. \*

Or, to return again to the case of Saul vis-à-vis David:

Reuveni dismisses as retrojections from hindsight all those passages which give Saul a real basis for jealousy of David. He accepts the Davidic (which, of course, became the "traditional") point of view: namely, that Saul was irrational in his behavior, but David rational in his. Moreover, says the author, Saul's was a self-fulfilling prophecy, for it was precisely his monomaniacal pursuit of David which transformed him into what Saul most feared: a serious contender for the throne.

Cohen, on the other hand, alleges that if we consider Saul to be rational, then our eyes can open to the realization that there may very well have been a palace coup, against which he was reacting by his ferocious jealousy! That David never mentions his secret anointment (one of Reuveni's chief arguments for the view that such an anointment never took place) is crucial to the success of the plot!

There are places where Reuveni almost goes so far as to make personality one of his historical principles:

As for the kingdom: no matter what its abilities and its origins, it did not at all times have the same degree of stability, unity, and defensive and offensive force. Its real strength was largely dependent upon the characteristics of the ruler, the king. (P.29).

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\* Ibid., pp.69f.

But for the most part, personal characteristics play the same part in Reuveni's history as did the deus ex machina in such theologically-oriented works as the Former Prophets: namely, as a shibboleth and stumbling-block to deeper investigation of more reliable causes.

(It should be noted that Cohen, too, occasionally has recourse to personality:

Saul also possessed the personal attributes desirable for the newly created position -- a commanding appearance, a cyclothymic personality, and an ability to move people under the banner of his leadership. \*

If a cyclothymic personality can be discerned from the Biblical texts, we must ask why a schizophrenic personality could not likewise be discerned.)

#### Textual Problems

The most difficult textual problem of all is Reuveni's text itself. A good editorial eye would have produced an eminently readable work about half the size of the present one; the absence of an editor has largely diminished the sharpness of Reuveni's brilliant insights, and of his pretension-deflating wit, by leaving them buried in mounds of verbiage.

The author's basic hypothesis -- namely, that David's major accomplishment was the rescue of the Israelites from inundation by and assimilation into a tidal wave of Aramean migration -- is first set forth in a brief introduction (the only brief part of the book!). This hypothesis is subsequent-

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\* Ibid., pp.72f.

ly elaborated and re-elaborated during the reader's voyage across a veritable ocean of print -- some of it insightful and enlightening, but much of it repetitious and pedantic.

The author does not seem to be able to make up his mind as to what kind of audience he is addressing. He takes delight in mentioning innumerable names, places and relatively insignificant facts, which could be of interest only to scholars in his own field, but which serve as a hindrance and annoyance to the average reader. But the almost complete absence of scholarly apparatus (bibliography; documentation from sources other than his own previous works; maps; charts; etc.) means that he cannot be writing for scholars. (Even the intelligent layman would appreciate an occasional map or chart for reference purposes, if he is to be bombarded with so many names and places!)

Section One is a series of the author's anthropological recollections, which set the stage for David's appearance by presenting the international political setting in which he will operate. Sections Two and Three are primarily analyses of David's relationship to, and operation in, his world.

Reuveni must have composed the latter sections as more-or-less of a running commentary on the relevant chapters of the Bible -- namely, I and II Sam., and the parallel passages in I Chron. This is as good a method of composition as any other, provided the author or an editor later takes the trouble to reorganize the material topically; to eliminate needless repetition; to relegate less important matters to

footnotes and appendices; to punctuate the text properly, aiming for consistency in the use of parentheses, semi-colons, periods, and dashes; and to divide the text into logical paragraphs. That none of this was done in the case of David Ha-melekh becomes quite clear as the reader continues his "voyage" across its expanse. The absence of proper editing makes it a difficult book to read, and an even more difficult one to translate.

Any translator must in the course of his work make hundreds of decisions relating to the degree of literalness vs. the conveyance of the author's general intent; and relating to the correct nuance or connotation of a given word in a given context. Experience with both languages (in this case, Hebrew and English) is often critical in making such decisions -- and for the generosity with which he has allowed me to draw upon that experience, as well as for his apparently inexhaustible patience and good will, my adviser, Professor Abraham Aaroni, has earned my sincerest gratitude. It has been a pleasure learning from him.

Another problem, peculiar to translation from Hebrew, is that the repetition of a stem in, e.g., both a verb and its object, is considered excellent form in Hebrew; sometimes an author will juggle a stem around throughout a sentence, delighting in the puns he can thus create. In the average English sentence, however, the repetition of a stem is considered redundant; so that the translator, when

confronted with an oft-repeated Hebrew stem, must resort to a variety of circumlocutions.

The author's periodic sentences were another source of difficulty. Frequently, I had to pull a page-long sentence completely apart, rearrange its syntax, and then rewrite it as five or six smaller sentences.

It was exhilarating to realize that the author was quoting from the Bible in the original! Often, he had to grapple with textual problems whose solutions had already been taken into account by the English Bible translators. I had to be careful to indicate places where his understanding of the text differed from that implied by the J.P.S. translation. (All Biblical quotations, unless otherwise specified, have been taken from The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text, Jewish Publication Society of America: 1917.)

Some of the most difficult problems I encountered were problems of transliteration, rather than translation. The Hebrew transcription, often unvocalized, of the names of persons, places and peoples, usually defied ready transliteration to English, or back to English. Since the author had not documented his sources of information, I was obliged to spend many arduous hours combing the various sources listed in the footnotes, in search of acceptable English transliterations. For their assistance in this task, I am indebted to the librarians of the New York School of HUC-JIR, and es-

pecially to Mrs. Catherine Markush. The citations in the footnotes are usually not intended to corroborate the author's information, but rather to indicate the source of my translation.

All these problems notwithstanding -- or perhaps because of them -- this translation has proved to be a most valuable and informative exercise in the study of Hebrew, Bible, and history. Perhaps it will also make a modest contribution to our understanding of an important chapter of Israel's history, as seen through the eyes of an articulate and learned modern Israeli.

For a measure of patience and understanding truly "beyond the call of duty," and for her unfailing devotion through long and difficult hours, special thanks to my wife, Ruth.

Brooklyn, New York  
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Erev Pesah, 5729



((7))      Author's Introduction

At the time I wrote Shem, Ham and Japheth, I asked myself a question: After David had stricken and subdued the Philistines (II Sam.8:1), why didn't he really get control of the coast? Why didn't he bring the Israelites to the sea, and urge them to follow the lead of their Phoenician neighbors?

And then still another question came to mind: For many years, David had nurtured the thought of a great Temple in Jerusalem, a single supreme Temple for the entire nation; and he had prepared everything that was required for it. He had selected a site on Mount Moriah; amassed great quantities of building materials; accumulated an abundance of gold, silver, and jewels; and made detailed plans both for the architecture of the Temple and for the worship that would take place in it (II Sam. 7; II Sam. 8:10-12; I Ki 8:17-19; I Chron. 22-29) -- why, then, didn't he build the Temple? What prevented him?

The following answer is suggested in several places in the Bible, as, for example, in I Chron.22:7-10:

And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, it was in my heart to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God. But the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build a house unto My name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name."

But this is obviously a later interpretation, one of the usual explanations fostered by Solomon's faction -- whether in his own day or afterwards -- in order to justify his claim to the throne. The true explanation was given by Solomon himself, in the following words of his embassy to Hiram:

Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them (his enemies) under the soles of my feet. (I Ki 5:17)

((8)) Here, too, is the answer to the first question. David did shatter the might of the Philistines. From that time on, they were no longer a determining factor in the Land of Israel. But he did not manage to complete his victory by dispossessing them in favor of Israel.

The assault of the Aramean tribes upon the lands of the "Fertile Crescent" was just then at its height. They inundated northern Arabia, the lands along the Euphrates and the Tigris, the steppes of the Syrian wilderness, and most of Syria. The individual existence of most of the ancient peoples who dwelt in those lands -- Hurrians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and the desert tribes of the Hebrew-speaking family (Seth,<sup>1</sup> Midian, Eber, Semitic Elamites, "children of the east,"<sup>2</sup> Ishmaelites, Hagrites,<sup>3</sup> and others) became indistinguishable as they began to Aramaize in their language and traditions. (They underwent a second transformation in the second half of the first millenium of the Christian era -- when they shed their Aramean form and took on Arabic form.) In David's time the Aramean torrent had already arrived at the gates of the Land of Israel, and stood over the tribes of Israel,

preparing to inundate them. David was forced to turn his attention away from the Philistines and to direct all his strength, and all his nation's strength, to the struggle with Aram.

We don't know much about his wars with the Arameans (just as about his other wars); but it is quite clear that they were long, difficult battles, surely extending for many years. We do know their results: what Babylonia and Assyria didn't manage to do in their time, in their lands -- to stem the Aramean flood, to repulse and destroy it -- David managed to do. As a result of his crushing victories, the Israelite nation did not Aramaize and did not lose its national essence, as did other nations of the same period and the same region; but rather maintained its individuality and existed in its land for another thousand years. And at the end of that time, the nation was already crystallized and solidified sufficiently to withstand all the pressures of dispersion and exile until this very day. This crystallization, and staying power -- throughout all the generations, in strange and hostile environments -- may also be credited to David, if it were permissible to credit such a thing to one person.

David holds a unique spot in the history and traditions of Israel, and he also cuts a permanent and outstanding figure in the recognition of the world -- a symbol of manly beauty, wisdom and uprightness of heart, bravery and success. But it is not on account of these virtues that his name is

great in Israel; there are many men, everywhere and in every age, who are blessed with these brilliant traits and talents, even if not all at once and not in the same combination. And it is not on account of his ascent "from the pasture, from behind the sheepfold" to the throne; there are many men in every generation, and even in our own time, who ascend from humble beginnings to the heights of society or the state. Two lasting deeds have preserved him and will continue to preserve him in the tradition of Israel: he saved the nation by sword from the danger of assimilation and destruction which lay in wait for it from without; and he created a settlement<sup>4</sup> in Zion, making Jerusalem the center of Israel throughout its history, and the inner bond that was thus forged could not be damaged by all the punishments of the diaspora.

Israel had many kings. They came and went. David remains. He is recognized by the people as its one and eternal king: "David the King of Israel lives and endures."

In Shem, Ham and Japheth (and also in my second work, which deals with the problem of ((9)) ancient west-Semitic peoples: The Background of the Hebrews), I was not able to turn to the above questions, and I had to be content with two short footnotes (in Shem, Ham and Japheth, page 159, note 6, and page 199, note 7). And now, in this book, I have gone thoroughly into the matter, trying to explain the external situation in the Middle and Near East at that time, and the internal conditions in Israel -- the circum-

stances by which the soil was made ready for David's actions;  
to clarify the place of David in Israel's history; and also  
to describe, as far as possible, his human personality as  
it really was, and also some of the other personalities who  
appear alongside him and who affect his life.

*Feci quod potui,*

*Faciant meliora potentes.*

((11))

SECTION ONE: TWO CIRCLES

((13))

A) The Narrow Circle

After the tribes of Israel had settled in Canaan, they found themselves surrounded on all sides, including the sea, by peoples and states who coveted that "land flowing with milk and honey." With some of them, and sometimes with most of them, the Israelites were in a state of war -- wars of either defense or expansion -- and sometimes these wars took on the form of a battle for their very existence. They were as if situated at the center of two oppressive circles, one inside the other. At first, hostile elements still survived within their borders, most of them not Hebrews and not even Semites, but rather fragments of the nations who were swept along, in the middle of the first half of the second pre-Christian millenium, by the great migratory wave that spilled out of Asia Minor to the lands of the "Fertile Crescent," and which is known by the name of "Hyksos\* migration." They were Anatolian and Aryan peoples, and with them, or in their wake, came Hurrians from Zagros; and in Canaan, during the second half of the second millenium, most of them began to consider themselves descended from Canaan and Ham.

Basically, the Canaanites were not west-Semites; they were not even Semites at all. They were not an early element

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\* The Greek form, "Hyksos," apparently is derived from the Egyptian hegau-khasut<sup>5</sup> -- "foreign rulers" or "rulers of foreign lands" (Shem, Ham and Japheth, p. 94).

in Canaan, and it was not even called by their name during the first half of the second pre-Christian millenium.\* In no source document from before the fifteenth century is the name Canaan even mentioned.

In my book Shem, Ham and Japheth, I went into detail on the problem of "the Children of Ham," and I came to the conclusion that the peoples numbered among the Hamites in the Bible all came out of eastern Asia Minor and northern Mesopotamia, and were divided into three main streams: Cushites (Kossaioi in Greek), who headed southeast and got control of Babylonia; Canaanites, who went southwest and settled on the Phoenician coast and in the Land of Israel; and Egyptians [𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤍] (Mu-su-ri<sup>6</sup> in Assyrian), and with them a mixed multitude of northern elements from the remoter parts of Asia Minor, and Semites (among them Hebrews, too) from the Land of Israel and its vicinity -- these continued westward and conquered the Nile Valley, which from then on was known to the Semites by their name, 𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤍 (and thus in Arabic today: 𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤍). But these settlers themselves called their country, ((14)) both before and after settling there, Kemet.<sup>7</sup>

It may be supposed that the Canaanites were a principal element among the fragments of foreign nations which settled in the Land of Israel after the "Hyksos" migration; and with the passing of time, the rest of them began to trace them-

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\* Ibid., Chapter: Ham, Section: Canaan.

selves to Canaan. Not only they, but even foreign peoples who had preceded them in Canaan were so inclined, and also those who came after the "Hyksos" wave.

The Amorites, who are counted in the Bible as being among the Hamitic descendants of Canaan, were known in Babylonia during the third pre-Christian millenium as Semites. They spread both southward and northward throughout the lands of the two rivers, and by the early centuries of the second millenium we already find "Amorite" dynasties in Assyria, Babylonia and other Mesopotamian states which were formerly Sumerian or Gutian<sup>8</sup> or Hurrian. From the names of these kings it is clear beyond a doubt that they were west-Semites and spoke dialects related to Hebrew. The meaning of the Akkadian name amuru [from which the name Amorite is derived] is "westerners." Thus did the Akkadians refer at that time to any Semitic peoples and tribes whose home or place of origin was west of the River Euphrates. When many non-Semitic northern peoples had burst into Syria and the Land of Israel, the name amuru was applied to them, as well. The Hurrians occupied a place of prominence among these peoples. They fused together with the earliest Semitic settlement; and it was especially to this fusion that the name "Amorite" clung. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, a great "Amorite" kingdom was established in Lebanon and in the adjoining territories of Syria by the Hebrew conquerors 'Abdu-Ashirta<sup>9</sup> and his son, 'Aziru<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, or not long thereafter, these "Amorites" also spread out on both sides of the Jordan.



The Israelites at the time of the Exodus recognized them by this name, and counted them among the Hamitic peoples; from this we learn that the foreign elements had prevailed among them, and had brought them closer to the Canaanites. The pressure of the conquering Israelite tribes no doubt caused this; it is possible that this was the decisive factor in the process of the various peoples' becoming joined to Canaan.

During the Amarna period (the end of the fifteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century) the Hurrians constituted a recognized foreign element in the Land of Israel. But during the following centuries, they were swallowed up by the population of the country. Some were, of course, absorbed by the Semitic settlement, and some blended in with that mixed multitude which was then known as "Amorite," thereby becoming known as foreigners, and ceasing to be a national entity of their own. In any event, the Israelite traditions from the period of the conquest of the land and from the period of the Judges do not know about the Hurrians in the Land of Israel, but only about Edom. It is very likely that the remnants of the Hurrians retreated to the end of the Negev, and after a while assimilated with the Edomites there.

Together with the "Canaanite" peoples are also mentioned the Jebusites. Their center, or one of their centers, was in Jerusalem, and in the eleventh century the city was called by their name -- Jebus. But before that, at the

beginning of the second millenium, and in the days of the Patriarchs, and during the Amarna period, it was known by its ancient and original name -- Jerusalem. It is very likely, then, that the Jebusites were not among the remnants of the Hyksos migration, but rather belonged to the "Sea Peoples" who had come with the Philistines. And indeed, in an inscription of Pharoah Ramses III, a people by the name of Weshesh<sup>10</sup> is mentioned as one of the four or five peoples who accompanied the Philistines in their invasion of Syria and Israel at the beginning of the twelfth century. ((15)) Weshesh is probably Jebus. And here, perhaps, is the reason for the agitation of the Philistines, and for their united assault against David, after he had captured Jerusalem.

Joshua the son of Nun had conquered much of the land, but not all of it. In various places there remained Canaanites, "Amorites," and other foreign peoples, who had stood their ground. In the course of time, the lines of national distinction between the small peoples and the Canaanites or Amorites became blurred, and the Israelite chroniclers saw no need to mention the smaller peoples by their specific names; they were all either "Canaanites" or "Amorites." The Jebusites were mentioned by name in David's time only because Jerusalem was in their possession, and its capture by David brought on intense battles with the Philistines.

Aside from the remnants of the Hyksos migrations and the Philistines, there were several other foreign elements

in Canaan during the eleventh and tenth centuries, such as the Caphtorim (Cretans or others of the "Sea Peoples") in the South, on the coast (it is possible that they anticipated the migration of the "Sea Peoples," who arrived at Egypt's border at the beginning of the twelfth century); the Avvim, who preceded the Caphtorim there ("and the Avvim, that dwelt in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, that came forth out of Caphter, destroyed them and dwelt in their stead" -- Deut. 2:23); the Rephaim, who had formerly been located across the Jordan and in the hills of Ephraim, or close to them ("And Joshua said unto them, 'If thou be a great people, get thee up to the forest, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim'" -- Joshua 17:15), and also in the neighborhood of Jerusalem (cf. the Valley of the Rephaim); and other remnants of ancient peoples.

The tribes of Israel gradually prevailed over the foreign elements which remained in their midst, until they had all been completely absorbed during the first half of the first millenium. But around the Israelites dwelt peoples as strong and aggressive as they. During the twelfth and eleventh centuries, great danger from the Philistines was in store for Israel. The "Island Peoples" arrived at Israel by land and by sea, after they had destroyed the Hittite kingdom in Asia Minor, the Hittite states in northern Syria, and the "Amorite" state of 'Abdu-Ashirta's dynasty in Lebanon. From Lebanon they continued southward, along the coastline of the land of Israel, and tried to break into the Egyptian Delta. Their

success in Asia Minor and Syria stirred other peoples (the Aegeans and the Libyans) to a desire for conquest, and especially for the conquest of Egypt, that ancient kingdom, so fertile, and so wealthy thanks to vast treasures accumulated by many generations of conquering Pharaohs.

Egypt was generally on the decline at that time, and her neighbors to the west, east and north knew of her weakness. However, just at that moment a king ruled over her who remained on the throne for many years: Ramses III (1198-1167), a man of abundant energy and many accomplishments. He repulsed the attack from the west of the Libyan kings and their confederates from the "Sea Peoples" (among the latter are mentioned also the Sherden<sup>10a</sup>-- after whom the island of Sardinia is named until our own day). After a while he turned eastward, and went out against the main division of the "Sea Peoples," the one which was heading from Lebanon ((16)) southward towards the Nile Valley. In an inscription of Ramses III, from the eighth year of his reign, it is written:<sup>11</sup>

The nations came out of their islands...suddenly did they spread abroad. No land had the strength to withstand their armies, beginning with the Land of the Hittites: Kode (Qatna)<sup>12</sup>-- a people and a place in northern Syria), Carchemish, Arvad<sup>12a</sup> and Alishiya (Cyprus) -- were devastated. They (the invaders) encamped against the Amorites,<sup>13</sup> and pillaged the entire land and all its inhabitants. They went out, a flaming fire before them, and marched on the highway to Egypt. This was the force of their strength: the Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh (Siculi -- their name has attached to the island of Sicily), Denyeh (Danaoi, in Greek?), and Weshesh (Jebus?). These peoples all entered an alliance to scatter Egypt to the ends of the earth; they had confidence and much evil intent in their hearts.

Ramses fought them off victoriously, and after they had been humbled beneath his hand, he placed a tax upon them and allowed them to settle on the coast of the land of Israel. A short time after his death, the power of Egypt outside her own borders disappeared. The tribes of Israel were scattered; but the Philistines, who were concentrated along the coastline, grew ever stronger. No doubt, their countrymen from the coasts of Asia Minor and from the Aegean islands continued to add to their numbers. In any event, their strength increased, and their pressure upon Israel grew much stronger. In the eleventh century, they conquered much of the interior of the land; they got the upper hand along the boundaries of Dan and Judah, and also in the Jezreel Valley, and sometimes they ventured even further eastward and northward.

It seems that at first the fighting was located primarily in the southern half of Israel -- Judah, Dan, Benjamin, and southern Ephraim. The struggles of Judah with the Philistines began earlier than those of the northern tribes and ended later. Hardest hit was the tribe of Dan, whose first territory was between Judah and Benjamin on the one hand, and the Philistines on the other. Samson was a Danite, and the location of all his deeds was on the borders of Dan, Judah, and the Philistines. In the long run, the Danites weren't able to hold their own there: some of them moved north, and the others were absorbed into Judah. The strength of the Philistines in Judah during the period preceding the up-

rooting of Dan, and the fear which they cast upon that whole neighborhood, are described in a marvellously vivid picture in Judges 15. After the wounds Samson had inflicted upon the Philistines, as a result of what happened between him and his Philistine wife and her father's house,

the Philistines went and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves against Lehi (in the northwest of the Judean hills, according to Y.Press). And the men of Judah said, "Why are ye come up against us? And they said (the Philistines): "To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us." Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam (in the vicinity of the Sorek River<sup>13a</sup>), and said to Samson: "Knewest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what then is this that thou hast done unto us?" And he said unto them: "As they did unto me, so have I done unto them." And they said unto him: "We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines." And Samson said unto them: "Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves." And they spoke unto him, saying: "No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand, but surely we will not kill thee."

The expansion of the Philistines into the Jezreel Valley began after the rout of Israel at Aphek (some time during the first half of the eleventh century). The battle of Aphek testifies to the efforts of the "Sea Peoples" to settle in the interior of the land. We don't know whether it was Israel's weakness which awakened them to increased momentum, ((17)) or an increase in their own strength -- both of these must have been responsible. The union of the Israelite tribes in Saul's time only aggravated the battle, and the result -- was the second rout of the Israelites in the hills of Gilboa (last quarter of the eleventh century). At the beginning of Saul's kingship there were no iron smiths in Israel (at least not yet): "So it came to pass in the day of battle,

that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan," only in the hands of Saul and Jonathan alone (I Sam.13:22). The Philistines went out against Israel armed with the ability to manufacture metals, and with superior weaponry and military technology; and we may also suppose that their strength was doubled at that time by a new wave, or new waves, of immigration from the Aegean islands. At the same time as the strip of coastline became too narrow for them, they became more confident in their ability to spread out further by expanding their territory.

It was not against the Philistines alone that the southern tribes had to struggle. In the Negev, nomads from the wilderness of Sinai and from Midian made raids upon Judah and Simeon. In I Sam.27:8 are mentioned three tribes against whom David fought when he lived in Ziklag:

And David and his men went up, and made a raid upon the Geshurites, and the Gizrites (men of Gezer) and the Amalekites; for these were the inhabitants of the land, who were of old (they had lived there since time immemorial?), as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

And from across the Dead Sea, various desert tribes would come and raid Judah from time to time: Midianites, Hagrites, Ishmaelites, and others.

In the Negev, south of the Dead Sea, lived the Edomites. Archaeological investigations have discovered that in the first half of the second millenium, permanent settlements existed neither in this region nor across the Dead Sea and the River

Jordan northeastwards, up until the heart of the land of Gilead. The current opinion is that Hebrew peoples did not begin to settle permanently in these places until the fourteenth century. And if we accept the tradition that the Israelites encountered them during the Exodus, and that they -- the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites -- were already crystallized states with fortress-defended borders and fortified cities, such as N. Glueck has found, it is necessary to postpone the date of the Exodus at least until the thirteenth century.

Across the Dead Sea was located the land of Moab, North of Moab was a small Amorite state with its capital at Heshbon; at the time of the Exodus, the Israelites conquered it, and settled the tribe of Reuben there. Gad made its home north of Reuben, in Gilead. East of Gad's territory stretched the land of the Ammonites; and north of the Ammonites, in Bashan, half of the tribe of Manasseh settled.

From time to time, the Syrian-Arabian desert would spew forth Semitic nomad encampments into the lands of the "Fertile Crescent," as the populous regions overlooking the deserts and steppes from the east, north and west are known today. Such movements of desert tribes would no doubt come into existence for a variety of reasons and causes, which would combine into a mighty pushing-and-pulling force: surplus population, drought, famine, inter-tribal wars, the rise of a leader aspiring to conquest who would subdue and



unite a number of tribes -- on the one hand; and the decline of the populated lands, and their conspicuous weakness -- because of deterioration of their rulers, internal violence and neglect -- on the other hand.

At the end of the twelfth century, the Aramean storm arose west of the Euphrates River, and began to make its way eastward. In the eleventh century the Aramean tribes spread ((18)) northward and encroached upon the southern reaches of the Hittites in Syria; and then the waves of the Aramean ascent rose still higher, westward and southward, until they touched the northern territory of the land of Israel. At the end of that century, three small Aramean states were already known to be north of Gilead, across the Yarmuk: Geshur,<sup>14</sup> Maacah,<sup>15</sup> and Beth Reheb.<sup>15</sup> The names are those of earlier settlements, but by the time of David, these states were already Aramean, or at least Aramaized.

Southeast of the populated strip of Transjordan, in northern Hijaz<sup>16</sup> and north of Najd,<sup>16</sup> lived nomadic tribes and semi-nomadic tribal peoples: Seth and Midian and the "children of the east,"<sup>17</sup> Sheba, the Meunim,<sup>18</sup> and many others. When the time was ripe, these desert-dwellers would band together into encampments and go out against the Transjordanian settlements. Sometimes they joined together with the children of Lot and their neighbors, and they would all attack Israel together.

### B) A United Front

The peoples who surrounded the Israelites used to clash with them quite frequently -- perhaps because they lived right in the middle, and their land was desirable, a land of corn and wine, of olives and oil. There were, naturally, times of peace between Israel and some or all of their neighbors; and there were other times when all these peoples joined forces to attack them from all sides at once. The latter would generally happen either when Israel's pronounced weakness whetted their neighbors' appetites, or when the Israelites were beginning to recover and to renew their strength, thereby arousing worry on the part of the surrounding nations.

We find in Scripture many casual and fragmentary references to situations such as the above, from all periods of history. An echo of the situation in Israel at the beginning of David's struggle for unification of the nation, is heard in the prayer of the poet Asaph the son of Berechiah, which is preserved in Psalm 83:

O God, keep not Thou silence;  
 Hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God.  
 For, lo, Thine enemies are in an uproar;  
 And they that hate Thee have lifted up the head.  
 They hold crafty converse against Thy people,  
 And take counsel against Thy treasured ones.  
 They have said: "Come, and let us cut them off from  
     being a nation;  
 That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."  
 For they have consulted together with one consent;  
 Against Thee do they make a covenant;  
 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;  
 Moab, and the Hagrites;  
 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek;

Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre (i.e., the whole Phoenician coast from Gebal to Tyre and the Philistine coast, on the one hand; and the people of Transjordan and the Negev, on the other hand);

Assyria also is joined with them;

They have been an arm to the children of Lot. Selah.

Do Thou unto them as unto Midian;

As to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook Kishon;

Who were destroyed at En-dor (an allusion to the annihilation of Tjeker, one of the "Sea Peoples" who had arrived at around the same time as the Philistines, and had gained control of the region of Dor; and whose dynasty still existed there at the beginning of the eleventh century);

They became as dung for the earth.

Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,

And like Zebah and Zalmunna all their princes...

((19)) Commentators on the Psalms like A. Bertholet and his ilk -- German theologians who banded together and ground out commentaries and super-commentaries on the Bible in Kautsch's translation\* -- decided that all the hymns in the Book of Psalms were of late origin, from the time of the building of the Second Temple and thereafter. Having thus decided, they tried to interpret in the same way even those hymns which are specifically attributed to members of David's generation and which take their cue from events which happened in his time. Even though the poet's entire inspiration, and all his ideas and expectations, might flow from memories of deeds which were done before David's time; and even though there might be no hint of any historical event which took place after David; these commentators "understand" the hymn as being entirely directed to events in the time of the Hasmoneans.

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\* Tübingen, 1923

"It has long been recognized," says Bertholet in his commentary on Psalm 83, "that this hymn may best be explained in the light of the book of First Maccabees, Chapter 5. Many of the peoples mentioned there (who formed an alliance and rose up to destroy the Jews)...are the same ones mentioned in that hymn -- among them Tyre, whose relations with the Jews had, apparently, been generally good." (However good relations between Tyre and Israel may have been during the reigns of David and Solomon, we cannot infer from this that they had been good before David's victories against Aram in Syria.) As for Asshur, notes Bertholet, weren't the Syrians known by that name at a later time?

There are many things that "have long been recognized" by German theologians and other scholars who follow in their footsteps, which are nonetheless groundless; and the aforementioned interpretation doubtless falls into this category. The great difficulty, which Bertholet overlooked in his haste, is that most of the peoples mentioned in Psalm 83 are not mentioned in I Macc.5.

In Psalm 83, the names of ten peoples are specified: Edom, Ishmael, Moab, Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistines, Tyre, and Assyria. Six of them are missing from I Macc.5: Ishmael, Moab, Hagrites, Gebal, Amalek, Assyria. And most of the peoples and cities mentioned in I Macc.5 (because of their encounters with the Jews, or because of the Hasmonean battles against them -- Nabateans,

Arabs, the sons of Baean,\* 19 the residents of Acre and Sidon and many other cities in the north of Israel, in the west, and in Transjordan) are not mentioned in Psalm 83. Only four names are common to both sources: Edom, Ammon, the land of the Philistines, and Tyre.

These four are not symbolic names; they actually existed in the days of Judah the Maccabee, as they had in the days of King David (even if changes had come over some of them with the passing of time, and some different elements had become mixed in with them), and Judah actually fought against them.

The Edomites not only existed; they had even encroached upon Judah's border after the destruction of the First Temple, and had penetrated Judah's territory until north of Hebron. Judah the Maccabee conquered Hebron and its vicinity from them.

We don't know whether Ammon was still ((20)) the same people who had dwelt in Transjordan in the days of the Judges and the First Temple; or whether the nature of the settlement in that land had changed, with the new population merely being called the same name as the old.

The dwellers of the Nile valley, for example, are still called "Egyptians" in our own day, although they have nothing

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\* Meunim (from Ain<sup>20</sup>), natives of southern Arabia, who settled in Transjordan. The Simeonites encroached upon them in their day (I Chron.4:41); and King Uzziah smote the Arabs in Kir-Baal and the Meunim (II Chron.26:7).

in common -- neither culture nor language nor religion nor traditions -- with the ancient Egyptians. It is possible that most of the residents of modern Egypt are the physical descendants of the ancient Egyptians (that is to say, of a mixture of Egyptian, Hebrew, Arab, Nubian, Libyan and Greek ancestries); but the nationhood of a people is determined by its spiritual form, by the content of its consciousness, and not by its physical source. The Bulgarians were originally a Turkic people, and now they are a Slavic people; while most of Asia Minor's population are, according to their physical source, the descendants of the Hurrians and the Hittites, Gomer,<sup>21</sup> Tubal,<sup>21</sup> and Meshech,<sup>21</sup> Phrygians and Lydians and Greeks, etc., but today they are a Turkic people.

By the time of the Hasmoneans, Transjordan had already been flooded with Arab tribes. Some of them were known to us by name, e.g., Nabateans, sons of Ambri<sup>22</sup> (Josephus, Antiquities, Book XIII, 1:2), etc. Others were known by the general classification Arabs, just as the Israelites were known to strangers by the general name which was common to all descendants of Eber: Hebrews. Still others were addressed by the names of the peoples who had preceded them in the same places, and whom they, the Arabs, had displaced or assimilated. For example, Josephus says specifically about Moab, "the Arabians, such as the Moabites and the Gileadites" <sup>23</sup> (Antiquities, Book XIII, 13:5).

In Gilead, the Jews had by that time already become such a small minority that they had to seek refuge in a

certain fortress, and only with difficulty did they defend themselves against enemies from the entire vicinity who were pressing in upon them. Judah the Maccabee -- after smiting the adversaries -- gathered the Jews of Gilead together and moved them to Judea in order to save them (Antiquities, Book XII, 8:5).

Probably the "Ammonites," too, had already become Arabized like the Moabites, with only the name Ammon being perpetuated. The capital of the Ammonites has retained its original name until this very day, and is called, in Arabic, Amman.

In Psalm 83, Philistia is mentioned: King David fought against the Philistines, in Philistia and in other places, until he had subdued them. In I Macc.3:41, the land of the Philistines is spoken of: Judah the Maccabee fought in the land of the Philistines, but not against the Philistines. Perhaps a few last remnants of them had survived, but the Philistine people itself no longer existed in the land of Israel. There is mention of them neither in the Book of Maccabees, nor in the works of Josephus, nor in any other source from that period. In I Macc.3:41, it is said that when Nicanor and Gorgias went out against Judah, an "Aramean" -- i.e., Syrian -- army, and allóphyloi, joined them. The Septuagint designates the Philistines, beginning with the Book of Judges, as allóphyloi (but in the Pentateuch and in Joshua they are designated by their own name). However, the literal meaning of this word is "foreigners,"

and there is no reason to suppose that in the Book of Maccabees, in that place [i.e., 3:41], the Philistines are meant: there is no proof that the "foreigners" in Philistia, at the time of the Hasmoneans, were Philistines.

As for Tyre, there is no doubt that her residents, together with those of Acre and Sidon, participated in attacks upon the Jews of Galilee during the time of Judah the Maccabee. Nor is there any doubt that these [the inhabitants of the above-mentioned three cities] were still ((21)) Phoenicians, at least judging by their language. In the Phoenician cities they continued minting coins bearing inscriptions in Phoenician-Hebrew characters until the end of the second Christian century.\*

From I Chron.15:17-19 and 16:5-8, we learn that Asaph the son of Berechiah was a Levitical poet. When David brought the ark of the Lord, in a festive procession, to the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite on Mount Moriah -- the place where Solomon was later to build the Temple -- he [David] appointed choirs of Levites to sing and to play

and to thank and praise the Lord, the God of Israel: Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah...with psalteries and with harps; and Asaph with cymbals, sounding aloud...Then did David first ordain to give thanks unto the Lord, by the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

It is clear that Asaph was among the most important poets of David's time; he is also counted among the "seers" or "prophets" ("of the sons of Asaph...under the hand of

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\* N. Slouschz, Treasury of Phoenician Inscriptions (Hebrew), Tel-Aviv, 5702 A.M., p. 16.



Asaph, who prophesied\* according to the direction of the king." I Chron.25:2).

That Asaph's hymns were preserved and recited throughout the period of the First Temple, is proven by what is said in First Chronicles about King Hezekiah (fl. end of eighth century to beginning of seventh):

Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. (29:30)

And if they had remained in existence until the time of Hezekiah, and had become a fixed part of the cultic ritual, it is clear that they must have continued to serve in this capacity during the time of the Second Temple; and there is neither reason nor logic in looking for explanations of them in events from the period of Judah the Maccabee.

There are hymns in the Book of Psalms which are traced back to the ancients: Moses, David, Solomon, and that group of religious poets assigned by David and Solomon to the cultic ceremonies: the Korahites, Asaph and his sons, Etan, and Heman. Certainly some of these hymns are of late origin, and are merely credited to famous poets of ancient times. But we cannot infer from this that all the hymns are of late origin.

There are certain expressions and verses in the Psalms which approximate in both content and spirit the language

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\* Some versions read, "Asaph, the prophet" [rather than "Asaph, who prophesied"].

of the Ugaritic epic; and there are some which are comparable to Egyptian hymns from the second half of the second pre-Christian millenium (e.g., Psalm 104 brings to mind the wording of Pharoah Amenhotep IV's hymn to the sun).

It is a fact that from the earliest times, songs and melodies and dances played a great part in the life of Israel (as in the life of other nations) -- whether in cultic ceremonies, or in times of spiritual exaltation because of some important event. Laban chastises Jacob for fleeing in these words: "Wherefore didst thou flee secretly, and outwit me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp?" (Gen.31:27). "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel" -- a very ancient song, judging from its style and its mood. The same is true of the wonderful "song of the well," only the beginning of which is cited in the Pentateuch (it was, no doubt, recorded in its entirety in collections of ancient poetry; and the editors of Numbers thought it unnecessary to copy it, since everyone already knew it):

Then sang Israel this song:  
 "Spring up, O well -- sing ye unto it --  
 The well, which the princes digged,  
 Which the nobles of the people delved..." (Nu.21:17-18)

All the speeches of Balaam, too, are parts of ancient songs.

A few of these songs (like the Song of Moses, and the Song of Deborah and Barak) were introduced into the Bible in their entirety, or their greater part; ((22)) of others,

only small sections or headings were quoted -- a reminder of their existence; and the rest were lost entirely.

But many of the hymns which were established for use in the cultic rituals of the Temple became permanent, and some very ancient hymns were preserved in this manner, too. Just as Pharoah Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV, fl. fourteenth century B.C.) sang his great song to the sun, we may suppose that Moses sang great songs to his God, and that some of them were preserved in the Bible. After the Temple was built and the cultic rituals established, ancient songs were regularly sung -- songs from the time of the Exodus and the period of the Judges, songs of David and Solomon and the Temple poets ("And the priests...and the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made, to give thanks unto the Lord...with the praises of David by their hand; and the priests sounded trumpets over against them." II Chron. 7:6). As we have seen, they were still singing these songs 250 years after Solomon (in Hezekiah's time); this proves that they were not forgotten thereafter, but rather returned again -- to whatever extent they did return -- during the time of the Second Temple.

German commentators and their followers generally trace the poetry of the Psalms, among them David's victory song (II Sam. 22; Psalm 18), to the time of the Second Temple. It is a little difficult [to understand how they can do so]. Which of the Judean kings, during the time of the Second Temple, could have said,



in honor of one of the Hasmoneans (which one?) was subsequently traced back to David (when?).

But the content simply doesn't justify this kind of reasoning. No Hasmonean king could have spoken like David:

Thou hast made me the head of the nations...  
 As soon as they hear of me, they obey me (i.e., by dint of the reports they have heard about me, they submit to me. Cf. I Chron. 14:17: "And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations")...  
 Even the God that executeth vengeance for me,  
 And bringeth down peoples under me, (in Psalms: and subdueth peoples under me).<sup>24</sup>

This description does not suit any Hasmonean king, but it does suit David.

((23)) Judging by its content, Asaph's poem, Psalm 83, pertains to the beginning of David's reign -- the time when he captured Jerusalem and prevailed over the Philistines, and all the surrounding nations began feverishly preparing themselves to attack Israel-- and it does not fit properly into any other historical period.

We recognize circumstances similar to those described in Psalm 83, prevailing when the Israelites first came into the land.

And it came to pass, when all the kings that were beyond the Jordan, in the hill-country, and in the Lowland, and on all the shore of the Great Sea in front of Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof (about the conquest of Jericho and Ai), that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord (Joshua 9:1-2).

And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard thereof (about Joshua's conquests), that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings that were

on the north, in the hill-country and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the Lowland, and in the regions of Dor on the west, to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill-country, and the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpah (Joshua 11:1-3).

But when they saw that Israel had the upper hand, "their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel" (Joshua 5:1). "The Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and mighty; but as for you, no man hath stood against you unto this day. One man of you hath chased a thousand" (Joshua 23:9-10). This was the case, too, in David's time, after his great victories; and we have witnessed the same in our own time.<sup>24a</sup>

If attempts such as these, to unite and to take Israel by storm from all sides, were made during a period of Israel's increasing solidarity -- such attempts were even more likely to be made at a time when Israel or Judah had declined and was weak. For example, during the reign of Ahaz, when Aram and Israel joined together for an attack upon Judah:

Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war (733 B.C.); and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.

They did not manage to capture Jerusalem, but Rezin did cut the corner of the Negev away from Judah's territory:

At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath to Aram, and drove the Jews from Elath; and the Edomites came to Elath, and dwelt there, unto this day (II Kings 16:5-6).

That is to say, as a result of the king of Aram's victory over Judah, and the ouster of the Jews from Elath, the Edomites

received possession of Elath. Ahaz sought aid from Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria; the latter came, conquered Damascus, and put Rezin to death (II Ki.16:9). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to Ahaz's sin in commanding that an altar be built in Jerusalem like the one he had seen in Damascus, and then in offering sacrifices upon it. He had apparently begun to believe, after his defeat, that the strength of Aram's gods was greater than that of Israel's God. But in II Chron.28:16-27, a few details are presented which are missing from II Kings:

At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the Lowland, and of the South of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Aijalon, and Gederoth, and Soco with the towns thereof, and Timnah with the towns thereof, Gimzo also and the towns thereof; and they dwelt there...And Tillegath-pilneser (the name is distorted) king of Assyria came unto him (unto Ahaz), and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

((24))

### C) The Wide Circle

The Israelites were usually able to resist the pressure of the narrow circle, that chain of nations which immediately encircled them. But just behind these, in a wider circle, were located great and powerful kingdoms, which from time to time would extend their reach into the lands of the narrow circle, and also into the land of Israel. These kingdoms included: Egypt, Heth, Assyria and Babylonia.

#### 1) Egypt

Suppiliumas,<sup>25</sup> the founder of the Hittite kingdom's military strength (during the second quarter of the 14th

century B.C.), humbled Khilaku<sup>26</sup> (Cilicia); broke the might of Mitanni, the Hurrian state (northeast of Assyria) which was then at the height of its greatness; broke through to Syria; and finally arrived, in his path of conquest, at the "Amorite" state in Lebanon, which was ruled at that time by 'Aziru the son of 'Abdu-Ashirta. 'Aziru's state extended from the neighborhood of Qatna<sup>27</sup> (north of Kadesh<sup>27</sup> on the Orontes River<sup>27</sup>) southward until beyond Gebal.<sup>28</sup> This was the Amarna period, and the land of Israel, portions of Syria, and the Phoenician coast were still considered by be subject to Pharoah, and reliant upon him for protection. When 'Aziru realized that the Hittites were growing ever stronger, and were already approaching his border, and that there was no hope of deliverance from Pharoah's direction, he turned his back on Egypt and made a covenant with Suppiliumas. The lands which were south of 'Aziru's kingdom -- the southern end of the Phoenician coast and the land of Israel -- continued to recognize, in theory and occasionally in practice, the supreme authority of Egypt. Seti I<sup>29</sup> and Ramses II (the end of the 14th and first two thirds of the 13th centuries) put an end to the Hittite expansion southward. Seti I fought against them in Syria. At the beginning of Ramses II's reign, the battle between Egypt and Syria over the Amorite kingdom was renewed. Egypt's resurgent strength awakened in 'Aziru's successors the hope that, with Egypt's help, they would be able to break loose of the Hittite yoke. Bantishinna,<sup>30</sup> the Amorite king, got in touch



with Ramses. Ramses, mobile and full of self-praise, gathered his army and hurried to Syria. In a great battle (1286 or 1285) which took place in the vicinity of Kedesh on the River Orontes, the Hittites won the upper hand. Pharoah's army was repulsed from the Amorite border, and the Hittites pushed southward as far as Damascus. Bantishinna managed to become reconciled with Muwattalish,<sup>31</sup> the Hittite king.

After a number of years (in approximately 1271), Ramses II made an "eternal" pact of friendship with King Hattusilis III,<sup>32</sup> the younger brother of Muwattalish. During the reign of Ramses II, and during the reign of his son Merneptah, no further recognizable changes took place in the Hittite-Egyptian boundary in Syria. At the end of the 13th century, internal troubles began to disturb Egypt, and her actual power over southern Syria and the land of Israel became nil. It was about seventeen years from the death of Merneptah until another Pharoah was seen fighting in these places -- and only for a short while, at that. ((25)) During this time the power of the Hittite kingdom was also on the wane; and at the beginning of the 12th century, their kingdom was destroyed by the "Sea Peoples," never to rise again.

After the latter had invaded Asia Minor, or at the same time, other bands of Aegean pirates arrived at the shores of Libya in many ships. There they came to an understanding with a local king named Temeh,<sup>33</sup> with whom they decided to combine forces for an attack upon the Delta.

And other armies of "Sea Peoples" (as the Egyptians called them), who had crossed the length of Asia Minor by land, broke into Syria, put an end to the Amorite kingdom in Lebanon, and continued southward toward the Nile Valley. The report of the treasures which had been accumulated by the kings, officials and priests of Egypt during the millenia of her greatness, had travelled far and wide; and when the signs of her weakness multiplied and became known in the world, all the eastern Mediterranean nations enveloped her, encircled her, clung to her like flies to a carcass.

At that time, the king of Egypt was, as I have said, a Pharoah of abundant energy and many accomplishments, Ramses III (1198-1167). He struck back successfully at those who were invading the Delta from the west. The ships of the Aegeans were sunk, and their armies trampled and largely annihilated. Their casualties were estimated at more than 12,500, while about a thousand more were taken captive. After this victory, Ramses fortified his western border and prepared himself for an encounter with the principal wave of Sea Peoples, who had distinguished themselves in Lebanon and had subsequently begun to travel towards Egypt. Those who went by land, either walked on foot or rode on ox-carts, and as they passed through, they destroyed and pillaged the settled areas as much as they could. At the same time, their navies were sailing along the coast and wreaking destruction in the cities and villages near the sea.

The place where he came face to face with the invaders is not clearly specified in Ramses' inscriptions; it was possibly the southern coast of the land of Israel. In any event, he defeated them badly on both land and sea, as he had previously done to the Libyans and Sherden in the battle over the Delta. After they had surrendered, he allowed them to settle along the coastline. The principle bloc among the invaders were the Philistines (Pelasgians<sup>34</sup> in Greek). Apparently they settled between Jaffa and Rafiah in the Shephelah, which since that time has been named after them: Philistia. Other Aegean peoples who had come with them, settled north of them, perhaps as far north as the border of Tyre. The Greeks called Philistia Palaistine -- cf. פלשתינה in the Talmud -- and they applied the term to the entire land of Israel, and thus it has remained in foreign [i.e., non-Hebrew] languages until today.

We know the exact name of only one of the Sea Peoples who came to Israel with the Philistines and settled there. That name was written in Egyptian hieroglyphics: Tjeker; but its identity has yet to be discovered. Wen-Amon<sup>35</sup> an Egyptian who travelled to Gebal in the service of Heri-Hor<sup>36</sup> the high priest at No-Amon<sup>37</sup> (the Thebes of the Greeks; known today as Karnak), to bring wood from Lebanon for the boat of the god Amon-Re<sup>38</sup> went down to the Huru Sea (the Mediterranean; the land of Israel was then often known in Egyptian as Huru, i.e., Land of the Hurrians -- a reminder of the great amount of Hurrian sediment which had remained

there from the Hyksos wave). He [Wen-Amon] first came to Dor,<sup>39</sup> a Tjeker city, ruled over by a King Tjeker.<sup>40</sup> This was ninety years after the invasion of the Sea Peoples, who had been stopped in the land of Israel by Pharaoh, beaten and made to surrender. ((26)) In an inscription of Ramses III, Tjeker is also mentioned among the peoples who came with the Philistines; and from Wen-Amon's story, we learn that the Tjekerites ruled in the district of Dor.

Undoubtedly, others of the Sea Peoples must have conquered certain territories for themselves in Israel; and after a period of time, because of their insignificant numbers, become assimilated by the Philistines, or by the "Canaanites" or "Amorites," or by the Hebrews, who had been and who continued to be the principal settlement in Canaan.

Up to the present time, we have obtained no information about the other Sea Peoples, except perhaps about Weshesh, also one of the Sea Peoples who came with the Philistines. It is reasonable that Weshesh is Jebus (I went into detail about this in my book Shem, Ham and Japheth, pp.155ff.). Probably the Jebusites conquered Jerusalem at the time of the Aegean invasion and held on to it during the 12th and 11th centuries, until David took it from them. And since they dwelt in Jerusalem, far from the Philistines and the other Sea Peoples, they became more like the foreign peoples who had preceded them and their brothers of the Aegean invasion into the land of Israel, and they began to trace themselves to Canaan, as did those other peoples.

Ramses III was the last strong king of the twentieth dynasty. During the time of the nine Ramseses who reigned after him (1167-1090), Egypt was weakened by internal divisions. At the end of the 12th century, a local ruler arose in Zoan, by the name of Nesubenebbed<sup>41</sup> (Smendes,<sup>41</sup> to the Greeks). He conquered the entire Delta, and made himself king of Lower Egypt. At the same time, the high priest at No-Amon grew much stronger, and foisted his rule upon Upper Egypt. The battle between north and south, which lasted about a century-and-a-half, sapped Egypt's strength, both internally and in relation to the rest of the world. The last shadow of Egyptian rule in the land of Israel and in Syria, on the Philistine coast and in the Phoenician cities, faded away. Pharaoh's protection turned away from the remnants of foreign peoples in the land of Israel, but the Israelite tribes who were settling in the land at that time, managed to take them over and to take up the struggle with the Aegean peoples.

During the same period, the Libyan tribes gradually and quietly infiltrated the Delta, until they had finally become a decisive military factor there. The last king of the Zoan dynasty was defeated by a Libyan leader named Shishak (Sheshonk<sup>42</sup> in Egyptian; Shushinku<sup>43</sup> in cuneiform), in 945 B.C. (i.e., in Solomon's time). Shishak established a new dynasty in Egypt -- according to Manetho,<sup>44</sup> the twenty-second -- and died in 924. At the end of his reign, after he had fortified his rule in Egypt, and to a certain extent

also in Libya, he turned to the land of Israel. According to the inscription which he left in the Temple of No-Amon, he reached as far north as Kinneret, looting everything he could along the way. II Chron.12:2-9 relates it as follows (the matter is also mentioned in I Ki.14:25-26):

And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam (he reigned from approximately 931-915), that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem...with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen; and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubim, the Sukkim, and the Ethiopians. And he took the fortified cities which pertained to Judah, and came unto Jerusalem...So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all away; he took away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

((27)) This was not, however, an expedition of conquest, but rather a mere raid for the sake of plunder. Shishak returned to his country laden with booty, and the land of Israel -- no matter how ruined or pillaged -- remained free of Egypt's yoke. After Shishak's death, internal troubles and wars again broke out in Egypt. These wars lasted for many generations, put a complete end to Egypt's strength, and finally resulted in the conquest of the land of the Nile by the Assyrians (during the first half of the seventh century). And in 525, after a short and insubstantial period of independence (the Sais dynasty<sup>45</sup>-- the twenty-sixth), Egypt was conquered by Persia.

More than 260 years passed between Ramses III's expedition against the Philistines in the land of Israel (ca.1192) and Shishak's expedition (ca.926). During this

2) Heth

During the fourteenth century, a powerful and aggressive Hittite kingdom arose in the heart of Asia Minor. It gradually widened its boundaries westward, eastward, and southward. In the southwest of the peninsula, it brought the kingdom of Arzawa to its knees (during the first millenium B.C., Lydians and Carians<sup>47</sup> lived there; there was no longer any memory of the Luvians<sup>48</sup> who had lived in that land during the second half of the second millenium). And in the peninsula's northeast corner, it took possession of a kingdom named Hayasha<sup>49</sup> (in later years, a region in northwestern Armenia; and the Armenians, who came from the west and apparently made their first settlement in this region, call themselves, in their own language, Hayk<sup>50</sup>). After a while, the Hittites conquered Kissuwadna<sup>51</sup> (Cilicia); and by the third quarter of the second millenium, they had already arrived in the north of the "two rivers" region, where they put an end to Mitanni, a strong Hurrian kingdom north of Assyria. In Syria, they took their conquests southward as far as Kedesh, on the Orontes River, and brought the "Amorite" kingdom established by 'Abdu-Ashirta under their dominion. Here they clashed ((28)) with Egypt, who since the time of Thutmose III<sup>52</sup> (second quarter of the 15th century) had always considered Syria and the land of Israel as her property and her sphere of influence.

The early kings of Egypt were in the habit of boasting

period of time -- the days of the Judges and Saul and David and Solomon, and until the first years of Rehoboam's reign -- Egypt's power was not felt in the land of Israel. The arm which threatened Israel from the west had withered and fallen away from the outer circle. In fact, the entire circle appeared ready to disintegrate. The Hittites had already fallen. The strength of Babylonia and Assyria was being gradually broken by the weight of the Aramean ascent, so that they were no longer a factor in the lives of countries west of the Euphrates.

The bursting of the Aramean tribes into settled regions was not restricted to the lands of the Euphrates and Tigris. Their flood tide grew ever higher during the 11th century, until it had inundated most of Syria, and its advance waves had reached the northern and eastern corners of the land of Israel. It wasn't long before the lands of the Two Rivers became Aram of the Two Rivers, and the name of Aram was added to the names of several localities and states in Syria and along Israel's border: Paddan-Aram, Aram-Zobah,<sup>46</sup> Aram-Damascus, Aram-Beth-rehob, Aram-Maacah; and south of the latter was a small state by the name of Geshur, which Arameans also ruled at that time. The entire land of Israel, too, was about to be thus inundated. The man who filled the breach, who stopped and repulsed the powerful Aramean expansion southward from Syria, just as Pharoah Ramses III had, in his day, stopped the Sea Peoples and repulsed them from Egypt's borders, was King David.



about their heroism and their victories, whether or not there was a basis for such boasting (the Levantines, the modern heirs to their throne, have inherited this trait from them in full measure). Ramses III didn't fall behind the other Pharaohs when it came to words of self-praise. According to his version, he was victorious against the Hittites in the battle of Kadesh. But judging from the results of that battle, it is clear enough that he came out the loser. The Amorite state in Lebanon continued to look to the Hittite kingdom for protection; and the Hittites pressed even further southward, taking Damascus. Nonetheless, their victory was indecisive. Egyptian authority continued to prevail south of Damascus.

The people who during the second half of the second millennium established the mighty kingdom in Asia Minor which was known as "Hittite," inherited that name from the people who preceded them there. It has not yet been ascertained what their original name was. In any event, the name "Hittites" stuck to the rulers of the new kingdom, just as, for example, the name "Egyptians" stuck to the inhabitants of the land of Kēmet (the original name of ancient Egypt). The assumption of the name of the conquered land by its conquerors is a common phenomenon in the history of nations. Thus do we find several Latin American states, the language and culture of whose inhabitants is Hispanic, being named after local "Indian" peoples who had preceded them in these lands, and who had lost their own national independence.

Thus, too, for example, the residents of the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, who long ago became Italianized, are still named after the ancient Siculi and Sherden.<sup>53</sup> And the distant ancestors of the inhabitants of the island of Malta, were Sidonians speaking a Hebrew-Phoenician dialect, whose island was named Melita,<sup>54</sup> i.e., a place of refuge [Hebrew root: (M)] from the misfortunes of the sea (the name was shortened to Malta). The residents of this island today are Catholic Christians, speaking a Semitic dialect similar to Arabic, mixed with Italian. They have forgotten their Phoenician past, and yet they are still called "Maltese."

Thus, too, with the "Hittites." They had inherited their name from a previous people who had disappeared, and that name was perpetuated even after their great kingdom was destroyed, and only fragments of it remained: medium-sized kingdoms and petty city-states in the southeastern part of Asia Minor and in northern Syria. These states continued for hundreds of years to bear the name of Heth, and to write with Hittite hieroglyphics, and to preserve a Hittite style in their art -- until they were all conquered by Assyria. Only then did they finally mix with the Arameans and Greeks, to form a mixed Levantine settlement there, in Syria (the name "Syria" is the Greek version of "Asshur") -- namely, the Syrians.

We know neither what motivated the Sea Peoples to make a landing in Asia Minor at that particular time, the beginning of the 12th century, nor how they succeeded in destroy-

ing the Hittite kingdom and cleaving a path for themselves through Syria, Lebanon and Israel up to the Egyptian border. We have no real information; but we may suppose that the factors in the Hittite fall were no different from those which overthrew other aggressive military kingdoms in ancient times.

Such kingdoms ((29)) would be established in places where permanent settlements had become numerous and strong; where villages and cities had arisen. But poor, hungry, nomadic tribes, hunters of prey skilled in the use of the sword, would continue to swarm around such a kingdom. These tribes were forever covetous of the riches which, under the protection of a strong government, would accumulate in the settled land. As for the kingdom: no matter what its abilities and its origins, it did not at all times have the same degree of stability, unity, and defensive and offensive force. Its real strength was largely dependent upon the characteristics of the ruler, the king. Of course, the founder of a kingdom had to be a man of abundant energy and full of stratagems, with a lust for greatness and dominion as the major passion of his life. In some cases, his son would inherit these traits and appetites from him in full measure, and even more, as Alexander the Macedonian did from Philip his father. In other cases, the son inherits his procreator's traits in diminished measure, but sufficiently to keep the inheritance alive -- like King Solomon after David. Either way, the third and fourth generations usually turn out to

be pampered and somewhat softened men, who flee from the hardship and danger which are the condition of achievement and conquest.

On the other hand, the oppressed elements or the adversaries and rivals within the kingdom -- vanquished peoples, saboteurs from the king's own circle, or ambitious men from among his own people -- all these elements gain courage, uncover the weak spots in his regime, and never waste an opportunity to undermine him. A frequently recurring situation is competition for the throne among the king's sons, leading to the outbreak of internecine warfare in his old age or after his death. Each party to the dispute attracts fragments of the army and of the disgruntled masses, and also tries to mobilize assistance from among tribes across the national border who are lusting for battle and spoils.

The tribesmen study the ways of the settled land, its weaponry and its methods of warfare; and they see its riches and its delights. Many of them even find employment in the king's army during peace time. Then, in a time of crisis and governmental weakness, they alert their brethren across the border -- residents of mountains, deserts and impoverished islands, dwellers in marshes and forests -- to storm the kingdom; and these advance infiltrators serve them as guides and allies. For their part, the residents of the settled land, who have been accustomed to dwelling in safety under the king's protection, have in the course of

time lost their earlier military preparedness; they no longer take delight in battle.

Savage and half-savage tribes, who live along, or just across, the border of the kingdom, lie in wait for signs of its weakness, with the patience of hunters. Every now and then, they try raiding an outlying district, in the hope that the right time has arrived, or to ascertain just how weak the state has become. If they meet strong opposition, they retreat and wait for a more opportune occasion. They have plenty of time to wait, for years or even generations; to dream of the treasures that are waiting for them; and never to take their eyes off what's happening inside the kingdom -- they have no other business to attend to. And as soon as breaches appear in the kingdom's walls, the barbarians will burst in and wreak destruction there. The news of their success travels quickly, whether on land or throughout the isles of the sea. Other tribes and nations are stirred from their places and join themselves into great armies, so that the raid turns into an invasion of major proportions. Thus did Rome succumb to the attacks of the Germanic barbarians; thus, too, Byzantium;<sup>55</sup> and thus, in the time we are now discussing, ((30)) did Assyria and Babylonia succumb to the Aramean torrent which came upon them from the Syrian-Arabian desert. And thus, too, doubtless, did the Hittite kingdom fall prey to the Sea Peoples.

The details of its destruction are not known, but

the fact of its destruction is. Ramses III, when he defeated the Sea Peoples on the coast of the land of Israel, thus saving his land from them (ca.1192), enumerated in his inscription five peoples who took part in that invasion: Tjeker (as yet unidentified), Shekelesh\* (Siculi), Denyen (Danaoi?), Weshesh (apparently Jebusites), and the Philistines at their head. They devastated the island of Alishiya (Cyprus), Arzawa, Carchemish, and other places in northern Syria, and put an end to the Amorite kingdom in Lebanon. Possibly it was this blow that caused the Amorite migration southwards.

The composition of these "Amorites" was already at that time largely Hurrian, mixed with elements of the west-Semites (Phoenicians), and likewise of the Hittites and of other northern peoples. In the land of Israel they probably joined up with the local Hurrians, remnants of the Hyksos period, who constituted a recognizable element there. From that time on -- if not even earlier -- the name "Amorite" was applied to them [this mixture of local Hurrians and Amorites], as well. The Amorites took control of the Semitic settlements in various parts of the country, and established petty kingdoms on both sides of the Jordan. It was the latter that the Israelites encountered at the beginning of their settlement.

What happened in Asia Minor after the Hittite kingdom ceased to exist? The sources are shrouded in darkness for

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\* In the Harris Papyrus, Sherden are mentioned, and Shekelesh are omitted.

more than two hundred years. But the place didn't stand empty. During the tenth century a Phrygian kingdom already exists in the heart of the peninsula, in the region where, during the previous millenium, the Hittite kingdom had had its seat. In the eastern half of Asia Minor lived peoples whose names are known to us from the Bible, from cuneiform inscriptions, and from the chronicles of Greek historians; but the names of those who had preceded them in these places have been lost. On the southern border of the Caucasus arose the kingdom of Urartu.<sup>56</sup> West of Urartu was Kummukh<sup>57</sup> (Kummuhu<sup>58</sup>; Commagene,<sup>58</sup> in Greek); northwest of Kummukh was Milid<sup>59</sup> (Melid,<sup>60</sup> Malatya,<sup>61</sup> Melitene<sup>61a</sup>); west of Kummukh was Khilaku<sup>26</sup> (Cilicia) and its southern part -- Kue.<sup>62</sup> Further west was Tubal (Tibarēnoi<sup>63</sup>).

When the storm of the Sea Peoples had left, Hittite elements revived in southeastern Asia Minor and in northern Syria, and reintroduced traditions of former times. The kings of the states established in those lands were all known by historical Hittite names. The inscriptions from that era were all written in Hittite hieroglyphics, and in the official Hittite language which had been used in the days of the great kingdom of Heth.

The chief Hittite kingdom at the northern end of Syria, during the tenth to eighth centuries, was Carchemish. West of Carchemish and east of Kue, was located a small state named Samal<sup>64</sup> (Yaudi<sup>65</sup>). The state south of Samal was named Hattina<sup>66</sup> (the region around Alexandretta,<sup>67</sup> today Hatay<sup>67</sup>).

Southeast of it was Luhuti,<sup>68</sup> whose capital, Khalman<sup>69</sup> is Aleppo. (During the following centuries, it was known for a while as Hatarikka,<sup>70</sup> the Hadrach<sup>71</sup> of the Bible.) Further south, on what was apparently the southern boundary of Hittite expansion in Syria, was located Hamath.

((31)) Toi<sup>72</sup> (or Tou<sup>73</sup>) the king of Hamath was King David's ally in his wars with the Arameans. Solomon bought horses from Kue, in southern Cilicia. The Hittite kingdoms in Syria struggled with Aram for a long time, and it is known that they were still, in the middle of the ninth century, independent powers. When the Arameans were besieging Samaria (during the reign of Jehoram the son of Ahab, middle of the ninth century), their camp became panicked during the night, "and they said one to another: 'Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us,'" (II Ki. 7:6). At the end of the eighth century, Sargon, the king of Assyria, conquered Carchemish and all of Syria (and also Samaria and Philistia), and annexed it, together with all the Aramean and Hittite kingdoms, to the Assyrian kingdom.

Ramses III, having smitten and defeated the Sea Peoples, allowed them to settle on the coast of the land of Israel. The Philistines were a principal element among that group of peoples from the Aegean islands, and those tatters of peoples from Asia Minor and Syria who followed in the footsteps of the Aegeans. In the course of time, the name



"Philistines" came to be applied also to them [i.e., all the others] and their remnants. It is also possible that they were all regarded as "Philistines" only by outsiders, but that among themselves, each nation still preserved its original name for a long time. Cf. the Israelites, and doubtless, too, the Edomites and the "children of Lot," the Midianites and the "children of the East," and others, who were known by the general name of Hebrews. Be that as it may, we know from the story of Wen-Amon the Egyptian that in his day (ca. 1100) the region of Dor was in the hands of Tjeker, and Tjeker was one of the Aegean peoples mentioned in the inscription of Ramses III.

Of course the Sea Peoples did not restrict themselves to the strip of coastline which they first seized. We may suppose that after they had fortified themselves on the coast, their comrades from the islands of the sea continued to join them, so that their numbers grew ever larger. In any event, we have this measure of their strength during the 12th and 11th centuries: they encroached upon the tribes of Israel, and in some areas penetrated far into the interior of the country.

The period we are now approaching -- the end of the eleventh and beginning of the tenth centuries -- concludes the "dark age" in Asia Minor, the period when the older peoples were uprooted by new ones, amid the destruction of ancient political, national and linguistic structures. There was no longer a single powerful kingdom in Asia Minor,

capable of extending its power to the peoples of Syria and Israel. The northern arm of the outer circle had withered, too.

### 3) Assyria

The city of Asshur (the name of the place today is Kala'at Sherkat<sup>74</sup>) was located on the west bank of the Tigris River. The territory of Assyria, in the Tigris Valley, was a small place, lacking clear geographical boundaries. Perhaps it was for this reason that the entire history of Assyria was characterized by the sword. Her small home territory robbed her of security and tranquility. Her choice was to attack and live, or to be still and fall. In this respect her situation and her destiny are somewhat comparable to those of Rome. In both Rome and Assyria the place of origin was a small city and territory. In both cases, ((32)) they expanded, as a result of continual and strenuous fighting, and as a result of a natural talent for empire-building: outstanding military abilities and a strong desire for conquest, traits which come bound together in a person's nature. In both cases the principal city was surrounded by a variety of hostile national elements -- some close to her in language and tradition, and therefore easy to assimilate into one nation; and others foreign to her and therefore hard to absorb.

The difference between Rome and Assyria is that most of the local Italian tribes -- the Umbrians,<sup>75</sup> the Samnites,<sup>76</sup>

the Sabines,<sup>77</sup> the Sabellians<sup>78</sup> and others -- were close to the Latins in language and race, which made the process of amalgamation easier. During this process, the foreign minorities were also absorbed into the Latin-Italian mixture: Celts, Ligurians, Tursci<sup>79</sup> (Etruscans). Another factor which assisted the amalgamation of the Italian peoples, is that no other strong political and cultural center arose on the Latins' peninsula -- from among the elements related to them -- which could compete with them. The two centers which did compete culturally with Rome -- that of the Tursci in Tuscany, and that of the Greeks in southern Italy and in Sicily -- were foreign transplants in the land, who in the course of time gave way to the local elements and were assimilated by them.

Unified Italy was used as a solid, broadened base for the Roman kingdom, by virtue of which Rome was able to foist its rule upon all the Mediterranean nations. But this unification [of Italy] did not serve to prolong the days of the Roman-Latin nation. After a while, a new mixture of Italian dialects, and an amalgam of foreign languages from all corners of the empire, and of vulgar dialects, encroached upon the "classical" Latin tongue, and laid the groundwork for the Italian language and the Italian nation, which was to inherit the place of the Roman on the Appenine peninsula.

Assyria's situation and her course were different. At the beginning of the third millenium, the Sumerians lived in her territory, or at least ruled over it. In the course

of time, a Semitic Assyrian element increased in the district of Assyria, and predominated over the Sumerian element. These Assyrians had, no doubt, come from Akkad. From the beginning of Semitic Assyria until the end of her days -- notwithstanding all the changes wrought upon her by time and history -- her language was fundamentally Akkadian. But west-Semitic influences can also be seen in it.

In her height of cultural attainment, Assyria did not match up to Akkad, her progenitor; nor later to Babylonia, the heir to Akkad. She was, therefore, unable to unify all the national elements close to her in language and origin, as Rome had unified all the Italian peoples. And Babylonia, for her part, was unable to unite all the peoples of the Two Rivers because of Assyria, who struggled with her over the hegemony in Mesopotamia, and who was generally stronger than she from a military standpoint.

Another factor which determined Assyria's history was the proximity of large, strong peoples whose cultural and sometimes even military strength was not inferior to her own: Sumerians, Gutians, Elamites, and especially Hurrians; and in the second millennium B.C.-- Cushites (the Kossaiol of the Greeks), and Hittites, and Urartu and Aryan peoples, who poured in from the north.

From the east and southeast, certain west-Semitic peoples, who spoke ancient Hebrew dialects, encroached upon Assyria -- and were encroached upon by her. ((33)) The Akkadians used to call these west-Semites a single, inclusive name:

Amuru (Amorites, i.e., "westerners"). But when the need arose, they could specify each people or tribe by its own name; and thus the names of those west-Semitic peoples who were included in the general term, "Amorites," have come down to us: Seth, Eber, Elam (a son of Shem -- Ahlamu<sup>80</sup> in cuneiform; Aammu<sup>81</sup> in Egyptian hieroglyphics), Suhu,<sup>80</sup> Jair<sup>82</sup> (Iairi,<sup>82</sup> Iauru<sup>82</sup> in Assyrian sources), etc.

Seth (Shutu<sup>83</sup> or Sutu<sup>84</sup> in cuneiform; Setjet,<sup>85</sup> and Setju<sup>86</sup> in the plural, in Egyptian) was one of the most ancient and long-lived of these peoples. They are mentioned in both Egyptian and cuneiform sources from the beginning of the third millenium B.C. until the end of the second. During the third millenium and at the beginning of the second, a kingdom named Mari existed in the central area of the Euphrates valley. In the opinion of Emil Forrer,<sup>87</sup> the residents of this state were Sethites. During the first half of the third millenium, the Mari kings conquered the land of Babylonia, and ruled over it until the days of Sargon the Akkadian, who conquered all the lands from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea, Mari among them. A Sethite kingdom continued to exist along the Euphrates River. Kadashman-Kharbe<sup>88</sup> the king of Babylonia (beginning of the second half of the fifteenth century) smote the Sethites, by his account "from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof," and destroyed them completely -- language which brings to mind the boast of the Pharoah Merneptah: "The seed of Israel have I utterly destroyed." During the

reign of Adad-apal-iddin<sup>89</sup> (the first half of the eleventh century), Sethites pillaged the lands of Akkad and Sumer.

In the middle of the third millenium, approximately, Sargon of Akkad broke the power of the Mari and arrived as far as Cappadocia in his conquests. In his time, Assyria was part of the Akkadian empire. The rule of Akkad's kings over Assyria lasted about 150 years. It is apparently from the time of this dynasty, that we receive the oldest mention of Assyria by name. During the second half of the same [i.e., third] millenium, the Gutian nation (there is a theory that the Gutians were among the Hurrian peoples), south of Assyria, grew strong enough to establish its rule over Assyria and Akkad. During the last quarter of the third millenium, the Sumerians, rulers of Ur, took the place of the Gutians in the southern Two-Rivers region. They maintained their rule of Assyria for some time; but although the rulers were Sumerians, the inscriptions found in Assyria from that period are written in Akkadian.

Assyria's principal element had already been Semitic, and, it seems, basically Akkadian, for several generations, perhaps from the beginning of the third millenium. Understandably, this is not proven by the Akkadian inscriptions of the Sumerian rulers; the latter had already come under the influence of Akkadian language and culture, so that even in Ur, their capital, they were carving their inscriptions in Akkadian. The convincing proof comes from the fact that by the end of that millenium, kings ruled in Assyria whose

names were plainly Semitic; and from that time until the end of the Assyrian state's existence (in 606 B.C.) -- and even for several generations afterwards -- the language of the surviving Assyrians was an Akkadian dialect.<sup>89a</sup>

((34)) By the end of the third millenium, or the beginning of the second, Assyria was already independent, and the names of her kings were, as stated, Semitic. In a short time, she attained amazing military strength, and expanded her field of conquest on all sides, so that her kings could glorify themselves with such descriptions as, "King of the Four Winds of Heaven," or "King of the Universe."

During the first centuries of the second millenium, the lands of the Euphrates and Tigris were inundated by west-Semitic tribes, speaking Hebrew dialects. As stated, the Akkadians called them Amorites. Thus, too, were they called by other nations among those who had adopted the Akkadians' cuneiform style of writing, and together with it, to a certain extent, the Akkadian language for the purpose of writing -- since their own languages were not yet ready to serve as vehicles of written expression.

At that time Amorite ruling dynasties arose in Babylonia and Assyria, and in most of the lands of the Two Rivers. The first Amorite king of Assyria, Shamshi-Adad,<sup>90</sup> renewed and enlarged her aggressive power. After the death of the latter's son, Assyria fell briefly into the power of the famous Amorite king of Babylonia, Hammurabi. Hammurabi's kingdom did not last long; his successors were unable to

maintain its extended boundaries. Assyria got back its independence, but not its strength; while Shubartu,<sup>91</sup> a neighboring Hurrian kingdom, became strong and aggressive.

At that time, a migration of Aryan peoples from the north southward and eastward, grew to tremendous proportions. Hordes of Aryans burst into the Middle East. Some of them invaded Asia Minor; most of them inundated Iran -- some travelling to India, and others encroaching upon the peoples of Zagros and being drawn with them into Syria and the land of Israel. Because of these upheavals, many Hamite peoples, from across the Tigris and from Asia Minor, moved, and spilled into the lands of the "Fertile Crescent." This is the movement known in the history books as "Hyksos." The Bible specifies by name four of these peoples: Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan.<sup>92</sup> The Cushites (Kossaiot), a people from Zagros, conquered Babylonia in the middle of the 18th century, and ruled there almost 600 years. To be sure, in the course of time they became assimilated with the Akkadians, and during the last generations they even exchanged their names for Babylonian ones. The Egyptians [Hebrew: מִצְרַיִם] (some of whom settled north of Assyria, and were known in Assyrian inscriptions as Musri<sup>93</sup>) apparently stood at the head of those who conquered the land of the Nile; from that time on, Kēmet was known by their name, both in Hebrew and in the languages of all the eastern nations; and even today in the language of its Arabic-speaking inhabitants. The Putim (Pd.t<sup>93a</sup> of the Egyptians;



Pisidians of the Greeks), a well-known people from Asia Minor, left no impression at all in the Biblical tradition. Apparently they did not appropriate a place of their own in the "Fertile Crescent" region, but were absorbed by other peoples. The Canaanites settled on the Phoenician coast and in sections of the land of Israel. During the second half of the second millenium the land was sometimes -- in Egyptian and cuneiform inscriptions -- named after them. In the Bible, in traditions from the days of the Israelite settlement, the land is named after the "seven foreign nations" who had survived there from the Hyksos period, Canaan being one of them. In the course of time, these nations were lost: almost certainly, some of them were swallowed up by the Hebrews, and some of them looked for support against the Hebrews from the Canaanites. Indeed, ((35)) in the Bible they -- and among them also the "Amorite" mixture (Hurrians sprinkled with Semites) are already called "sons of Canaan."

Hurrians played a large part in the Hyksos migration. During the Amarna period (the end of the 15th and beginning of the 14th centuries), most of the identifiable names in the land of Israel are Hurrian. But by the time of the establishment of the kingdom in Israel (the last quarter of the 11th century), they had already been absorbed -- partly by the Hamite peoples who came to Israel with the Hyksos wave; partly by the Sea Peoples, who arrived with the Philistines; partly by the Hebrew tribes. In Israel's traditions, only a small trace of them remains in their

original name. They were generally known at that time in the land of Israel as Amorites, and only in the corner of the Negev, where they had assimilated with the Edomites, were they known as Hurrians.

Ups and downs are the fate of every people, just as of every individual, but the Assyrians experienced both exaggerated ascents and exaggerated declines. The middle centuries of the second millenium were a period of weakness for Assyria, and of bitter struggle with her Hurrian neighbors -- first with Shubartu, and then with its follower and successor, Mitanni, a mighty kingdom in its day (15th-14th centuries). For a while, the Hurrians had the upper hand. But Assyria kept a measure of independence throughout that period, so that it is reasonable to say that a single dynasty ruled over her throughout her existence, from the 17th or 16th to the 7th centuries, more than a thousand years -- a unique phenomenon in the history of nations. Perhaps only the Japanese dynasty can compete with the Assyrian in longevity; although most of the time the kings of Japan were only figureheads, and in actual fact other officials, the shoguns, were the rulers. The royal chronicles of Assyria enumerate 63 kings occupying the throne of Assyria in succession, all of them, except for four doubtful ones, members of the same ruling family. This continuity stood Assyria in very good stead whether she was on the defensive or the offensive.

The rise of the powerful Hittite kingdom in Asia

Minor (in the 14th century) benefitted Assyria. During the reign of King Tushratta<sup>94</sup> (first half of the 14th century), the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni reached the height of its greatness. Assyria was subordinate to it, and in eastern Asia Minor Tushratta foisted his rule upon Cilicia and further northward as far as Pontus. The Mitanni expansion resulted in a clash with the Hittite kingdom which was then on the road to conquest and the establishment of a far-flung empire. The details of this clash, which apparently occurred after Tushratta's death, are not known. The results show Mitanni losing part of her possessions in eastern Asia [Minor]. At the same time, a powerful king, aspiring to battle and conquest, ascended the throne of Assyria: Ashur-uballit I<sup>95</sup> (ca.1362-1337). He did not miss the opportunity afforded by Mitanni's weakness -- after Tushratta's death and their retreat before the Hittites -- and he struck, in league with Alshe<sup>96</sup> (or Alzi<sup>96</sup>), a kingdom on Mitanni's northern border. Mitanni was beaten, and divided between Assyria and Alshe. Suppiluliumas, the renewer of the Hittite empire (ca.1380-1350), sent an army to Mitanni and installed a king of his own there; but after a few years Ashur-uballit returned and conquered it again. Thus began a struggle between the two kingdoms over ((36)) the land of the Hurrians which lasted about a hundred years, from the middle of the 14th to the middle of the 13th centuries; and finally Assyria prevailed over Heth. During the second half of the thirteenth century, the Hittite kingdom's power in Asia

Minor grew ever weaker; perhaps it was the inadequacies of her kings which opened the door to uprisings and rebellions. At the beginning of the 12th century, the end was brought on, as we already know, by the Sea Peoples. They wreaked destruction also in the Hittite states of northern Syria (Carchemish, Halab, Hamath), and thus prepared the ground for the Aramean conquests in Syria during the 11th century.

The Hittite kingdom in Asia Minor had served as a shield against the barbaric Aryan peoples who were raging in the Balkans and in the steppes of southern Russia. With the Hittite collapse, many peoples from the north began to pour, or to be swept, into the lands of the Middle East. Meshech and Tubal and Gomer and Ashkenaz (Scythians) inherited the eastern portion of Asia Minor; Carians<sup>97</sup> and Lydians and other -- its western part; Phrygians its north central part. From the latter came the Armenians, who settled on the border of the Caucasus. Not all the prominent peoples in southeastern Asia Minor and the northern Two Rivers region were new there; some, like Urartu, Togarmah,<sup>98</sup> Gog (Gagaia,<sup>99</sup> Gasga,<sup>100</sup> Kash,<sup>100</sup> Kashkai<sup>101</sup>) and others, had been known since the previous millenium. During the 12th century a Hurrian kingdom was also renewed east of Assyria: Kummukh (Commagene<sup>102</sup>), which for a while posed a threat to Assyria. During the second half of the 12th century, during the reign of Ashur-rēsh-ishi I<sup>103</sup> (1151-1117), Assyria regained her strength. However, because of Ashur-rēsh-ishi's war with Nebuchadnezzar I, the king of

Babylonia (1150-1126), he was unable to devote much attention to the east. His son, Tiglath-pileser I (1117-1080), fought great battles in those parts. In the first year of his reign, the Meshechites (Meshech -- Mushki<sup>104</sup> to the Assyrians) invaded the Hurrian kingdom of Kummukh, Assyria's neighbor, and destroyed it. Immediately, Tiglath-Pileser went out against them, smote them hip and thigh, and conquered Kummukh and other lands west of it. The following year he was victorious against the Shubarites<sup>102</sup> (Hurrians) in their own land and also defeated the Gogites (Gasga, Gagai of the Amarna letters), the people of Urum<sup>102</sup> (in the vicinity of Lake Urmia?) and many other peoples. He subjected the kings of Armenia, and conquered Azerbaijan<sup>105</sup> as far as the Caspian Sea. After all these attainments, he was justified in designating himself, as had some of the greatest conquerors among his ancestors: "King of the Four Winds of Heaven."

However, in the fourth year of his reign, a new enemy rose against him: armies of Arameans began to burst out of the Syrian-Arabian desert, crossing the Euphrates River around the mouth of the Habor River<sup>106</sup> and encroaching upon the Assyrians. Tiglath-Pileser fought against them in the steppes of the land of Sukhi<sup>107</sup> and pursued them northward as far as Carchemish. But this was just the beginning. Hordes of Arameans pressed in upon the lands of the Euphrates and the Tigris, in a mighty flood, along a wide front -- from Babylonia all the way to Syria. Tiglath-Pileser fought against them from the central Euphrates region southward

to the Babylonian border. Until the end of his life, twenty-seven years later, he would wage war against them every year (in a certain year, he went twice) in an effort to repulse them. In the meantime, he also found time for conquest in the lands of the western "Fertile Crescent": he defeated a Hittite kingdom in northern Syria, the kingdom of the Amorites ((37)) in central Syria, and received tribute from the Phoenician cities along the coast -- Arvad,<sup>108</sup> Gebal, Šumur,<sup>109</sup> Sidon, Tyre and others. After he had penetrated southeastward, into the land of the Sukhū,<sup>110</sup> he engaged in battle and prevailed against Karduniash<sup>111</sup> (the name of the Babylonian kingdom of the Cushites<sup>112</sup>). But in the end he made peace with her king. Perhaps his acquiescence was caused by the pressure of the Aramean tide, which was growing ever more mighty. The same factor brought Ashur-bēl-kala,<sup>113</sup> Tiglath-pileser's second son (1077-1060) and Marduk-shapik-zer-māti,<sup>113</sup> the king of Babylonia (second quarter of the 11th century), into a covenant of mutual defense. During the reign of Ashur-bēl-kala, most of the force of the Aramean flood was directed southward, toward Babylonia. This was apparently the result of the internal strength and spirit of the Assyrians. The Arameans caused an upheaval in Babylonia: Marduk-shapik-zer-māti was defeated, and an Aramean ruler named Adad-apal-iddin<sup>113</sup> (Adadaplaiddin<sup>114</sup>) ascended the throne.

After they conquered the Babylonian throne, the

Arameans expanded into the steppes of Sukhi (on the Euphrates River), and by the reign of Ashur-nasir-pal<sup>115</sup> (1047-1029), they had already overrun the entire territory between Babylonia and the region of Assyria. During the reign of Shalmaneser II<sup>115</sup> (1028-1117<sup>116</sup>), Ashur-nasir-pal's son, the Arameans came close to Asshur, the capital; this was the reason, according to Forrer, which impelled the Assyrian kings to move their capital northward to Nineveh (at the end of the 11th century). At the same time, the chief Assyrian god, Adad, lost stature with his people, upon the exposure of his impotence and his inability to save his people; his cult began to lose ground to the cult of Ishtar.

Assyria shrank greatly in size, and her power waned. She no longer had any defense against the Aramean waves, which moved northward, crossed the Tigris River, and seized the lands east of Assyria (the region). In Shubartu, which since time immemorial, indeed for millenia, had been a Hurrian state, arose an Aramean kingdom which was given the ancient name of the land: Hanigalbat.<sup>117</sup>

Another Aramean branch made its way northwestward of the Euphrates River, and at the end of the 11th century came to the Sagur River<sup>118</sup> and captured the city of Pethor<sup>118</sup> (Balaam's city, Pitru<sup>119</sup> in Assyrian; located about 18 kilometers southwest of Carchemish), which was then the capital of a Hittite kingdom. Concerning the time of Ashur-rabi II (1010-981), a contemporary of King David's, Forrer writes the following: after Pethor, the Arameans conquered

Mutkinu,<sup>120</sup> the Assyrian fortress opposite it. From then on, Assyria could no longer restrain their advance. No doubt, the Assyrians<sup>121</sup> were at times repelled during the ceaseless battles; but isolated military victories were of no avail against the constantly more overpowering Aramean flood. After Ashur-rabi II, the kings of Assyria were Ashur-resh-ishi II<sup>122</sup> (980-966) and Tukultiapilesharra<sup>123</sup> (Tiglath-pileser II, 965-933). These years [980-933] correspond to the end of David's reign and the entire reign of Solomon. By the end of Tiglath-Pileser's reign, Assyria had been thrown back to her place of origin, that small territory which was her original home: her boundaries during the first half of the 14th century, before she had gained her freedom from Mitanni.

The arm of Assyria was cut off; her sword, which had been stretched over all the surrounding lands, was broken. Now a new evil was feverishly making ready to descend upon the peoples on the shore of the Western [Mediterranean] Sea, an evil perhaps greater than that of Assyria -- namely, the danger of being drowned in the Aramean flood.

((38))

#### 4) Babylonia

When Babylonia begins to emerge from the shadows of the distant past, she, like Assyria, is at first a Sumerian city. Her name is Ka-dingira,<sup>124</sup> "the god's gateway." When her Semitic element prevailed, her Sumerian name was translated to Akkadian: Bab-ilu [𒂍𒅗𒄠]. In Hebrew, the name was, as



usual, shortened: the  $\kappa$  fell, and the form Bavel [בָּבֶל] was born. Thus were the Akkadian-Assyrian names of the kings of the Two-Rivers lands shortened in Hebrew: Šarru-ukin<sup>125</sup> -- Sargon; Šulmānu-ašarid<sup>126</sup> -- Shalmaneser; Tukultiapilesharra -- Tiglath-pileser. According to the present state of our information, Babylonia was first mentioned by its Semitic name in an inscription of Shargalisharri,<sup>127</sup> an Akkadian king of Sargon's dynasty (24th century), who ruled after Naram-Sin.<sup>127</sup>

The dynasty established by Sargon of Akkad (ca. the middle of the third millenium B.C.) lasted less than two hundred years. During the 23rd century, the power of the Sumerians returned and prevailed in the southern Two-Rivers region.\*

The kings of Ur conquered the land of Akkad and put an end to Sargon's dynasty. They installed Sumerian governors in Babylonia. In the artificial sequence of "dynasties" which ruled in Babylonia (a sequence created by historians for convenience's sake), this is reckoned as Ur's third dynasty, and is known for short as "Ur III." During the 21st century the Sumerian kingdom began to collapse under the pressure of new Semitic tribes, who were bursting in from west of the Euphrates River. Elam (of the east), too, was the natural and perpetual adversary of Babylonia and

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\*The name Two-Rivers [שְׁנֵי נָהָרִים], like its Greek translation, "Mesopotamia," refers here not to the small region around the upper Euphrates River, between it and the River Balikh, but rather to the entire area between the two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the land of Babylonia in general.

of any other expansionist neighboring state; and so Elam did not miss the opportunity to pounce upon the tottering kingdom. However, Elam's attack was only a passing thing, for the "Amorites," i.e., the western Semites, were still to spread southward and northward, and in a short while to establish their rule over most of the nations of the Two-Rivers region.

Amorite dynasties arose everywhere. In Babylonia an "Amorite" dynasty arose, apparently, during the second half of the 21st century, and continued in existence for about three hundred years. The name of its founder is written, cuneiform-style, Sumu-abī,<sup>128</sup> i.e.,  $\sum_{10}^{10} \text{ab} \text{ē}$  (cf. Ahab  $\left[ \sum_{10}^{10} \text{ab} \text{ē} \right]$ ; Shemeber  $\left[ \sum_{10}^{10} \text{ab} \text{ē} \right]$ <sup>129</sup>). In Assyria, too, a west-Semitic king ruled at that time, by the name of Ilushuma<sup>130</sup> ( $\text{il} \text{u} \text{shu} \text{ma}$ ; cf. Samuel  $\left[ \text{il} \text{u} \text{shu} \text{ma} \right]$ ). Sumu-abī's successor, Sumula-ilu<sup>128</sup> ( $\sum_{10}^{10} \text{ul} \text{a} \text{il} \text{u}$ ), extended the boundaries of his kingdom. The widely hailed Hammurabi, sixth king of the "Amorite" dynasty, prevailed over Babylonia's neighbor-states, her ancient adversaries: he humbled Mari on the one hand and Assyria and Nineveh on the other, and he subjected several states in the north and the south to his dominion. The western-Semitic wilderness tribes quickly adopted the culture of the Akkadians, as well as their language (at least as a written language), just as the Germanic tribes fleeing from the Huns, from the shores of the Black Sea westward (the East Goths and the Lombards to Italy, and the West Goths to the Iberian peninsula) would in their day adopt the Latin language. The famous

law-book by Hammurabi, the "Amorite" king, is written in perfectly good Akkadian.

((39)) The storming of non-Semitic peoples from the north and east into the lands of the "Fertile Crescent" (in a movement known as "Hyksos"), undermined and toppled the political structures which had formerly existed in those lands. In the midst of this confusion, Hittites from Asia Minor (under Murshilish I<sup>131</sup>) burst into the lands of the Two Rivers, and reached Babylonia, which they pillaged and destroyed. Thus came the end of her west-Semitic dynasty. This destruction made Babylonia easy prey for the Cushites (𒌷𒍪𒌆; the Kossaioi of the Greeks; Nimrod the son of Cush in the Bible<sup>132</sup>), mountain-dwelling (non-Semitic) tribes from Zagros, who had been stalking Babylonia's border for several generations. Thus was a Cushite kingdom established in Babylonia, which was afterwards to be known as Karduniash<sup>133</sup> and which existed until the second quarter of the 12th century.

These mountain-dwelling tribes from Zagros, like the west-Semitic desert tribes in their day, were culturally impoverished upon their arrival in Babylonia, and still far from literate. Such inscriptions of their kings as have been discovered, are all written in Akkadian or even Sumerian -- which indicates that they were written by Akkadian copyists. The founder of the Cushite empire appropriated all the boastful descriptions used by the great Akkadian and Babylonian kings: "King of the Four Corners of the Earth, King of

Sumer and Akkad, King of Babylonia." But generally speaking, Babylonia was on the decline during the rule of the Cushites. To be sure, the earlier Cushite kings expanded the country northward; but these conquests led to conflicts with Assyria. On their other flank, in the south, they had to struggle with the tribes of the Persian Gulf.

The Cushite kingdom got stronger during the fifteenth century, and sought a place for itself among the "great powers," such as Egypt and Heth. It wasn't very long before Assyria, too, gained new strength. Burna-Buriash II,<sup>134</sup> the king of Karduniash (1369-1345), asked Pharoah Ikhnaton (Amen-hotep IV) not to trade with Assyria, because the Assyrians were his [Burna-Buriash's] subjects, according to his account. But in Pharoah's court they saw Assyria's growing strength -- and the lack of substance in the king of Babylonia's words -- and they paid no heed to the latter's demand. In the struggle over the hegemony of the Two-Rivers lands, which developed between Karduniash and Assyria during the second half of the 14th century, alternately battles were fought, and agreements of peace and friendship made. After about a hundred years had passed, a warrior-king came to the throne of Assyria, who lusted after conquests: Tukulti-Ninurta I.<sup>135</sup> He attacked and defeated the kings of Urartu, north of Assyria; and in the south, he captured Babylonia, and brought the lands of Akkad and Sumer into subjection. He also conquered the shore of the Persian Gulf, and the island of Bahrain,<sup>136</sup> and the nearby Arabian coast. For some

time Babylonia was subject to Assyrian rule; but during the last quarter of the 13th century, she regained her independence. No doubt she exploited the internal confusion and wars which broke out in Assyria following Tukulti-Ninurta's murder at the hands of his son, Ashur-nadin-apli.<sup>137</sup>

After about a generation, war flared up once again between the two rival states; and the Babylonians suffered defeat. Kutirnakhhunte II,<sup>138</sup> the king of Elam, did not waste the opportunity: he immediately came rolling into the collapsing Cushite kingdom, looting and destroying the city of Babylon and the entire land. In this war, the last Cushite king, Enlil-nadin-akhe,<sup>138</sup> fell, and the rule of Cush in Babylonia came to an end (the beginning of the second quarter of the 12th century).

Marduk-shapik-zeri<sup>139</sup> (1170-1153), from the city of Isin,<sup>139</sup> renewed Babylon and her kingdom. ((40)) The days of this dynasty were a period of renewed flourishing and recovery of strength for Babylonia. The struggle between her and Assyria continued. The third king of this dynasty, Nebuchadnezzar I (1146-1123), largely restored Babylonia's military power. It is true that his attacks on Assyria were not favored with success; but west of the Euphrates River, he expanded his boundaries as far as the southern anti-Lebanon; and in the east, he smote the Cushites (Kassites), and delivered the Elamites a resounding defeat.

For a while, Babylonia enjoyed the upper hand even in her struggle with Assyria. But her last military success

brought disaster upon her. Marduk-nadin-akhe<sup>140</sup>, the king of Babylonia (1116-1101), captured the Assyrian city of Ekallati<sup>141</sup> and took the idols of the god Adad<sup>142</sup> and the goddess Shala<sup>142</sup> from their temple there, bringing them back to Babylon as concrete testimony to his victory. Assyria's response was not long in coming. Tiglath-pileser I (1117-1080), a strong king who had been victorious in all his undertakings, found time to turn southward, even though he was busy most of his life repelling the Aramean armies who were incessantly breaking through his western boundary. In 1100, he smote the Babylonians in two separate engagements. They were routed completely. In the second battle, the last king of the Isin dynasty fell. Tiglath-pileser conquered the great cities of Babylonia, and when he captured the capital, he burned its palaces. We may suppose that pressure by the Arameans then forced him to rush off to another weak spot in his kingdom whose borders were so long -- and after he left, an Aramean named Itti-marduk-balatu<sup>143</sup> ascended the vacant throne of Babylonia. That dynasty lasted about sixty years.

During the second half of the 11th century, Babylonia was in a state of chaos and revolution -- on account of being flooded by Aramean tribes -- and her rulers kept changing at short intervals. In 1016 -- during the reign of King Saul -- the Babylonian kingdom was conquered by a certain man "from the House of Bazi"<sup>144</sup> -- apparently, from the Aramean tribe of Buz (Buz the son of Nahor, Gen.22:21;

"Dedan, and Tema, and Buz," Jer.25:23; "Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite," Job 32:2). His dominion was also short-lived, and after his death (in 997) Babylonia fell into chaos for about sixteen more years, until a stable dynasty finally arose (in 990<sup>145</sup>) and began slowly to bind up the wounds of the demolished state. This dynasty was long-lived (990-732), but Babylonia did not again become strong and influential as a power in the international arena -- not during the days of this dynasty, nor for a long while afterwards, until nearly the end of the First Temple period. The reasons [for Babylonia's continued impotence] were-- first, the waves of Arameans who were very forcefully overflowing into her land and into most of the Euphrates and Tigris lands; and secondly, Assyria, who had overcome defeat by the Arameans and had once again become an aggressive power, destroying lands and subduing many nations under her rule, among them Babylonia and all the peoples of Sumer and Akkad and Elam.

During the days of Saul and David and Solomon, and for many generations thereafter -- until Nebuchadnezzar II, the Chaldean -- Babylonia's hand was too short to do any harm in Israel.

((41))

D) Eber

We don't know whether the Sumerians -- a non-Semitic people, whose place of origin is not yet clear -- preceded the east-Semites, speakers of Akkadian dialects, into the

southern Two-Rivers region; or whether they penetrated into the land south of Babylonia after the Akkadians, and then became rooted there, and developed a culture of their own. At the dawn of history in that region, these two peoples are found there beside each other, with the Sumerians enjoying a discernible cultural ascendancy over the Akkadians. In any case, the Akkadians received their knowledge of writing -- a syllabic cuneiform -- from the Sumerians; and the Hurrians and the Cushites and the Hittites in Asia Minor and in Syria received it from the Akkadians. All the nations of the Middle East, even the Egyptians, used this cuneiform writing (in the Akkadian language, incidentally) in international commerce; and they preserved it, with its Sumerian roots, throughout the second millennium -- until alphabetic writing, a creation of west-Semites of the Hebrew-speaking family, prevailed and began to replace syllabic writing.

In the Two-Rivers lands and their vicinity, during the third millennium, lived various peoples aside from the Akkadians and Sumerians: eastern Elamites (non-Semites); tribes of the Persian Gulf; Hurrians; Gutians (perhaps belonging to the family of Hurrian nations); and other Zagros peoples. At that time, elements of the first -- i.e., Hebrew -- stratum of the west-Semites had already begun to be visible. On the banks of the Euphrates River, north of Babylonia, was established the kingdom of Mari, whose residents were west-Semites of that stratum -- and some think [that they belonged to the] Sethites. At the end of the



29th century this kingdom grew stronger, and foisted its rule upon a great part of southern Mesopotamia.<sup>146</sup> Her expanded kingdom apparently continued in existence until Sargon of Akkad rose against it, and broke its might.

The Akkadians, and all the people who used cuneiform after them, received it exactly as it had come from the Sumerians, and they did not succeed in adapting it to the needs of their own languages. The results are particularly prominent in the Semitic languages. The Sumerians, of course, had no signs to express the guttural sounds, which are peculiar to the Semitic languages --  $\text{ħ}$  or  $\text{ʕ}$ ,  $\text{h}$  and even  $\text{ʔ}$  -- and when they found it necessary to transliterate a west-Semitic, i.e., Hebrew, word or name which expressly included such sounds, they would write a palatal " $\text{h}$ " or the sign for "a" in place of guttural  $\text{ħ}$  or  $\text{ʕ}$  : thus, the Hebrew word  $\text{שָׁחַט}$  ["to slaughter"]<sup>147</sup> becomes "shahatu";  $\text{נַהַרִּינָא}$  [i.e., Mesopotamia] becomes "Naharina" or "Naarina"; etc. Similarly, they would transliterate  $\text{ħ}$  and  $\text{ʕ}$  with " $\text{ʔ}$ " or " $\text{h}$ " or " $\text{h}$ ." Thus,  $\text{בֵּית־עֵדֵן}$  [Beth Eden] becomes "Beit 'Adini"; eastern  $\text{עֵלָם}$  [Elam] becomes "'Elamtu";  $\text{עֲנַב}$  [Anab] becomes "'Enbu" or "Hanibu";  $\text{כְּנַעַן}$  [Canaan] becomes "Kinahi" or "Kinahna." Examples of transliteration for guttural  $\text{ħ}$ :  $\text{אַזַּתִּי}$  [Gaza] becomes "'Azati" or "Hazati";  $\text{אַוּרָא}$  ["to wrap"]<sup>147</sup> becomes "'etu," etc. We see defects such as these, and others, in the transliteration of Hebrew names to Greek (and from Greek to all the European languages):  $\text{ħ}$  is transliterated by "a";  $\text{ʕ}$  by "a" or "g";  $\text{ʔ}$  by "s." Defects and corruptions are a

natural occurrence in transliterations from one language to another. Therefore do we find that the early Hebrew names which occur in cuneiform documents ((42)) are defective and odd-looking. However, if we take into account the changes that they have undergone as a result of transliteration into cuneiform, we will not find it hard, in many cases, to trace them to their source. In this way did I manage to discover\* that the Ahlamu<sup>148</sup> [𐎶𐎵𐎠] of Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions is Elam, the first-born of Shem, one of the most ancient peoples of the Hebrew-speaking stratum in the land of Israel and Syria; called Aammu<sup>149</sup> [𐎶𐎠𐎶] in Egyptian inscriptions. The Egyptian language had no "l"; in the New Kingdom, the Semitic ʿ was usually transliterated by "r." However, in the Old and Middle Kingdoms (third millenium and first quarter of the second millenium), they would occasionally transliterate the Semitic ʿ and ʔ by "a." This was true, no doubt, in the case of Elam the son of Shem : in the Egyptian sources from that period, the name is written Aammu [𐎶𐎠𐎶]. There are some antiquity scholars who try to read in the word Aammu the letters ʔ ʔ ʕ -- i.e. Arabs [ʔ ʔ ʕ]; but this is merely a typical instance of their wishful thinking. Every known fact refutes this reasoning: firstly, there is no mention of Arabs in the settled lands until 1000-1500 years after the period we are discussing; secondly, all Semitic names -- whether of places or of people -- in the

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\* Shem, Ham and Japheth, pp.19ff.

land of Israel and Syria during the third and second millenia, no matter what their archaic or dialectical forms, are explicitly Hebrew.

The oldest of the west-Semitic peoples mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions is Setet<sup>150</sup> (sometimes written with "tj" -- Setjet<sup>150</sup>); in the Bible: Seth. The earliest information thus far discovered about them comes from the time of Pharoah Atoti<sup>151</sup> the second king of the First Dynasty of Egypt's Old Kingdom (ca. 33rd century). This king "smote Setet." Also the third king, Ata<sup>151</sup> (Aza or Asa) defeated Setju. From this evidence, it is clear enough that the Sethites were settled east of Egypt, in the land of Israel and its vicinity, in the fourth millenium B.C., and there is no way of knowing for how many centuries or millenia earlier than that -- not necessarily just from the time of Atoti. And three decisive changes, which came over Egypt during the last third of the fourth millenium, are apparently responsible for Seth's name being found after the fourth millenium. (1) The scattered settlements of the Nile Valley united under powerful rulers, and became parts of a single large and aggressive kingdom. (2) This kingdom sought to expand and to gain control of the neighboring lands, and thus collided in the east with the residents of Israel and its adjacent territories, west-Semitic peoples. (3) Writing: the science of writing -- hieroglyphic symbol-writing -- had been born in Egypt.

After Setet-Seth, these other names come up in Egyptian

documents: Mentu<sup>152</sup> (sometimes "Mentju," written with "tj"), which is apparently Midian (the transliteration of the Hebrew מִדְיָן by "t" is common in Egyptian, and on occasion it was transliterated by "tj"; and the assimilation of the j by the following letter is also common in Hebrew: מִדְיָן in other languages becomes מִדְיָן in Hebrew); Fenkhu<sup>153</sup> -- Phoenicians; Retenu -- perhaps Lud, the son of Shem. And beginning with the middle of the third millenium, the name Aammu -- Elam becomes ever more familiar.

In the Biblical tradition, Elam the firstborn of Shem is mentioned only in Gen.10:22 and in a parallel text in I Chron.1:17. ((43)) In other places, a different, non-Semitic, Elam is meant, a people situated east of Babylonia, whose capital was Susa; and after the return from Babylonia, a number of families named Elam are mentioned in Judea. Elam the son of Shem is not mentioned any further in the Bible. This is also the fate of the Sethites. In the Bible, Seth is the third son of Adam, and a second progenitor of mankind (after the downfall of Adam's first two sons), and only once is his name used to designate a people, alongside, or parallel to, Moab: "And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,/And shall smite through the corners of Moab,/And break down all the sons of Seth"(Nu.24:17). In this vision of Balaam are heard echoes of Israel's successful wars against their Trans-jordanian enemies.

A look at Israel's history provides us with an explanation for the disappearance of Seth and Elam from Israel's

historical recollection. At the very close of the second millenium, when the tribes of Israel were uniting to form a single nation dwelling in its land, the Elamites were no longer to be found in the land of Israel. Some of them must have amalgamated with Israel (perhaps the Elamite families mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah and in I Chronicles 8:24, and counted as part of Levi and Benjamin, stem from this source), and with the Hebrew peoples across the Jordan and in the Negev -- the Ammonites, Moab, Edom, and others. But the great majority wandered eastward -- during the first half of the second millenium, and possibly even earlier -- together with that great stream of west-Semites, "Amorites" in Akkadian, who were attracted<sup>154</sup> to the lands of the Euphrates and the Tigris. There, indeed, do we find mention of them (Ahlamu--Elam) in the period of ancient Babylonia; and after a long pause, in the Amarna period; and during the following centuries, in the documents of the Assyrian kings.

The Sethites, too, are mentioned a few times in the land of Israel during the third quarter of the second millenium -- in the Amarna letters, and subsequently in the monument by Pharoah Seti I (ca. 1300) which was found at Beth Shean. Probably these were the last vestiges of the Sethites in the land of Israel. During the final centuries of the second millenium, all trace of them there disappeared; like Elam and Midian and the "children of the east" and the other peoples of the early Hebrew stratum, they must have been assimilated by the tribes of Israel and the other late

Hebrew peoples. But in the eastern arm of the Fertile Crescent -- again like Elam (Ahlamu) -- Seth (Shutu, Sutu) is well-known all through the second millenium as being among the tribes of west-Semitic nomads, and its name was perpetuated in Assyrian documents until the middle of the second quarter of the first millenium B.C.

By the first stage of Israel's history, the period of the Judges, Elam and Seth were no longer real factors in the land of Israel or its immediate vicinity. They had been left behind in the shadows of a distant Semitic past, but they had no historical presence. Nor did the Israelites recognize their northern neighbors by their inclusive name (Fenkhu in Egyptian, Phoenikoi in Greek); or perhaps they saw no need to use that designation, just as they didn't use the inclusive term, Hebrews, in referring to the Hebrew peoples in Trans-jordan. Rather did they specify the residents of Lebanon and its coast by the name of their tribe or city: Sidonians, Tyreans, Gebalites, Zemarites, Arvadites, Arkites. One of the peoples of the ancient Hebrew stratum, mentioned in Egyptian sources from the fourth and third millenia, ((44)) is recognized by the Israelites very tangibly -- an an historical situation: namely, Midian, which is, in my opinion, the Mentu of the hieroglyphic inscriptions. The [southern] Midianite border during the last centuries of the second millenium, apparently ran from northern Hijaz<sup>16</sup> to the Gulf of Eilat; in the north and northwest, their border was formed by Sinai, Edom, and Moab. During the period of the Judges, the Midian-

ites, together with Amalek and the "children of the east," squeezed in upon the Israelite tribes, until they were decisively defeated in the Jezreel Valley by Gideon and his men.

The place of origin of the west-Semites of the first Hebrew stratum was probably the northwestern regions of the Arabian peninsula, including the land of Israel. From there, these nomads would, at opportune times and according to circumstances, spread ever further westward -- to the Nile Valley and even south of it; northward -- to Syria; and eastward -- to Mesopotamia. No one knows how many thousands of years these movements existed before our earliest historical information about them -- information which is sparse, fragmented, and in many instances vague. It seems that the eastward migration of west-Semitic tribes gained momentum during the fourth and third millennia; and some of them -- from among those whose names are specified in hieroglyphic documents, where they are known as the eastern neighbors of the Egyptians -- appear in third-millennium cuneiform sources in the neighborhood of Akkad. Above, I mentioned the west-Semitic kingdom of Mari, which was already in existence north of Babylonia, during the first centuries of the third millennium.

The entire first historical stratum of these west-Semitic peoples -- from northern Arabia to Cappadocia and from the Egyptian border to the Zagros mountains -- was Hebrew in its language, its customs, its memories, and its

tribal and geneological traditions. I call their language Hebrew, not because their many dialects were exactly identical with the language of the Bible; but rather because in spite of all the differences, they are still branches of a single language, one which has been known throughout the world, for thousands of years, by the name Hebrew. Likewise, the various dialects which now exist in Italy are branches of a single language, Italian; and the many Arabic dialects spoken in Arab lands no matter how different from each other, or how far away from each other, are still branches of a single language, Arabic. Similarly, we use the name land of Israel even when we refer to the period before the Israelites settled there, although the land was then known, e.g., in Egyptian, by other names. Thus, too, do we call the land of the Nile <sup>778</sup> (and in western languages, Egypt, etc.) even though its own residents called it Kemet.

In Akkadian and Sumerian sources, together with the west-Semitic peoples who wandered eastward during the third and second millenia, are also mentioned Hebrews (in Sumerian ideograms: Sa.Gaz,<sup>155</sup> and in Akkadian: Habiru.\*

((45)) In the army of Naram-Sin,<sup>156</sup> an Akkadian king from the dynasty of Sargon (second half of the 25th century), there was a company or garrison of Sa.Gaz men. The proper name Ha-bi-ra-m, the Akkadian transliteration of the name Eber [778], is also found from that time on. From then until

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\* The problem of Habiru--Eber is discussed in my book, Shem, Ham and Japheth; and in more detail in The Background of the Hebrews.



the end of the second millenium, the Hebrews are mentioned often throughout the lands of the Middle East-- in syllabic cuneiform (with the habits of the various languages which employed it, dictating certain changes in appearance [i.e., of the word Hebrews]); in alphabetic cuneiform (Ugaritic); and in Egyptian hieroglyphics.

In the places where their name is discovered, the Hebrews occupy all kinds of positions --from slaves and servants up to soldiers, charioteers, government officials, rulers in their own right, governors of fortresses<sup>157</sup> and states.

They are usually portrayed as mercenary brigades, or as nomads lying in wait at the side of the road for caravans, or encroaching upon settled lands. We cannot infer from these notices that they were only, or principally, mercenaries or highwaymen, or even just servants (from discoveries in the archives of a certain Hurrian family in the city of Nuzi,<sup>158</sup> near Kirkuk,<sup>159</sup> [we know that they were servants]). Certainly many mercenaries -- children of Eber, children of Seth, and other desert peoples -- served in the armies of the Mesopotamian kings. In all times and places, members of primitive tribes would gladly hire themselves out to armies of warlike rulers -- because of the pay, anticipation of booty, the splendor of the uniforms or the weapons, the opportunity to take advantage of defenseless men and to plunder them. So that those who did not break out of the desert way of life used to join raiding parties at every opportunity. But people

who think that they spent all their lives as robbers and soldiers are obviously mistaken. In normal times, nomads like these made a living by raising and selling cattle (as, for example, the Terahites), by fishing and hunting when they were in suitable places; and by inter-city or international transport of merchandise.

And those who did go beyond their tribal bounds, and settled in various populated lands, got involved in all kinds of work, in the cities and in the villages. However, kings and chroniclers generally had no interest in mentioning them. The inscriptions found by archaeological digs contain notices and data regarding the construction of large buildings; regarding wars and victories, men killed, captives and booty taken; regarding mercenary bands, Habiru among them, their chariots and the provisions needed to feed them. Otherwise, the Habiru, or members of any other tribe, are mentioned only by chance -- in work contracts, or private affairs, or incidental to some legal decision -- as being among the parties to the case; unless they happen to be involved in a very noteworthy occurrence.

In the same way, for example, we know nothing about the hordes of Normans who spread throughout all of Europe at the end of the first and beginning of the second millenia A.D., except the stories about their attacks, and their cruelty, and the destruction they wrought in the places they invaded. But most of them wound up settling in the lands they had conquered; and then, since they became

adjusted to the everyday way of life, we hear no further news about them.

The children of Eber followed the pattern of the children of Seth, the children of Yamin [Yamina]<sup>160</sup> Elam-Ahlamu, Jair-Iauru, and others. Some of them became integrated into the life of the lands where they were living, and were assimilated by the inhabitants of those lands. Others continued to live their tribal lives and to maintain their individual existence. The former course was followed by those in the eastern section of the Fertile Crescent, and the latter by those in its western section -- namely Syria and the land of Israel. In Egyptian inscriptions dating from the time of the Middle Kingdom ((46)) (the period of the Patriarchs), until the end of the second millenium, the element Eber is found frequently in names of kings and tribal princes in the land of Israel -- alone or in combination with names of other Semitic gods, such as Resheph, Hadad, Baal, etc. And starting with the second half of the second millenium B.C., the Hebrews are recorded in these inscriptions as members of a certain people or tribe. These references subsequently become more numerous, until by the Amarna period (end of the 15th and first half of the 14th centuries), they bear witness to an increasingly constant and successful invasion of the land of Israel, Syria, and the Lebanon by Hebrews, whether as mercenaries hired into the armies of local rulers, or as conquerors of cities and regions on their own. This process continued more and more

successfully, until by the 13th century we already see the Hebrew tribes in the land of Israel crystallizing into a nation, and known as the children of Israel. About three hundred years later, at the time of Saul and David, these children of Israel stood facing the Aramean torrent, which had already inundated most of Mesopotamia and Syria, and which had now reached their border and was about to engulf them, too.

#### E) Aram

We have no source-information on the Arameans before they arrived at the populated lands around the Euphrates River, at the end of the 12th century B.C. We don't know where they had lived and wandered before they began to pound on Assyria's and Babylonia's door. Since they were west-Semites, and their language was close to that of the children of Eber, their origin must have been the Arabian peninsula, the cradle of the Semites and the place where they all could be found just before their appearance at the perimeter of the historical stage. What came before that time -- whether the remote ancestors of those peoples which during the historical era were known to belong to the early, Hebrew, stratum of west-Semites, waited there [i.e., in the Arabian peninsula] for thousands or for tens of thousands of years, before their Semitic image took shape; whence they came to that region, and when -- we don't know for sure; neither do all the newly-hatched theories have any possibility

of attaining certainty. Of course, the progress of historical investigation is likely to push the threshold of history backwards a bit, and to open new keyholes through which we can peep at the glimmerings of history's dawn.

Historians are wont to compare the bursting of the Aramean armies into the "Fertile Crescent" lands at the end of the second and beginning of the first millenia B.C., to the storming of the Arab tribes into the lands of the Middle East and north Africa fifteen hundred years later. There are, of course, aspects of these two migrations which are comparable, just as there are in the migrations of non-Semitic nomad tribes -- Hamites (Urartu or Caucasian peoples, who preceded the Aryans in Western Asia and eastern and southern Europe), Aryans, and Mongolians. ((47)) We have, in a previous chapter, already discussed the reasons which stir primitive peoples from their places, and compel them to seek new homes. I shall here indicate again the principal ones: flight from a strong and frightening enemy; weakness of the settled land (whatever its source), along the border of which roam barbaric tribes, whose lust is aroused and whose hope of success is nurtured by just such weak spots; the ascent of a leader who can succeed in uniting a number of tribes and in leading them to victory.

Waves of Semitic nomads were, no doubt pouring into the boundaries of the Fertile Crescent and into the lands of Africa close to the Red Sea and the Sinai Peninsula, for millenia before the beginning of our historical information.

During the fourth millenium B.C., east-Semites (Akkadian-Assyrians) are already found in the lands of the Euphrates and Tigris; and during the third millenium, west-Semites, from the regions near the Mediterranean Sea, are also found there. The residents of the land of Israel, Syria, and northern Arabia at that time had various tribal or national names. Some of them have reached us in hieroglyphics, just as Egyptian scribes recorded them in their day. Some of these names are known to us from ancient Biblical traditions:

Setet -- Seth; Mentu -- Midian; Aammu -- Elam (the son of Shem). All these west-Semitic peoples spoke dialects of that same language which we recognize -- at a later stage -- as the language of the Israelites and most of their neighbors: the peoples of the Negev and Transjordan, northern Hijaz and the steppes and wildernesses north of Najd, on the one hand; and the peoples close to the Mediterranean coast (Phoenicians and Carthaginians), on the other hand.

The first mention of the Arameans occurs in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser I, from the fourth year of his reign (1112 B.C.). In it, their name serves as an adjective descriptive of another people. The words refer to Ahlamu (the Semitic Elamites); in this inscription they are called "Ahlamu Aramaia," i.e., Aramean Elamites. Several historians of the ancient Middle East have concluded, on the basis of this form, which recurs often in the inscriptions of Assyrian kings after Tiglath-Pileser, that Ahlamu was one of the first Aramean tribes. But as for me, when I wrote my

book Shem, Ham and Japheth (during the 1920's), I realized the fact that the Ahlamu are not described by the adjective "Aramean" in any document before Tiglath-Pileser I, although their name is mentioned in cuneiform sources hundreds of years earlier -- dating not only from the Amarna period (15th-14th centuries), but even from the days of ancient Babylonia (beginning of the second millenium).<sup>\*</sup> For this reason, and for other reasons (which I discussed in Shem, Ham and Japheth), I came to the conclusion that the Ahlamu were not Aramean; but that they belonged to the early stratum of Hebrew-dialect speakers, and that according to the tradition of the Hebrew peoples, their name and ancestry was Elam the first-born of Shem. Before Shem, Ham and Japheth was even printed, I found support for my opinion (that the Ahlamu were not Arameans) in the work of E. Forrer. He reasoned that the use of the form "Aramean Elamites" ((48)) tells us clearly that they were not Arameans. And indeed, we have Persian Kurds, Turkish Kurds, Iraqi Kurds -- and they are all Kurds, not Persians, Turks or Arabs.

Together with Seth and Elam and other west-Semitic peoples, the children of Eber begin to be mentioned -- in Akkad and Sumer, during the third millenium B.C., and also in the Mediterranean lands during the second millenium. Their penetration into the settled countries differed in several respects from the Aramean expansion at the end of

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<sup>\*</sup> Shem, Ham and Japheth, p. 70, n.1.

the second millenium B.C., and from the Arab expansion in the middle of the first millenium A.D. Indeed, every entry of an uncivilized people into a civilized land encounters a different set of circumstances and takes on a different form, no matter how similar its root causes might be. At the end of the third millenium and the beginning of the second, the children of Eber were among those tribal peoples -- whose language and way of life was similar to their own -- who overran and gained control of Mesopotamia, established their own dynasties, and were known in Akkadian by the inclusive name Amuru (Amorites, i.e., westerners).

The penetration of this west-Semitic wave into Mesopotamia, and the later Aramean penetration, were alike in this respect: neither group had a unifying pivot -- either political or spiritual; both had only a closeness of tradition. Every place they conquered became a kingdom into itself, and these kingdoms frequently used to fight against each other. What finally happened to the west-Semites in the east, is that they adapted Akkadian-Sumerian culture to their needs, and became assimilated into the local population. The only exceptions were those who continued to lead nomadic lives, as keepers of livestock, and to preserve their tribal way of life. In similar fashion, during the earlier stages of their assault, did the Arameans in Mesopotamia also assimilate. This process slowed down, and finally stopped, because of the bitter, prolonged struggle between the two poles of Akkadian culture. Babylonia and Assyria weakened



each other by means of wars which constantly began anew after short intermissions -- until both of them fell prey to new Aryan kingdoms -- Media and Persia -- which had arisen in Iran. The destruction of Babylonia and Assyria paved the way for the spread of the Aramean language throughout most of the Fertile Crescent lands.

In similar fashion did the penetration of the Hebrews into the land of Israel begin in its day, namely the second half of the second millenium. Hebrew tribes, from among those whom we later recognize as tribes or parts of tribes within the Israelite nation, are already found in the land of Israel at the beginning of the second millenium B.C. (and probably even in the third millenium). Some of them are specified by name in my book, The Background of the Hebrews: Zebulun, Simeon, Joseph, Jair, Asher; and within Simeon -- a clan by the name of Abraham (written 'אברהם and 'אברהם) (pp.27; 134-137). During the Amarna period, the Hebrew migration grew stronger, storming throughout the land and conquering its cities (no doubt with the help of their brethren, who were streaming in from the wilderness east of the Jordan). Shortly thereafter, these individual accomplishments were transformed into a centralized process of conquest, which ultimately led to control over most of the country. The gathering of the Hebrew tribes under the leadership of Moses and Joshua had begun by virtue of a new religious idea. In the fervor of this new faith, they united and conquered the land, becoming fused into one nation, and

even maintaining a single united kingdom for a while.

The Arameans lacked this kind of unifying force. Their strength was in their numbers, in the mighty drive of their hordes. They did not create an enduring culture of their own, and even their language -- which was common coin throughout the Persian and Byzantine and Roman periods, in the entire area between Iran and Egypt -- finally yielded to Arabic and ceased to exist.

Comparable aspects of the Aramean and Arab expansions may be found only in the early stages of the invasion by the Arabs of the settled lands. In the wake of the second, Aramean, stratum of west-Semites, and not long thereafter, tribes of the third, Arab, stratum began to come up out of the heart of the Arabian peninsula and to push northward. They were first seen in the vicinity of the settled lands during the first centuries of the first millenium B.C. They infiltrated into the perimeter of the settled lands, becoming mixed with Aramean tribes in the east, and with Hebrew tribes in Transjordan, in the Negev, and in the Sinai peninsula. They increased slowly; more than another millenium had to pass before they had multiplied sufficiently in the north. Then they prevailed over the Hebrew and Aramean tribes who wandered throughout the expanse of the Syrian-Arabian desert, assimilated them, and established small kingdoms and principalities -- on the Persian border, on the one hand; and in Transjordan, on the Byzantine border, on the other hand. A religious revivalist then appeared, who

united several tribes, firing their enthusiasm; and who defeated other tribes, bringing them into submission. Following Mohammed, who did not excel in military talent, there arose from the ranks of the Believers skillful and imaginative military leaders, like the Caliph Omar and his generals. Then the Arabs managed to roll into the lands of the Middle East and north Africa, which were weakened and disturbed by the corruption of their Byzantine and Persian rulers, and crush them completely, just as the barbarians from eastern Europe, Huns and Germans, had completely crushed the decadent Western Roman Empire. But unlike the European barbarians, who accepted the religion and culture of those whom they had conquered, the Arabs imposed their own religion, language and customs upon the defeated Levantine peoples in the lands they conquered.

The Aramean movement, as I have said, did not find within itself such centralized strength, and its ultimate destiny differed from that of the Arab expansion. However, the initial momentum of the Arameans was no less than that of the Arabs. The Assyrian kings struggled for centuries with Aramean waves which kept swelling and breaking in upon their border, one after another; and subsequently with the kingdoms which these invaders established on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris in Babylonia, in the Hurrian lands east of Assyria, in northern Mesopotamia and in Syria. These Assyrian kings mentioned many Aramean tribes by name, and some of them are also mentioned in the Bible. Israelite

Biblical traditions concerning the Arameans are the product of various contacts with them, at various times. The memories in Genesis stem from transactions between tribes or clans of Hebrew and Aramean nomads, cattle-raising men, whose traditions and way of life were similar. But the historical occurrences related in the Prophetic books and the Hagiographa are the product of relations between nations settled within fixed boundaries -- Israel, who was living on its land, and Aram, who had taken root in Syria. Most of the names of Aramean tribes and settlements ((50)) which are recorded in Assyrian lists, are not found in the Bible, but there are some [from the Bible] which seem identical with scattered references in cuneiform documents, as for example the following:

Buz (the son of Nahor, Gen.22:21; Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, Job 32:2; Tema and Buz, Jeremiah 25:23) -- mentioned by Esarhaddon. It is thought that they were located in the vicinity of Tema.

Dinites (Ezra 4:9) -- perhaps the Dunanu mentioned by Tiglath-pileser.

Hagrites -- Hagaranu? One of the Aramean tribes defeated by Sennacherib in 703. The Hagrites and Ishamelites, like all nomadic tribes in northern Arabia and in the steppes west of the Euphrates, had been Hebrew tribes, according to their language and traditions, during the second millenium and the beginning of the first; and many, if not most, of them traced themselves to Abraham the Hebrew. During the first

half of the first millenium, when the Aramean sweep northward and eastward became much stronger, whole tribes or parts of tribes Aramaized and were swept along with them, into conquered lands of the east. It is not impossible, therefore, that the Hagrites, who are known to us as allies of the Ishmaelites and Moabites in southern Transjordan, should have been found in Mesopotamia at the end of the eighth century.

Incidentally, Nabato -- apparently Nebaioth (Ishmael's first-born, Gen.25:13) -- is mentioned alongside the Hagaranu, in the same source.

On the same list is found a tribe by the name of 'Ubulum; the same name is written, in another place, as 'Uburu. Possibly it is 'Eber (in cuneiform, as I have said, there was no Y, and so the Assyrians used to transliterate the west-Semitic Y by ' ) -- a branch of Hebrews captured by the Arameans which may or may not have Aramaized. The Elamites, "Ahlamu Aramaia," for example, were not Arameans at that time; and the Sethites, whom Sargon mentions together with the Aramean tribes around the Tigris River on the same list as 'Uburu, were, in fact, decidedly distinguished from the Arameans.

Hul (the son of Aram, Gen.10:23) -- perhaps the Huli'a mentioned by Tiglath-pileser III.

Hazo (the son of Nahor, Gen. 22:22; the brother of Ghased) -- at the time of Esarhaddon this tribe was in the vicinity of Haran.

Kesed, Kasdites -- Kaledu in cuneiform. According to Josephus, the Kasdites [Chaldeans] were closer to the Hebrews than any other people. In the course of time, they Aramaized.

Pekod (Jer.50:21; Ezek.23:23) -- in Assyrian, Fukudu. -- is mentioned in the writings of the Assyrian kings as being in Babylonia, alongside the Chaldeans, the Nabato, the Rubu (perhaps Rehob), and many others.

Teman<sup>164</sup> -- Temanaya (in an inscription by Adad-nirari II, 911-890, and in inscriptions of other Assyrians). In the Pentateuch and the Prophetic books, Teman is counted together with Edom. But the residents of Tema, an oasis north of Khaibar<sup>165</sup> on the road to Jauf,<sup>165</sup> traced themselves to Ishmael, and were probably called Temanites. There is no way of knowing whether these two were parts of a single tribe. The children of Tema are mentioned in the Bible together with various tribes, some among them, such as Buz, definitely Aramean; and others (Jetur,<sup>166</sup> Naphish,<sup>166</sup> etc.) ((51)) who were later known as Arabs (although they traced themselves to Ishmael the son of Abraham, which means that they were originally Hebrews). It seems reasonable that the large Aramean tribe Temanaya, mentioned by Adad-nirari II, or the T'umana'a of Sargon and Sennacherib, is identical with the Biblical Tema.

During the last century of the second millenium, and the first centuries of the first millenium, small and medium-size Aramean kingdoms arose in Mesopotamia and Syria, and some of them are mentioned in the Bible, as a result of any

kind of occurrence affecting Israel. From traditions concerning the Patriarchs, there remains the memory of Paddan-Aram, or the field of Aram (Hosea 12:13) in Haran, and of Aram-Naharaim in the region of the River Euphrates' source. These are places where there were Arameans during the time of the First Temple, and it was therefore supposed, at that time, that they had also been there in the days of the Patriarchs. But from the eleventh, tenth, and following centuries, there remain real -- albeit occasional and fragmentary -- historical memories of several Aramean states which sprang up throughout the Fertile Crescent -- from southern Babylonia up to the northern reaches of the land of Israel.

On the northeastern border of the land of Israel, during David's reign, there existed three small Aramean states: Aram-Beth-rehob, Aram Maacah, and Geshur-in-Aram. It is known that the regions of Maacah and Geshur were called these names long before the Arameans came, and that the Arameans who took control of those regions -- apparently during the 11th century -- were named after them. Further north, a strong and aggressive kingdom, Aram-Zobah, arose at that time. She expanded northward and eastward from her base in southern Syria, reaching as far as the Euphrates River, and some think even across it. But her hour of greatness was not prolonged: David shattered her strength, and after a while Aram-Damascus took her place. Arpad, a small Aramean kingdom north of Aleppo,<sup>167</sup> is mentioned several times in

Hanigalbat, the cradle of the Hurrians, their homeland from time immemorial, the place of origin of the Mitanni kingdom in its day, became an Aramean kingdom; it retained only its Hurrian name, just as Geshur, Maacah, Damascus, etc., on Israel's border and in Syria, retained their own names. Babylonia was ruled alternately by Babylonian and Aramean kings (the latter, to be sure, used to take on Babylonian form after a short while); and in the lands of Babylonia and Sumer, as far as the border of eastern Elam and as far as the coast of the Persian Gulf, the process of Aramaization of the various nations located there -- Chaldeans, Sumerians, Akkadians, Cushites, and Hurrians -- proceeded apace. West-Semitic tribes, residents of long standing in those places, of the Hebrew-dialects-speaking family -- the children of Seth, the children of Eber, Elam (the first-born of Shem), Sukhu, Jair, the children of Yamin, and others -- also began to Aramaize. Those tribes which managed to preserve their historical-social individuality and uniqueness until the threshold of the first millenium B.C., or even during its early centuries, were like floating islands<sup>169</sup> in an Aramean sea; and if they are mentioned by name in the chronicles of the Assyrian kings, they were designated by the adjective "Aramean" -- i.e., being in an Aramean country and environment, just as we say today: "Canadian" Frenchmen,<sup>170</sup> "Russian" or "Soviet" Armenians, "German" Jews, etc.

Assyria herself, the homeland of the Assyrians, was not conquered, although she lost all her conquered territories



and was reduced to her original size. At the beginning of the Aramean ascent, Assyria had demonstrated great defensive power. Tiglath-pileser I used to make war, every year for twenty-seven years, against the Aramean armies who were assaulting his border; and thus he stopped them and even beat them back. But his sons were weaker than he. Four brothers, they ruled one after another, the first from 1079-1078, and the last from 1057-1048. During these thirty years, the Arameans continued their assault against the borders of the Assyrian kingdom, cutting it down from all sides. During the following hundred years -- the period of time corresponding to that of Samuel the prophet, Saul, David and Solomon -- the Arameans took possession of the length and breadth of southern Mesopotamia, and arrived at the very gates of the city of Asshur. As I have said, this prompted the Assyrian kings, in Forrer's opinion, to move their capital northward, to Nineveh.

However, Assyria did not stop struggling against the Arameans, and her stubborn battle helped cause a portion of the Aramean flood to be diverted northward and westward, during and after the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. Between 1020 and 1010, the Arameans advanced as far as the River Sagur, on the border of Carchemish, which was then a Hittite state, and conquered Pethor (the city of Balaam) which was located at the river's source. Another cause [for the diversion of the Aramean flood away from Assyria] was the internal situation in Syria. In contrast to Aram's deterrent by As-

syria's strong defenses, she found the Levantine countries an easy nut to crack. The migration of the "Island Peoples" at the beginning of the 12th century had devastated the kingdom of the Hittites in Asia Minor, and had wrought destruction in the smaller Hittite kingdoms in Syria. This made conquest easier for the Arameans in both northern and southern Syria. The Aramaization of the south was apparently rapid and thoroughgoing. After Aram-Zobah, whose ascendancy was brief, Aram-Damascus took over the leadership and direction of the small Aramean kingdoms in the west.

Although Aram gravitated toward Syria, the power of that stream which continued to pour from the desert into the eastern arm of the Fertile Crescent did not diminish very much, either. The land of Babylonia was filled with Aramean tribes. Assyria retreated to her original border. During the reign of Tiglath-pileser II (965-933), Assyria had become an inferior kingdom, fighting for her life, and only with difficulty managing to save the remnant of her territory, a small region comprising Asshur [the city], Nineveh, and Arbela.<sup>171</sup>

The Aramean flood, after inundating most of Syria, prepared to inundate the land of Israel as well.

((55))

SECTION TWO: DAVID'S ASCENT

((57))

A) About Israel's Wars in the Bible

In the Biblical Encyclopedia,<sup>172</sup> the following is said about "David":

David's essential accomplishment was the establishment of Israel as a political unit, and the transformation of a community of patriarchal tribes...into a united people.

Moreover, he

carried out two internal projects whose importance was very much greater from the standpoint of historical continuity during succeeding generations, namely: (a) the fusing of all the separate constituencies within the national boundaries, despite their national and sociological variety (members of the Israelite tribes; the various appendages who were blood relatives of the Israelites; the remnants of the Canaanite residents -- the Hivites, etc.; and a significant number of residents of areas which had been annexed or conquered during David's reign) into a single nation with a salient government and culture of her own; (b) the efficient organization of the governmental bureaucracy within the new political unit (p.638).

The facts mentioned are undoubtedly true; my only doubt is whether they were really David's essential accomplishments. There are several reasons for that doubt. In the first place, it is natural, and indeed obligatory, when a new state is formed out of primitive tribes (whether for the purpose of defense against their enemies or for the purpose of external conquest), that the first(or one of the earliest) rulers will establish an active governmental apparatus; that he will announce a permanent set of regulations; and that he will do as much as he can to break down

the traditional barriers separating the various sectors of the population, especially the tribes, from one another. If he does not take these steps, or does not succeed in them, his state cannot continue to exist.

Secondly, David was not the first to accomplish these tasks. Following Moses, who had unified a number of Hebrew tribes by virtue of a new religion and the Exodus experience -- a unification out of which the Israelite nation was ultimately to be born -- there arose other great leaders in Israel who fortified that tribal combination. They nurtured within the consciousness of the tribes, who were still secluding themselves behind the old barriers, the recognition of their national unity. Those leaders included Joshua, the Judges -- Deborah the prophetess, who with her flaming cry and her mighty song surely stirred the hearts of her own generation as of all the generations which followed; the wonderful manner of Samson the Hero, both real and legendary; and others like them -- and Saul, the first to unify all the Israelite tribes into one kingdom. Saul defended Israel's territory with strength and with notable success against ((58)) her eastern and western enemies; and had it not been for his rout at the Battle of Gilboa, the kingship would almost certainly have remained in his family for several generations.

David plowed in a field which had already been plowed before his time. To be sure, he rose above most of his

predecessors, and accomplished more than they; but even his success in "internal projects" was not complete. The tribes did not become fully assimilated with each other during his reign. The outcry of Sheba the son of Bichri, "We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse" [II Sam.20:1], hit home to all the tribes except David's own. The rebellion failed, and Solomon more-or-less maintained the kingdom's unity. But after Solomon's death, the buried schism came to the surface, and could no longer be repaired. The slogan remained the same throughout all the following generations: "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse" (I Ki.12:16).

The impression that David's image made on the people was, as in the case of Samson, greater after his death than during his lifetime -- and it has continued to grow and to become more deeply rooted with every passing generation. The far-reaching but tense national unity which the living David achieved did not last long, just the great kingdom which he conquered with his sword did not last long. But the historical David -- and the legendary David who arose from him -- became the core and the binding force of a complete national unification which grew stronger and ever more deeply rooted with every generation. And today, as in the past, every Jewish heart is stirred by the national slogan: "David the King of Israel lives and endures!"

And there is still another aspect of David's accomplishments, one which places him too high to be compared to anyone

else in Israel's history -- namely, his wars with Aram. In this area, too, Saul had preceded him, but during Saul's reign, only the first signs of the impending storm appeared on the horizon. It was David who had to face all the fury of the storm; and if he didn't turn back the chariot of History, at least he stopped it sufficiently to save Israel from being trampled under its wheels, as all the other Fertile Crescent nations from Persia to Egypt had been trampled and made to lose their independence and their unique national existence. Thanks to King David, the Israelite people was able to maintain its existence and its uniqueness from that time until this very day.\*

Israel was fortunate that it was David who came to the throne after Saul. Saul was a hero-king: his career began when he saved Jabesh-gilead from Nahash the Ammonite, and it ended in a crushing defeat in battle against the Philistines.

And the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa...So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them" (I Sam.31).

Throughout his reign, Saul strongly defended Israel's

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\*I once briefly pointed out this aspect, in Shem, Ham and Japheth, p.159,n.6, and p.199,n.7. I didn't have enough room there to develop this idea, and from that time on, I was unable to reconsider it. I shall now try to do this.

territory against her neighbor-adversaries across the Jordan; against the Arameans, whose first waves had begun to reach the outer edges of the land; and against ((59)) the Philistines, who were forcefully pushing their way into the interior of the land. To a great extent -- at least, until his final rout -- he managed to repulse all these enemies.

Information about Saul's wars is very scarce, as is information about the wars of other kings, even about the great and victorious wars of David and of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz and of Jeroboam the son of Jehoash. Deeds of war were not important to the editors of the Bible; but rather ethical instruction: an explanation of what took place in the light of the editors' religious point of view. Another reason[why military accomplishments were not treated at great length in the Bible]: political and military events were recorded in many books, like the "books of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah"[cf. II Ki. 14:15, 18 et passim], the "Book of Jashar," the "Book of the Lord's Wars," etc. There was no need therefore, to retell them at length; a few words or even just a passing reference was sufficient. On the other hand, trivial occurrences were discussed at length, and "miraculous" or "wondrous" events described in detail; and since all the books except the Bible were subsequently lost, many of the events which helped to determine the destiny of the nation are unknown to us.

Between Saul's victory against the Ammonites in the battle over Jabesh-gilead, and the great defeat he handed the Philistines from Michmas as far as Aijalon, on the one hand; and his last battle in the mountains of Gilboa, on the other hand, there is hardly a word about his wars. Without a doubt, those battles were numerous, and important to Israel's future. But all of Saul's accomplishments during this period of time are summarized in two short verses, from which we may infer some not-at-all-insignificant deeds. In I Sam.14:47, it says:

So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; and whithersoever he turned himself, he transgressed [שׁוּבָה]. 173 (The Septuagint says: "he was saved" [שָׁמַר]).

Certainly the original source didn't say "he transgressed" [שׁוּבָה], but rather "he prospered" [נָשָׂא] or "he succeeded" [נָשָׂא], following the Biblical style usually employed in speaking of a man who does valiantly in battle; e.g. "And David had great success [נָשָׂא] in all his ways" (I Sam 18:14); "And Hezekiah prospered [נָשָׂא] in all his works" (II Chron. 32:30); "Whithersoever he turneth, he prospereth [נָשָׂא]" (Proverbs 17:8). Apparently the faithful of the Davidic dynasty were unable to put up with a scriptural verse which specifically said that Saul -- whom they were in the habit of depicting as an evil sinner -- had actually succeeded in his every undertaking. However, from the content of that verse itself, as well as from what we know of Saul's accomp-



lishments from other places, it becomes clear that he succeeded in saving Israel quite often. And I Sam.14:48, which comes as an addition to the previous verse, completes the impression: "And he did valiantly, and smote the Amalekites,\* and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them." The expression "and he did valiantly" refers primarily to what had just been said about his wars with all the enemies of Israel roundabout; it refers partly, too, to his war with Amalek. The mention of Amalek serves here as a kind of opening for the account of Samuel the prophet's last quarrel with him (Samuel had not become reconciled to the curtailment of his power and authority due the crowning of a king, and he never stopped looking for reasons to find fault with Saul.) At the end of I Sam.14, we read: "And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul." The folksong, ((60)) Saul hath slain his thousands" is quoted for the sake of comparison -- in order that all might see and know that David had done even better; nonetheless, this song does testify to the victories of Saul. David's own words, in his lament over Saul and Jonathan's death, also testify to Saul's victories:

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\* About the war with Amalek, I Sam.15:7-8 says the following: "And Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is in front of Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword." Apparently, this was an important achievement; and it was only one of his military achievements.

To teach the sons of Judah the bow (David was still in Ziklag, and his vision was still firmly fixed upon his own tribe)...

Tell it not in Gath,  
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;  
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,  
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph  
(proof that the Philistines had suffered  
defeat at Saul's hand)...  
From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the  
mighty,  
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,  
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.  
(II Sam.1:18-27)

Since Samuel "never beheld Saul again until the day of his death...and the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel" (II Sam.15:35), the editors of I Samuel had no further interest in relating his bravery and his successes (if he had had any real failures, they surely would have been mentioned -- for the sake of ethical instruction). They were satisfied with the description of Saul's relationship to David, and the story of his persecution of David. The editors dwelt at length on these aspects, because here Saul's life comes into contact with David's, and his failures point up David's success, cleverness, and good fortune. The editor of Chronicles explains further:

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord...and also for that he asked counsel of a ghost, to inquire thereby, and inquired not of the Lord; therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse" (I Chron.10:13-14).

After the division of Israel into two kingdoms, their outward-directed strength diminished, both because they wasted their strength in internecine battles, and because of the separation itself. Both kingdoms taken together were

generally much weaker than the whole kingdom of David and Solomon had been. Both kingdoms experienced rises and falls. Occasionally one of them, more often the Northern Kingdom, would gain strength, and would again, for a while, become a strong determining force in her neighborhood. During the reigns of Omri and Ahab, Israel [i.e., the Northern Kingdom] had noteworthy strength: Ahab defeated Ben-hadad, the Aramean king, in two battles. Subsequently, he entered an alliance with him in order to repulse Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king. Ahab's military force included 2,000 chariots and 10,000 infantry, according to Assyrian lists.

Israel's strength was even greater than this during the reigns of Jehoash and Jeroboam his son, a period of more than fifty years (800-745 B.C.). Jehoash defeated the Arameans on three separate occasions: "And [he] took...out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash smite him, and recovered the cities of Israel" (II Ki.13:25). And when Amaziah, the king of Judah, provoked him, Jehoash easily defeated him, broke through the wall of Jerusalem, and plundered the Temple treasures. (II Ki.4:8-14). "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might...are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel(II Ki.14:15)?" His son, Jeroboam, almost returned to Israel the greatness it had known in David's time: "He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah" (II Ki.14:25).

In the verse just before this one, it says of him: "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat." If this be the case, how can his success and greatness be reconciled with his sinfulness? The answer:

For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter...neither was there any helper for Israel. And the Lord said not that He would blot out the name of Israel from under ((61)) heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash (II Ki.14:26 -27).

The substance of Jeroboam's deeds are not this editor's business:

Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, for Judah in Israel (some people think that the original source said, "recovered...for Israel," and that the later editor, by whose time the Northern kingdom no longer existed and Judah had become identical with Israel, joined Judah's name to that of Israel, resulting in the strange merger: "for Judah in Israel"), are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (II Ki. 14:28)

And that is all the Bible tells us about Jeroboam II, the greatest of Israel's kings after David.

We may infer what others thought of the strength and might of the kings of Israel and Judah, from the letter of denunciation sent to Artaxerxes, the king of Persia (465-424), by officials of the Persian government in Syria and by parts of eastern peoples who had been exiled westward by Assyria: Archevites (residents of the Babylonian city of Erech,<sup>174</sup> Babylonians, Shushanchites, Dehites, Elamites,

and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asenapper (Ashur-bani-pal, the son of Esarhaddon, who

reigned 669-639; Σαρδαναπάλλου 175 of the Greeks) brought over, and set in the city of Samaria, and the rest that are in the country beyond the River (i.e., west of the River Euphrates, in Syria and the land of Israel): -- "And now...

the writers of the letter warned Artaxerxes that

the Jews that came up from thee are come to us unto Jerusalem; they are building the rebellious and the bad city, and have finished the walls, and are digging out the foundations

and that when the city would be built, its inhabitants would not pay taxes to the royal reasury. The king should examine the book of his ancestors' records, where the accusation would be proven. Artaxerxes commanded that the books be examined, and in his reply to the accusers confirmed their words, and went on to say

that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, who have ruled over all the country beyond the River (i.e., westward); and tribute, impost and toll (taxes upon land, provisions, and travel) was paid unto them.

At his command, the work of rebuilding Jerusalem was put to a stop.

Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem, and it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia (ca. 423-404) (Ezra 4:24-27 [sic] 177).

David is given a disproportionately large place in the Bible. The story of his rise "from the sheep fold" to the throne is told expansively, and with many details, thanks to his justice and righteousness. It is also feasible to put it this way: because of his fame and his renown, a full measure of justice and righteousness were attributed to him;

and because of his justice and righteousness, he was given such a large place in the Bible. Four historical factors combined to elevate David step by step in the recognition of the people, and to secure a central place for him in the imagination of all future generations: First and most important, he saved the nation from the Aramean flood, which was about to swallow it alive, and strengthened its inner unity. Second: he thought up the idea of the central sanctuary, prepared everything needed for the building of the sanctuary, and richly endowed it with hymns and songs which were later to be introduced into its ceremonies. Third: his dynasty, which ruled continuously in Jerusalem for more than 400 years, implanted and nurtured the concept of his greatness and his anointment by God; the concept of the kingship belonging exclusively to him and his descendants forever. Fourth: these concepts of David's image were nurtured further and more extensively ((62)) during and after the days of the Second Temple, by the Pharisees and all others who opposed the later Hasmoneans and the Herodian dynasty, which ruled with the help and protection of Rome.

David did not differ from his environment in the content of his faith. A deep religious faith was implanted in his heart. He was generally a man of strong and rebellious feelings and passions, but he was at the same time flexible, calculating, and in control of himself whenever necessary. His was an uncommon combination of a poetic soul, which sailed with a stream of noble ideas upon the waves of a

fine rhetorical language, expressive and full of metaphor; joined with a calculating mind which knew its course, which set high goals for itself and knew how to achieve them. He struck a certain balance between poetic and religious flights of fancy, on the one hand; and evaluation of things as they were and an acceptance of that reality, on the other. Characteristic of his nature and temperament is the story about the son borne to him by the wife of Uriah the Hittite: when the child got sick and became fatally ill, David prayed for him, and fasted, and lay upon the ground; but when he learned that the child had died, he arose and washed and asked for food to eat. When his servants requested him to explain his behavior, he replied, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (II Sam.12:15-23).

David's thinking was logical and consistent. Nevertheless, despite the veneration in which he was held by succeeding generations, they did not behave as did he, either in regard to mourning or in regard to other customs. The customs didn't change, but the concept of the great and venerated king did change. David's image in the prophetic books and in the Hagiographa differs greatly from his image in the Aggada. The latter evisions him in circumstances which did not exist in his time, and ascribes to him a type of piety foreign to his generation. According to the Midrashim, he used to occupy himself with study of Torah, and he used to get up at midnight to recite hymns and praises to the Lord:

There was a harp hanging above David's bed, and when the time of midnight arrived a North wind came and blew upon it, so that it produced melody. He (David) used immediately to rise.

At day-break,

the wise men of Israel entered his presence and said to him, "Our lord, the king, thy people Israel are in need of sustenance." He answered them, "Go, let each sustain himself from the other."<sup>178</sup> They said to him, "A handful cannot satisfy a lion, nor can a pit be filled with its own clods."<sup>179</sup> He said to them, "Go, stretch forth your hands with the army."<sup>180</sup> At once they took counsel with Ahitophel, and consulted the Sanhedrin.<sup>181</sup> (Berakhot 3).

Thereupon David, disregarding his royal dignity, arose, doffed his imperial robes and his crown, wrapped himself in his cloak [Heb: ב' (6)] and repaired to the Sanhedrin. "My masters," said he, "I have come merely to learn..." (Genesis Rabbah 84:13 <sup>182</sup>).

A disproportionately large place in the Bible is devoted to the story of David's rise, and also, therefore, to the events with which his greatness began -- the legendary and non-legendary tales of his bravery, and his success in the earlier wars. But the place allocated to his mighty achievements, military and political, which followed, is not much greater than that devoted to the "accomplishments and bravery" of other kings who "did valiantly." As I have said, there are two reasons for this: (1) The chroniclers valued most highly that material which served to strengthen faith in God's alert, active, and detailed supervision of the world, as a result of which good men would be rewarded and evil men punished. (2) Important historical events ((63)) had already been related in ancient poems, and recorded in numerous books, and the editors of the Bible saw no need to repeat their details once again. All that rich ancient source



literature has been lost; naturally, the editors and canonizers of the Bible had no way of knowing that this is what would ultimately happen to it. And so today all that remains is a combination of what was mentioned -- by accident or on purpose -- in the Bible, as it has been preserved to this day; and fragments of antiquity which are occasionally discovered in archaeological digs and in studies of ancient history.

#### B) King Saul

We have three versions of Saul's coronation: (1) Samuel the prophet secretly anoints him as "prince" over Israel, in the land of Zuph (north of Jerusalem), in a city "where the man of God was" (I Sam.9-10; the name of the city is not mentioned anywhere in the story). (2) Samuel gathers the people together at Mizpah, and chooses Saul as king (end of I Sam.10). (3) Samuel renews the kingship at Gilgal (I Sam. 11:14-15).

The struggle with the Philistines was getting more and more difficult. The disunited tribes of Israel needed real unity, under the direction of an active and forceful military leader. Samuel had been such a leader in his day. He had strongly defended Israel's territory, and had enjoyed a measure of success.

So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even

unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines (I Sam.7:13-14).

But when Samuel had grown old and his sons had turned sinful, the elders of Israel came to him and said, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (I Sam.8:5). With a heavy heart, and after severe admonitions, Samuel granted their wish. The first anointment, the secret one, was perhaps a story invented and fostered some time later by Saul's dynasty and adherents. The two other coronations do not contradict each other.

It is possible that Samuel had heard about Saul beforehand; perhaps he had even seen him, and thought that this young fellow would be right for the kingdom and convenient for him, too. He didn't seem endowed with those traits which make a great leader; but he was a valiant warrior, "from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people" [II Sam.9:2]. Surely he would be acceptable to the people. He, Samuel, would be his right hand man, and would guide him with his advice; Saul wouldn't do a thing without him. But if Saul would not listen to him, he would leave him and no longer stand by his side; and without Samuel standing at his side, Saul's kingdom would fall.

That is just how it went, at first. When Samuel presented him to those who had gathered, he said, "'See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?' And all the people shouted, and said: 'Long live the king.'" Subsequently, everyone, including

Saul, went back to his own home; ((64)) only a few men of valour, "whose hearts God had touched," accompanied Saul.

"But certain base fellows said: 'How shall this man save us?' And they despised him, and brought him no present" [II Sam. 10:24-27].

A complete change came over Saul's relationship to the people after his surprising victory over the Ammonites. Now everyone recognized his kingship. "And the people said unto Samuel: 'Who is he that said: Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.'" Then Samuel renewed the ceremony of coronation, and Saul actually began to reign.

Saul was physically strong, and courageous on the field of battle. But he was not mentally healthy. Every now and then he would be wracked by powerful emotional upheavals, which would take on different forms: an intoxicating religious fervor; or a warlike nationalistic awakening (like the one which led to his saving Jabesh-gilead from the hand of the Ammonite king); or a depressing and alarming black despair; or suspiciousness to the point of madness and monomania. Such was his suspicion of David, and this suspicion expanded to include his son and the other people around him. The Bible, by means of hints and explicit statements, anticipates David's future, giving us the impression that Saul had good reason to doubt him. But the facts related do not confirm this impression. There is no basis for supposing that David had his eye on the throne while he was an officer and commander in

Saul's army, and the friend of Jonathan, the heir-apparent, and finally the king's son-in-law, the husband of Saul's daughter. It was in David's nature to be faithful to his friends and benefactors; and while there is no doubt that he sensed his power and strove to achieve greater heights, hypocrisy and betrayal were foreign to his soul.

We don't know whether Saul was visited with emotional upheavals in his childhood -- but he almost certainly must have been. The Bible relates that when he was on his way home after looking for the lost asses -- he was at that time a young fellow -- he saw a band of prophets coming toward him,

and the spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another: "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"...Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Sam. 10: 10-12).

We find another version of the origin of this saying in I Sam. 19:23-24; and in that place we also find a brief description of the nature of the prophesying:

And he went thither (Septuagint:thence) to Naioth in Ramah; and the spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

From time immemorial, and in every generation -- even today (cf. the Moslem dervishes) society has known bands of religious fanatics, who intoxicate themselves with wild yells

and dances, with unruliness and self-inflicted injuries, until they lose their senses -- in fact or to all appearances. Some of these men are by nature mentally ill, and some are charlatans who earn money by their "holy madness," and who take pleasure in such deception. And there are, of course, men who combine these two types in varying proportions. But a spectator who comes and participates with prophets such as these, and who goes wild ((65)) in the same way as do they -- a man whose line of work is not prophesying, and who has no personal stake in so doing -- such a man must certainly be emotionally afflicted. Saul was such a case.

The Bible says the following about Saul's suddenly realizing the need to rescue Jabesh-gilead:

And the spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard these words (about the siege, and about the threats of the Ammonite king), and his anger was kindled greatly.

His emotional upheaval stirred men's hearts:

And the dread of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out as one man...And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies, and they came into the midst of the (Ammonite) camp...and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day. (1 Sam. 11)

Samuel's disappointment with Saul was not long in coming. Saul was not a great leader, but neither did he belong to that category of men who were born to be led. At first he had been afraid of Samuel, and had submitted to him. It had seemed to him that without Samuel, the ground would slip from beneath his feet. But his submission had been forced, and therefore neither complete nor consistent.

Samuel quickly realized Saul's character. And Samuel's bitterness over his loss of power, as well as over the downfall of his sons and the consequent loss of any hope for the continuation of his own dynasty, caused him to begin hating the man whom he had crowned as king, and to begin looking for reasons to find fault with him. He never lost an opportunity to predict a bad future for him.

Saul, for his part, did not dare to lay a hand on the esteemed "man of God," both because the kingdom was new and unstable in his own hands; and because he, like all the people, believed that Samuel was holy, an inspired prophet who heard the voice of God. Saul tried to appease him verbally, so that he might continue supporting him, if only for appearance's sake. And when Samuel wrathfully announced that the kingship would be taken away from Saul and his descendants -- "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day" -- Saul pleaded with him: "Then he said, 'I have sinned; yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God' (I Sam.15:28-30). But when Saul strengthened his grasp upon the throne, and had become accustomed to reigning according to his own whims, even Samuel became afraid of him.

The story of David's secret anointment is apparently a reaction to the story fostered by the house of Saul about his secret anointment by Samuel; but it [i.e., the story of David's anointment] reflects that change [i.e., the change

which had taken place in the relationship of Samuel to Saul]. The Lord said to Samuel, "Fill thy horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons." And Samuel said: 'How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me.'" (I Sam.16:1-2) The intent of the two stories is evident: Samuel had secretly anointed Saul king, at the Lord's command -- and Samuel had then revoked his right to the kingship and secretly anointed David, also at the Lord's command. Both stories, especially the second, are suspect. In no other place in the Bible is David's anointment by Samuel mentioned -- neither during the time he was at Saul's court, nor subsequent to that; neither by David himself, nor by anyone else. The thought of that anointment never arises in David's own mind, or in the mind of his brothers or any other members of his household. There is no hint that David tried to sabotage the kingdom while Saul and Jonathan were alive; nor could he have been successful in doing so. If Saul had not been routed at Gilboa, and if he and his sons had not been killed in that battle, David would almost certainly not have attained the throne.

Samuel's relationship to Saul surely contributed, to some extent, to the undermining of the latter's position; but even more significantly, it aggravated his mental imbalance. Saul did not suspect David because there was any good reason for him to do so, ((66)) but rather because a pathological suspiciousness had been rooted in his nature since his earliest days. And this suspiciousness was in need

of nourishment. Even before he had met David, his mental affliction had already manifested itself; moreover, it was precisely because of his affliction that David was brought to him. "Now the spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrified him." His servants obtained his permission to find a man

"who is a skilful player on the harp; and it shall be, when the evil spirit from God cometh upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well"... Then answered one of the young men, and said: "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is skilful in playing, and a mighty man of valour, and a man of war, and prudent in affairs, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him" (I Sam.16:14-18).

Some of the virtues here attributed to David were almost certainly added later on, by an editor or copyist from among the supporters of David's house. It does not seem likely that it would already have been said at that time about the lad David, "who was with the sheep," (I Sam.16:11, 19; 17:34; et passim) that he was a "man of war," or that "the Lord is with him." The combination of all the qualities enumerated in that verse serves only to show how David appeared to the people after he had reached the height of his greatness. Of course, this [later] image was not invented out of whole cloth, but had a basis in reality. The man who recommended David to Saul surely must not have been reticent about praising him; but, on the other hand, neither did he have the slightest need to exaggerate. He could say, without any exaggeration, that David was "skilful in playing"; and if not "a mighty man of valour," he was at least a valorous young man, "prudent in affairs, and a comely person."



Saul's pathological suspiciousness reached the stage of actual madness when he ordered the slaughter of every living creature in the city of the priests. Because he suspected that Ahimelech the priest was on David's side -- a groundless enough suspicion, judging by what is related -- Saul ordered Ahimelech's whole household executed, together with every living thing in the city of Nob, both man and beast.

And the king said unto the guard that stood about him: "Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David"...But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord. And the king said to Doeg: "Turn thou, and fall upon the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and he slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep, with the edge of the sword (I Sam.22:17-19).

In II Samuel is mentioned another deed which, although its details are not made explicit, was clearly done in open and brutal violation of a sacred obligation. The three-year famine which took place during David's reign was interpreted as a punishment from God "for Saul (i.e., because of his sin), and for his bloody house, because he put to death the Gibeonites." Here the editor comments: "Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them; and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah." David asked the Gibeonites,

"What shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I make atonement?..And they said unto the king: "The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, so that we

have been destroyed (in place of "so that we have been destroyed" [לִּי נִשְׁמָה]), the Septuagint reads "to destroy us" [לְהַרְגֵנוּ]...let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah of Saul."

David gave them what they requested -- two of Saul's sons and five of his grandsons -- "and they hanged them in the mountain before the Lord" (II Sam.21:1-9).

Saul saw plots against himself everywhere -- among the members of his household, among his servants, among all those around him -- and insane deeds of punishment like that which he committed in the city of Nob undoubtedly served to turn ((67)) the hearts of many, especially in Judah, to the persecuted David. Saul went out to the battle of Gilboa despondent and full of foreboding, without any hope of winning. Certainly this state of mind on the part of their king and commander weakened the hand of the soldiers, and hastened the defeat.

### C) David at Saul's Court

We have three versions of Saul's path to the kingship, and two versions of David's path to the king's court. The versions of Saul's coronation -- whether they are rooted in fact or legend -- do not contradict one another. The stories about David, on the other hand, are totally irreconcilable. The first, which suits everything we know about David, is apparently the correct one. He was a handsome lad, captivating in appearance: "Ruddy, and withal of beautiful eyes [רֹדֶד וְיָפִי עֵינָיו] (a lad with beautiful eyes [רֹדֶד וְיָפִי עֵינָיו] 183), and

goodly to look upon" (I Sam.16:12). He was also brave; lucid in his thinking; a quick decision-maker; a man who was as good as his word, and never failed to attain his goal. It seems that he fell into that category of men who are blessed from birth with the talent for getting close to the right people, and bringing those people close to themselves. Men and women were attracted to David at first sight; indeed, many were devoted to him with all their heart and soul; and he never broke faith with those who loved him.

The second story seems improbable, not because young David lacked the prerequisites for defeating Goliath in the manner described in I Sam.17. He was strong, agile, bold, and undoubtedly experienced and excellent in hitting targets with pebbles; and the giant was felled by natural means, without miracles. And [the second story seems improbable] not only because in another place (II Sam.21:19) it explicitly says that Goliath the Gittite was slain by Elhanan, one of David's mighty men (the version in I Chron.20:5 -- "And Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite" -- seems like an attempt to resolve the discrepancy); but because the two stories simply do not correspond to each other. According to the first, David was brought to Saul because he was skillful in playing the harp.

And he stood before him; and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight." And it came to pass, when the [evil] <sup>184</sup> spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand; so Saul found relief, and it was well with him, and the evil spirit departed from him. (I Sam.16:21-23).

Beforehand, Saul had not even known David, nor had he heard of him.

In the second version, too, the story of Goliath (I Sam.17), Saul didn't know David before the duel, and he asked Abner about him. And after the young shepherd's victory, Saul himself asked him: "'Whose son art thou, thou young man?' And David answered: 'I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite' " [I Sam.17:58]. Immediately thereafter: "And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house" (I Sam.18:2).

In both versions, Saul sees David for the first time, and once he sees him, he keeps David ((68)) with him. According to both versions, David used to play the harp for Saul whenever the latter was overcome by uneasiness. There is no room, therefore, for both versions; only one of them can be correct. And the matter of playing the harp, which is attested by both versions, lends more credence to the first version, since there it is the primary reason for David's coming to Saul. There are other substantial reasons [for believing the first version to be correct]. I have already mentioned one of them -- namely, that verse which says, in all innocence, and quite incidentally, that Elhanan slew Goliath. And another reason is the nature of the story about the duel.

In comparison with the first version, the second impresses us as a legend of the kind with which the imagination of a people, some time later, usually embellishes the

youth of a man who had become famous for his heroism. The story is very nice -- there must be a reason why it has been able to enchant the entire world, in every generation --and it contains some very vivid and realistic details; but they don't hang together very well, so that the story doesn't seem probable. David's three older brothers follow Saul into battle with the Philistines in the valley of Elah, and David -- the youngest of Jesse's eight sons -- is sent to bring them provisions. En route, he circulates among the soldiers and listens to their conversation. They are talking about Goliath the giant, who comes out of the Philistine camp every so often, and teases the Israelite ranks. One of the soldiers says:

Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely to taunt Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

(This is clearly a legendary statement, and we don't hear a thing about it after David's victory -- although, to be sure, the matter of giving the king's daughter later returns in more realistic circumstances.)

David, of course, is ready to do battle with Goliath; he wants only to ascertain if the king had really promised everything that he, David, had been told about. He asks other men, and they all confirm the statement of the first. His eldest brother becomes angry with him, and says,

Why art thou come down? (i.e., Why you, of all people? Couldn't they have sent the provisions with someone else?) and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in

the wilderness? I know thy presumptuousness, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

This is the typical attitude of an older brother towards a younger brother, especially when the younger boasts his intention of doing what the older ones dare not do; it is a poignant psychological statement. And David's answer is also typical: he excuses himself, but he has no intention of desisting from what he has in mind. He says: "Look what I've done now! Isn't it something!"<sup>185</sup> -- as if to say, this is not mere curiosity, but an important matter that I intend to do something about.

It is clear that neither David's brothers, nor David himself, know anything about the prophet Samuel anointing him king "in the midst of his brethren" (I Sam.16:13); for if they had known of such an anointment, David and his family would have wasted no time setting up David's anointment in opposition to Saul's.

After this, David moved away from his brothers and turned to other people with questions. "And the people answered him after the former manner." News of David traveled through the camp and reached the king. When they brought David before Saul, he immediately began to encourage the frightened king: "Let no man's heart fail within him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul expresses doubt of David's ability: "For thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." When he answers, David speaks with the voice of Legend, ((69)) briefly recounting

his previous heroism (the text is somewhat distorted):

Thy servant kept his father's sheep (why "kept"? Had he already stopped keeping them? No; but the legend was undoubtedly created at a time when David was no longer a shepherd); and when there came a lion or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him (apparently, the lion), and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

The slaying of a lion is a recurring motif in legends of ancient heroes (Gilgamesh, Samson, and others). To be sure, Samson tore a young lion apart with his bare hands -- "as one would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand" [Judges 14:6] (it is doubtful that an ordinary man could tear apart even a live kid with his bare hands). While it is not said that David tore the lion apart with his bare hands, an additional mighty deed is credited to him, namely the defeat of a bear: "Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them."

The story-teller continues spinning his yarn: the king dresses David in his own clothing and armour, puts a brass helmet on his head, and girds him with his sword. The little shepherd tries to walk with all this apparatus, but is unable to do so; it is too heavy for him, and it makes him lose his agility. He removes it, and goes out to face Goliath with his sling and five pebbles.

An exchange of insults and teasing, as was customary before a duel, then takes place. Goliath scorns his opponent "for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance," and curses him by his god (a custom among

Oriental peoples to this very day). Nor is David to be verbally outdone. He (as is fitting for the Psalmist) contributes words of faith and ethical instruction, even informing Goliath from the start what he will do with him:

This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

The battle itself is simple, involving no supernatural occurrences. The agile shepherd, skilled in the use of the sling, does not approach the Philistine giant for hand-to-hand combat, but wounds him with a stone from some distance away.

David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead (proof of David's strength, as it was remembered by the Israelites, or as it was imagined in later days), and he fell upon his face to the earth.

Thereupon David does just what he has promised: "And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem" (surprising, since Jerusalem did not yet belong to Israel) -- I Sam. 17:54.

The description of the battle, and of David's method of victory, is realistic enough. If the story was not a complete contradiction of the first version, as well as of that recorded information which innocently says that it was Elhanan the son of Jair who slew Goliath the Gittite; and if so many of its details were not stamped with the imprint of legend, we would not find it hard to accept the story as



an account of what actually happened.

By either means, David arrived at the king's court. He was an attractive lad, and, as is written about him, "prudent in affairs." His rise was very rapid. Several factors paved the way for him: ((70)) his good looks; the fact that he was well-liked by both men and women; his sharp, insightful intelligence; his bravery and boldness; his talent for commanding and directing people; and last but not least, his surprising good fortune. In the category of David's good fortune must also be included Saul's mental imbalance. One short verse in Chapter 18 illumines and summarizes the story of David's ascent up the stairway of glory and greatness: "And David went out; whithersoever Saul sent him, he had good success; and Saul set him over the men of war; and it was good in the sight of all the people, and (an even more difficult accomplishment) also in the sight of Saul's servants"(v.5). It is clear that David performed marvellously on his military missions; his deeds and achievements aroused everyone's admiration. Even by that time, legends about his bravery and good fortune had probably begun to take shape. The imagination of the following generations would add to the reports of his perpetual good fortune, and of the deeds which he did perform, stories of wondrous acts which, if he really didn't do them himself, could have been performed by someone like him. And these acts grew continually more numerous.

The Bible had absolutely no intention, however, of telling the story of David's deeds. Verse 5 is put in only

to explain why Saul began to be jealous of him and to harrass him. Saul had fought ceaselessly against the enemies which encircled Israel; but we get the impression that he was able to repulse them only with difficulty. His wars were principally wars of defense. With David's appearance on the scene, all that changed. The latter succeeded in all the military undertakings he was sent to accomplish, and was made a commander. His brilliant successes damaged his relationship with Saul. When they were returning from battle together, people would credit the victory mainly to David. Women used to come forth from "all the cities of Israel" (this expression apparently refers to those cities which were on or near the route the Israelite army was travelling on its return from the battle field), with songs and dances,

with timbrels, with joy, and with three-stringed instruments. And the women sang to one another in their play, and said:

Saul hath slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said: "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands; and all he lacketh is the kingdom!" And Saul eyed David from that day and forward (I Sam.18:6-9)

Saul's mental balance had already been upset; perhaps it had been upset since his early childhood. His spirit was ravaged by attacks of melancholy, burdened by depression and suspicions, and subject to outbursts of mad rage. To these was now added jealousy, which drove him to madness. He immediately began to think that David represented a great threat to his throne and his dynasty. It cannot be said that his suspicions were entirely the product of a deluded

imagination. For he himself had been made king only by virtue of having saved Jabesh-gilead from the hand of Nahash the Ammonite, and continually defending the land from the attacks of the Philistines and other enemies. And now, if the people saw in David a better rescuer and saviour than he, who could be sure that the ground would not slip out from under his throne?

Saul's suspicions seem to us to be better founded than they really were at that time, because we know what took place afterwards. But there is not so much as a hint that David had his eye on the throne of Israel, in anything that is related about him from the period before his flight from Saul, and especially before he and his men sought refuge outside of Israel's borders, and put themselves under the protection of Achish, the king of Gath. Saul was the Lord's anointed, ((71)) a sanctified king as far as the people were concerned, and also, no doubt, as far as David was concerned:

Who can put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?...The Lord forbid it me, that I should put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed (I Sam.26:9-11).

If David said words such as these, or even if they were put into his mouth, then this type of respect for the king's position was accepted and understood by everyone. The cult of the holiness, or even divinity, of the king was at that time in practice in Egypt, in the Phoenician kingdoms, and in other Oriental countries (and subsequently in Rome; the meager remains of this cult have lasted until our own day

in some European countries). With the crowning of a king, this cult began to be common in Israel, as well. It is possible that the stories about David's opportunities to kill Saul in secret, of which he did not take advantage, were created later on, in order to demonstrate David's righteousness, greatness of heart, and piety; and in order to strengthen and nurture the cult of king-worship; and incidentally to put Saul's mental weakness and lack of character on display. It cannot be doubted, however, that David spoke and acted in the spirit of that cult when the Amalekite fellow came to him at Ziklag and brought him Saul's crown and bracelet, and related that he had killed the king, in accord with the latter's request.

And David said unto him, "How wast thou not afraid to put forth thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?... Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying: I have slain the Lord's anointed" (II Sam.1:2-16).

The killing of the Amalekite was apparently the result of some careful calculation. David sought to vindicate himself in the eyes of the people. Perhaps the news had already been circulated about his desire to throw in his lot with the Philistines and fight against Israel; and if it had not yet been circulated, the people of the House of Saul were presumably being diligent about circulating it. It was therefore incumbent upon David to prove his credibility to the people. The Amalekite envisioned himself as a bearer of good news. David was quick about doing a deed which would show everyone that to him, the defeat of Israel and the death of her king

were evil, bitter news. As a matter of fact, it wasn't the Amalekite at all who killed Saul (perhaps David didn't know this); he only said so, in the hope of receiving a substantial reward. If he had killed him, he would only have been doing the king's will, saving him from the abuse he would have received had he remained alive. But to David, another aspect was important: he would be able to explain the sentence he passed in terms of his fury at hearing the awful news, and in terms of his great zealousness on behalf of the holiness of him who wore the crown.

At first glance, it would have been the House of Saul which gained a clear advantage from the cult of "the Lord's anointed": Saul had been openly anointed and chosen by the prophet who was authorized to speak in God's name; and as for the opposing story concerning David's secret anointment by the same prophet -- it almost certainly had not yet been invented. However, David's situation and the situation of his household in the early days [of his reign], necessitated a display of great veneration for an anointed king, even if it be Saul.

After David's flight, all of Saul's attention was devoted to one thing: capturing and killing him. It may be supposed that in the meantime he neglected, to some extent, the matter of defending the country from its external enemies; and the indications of this neglect almost certainly became manifest, too, at the battle of Gilboa. Of course, at times of great external danger, Saul ceased his pursuit of David,

but as soon as the danger had passed, he immediately resumed that pursuit. Such was the case when he had him cornered in the wilderness of Maon:

But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, "Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have made a raid upon the land." So Saul returned from pursuing ((72)) after David, and went against the Philistines...And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines... [that] Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats (I Sam. 23:27-28; 24:2-3).

The action which took place in the city of Keilah (twelve kilometers east of Beit Guvrin, according to Y. Press) is enlightening. The Philistines were fighting against Keilah, and pillaging the threshing-floors. Saul didn't come to their aid. The residents of the city, or of the neighborhood, turned to David for help. He was ready to accede to their request immediately, but his men were not pleased with his decision. They said, "Behold we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" David would not budge from his decision, and his opinion prevailed. "And David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah." Saul had not worried about saving the city, but as soon as he heard that David was in Keilah, he was aroused, and began to call the people to arms, in order to go there and capture him. "And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men." The residents of Keilah remembered the fate of Nob, the city

of priests, and apparently sent word to the king that they would help him capture his sworn enemy. David was not the tranquil kind; his eyes and ears were open, and when he realized the intention of the inhabitants, he left their city. He committed no acts of vengeance against them; for he realized as well as they what would happen to them if they openly stood at his side, against the king. He then sought refuge for himself and his growing band -- by that time there were already about six hundred men with him -- in the mountainous wilderness southeast of Hebron: "And David abode in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill-country in the wilderness of Ziph"(I Sam.23:1-14).

Israel's eastern and western neighbors rejoiced, of course, at the division and the struggle which had broken out in her midst, and were ready to strengthen the weaker side -- David -- and to help him whenever he needed them. Two facts make us aware of their relationship. First and foremost, David's family was in danger of persecution. For this reason, when David escaped to the cave of Adullam (northeast of Beit-Guvrin), his brothers and his entire clan came to him there. Even at that time (before the incident at Keilah), David was no isolated refugee: "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them; and there were with him about four hundred men." It was only by virtue of their agility and fleet-footedness, however, that they could hope to be saved from

outweighed by its loss. The idea of the kingship had not yet struck deep roots in the consciousness of the people. The support which David the fugitive received from his tribe; the rebellions which broke out, in the course of time, during David's own reign; and the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death -- all these attest to the instability of the royal framework. Samuel's bitter opposition undermined Saul's position quite a bit. To be sure, his successes in defending Israel's soil kept strengthening his hold on the throne. After all, he ruled mainly by the will of the people, by virtue of the faith which the tribes placed in him. If he had succeeded in killing David, the tribe of Judah would almost certainly have rebelled against him; and surely other tribes would also have joined the rebellion. Just as David was supported by his tribe, thus, too did Saul place his trust first and foremost in his own tribe. When his suspiciousness had grown to the point of making him lose his mental balance, he turned to his men and said (I Sam.22:7-8):

Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and there was none that disclosed it to me when my son made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or discloseth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

It is doubtful whether Saul, in his objective and subjective circumstances, could have suppressed rebellions like those which arose during David's reign, and which even David had ((74)) trouble overcoming. And if he had managed to quell all



the hand of the king. Old people, women, and children were a burden and stumbling-block to them. Therefore David sought refuge across the border for his parents.

And David went thence to Mizpah of Moab; and he said unto the king of Moab: "Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me." And he brought them before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the stronghold [I Sam.22:1-4].

It seems reasonable that it was not only on account of weak family ties (via Ruth the Moabitess) between the House of Jesse and the Moabites, that the king of Moab received David's parents; but principally because he recognized in David a substantial factor contributing to the weakening of Saul's kingdom.

The same was true of the Philistines. When David realized that he could no longer escape from Saul's power within his tribal boundaries, let alone within the boundaries of other tribes, he sought refuge ((73)) with the Philistine king of Gath. The latter did not reject him, despite the defeats which David had handed the Philistines in the past; and Achish's reasons were, no doubt, the same as those of the king of Moab.

From everything that is related, we must draw the conclusion that Saul's suspicions, even if they were appropriate later on, were premature at the beginning; and that if he had behaved differently, these suspicions might possibly never have been realized. Their realization was largely Saul's own fault.

Be that as it may, the suspicions were strengthened, deepened, and immediately brought to fruition by jealousy; and Saul's feeble mind was shaken to its very foundation.

And it came to pass on the morrow (the day after the women had sung: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands"), that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved [Heb.: כַּפְזִי; lit., "prophesied"] in the midst of the house (I Sam.18:10).

We have already discovered the nature of this prophesying:

And he also (Saul -- like the company of prophesying prophets) stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Sam.19:24) --

another version of the source of this saying. Although neither version is clear, there can be no doubt that Saul more than once had attacks of "prophesying" like this, and that during the time of such an attack he lost his self-control, if not his consciousness. In the above-mentioned incident, after the women had sung the song, he took his spear, and said "'I will smite David even to the wall.'" And David stepped aside out of his presence twice" (I Sam.18:10-11). Now, Saul was a giant and an experienced warrior, and if he tried twice -- on the same occasion -- to pierce David with his spear, and failed, two factors are apparently responsible: (1) Because of his madness neither his eye nor his hand was as trustworthy as usual; (2) David was faster and more agile than Saul, in any event.

From a practical point of view, Saul's attempt to murder David in his own household, without any reason except jealousy, was a step whose possible gain was sure to be

the uprisings, and to subdue them, he would have been transformed from a king favorable to the people, into a despotic ruler, hated by the majority. One way or another, he would in a short time have lost his kingdom.

Saul's attempt on David's life, as the latter was playing the harp in his presence, was not a calculated act; it was born suddenly, out of the heat of insanity. When Saul began to think clearly again, he recoiled. But he did not abandon his plan; he merely began to look for more indirect ways of achieving it. This account is given at length, with an abundance of vivid detail, in I Sam.18-26. After his attempt to kill David, Saul became afraid to keep him nearby. The Bible says: "And Saul was afraid of David" (I Sam.18:12). In addition to the fear, there was also a feeling of hatred: he simply didn't want to see David around him any more. Why, then, didn't he just release him and send him home? Why did he appoint him to be captain over a thousand? He apparently sought to blur the impression that he had attacked David because of jealousy; and at the same time he hoped that if David went out to war frequently, he would be wiped out in one of the battles. But his hope was not realized. David succeeded in all his military missions, and was not harmed. "And David had great success in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them" (I Sam.18:14-16).

Among those who became attached to David were some who

not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies." Here the Bible comments: "For Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines." David surely understood Saul's intention, but this merely prodded him into demonstrating his ability: Saul thought he'd trap him with a hundred foreskins; he would present Saul two hundred. "And David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins...And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife." Following this, Saul's fear and hatred of David became even greater. "And Saul was David's enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth; ((75)) and it came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David prospered more than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by" (I Sam.18:20-30).

Saul became virtually a monomaniac, and the aim of his monomania was the extermination of David. Now he spoke openly with Jonathan and with his own close friends about the necessity of killing David. But his personality was split, and so his mind was changeable. Jonathan offered a rhetorical defense of his friend, reminding his father of everything David had done for him and for Israel, and then said, "'Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?'" And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan; and Saul swore, 'As the Lord liveth, he shall not be put to death.'" But David again gained a victory over the Philistines, "And slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled before him."

Once again,

an evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he (David) slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall; and David fled, and escaped that night.

First, he came to his house. He must have thought that Saul would repent of his action after the attack had passed and he had cooled off; in any event, Saul would not try to kill him in his own house. But he was wrong. This time, Saul did not repent, nor did he flinch from achieving his designs in public. The incident of the attack with the spear apparently had taken place at night. The king immediately sent men to David's house to keep watch over him during the night and to kill him in the morning. At this time, the two split from each other completely. Michal was informed of her father's decree; she found a way to get David out of the house secretly; he escaped, never to return again to Saul.

#### D) David the Fugitive

The characteristics of David's personality and insight, by virtue of which he was able to accomplish as much as he did, became fully revealed during his days as an outcast and fugitive in the Judean wilderness.

He had fled from his house in great haste, taking neither weapons nor provisions for the journey. According to the legend recorded in I Sam.19, he sought refuge with the prophet Samuel. Saul sent messengers to seize him and bring him back,

but they could not do so, for God's spirit fell upon them and they prophesied before Samuel, together with Samuel's group of prophets. The king sent other messengers, and the same thing happened to them; the same happened even to Saul himself when he came there; and David was saved.

It is doubtful, however, that Samuel was still alive at that time. Sh.Yewin (in the Biblical Encyclopedia,<sup>186</sup> under "David") thinks that David came to King Saul's court in about 1014 B.C.; and it is generally thought that Samuel died about three years before that. In any event, Samuel couldn't have provided refuge for David, because Samuel was afraid of Saul (I Sam.16:2). Neither does it seem reasonable for David to have turned northward in his flight, and come to Ramah in the territory of Benjamin, instead of trying to save himself within the boundaries of his own tribe.

((76)) In contrast to this, there appears the story of his coming to Ahimelech the priest, in Nob. In the opinion of historians, the city of priests was located in the vicinity of Mount Scopus and the Arab village of El-Isfiya. Saul's place of residence and his court were at Gibeath-benjamin<sup>187</sup> (which is Gibeath-shaul<sup>188</sup>), about five kilometers north of Jerusalem, on the road to Shechem. David was afraid not only of Saul's servants, who would give him chase; danger awaited him at every turn, and from every man, as long as he had not left Benjamin's borders. Tribal bonds were very strong at that time. Saul, although he ruled over all Israel, was first and foremost the king of the Benjamites (I Sam.22:7-8), just

loved him with all their heart, and stuck with him until the end of his life; and those whose great love for him changed, after a while, to an even greater hatred. This was the case with Saul, and also with his daughter Michal, after she had realized David's part in the destruction of her father's house, and after she was taken by force, against her will, from her second husband. But Saul arrived only gradually at that state of mind in which he openly sought to kill David, and in which he utterly destroyed the city of priests together with everything in it. At first he conceived various plans and stratagems of destroying David through the agency of others. David's luck in returning unharmed from several engagements enraged Saul, and fed his hatred and his wrath; but still he did not lose the hope that David would some day be stricken in war. All he had to do was keep on sending him on especially dangerous missions. That is why he inwardly rejoiced when he realized that Michal, his youngest daughter, loved David; he said:

"I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him"...And Saul commanded his servants: "Speak with David secretly, and say: Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee; now therefore be the king's son-in-law."

But David knew Saul, and knew Saul's feelings towards him. Therefore he answered cautiously, and with exaggerated modesty: "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" Whereupon he was answered, in Saul's name: "The king desireth

not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies." Here the Bible comments: "For Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines." David surely understood Saul's intention, but this merely prodded him into demonstrating his ability: Saul thought he'd trap him with a hundred foreskins; he would present Saul two hundred. "And David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins...And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife." Following this, Saul's fear and hatred of David became even greater. "And Saul was David's enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth; ((75)) and it came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David prospered more than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by" (I Sam.18:20-30).

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as David would be first and foremost the king of the children of Judah (II Sam.19:12ff.). Of course, David had no intention of going to Bethlehem, and thus bringing ruin to the city of his birth and to his entire clan. However, it was only in his tribal territory, in the mountains of Judah, that he could hope to hide, and to escape from the power of the king.

He was also afraid of heading south or southwest, for that was populated country, with villages and cities alongside the highways, and a great deal of traffic. If he were sought there, he would easily be captured. Therefore he turned to the desolate mountains east of Jerusalem, over which Saul had no dominion, because the Jebusites ruled over the city and its environs; the city was even named after them: Jebus.

But he couldn't travel very far in the wilderness alone and unarmed. He immediately conceived a plan: Nob, a small settlement of priests on the border of the Jebusite kingdom, was nearby. They surely hadn't yet been informed that David had fallen out of the king's good graces; he would therefore stop off there and obtain what he needed from them by cunning. Ahimelech the priest hurried forward to meet him -- ready to do him honor and be of service to him, for he was well aware of his exalted position as an army commander and son-in-law of the king. He was only surprised to see him travelling alone in the desert. Their conversation was typical and very realistic; it shows us clearly how David succeeded in adapting himself to every place and circumstance,

and in instantly finding a satisfying answer to every question or doubt.

Ahimelech: Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?

David: The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me: Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee; and the young men (the men of his guard) have I appointed to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thy hand? five loaves of bread? give them in my hand, or whatsoever there is present (whatever you have).

Ahimelech: There is no common bread under my hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women.

David:<sup>189</sup> Of a truth women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition; the vessels of the young men are undefiled, even when it is a common journey; how much more today will the holiness of the bread be maintained in our vessels.

But David also needed a weapon. And once again he was faced with the same difficulty: what should he say to the priest to satisfy his curiosity as to why a man like David was travelling defenseless on such a road?

((77)) David: And is there peradventure here under thy hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

Since it is mentioned here that David is looking for a sword for himself, the story-teller takes the opportunity to recall the incident of Goliath, and the sword becomes that of the Philistine giant. Incidentally, this is the only place in the entire Bible -- aside from I Sam.17 -- in which the victory over Goliath is attributed to David.

Ahimelech: The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the vale of Elah, behold, it is

here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other save that here.

David: There is none like that; give it me (I Sam. 21: 1-10).

However, when Saul was informed of the transaction by Doeg the Edomite, the latter accusing Ahimelech of being an accomplice to David, Doeg did not attach Goliath's name to the sword.

And Saul said: "Hear now, thou son of Ahitub...Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?" Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said: "And who among all thy servants is so trusted as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and giveth heed unto thy bidding, and is honorable in thy house? Have I today begun to inquire of God for him?"

But Saul's mind was closed, so that he could accept no explanations, and the entire city of priests was destroyed at his command (I Sam. 22: [12-]16).

David came to the Adullam region, a remote place south-east of the valley of Elah, and he hid in one of the caves there. But he was no mere anonymous refugee; his name had preceded him. Very soon "every one that was in distress" began to collect around him -- embittered men, people who were escaping responsibilities, downtrodden men, and of course -- after the incident at Nob -- his father's house and all his relatives; and also the single soul among the inhabitants of Nob who escaped -- Abiathar the son of Ahimelech. David considered himself responsible for the tragedy of the priests of Nob. With a sorrowful heart, he said to

Abiathar:

I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul; I have brought about the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; for with me thou shalt be in safeguard" [Heb: *וְאִתִּי תִּהְיֶה בְּמִלְחָמָה* --] a deposit entrusted to my responsibility for safekeeping) (I Sam.22:22-23).

But David also knew how to derive profit from everything that came into his possession. Abiathar had brought with him an ephod --a kind of holy garment or object by which the priests used to receive oracles. In time of doubt, especially when hesitation or signs of rebellion appeared among the men of his band, David turned to the ephod for help. When he heard that Saul intended to besiege him in Keilah, he said to Abiathar: "Bring hither the ephod." Then David asked the Lord: "Will Saul come down, as Thy servant hath heard?"...And the Lord said: 'He will come down.' Then said David: 'Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of Saul?' And the Lord said: 'They will deliver thee up'" (I Sam.23:6-12). After receiving this answer, David knew what he had to do.

The trait of expeditious action was one of David's outstanding characteristics. He would review a situation, decide upon a course of action, and carry it out, all at the same time. His strength of spirit, and the use of the ephod, helped him suppress a rebellion among his men, and save himself from death ("for the people spoke of stoning him"), after the Amalekites had burnt Ziklag.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech: "I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod." And

Abiathar brought thither ((78)) the ephod to David. And David inquired of the Lord, saying: "Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And He answered him: "Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and shalt without fail recover all" (I Sam.30:6-8).

Abiathar and his ephod strengthened David's position vis-à-vis his own men and vis-à-vis the inhabitants of the land. At the same time, Abiathar, too, became more esteemed. And as Abiathar's praises began to be more widely rehearsed, the memory of the slaughter committed by Saul in the city of priests also began to circulate more widely, and to be revived in people's minds. This, too, was advantageous to David and damaging to Saul. David, at the time of his greatness, did not forget the people who had shared a life of hardship and danger with him, when he had been an outcast and fugitive from Saul. When he reigned in Jerusalem, he appointed Abiathar as head priest (alongside Zadok), and as adviser to the king. But power does not last forever. When David became old and mortally ill, competition increased at the royal court. Two factions struggled with each other: Joab and Abiathar fought for the coronation of Adonijah, David's eldest son (after the death of Amnon and Absalom); but Bath-sheba, Solomon's mother, and the prophet Nathan inclined the king's heart towards Solomon (I Ki.1). It was Solomon who came to the throne --

And unto Abiathar the priest said the king: "Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art deserving of death; but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou didst bear the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou wast afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted." So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord.

The editor adds a comment: "that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled, which He spoke concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh"(I Ki.2:26-27)... "and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar"(I Ki.2:35). Abiathar had chosen the side that failed, and so he had lost; without David, his ephod was of no use to him.

David's feelings of gratitude -- of the obligation of gratitude -- were strong. Many people loved him; some of them stuck by him all their lives. Those who loved him, loved him greatly (and those who hated him -- hated him greatly). He remembered the devotion of those who loved him, but there is no proof that he responded to them with an equal degree of love. His strong sense of independence would not tolerate dependence upon anyone else, even that dependence which comes from ties of love. The love of Jonathan for David, and the covenant which they made between them, is referred to more than once. "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he (Jonathan) loved him (David) as his own soul (I Sam.18:1-4). That covenant is not subject to doubt. Its manifestations are visible even after Jonathan's death. The men of the house of Saul, and also, certainly, most of their fellow-tribesmen, conceived a strong hatred for David from the time that the kingship came into his possession. The danger to his house was substantial. This is attested by the faith David placed in the report of Ziba, Jonathan's servant, who came to inform on Meribaal, Jonathan's son, while David was in flight from Absalom. David



asked him: "'And where is thy master's son?' And Ziba said unto the king: 'Behold he abideth in Jerusalem; for he said: To-day will the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.'" (II Sam.16:1-4) The curses and stones which Shimei the son of Gera, "of the family of the house of Saul" showered upon David and his men (II Sam.16:5-13) also attest [to the threat Saul's house posed to David's]; as does the rebellion of another Benjamite, which alarmed David more than Absalom's rebellion, that of Sheba the son of Bichri (II Sam.20:1-6). The need and desire to remove the threat by exterminating all of Saul's descendants conflicted in David's heart with his assurances to Jonathan.

The covenant, and the love, and the oaths which David and Jonathan swore, are written about in several places. ((79)) In I Sam.20:8, David says to Jonathan: "Therefore deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee"; and Jonathan to David: "But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever (I Sam.20:15)". At the end of the same chapter: "And Jonathan said to David: 'Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying: The Lord shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever.'" We find similar words in Chapter 23:17-18. And in II Sam.21:7 -- confirmation from a later period: "But the king spared Mephibosheth (Meribaal), the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul."

Did David love those who loved him? It is nowhere related that he returned the love of Saul, who "loved him greatly" at the beginning; or that his soul was bound up with the soul of Saul's daughter Michal; or with the souls of Zeruah's sons, the two brothers who were ready to give their lives for him at any time; or with the souls of many others (except his sons and some of his wives) who clung to him with all their might. We hear only about his love for Jonathan, and that only on one occasion -- when he was mourning him after his death:

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan;  
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;  
Wonderful was thy love to me,  
Passing the love of women [II Sam.1:26].

But this is a retroactive love, conceived when David was in a poetic mood.

There is undoubtedly a kernel of fact in the stories about the meetings of David the fugitive with Saul and Jonathan; but these stories are dominated by other elements, whose purpose is to accentuate Saul's impotence and mental incompetence; and by contrast to accentuate David's superior qualities, David's cunning, and mainly the transfer of God's grace from Saul to David, and the confirmation by men and by God of the latter's right to the kingship. Jonathan came to see David secretly in a grove, in the wilderness of Ziph -- "And he said unto him: 'Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel'" (I Sam.23:16-18). After the incident in which David cut the corner of Saul's garment, in a cave in the wilderness

of En-Gedi, the king himself says words like these to him: "And now, behold, I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand" (I Sam.24:21). In chapter 26, another story gives David a similar opportunity: again Saul's life happens to be in David's hands -- and again the latter refrains from doing any harm to the Lord's anointed one. The scene this time is the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon (according to Y. Press, southeast of Hebron). Instead of harming the king, David stands and reproaches him at a distance, from the top of a mountain: "Wherefore doth my lord pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in my hand?" At this point, an incidental comment is placed in David's mouth, which sheds light upon that era's concepts of the relationship of man to God, and of man to his fellow-men. David says: "If it be the Lord that hath stirred thee up against me, let Him accept an offering" -- i.e., it's not your place to intervene between me and God; I know how to appease Him with a sweet-smelling sacrifice. "But if it be the children of men (who have stirred thee up against me), cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of the Lord, saying: Go, serve other gods." In other words: since they will have compelled me to leave the territory of Israel, I shall be forced to worship foreign gods, and my sins will fall on the heads of those who have so compelled me." The king listens to David's reproof and is conscience-stricken. "Then said

Saul: "I have sinned; ((80)) return, my son David." And after a few more verbal exchanges, Saul again confirms that the future belongs to David: "Blessed be Thou, my son David; thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail." We also hear of David's right to the throne and of his divinely foreordained future from the mouth of Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite: "And though man be risen up to pursue thee (meaning Saul), and to seek thy soul...it shall come to pass that the Lord shall do to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall appoint thee prince over Israel" (I Sam.25:29-30).<sup>190</sup> We hear an additional confirmation from the mouth of dead Samuel: "And the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David" (I Sam.28:17).

#### E) In the Wilderness

How did David provide for himself and his band in the wilderness of Judah? The story of Nabal and Abigail reveals a little of their way of life. At the time David escaped from Saul, he was a solitary refugee without food or weapons, but he was not an unknown person. After he had arrived within his tribal boundaries, fugitives of all kinds began to gather around him: men in distress, men evading social responsibility; and above all, the members of his family and all his relatives, for they were bound to be objects of Saul's vengefulness. By the time of David's stay in the Adullam region, the number of his men had already

grown to about four hundred; and we are immediately told that, as we would expect, "he became captain over them" (I Sam. 22:2). After a while, his band numbered about six hundred sword-bearing men. A company of six hundred men is not a great force, but under David's leadership it became a substantial factor in Judah. With it, David defended remote settlements from bands of desert nomads, who used to raid and plunder them, laying waste their fields and stealing their cattle. With this same group, he saved the city of Keilah from the Philistines. In exchange for this protection, David used to receive his livelihood.

Various circumstances worked in David's favor, some of them external and independent of him, and others of his own making. Feelings of jealousy and rivalry were prevalent among the tribes. The intensity of the quarrels between the two brother-tribes, the Josephites, during the days of Gideon and Jephthah, is instructive. After Gideon's victory over the Midianites, the Ephraimites came to him, very angry about not having been given a large enough role in the battle against Midian -- "and they did chide with him sharply." By dint of his personal charm and his conciliatory language, Gideon succeeded in preventing inter-tribal warfare (Judges 8:1-3). But it was not prevented in Jephthah's time. Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant soldier, but he was not endowed with Gideon's spiritual qualities. He was a hard, embittered man. Once, the Ephraimites gathered together for the purpose of initiating a quarrel with him, as they had done with Gideon

in his day, and they began by threatening: "Wherefore didst thou pass over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thy house upon thee with fire." Jephthah answered them harshly, and did not shy away from using the sword. The Ephraimites burst into Gilead, but were defeated. Within the Gileadites sizzled ((81)) a burning hatred against the Ephrathites,<sup>191</sup> for the latter used to belittle them, saying: "Ye are fugitives of Ephraim, ye Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim, and in the midst of Manasseh" -- as if to say, You are insignificant people, the refuse of Ephraim and Manasseh. When Ephraim's army was defeated, its soldiers dispersed, and each one tried to save his own life. But no one could be saved unless he returned to cross the Jordan westward, back into his own territory. However, because of their hatred for the Ephraimites, the Gileadites seized the fords of the river, and asked anyone who wanted to cross, "'Art thou an Ephraimite'<sup>192</sup>?' If he said: 'Nay'; then said they unto him: 'Say now Shibboleth'; and he said 'Sibboleth'...then they...slew him at the fords of the Jordan" (Judges 12:1-6).

The jealousy and resentment that simmered between Benjamin and Judah were evident even in Saul's time. But there were some Benjamites who were hostile to Saul -- whether because they considered themselves of better lineage than he; or because they had not received all the benefits they had expected from him; or because they were exploited by his officials: every ruler has many ways of making people hate

him. These disaffected Benjamites threw in their lot with David while he was still in Ziklag. The Book of Chronicles, which bears the imprint of the adherents of David's house, points this out with victorious trumpeting:

Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he was yet shut up because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, his helpers in war. They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in slinging stones and in shooting arrows from the bow; they were of Saul's brethren of Benjamin (I Chron.12:1-2).

David was reluctant to accept them; he didn't even have confidence in men of his own tribe who had come with those Benjamites:

And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the stronghold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them: "If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you (we will be able to do battle together); but if ye be come to deceive me, if ye be among my adversaries,<sup>193</sup> seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and give judgment.

Then Amasai, the head of the captains, arose (the text is faulty; according to the Septuagint, it should be Abishai, the head of the captains), and gave his enthusiastic guarantee of the newcomers:

Then the spirit clothed Amasai, who was chief of the captains:

Thine are we, David,  
And on thy side, thou son of Jesse;  
Peace, peace be unto thee,  
And peace be to thy helpers;  
For thy God helpeth thee.

Then David received them, and made them captains of the band (I Chron.12:17-19).

From David's fears, we learn that most of the Benjamites were loyal to Saul, their fellow-tribesman. By the same token, the children of Judah tended to be on David's side. Judah

was already then one of the largest of Israel's tribes, the largest in the south; but Benjamin -- after the incident of Gibeah<sup>194</sup> -- was very small and weak. Perhaps this had been one of the prophet Samuel's reasons for choosing as king a man from the tribe of Benjamin, rather than from any other tribe. The form of Saul's own answer to Samuel allows us to draw this conclusion: "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" (I Sam.9:21). Samuel could suppose that a man from a small tribe, who belonged to a family below the top of the social scale, would be more dependent upon him, and obedient to him, than would the scion of a great and powerful tribe.

((82)) No doubt, the giving of the kingship to Benjamin angered Judah; so that when the quarrel between the Benjamite king and the "commander of a thousand" from their own tribe who had already achieved a reputation for bravery and good fortune, became aggravated, the loyalties of the men of Judah were with David. It is not surprising that David found refuge in Judah; although, to be sure, his rescuers did not admit to concealing him: the king was strong and vengeful, and the slaughter in Nob had filled many with dread.

But David and his band couldn't live on sympathy alone. They needed food and clothing, too. And the number of mouths which had to be fed was, of course, far greater than the six hundred who went out with the raiding party. David al-



ready had two wives: Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess; and many of his men were also heads of families (I Sam.27:3). When the Amalekites raided Ziklag, while David and his army were away, they took their wives and children captive (I Sam.30:1-3, 18-19). We don't know where the heads of families had kept the members of their households before they left Judah's territory and settled in Ziklag, under the protection of the Philistine king of Gath. We have read about David, that he found a place of refuge for his parents with the king of Moab. Surely others must have done likewise, and arranged accommodations in various safe places, in or out of Israel, for people dependent upon them. But of course they were still responsible for supporting them.

They used to earn their living in several ways. Firstly, they would make raids upon those desert tribes who had always been a thorn in the side not only of the southern Israelite settlements (southern Judah, Simeon) but also of those small Hebrew tribes who looked to the Israelites for protection (the Jerahmeelites, the Kenites). They would make the same kind of raids later, when they would be living in Ziklag:

And [they] made a raid upon the Geshurites, and the Gizzites (among the remnants of the Canaanites; cf. I Ki.9:16), and the Amalekites; for those were the inhabitants of the land, who were of old, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt...and (David, in that raid) took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel (I Sam.27:8-9).

They found a second source of income for themselves in defending border settlements from enemies. The king was far away, and did not always rush to the aid of such settlements. David was nearby, and quick to respond; his band was mobile, and lived by the sword. The incident of Keilah is an example of this. The residents of Keilah asked David, and not Saul, for help. The rescue of settlements belonging to the Israelites or to their allies would open up two sources of income for David: if he succeeded (and David always succeeded in his military undertakings; the Bible makes no secret of his shortcomings and weaknesses, and if he had ever sustained defeat, it would surely have been recorded), he would plunder the enemy camp, as in the case of Keilah: "And David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter" (I Sam.23:5). Afterwards he and his band would stay in the rescued city for a while, and live as its guests. Their stay was, of course, a burden to the residents. And this was apparently one of the reasons -- aside from fear of the king's revenge -- which impelled them to inform Saul that his sworn enemy was in their city, and that they were ready to hand David over to him. David became aware of the plot while there was still time; he must have had faithful friends, grateful men, in the city. He left Keilah without any acts of revenge and without bearing any grudge. He knew the city's predicament, and understood the feelings of her inhabitants. Even earlier, before he had turned to God with questions ((83))

(via the ephod), he had been told "that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake"(I Sam.23:10).

Even though David was called "a man of blood," and he truly did shed much blood, he was not the bloodthirsty type. It is related about him that in the course of his raids in the wilderness of Sinai "David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive"; and again: "And David left neither man nor woman alive, to bring them to Gath" (I Sam.27:8-11), lest the Philistines discover that he was doing injury to Israel's enemies, and not to his own people (as he had told Achish). But this is no doubt one of the numerous stories which were circulated in order to publicize and to extol David's power in devising stratagems and in destroying [Israel's] enemies. Among these figments of imagination we may also include the first version of David's coming to Achish, the king of Gath: the Philistines recognized him, brought him to the king, and said, "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying: 'Saul hath slain his thousands/And David his ten thousands?'" David was frightened, and pretended to be insane; Achish apparently believed that he was insane, and chased him out of the land; and thus was David saved (I Sam.21:11-16).

David surely did not take pity on the thieving, murderous desert nomads, and he used to destroy them insofar as he was able; just as they used to do when they would come upon a Judean settlement. This was no mere quest for booty; it also had the quality of a mutual blood-feud. But it does not

seem reasonable that David could have hidden from Achish and the Philistines the truth about whom he was attacking in the Negev; it is impossible that the truth would not have been quickly revealed to them. David was not attacking his own people; but the Philistines suffered from the raids of the desert tribes, just as did the Israelites. David's battles against the nomads was useful to the Philistines, too. It is almost certain, therefore, that Achish did not regret David's activities in the wilderness; and that he didn't refuse to accept part of the spoils from him, either.

A third source of David's livelihood (before he came to Ziklag) is described in detail in I Sam.25. David was unable to spend much time in any one place, because of Saul's pursuit, and also because the local residents were afraid of Saul's certain revenge upon themselves. Furthermore, his growing band became a burden upon the population. At the beginning of the chapter, we are told: "And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran," that is, to the vicinity of Kadesh-barnea; but neither did he neglect his sources of income in Judah. In the incident we are discussing, he appointed men to guard the large flocks of Nabal the Carmelite (Carmel in Judah was a large village, fifteen kilometers south of Hebron; the name has been preserved in Arabic until our own day: el-Kirmil<sup>195</sup>), consisting of thousands of sheep and goats. It seems that they grazed in places far from civilization, and were thus in danger of being stolen. Possibly there was even an agreement between David and the

supervisor of the flocks concerning David's protection; in any event, it is clear that this protection was desirable to Nabal's shepherds. At the time of the sheep-shearing, David sent a message to Nabal asking compensation for his troubles. The form and style of his request bring to mind the language of the Amarna letters -- men did not speak that way at any later period:

And David said unto the young men: "Get you up to Carmel...and thus ye shall say (to Nabal): 'All hail! and peace be both unto thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers; thy shepherds have now been with us, and we did them no hurt, neither was there aught missing unto them...Ask thy young men, and they will tell thee; wherefore let the young men (David's messengers) find favour in thine eyes; for we come on a good day; ((84)) give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thy hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David.'" ...And Nabal answered David's servants, and said: "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master; shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men of whom I know not whence they are?"

When this answer was delivered to David, he said to his men:

"Gird ye on every man his sword"...and David also girded on his sword; and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the baggage.

One of the shepherds hurried to Nabal's wife, Abigail, and said to her:

"Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he flew upon them. But the men were very good unto us...they were a wall unto us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house; for he is such a base fellow that one cannot speak to him." Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and

two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. With these, and with her sensible words and her beauty, she appeased David's wrath.

And David said to Abigail: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy discretion, and blessed be thou, that hast kept me this day from bloodguiltiness, and from finding redress for myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the Lord, the God of Israel, liveth, who hath withholden me from hurting thee, except thou hadst made haste and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light so much as one male.

The matter ended according to the Biblical pattern: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree"[Ps.92:13]... and the evil man shall be felled by his evil. When Abigail returned home, she found her husband taking part in a drinking-party with his companions, and extremely drunk. The next morning, when she told him everything, he was seized with convulsions or paralysis "and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, so that he died" -- and Abigail married David.

The story is a living slice of reality at that time. It contains no miracles; and no detail in it arouses any doubts. And the fact that it has a happy ending is no reason to deny its authenticity: there are chapters of life, too, that have happy endings.

In any event, this incident teaches us what David's third source of income was, during the years that he was pursued by Saul, and hiding from him in the mountains of

Judah and the wilderness of the Negev. He would defend the inhabitants' flocks, and their shepherds,, who had sought good pasture-lands far from their village, and who were continually stalked by danger from men of the desert looking for prey -- and thus would David earn his livelihood. There were ranchers who thought of this as extortion, and refused to pay. Perhaps Nabal was unaware of the protection which David's men had been to his flocks "in the field"; or perhaps he didn't want to be aware, or to value that protection properly; however, his shepherds knew, and they valued it. Unless Abigail had anticipated the danger, David would no doubt have killed Nabal and destroyed his entire household. In the shepherd's words to Abigail are reflected feelings of affection for David, an affection which even then had grown strong in people's hearts -- and which would ultimately raise him to the throne of Israel.

Probably incidents like that of Nabal did not occur frequently. Perhaps for that very reason it was recorded; ((85)) perhaps, too, because it delighted those who told it and those who heard it, for it proved that there was at least some justice in the world. Most of the ranchers no doubt realized that David was indeed saving their property; and they did not evade paying him his due; especially since they knew that he would not remain still, while he had the power to requite their evil.

F) In Gath

Thoughts of becoming king could not have percolated in David's mind before he had left the soil of Israel. King Saul was never quiet or at rest; the pursuit of David had become the single aim of his life. That pursuit kept on increasing in intensity. So much of his energy and time were absorbed on this internal battle-front, that his battle against external enemies was somewhat weakened. David realized that despite all his agility and cunning, despite all the sympathy and support he had found within his own tribe, he could no longer remain in hiding: the king would eventually catch up with him. From a certain standpoint, his situation was similar to that of Alcibiades the Athenian, who was forced to flee his homeland and to seek refuge in an enemy's land. When the pressure became more than he could bear, "David said in his heart: 'I shall now be swept away one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines'" (I Sam.27:1). Of course he did not come to a Philistine king without having negotiated with him first.

David's acceptance by Achish, the king of Gath, was the result of political calculation. What had been taking place in Israel was not hidden from her neighbors. Achish knew that Saul's fortunes were on the decline; and that David had a great deal of support there, especially amongst his own tribesmen. Along with these considerations, we must include



David's personal charm, his congenital talent for winning the heart of anyone whom he needed. His son Absalom inherited this particular talent from him (II Sam.15:1-6), but not the other talents which had raised his father from the sheepfold to the royal throne.

Achish became attached to David, as Saul and Jonathan and Michal once had become; indeed, even "Saul's servants," that is, his courtiers, regarded David favorably at first. It seems that the king of Gath had full confidence in him, and was ready to include him among his closest companions. But David had not come alone; six hundred men, together with their families, had gone over to Gath with him: "And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household" (I Sam.27:3) -- in other words, a total of about two thousand people, to say the least. We may suppose that relations between the inhabitants of Gath and the Hebrews who had come along with David, men of a raiding party who lived by the sword, were not as comfortable and smooth as those between their leader, the adaptable David, and his Philistine patron, who had good reasons of his own [for wanting David there]. Because of this, and because David felt too restricted in Gath, he asked to move to another place, some distance from the city, with his men, and his request was granted.

And David said unto Achish: "If now I have found favour in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there; for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city ((86)) with thee?" Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day.

And the editor here adds a political observation: "wherefore Ziklag belongeth unto the kings of Judah unto this day" (I Sam. 27:5-6). His observation proves that this document originates in the time of the First Temple.

David became a kind of feudal prince; he received a fief from the king and thus became the ruler of his own city-state and his own small army, with a carte blanche to make raids in the desert. Probably the idea of making David into a real opponent of Saul was thought up in the court of the king of Gath at that time. It was, no doubt, at that time, too, that David himself began perceptibly to entertain the idea of the kingship -- if not the kingship of all Israel, at least that of Judah. While he lived in Ziklag, under Achish's protection, he saw himself no longer bound by loyalty to Saul, his mortal enemy, but rather to the king of Gath.

The scheme of making David king in Judah must have found support in Achish's court. The Israelites had settled in the heart of the land, seized most of it, and become a great nation; their union into a single kingdom, under the leadership of a single king, posed a threat to the very existence of the Philistines in the land. The efforts of the Philistines to expand and to establish their dominion over the interior of the land had been unsuccessful. By Samuel's time, they had already lost many of their previously conquered territories. With Saul's assumption of the kingship, the struggle had become intensified, with Israel gaining

the upper hand, especially once David began managing things. But now, if David would reign in Judah and fight against Saul, Israel would be weakened -- relieving the pressure on the Philistines and improving their chances of a decisive victory. David seemed to them to be the best means to this end.

From the time that the Israelite tribes had begun to unify, in Samuel's day, and even more in Saul's day, the position of the Philistines had deteriorated. After all, they were only a branch of the mighty torrent of Island Peoples which several generations before had burst in upon the mainland, taking Asia Minor, Syria, and the land of Israel by storm. When the flood waters retreated, the Philistines were left in the land of the Hebrews, as a kind of sediment on the coastline. At first, they tried to penetrate into the land; to widen their territory by pushing their border eastward. They were even somewhat successful, aided as they were by improved weaponry, military experience, and reinforcements from the islands -- and weakness of the bonds connecting the Israelite tribes. But in the course of time, there occurred noticeable changes in the Philistines' strength relative to that of the Israelites. The latter became more numerous; and with the advent of the kingship, their unity became greater. The nucleus of a standing army, properly outfitted and trained in the arts of warfare, took shape. At the same time, the stream of immigration from the Aegean islands seems to have dwindled. Whether because of Israel's increased strength, or because of new developments in the

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Aegean world, that flow of immigration turned to the shores of the Black Sea, after the fall of Troy; and was also strongly attracted westward, all along the shores of the Mediterranean. All of this most likely weakened the power of the Philistines in the land of Israel. However, at that time [i.e., the time David was in Gath], they had not yet lost hope. They were preparing for a great effort.

During the period following their invasion of the land, and before the great battle in Mount Gilboa, the Philistines and the peoples attached to them were no more united than the Israelites had been before Saul. They had first arrived from the islands of the sea as an alliance of five or six nations. These are mentioned by name in an inscription of Ramses III. From the story of Wen-Amun the Egyptian, we know that in his day, eighty or ninety years after the Philistine invasion, one of those nations, Tjeker, was settled ((87)) in the region of Dor, and had a small kingdom of its own there. We may suppose that every one of these nations established an independent kingdom for itself. And if Jebus is the Weshesh who are recorded in Ramses III's inscription, then we have a record of still another such kingdom. Philistia itself, as we know, divided into five states: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (Joshua 13:3) -- and each state had a ruler of its own: a prince. These states were not even united in their wars against Israel. During an emergency, they would band together, more-or-less, according to the circumstances. But when the strength of the Israelites

became greater, the drive for unity prevailed among the Philistines, as well.

The conflict between the Israelite king and his renowned general showed the Philistines a weak spot in Saul's kingdom. If the gap could be widened, if they could manage to pit Judah against Israel, their own situation would be much improved, and they would even have hope of breaking the power of the Hebrews once and for all. Probably the king of Gath and his men strove to achieve this goal.

David was, to be sure, of one mind with Achish. But David also had some ideas of his own. During his stay in Ziklag, he kept in close touch with the elders of Judah, and perhaps even with influential people in other tribes. In the nature of things, he now saw the war of the Philistines against Israel, which was likely to bring him to the throne, as primarily a war against Saul.

At first, Achish and his advisers may have urged David to make raids against Judah's border, under the assumption that they could then be sure of his reliability. David did not find it hard to prove to them that if he did so, he would become repulsive to his own people, and that any advantage the Philistines might gain would be cancelled out by the resulting loss. We know for a fact that David was actually permitted to attack the desert tribes who were a nuisance both to southern Judah and to the Philistines.

The king of Gath valued David as a man of many accomplishments and much influence in his own country. And since

such a prize had come Achish's way because of hatred for Saul, it was to the Philistines' advantage to strengthen David and, via that hatred, to engender division and civil war in Israel. Achish relied so strongly on the mutual hatred between Saul and David that he did not hesitate to take David and his men with him, in a war against Israel.

There is no doubt that this prince, like most of the people who came into contact with David, was captivated by his personal charm. But the other Philistine princes didn't share his faith in the Hebrew general and his company.

Then said the princes of the Philistines: "What do these Hebrews here?" And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines: "Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who hath been with me these days or these years (i.e., a long time), and I have found no fault in him since he fell away unto me unto this day?" But the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him: "Make the man return, that he may go back to his place where thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us; for wherewith should this fellow reconcile himself unto his lord? should it not be with the heads of these men?" (i.e., with the heads of the Philistines) (I Sam.29:2-4)

Achish acceded to their request, and apologized to David:

As the Lord liveth (possibly he swore by the name of Israel's God [יְהוָה] in order to appease David, and in order to make him believe in his sincerity), thou hast been upright, and...good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day; nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

((88)) David played his role to the hilt. He arose and pleaded: "But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been before thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

Achish was truly regretful, and repeated what he had previously said, commanding David to go home [i.e., to Ziklag] with his company. "As soon as ye are up early in the morning, and have light, depart" (I Sam.29:6ff).

We have no way of knowing what David would have done had he actually been allowed to participate in that war, on the Philistines' side. The Biblical account does not make clear what he really had in mind. Perhaps he had not arrived at any clearcut decision; perhaps he was inclined to wait and see how matters developed. Of course he told his men -- and he wanted to believe himself -- that this was a war against Saul, who was out to take his own life, and their lives as well. If so, what would he have done on the battlefield? If he had seen that the Philistines were sure to win, possibly he would have fought alongside them -- and his place in Israel's history would have been completely reversed. But if he had felt that the battle was a toss-up, he almost certainly would have switched his allegiance, attacking the Philistines and helping Israel to victory. However, David's surprising good luck helped him this time, too: his lack of credibility with all the other princes removed him from the horns of the dilemma.

Probably his men were not happy about fighting alongside the Philistines against Israel. They submitted to David's orders in this matter as in all others, but not wholeheartedly. Their disposition was bitter, and this bitterness was transformed into rage when they returned to Ziklag and



saw that in their absence the city had been destroyed and razed by the Amalekites, and their wives and children taken captive. They considered it all to be David's fault. In the fury of their outburst they were ready to stone him. From this, we learn that they had not willingly accompanied him into the Philistine army. Only David's strength of spirit, combined with quick thinking and acting, saved him from death, and reversed his fortunes.

With the use of the ephod, David was able to calm the agitated crowd and infuse them with a spirit of hopefulness; and they immediately went out to pursue the Amalekites. The men had become tired, from the journey to and from the Philistine camp, and from the agitation both in that camp and upon their return to Ziklag; and now they were going out again. They had not gone very far into the desert before two hundred men stopped at the brook Besor, and refused to cross it -- perhaps because they despaired of succeeding in the pursuit. But four hundred men continued to follow David. En route, they found a young man lying on the ground, faint with hunger and thirst. They gave him water to drink, fed and revived him, and asked him who he was.

And he said, "I am a young Egyptian, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We made a raid upon the South of the Cherethites, and upon that which belongeth to Judah, and upon the South of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

The Egyptian directed them to the raiders' camp, and

behold, they were spread abroad all over the ground, eating and drinking, and feasting, because of all the

great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

I have already noted, above, that the Philistines, like the Israelites, suffered from the pestilence of the Amalekites and other desert tribes; and the injury done by David to these nomads was not likely to spoil his standing with the king of Gath and his people.

And David smote them (the Amalekites) from the twilight ((89)) even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men who rode upon camels and fled (I Sam.30:7-20).

Of course, it wasn't only in this incident that many Amalekites succeeded in escaping from David's power. Such expressions as "And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive" in Chapter 27; or "And Saul smote the Amalekites...and he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword" (I Sam.15:7-8); are partly products of an editor's or copyist's imaginings. In any event, the strong and aggressive Amalekites of David's time betoken the fact that Saul had not "utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword."

David possessed a great deal of outward adaptability to his environment, and at the same time a great deal of forcefulness. He knew how to give orders and to make people do his will; and he knew how to speak to people endearingly and in gentle language -- but his variety of approaches did not mean that he had changed his mind; decisions and the means for their implementation were already hidden in his

mind.

He returned from pillaging the Amalekite camp, with a great deal of booty. Some of the four hundred men who had accompanied him spoke bitterly about the two hundred who had stayed behind and waited by the brook Besor for the others to return.

Then answered all the wicked men and base fellows, of those that went with David, and said, "Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and children, that they may lead them away, and depart."

David's answer points up the naturally humane feelings which never diminished, despite David's being involved in war for so many years.

Then said David: "Ye shall not do so, my brethren...for as is the share of him that goeth down to the battle, so shall be the share of him that tarrieth by the baggage; they shall share alike." And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day (1 Sam.30:21-25).

#### G) To the Kingship

The moment David left Israel's territory, as I have said, he no longer considered himself bound by loyalty to Israel's king. Theoretically, he had become a "servant" of -- i.e., submissive to -- a Philistine king. But David did not sever his ties with the notables of his own tribe; if anything, those ties became even stronger than they had been before. Probably the thought of becoming king was planted in his mind in Ziklag. He received support from Achish, on the one hand, and the men of Judah, on the other.

Nevertheless, he did nothing substantial in that direction while Saul was still alive. But after the death of Saul and Jonathan, and the rout of Israel in the battle of Gilboa, his vague thoughts about the kingship ripened, and were transformed into a decision.

Even at that time, however, he had not yet thought of becoming king over all Israel. Circumstances had paved the way for him to assume the kingship of Judah; and he was not the type to let an opportunity slip by. His first act, upon returning to Ziklag laden with booty, was to send gifts to the elders of Judah. "And...he sent of the spoil ((90)) unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends (?) [לְרֵעֵיוֹ], saying: "Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord" (I Sam. 30:26). The meaning of the word לְרֵעֵיוֹ [literally, "to his friend"] in this verse is not clear. Some emend it to read לְרֵעֵיהֶם ["to their friends"] or לְרֵעֵיהֶם ["to his friends," as cf. the J.P.S. translation, above], etc. -- but all these emendations do not really solve the problem. A reading found in one of the Septuagint versions seems more correct: לְרֵעֵיהֶם [i.e., "to their cities"]; and, indeed, a list of the cities to whose elders David sent presents immediately follows the verse in question: Beth-el; Ramoth of the South (in Simeon's territory); Jattir (southeast of Hebron); Aroer (about twenty kilometers southeast of Beersheba; in Arabic: Ar'arah<sup>196</sup>); Siphmoth (about twenty kilometers southeast of Eshtemoa; el-muhajit?<sup>197</sup>); Eshtemoa (south of Hebron; an Arab village: es-Samu<sup>198</sup>); Racal (Carmel in Judah, according to the

Septuagint; eleven kilometers southeast of Hebron); Hormah (some identify it with tell el-milh<sup>199</sup>, about twenty-two kilometers southeast of Beersheba); Kor-ashan<sup>200</sup> (seven kilometers north of Beersheba); Athach or Ether<sup>201</sup> (1.5 kilometers northwest of Beit Guvrin; in Arabic, el-<sup>5</sup>Ater<sup>202</sup>); Hebron; and also "to them that were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them that were in the cities of the Kenites...and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt" [I Sam.30:27-31]. David was in touch with all these cities, and we may suppose that his contact with them did not just begin at that time.

David never forgot to find support for his actions in Divine endorsement, and he did the same thing now.

And...David inquired of the Lord (by means of the ephod, no doubt), saying: "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" And the Lord said unto him: "Go up." And David said: "Whither shall I go up?" And He said: "Unto Hebron."

So David went up, with his wives and his band of men, "every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron." From what follows, it becomes clear that the whole matter was completely prearranged: "And the men of Judah came, and they there anointed David king over the house of Judah" (II Sam.2:1-4).

As soon as he had returned to Judah and been anointed king, David began once again to observe the precept of respect for an anointed king. When the Amalekite came to him and reported that he had killed the king (at the latter's request) with his own hands, David displayed terrible shock and com-

manded that this "bearer-of-good-tidings" be put to death -- even though it is clear from David's words that he didn't believe the Amalekite's story. (Certainly the Amalekite, upon realizing what was in store for him, must have admitted that he had fabricated the story of killing Saul, in the hope of receiving a handsome reward.) This was the language David used, in decreeing death for the Amalekite:

How wast thou not afraid to put forth thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" And David called one of the young men, and said: "Go near, and fall upon him." And he smote him that he died. And David said unto him: "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying: I have slain the Lord's anointed" (II Sam.1:14-16).

David subsequently sent words of blessing and praise to the men of Jabesh-gilead because they had buried Saul's body; and he added: "Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them" (I Sam. 2:4-7). He never depended upon having been anointed by the prophet Samuel. The intent of his embassy to the men of Jabesh-gilead is clear: he was delivering the message to all of Gilead, and to all the northern tribes, that the question of the kingship had not yet been resolved, and would not be resolved by the coronation of one of Saul's offspring -- ((91)) for he, David, also had a justifiable claim to the throne. To be sure, at that time only the men of Judah recognized him, but his eyes were focused on what was taking place throughout Israel -- and if the rest of the tribes wanted him, he was ready to take the place of "their deceased lord."

In the characteristic expression "For your lord is dead, and also they have anointed me king over them," David hints that he will not recognize the right to reign of any other person from the House of Saul.

But the northern tribes did not show themselves willing to elevate a man from the tribe of Judah as king over themselves. If there had to be a king at all, better that a son of Saul, who would at least be a lawful successor, should sit on his father's throne. Abner, Saul's general, and apparently a man of great influence in Israel, hurried to bring Ish-baal [i.e., "man of Baal"] (in order to express contempt for Baal, as well as for the man who was named after him, the Bible usually called him not Ish-baal but Ish-bosheth [i.e., "man of shame"]), Saul's fourth son (since his first three sons -- Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua -- were slain with Saul in the battle of Gilboa) to Mahanaim (north of the brook Jabbok, 3.5 kilometers northeast of Rosh Pinna), "and he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel" (II Sam.2:9).

The continuous struggle between the houses of Saul and David lasted several years. It should be noted that throughout that time, the Philistines did not attack David and his country. They rejoiced, no doubt, at the success of their plan; and they carefully followed the expansion of the civil war in Israel, and awaited its results. Meanwhile, they refrained from any action of their own, lest the Israelite

tribes become reconciled and reunited. This type of reasoning lends itself to interpretation as a sign of weakness on the part of the Philistines.

David's attitude while he was located at Hebron also begs to be interpreted. According to his character, and according to everything we know about him, he should have been out to achieve immediate submission by force. Why did he linger in Hebron for more than seven years? Maybe at first he didn't consider himself strong enough to carry on a war of offense; but there is no doubt that in a short time he had achieved military superiority.

The struggle took the form of limited local engagements, one of which is described vividly in II Sam. 2:12-32:

And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out; and they met together by the pool of Gibeon (about ten kilometers north of Jerusalem; in Arabic el-Jib<sup>203</sup>), and sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab: "Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and play before us." And Joab said: "Let them arise." Then they arose and passed over by number: twelve for Benjamin, and for Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so that they fell down together... And the battle was very sore that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David... And Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner; and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon (the valley which is in the vicinity of Gibeath-benjamin, through which runs the highway leading to Transjordan). And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one band, and stood on the top of a hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said: "Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the



people return from following their brethren?" ((92)) And Joab said: "As God liveth, if thou hadst not spoken, surely then only after the morning the people had gone away, every one from following his brother." (According to commentators [the meaning of *וַיִּשָּׁבְעוּ* is: If you had not said by the pool of Gibeon: "Let the young men arise," etc.) So Joab blew the horn, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more (on that day)."

At the end of the chapter, the losses of both sides are summarized: twenty of David's men fell, among them Asahel, the brother of Joab, and "of Abner's men -- three hundred and threescore men died." Whether these figures are accurate or not (they originated in the camp at Hebron, of course), their proportional truth is not subject to doubt. Since David's men did prevail against Abner's men, and pursued them, it is clear that David's army suffered fewer losses, perhaps many fewer, than did their opponent. From this passage, we also learn how small were the armies which participated in these clashes. We have no figures. We do know that Abner was the aggressor in this instance. He came from Mahanaim (in Gilead, in the territory of Gad) to Gibeon for the purpose of attacking David in Judah; so we may suppose that he considered himself stronger than David, at least numerically. Nevertheless he was defeated. It is not hard to figure out why. The regular, experienced core of Saul's army had been wiped out at Gilboa; and those who had not fallen had scattered, each to his own home. Some had gone over to David's side. Abner had collected as many men as he could. At Mahanaim, David must have been viewed as the head of a band of outlaws, robbers, and extortionists, who would flee for their

lives as soon as the king's army approached, just as they had once fled from Saul; whereupon Abner's army would inflict punishment upon Judah, and would not return empty-handed. They prepared themselves for a quick, easy victory. But David was no longer the head of an isolated and ostracized band; he was king of Judah, and the entire land of Judah stood behind him.

David's greatest advantage lay in having the men of his original company, who had travelled around in the wilderness with him for days and years; who had withstood all kinds of hardships and learned to live by the sword; who were men of war, toughened and experienced. Following the battle of Gilboa, soldiers from various tribes joined him, as is told in I Chron.12 -- even soldiers from Benjamin, among them, no doubt, some who had served in Saul's army.

David had another advantage, no less valuable: at the head of this army stood Joab, a man endowed with the qualities of a great commander. It is not surprising, therefore, that David gained the upper hand during the protracted struggle with the house of Saul. The Bible, as usual, points this out incidentally, in one small verse: "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker" (II Sam.3:1).

To these advantages must be added certain accidental reasons which worked in David's favor. Ishbaal the son of Saul was a man of weak character, not suited to be king in

those confused times. The strongest man in his government was Abner, Saul's uncle or cousin, and his military commander. It was Abner who crowned Ishbaal, and Abner who preserved his throne until the quarrel that occurred between them. It was he who actually ruled in the northern kingdom, and he exercised considerable influence over the elders of Israel. The quarrel between Ishbaal and him, on account of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul's concubine, hastened the downfall of the house of Saul. Ishbaal spoke harshly to Abner, saying: "Wherefore has thou gone in unto my father's concubine?" Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth." In his anger, he reminded Ishbaal that he was ruling only by Abner's grace; now, therefore, he would transfer the kingship to David. ((93)) There is no way of knowing whether Ishbaal's indignation poured forth just because of anxiety about his father's honor; or whether also, and perhaps even primarily, because of his suspicion that Abner had his eye on the royal throne. An outsider who marries into the royal family -- whether it be to a king's daughter, widow, or concubine -- becomes a member of the family; and at the right moment he can be counted among those eligible to assume the crown. After David had married Michal (and had not fallen in battle, as her father had anticipated), Saul's suspicions that his son-in-law was plotting to take his place became much stronger. When Bath-sheba interceded with Solomon, that he might give Abishag, David's concubine, to Adonijah in marriage, he answered his mother sharply: "And why does thou ask Abishag the

Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother." The request cost Adonijah his life: "And King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him, so that he died" (I Ki. 2:13-25). But in the case of Saul's concubine, the initiative and power were in Abner's hands. When he saw his omnipotent general become enraged, Ishbaal's heart sank: "And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him" (II Sam. 3:11).

Possibly Abner no longer believed that the kingship would remain in Saul's dynasty, and was merely looking for a pretext to leave the sinking ship. For what could have prevented him, under the circumstances, from expelling Ish-baal, and perhaps, indeed, taking his place? But he had apparently come to the conclusion that he would not be able to stand his ground against David. Undoubtedly he knew that most of the elders of Israel considered this to be the case. We can deduce this from the language of his suggestion to David: "Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring over all Israel unto thee" (II Sam. 3:12). David was not hasty; he was already sure of complete and imminent victory. In his reply, he made his agreement conditional upon the return of his first wife, Michal the daughter of Saul. It is doubtful whether he really missed her; and there is no doubt that after everything that had happened to her father's house and to her, and in the light of David's role in their downfall, that Michal utterly

loathed him. And now David inflicted still another cruel blow upon her: at his request, she was taken against her will from her second husband, who loved her deeply, and to whom we may suppose that she, too, was attached.

Probably David had political considerations in mind when he did so. For many people, Michal's being returned to him was tantamount to a confirmation of his claim on Saul's throne. David's demand was also partly a test of Abner's sincerity and ability. Above all, it was a demonstration to everyone of Ishbaal's impotence and worthlessness. It was for this reason that David turned publicly to Ishbaal (after the matter had been discussed with Abner, no doubt) with these words:

"Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Paltiel the son of Laish. And her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim (II Sam. 3:4-16).

Bahurim was apparently a village in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives, on the old road to the Jordan.

We may deduce from Abner's promise to David "to bring over all Israel unto him," that Abner had already discussed this matter with whoever had influence within the tribes. This may also be seen in his manner of speaking to the elders of Israel after Michal's return: "In times past ye sought for David to be king over you" (II Sam. 3:17). And Saul's son had lost the last vestige of his respect in the eyes of Israel by his public, humiliating submission to David's demand.

((94)) It was not hard for Abner to bring over to the son of Jesse not only the northern tribes, but even Benjamin, the tribe of Saul and of Abner himself. After so doing, he came to Hebron to negotiate with David, in the name of Israel and Benjamin, over the conditions of his becoming king (II Sam. 3:19-21).

At this point occurred the first open schism between David and the sons of his sister Zeruah -- Job and Abishai. To be more precise, the schism erupted from one side; the sons of Zeruah remained faithful to their uncle, and dedicated to him with all their heart and might. But David's soul recoiled from them. The two of them had, no doubt, been a source of distress to him for some time. Despite all the love and admiration which they expressed for him, they were still stubborn men, forceful in their opinions, who guarded their position and their prerogatives with a fierce jealousy; and sometimes their actions ran counter to David's wishes and did damage to his plans. The lack of correlation between the mentalities of the two sides had already shown itself, in the second version of David's opportunity to finish off Saul in his sleep, in the midst of his camp, while the entire camp was fast asleep (I Sam. 26). The story is apparently legendary, but it does inform us about the type of relationship which during the course of time built within David a true hatred for his nephews.

Then answered David and said...:"Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?" And Abishai said:"I will go down with thee." So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within

the barricade, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David: "...let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time."

David prevented him from so doing, and, according to the Bible, lectured him about the holiness of "the Lord's anointed." He commanded Abishai to take -- as tangible proof-- only "the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water."

The division between David and the sons of Zeruah became ever wider. In the course of time, David's aversion to them became stronger and more serious. If he had been an ordinary despot, he would not have found it hard to finish them off, or at least to move them far away from himself. But he remembered their boundless devotion, and all that they had suffered with him; he remembered how they had risked death for his sake -- and he could do them no harm. David had very strong feelings of loyalty, gratitude, and family closeness. The two brothers were also among the leaders of his mighty men, and Joab had shown himself to be a first-class commander. While David was still wandering in the desert with a band of embittered men, he used to lead them himself, whether in battle or in any other circumstances. Now that he ruled over Judah, he was preoccupied with the welding of his new kingdom; with the repulsion of attacks by the house of Saul; with the establishment of ties with influential men in the northern tribes; with preparing for the conquest of Jebus; with arranging for a permanent army, trained in the art of warfare and properly outfitted -- or at least the

stable and solidified core of such an army -- for he was sure that the conquest of Jebus would engender a great battle with the Philistines. In order to have ample time for all these new responsibilities, David found it necessary to delegate to the sons of Zeruah the conduct of the small, perpetual struggle against the aggressing men of Saul's house, and against external enemies. Perhaps David delegated the conduct of this struggle to other commanders, too -- but mainly, it seems, to Joab.

The act of betrayal committed by the sons of Zeruah, in murdering Abner in the gate of Hebron, came to David((95)) as a stupefying blow, as a stroke of fate which was likely to destroy the delicate web of ties that had been spun between himself and several of the elders of the northern tribes. From the time he had become king in Judah, and realized what was happening in Ishbaal's kingdom, David had been careful not to force matters by the use of military power. Instead, he had looked for ways of winning the hearts of the tribes of Israel in peace and good-will. It was for this reason that he would not wage an aggressive war against the house of Saul even after Ishbaal's death. Just as David knew how to act with the speed of lightning; so he also knew how to calculate his course, how to prepare the ground for himself very slowly, and how to advance on a secure footing. He would display feelings of respect for the deceased Saul at every opportunity. His laments over the death of Saul and Jonathan and Abner no doubt made a great impression on the people. But



even if certain [political] considerations were attached to these laments, they should not be seen as mere tactics. David's sincerity is pointed up very clearly by the difference between his reaction in these cases and his reaction to the murder of Ishbaal. For the latter he did not lament; he merely condemned his murderers and sentenced them to death. But David was heartsick about the rout of Israel at Mount Gilboa, and about the death in battle of Saul and Jonathan -- especially of Jonathan -- and David's sorrow and mourning were genuine and deep. His laments came from the heart; there are few songs in the world which can match them in strength of feeling and power of expression. The murder of Abner shook him to the quick: Abner had been his guest; Abner had been the sure link between him and the tribes of Israel. How would his murder be interpreted? Either as a betrayal for which David was responsible, or as a sign of weakness: proof that David could not rule over his own house. Either way, this matter was sure to cost him support and to negate several years' hard work. David was not perturbed only by such calculations as these. The treacherous act itself hurt David's sense of honesty and of responsibility for the welfare of a man who had come to him at his own invitation, and who had looked to him for protection. And under the circumstances, David could not even requite his nephews their transgression.

Now the sons of Zeruah had reasons of their own [for murdering Abner]. They presented the murder as familial re-

venge for the blood of their brother Asahel, who had been killed by Abner; and it is recorded as such, too, in I Sam. 3:27,30. But Asahel had been killed in battle, while Joab murdered Abner through subterfuge in Hebron, in open violation of his diplomatic immunity, of the laws of hospitality, and of the king's will. It was probably not just the desire for blood-revenge, or even mainly that desire, which impelled Joab to perpetrate his deed. Abner had been commanding general for both Saul and Ishbaal; and if he was coming over to David's side, he must have secured the same position for himself with David. Joab suspected -- correctly, no doubt -- that David was thinking of appointing Abner as head of the army in Joab's place. David had not included him and his brother in on the negotiations with Abner. His intention was clear to them, and Joab reacted to it in his usual fashion -- with calculated cruelty and with an unconcealed outburst of violence, burning all his bridges behind him. He left David just two alternatives -- either to put him to death, or to leave him in office. And David didn't have the courage to do him any harm. Joab remained, and kept his position.

In the same way, and for the same reason, would Joab later slay Amasa (II Sam.20;4-10). And David, depressed and flustered after Absalom's rebellion, would again retreat and would not even show the same strong bitterness in public, as he had done in the first case [the murder of Abner]. In the stories about David are recorded several such clashes as these between him and his kinsman and great general, who was

dedicated to him all his life. Sometimes he would disobey him ((96)) out of dedication (cf. the killing of Absalom), and sometimes he would act out of his own self-interest. David would generally recoil, but reconcile himself to what had been done. But Joab paid with his life for his last attempt to contradict by his actions the decision of the old, mortally ill king -- namely, to bequeath the throne to Solomon. For the latter did not possess the same spiritual restraints as did his father.

Two spirits dwelt side by side within David: that of a man whose strength is in action; and that of a man whose strength is in speech -- the outpouring of his storm-filled heart into penetrating words and powerful song. The latter is just what David did now -- he greatly lamented and bewailed Abner's death; he arranged a well-attended funeral for him, and he wept at his grave. There was no hypocrisy or pretense in all this. The curses which David showered upon Joab and his entire clan, and the lament which he made over Abner, were truly spontaneous -- and at the same time they served as protection for David against people's doubts.

And...David...said: "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner; let it fall upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth by the sword, or that lacketh bread"...And the king lamented for Abner, and said:

Should Abner die as a churl dieth?

Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters;

As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall.

His manifestations of sorrow and anger were sincere, and (according to a version originating, no doubt, in the house of David) they did their job; they removed suspicion and doubt from people's minds. The Bible says: "And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them...So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner."

But one aspect remained which could not have given people very much assurance. Not only did Joab go unpunished; but he was not even banished from the king's court, nor was he removed from his high position in the army. An aspect of David's character is here revealed, which was to become more and more prominent in the course of time, in direct proportion to his loss of physical and spiritual strength: his partiality towards members of his family and towards all those whose lives were closely involved with his own. In one compartment of David's soul, there resided a repugnance for Joab, crude and stubborn, cruel and sly -- and a real hatred for both brothers. In a second compartment, there dwelt the clear and deep-rooted memory of everything they had done for him since his youth, of how they had stood at his side through all times of danger, of how many times they had saved him from death. He was their idol and he knew it. And in yet a third compartment were arranged clear political and military calculations: the two brothers were among David's greatest soldiers; and even if he had other men as brave as they, he had none to compare with them in military ability, as officers

and as battle-commanders. And there is no doubt that David, as we have come to know him, saw with his mind's eye even then, in Hebron,-- in general terms, of course -- what he was going to accomplish: how he would establish a great, united kingdom of Israel, and how he would humble ((97)) all of Israel's enemies roundabout. He needed men like the sons of Zeruiah, whose loyalty to him and whose dedication to their people were boundless.

David found it necessary to apologize for this weakness, and he did so immediately, in the presence of everyone there -- making an open and emotionally powerful admission. His words were from his heart, and they entered the hearts of the people, easing the tension.

And the king said unto his servants: "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, and just anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me; the Lord reward the evil-doer according to his wickedness" (II Sam.3:22-29).

The good fortune encountered by David along his political and military way was amazing -- but he had the ability to make use of every bit of it. The situation which took shape in Ishbaal's kingdom after the death of Abner is described in II Sam. 4, in a single verse which is short, but as enlightening as a hundred pages: "And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the Israelites were affrighted." Following this, the course of events was rapid, and a resolution was not long in coming:

And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the

children of Benjamin; for Beeroth (perhaps el-bireh,<sup>204</sup> opposite Ramallah, 14.5 kilometers from Jerusalem on the way to Shechem) also is reckoned to Benjamin...And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, as he took his rest at noon...on his bed in his bed-chamber; [and] they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all night.

A righteous man's work is done for him by others. The hand of fate paved the way for David to the throne of Israel. The death of Saul and his sons in the battle of Gilboa had broken a passageway for David through the wall of law and tradition; and now the transgression of the sons of Rimmon had come along to remove the last obstacle from David's path. Those factions who had still clung to the fringes of the House of Saul -- whether out of family and tribal loyalty or out of inertia -- suddenly awoke to the realization that the place was empty, that there was no longer anything to hold on to, or to be held by. And the transgression of the sons of Rimmon also gave David another opportunity to prove by sharp words (and he knew how to find them at the right moment) and by decisive action, his righteousness and purity of heart; his repugnance at the shedding of innocent blood; and his desire to do honor both to the memory of the statutory king and to the feelings of the people. He also had the opportunity to show to everyone that he would not show favor to evil-doers, even though he had shown favor to the sons of Zeruiah (in their case there was, after all, the argument of blood-vengeance). The murderers of Ishbaal would pay with their heads. The end of the story is told in verses which,

although few in number, leave a strong impression:

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king: "Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, who sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed." And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them: "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying: Behold Saul is dead, and he was in his own eyes as though he brought me good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, instead of giving a reward for his tidings. How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed, shall I not now ((98)) require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?" And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron (II Sam.4:8-12).

Chapter 5 begins with the story of David becoming king over all Israel: "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron...and they anointed David king over Israel" (II Sam.5:1-3). In the light of these circumstances which are known to us, it seems reasonable that David's coronation as king over all Israel really did take place not long after the murder of Ishbaal. However, in II Sam.2, we see two pieces of information -- right alongside each other -- which at first glance seem mutually contradictory. Verse 10 says: "Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David." And then verse 11 says about David: "And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months." This information about the length of David's reign at Hebron over the house

of Judah, is repeated several times (II Sam.5:5; I Ki.2:11; I Chron.3:4, 29:27), and there is no reason to doubt its veracity. But the number of years assigned to Ishbaal -- "two years" -- begs an explanation. Did it take more than five years before the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron?

What is said about the kingship of Ishbaal (in II Sam. 2:8-10) is not sufficiently clear. Apparently two passages have become mixed together and distorted here: one about Saul, and one about Saul's son. I Sam.13:1 says: "Saul was years old when he began to reign; and two years he reigned over Israel." II Sam.2:10 says: "Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years." 205 Nowhere in the Bible does it say how old Saul was when he began to reign, or for how many years he reigned. But Josephus says (Antiquities, Book VI, 14:9) that he was king for eighteen years while the prophet Samuel was alive, and then for twenty-two years after Samuel's death -- a total of forty years. Paul of Tarsus also quotes this figure (Acts 13:21; possibly he was just copying Josephus). Josephus had access to ancient sources which have since been lost. Whether Saul reigned exactly forty years, or less, or more, apparently he was assigned this number in the tradition -- perhaps under the influence of the number of years David and Solomon held the kingship. But there is no doubt that he did reign for quite a long time.

From the story about Saul's beginnings, it is clear that



he was a young fellow at the time Samuel chose him. In I Sam. 9:1-2, we read that Kish, the son of Abiel, "had a son, whose name was Saul, young [יָנוּץ] and goodly, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he." The meaning of the word יָנוּץ [which J.P.S. translates "young"] is, of course, a choice, excellent, brave man; but for the most part, and generally, it refers to an unmarried youth (cf. Ben-Yehuda's dictionary, or the Biblical Dictionary of Y. Steinberg<sup>206</sup>). And we get the impression that Saul was at this stage of life when Samuel presented him to the people. Samuel gathered the people together at Mizpah, and cast lots -- "and Saul the son of Kish was taken." The Bible indicates the "stage fright" which seized Saul: he ran off and hid himself.

But when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they asked of the Lord further: "Is there yet a man come hither?" And the Lord answered: Behold, he ((99)) hath hid himself among the baggage. "And they ran and fetched him thence" (I Sam.10:21-22).

This was not the behavior of a man respected in his community; nor was it in character for Saul, as we remember him from later days, "to hide himself among the baggage."

And if he was young when he began to reign, it must be admitted that he reigned for decades. Why? Firstly, because at the time of his death he had many sons and daughters and grandchildren. Secondly, and most important, because he fought many wars with all the peoples round about. We hear about his wars with Moab and the Ammonites, with Edom, with the kings of Aram-Zobah, with the Philistines, with Amalek

(I Sam.14:47-48). And not only once did he fight with them; in the case of the Philistines, we know explicitly that he came to grips with them frequently. These wars were not fought in two years, and not even in twenty. We should not forget that between wars there were also peaceful years. And if the tradition fixes his reign at forty years, we may be sure that he reigned for longer than a generation.

On the other side, the fact that he went out to war, and that he actually did fight with his sword, during the battle of Gilboa, means that he was still in possession of his strength; i.e., he was in his sixties, perhaps his early sixties. This, too, proves that he was young when he began to reign. 207

According to the tradition quoted by Josephus, Saul reigned, as I have said, for forty years. Apparently, this was the figure given in those sources which Josephus knew. But when the "Former Prophets" were edited, things got mixed up: the forty years of Saul's reign were attributed to Saul's son, as the age at which he assumed the throne; while the two years of Saul's son were attributed to Saul.

As for Ishbaal, it is possible that he truly did reign for only two years "over all Israel." Here is the language of the two verses (II Sam.2:8-9) which tell about his kingship:

Now Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites (apparently: over Asher), and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

In the mountains of Gilboa, the Israelites had suffered a great defeat. In I Sam.31, the results of that rout are summarized in one choppy verse (7) -- perhaps written soon after the event, while the writer was still astonished and confused:

And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley (the Valley of Jezreel or the Jordan Valley or both), and they that were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

And in I Chron. the same story is told in a shorter and smoother verse (10:7):

And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that (Septuagint adds: Israel) fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

Certainly after this great blow, and everything that came in its wake, Ishbaal's kingdom did not arise quickly. Several years probably passed before Abner managed to join together the tatters of Saul's split kingdom. II Sam.2:9 may therefore be interpreted as follows: the first thing that Abner did was to rescue Ish-baal and settle him in Mahanaim. ((100)) He subsequently got in touch with the elders of Gilead, and urged them to recognize the right of Saul's son to reign. Meanwhile, no doubt, the small, quiet, but brutal war against the Philistines, who had penetrated into the valleys in the interior of the land, did not cease; and the Philistines' progress was effectively hampered. We don't know why the forcefulness of the Philistines diminished; but we get the impression that it did diminish to the extent that they could

no longer hold their own in the places which they had most recently conquered [i.e., during and after the battle of Gilboa]. And the more the Israelites recovered, the better were the prospects for a renewal of the monarchy. Abner's efforts gradually bore fruit. Following Gilead's lead, the children of Asher agreed to accept Ishbaal as king; and after Asher, the [Jezreelites<sup>208</sup>]. (This indicates that the entire Jezreel Valley had not been conquered by the Philistines; or that following the Philistines' withdrawal from the valley, or from parts of it, owing to the increasing pressure of the Israelites, the Jezreelites had joined together. And of course the withdrawal of the Philistines did not come immediately following their victory and settlement in the forsaken cities of the valley). Following Gilead and Asher and Jezreel, the Ephraimites, the central and most influential tribe at that time, accepted Ishbaal's kingship; and finally the Benjamites did, too. We are entitled to assume that about five years had passed before Ishbaal reigned over "all Israel." After two more years, he was murdered while sleeping in his bed; and not long afterwards, the heads of the tribes came to David at Hebron, and crowned him king over all Israel.

((101))      SECTION THREE:    THE WARS OF DAVID

((103))      A) The Conquest of Jerusalem

It may be supposed that the thought of conquering Jerusalem had percolated in David's mind even before he was made king over all Israel. He must have seen that this city would be more suitable than any other place, to become the focal point of a united nation. Its conquest became the need of the hour, as well as of the future.

By far the greater portion of the interior of the land had, by David's time, come into the Israelites' possession. They almost certainly had reached the coast here and there, but their main contiguous settlement was on the mountainous spine of the land, from the Negev north to the ridges of Mount Hermon and the Lebanon. Only one vertebra was missing from this long backbone: Jerusalem, in the hands of the Jebusites, broke the contiguity.

At one of the meetings of the Bible Study Club, which meets every now and then at D. Ben-Gurion's, the opinion was expressed, during arguments about an address by Sh. Yewin,\* that David conquered only the fortress of Zion, and that the city of Jerusalem was then already in Israel's possession. A well-known person, the advocate of this opinion, mentioned as proof the verse: "And David took the head of

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\*The address and the arguments were published in a pamphlet (entitled Saul and David) by the Bible Club [תנ"ך], Jerusalem, II Adar 5722.

the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem" (I Sam.17:54) to King Saul. D. Ben-Gurion rightfully pointed out to him: "There is also a verse according to which it wasn't David who killed Goliath."

I have already, in the second section of this book, gone into detail about the story of David and Goliath. I found it to be a legend of late origin. The concept that Saul was a king of Israel whose court was at Jerusalem is even further confirmation [of the story's late origin]. The well-known person sought support from another verse: "[And] David took the stronghold of Zion" (II Sam.5:7) is written; it is not written that he captured Jerusalem. But the verse before it says explicitly:

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem, against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke unto David, saying: "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither"; thinking: "David cannot come in hither."

Come into where? Jerusalem. And in I Chron.11:4, the same thing is expressed even more clearly:

And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem -- the same is Jebus -- and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David: "Thou shalt not come in hither." Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David,

i.e., first he took the fortress, and then the city.<sup>209</sup>

((104)) It is known that at that time the Jebusites had (or, more precisely, all that remained to them at that time was) a small territory surrounding their city. A few kilometers distant from the city there are known to have been several Benjamite settlements, such as Nob on Mount

Scopus, north of the Mount of Olives; Bahurim, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives; Gibeath-benjamin, about eight kilometers north of Jerusalem; Anathoth, 4,5 kilometers northeast of Jerusalem; and others. And the tribe of Judah encroached upon the Jebusites from the west and south, and arrived as far as the Valley of the son of Hinnom,

unto the side of the Jebusite southward -- the same is Jerusalem -- and, <sup>the</sup> border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the uttermost part of the vale of Rephaim northward. And the border was drawn from the top of the mountain unto the fountain of the waters of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron" (northwest of Jerusalem) (Joshua 15:8-9).

Incidentally, the words about "the side of the Jebusite southward -- the same is Jerusalem" prove that this description comes from the period preceding the conquest of Jerusalem.

We find a very meaningful passage in Joshua 15:63: "And as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem,<sup>210</sup> unto this day." When couldn't the children of Judah drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem? Before David! This means that these words were copied from a source written earlier than David. However, by the time of the copyist, Jerusalem had long been part of Judah; therefore, he found it necessary to add: "with the children of Judah." The same is said of Benjamin, too: "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem, unto this day" (Judges 1:21).

We learn about the relationship that existed between the Israelites and the Jebusites prior to David's conquest, from a casual observation in Judges 19:11-12:

When they (the Levite and his concubine) were by Jebus -- the day was far spent -- the servant said unto his master: "Come, I pray thee, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it." And his master said unto him: "We will not turn aside into the city of a foreigner, that is not of the children of Israel; but we will pass over to Gibeath (Gibeath-benjamin)."

These feelings continued to exist between the Israelites and the Jebusites until the time of David. We see this in the mocking reply of the Jebusites to David: "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither (into Jerusalem)"; i.e., the blind and the lame are enough to defend our city against you. And it may be supposed that they really stood blind men and lame men on the walls, alongside their soldiers, in order to demonstrate their contempt for David and his army, in a concrete fashion.\* Apparently David and his men were greatly enraged by this incident:

And David said on that day: "Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites (and I Chron.11:6 here adds the word "first"), and getteth up to the gutter (this is thought to mean "whoever destroys the conduit which brings water into the city"), and \_\_\_\_\_ (words such as "destroys" or "casts to the ground" are missing here) the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul \_\_\_\_\_" (II Sam.5:8).

The sentence is completed in I Chron.11:6, as follows: "[he] shall be chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and was made chief."

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\* Thus says Josephus, in Antiquities, Book VII, 3:1.



Upon what and upon whom did the Jebusites rely, when they so contemptuously rejected David's demand that they surrender? Upon ((105)) their fortified walls and upon the help of the Philistines. Attention should be paid to the fact that not one of the foreign nations which were traced to Canaan bestirred itself; only the Philistines awoke, after seven-and-a-half or eight years of quiescence, and stormed against David with all their might.\* According to Gen.10: 15-18, many foreign peoples in Syria and the land of Israel, the Jebusites among them, traced themselves to "Canaan":

And Canaan begot Zidon his first-born, and Heth; and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite; and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite; and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward were the families of the Canaanite spread abroad.

This is, of course, a late version, which attributes to Canaan most of the foreign peoples "who were not part of Israel" -- the remnants of peoples who had once settled in the land of Israel and its vicinity, and who had been pressed northward, southward, and eastward when Israel took shape and became stronger in the land. Some of these peoples had held their own until David's time, and a few of them continued to do so even after David. From Samuel's time comes this

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\* According to Josephus, the allies of the Philistines in that war were "all Syria and Phoenicia; [and] many other nations besides them, and those warlike nations also, came to their assistance and had a share in this war" (Antiquities, Book VII, 4:1 <sup>211</sup>). It appears that Josephus mixed things together, and combined that war with those which David later fought in Transjordan and Syria. Those latter wars were truly expansions of his third war against the Philistines, or at least were fought in support of it.

isolated passage: "And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites" (I Sam.7:14) -- in contrast to the perpetual state of war against the Philistines. This passage informs us that the Amorites were still independent and strong in the land of Israel at that time. Gezer was in Canaanite hands until Solomon's time (I Ki.9:16-17). In David's time they still spoke about "all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites" (II Sam.24:7).

However, as I have said, it was only the Philistines who arose to the aid of Jebus. A combination of several circumstances was no doubt responsible for this; maybe we will be able to discern a few of them. The foreign peoples who had entered the land of Israel between the Hyksos period and the invasion of the Philistines, were cut down and shattered by wars against Israel, from Joshua's time on; their strength diminished, and they lost their appetite for war. The "kings of the Hittites" mentioned during Solomon's time (I Ki.10:29) were far away, in northern Syria; but the Philistines were nearby and powerful; the Philistines viewed with alarm the renewal of the united Israelite kingdom, especially under David, for they knew him all too well.

In addition to all these reasons, a strong emotional factor was also probably operative here. In Shem, Ham and Japheth, I cited reasons for my opinion that the Jebusites were the Weshesh of Ramses III's inscription, one of the four "Sea Peoples" who had accompanied the Philistines when the latter had entered the land of Israel at the beginning

of the 12th century. If this supposition is correct, then the agitation of the Philistines, as well as their desperate assault against David when they discovered that he was about to conquer Jebus, become more understandable. For then political considerations were supplemented by traditional ties, and perhaps also by feelings of racial affinity; but principally by ties of brotherhood and covenant coming from the days when their ancestors had travelled throughout Asia Minor and Syria together, destroying and looting as they went, until finally they had reached the land of Canaan and had settled there, each nation wherever it could. The Jebusites had conquered Jerusalem, and changed its name to "Jebus." They established a small foreign kingdom ((106)) in the heart of the country, between the territories of Benjamin, Judah, and Dan; and they stood their ground there -- no doubt, with the help of the Philistines -- for about two hundred years.

But now their kingdom came to an end. The Philistines' help came too late. David worked quickly, as was his wont. "[And] David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David" (II Sam.5:7). It seems that after capturing the fortress, he immediately conquered the city, too; and Joab, who was the first to mount the wall of the besieged city, was appointed "chief and captain," a kind of military governor. After the city's conquest, which apparently involved much death and destruction, the victors occupied themselves with rebuilding the ruins: "And David built (I Chron.11:8 adds "the city") round about from Millo and inward" (II Sam.5:9);

"and Joab repaired the rest of the city" (I Chron.11:8).

Joab was a wise and cunning person, forceful in his opinions and his will; he excelled in bravery, and in military and administrative skill, as well as in strategems and in political insight.

"And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold (II Sam. 5:17). A version which, in the light of his later deeds, is more reasonable than the above, is I Chron.14:8: "And David heard of it, and went out to meet them." It is, of course, possible that at first he shut himself up in the fortress, and then later went out and attacked the Philistines. The passage doesn't make it clear whether the Philistines went up after Jerusalem was already in David's hands, or before that time. As few words are devoted to this war as to any other war in the Bible. The Philistines apparently went by way of the brook Sorek, and arrived at the Valley of Rephaim, southwest of Jerusalem. They encamped in the vicinity of Ramat-Raḥel, on the road to Bethlehem. There, David clashed with them: "And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and he said: 'The Lord hath broken [יָצָא] mine enemies before me, like the breach of waters.' Therefore the name of that place was called Baal-perazim." The Philistines suffered a great defeat: "And they left their images there, and David and his men took them away." The loss of the idols illustrates the extent of their rout. But that whole battle

is discussed in only five verses in II Sam.5 (17-21).

This defeat was not decisive for the Philistines. The struggle continued, with the Philistines girding themselves for a second round. "And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim" (II Sam.5:22). This time David met the enemy with outstanding military tactics, overpowered them, and defeated them completely.

And when David inquired of the Lord, He said: "Thou shalt not go up (I Chron.14:14 adds: "after them"; but more likely is the Septuagint version: "towards them"); make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees [פ'1227] (some think that פ'1227 is the Valley of Baca, south of the Valley of the son of Hinnom<sup>212</sup>). And it shall be, when thou hearest, from above the valley of Baca, the sound of marching<sup>213</sup> (apparently the sound of the Philistines marching in the valley, while you and your army are still situated in high places, above the valley), that then thou shalt bestir thyself; for then is the Lord gone out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." And David did so, as the Lord commanded him, and smote the Philistines from Geba (I Chron. 14:16 says: "from Gibeon") until thou come to Gezer.

To this, the editor of I Chron. adds: "And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations" (14:17; cf. II Sam.7:9).

((107)) Although this scribe was to a certain extent anticipating what was to happen later, we may suppose that because of that battle, David's reputation as a powerful and frightening warrior began to be heard even outside of the land of Israel; and, no doubt, his name became ever more important in neighboring lands, as his battle front extended ever further into Transjordan and Syria.

David's image is revealed to us by the sources in a kind of sculptured relief -- sometimes in bas-relief, and

sometimes in high relief. Everything we know about him is drawn from ancient Biblical passages. But these passages were generally redacted during later generations, following the Babylonian captivity; and from then on, they were re-copied by each successive generation. The original sources have not been preserved; all we have are copies, and copies of copies, which have become distorted in many places. We have no documents which are definitely from the time of the early Israelite kings -- neither documents of our own or of anyone else's. Therefore we can see only a partial view of David, from one perspective or from another, but never as a rounded whole.

One might wonder, and say: David humbled all the enemies of Israel, to the east and to the west; and in his conquests he reached as far north as the border of Hamath; and in the northeast as far as the Euphrates River. How is it, then, that no information about him was preserved in any of the numerous archives found in the land of Israel, in Syria, in Phoenicia, and in Mesopotamia? Is such a thing possible?

It is indeed possible. The preservation of source material depends, first and foremost, on the cultural and political situation of the region; i.e., whether there is anyone to record what is taking place in his time; and whether there is anyone who will worry about the preservation of such records. The two or two-and-a-half centuries following the invasion of Asia Minor, Syria, and the land

of Israel by the Sea Peoples, were a time of confusion and the deterioration of patterns of life which had become crystallized during the preceding generations. During this same period, the Mesopotamian lands and Syria were inundated by wandering Aramean tribes, in a movement which took shape at the end of the 12th century; and Egypt became totally absorbed in her own affairs, as the Pharaonic kingdom began to break down, owing to internal disintegration as well as to the incursions of the Libyans along her northwestern border and the Nubians in the south. What do we know about the destruction of the great Hittite kingdom in Asia Minor? And if the lists of Assyrian kings had not been found, would we have had any idea of the Aramean torrent during the 11th century?

And even if the source documents did exist in their own day, the matter of their preservation depended upon the climate, and the matter of their being found upon "luck," upon a fortunate accident. In the whole prodigious mountain of material left to us by ancient Egypt, the name of Israel has so far been found only once. And what would we know about the situation in the land of Israel at the end of the 15th century B.C., and during the first half of the 14th century, had the Amarna letters not been discovered? The reverse is also true: the Bible makes no mention of Ahab's part in the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.), which saved the land of Israel from the power of Assyria for 150 years.

After the Philistines' second defeat, there were ap-

parently no more great battles between them and Israel. It seems that the brave, great deeds which were performed by David's heroic men and engraved in the memory of future generations, and some of which were recorded in the Bible, all occurred during the aforementioned two battles ((108)) or thereafter.<sup>214</sup> There is no doubt that after the second battle, limited engagements and reciprocal attacks along the border did not stop. After a while -- we don't know how long -- David delivered a final blow to the Philistines, and shattered their strength. This event is summarized in II Sam.8:1, as follows: "And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them; and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines."

The prominence of the name Metheg-ammah, if it is a name, informs us that the place was important at that time, a great city in Philistia. We don't know for sure which city the Bible is here referring to. I Chron.18:1, in a passage parallel to II Sam.8, says: "And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and its towns out of the hand of the Philistines." Probably, then, Metheg-ammah is Gath. Possibly at that time it was so designated; but we don't know the significance of that designation.

In any event, the matter ended with David subduing the Philistines, and the wars against them came to an end. If so, the question arises: why didn't he complete the conquest of Philistia? Why didn't he establish Israel on the



coast, and thus give them access to the trade-routes of the Mediterranean Sea? We will look for the answers to these questions in the following chapters.

### B) The Temple

David's throne rested first and foremost on his military success. With the exception of Joshua the son of Nun, there has never arisen in Israel a commander as great and successful as he. The impression he made on the people -- not only the legendary impression in later generations, down to our own day, but also in his own time and his own generation -- was monumental. More will be said about that later.

Military talent and administrative talent are innately bound together. Not every talented ruler, who excels in administrative matters, in the establishment of laws and of governmental machinery, is also a good military commander; but every great military commander must also be endowed with the characteristics of a legislator, administrator and executive. For if this is not the case, the latter cannot be militarily successful. The foundation of success in military engagements -- aside from those strategic and battle skills which are unique to the situation -- is a well-ordered and well-regulated army; and the existence of such an army for any length of time requires the regulation of those lands which support it. Every famous military commander -- Sargon of Akkad, Hammurabi, Cyrus, Darius, Alexander of Macedon, Julius Caesar, Napoleon -- was known to have renewed and

improved his governmental apparatus.

David showed himself, from his earliest days in King Saul's court, to be skillful not just in playing the harp, but in leading men. As an officer in Saul's army, he proved not only his bravery and agility, but also his strength in military tactics and strategy, so that in a short time he had risen ((109)) to the rank of commander. People trusted his ability and his luck, and stuck with him. "And David went out; whithersoever Saul sent him, he had good success; and Saul set him over the men of war; and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants" (I Sam.18:5). When David escaped from Saul to the wilderness of Judah, all kinds of fugitives and law-breakers began to gather around him there. It was David who became their leader, as if it were expected of him (I Sam.22:2), even though his older brothers had also come. All the members of his clan had been forced to flee from their homes in order to save their lives, and to seek protection with him. David led them, as well as those who joined him later on, with strength and with energy, with sound counsel and resourcefulness, throughout the time they were wandering in the desert, and throughout the time they were living in Ziklag under the protection of a Philistine king. At the same time, David was establishing strong ties with the leaders of his tribe, as well as with some of the influential men in other tribes. He wasn't able to accomplish all this, of course, by virtue of military tactics alone;

he was helped quite a bit by his character and his ways, by his behavior and by changes which he instituted and which most people liked. This decision, for example, became a law: "As is the share of him that goeth down to the battle, so shall be the share of him that tarrieth by the baggage; they shall share alike." David imposed a stern discipline upon his wild band: the men whom he sent to guard the flocks of Nabal the Carmelite did not rob or oppress the shepherds, as was the custom of powerful watchmen in places remote from civilization. In the language of one of the shepherds: "We were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we went with them, when we were in the fields; they were a wall unto us." David was already known then as a man who was faithful to those who trusted in him; who pursued justice; who liked his fellow-man; who was passionate in his faith and in all his actions -- and the nation began to revere him.

Of course, some of the pious words quoted in David's name were attributed to him later on -- and not necessarily because of any ulterior motive; for later generations took it for granted that David, the great king, the Lord's anointed, a poet and God-fearing man, should have composed wonderful poems and psalms and prayers to God, his savior and tower of strength. But even David's contemporaries -- and even he himself -- had sufficient grounds for taking this for granted. The surprising development of his life and his wonderful actions and words made many people begin to believe that God was truly with him, and that he was really God's chosen one.

This faith, on his part and on the part of others, was a great source of support for his throne, second only in importance to his military brilliance. And David, despite his perfect faith in God's special favor towards him, knew how to use even this aspect for the strengthening of his position -- whether he was the head of a persecuted band, or sitting on the royal throne. When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, the sole survivor of the priests of Nob, who had all been slain at Saul's command, came to him, David cried out in sincere and deeply-felt sorrow: "I have brought about the death of all the persons of thy father's house!" At the same time, he immediately realized what benefit he could derive from the presence in his camp of a priest wearing an ephod; and he then proceeded to derive it, fully. The priest and the ephod strengthened David's rule over his men, raised their morale, and helped him to impose his will upon them in difficult times, to diminish their doubts and fears before a daring undertaking.

And just as he acted in the desert and in Ziklag on a limited scale, when he reigned in Jerusalem he would act again on a larger scale. It is natural, therefore, that following the completion of the first battles against ((110)) the Philistines, he decided to make his capital into a great cultic center, either the principal one, or the only one, and a center for the entire nation. This was a decision of great consequence for Israel's entire future -- from the national as well as the religious as well as the political standpoint.

During the pause between the first wars, with the Philistines, and the series of difficult wars with all the surrounding enemies, David established a great army, judging by the needs of his country at that time. It contained about 30,000 men, and was apparently a standing army. After establishing it, David considered his people and his throne to be secure against external attacks, and devoted himself completely to the upbuilding of Jerusalem, and realization of his idea concerning a great sanctuary, and the centralization of the cult therein.

He made a decisive public gesture in this direction when he led a great number of people to Baale-judah, which is the same as Kiriath-jearim, "to bring up from thence the ark of God" (II Sam.6:2). (The place is named after Baal and Baalah, in various combinations or uncombined: Baalah, Bealoth, Kiriath-baal. Apparently a popular sanctuary to Baal and Baalah had once been located there. It is also known by other names, among them the ancient name Kiriath Anavim, which has been preserved until our own day, in Arabic, in the form Kiriath Alanab.)

The ark had fallen into the hands of the Philistines at the end of Eli the priest's lifetime (first half of the 11th century), during the battle of Aphek (apparently located around the source of the Yarkon), in which the Israelites were badly beaten. In I Sam.5-6, the activities of the Ark while it was "in the country of the Philistines" are related in detail -- the miracles that occurred there, and the

vengeance which the Ark wrought against the Philistines and their god Dagon. But if we turn our attention away from supernatural things, the body of the story can be accepted as fact. The ark was brought to Ashdod, and an epidemic probably broke out there, perhaps of the plague. The epidemic was interpreted as a punishment from Yahweh, the God to whom the ark of the covenant belonged. The inhabitants of Ashdod were afraid to keep the ark in the city, and quickly transferred it to Gath. The men of Gath sent it to Ekron. Since the epidemic became more widespread, and reached Ekron, too, a tumult arose in the city:

[And] the Ekronites cried out, saying: "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people"...For there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city...And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods...And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying: "What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? declare unto us wherewith (i.e., How? By what means and by what route?) we shall send it to its place."

Feelings of hatred were then almost certainly at their height, and the two sides could not have established direct contact. The priests and the diviners, in their wisdom, found a suitable strategem: the ark was sent on a cart harnessed to two milch cows; and the cows brought it to Beth-shemesh against their will, by virtue of a force not their own. The ark, which had left a region infected with the pestilence, brought it also to Israel's territory.

And He smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, (why? The editor explains:) because they had gazed upon the ark of the Lord...seventy men (this number appeared two small in the eyes of a later editor or copyist,

who therefore added to the preceding, without any logical reason for so doing:) and fifty thousand men...And the men of Beth-shemesh said: "Who is able to stand before the Lord?"

Ultimately, the ark was kept at Kiriath-jearim, and there it was as if forgotten until David's time.

((111)) This version poses problems that we do not know how to answer, even if we allow for miracles. Firstly, what is the explanation for the prophet Samuel's complete absence from the picture? Secondly, at the beginning of Saul's reign, when he fought against the Philistines at Michmas, he said to Ahijah (one of Eli the priest's descendants): "'Bring hither the ark of God!" (Now comes a broken sentence, which is intended to explain the presence of the Ark there:) for the ark of God was there at that time and the children of Israel..."<sup>215</sup> (I Sam.14:18). Targum Jonathan emends it to read: "with the children of Israel." And as for the ark of God, most of the commentators suppose, as does the Septuagint, that the ephod is intended; and Rashi's opinion is that the Urim and Thummim are meant. However, the source states specifically: the ark of God.

At any rate, during the time following the conquest of Jerusalem, the ark (whether it was the same one which had been in Saul's camp, or a different one) was located in Kiriath-jearim, and David went out to transfer it to his new capital, with much ado. The ark was transported by ox-cart. On the way, the oxen overturned the cart, and Uzzah -- one of the sons of Abinadab, in whose house the ark had been

kept -- grabbed it, so that it would not fall.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error (the words <sup>17</sup> [do not mean "for his error"; rather, they] are a distortion, which is cleared up in I Chron. 13:10: "because he put forth his hand to the ark" <sup>17</sup> [7e1c/18]; and there he died by the ark of God."

This incident (perhaps a case of a heart attack) left David (and certainly the entire nation) stunned -- "And David was displeased, because the Lord had broken forth upon Uzzah... And David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said: 'How shall the ark of the Lord come unto me?...[And] David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.'" Only after three months had gone by, was David satisfied that the ark had caused Obed-edom no harm, but that, on the contrary, "'The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.' And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy" (II Sam. 6:1-12).

David's faith was no different from the faith of those around him. Priests, prophets, and an ephod, omens and dreams were for him not only a way of influencing the people -- although he knew how to make practical use of the religious factor, as of every other factor. Rather, at the same time as David used the religious factor as a means of strengthening his influence upon the masses, he was himself influenced; and as his luck grew better, his faith became deeper. The prophet Nathan's influence over him was great: when a faction of courtiers sought to have the old, very sick king



bequeath his throne to Solomon (and not to Adonijah), they turned for help to the prophet Nathan, and thus prevailed.

The thought of the Temple in Jerusalem almost certainly had percolated in David's mind shortly after he had conquered the city from the Jebusites, and defeated the Philistines in battle on two occasions. Concerning this, the Bible says (II Sam.7:1-3):

And it came to pass, when the king dwelt in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about (this observation is missing from I Chron. 17:1; probably it was written during the interval before his great wars against Aram and her allies), that the king said unto Nathan the prophet: "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains (in I Chron., "under curtains," i.e., in a tent). And Nathan said to the king: "Go, do all that is in thy heart; for the Lord is with thee."

But David didn't build the Temple. Why? This aroused surprise in later generations, ((112)) and it became necessary to answer the questions: Why didn't David, the mighty king who humbled all the surrounding nations and collected vast treasures from every land, carry out his idea of building the Temple? What prevented him? From the explanation presented later in this chapter [i.e., II Sam.7] and in I Chron. 17; and from the words of David's thanksgiving and prayer when he sat "before the Lord"; it is clear that this version originated in the house of Solomon, perhaps with Solomon himself. David's kingship had needed divine justification, notwithstanding all David's achievements and the brilliance of his personality; and so the idea of his being chosen, and even of his being anointed by Samuel at God's command,

was created. In the same way, Solomon's kingship also needed divine justification. In many people's minds arose the question: Why was Solomon, the youngest son, made king, rather than Adonijah, the natural heir, the oldest of David's sons after the death of Amnon and Absalom? (Another son is mentioned among David's eldest sons -- Daniel,<sup>216</sup> or Chileab<sup>217</sup> or Caleb -- but nothing is known about him: maybe he died young). To be sure, David himself had crowned Solomon. But informed sources said that this had been engineered by a faction at court.

Owing to the king's increasing weakness, two factions crystallized in the palace: that of Adonijah, and with him Joab and Abiathar (of the descendants of Eli the priest) and their companions; and that of Solomon. Working on Solomon's behalf were his mother, Bath-sheba, the prophet Nathan, and others among the king's close friends. The Bible says: "But Zadok the priest (of the descendants of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest), and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei (Josephus, Antiquities, Book <sup>218</sup> 14:4: "Shimei, David's friend" [Heb. שִׁמְעִי]), and the mighty men that belonged to David, were not with Adonijah" (I Ki.1:8).

It seems that this faction had a strong influence upon David; but the matter was finally decided by the overly hasty actions of Adonijah, who wanted to rush matters. (He must have acted on the advice of Joab, for the pattern of the latter throughout his life was to present the opposing side

with an irrevocable fait accompli.) Adonijah assembled all the king's sons, except for Solomon, and the army officers, and a great number of people, at En-rogel (on the brook Kidron), and made a great feast, "and behold, they eat and drink before him (Nathan informed David), and say: "Long live king Adonijah!" For a short while, the former David, who had known neither hesitation nor qualms, awoke in the heart of the dying old man: he immediately commanded that Solomon be crowned in a great public ceremony.

So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites (apparently they could not be sure of the loyalty of the local, Israelite, army -- since several of its officers had joined Adonijah -- and so they rallied, to a certain extent, on foreign mercenary bands) went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon (a spring alongside the brook Kidron, below Mount Moriah). And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the Tent, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the ram's horn; and all the people said: "Long live king Solomon!"

And then, when David's will became known to all, the wavering and uncertainty came to an end: "And all the people came up after him (from the valley), and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them."

Despite all this, Adonijah had still been the eldest son, "and he was also a very goodly man" (I Ki.1:6), ((113)) and Solomon had had him killed. And after Adonijah, David had had still other sons older than Solomon. What special claim, therefore, did Solomon have to the throne? Only David's decision? He needed an authority higher than that. So that

here again, as in the case of David's claim to the throne of Israel, he based his case upon divine choice, upon the will of Heaven.

The Lord had informed David, through the prophet Nathan, that it was not he who would build the Temple. ("And it shall come to pass..." I Chron.17:11), "when thy days are fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee...He shall build a house for My name" (II Sam.7:12-13). In this speech, and in David's speech of thanksgiving which follows it, no answer is supplied to the question of why David was not allowed to build the Temple. We find further confirmation of Solomon's right, in a speech delivered by Solomon himself, while dedicating the newly-built Temple:

Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. But the Lord said unto David my father: "Whereas it was in thy heart to build a house for My name, thou didst well...nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for My name"...[And] I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel as the Lord promised, and have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. (I Ki.8:17-21).

And the answer to the question of why not David, is given in I Chron.28, and is entirely in the spirit of Solomon's faction:

And David assembled all the princes of Israel...[and] David the king stood up upon his feet, and said: "Hear me, my brethren, and my people! As for me, it was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord...But God said unto me: Thou shalt not build a house for My name, because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood...(Here David mentions that he, too, had had many brothers, older

than he, but nevertheless God had chosen him.) And of all my sons -- for the Lord hath given me many sons -- He hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. And He said unto me: Solomon thy son, he shall build My house, and My courts."

This version, which was, of course, composed after David's time, is interested in justifying and strengthening Solomon's claim upon the kingship in the eyes of the people; and at the same time in explaining why David did not build the Temple.

We may suppose that there were substantial historical reasons which prevented David from carrying out his idea. They were, as we shall see, the same circumstances which had prevented him from completing the conquest of Philistia, and thus bringing Israel to the seacoast: namely, wars, and the pressure of the Aramean flood, which had inundated Syria and the expanses of the Syrian-Arabian desert, and whose advance waves were already beating on the doors of the land of Israel.

#### C) War on All Sides

In II Sam.8, we find a short summary, full of omissions, of David's military achievements; and there is no way of knowing whether the achievements listed there are recorded chronologically or not. Possibly this summary was taken from an historical work which was once known throughout Israel, and ((114)) which included the important events of the past together with all their details. Therefore, the editor of II Sam.

did not consider it necessary, or part of his business, to retell what everyone already knew; or even to enumerate in his summary all the events which were remembered.

The first verse mentions another war against the Philistines, apparently a third great battle, this time final and decisive: David smote them and subdued them, and took Methegammah, apparently Gath, from them. In the following verses, David's victories over all his enemies roundabout, are indicated in the same manner in the two parallel chapters (II Sam. 8 and I Chron. 18).

We have exact information about neither the beginning nor the course of the third battle against the Philistines; only its outcome is told to us. But its causes, stemming from the relationship between the two sides, as well as from international relationships throughout that region, are not hard to understand. Clashes on the border had not stopped; the Philistines, although they had been twice defeated, had not been subdued, and they naturally thought about what in our own day they call "a third round."<sup>219</sup> But David's kingdom had crystallized, and his military strength had grown. The Philistines, following their defeat in two wars, could not have hoped to prevail against Israel with the use of their own strength alone. They must have expected the cooperation of the peoples of Transjordan and the Negev, in an encircling attack against Israel; and they must especially have pinned their hopes upon the Arameans. The movement of Aramean tribes was then -- the end of the 11th century and

the beginning of the 10th century B.C. -- at its greatest strength. These tribes had joined together to form great armies and had inundated all the lands of the "Fertile Crescent," and already stood on the threshold of the land of Israel. After flooding the lands of Mesopotamia and Syria, they had turned southward to the land of Israel and Egypt, when David's kingdom suddenly arose as a stumbling-block in their path.

Corresponding to the international situation, was the internal situation. The period of Saul's kingship had been spent in self-defense against Israel's enemies, who would encroach upon her territory from time to time. Only with difficulty did he repulse them; and his kingdom came to an end in a great rout for Israel. In David's time, the self-defensive repulsion was transformed into decisive repulsion and even counter-attack. It cannot be said whether David thought about conquest from the start, but this much is clear: a combination of his success in battle against Israel's enemies; and their attacks, renewed on an even larger scale; and the dimensions of his constant victories, set David upon the road to aggressive war.

There are gentile historians who are made uneasy by the name of King David, which has been travelling throughout the world for the past three thousand years; they greatly desire to belittle his image. Some of them cast doubt on his military greatness or upon his worth as a poet (the supposition being that the poems attributed to him are not

"really" his). Some of them call to mind his many iniquities -- not only those specified in the Bible, but also those which they can manage to dig up from their own commentators. And of course they do not forget his wicked characteristics, such as cruelty ("man of blood") and desire for conquest. There are even some of our own historians who follow in their footsteps; a certain amount of mimicry is not a rarity among those of our scholars who dabble in the history of Israel.

Since we are now about to discuss the story of David's conquests, one general comment is in order. An historian's utterances about "expansionism" are essentially incisive testimony to the poverty ((115)) of his thought. Any people that considered itself stronger than its neighbor would try to conquer its neighbor and its neighbor's land; and every ruler and leader, if he had energy and initiative, saw victories and conquests as his prime means to the attainment of distinction and glory. This had always been the case; and we have seen it ~~to~~ be the case in our own day. To say that an ancient king was an "expansionist," i.e., that he did what everyone did, amounts to saying nothing at all about him. To what may we compare it? To the description of our ancestor Abraham, in the Soviet Russian encyclopedia, as a "slave-owner." Every property-owner during that period, and during every subsequent period, was a slave-owner. Slavery exists even today in various places in the world, including the Middle East -- and not only in Saudi Arabia, which is famous for its slave-markets, but in most of the



Arab countries. And there is no larger slave-owner in our own time than the Russian government. Therefore, if our ancestor Abraham's claim to fame is that he was a slave-owner, why does the Russian encyclopedia overlook the name and memory of all the other slave-owners in Abraham's generation, and in subsequent generations up to and including our own?

In the winter of 1959, I heard a lecture about King David, delivered in two parts (on December 9 and 10) over the "Voice of Israel" [Israel's national radio station]. Two prominent features of that "historical understanding" which I discussed above, stood out in that lecture. The learned lecturer (my ear didn't catch his name) also supplied an original idea of his own: expansionism, he said, is not merely a nasty quality; it is also an impractical system, whose benefits are annulled by its disadvantages. By way of proof, he cited the expansionism of David, whose conquests did not endure after his lifetime; while the system of Saul, who was satisfied with self-defense, insured the continued existence of the people of Israel on their own soil.

I shall not deny the fact that David's conquests did not remain in the hands of the Israelites once they had split into two kingdoms; I shall merely note that a majority of the world's nations are living today in lands which their ancestors conquered from other nations during historical times. Thus do the English live in Britain, in Australia, and in other places; Europeans from various land live throughout the American continent; the Turks live in Asia Minor; the

Arabs in the "Fertile Crescent" countries and North Africa; the Aryans in Persia and India; etc., etc. The same was doubtless true in prehistoric times as well. To be sure, not **all** the conquests remained in the hands of the conquerors. For example, the memory alone remains of the Germanic conquests in Europe -- in Italy, France, Spain, the Balkans and North Africa (by the Vandals) -- during the medieval period. The Germans' national aggressiveness is the obverse of a weak and easily-defeated spirit of independence; in strange surroundings, the Germans tend to lose their national identity more easily than do many other peoples.

Israel, like most peoples, also acquired her land by the sword. The conquests of Joshua the son of Nun gave a homeland to those Hebrew tribes who had become united into one nation under Moses' inspiration; and David's victories strengthened and fortified them in their land to the point where they were able to stand their ground in it for another thousand years. And then, even after the land was taken from them, they retained their national identity in all the lands of their dispersion; and never for a single day gave up the idea of returning to their native land.

((116)) By Saul's time, the Aramean flood had already approached Israel's door, and little Aramean kingdoms had been established along her border, to the north and north-east: Beth-rehob, Tob, Geshur, Maacah. Behind them stood two kingdoms which were very powerful at that time: Aram-Zobah and Aram-Damascus. Saul repulsed the earliest encroachments

of the Arameans. But their strength and pressure grew.

On the other hand, Israel's increasing strength in David's time aroused the feelings of fear and jealousy in her neighbors of long standing. While David was being pursued by Saul, and hiding out in the wilderness of Judah, the Ammonite and Moabite kings, and even the Philistine king, were inclined to deal graciously with him. In the case of Moab, perhaps the tradition of David's descent from Ruth the Moabite helped him somewhat. But of course the principal factor was hatred for Saul, who had united the formerly divided Israelite tribes via a monarchial framework; and the desire to widen the breach between him and his sworn enemy. It was for this reason that the king of Moab did not refuse David, when the latter asked him to grant asylum to his parents for a while. "And he brought them before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the stronghold" (I Sam.22:3-4).

The Bible doesn't tell what ultimately happened to them there. One Midrash (Numbers Rabbah 14:3<sup>220</sup>) says that the king of Moab killed them; only one of David's brothers escaped to Nahash the Ammonite king, and that was the kindness which Nahash had shown David (recollected in II Sam. 10:2). We don't know why the king of Moab killed the members of David's family -- if he truly did kill them -- and it stands to reason that this is not a later comment. In any case, the relationship between David and Moab became much worse, whether before David's coronation or thereafter.

And when a battle began against his neighboring enemies, a battle which later was transformed into a series of great wars against the kings of Transjordan and Syria, David took fierce revenge on Moab:

And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, and brought presents (II Sam.8:2).

Clearly, something had happened between him and the men of Moab, that had changed their earlier bonds of friendship into strong hatred.

In contrast to this, good relations persisted with the Ammonites throughout King Nahash's lifetime. Upon the latter's death, David sent ambassadors to console Hanun his son, as was customary among kings who sought friendship and peace with each other. For example, when David died, "Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father; for Hiram was ever a lover of David" (I Ki.5:15). (Embassies like these are also mentioned in the Amarna letters.) But David's victories had sown fear and hatred among Israel's neighbors. When his ambassadors came to the new Ammonite king,

the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord: "Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

Hanun did not think about it very long, and did not hesitate; he responded to David's consolation with a crude public insult:

"So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to the buttocks, and sent them away" (II Sam.10:1-4).

Thus began a long, difficult war against the Ammonites and against the Aramean kings. The latter did not ((117)) waste so fine an opportunity, but assaulted Israel with all their might. Josephus links this Aramean assault not to the war against the Ammonites, but rather to the second battle against the Philistines, following the conquest of Jerusalem. He says ( Antiquities, Book VII, 4:1 <sup>221</sup>):

When the Philistines understood that David was made king of the Hebrews (in foreign languages, the Israelites, like other branches of the children of Eber, are called Hebrews; and Josephus, who adapted his writing, especially in the matter of names -- to the habits of Greek readers, designates the Israelites: Hebrews), they made war against him at Jerusalem...And let no one suppose that<sup>222</sup> the Philistine army was small, and do not conclude that they showed any faintness of heart or fear, as guessing so from the suddenness of their defeat, and from their having performed no great action...; but let him know that all Syria and Phoenicia, with many other nations besides them, and those warlike nations also, came to their assistance, and had a share in this war.

It is clear from what follows that in Josephus' opinion this expanded war was linked with the Philistines' second war. He says that because of this help, the Philistines were able to renew the war against Israel with stronger forces than at first -- to be more precise: "with an army three times as numerous as before" -- even though they had sustained so many defeats and even though they had lost so many thousands of fighters. Further on, he quotes details concerning David's victory, which are explicitly taken from what the Bible tells

about David's second battle against the Philistines. In the Lord's name, David is told that he must place his army in "The Groves of Weeping [וְעֵץ] " ("and come upon them over against the mulberry trees [וְעֵץ] " [II Sam.5:23]); not far from the enemy's camp. He must immediately attack when "the trees of the grove should be in motion without the wind's blowing" ("And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees" [II Sam.5:24]). Thus did he do; and he shattered the enemy at one blow, and pursued them as far as Gezer [Josephus says, "Gaza"], just as is recorded in II Sam.5:25. But in the Biblical passage, there is not a single indication that the Arameans or the children of Lot participated in the Philistines' early wars against David. On the contrary, the chapter which is primarily devoted to the wars against Aram (II Sam.8) begins by telling of decisive victories against the Philistines and against Moab. Probably, then, the great struggle against Aram developed in some way out of the third battle against the Philistines and the war against Moab.

Our sources do not clearly reveal whether the war against the Ammonites was a part of this same war, or whether it was an episode unto itself, which occurred at a different time. The source of the difficulty is that the same chapter which begins with the subduing of the Philistines, goes on to tell about the battles against Hadadezer, the king of Aram-Zobah, and against the king of Aram-Damascus; and then, the chapter which tells of the war against the Ammonites puts

many Aramean kings at their side, too -- led by Hadadezer, the king of Aram-Zobah. Perhaps there were two wars, or two cycles of wars, between David and Hadadezer: one tied to the third Philistine battle, and one developing out of David's war against the Ammonites.

If we suppose that David fought two wars against Hadadezer, or more than two, -- and there is some evidence for the latter supposition -- then the Ammonites must have stood aside during the first war. Perhaps they did so because King Nahash was still alive, and his certainty of David's friendship prevented him ((118)) from becoming entangled in that battle; or perhaps they did so for other reasons. After David's victory, there was an interval of indeterminate length. But Hanun, Nahash's son, was not happy about this. In any time or place, the wicked son of a righteous father will ordinarily try to prove to himself and to others that he knows better than his father, and that he can manage things more successfully than his father. It is also probable that the Aramean kings incited Hanun against David, buoyed him up, and promised him their full support.

To be sure, that support was not given to the Ammonites free of charge, but it was given quickly and abundantly; apparently, the Aramean kings had been awaiting just such a confrontation with David, and were ready to respond immediately. The Bible says (II Sam.10:6):

And when the children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David (i.e., they had become repulsive to him; they had made him hate them), the

children of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob, and the Arameans of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob (i.e., an army from the land of Tob -- an area north of Gilead, between Bozrah and Edrei) twelve thousand men.

These figures, which seem realistic, did not satisfy the editor of I Chron. He added (and also subtracted) details, and augmented the power of the Aramean army with a mighty host of chariots:

Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Aram-naharaim, and out of Aram-maacah, and out of Zobah. So they hired them thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people (19:6-7).

Of course, the expression "they hired" does not mean that they paid the wages of those hosts: one doesn't hire armies of tens of thousands of fighters, and needless to say, of tens of thousands of chariots, with a thousand talents of silver. What is meant here, no doubt, are the bribes sent to the Aramean kings in order to urge them to keep their promises. As for the "thirty and two thousand chariots" -- this passage almost certainly mixes together information about two battles fought during this war: the battle at the city of Medeba (on the border of Moab, south of Mount Nebo), and the battle at Helam, which is perhaps the "Alema" of I Macc.8:26<sup>223</sup> (in the lower Golan).

That there were at least two battles in the war against the Ammonites and Aram is not subject to doubt. (There was also a second war against the Ammonites, which ended with the conquest of their capital, Rabbah.) In the second of these



two battles, David completely shattered Hadadezer's strength; and apparently put an end to the kingdom of Zobah.

And when all the kings that were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them (I Chron.19:19 says: "they made peace with David, and served him"). So the Arameans feared to help the children of Ammon any more (II Sam.10:19).

In the battle of Medeba, no chariots are mentioned at all; this doesn't mean that there were none there, but rather that they did not constitute a significant force. And the following is said about the battle of Helam: "And David slew of the Arameans seven hundred drivers of chariots, and forty thousand horsemen" (II Sam.10:18). If the Arameans lost seven hundred chariots, they probably started out with between a thousand and two thousand chariots; this is a number that makes sense. But I Chron.19:18 tells about the destruction of "the men of seven thousand ((119)) chariots, and forty thousand footmen." The number "seven thousand chariots" is apparently the product of a common practice, namely, the transformation of hundreds into thousands and ten-thousands. On the other hand, the version "forty thousand footmen," of I Chron.19:18, is more reasonable than the "forty thousand horsemen" of II Sam.10:18. In Josephus' Antiquities (Book VII, 6:3), we again find differences in the figures: the king of Aram had "eighty thousand footmen" (there is no mention of chariots) and about "forty thousand of (the enemy's) footmen and seven thousand of their horsemen" died.

David's wars against the Arameans resulted in his con-

quest of Syria as far as the border of Hamath, on the Orontes River, and his arrival as far eastward as the River Euphrates.

D) But He Didn't Lead Them to the Sea<sup>224</sup>

Every nation living close to the Mediterranean Sea, and even some of those who lived far away, tried to reach its shores and set sail upon it. The sea brought riches and power to those who became familiar with it. The peoples of the Aegean islands -- the Philistines (Pelasgians, to the Greeks), the Dodanim<sup>225</sup> (Dardanim<sup>226</sup>), the Tursci (Etruscans, to the Romans) -- all drew their strength from the sea. Mighty Sidon and glorious Tyre, Gebal and Sumur<sup>227</sup> and the other Phoenician cities drew their greatness and power from the sea. How many sources of blessing and abundance did the sea provide for those who knew it well: fishing; trade with those who dwelt along its shores or on its islands; plunder of nearby settlements, when the time was ripe, and capture of their inhabitants for sale as male or female slaves; piracy of competitive foreign merchant ships.

It is impossible that all that wealth and glory, that strength and splendor, which had come the way of the Kittim<sup>228</sup> (the inhabitants of Cyprus) and the Caphtorim<sup>228</sup> (the inhabitants of Cherethim<sup>229</sup> [Crete]) from the sea, should not have whetted the Israelites' appetite. Why didn't a king as strong and victorious as David try to implant his people along the seacoast, teach them the ways of the sea, build a great navy, and follow in the footsteps of his seafaring neighbors? Why

didn't David do all this, after he had broken the might of the Philistines and subdued them?

There is one probable answer, and I have already mentioned it in the previous chapter: the seriousness of the struggle with Aram. The danger of the Aramean flood obliged David to mobilize the entire people for a round of long and difficult wars. In one place it is written: "And he gathered all Israel together, and passed over the Jordan...And the Arameans set themselves in array against David, and fought with him." The results of that battle: "And the Arameans fled before Israel," etc. (II Sam.10:15-19; I Chron.19:16-19). Because of these struggles, David was forced to abandon a number of his ideas as well as a number of the projects he had already begun. Some of these are specified in the Bible, and some of them may be deduced from circumstantial evidence -- namely, David's opportunities and the traits of his character. The Aramean tribes poured with great momentum into most of the lands of Mesopotamia and Syria; ((120)) and in the course of time this movement led, if not to Aramean control, in a political sense, over all those territories, at least to the substantial Aramaization of the peoples who had preceded them there. The only people at that time to withstand the mighty flood, and even to get the better of it, thereby saving itself from inundation and assimilation, was Israel -- under King David's leadership. To be sure, the Aramaic language would spread, during succeeding generations and especially during the time of the Second Temple, even throughout most of the

land of Israel; but by that time the people would already have been refined in the furnace of their historical, national and religious experiences, and would have been tempered and cast so well that neither change of language nor conquest nor dispersion would be able to melt or assimilate it.

The external factors which prevented David from realizing some of his plans, were joined in the course of time by internal factors -- the significant change which came over David during the second half of his reign. This will be dealt with in its proper place.

It was mainly the wars with the Arameans, which required David to expend the last ounce of his and his people's energies, that hindered him from building the great Temple in his capital. This is even stated explicitly in the message which Solomon sent to Hiram, the king of Tyre:

Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them (his enemies) under the soles of my feet (I Ki. 5:17).

Commentators tried to reconcile the contradiction between this natural, logical explanation and what is said elsewhere about David being commanded from heaven not to build the Temple. The reason in the latter instance was "because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood" (I Chron. 28:3); "Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars" (I Chron. 22:8). Re~~Dak~~<sup>230</sup> in his commentary on Solomon's message, says: "He (Solomon) did not want to reveal to him (Hiram) the real reason for God stopping David; for this would not have been

proper respect for his father; and so he told him this more acceptable reason: [the wars] which were about him on every side." Possibly the story about the divine decree, which was pleasing to Solomon's faction, was subsequently invented by that faction, or by Solomon himself, as I have already noted; but the simple reason which Solomon gave innocently, at the beginning of his reign, to the king of Tyre, is revealing.

Various texts tell about the preparations David made for building the Temple, and about the prodigious wealth he assembled for that purpose -- from the booty of the lands he conquered; and from the taxes he collected from the vanquished; and from the contributions made by "the princes of the fathers' houses, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands, and of hundreds" (I Chron.29:6):

And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Betah (Tebah, Tibhath, south of Baalbek) and from Berothai (in the same region), cities of Hadadezer, King David took exceeding much brass.

And Toi, the king of Hamath, Hadadezer's opponent in war, sent tribute to David:

vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass. These also did king David dedicate unto the Lord, with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all the nations which he subdued: of Aram, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah (II Sam.8:7-12).

According to I Chron.28,

David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains ((121)) of the companies

that served the king by course, and the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, and the rulers over all the substance and cattle of the king and of his sons, with the officers, and the mighty men, even all the mighty men of valour, unto Jerusalem,

and he addressed them, emphasizing and re-emphasizing Solomon's right to rule after him, and to build the Temple, since he, David, had prepared everything required to build it: detailed patterns and countless riches. Furthermore (I Chron.29):

Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and silver for the things of silver, and the brass for the things of brass, and the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance ...three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, wherewith to overlay the walls of the houses.

And the princes of the clans and all the other officers offered willingly and gave

for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand darics, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and of iron a hundred thousand talents. And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord (I Chron.29:2-8).

Because of the wars in Aram, David had been compelled for the moment to stop his war with the Ammonites. Only after the alliance of the Aramean kings in Syria and along the River Euphrates had been shattered, and "all the kings that were servants to Hadadezer" had made peace with him and served him, and "the Arameans feared to help the children of Ammon any more" -- only then could David devote his at-

tention once again to Transjordan and the Negev, and finish subduing Ammon and Edom and Amalek and other neighboring peoples, who had been Israel's bitter enemies from time immemorial.

But the Philistines had been subdued earlier, and apparently did not try to rebel any more. David, who was completely engaged in long and difficult struggles with many strong enemies in the east and north, left the Philistines alone, and never actually completed the conquest of the coast. And by the time he had prevailed over all his external enemies, and over all the internal rebels and conspirators, he was no longer the same David.

Any enterprise -- whether on the part of an individual or a community -- depends in great measure upon the man who leads it, be he a private businessman or a head of state, a dictator or an hereditary king or the adviser to a ruler, who actually directs the latter's actions. No great leader can accomplish substantial things unless he has a people whom it is possible to prepare for such accomplishments; and no people can achieve anything of value unless it has a leader who is prepared for such achievements.

#### E) The Struggle with Aram

Just as we thus far have no information from external sources about King David, so have we no original information about his principal opponent in war, Hadadezer the king of Zobah. E.Forrer (in the Reallexikon der Assyriologie, under

the heading "Aramu") and others, among them A. Malamat ((122)) in the Biblical Encyclopedia (under the heading "Hadadezer"), suppose that it is perhaps Hadadezer who is meant by the reference in the Assyrian king lists, from the 10th and 9th centuries B.C., to the Aramean conquests in northern Mesopotamia, in the vicinity of Carchemish (Pethor, the city of Balaam; and Mutkinu), during the reign of Ashur-rabi II. From what the Bible tells about Hadadezer, we know that he imposed his authority over many of the kings of central and southern Syria, and expanded his holdings in the Syrian wilderness as far as the Euphrates River, and perhaps even beyond. In the north, he was involved in war with Toi (or Tou) the king of Hamath on the River Orontes; Hamath was then a Hittite kingdom.

David fought several wars, no doubt, against an alliance of the Aramean kings of Syria and Mesopotamia. This is quite clear from what the Bible says about his wars. Additional evidence is found in the passage which Josephus quotes from the historical work of Nicolaus of Damascus. This Nicolaus, a Greek poet and historian, a contemporary and friend of Herod, wrote a world history in 144 volumes; and most of his information was, of course, drawn from sources other than our own. Josephus says (Antiquities, Book VII, 5:2): Adad, the king of Damascus and Syria, was Hadadezer's friend, and when he heard that Hadadezer was fighting David, he rushed to his aid, at the head of a great army. He clashed with



David at the Euphrates River, and was defeated. He lost twenty thousand men in that battle, and all the others fled.

Nicolaus also makes mention of this king in the fourth book of his histories; where he speaks thus: "A great while after these things had happened (i.e., after what had just been related), there was one of that country whose name was Hadad, who was become very potent; he reigned over Damascus and the other parts of Syria, excepting Phoenicia. He made war against David, the king of Judea (during the last centuries B.C., the name "Israel" lost a great deal of ground to the name "Judea," and the people became generally known -- especially to foreigners, Greeks and Romans -- by the name "Jews"), and tried his fortune in many battles, and particularly in the last battle at Euphrates, wherein he was beaten. He seemed to have been the most excellent of all their kings in strength and manhood." 231

A. Malamat says the following (in the Biblical Encyclopedia) about Hadadezer, the ally of that same Adad king of Damascus:

The strongest Aramean king in David's time. His influence extended over great expanses of southern Syria, and along the edge of the desert as far as the River Euphrates region in the northeast and the land of Bashan in the south.

He assumed the leadership of the Aramean states which were fighting against Israel. The order of these wars is not clear. According to II Sam.8 and I Chron.18, David's expedition into the heart of Syria preceded the battles with Hadadezer in Transjordan. "But most historians place these battles before David's far-reaching conquests in Syria and the plain of Lebanon, which caused the dissolution of the kingdom of Aram-Zobah."

A. Malamat follows the majority, and under the heading "Aram-Zobah" he no longer hesitates about the order of David's

### Aramean wars.

The Israelites severely defeated them (the Arameans) three times, according to the stories in the Bible. The first time, the Arameans were defeated by Joab in the plain of Medeba (I Chron.19:7), when they came to rescue the Ammonites from the hand of the Israelites (II Sam.10:6-14; I Chron. 19:6-15). Apparently they were defeated again, a year later, near ((123)) the city of Helam, in northern Transjordan... At that time, David began to penetrate into the heart of the kingdom of Zobah

in the absence of Hadadezer,

for he was engaged just then in re-establishing his authority over the lands of the Euphrates region. When Hadadezer returned from his expedition, the two opponents met in a mighty battle along the border of Hamath (I Chron.18:3). David handed Hadadezer a tremendous defeat.

We don't know whether Hadadezer could have been engaged in establishing his authority in the Euphrates region, or in re-establishing it there -- after his two defeats in Transjordan. And there is no Biblical support for E. Forrer's supposition (in R.L.A., under "Aramu"), repeated by Malamat, that David's war in Syria took place during Hadadezer's absence. Whether we prefer the version quoted in II Sam.8:3: "David smote also Hadadezer...as he went to restore<sup>232</sup> [7' e n f] his dominion at the river Euphrates"; or the version in I Chron.18:3: "as he went to establish<sup>232</sup> [7' 3 n f] his dominion at the river Euphrates" -- we cannot ignore the passage's very clear statement that the battle was with Hadadezer himself and with a great army. It was not with a handful of companies left behind, as it were, by the king of Zobah while he went to the region of the Euphrates River. We cannot separate verse 3 -- "David smote also Hadadezer" --

from what follows it: "And David took from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen."

And subsequently,

when the Arameans of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David smote of the Arameans two and twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus; and the Arameans became servants to David, and brought presents.

This was a second battle in that same war, and once again great armies participated in it. It is not impossible that Hadadezer had been on the way to the Euphrates region; but that when he heard of David's expedition in the same direction, he quickly returned, so that they met and came to grips, apparently, on the road between Tadmor and Hamath. Whether they met there or elsewhere, it is clear that the battle was fought with Hadadezer himself, and not without him, in his absence.

It is also clear that that war was not decisive -- even though it handed the Arameans two severe defeats: first to Hadadezer alone (or in league with the petty kings who were under his control); and later to the combined armies of Hadadezer and his ally the king of Damascus. The decisive defeat came in another war, in northern Transjordan. Only after the battle of Helam could it be explicitly stated: "And when all the kings that were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the children of Ammon any more" (II Sam.10:15-19). Only after this final and

conclusive victory against the Arameans, could David again turn to the Ammonites and finish his war with them. From this we learn that his wars with Ammon took place after that series of wars with the Philistines and Moab and other adjacent nations, which developed in response to the conquest of Jerusalem and Israel's increase in strength.

It is clear from the Biblical passage, that at the time Nahash, the Ammonite king, died, Israel was at peace, and David lived in Jerusalem undisturbed. The story about David's embassy to Hanun, Nahash's son, to comfort him upon the death of his father, proves that until that time bonds of friendship had existed between David and Nahash. This means that Ammon had not been involved in any of the previous wars. Furthermore, ((124)) the fact that David himself did not go out in this war, as he had formerly used to do, but rather assigned the command to Joab, informs us that the conflict with Hanun broke out fairly long after David had become king of Israel. That same delegation of responsibility to Joab, as well as the course of the war itself, prove that at the time David already had a great army, properly trained and outfitted, an army prepared to wage war against the Ammonites in their own land and also to defeat the Aramean kings who chose to butt into that war. David could not have had such an army, or such ability, early in his reign.

If the battle of Helam was the last one, the one which brought David's Aramean wars to a close, then the other bat-

tles mentioned in the Bible had to precede it. There is no reason, therefore, for reversing their order, as do "most historians," A. Malamat among them.

E. Forrer's logic (in R.L.A., under "Aramu") is instructive. In II Sam.8:5, it is stated explicitly that David utterly defeated Hadadezer, the king of Zobah. This does not seem likely to Forrer. He "understands" that it really didn't happen that way. What did happen, then? Hadadezer had gone out to the lands along the Euphrates, to re-establish his dominion there. In his absence, David burst into Syria, defeated the garrison which Hadadezer had left behind, and took his booty. And since Hadadezer returned immediately (as Forrer seems to know),

"and brought out the Arameans that were beyond the River" (II Sam.10:16) against David; Hadadezer must have foisted his rule upon the kings of Syria (cp. II Sam.10:19), despite the raid (for the sake of booty -- Beutezug) which David had made against him, and despite David's subjugation of the Arameans of Damascus. Perhaps he (Hadadezer) had even succeeded in subordinating the Arameans of Mesopotamia, i.e., the land of Hanigalbat.

The "perhaps" which I have italicized is very instructive: we have before us a typical example of a man engaging in wishful thinking. Since Hadadezer had "returned victoriously" (?) from the lands across the Euphrates River, and established his authority over the kings of Syria, it cannot be supposed that he had previously been defeated by David; one is forced to admit, therefore, that David had made a raid in Syria during the absence of the king of Zobah. Here A. Malamat strays from the path paved by E. Forrer.

He says: "When Hadadezer returned from his expedition (in the Euphrates region) the two opponents met in a mighty battle along the border of Hamath (I Chron.18:3). David handed Hadadezer a tremendous defeat." Even prior to that, because of Hadadezer's rout in the battle of Helam, "the kingdom of Aram-Zobah had diminished in strength; and her authority over the other Aramean states had been undermined." Following Hadadezer's defeat in Syria, and the weakening of his kingdom, and the loss of his dominion over the Aramean kings, it is natural (to Malamet) that he should have been "engaged just then in re-establishing his authority over the lands of the Euphrates region." And when he returned to Syria, he fought his last war with David, which resulted in his final rout and the end of his kingdom. Thus says Malamet, in his departure from Forrer's version.

Forrer brings additional proof in support of his version: "The fact that Hadadezer was unable to do anything against David's Handstreich, also supports the theory that Hadadezer was too far away to be able to do anything" (Op. Cit., p.134, col.2). On page 135, column 1, he forgets his proposition that David's war in Syria was amere Handstreich, ((125)) and he says: "Because of David's successes in war, Solomon inherited this kingdom" (the kingdom of Zobah).

And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the (Euphrates) River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt...For he had dominion over all the region on this side the River, from Tipsah even to Gaza, over all the kings on this side the River" (I Ki.5:1-5).

Of such is E. Forrer's logic.

### Footnotes

- 1 Cf. Nu.24:17.
- 2 Cf. Ju.6:3,33.
- 3 Cf. Ps. 83.
- 4 Reuben Alcalay, The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary, IV (Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem, 1955), column 2839.
- 5 James B. Pritchard, ed. Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton, 1950), p.20, n.16.
- 6 Ibid., p.285 et passim.
- 7 Encyclopedia Britannica s.v. "Egypt," p.54.
- 8 William Foxwell Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore, 1957), p.150.
9. Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.483.
- 10 Ibid., p.262. (See note 11, below.)
- 10a J.H. Breasted, "The Decline and Fall of the Egyptian Empire," in The Cambridge Ancient History, II (Cambridge, England, 1924), p.173.
- 11 Op. Cit. (above, note 5), p.262. With three exceptions, (see notes 12, 12a, and 13, below), all names in this passage are taken from Pritchard. The latter translates the inscription differently from Reuveni, as follows: "The foreign countries made a conspiracy in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms, from Hatti, Kode, Carchemish, Arzawa, and Alshiya on (footnote: Hatti was the Hittite Empire, Kode the coast of Cilicia and northern Syria, Carchemish the city on the Euphrates, Arzawa somewhere in or near Cilicia, and Alshiya probably Cyprus), being cut off at (one time). A camp (was set up) in one place in Amor (footnote: Perhaps in the north Syrian plain or in Coele-Syria). They desolated its people, and its land was like that which has never come into being. They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared before them. Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Weshesh (footnote: Except for the Philistines ((Peleset)), these names are rendered close to the Egyptian writings... [footnote ibid., p. 26: The Tjeker ((= Teukroi?)) were one of the Sea Peoples associated with the Philistines in the great movements of the 15th to 12th centuries B.C.]; the Shekelesh might be the Siculi; the Denyen ((cuneiform Danuna)) might be the Danaoi.

The Weshesh cannot be easily related to any later people), lands united. They laid their hands upon the lands as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confident and trusting: 'Our plans will succeed!'"

12 Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, The Macmillan Bible Atlas (New York, 1968), map #28; also Yohanan Aharoni, Carta's Atlas of the Bible (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1964), map #28.

12a But see Pritchard's rendering in note 11, above.

13 But see Pritchard's rendering in note 11, above.

13a Op.Cit., (above, note 12), maps #79.

14 Ibid., maps #90.

15 Ibid., maps #101.

16 Sir Clinton Lewis and J.D. Campbell, eds. The Oxford Atlas (London, 1951), map #54.

17 Cf. Ju.6:3,33.

18 II Chron.26:7.

19 Edgar J. Goodspeed, transl. The Apocrypha: An American Translation (New York, 1959), p.392.

20 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #50.

21 Gen.10:2.

22 William Whiston, transl. The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus (New York, n.d.), p.376

23 Ibid., p.403.

23a Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1948), p.48.

24 The author is citing II Sam.22:44-48, and he gives the alternate readings from Ps.18:44-48. However, on this basis, the beginning of his citation is incorrect. He reads 'וַיִּנָּחֵם, and I have translated it thus; but since he is citing II Sam.22 here, and not Ps.18, he should have said 'וַיִּנָּחֵם.

24a Reuveni is here referring to the astonishment of the world, and particularly the incredulousness of the Arab nations, that the modern State of Israel has been able to hold her own against hostile neighbors, who encircle her. Reuveni's entire presentation is, in fact, colored by his conviction that Israel's modern history is a recapitulation of her ancient history (see Translator's Introduction).



25 Jack Finegan, Light from the Ancient Past (Princeton, 1959), p.201.

26 Emil G. Kraeling, ed. Rand McNally Historical Atlas of the Holy Land (New York, 1959), p.28)

27 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #43.

28 Ibid., maps #104.

29 Ibid., p.37.

30 Stanley A. Cook, "Syria and Palestine in the Light of External Evidence," in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.318.

31 Op.Cit. (above, note 26), p.81.

32 Op.Cit. (above, note 25), p. 199.

33 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a). Temeh is not the name of the king, but rather the name of his country, Libya!

34 Encyclopedia Britannica s.v. "Pelasgians."

35 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.25.

36 Ibid., n.1.

37 Ibid., p.380, n.3.

38 Ibid., p.25.

39 Ibid., p.26.

40 Ibid. The ruler's name, according to Pritchard, was not Tjeker, but Beder.

41 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.191.

42 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.263. Reuveni reads it "Shoshenk." Since there is no certainty as to the vocalization (see note 43, below), he may be right.

43 H.R. Hall, "The Eclipse of Egypt," in Op.Cit. (note 10a, above), Vol.III, p.259: "In Egyptian it is spelt Sha-sha-n-k, which the Assyrians vocalized as 'Shushinku,' and we conventionally call Sheshenk or Sheshonk."

44 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.172.

45 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.75.

46 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #104.

- 47 Ibid. (Macmillan alone), map #183.
- 48 D.G. Hogarth, "The Hittites of Asia Minor," in Op. Cit. (above, note 10a), p. 253.
- 49 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.352.
- 50 Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. "Armenia," p. 378.
- 51 Op.Cit. (above, note 48), p.260.
- 52 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p. 23, n.5.
- 53 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a).
- 54 Encyclopedia International (1964), s.v. "Malta," p. 275.
- 55 i.e., Thus, too, did Byzantium fall before the onslaught of the Ottomans.
- 56 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #146.
- 57 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), map #4, facing p.250.
- 58 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #146.
- 59 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), map #5, facing p. 272.
- 60 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #146.
- 61 H.R. Hall The Ancient History of the Near East (London, 1919), map facing p.368.
- 61a D.G. Hogarth, "The Hittites of Asia Minor," in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.272.
- 62 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #146.
- 63 John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible (Milwaukee, 1965), p. 903.
- 64 G. Ernest Wright, Biblical Archaeology (Philadelphia, 1957), p. 278.
- 65 D. Winton Thomas, Documents from Old Testament Times, (London, 1958), p. 56, note "a."
- 66 Op. Cit. (note 10a, above), Vol.III, map #2, facing p.166. The suggested location (and orthography) differ somewhat from Reuveni's.
- 67 Op.Cit. (above, note 16), map.#56.
- 68 Op.Cit. (above, note 65), p.248, note "a."

69 Op.Cit. (above, note 63), sixth of the maps forming a supplement at the end of the book.

70 Op.Cit. (above, note 65), pp.54f.

71 Zech.9:1.

72 II Sam.8:9-10.

73 I Chron.18:9-10.

74 D.G.Hogarth, "The Hittites of Asia Minor," in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.258.

75 F.E.Adcock, "The Conquest of Central Italy, in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), Vol. VII, p. 603.

76 Ibid., p. 585.

77 Ibid., p. 603.

78 Ibid., p. 584.

79 Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. "Etruscan Language."

80 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p. 275.

81 Ibid., pp.298-300.

82 Op.Cit. (above, note 63), pp.410f. Reuveni's transcriptions do not coincide exactly with that suggested here.

83 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.329.

84 Ibid., p.490.

85 Ibid., p.329, n.14. Pritchard reads "Setet." But since Reuveni here spells it *ṣṣṣ* (using the *ṣ* rather than the *š*), I have amended the reading to "Setjet." Later on, Reuveni gives the alternate spelling *ṣṣṣ*, and there I have transliterated it "Setet."

86 John A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt (Chicago, 1951), p.90.

87 Walter G. Williams, Archaeology in Biblical Research (New York, 1965), p.173.

88 "Synchronistic Listing of Kings" in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.700.

89 Ibid., p.701

89a Reuveni forgets the beginning of his sentence, by the time he reaches the end of it. What he wants to say is "...from that time until the end of the Assyrian state's existence (in 606 B.C.), Akkadian was its language; and even for several generations after the state ceased to exist, the language of the surviving Assyrians was an Akkadian dialect."

90 Ibid., p.699.

91 R. Campbell Thompson, "Assyria," in Ibid., p. 237.

92 I Chron. 1:8.

93 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.234.

93a Op.Cit. (above, note 63), p.708.

93b Op.Cit. (above, note 12 -- Macmillan alone), map #245.

94 Op.Cit. (above, note 90 ),

95 Op. Cit. (above, note 63), chart on front endpaper.

96 Op. Cit. (above, note 91).

97 Op. Cit. (above, note 12 -- Macmillan alone), map #183.

98 Op. Cit. (above, note 12), maps #15.

99 Madeleine S. Miller and J. Lane Miller, Harper's Bible Dictionary (New York, 1952), p.231.

100 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), Map #5, facing p.272.

101 Op.Cit. (above, note 61a), p.271.

102 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.249. Reuveni says that Kummukh was east of Assyria; Maps #4 and 5 in Cambridge Ancient History, II, place it west of Assyria.

103 Op.Cit. (above, note 88), p.701

104 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.246.

105 Peter Giles, "The Peoples of Asia Minor," in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.17.

106 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #28.

107 Sidney Smith, "The Foundation of the Assyrian Empire," in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p. 11.

108 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #30.

- 109 Ibid., maps #38.
- 110 Op.Cit. (above, note 107), p.4.
- 111 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.240.
- 112 Most English sources call them "Kassites" or "Cassites."
- 113 Op.Cit. (above, note 88), p.701
- 114 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p. 273. Reuveni here gives another variant of the same name: ḥḏ/ḥḏ, whose English transliteration I have been unable to locate. It is probably "Hadad-bal-idin."
- 115 Op.Cit. (above, note 63), chart on front endpaper.
- 116 The date given as the terminus of Shalmaneser's reign (1028-1117) must be a typographical error. It should read 1028-1017.
- 117 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.228.
- 118 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #127.
- 119 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.278.
- 120 Roger T. O'Callaghan, Aram Naharaim (Rome, 1948), p.105.
- 121 The author says "Assyrians," but "Arameans" would make more sense in this context.
- 122 Op.Cit. (above, note 115).
- 123 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #90.
- 124 T.K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, eds. Encyclopedia Biblica (New York, 1914), column 413.
- 125 Ibid., column 4288.
- 126 Ibid., column 4423.
- 127 "Synchronistic Table," in Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.692.
- 128 Op.Cit. (above, note 124), column 444.
- 129 The author is comparing this "Amorite" name with other Semitic names, known to us from the Bible, which include the same elements ḥḏ and ḥḏ. Ahab: I Ki.16:28 et passim; Shemeber: Gen.14:2.

- 130 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.274.
- 131 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.230.
- 132 Gen.10:8.
- 133 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.240.
- 134 Op.Cit. (above, note 88), p.699.
- 135 Ibid., p.700.
- 136 Op.Cit. (above, note 16), map #52.
- 137 Op.Cit. (above, note 88), p. 700.
- 138 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.244.
- 139 Ibid., p.246.
- 140 Ibid., p.248.
- 141 Op.Cit. (above, note 124), column 447.
- 142 Op.Cit. (above, note 91), p.251.
- 143 Op.Cit. (above, note 88), p.701, where he is listed not as an Aramean, but as the son of the previous king, and therefore still in the Isin dynasty.
- 144 Op.Cit. (above, note 124), column 448.
- 145 If the years of "chaos" are sixteen in number the year cited here should be 980, and not 990.
- 146 Cf. above, p.38, author's footnote: "The name Two-Rivers [ שני נהרות ] .. [in] its Greek translation [is] Mesopotamia."
- 147 Reuveni does not explain the need for transliterating such words as one and wrap into cuneiform. Surely words already existed for these concepts in Sumerian or Akkadian without having to appropriate the Hebrew terms. Perhaps these are not the words "slaughter" and "wrap," but rather proper names. If so, I have not been able to locate them.
- 148 See note 80, above.
- 149 See note 81, above.
- 150 See note 85, above. Reuveni here gives both spellings.
- 151 "Select List of Egyptian Kings of the Old and Middle Kingdoms," in Op. Cit. (above, note 10a), Vol.I, p.661.

- 152 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.329.
- 153 Ibid., p. 21, n.34.
- 154 The Hebrew here should read <sup>לְעָמָם</sup> rather than <sup>לְעָמָה</sup>.
- 155 Op.Cit. (above, note 10a), p.733, n.1.
- 156 Op.Cit. (above, note 127).
- 157 Perhaps the author means "fortified cities," although he doesn't use the term <sup>עָרֵי מִצְדָּה</sup>, but rather <sup>עָרֵי מִצְדָּה</sup>.
- 158 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.85.
- 159 Ibid., p.217.
- 160 Op.Cit. (above, note 63), p.88.
- 161 Op.Cit. (above, note 5), p.250.
- 162 Ibid., p.270.
- 163 Ibid., p. 221.
- 164 Gen.36:11.
- 165 Op.Cit. (above, note 16).
- 166 Gen.25:5.
- 167 Op.Cit.(above, note 12), maps #146.
- 168 Op. Cit. (above, note 10a), Vol.III, map #5.
- 169 The author's intention in using the expression <sup>פִּי עַל פִּי</sup> is not entirely clear to me.
- 170 We actually say the reverse in English: "French Canadians." Reuveni is expressing a Gaullist point of view.
- 171 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #169.
- 172 Jerusalem: Bialik, 5716 A.M. (written in Hebrew).
- 173 The J.P.S. translation of <sup>וַיַּעַשׂ</sup> reads, "he put them to the worse." This is not, however, the true meaning of <sup>וַיַּעַשׂ</sup>, but rather the translators' attempt to solve the problem which also bothers Reuveni. To make that problem clear, I have departed from the J.P.S. rendering, and translated <sup>וַיַּעַשׂ</sup> by "he transgressed."
- 174 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #15.

175 Herodotus, with an English Translation by A.G. Godley (London, 1920), Vol. I, p.460.

177 Should read, "Ezra 4:7-24."

178 The translation of this Talmudic passage comes from: Rev. A. Cohen, transl. The Babylonian Talmud: Tractate B<sup>e</sup>RAK<sup>o</sup>T (Cambridge, 1921), p. 11. At this point in the text, the translator's footnote reads: "Let the rich help the poor."

179 The translator's footnote reads, in part, "The poor cannot remain satisfied with charitable doles, any more than a handful will satisfy a hungry lion. Moreover, a nation needs external sources of supply. It cannot live on itself, just as the soil taken out of a pit will not completely fill the cavity."

180 Translator's footnote: "Send out soldiers to obtain plunder."

181 Translator's footnote: "The Jewish senate, one of whose duties was to decide war. See Jewish Encyclopedia, XI, p.41."

182 Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman, transl. Midrash Rabbah, II (London, 1939). In this edition, it is 84:15.

183 The supposition is that of the author, not the translator.

184 The brackets are those of the Bible translators.

185 The J.P.S. translates this difficult line as "What have I now done? Was it not but a word?" But I have translated it more in keeping with Reuveni's explication. It is surprising that Reuveni should try to make a point with the use of a line whose meaning is so ambiguous.

186 Op.Cit. (above, note 172).

187 I Sam.13:2.

188 I Sam.11:4.

189 This is a difficult passage to translate; and J.P.S. is not clear. I have therefore used the Revised Standard Version (London, 1952), p.229; but I have modified that translation to make it agree with Reuveni's explications de texte.

190 Slight modification of tenses in J.P.S. translation, to make it conform with the author's intention.



191 The author means "Ephraimites." He apparently derives the use of 'עֲפְרַיִמִי for Ephraimite, from I Sam.12:5.

192 See note 191, above.

193 This is Reuveni's understanding of the words פִּלְאֵי יָדַי (פִּלְאֵי יָדַי). J.P.S. reads "But if ye become to betray me to mine adversaries."

194 Ju.19-21.

195 Op.Cit. (above, note 12 -- Macmillan alone), p.176.

196 Ibid., p.175.

197 J. Simons, The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament (Leiden, 1959), p.592.

198 Op.Cit. (above, note 12 -- Macmillan alone), p.178.

199 Op.Cit. (above, note 197), p.608.

200 J.P.S. reads "Bor-ashan."

201 Josh.15:42.

202 Op.Cit. (above, note 12 -- Macmillan alone), p.178.

203 Ibid.

204 Op.Cit. (above, note 197), p.592.

205 It is easier to see how Reuveni might be correct in his supposition that these two passages have been confused with each other, by considering the Hebrew, where the word פֶּלֶא is used both literally ("son of") and figuratively (to designate a person's age). II Sam.13:1: וְיָדָעְתָּ כִּי אֶתְּלָלָהּ וְיָדָעְתָּ כִּי אֶתְּלָלָהּ. II Sam.2:10: וְיָדָעְתָּ כִּי אֶתְּלָלָהּ וְיָדָעְתָּ כִּי אֶתְּלָלָהּ.

206 Tel-Aviv, 1961 (written in Hebrew).

207 Reuveni begs the question. He begins by showing that Saul was young when he began to reign (and fairly old when he died) in order to show that he reigned for many years. He then uses the conclusion that Saul reigned for many years, to "prove" that Saul was young when he began to reign!

208 This word, although omitted from Reuveni's text, is required by the context.

209 Reuveni's interpretation of the words הַיְּרֵמֹה is obviously at variance with the J.P.S. translation. It is hard to see how Reuveni derives the meaning he does from these words.

210 The author leaves out the word בְּיֵרֵמֹה in his quotation from Judges 15:63. It is, however, crucial that this word be included; otherwise the author's subsequent observation makes no sense. I have assumed, therefore, that it was left out in error, and I have included the words "at Jerusalem" in the English.

211 Op.Cit. (above, note 22), p.211.

212 Cf. Solomon Mandelkern, Concordance to the Old Testament (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 1952), p.198: "The Valley of Baca [is so named] because בְּכָא grew there..."

213 I have modified the J.P.S. translation to make it agree with Reuveni's subsequent interpretation. He likes to remove miraculous elements where he can; and he does so here, even though the passage itself wants to describe miraculous intervention (cf. the rest of the same verse).

214 The author's intention here is obviously "or prior to them," which would require the Hebrew to read לְפָנֵיהֶם.

215 J.P.S. has already emended the text to read "with the children of Israel. But to catch Reuveni's meaning, I have translated it literally.

216 I Chron.3:1.

217 II Sam.3:3.

218 Should read "Book VII, 14:4. Op.Cit. (above, note 22), p.233.

219 Reuveni constantly compares the situation of Israel then with that of Israel today. The "first round" in modern times was the war between Israel and her Arab neighbors when the state was first established, upon the termination of the British mandate over Palestine in 1948. The "second round" was the Sinai Campaign of 1956. The "third round" had not yet been fought at the time this book was written; it has been fought since: the "Six Day War" of June 1967. Unfortunately, the Arabs, unlike the Philistines, have not been subdued by the "third round," either; and some Arabs are now thinking and talking about a "fourth round."

220 Nu.R.14:1, according to the Soncino edition.

221 Except where otherwise indicated, the translation is taken from Op.Cit. (above, note 22), p.211.

222 The Whiston translation is modified from here down to "faintness of heart or fear," to make it agree with Reuveni, who must have read the original differently.

223 Should read, "I Macc.5:26."

224 Ex. 13:17. Reuveni emends the text, which traditionally reads  $\text{וַיִּלְכֹּד אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל}$  (i.e., "God led them not...") to  $\text{וַיִּלְכֹּד אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל}$ .

225 Gen.10:4.

226 Op.Cit. (above, note 124), column 1123.

227 Op.Cit. (above, note 12), maps #38.

228 Ibid., maps #15.

229 Ibid., maps #117.

230 David Kimhi, 1160-1235.

231 Op.Cit. (above, note 22), p.213.

232 J.P.S. reads "to establish" in both places, making no distinction between  $\text{וַיִּשְׁכֶּן}$  and  $\text{וַיִּשְׁכֶּן}$ .

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