A Study of Historical Writings in the Books of Samuel

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CHAPTER I
Concept of History

For millennia men have written accounts of events
which occurred during their lifetime. Some allegorized
the event, while others embodied the incident with
eponymous characters producing a legendary effect. At
times, either they exaggerated an unimportant occurrence
to the extent of rendering it grotesque, or minimized or
eliminated an important event.

In former years such descriptions and stories did
not trouble the historian. The puzzled historian simply
stated that it was impossible to obtain any historical
data and information from such accounts. Today, however,
a scientific approach through archeology has thrown new
light on such material. What has been dogmatically thrust
aside as merely beautiful mythological tales and fantasies
of the mind, is now viewed and examined with more care.
This is true of the ancient Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek,
and Hebrew literature. We are primarily concerned with
the Hebrew literature as manifested in the Bible. Many
of the obscurities of biblical stories have been clari-
fied by recent archeological research. We have come to
realize that within these ancient biblical accounts we
find the social and economic backgrounds of our people

portrayed during the various periods of their wanderings.
The question which asserts itself is, "Can these accounts
be considered as history in the light of present day
thought? Did the authors write history?" Before any an-
swer is given it is necessary to know exactly what is
meant by history.

The word "history" is derived from the Greek "ἰστορία".[1]
In the sixth century the Ionians used it in the sense of
a search for knowledge in its widest sense. "History"
meant inquiry, investigation, not narrative. It was not
until two centuries later that the historikos, the reciter
of stories, superseded the historian (ἰστορέων) the
seeker after knowledge. Thus "history" began as a branch
of scientific research.

It was Herodotus who first hinted at the use of the
new word by applying it merely to details accumulated dur-
ing a long search for knowledge. But by Aristotle's time
"history" is applied to the literary product, instead of
the inquiry which precedes it. From Aristotle's time to
modern times "history" (Latin historia) has been a form
of literature. In the scientific environment of today we
recognize once more, with the earliest forerunners of
Herodotus, that history involves two distinct operations,
investigation in the field of science, and literary pre-
sentation--in the field of art.

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1. Encyclopaedia Brittanica....History.

History in its widest sense is all that has happened.
There are as many things happening as there are human be-
ings. In the broadest sense these happenings are the
facts of history. But only a few of these facts are of
historical importance. In public affairs there is a
continual process of selection, by which important events
are singled out, and recorded. "...The aim of the his-
torian is the statement of what has taken place in the
past. He selects the facts to be included in his work in
accordance with some personal localized view, and he ex-
plains events by the imaginative reconstruction of the
characters and motives of the participants."[1]

We usually think that the duty of the historian is
to be impartial, and not to allow his human weaknesses to
influence his choice of facts. Because "partiality" means
that the historian "takes sides", that he is affected by
love, hate, and allows himself to be influenced by personal
considerations. One may ask whether such a thing as "Ob-
jectivity of Historical Knowledge" is possible.[2] An af-
firmative answer may be given. An objectivity of a piece
of knowledge may exist under the following conditions:

The knowing subject knows the object before him, in-
dependent of himself. Thus the personality of the knower
has no significance for the content of the piece of knowl-

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1. Teggart, Prolegomena to History, University of
California Publication, 1916, Vol. IV, p. 184.

2. Fritz Medicus, Objectivity of Historical Know-
ledge, p. 37 ff.

edge.. For example--when an experiment is demonstrated
in the lecture room of a department of physics, the visual
impressions are different for every spectator. Every one
sees the experiment from his own situation, but these in-
dividual differences do not enter into the piece of knowl-
edge itself. What is to be understood, has no reference
to the accidental circumstance of the observer.

Can this be applied to history? There are some
historians who claim that such an approach is not only
possible but desirable. Such men as E. Bernheim, W. Bauer,
Dr. Gooch, M. Seignobos, claim that history is a science
and should be studied objectively as other sciences are
studied. On the other hand, H. C. Davis, J. W. Fortescue
and others reject that point of view claiming that a docu-
ment is but a scrap of human nature or it is naught.
They fail to see how scientific conceptions of cause and
effect can be usefully employed when we are dealing with
the co-operation or clash of human wills. There is no
science of human nature. Shotwell, Huizinga claim that
today the interpretation of history is neither a science
nor an art, but partakes of the nature of both. For the
historian, one half of his business is the discovery of
the truth, and the other half, its representation.

This brings us to the subject of historiography, the
writing of history. It was shown above that the claim of
objectivity or impartiality in historiography is unmeaning.

The impartiality of historians must have some standards
of value. It seems almost impossible that he can ever
attain the scientific attitude of a chemist, who is in-
different as to whether his chemicals unite or separate.
The chemist is interested solely in what they do. But the
historian's judgment is permeated with his own judgments
of value. "Historiography is a rendering of what has
happened in terms of the emotions awakened by the result.
The selection of facts and the realization of character
are the fundamental elements of historiography. The
writing of history is the memory of what men cherish in
the life of the nation to which they belong. It is the
expression of the spirit of the community that gives it
birth, and takes on new forms as that spirit expands. A
man may present the picture of the distant past, but he
always speaks with the voice of his own generation, and
gives utterance to the ideas and aspirations of his own
community. He writes as a spokesman of his people.
Histories are written for men of one time and one people."[1]

Perhaps a definition of the concept of history will
help crystalize the previous discussion of "What is His-
tory?".

"History is the intellectual form, in which a civili-
zation renders account to itself of its past."[2] It is

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1. Teggart, Prolegomena to History, p. 208.

2. John Huizinga, Concept of History, pp. 1-10.

an intellectual form for understanding the world, just as philosophy, literature, jurisprudence, physical science, are forms for understanding the world. But history is distinguished from these intellectual forms in that it is related to the past and nothing but the past. Its purpose is to understand the world in and through the past. The past is limited in accordance with the type of subject which seeks to understand it. The subject which concerns itself with history is civilization. Every civilization has a past of its own. ("By civilization, we mean the ideal totalities of a social life and creative activity realized in a definite time and place, which for our thinking constitute the units in the historical life of mankind.") Every civilization creates its own form of history. The character of the civilization determines what history shall mean to it, and of what kind it shall be. A civilization whose outlook is narrow produces a history which is likewise limited and narrow; the reverse of this is true. Thus, the subject in which this intellectual form becomes conscious is in a civilization. Every civilization creates this form anew according to its own peculiar style. This concept of a civilization necessarily implies the unavoidable subjectivity implied in every history. [1]

Finally, the intellectual activity from which history takes its rise is "rendering account to oneself. It comprises every form of historical record; annalist, writer of memoirs, historical philosopher, scholarly researcher,

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1. John Huizinga, Concept of History, pp. 1-10.

etc....It expresses the constant presence of the pragmatic element. 'Account' expresses--ne quid falsi audeat." The subject matter of history is limited to the past of the civilization in which it is rooted. Thus we see that history gives only a particular representation of a particular past.[1]

A given event may be treated by one historian as of the greatest importance and by another as quite incidental. Each historian faces the event with experience of his own personality, i.e. Jew, Catholic, Democrat, Socialist, etc. Each can only understand the event in relation to what gives concreteness to his life. Thus two historians may differ from each other because of the concreteness of what their personal life history had produced for them. Therefore when two historians introduce their personality in order to understand the historic fact, they introduce something different. It may very well be the case that both historians are right, the one finding the fact in question relevant to his picture of history, the other finding it indifferent for his. Neither can exhaust historic reality because each sees it from his own standpoint.[2]

In order to put the right questions to history no one can do more than arrange himself in the systems of the life of his time. After having integrated himself in such a manner, and a period of the past has awakened his interest,

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1. Huizinga, Concept of History, pp. 1-10.

2. An example of such an approach is found on infra, p.24 concerning the two stories of the founding of the monarchy.

he will grasp the nature of this period in a way which
bears meaning for him and for his time, and then proceed
to write history.

The characteristic action in historiography presents
the issue of a crucial struggle between different groups,
societies, or nations. The histories which men have
chosen to keep in remembrance, have been inspired by bit-
ter conflicts.[1] Thus, for example, Herodotus, "The Father
of History", took for his theme a great subject, "the ori-
gin and progress of the Persian invasion". Herodotus
began with the narrative of a single war which was to him
recent history. He dealt with it in a way that still
makes it one of the most attractive histories ever written.
If he is open to the charge of sometimes being credulous
on religious matters, and uncritical in regards to numbers,
and to attribution of great events to trivial causes, it
is unreasonable to expect that writing as he did at the
very dawn of historical writing he could have been exempt
from such faults. His work is a scientific achievement,
remarkable for its approximation to the truth as well as
for the vastness of its scope. His story was simple in
action, of a victory ever won against overwhelming odds.[2]
The Athenians became the saviours of Greece. He gave
authority to a story which embodied Athenian tradition,

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1. Teggart, Prolegomena to History, p. 195.

2. J. T. Shotwell, "History of History Writing,"
Encyclopaedia Brittanica, "History".

and justified the Athenian empire. The work of Herodotus
narrates details of a recent event, with a prefatory ac-
count of the circumstances that led up to it. In such a
work, the focus, is the denouement as it appears to the
author; the unity is inspired by the outcome. In Herodotus
everything leads up to the crisis of the Persian invasion.
The argument of his history is a narrative of the relations
between the Greeks and the Oriental powers, (from the ac-
cession of Croesus to the capture of Sestos, 478 B.C.).
It shows the struggle of Greece with the Orient. A con-
flict of two different civilizations. Throughout the
work, the contrast of Hellenic with Oriental culture is
the keynote of the history of Herodotus.[1]

As was previously stated, Herodotus is considered by
historians as "The Father of History". This title becomes
very questionable when we investigate the historical liter-
ature in our Bible. A study of the Books of Samuel re-
veals accounts which measure up to historiography in its
truest meaning. There is at least one account in the Books
of Samuel which precedes Herodotus by at least two centu-
ries. This is not an attempt to deprive the Greeks of
the title "The Father of History", it is merely to open
our eyes to the fact that historigraphy in its truest sense
exists in the Old Testament. A view contrary to this

1. Bury, Ancient Greek Historians, p. 37.

is stated by Professor Shotwell, "In short it was the dis-
torters of Hebrew history who made that history worth our
while....The fact remains that, from our point of view,
the history was distorted".[1] However, rather than pass
judgment on that statement it would be better to study the
accounts presented to us in the Books of Samuel. It will
be shown from a study of these Books that historical writ-
ing passed through various stages of development, from that
of heroic poetry which describes contemporary happenings,
to that of an account of David which is remarkable for
its truth, combining the scientific spirit together with
an artistic sense, which enabled the author to cast the
material in the truest literary form. This view is sub-
stantiated by Professor Baron who states that it is not
an "accident that this people was the first to write histo-
ry. Historical narratives, songs and the like, doubtless
existed among all nations. But a consecutive historical
literature with that fine combination of factual state-
ment, pragmatic interpretation, and charming presentation,
as composed by the Hebrew writers and compilers between
the tenth and eithth century B.C., finds no parallel what-
ever in other ancient literatures before the Greeks. Even
the otherwise most distinguished Greek historians, such
as Herodotus and Thycydidies, lacked something of the his-

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1. J. T. Shotwell, Introduction to the History of
History, p. 107.

torical perspective of the Israelitic historians".[1]

Thus, in _Samuel_--there is the issue of a crucial struggle between different groups of peoples. For the theme of the _Book_ the various authors took a great subject, the origin and progress of the Israelitish monarchy. It shows the struggle of Israel against the different nations with whom they came into contact in their fight for independence.

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1. Baron, _A Social and Religious History of the Jews_, p. 25. Meyer, in his article on "Die Literatur der älteren Konigszeit" holds the same point of view as that presented by Dr. Baron. Edouard Meyer, _Geschichte des Altertums_, Band II 2, Chapter VI, pp. 284-286.

CHAPTER II

Evidence of Early Writing in Israel

Let it be stated at the outset that this is not an attempt to defend the hypothesis that historical writing in its truest sense exists in the Books of Samuel. On the contrary, wherever the text reveals distorted facts and the biased opinion of an author, no effort will be made to conceal it. An objective approach is the aim of this paper. A more thorough historical treatment of the Books of Samuel would be to begin with the first chapter and evaluate each chapter successively. However, time did not allow for such detailed study. Rather than analyze each chapter for the purpose of sifting out true historical writing, it was thought best to select examples or types of literature showing the development of the historiographical process, from its incipient stage, that of poetry, to that of a well constructed story in prose.

Amongst the various early peoples who knew little of writing, the bard or narrator is a familiar figure. On various occasions he would tell of great heroes and their victories. This is true of the ancient Greeks and Hindus as well as of Israelites. Throughout early times the deeds of Gideon, Abimelech, and Samson were told and recited over and over again. Stories of heroes such as

David and his battles with the Phillistines, and the deeds
of Saul and Jonathan were handed down from father to son.
Various materials were combined in these tales. These
narratives must have been memorized by certain men who
transmitted them down through the ages. Such was the case
with the ancient Greeks concerning the Illiad, or with the
Hindus concerning their Reg Vedda, or the Arabs and their
Qur'an; there is no reason why the **Bible** should differ in
this respect. Biblical narratives were likewise memorized
by certain men who handed them down to their successors.
We believe that during this process of transmission much
material had been forgotten and omitted. Undoubtedly the
accounts must have suffered alterations from age to age.
New people look upon material handed down differently from
that of the preceding generation, and unconsciously add
details which from their viewpoint seem reasonable. The
placing of this material in writing gave it a stable form,
for sacred writings tend to retain its special character-
istics and prevent change. Yet, even this written material
was not inviolable. As time passed and each age wrote
or rewrote the story, the author consciously or unconscious-
ly reflected his period, for every author is a product of
his age. In the first chapter it was shown that the lit-
erature of a specific period gives the historian insight
into the social and political conditions, and opinions of
the people during his time.

Thus, there are two types of records. First, those records which have been left by tradition, by folklore, by existing ceremonies, the original meaning of which has long been forgotten. The second type are written records. Our interest is primarily in this latter type. Let us first investigate the objectives for the writing of these accounts, and secondly, who could have written them. Things were recorded mainly for two purposes: first, for practical business reasons, i.e. accounts noting the sales of a merchant, or the title of a parcel of land, etc.; secondly, for literary purposes, such as ritual, poetry, and narratives. All writing is in a sense historical, in that it records something which has happened. The oldest records that have survived are those of monuments, potsherds, and ostraca. The record may have been inscribed by tools on stone or metal, or by a stylus on clay, or with a pen on ostraca, papyri, or vellum.

It must be remembered that regardless of whether the accounts contained on these monuments are true or false, they nevertheless reveal records of the period during which they were written and of the writers who portrayed them. These inscriptions have been found on tombs and in temples; "on tombs for the Gods to read, and in temples for the priests".[1]   The temple record is the origin of annals.

I.   Shotwell, History of History, p. 58.

The subject matter of the annal was a miscellany, woven
out of religion, war, catastrophies or mere business items.
With the development of the calendar came annals and chron-
icles. Events were written year by year. The annalist
wrote down what was happening or what had just taken place.
He entered on the temple lists the death of a king, or
registered conquests under order of the king. These an-
nalists were generally priests who kept temple records.[1]
Temple business, as was previously stated, played an im-
portant role. Donations to the temple were recorded. It
is natural that business in general (outside the temple)
employed scribes to note their transactions. Writing was
essential in the transaction of government business. Thus,
writing played an important role and special men were
trained for that profession. This was true of Babylonia,
Egypt, and the recently discovered kingdom of Ugarit,
where excavations at Ras Shamra revealed a temple library,
and a building which was a school or college for scribes.
But, what about Israel? Amidst these highly cultured
civilizations, was Israel an illiterate people depending
upon bards and narrators for the transmission of their
accounts and records? The discussion at the beginning
of this chapter would leave one to believe that there
was little knowledge of script amongst Israel. However,

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1. Shotwell, History of History, p. 39.

the recent archeological finds at Lachish may revolutionize
and overthrow our notions of the written accounts in our
Bible. Mr. J. L. Starkey's excavations at Tell ed-Deweir
revealed a group of letters written in an alphabetical
script. He delivered them to Professor Torcyner of the
Hebrew University for decipherment and translation.[1]

"The Lachish letters are written in carbon ink with
a reed pen on pieces of 'potsherds'. There are eighteen
(18) personal letters. These letters are in the Phoeni-
cian-Hebrew script. This script was used by the Jews un-
til the Babylonian captivity, at which time the Ass-yrian
Hebrew script superseded it. The Maccabeans tried to re-
vive this Phoenician-Hebrew script and used it on their
coins. However, it was later dropped from usage."

The alphabetical script in which these letters are
written is extremely interesting. The script is that of
the eighth-seventh centuries B.C. and presumably belongs
to the age of Jeremiah, shortly before Lachish fell into
the hands of the Chaldeans in 588-7 B.C.[2] These letters
with their flowing script must have been developed on papyrus,
or vellum. Professor Torcyner is of the opinion that this

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1. Professor Torcyner, who has already written a
book on the results of his decipherment of the Lachish let-
ters, permitted Sir Charles Marston to read his book before
he sent it to the press for publication. Sir Marston re-
lates the results of Dr. Torcyner's investigation in his
book, The Bible Comes Alive.

2. Albright, Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental
Research, No. 58, pp. 2-3.

form of writing must have taken many centuries to develop,
and perhaps might even go back to Moses' time. Which
means that the historians, priests, and prophets before
the exile wrote in this Phonician-Hebrew script. This
archeological discovery is most important in that for the
first time we find whole sentences of alphabetical writ-
ing penned in biblical times.[1]

Since 1930, an increasing number of early alphabetical
inscriptions have been discovered in Palestine. These
discoveries substantiate the theory that events were record-
ed in writing about the time they occurred. Archeological
discoveries have revealed many examples of the Sinai He-
brew type of script.[2] Sinai Hebrew had its origin in
the Sinai Peninsula. In the middle of this peninsula a
temple of Serebit was built by Hatsheput (1537-1485 B.C.),
during the reign of Thutmosis III (1501-1486). At this
temple the earliest alphabetical script has been found.
It was not written in cuneiform characters at all. In
December, 1929, excavations at Gezer revealed a bit of
pottery with three letters of this script. Later, in 1930,
at Bet Shemesh, another example of this Sinai script was
found on an ostracon written in ink. Finally, in 1935,
at Lachish, examples of this Sinai script have been dis-

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1. Marston, The Bible Comes Alive, p. 247.

2. Albright, Bulletin of Oriental Schools of Research,
No. 63, 1936.

covered. The Sinai script is definitely the oldest type
of alphabetical writing, and the Jews used it in their
records. Thus we see that Israel had at least three al-
phabetical scripts from the time of Moses onwards:

1. Sinai Hebrew (Gezer inscriptions)

2. Phoenician Hebrew (Lachish letters)

3. Assyrian Hebrew (exilic and post-exilic writings)

Unfortunately, the materials upon which these records
were written were of the perishable type. Previously, the
general opinion was that records concerning Israel during
the monarchy were irretrievably lost. However, the recent
discoveries have brought to light the hope that more materi-
al for the biblical period will be unearthed in the fu-
ture. John Garstang is of the opinion that the "pos-
sibility of the art of writing in early Hebrew, having
been adopted by the leaders of Israel soon after their entry
into Palestine, is now to be admitted".[1] "It would seem
indeed probable that the religious leaders of Israel after
their entry into Canaan, adopted the system of writing
already developed in the land, and commenced a series of
sacred archives. The text implies clearly that Joshua set
down in writing at Shilo,   the description of the tribal
portions (Josh. 18:9)."[2]

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1. John Garstang, Heritage of Solomon, p. 145.

2. Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. II, p. 334.

In the post-Mosaic period, the form of government of Gideon and Abimelech must have been similar to other city states of the surrounding peoples, and they, too, had their archives and important documents of state, as did other petty rulers of that time. Excavations at Shechem may yet reveal these hitherto unknown documents. Of course, we can not definitely affirm their existence, for lack of primary evidence. Biblical critics, who have hitherto denied Israel the possibility of having written accounts, must now approach their field of study with a different perspective.

Since we can no longer deny Israel the authorship of documents, we now turn to the problem of the writers themselves and ask, Who were the scribes in Israel? Amongst other nations, the priests possessed special knowledge. The discoveries at Ras Shamra Ugarit, which are contemporary with early Israelitish times, prove that priests were scribes. The priests in early Israel, similar to those among other people, had many functions. Amongst its various functions, that of teaching was important. As guardians of the law, with instruction as to the form of worship, they had occasion to record certain wise sayings, fables, parables, allegories, sagas, myths. The priests were thus the depository of traditional religious knowledge. These fables and parables represent reality in the form of a fictitious story. The people combined the imaginary with

actual events, for example, Jotham's fable, in which the
trees desire a king; or Nathan's parable of the rich man
who took a poor man's sheep.[1] Amongst other Semitic peo-
ples mythological tales played an important role, as is
evidenced from the Ugarit inscriptions. However, mytho-
logical tales were not of great significance in Israel be-
cause of its exclusive YHWHism. But sagas did play an im-
portant part in Israel. In myths the actors were mytho-
logical gods, while in sagas the actors were human beings.
Sagas are aetiological. Questions demanded answers. Why
was Issac so named? Why did the serpent crawl on its belly?
Questions of this nature found explanation in popular
poetical narratives. Although each was born of the imagi-
nation, to describe a narrative as saga is not to deny
its historicity. Sagas were usually associated with sacred
places. And with regard to cities of worship man was ex-
tremely conservative. The Hebrews took over places which
were formerly sacred to the Canaanites. It was natural
that Israel render to the gods of that country the tribute
they demanded. This was found to be the case in the estab-
lishment of sanctuaries and the places of worship. The
conquerors located their cultus at the places which were
sanctuaries of their opponents. Israel had to legitimize
them from the standpoint of YHWH, which was accomplished
by showing how God or his angels appeared there.to one of
the patriarchs. The priests preserved the story of YHWH's

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1. Bertholet, History of Hebrew Civilization, p. 336.

manifestation on behalf of his people. Such cult sagas
are found in Genesis. In respect to subject matter, even
cult sagas are germs of historical writings.[1] The ac-
count given by priests of the sanctuary of the Deity to
which it owed its being, is followed by information re-
garding other things that happened there. That is what
happened in the story of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. It
was perhaps a priest who described its erection and con-
secration, with statistics of offerings and income; even
an account of the pillage and seizures of the temple
treasury at the hands of their own kings, was recorded.
No doubt such a chronical was one of the sources for the
Book of Kings. One might state that this is true of later
biblical times, but who wrote such accounts during the
earlier days? We have no evidence concerning early scribes.
We are told that the Recabites had their own clan of writers.[2]
The Recabites lived in the Negeb, in southern Palestine.
They lived in the same district as did the Kenites. The
Kenites were itinerant coppersmiths, moving wherever work
was to be found. I Chron. 2:55 cornects the Kenites with
the Recabites. (According to tradition, Moses by marriage,
is related to the Kenites. (Ju. 1:16).) Perhaps the Recabites
learned the art of writing in Kiriyat-Sefarim.

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1. Bertholet, History of Hebrew Civilization, p. 340.
2. I Chr. 2:55.

Kiriyat-Sefarim (later called Debir) is located in
the southern part of Judah. The name signifies a city of
books. It is possible that in this city there was a group
of scribes who devoted themselves to the writing of books.
This city might have been a training school for scribes
similar to the school of scribes found in Ras Shamra. It
is possible that the priests had their training in Kiryat-
Sefarim, before they set out to serve various sanctuaries.
As yet, no document of these early priests functioning at
their sanctuaries during the rise of the monarchy has been
found. Perhaps further excavations at Shilo will fill
this lacuna in our history. Much of the material con-
cerning warriors and their heroic deeds shows us that they
are mere excerpts from longer descriptions. The story of
Gideon, for example, takes for granted a previously lengthy
description of the invasion of the enemy and their mis-
deeds which demanded Gideon's interference. The story of
Abimelech is likewise fragmentary. The connection with
the Gideon story is lacking. Such stories as Gideon,
Abimelech, and the Danites are but fragments.

The early period of monarchy was a time of great
literary activity. Besides the general output at the
sanctuaries, there developed a professional class of scribes.
Israel's monarchy was democratic. Only a free man in a
free country could face things and persons with an inde-
pendent judgment. It was in the atmosphere of freedom in
Israel that this unique development of literature flourished.

After having discussed the literary possibilities and their authors, we may now approach the two Books of Samuel. It must be remembered that the historian of these books incorporated material he found with comparative little alteration. This is shown by the inconsistencies found. Perhaps, as Kirkpatrick suggests, these inconsistencies may be used as evidence that the compiler presents original authorities instead of solving the discrepancies into a consistent unity.[1] At the very outset of the book a glaring inconsistency faces us. There are two accounts of the founding of the monarchy. In the older one, Samuel is described as the man of God, a well-known "seer", honored in his town, presiding at the sacrificial feast. A king is needed to deliver the people from the yoke of the Philistines. Samuel, informed by God, finds the man (Saul), annoints him, and tells him to await the opportune time for public announcement. This opportunity occurs after Saul defeats Nahash the Ammonite, when he is elected by acclaimation at Gilgal (I Sam. II:15).

On the other hand, we have a different account, a latter one, concerning the founding of the monarchy. In this one, Samuel is the famous Judge. The elders of Israel want a king. Samuel rebukes them, telling them it is sinful. (There is no indication that the people are suffering from oppression.) This account tells of a total de-

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1. Kirkpatrick, Cambridge Bible Book of Samuel.

feat of the Philistines sometime previously. A king is demanded because of the people's dislike of Samuel's sons. The establishment of the monarchy is carried out deliberately. Saul is chose ny lot at Mizpah, and Samuel, in a farewell address resigns his leadership (I Sam. 12).

Thus we have two different accounts of the founding of the monarchy. The older attempts to show that a king is needed to unite the people against the enemies. The other tries to convince the people that a monarchy is lower than a theocracy. These two accounts are irreconcilable. However, merely because they cannot be reconciled does not mean that the later is to be regarded as fictitious. Our author had two documents upon which he based his narrative, and he did not care to eliminate one in favor of the other, but merely attempted to unite them by connecting links. Many more examples of inconsistencies could be shown. A critical analysis of each chapter would reveal these inconsistencies. However, this paper will select specific passages in the Books of Samuel to show the development of the historigraphical process.

CHAPTER III

Types of Historical Writings

The first genre or type of literature we find is that of poetry. Poetry is older than prose, it takes shape long before men think of committing it to writing. With regard to the occasions that called forth Hebrew poetry, the simplest distinction is that between public and private occasions.

Public poetry was in the service of political life. It was war that called forth poetry, and seeing that war itself was looked upon as a holy thing, religious notes are naturally heard in this poetry. Appeal is either made to God to rise up against the enemy (Num. 10:35), or when a victory has been won, a hymn of praise is sung to God. A triumphal song, on the other hand, may be sung to a hero of a battle such as is evidenced in I Sam. 20:1 when David returns from war.[1] The best examples of poetry before the Book of Kings is the "Song of Deborah" (Jud. 5), and "David's Elegy over Saul and Jonathan" (II Sam. 1:17-27).

Let us examine an example of poetical literature and see what it tells us of our people. The most illuminating of all stories in Judges is that of Barak and Deborah.

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1. Bertholet, History of Hebrew Civilization, p. 317.

There are two accounts, one in chapter four which tells
the story in prose; the other in chapter five--the "Song
of Deborah"--in verse. These accounts differ in a number
of details, and the song, which is the older, perhaps the
oldest document in our Bible, describes the situation far
more accurately than the prosaic account.

A time of crisis has arrived. The Hebrews occupy the
hills, while the Canaanites rule the plains. The cities
with their strong walls and armed defense have prevented
Israel from gaining a foothold in the plains. The Hebrews
are awaiting the opportune time to invade the plain. The
Canaanites are uneasy. The Hebrews are increasing in num-
ber. War is in the air. Both peoples have leaders.
Sisera leads the Canaanites[1], Deborah and Barak, the Hebrews.
They meet for battle in the plain of Esdraelon near Meggido,
the classic battlefield of Palestine. The Hebrews are at
a disadvantage in arms equipment. The Canaanites have

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1. The Jabin of chapter four is to be disregarded.
He is not mentioned in the song. It was pointed out in
our Bible class that the author knew Sisera was the gen-
eral, but he wanted to deprecate the kingship or monarchal
idea in Israel, and in order to show his anti-monarchal
bias, he introduces Jabin. In 4:23-24 Israel delivers a
crushing defeat to Jabin Melech in Canaan. He mentions
"Melech-Canaan" four times to show his dislike for the
monarchal tendency.
    Another explanation for the confusion of Sisera and
Jabin is: Sisera was the principle character in the bat-
tle. At a later time, farther removed from the actual e-
vents, there was a struggle of Israel with a King Jabin
of Hazor. Not knowing any details, it was assumed that
the events were connected with the struggles of Sisera in
the north. The narrator made the combination as is found
in chapter four in which Sisera becomes the sub-commander
of a troop under Jabin.

horses and chariots. Battle is waged, and as though a
miracle occurred, the small quiet Kishon suddenly be-
comes a raging torrent flooding the plain, making the
horses and chariots useless. To Deborah it is an inter-
vention of YHWH. He stepped out of Seir to aid them.
Israel fights bravely and gains a decisive victory. Sisera
escapes only to perish at the hands of a woman, Jael. The
fate of the Hebrew conquest is decided. From this poem
we can learn two important facts:

First, the tribes were not united in any organiza-
tion. Only half take part in the conflict, Zebulon,
Naphtali, Ephraim, Benjamin, Macher, i.e., Menasseh and
Issachar. They were near the scene of battle. Asher,
Reuben, Gad, Dan stood aloof and are taunted for their
selfishness. Judah and Simeon are not mentioned. They
were far to the south and cut off by the Canaanitish ter-
ritory.

Secondly, religious unity exists amongst Israel.
The people of YHWH go down to the gates. Meroz (?) is
cursed because they came not to the help of YHWH.

In the Books of Samuel (II Sam. 1:18 ff.) we have an-
other example of an early poem portraying an historic
event, David's dirge over Saul and Jonathan. The author
of the Books took this poem from the Book of Yashar. The
lost Book of Yashar is mentioned twice in the Bible,
(Josh. 10:13; II Sam. 1:18 ff.). The contents of the Book
of Yashar were of a general kind including a description

of the battle of Gideon, and David's dirge over Saul and Jonathon. This alone is evidence of literary activity in early Israel. David's lamentation ranks with the greatest of the world. Not only does he mourn his dearest friend, Jonathan, but also the man who sought his life, Saul. Its Davidic authorship has, at times, been questioned, but it is generally agreed that it is genuine. It portrays David's sincere grief at the loss of his companion, Jonathan. Nowhere in the elegy does David express a selfish motive of joy in the removal of all obstacles for the throne of Israel, by Saul's and his son's deaths.

Another example of poetry in the Books of Samuel is the triumphal song with which David was greeted by the women after a victory over the Philistines: Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands (II Sam. 20:1).

From the field of poetry we turn to legendary material. Since the Books of Samuel are, for the most part, historical, there is little legendary material to be found in its composition. Before entering the Books of Samuel, the story of Samson as told in the Book of Judges should be noted. Samson is added as an amusing narrative to the Book of Judges because it concerned the early fights against the Philistines. According to the record given in the Book of Judges, he was supposed to have judged Israel twenty years. However, none of his judgments have been recorded. It has been shown that during Samson's time

"‏שפט‏" did not have the meaning of a man sitting on a
bench pronouncing judgments to the people. "‏שפט‏" had
the concept of a " ‏מושיע‏" deliverer who was a charis-
matic leader, one who arises to deliver Israel during a
crisis, and after the crisis is passed, this hero retires
from public life and once more becomes a private citizen.[1]
Yet Samson is not a national hero, he does not lead the
people into battle. There is recorded an account of his
adventures in love and in war. We are only told of how
he himself mowed them down with the jawbone of an ass.
His quarrels and fights are personal grudges which he bore
against the Philistines for the wrongs they had committed
against him, and his father-in-law. The incidents of his
career probably floated about locsely as popular tales,
long before they crystalized around the memory of a real
man whose courage and seemingly supernatural strength mark-
ed him out as a champion of Israel. The story-teller re-
lates an exciting account of the catastrophe which befell
this hero through the wiles of a woman who tricked him in-
to confiding in her the source of his strength; later she
betrayed him to his enemies. This legend concerns itself
with Samson's hair wherein lay his super-human power, and
the cutting off of his locks would render him impotent.

The only reason this legend was included in the Book
of Judges was that the accounts of his deeds against the

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1. Class notes are used in the writing of this legend.

Philistines were so popular that later editors were com-
pelled to place them in the book. Samson (in spite of
the theories concerning the mythological connotation of
his name) was an historical character about whom legends
were woven. These legends give us information concerning
the social customs of his time.

In the Books of Samuel there are three legends; the
"Witch of Endor", the "Sin of Census", and the "David-
Goliath" story. The story of the "Witch of Endor" has as
its background a battle between Israel and the Philistines.
Saul has assembled his army to meet the Philistines in a
decisive battle. The two armies encamp on opposite hill-
slopes, with the valley of Jezreel lying between. Saul
appears to be disturbed. He is uncertain of the outcome.
He desires to hear the word of God; he wants advice and
assurance of victory. If only Samuel were there to coun-
sel him, but Samuel was dead. Wraught with anxiety con-
cerning the battle, Saul thinks of black magic; yet he
had driven necromancers out of his land. However, he
learns from his servant of a witch living at Endor. Saul
disguises himself and seeks her aid. However, when Saul
demands that she bring up Samuel from the grave, the
witch realizes that it is the King with whom she has been
dealing. She remembers that he had decreed death to all
necromancers. But Saul, eager to speak with Samuel, assures
her that no harm will befall her. The witch sets about

her work to bring up Samuel.[1] Presently the witch informs Saul that she sees gods ascending out of the earth. "And he said unto her, What form is he of, and she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantel. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sorely distressed; the Philistines make war on me, and God is departed from me and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I called thee that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."[2] The ghost of Samuel scolds Saul--telling him that the kingdom shall be rent from him and given to David; that on the morrow Israel will be defeated and Saul and his sons will die.

From this legend we learn the practice of necromancy was familiar in ancient Israel, and laws failed to suppress it. So deeply rooted was the custom that Saul does not hesitate to consult necromancers. Apparently, the custom in necromancy was that the witches pretended to conjure up and see the ghost, while their dupes saw nothing, but heard a voice speaking which they took to be that of the spirit. For in the interview (as was shown above) the phantom was visible only to the witch, the king was able only to hear its voice.[3]

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1. Frazer, The Golden Bough, Vol. II, p. 519.

2. II Sam. 28:14-15, 19.

3. Frazer, The Golden Bough, Vol. II, p. 522.

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The second legend is the "Sin of the Census". This
objection of the Jews in David's time to the taking of the
census rested on superstition. From two narratives in
the Books of Samuel and Chronicles (I Sam. 24; I Chr. 21)
we learn that there was a general antipathy to the taking
of a census. The result of a census was disasterous.
The numbering of the people was followed by a great pesti-
lence; the people viewed the calamity as a righteous retri-
bution for the sin of census.[1]

The third legend has some similarity to the first in
that it concerns itself with a hero, David. He was the
most popular hero of Hebrew history, and his exploits
were told from generation to generation. We know that
the history as represented in the Books of Samuel, or for
that matter, the history represented in the Old Testament,
has been pieced together by editors from groups of stories
which accumulated without any effort to reconcile incon-
sistencies. The story of David's debut before King Saul
presents this difficulty. In David's introduction to
Saul we have two accounts which are mutually inconsistent,
I Sam. 16;17-23 and I Sam. 17:1-18:5. Both of these ac-
counts bring David to the vale of Elah and make him the
hero of the day. The first states that David was brought

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1. This will be discussed in detail under historical
anecdotes in prophetic stories, infra, p. 54.

because of his ability to soothe the King's malady by
music. Saul, temporarily cured by his music, makes him
his bodyguard. The second states that David is unknown
to Saul. He comes with a message from his father to his
brothers, hears the challenge of Goliath, fights him, and
meets Saul after Goliath is killed. Thus we have two ac-
counts of David's introduction to Saul. The Septuagint
renders a clearer account of the David story by omitting
I Sam. 17:12-31,41,55-18:5. Some claim that LXX represents
the earlier form of the text which the Palestinian tradi-
tion expanded. Or perhaps the narrative in LXX has been
revised in order to avoid the obvious discrepancy. Driver
states that it is doubtful whether the text of the LXX is
to be preferred to the Massoretic Text.[1]

The true story of David's introduction is the first
account in I Sam. 16:17-23. Music is the only cure for
Saul's malady. David was both a skilful musician and a
man of valor. Saul, very much pleased with David, appoints
him the court musician and his personal attendant. But
the tale concerning David's victory over Goliath arouses
our suspicion. The account given in I Sam. 17-18:5 is
often pronounced unhistorical. Our curiosity is aroused
because of the incident mentioned in II Sam. 21:19, that
Elhanan, one of David's heroes killed Goliath. It is un-
tenable to hold that David, while still a lad, killed the
champion of the Philistines. A battle was fought at a

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1. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of
Samuel, p. 150.

later time and attributed to David when he became King.
In ancient times it was customary to credit a king or lead-
er with the exploits of his servants. David, who later
became King, had this victory of Elhanan attributed to him.
The Chronicler in I Chr. 20:5 does the Books of Samuel one
better in an attempt to solve this inconsistency by stat-
ing that Elhanan killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath.
There are those who argue the reliability of the second
account. They claim that David actually triumphed over
some Philistine champion whose name was not Goliath. Such
a feat of valor would account for David's popularity, and
might have been the occasion of his attracting Saul's at-
tention, (if the story of David's introduction as a musician
is rejected). For it states (I Sam. 14:52) "when Saul saw
any mighty man of valor, he took him unto him". In I Sam.
18:5-7, we find that David had achieved a significant vic-
tory, for the women sing a song praising him for his val-
iant deed. It was then that Saul became jealous of him,
and saw in David a rival. "Saul has slain his thousands,
David his ten thousands." (The Hebrew text is corrupt and
the spellings of words are so imperfect that the text can
hardly be in its original form.)[1]

In spite of the arguments presented for the authentic-
ity of the second account, it appears to be a legendary

1. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of
Samuel, p. 151.

account accumulated from the stories of David's heroes.
These heroic anecdotes will be studied in detail later,
but for the present, a brief summary of these anecdotes
will suffice to prove the legend of the David-Goliath
episode. Professor Olmstead sets forth this theory.[1]
From these anecdotes we learn that Eleazar, Dodai's son,
smote the Philistines until his hand clave to his sword,
near Ephes-damim.[2] Elhanan, the Bethlemite, slew Goliath
of Gath, whose spear was like a weaver's beam.[3] Jonathan,
son of David's brother Shemi, slew a great giant who had
six fingers and six toes on each hand and foot.[4] From
these isolated stories was constructed one of the best known
biblical stories. From the story of Eliezar--the author
took the location Ephes-Damim; Goliath of Gath was taken
from the Elhanan story; the author changed the lance of
three hundred shekels of bronze of the Abishai story, to
a spear head of six hundred shekels of iron. The defiance of
the champion was drawn from the tale of Jonathan, David's
nephew. The author added the fact that the unknown shep-
herd slew the giant with only his sling...... Thus, the
famous David-Goliath legend......

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1. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria, p. 314.

2. II Sam. 23:9.

3. Ibid., 21:19.

4. Ibid., 21:21-22.

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We leave the poetical and legendary types of litera-
ture and turn our attention to historical literature.
The development of the historical genre of literature in
the Books of Samuel will be discussed under five sub-head-
ings as follows:

  1. Annalistic writings
  2. Prophetical history
  3. Political history
  4. Historical anecdotes
  5. David's court history.

From a previous discussion it was shown that the tem-
ple record was the origin of annalistic writings. Also
the institution of a royal and national government neces-
sitated the keeping of the records of all important events.
The style of annals was dry, actuary, factual, and careful
notes. Such facts were not historical literature, but it
supplied the sources for the construction of an histori-
cal period for an historian. The author of the Book of
Kings used the annals of the kingdoms of Israel and of
Judah. David's scribe, Shavsha, must have been in charge
of the Royal Annals. That there must have been annals
for David's reign is attested by examples in the Books of
Samuel. A few samples of annalistic writings will suf-
fice for proof.

II Sam. 5:4-5, is a typical example of annalistic
writing. The elders of Israel went to Hebron and annoint-

ed David King over Israel, but only after a covenant was made before the Lord. Then we are given the annalistic notation, "David was thirty years old when he began to rule, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three and three years over all Israel and Judah."

The annals have preserved for us an account of David's family. There are two accounts in II Sam.: one in 3:2-5, the other in 5:13-16. The first account deals with children born in Hebron, "And unto David were sons born in Hebron: his first born was Amnon of Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess; and the second Chilab of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third Absolam the son of Maacha the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth Shefatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth Ithream by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David at Hebron." The second account concerns those children born to David in Jerusalem; Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphat. If we check this list with that given in I Chr. 3:5-9 and I Chr. 14:3-7, we find that the name Negah is added, and also there are variations in the spellings. Most notable is that of the name Eliyada, which appears in I Chr. 14:7 in its original form--Beelyada. The lists of the thirty heroes given in

II Sam. 23:18-39 and I Chr. 11:26-47 are confusing.
There must have been some organization with Abishai as
their commander, but there is great uncertainty as to the
number of men. Chronicles adds sixteen names to the list
derived either from a different source, or else the end
of the text in Samuel was mutilated so that these latter
sixteen names were lost.

From the lists of the officials stated in II Sam.
8:16-18 and II Sam. 20:23-26 it appears that a typical
oriental administration was organized. Each closes with
mention of the priesthood, with slight variations. 8:18
states that "David's sons were priests", while 20:26
states that "Ira the Jarite was priest unto David." Joab
was the commander-in-chief; Jehoshafat, Ahilud's son, the
recorder; Benaiah was commander of the body guard. The
royal scribe was Shavsha.[1] Then there was a nucleus of
a standing mercenary army, the Crerethites and the Plethites.
Benaiah was captain of the royal guard. Adoram (20:24)
was over the forced labor. Azmaveth was over the king's
treasure. Shemi of Ramah was over royal vineyards,[2]

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1. This name, Shavsha appears in different spellings, i.e.
   II Sam. 20:25 שְׁיָא   I Chr. 18:16 שַׁוְשָׁא
   Ibid., 8:17 שְׁרָיָה

2. I Chr. 27:27.

Zabdi was overthe royal herds, etc. These annals con-
tinue to tell us of the local levies raised under captains
of tens, fifties, hundreds, etc., and of how free men
were subjected to more onerous work.

Finally, there is an annal telling of David's build-
ing operations. In II Sam. 5:90, it states, "(So David
dwelt in the fort and called it the city of David.) And
David built around about from MILLO and inward. And
Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar
trees, and carpenters and masons: and they built David
an house".[1]

Exactly what MILLO was, and who built it no one knows.
Professor R. A. S. Macalister offers an explanation. The
statement concerning the building of the MILLO occurs
three times in the Book of Kings:

1. I Ki. 9:24b "Then did he build the MILLO"

2. I Ki. 11:27b "Solomon built the MILLO"

3. I Ki. 9:15b "...to build the house of
   the Lord, and his own house, and 'MILLO'".

Thus we are faced with the question, Who built the MILLO,
David or Solomon?.

I Ki. 11:27 tells of Solomon's building the MILLO
and repairing "the breach of the city of David his father.".
When David captured Jerusalem he must have breached the

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1. This statement is also found in I Chr. 14:1.

wall. It would have been impossible for an army to
enter the city through the Şinnor, alone; a breach would
have had to be made. The northern end of the city was
the place for the breach, for there an attacker had the
advantage of working from a higher ground. If the city
gate was near by, then the story of David's attack is
clear. Joab's men climbed up the Shaft (Sinnor) and
harassed the defenders of the gate from the rear, while
David hammered at it from the front. The gate fell and
the conquerers entered. Immediately afterwards he built
from Millo and inward,(II Sam. 5:9b). If 'Millo' was on the
cite of the breach of the city of David, as is implied
from I Ki. 11:27, then it was natural that David would
build inward from the 'Millo', i.e. between the breach in
the wall and what was then the 'Millo'."[1]

Macalister is of the opinion that before Solomon's
time MILLO did not exist. This he deduces from the three
statements concerning the MILLO in the Book of Kings.
When David built "from the Millo and inward" the meaning
is no more than that he built from the place where
"Millo" was standing at the time of the historian. Upon
the pile of stones as a foundation (which Macalaster identi-
fies with the breach made by David), there was erected a
tower. This tower he identifies with MILLO. MILLO is con-
nected with the sense of filling. Thus, if it is interpret-

1. Macalaster, Palestine Exploration Fund Annual,
1923-25, pp. 79-80.

ed as the structure which filled the gap in the wall,
then its meaning is clear. Solomon filled the breach
(which David made) with a strong fortification.[1]

Another type of historical writing is that of pro-
phetical history. The story of Samuel told in I Sam.
1-8 is an example of this. The artificial division be-
tween the Book of Judges and the Books of Samuel often
leads one to the erroneous conclusion that with the first
chapter of the Books of Samuel we enter a new episode in
the development of the Hebrew people. However, on care-
ful examination, it becomes evident that there is no hia-
tus between Judges 21 and Samuel 1. In fact there is
a definite connection between the two books, and "Shilo"
is the link. Shilo is mentioned in Ju. 21:19 and it is
also the center of interest in the story of Samuel. Shilo
is of great importance because it was there that the Ark
of YHWH was brought and thus it was the center of worship
during Samuel's youth. From Joshua 4:15-21 we learn that
the Ark was first set up at Gilgal. Later it was moved
to Bet-el; then, because of political strategy Ephraim
transferred its abode to Shilo where it remained until
1080 when Shilo disappears from history in the battle of
Aphek. The complete annihilation of Shilo is not learned
from the Books of Samuel, but from Jer. 7:12-14, "But go

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1. Macalaster, Palestine Exploration Fund Annual,
1923-25, pp. 79-80.

ye now unto my place which was in Shilo where I set my
name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wicked-
ness of my people Israel...therefore will I do unto this
house,...as I have done to Shilo." Also Jer. 26:6, "Then
will I make this house like Shilo, and will make this
city a curse to all the nations of the earth". Psalms
78:60-64 speaks of the tragedy of Shilo. The defeat of
Israel in addition to the destruction of Shilo was too
tragic for the historian to mention. From his silence we
learn of the disgraceful defeat of Israel and the shame-
ful obliteration of Shilo.[1] Although Jeremiah lived
centuries after the event, the memory of that catastro-
phe remained with the people, so that the mere mention of
the event drove the point home to his listeners. It was
at Shilo that Samuel spent his early years.

In the story of Samuel the author managed to weave
the fortunes of the Ark. Later historians inserted the
Song of Hannah and a tendencious piece of literature
concerning the priesthood, and the establishment of the
House of Zadok. I Sam. 2:27-36 contains a complete deci-
mation of the House of Eli. He states that "all the in-
crease of thine house will die in their youth. You shall

1. Class notes in Dr. Spiegels Bible Class.

see a contender in the sanctuary (33) the single <u>One</u> whom
I shall not cut off...." This <u>single one</u> is definite.
It is during Solomon's time that this priesthood rivalry
takes place. Abiathar (a descendant of Eli) is deposed
and Zadok, an unknown is set up. Apparently we have a
record of an event long before it happened. The prophecy
given to Eli by the man of God (vs. 27) came true in the
time of Solomon. True prophecies are to be looked upon
with suspicion, usually they are corrected by some later
editor. At any rate, who would want such a decimation
of Eli's house? Zadok (vs. 35),("I shall raise up for me a
true priest." This bit of information in Sam. 2:27-36 is
<u>vaticinium ex eventio</u> written prophecy after the event
happened. It is obviously a rewriting of history to re-
write the story of the house of priesthood.[1]

The object of this paper is not a critical commenta-
ry of the material in the <u>Books of Samuel</u>, but to examine
the literature in the book for its historiographical value.
The tendencious writing given above is an example of his-
torical writing distorted to suit the aims of the author.
The material concerning Samuel in the first seven chap-
ters is very sparse. The very name itself arouses our
suspicion. The etymology given in I Sam. 1:20 really ap-
plies to Saul. (In class we were shown that Samuel

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1. Class notes from Dr. Spiegel's Bible Class.

is an early example of a later institution of " שאול־ים"
or " נתונ'ם". A boy is given to the sanctuary a
" נת'ן " servant of the priest.[1])

The story of Samuel's life was drawn by a later his-
torian who was not a contemporary of Samuel. In spite of
the fact that it is colored with ideas of the author's
period, nevertheless it is not to be regarded as entirely
unhistorical. What may be reckoned as historical is the
fact that from his early youth he had a definite connec-
tion with the sanctuary at Shilo. There are many incon-
sistencies in the narratives concerning him. The picture
of all Israel from Dan to Beersheba looking up to him as
virtual ruler (I Sam. 3:20), seems to presume a united
Israel in possession of the country. The account given
in I Sam. 7 which states that all Israel came to Mizpah
and he sacrificed to YHWH for Israel, tries to show us
the unity of the people; and as a result of his prayer
YHWH discomfits the Philistines leaving Israel to slaughter
them. Our doubt as to the authenticity of this account is
further aroused in that as a result of this victory Is-
rael recovered all the territory that had been captured
by the Philistines, and the Philistines came no more with-
in the borders of Israel. Such statements contradict ac-
counts in the story of Saul; they must be regarded as fic-

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1. Class notes from Dr. Spiegel's Bible Class.

titious. The author of this story merely tried to portray Samuel as an important figure in freeing Israel from Philistine oppression, to minimize the achievements of Saul. (This will be discussed in the third chapter.) Samuel was an important figure in Israel's history. He inaugurated a new type of society for Israel. Although both accounts of the founding of the monarchy are inconsistent, nevertheless they both agree that Samuel took a leading part.

Samuel was a practical politician. The Canaanitish religion with its worship of the local Baalim was making headway and progress amongst the people. It was necessary to unite the people to meet their common enemy, the Philistines. Samuel knew how to make use of the different groups of people. During that time there was a group of professional prophets who went around the country prophesying and acting similar to the Canaanitish dervishes. This group of mantic prophets had influence amongst the masses. The upper class had contempt for them as is seen from their derogatory remark in I Sam. 10:11-12, "And it came to pass that when all that knew him [Saul] beforetime saw that he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said to one another, What is this that is come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? ..." In that passage Saul's uncle, as well as the people, were surprised to see Saul associating with these mantic prophets.

These Israelitish dervishes connected themselves with the national religion of Israel which was YHWHism. YHWH ruled in Palestine and by YHWHism the land would be preserved. Samuel, a devotee of YHWH, conceived of a new movement to maintain the people; by God, people, and land. The group of professional prophets now served his purpose. By his insistence, these groups of prophets went about the land propagandizing for the unification of the people by a national God. These mantic prophets were bound up with this Deity who is the God of the land, and is connected with a certain people, the Israelites. These prophets were patriotic and mixed themselves in the politics of the land, This group was useful when a crisis threatened. Samuel established relations between them and Saul, and through them Saul became popular among the folk and later a leader to ward off attacks from the Ammonites and Philistines respectively. In David's time we hear of the prophets Gad and Nathan. Although they were devotees of YHWH, they did not, however, belong to the professional group of prophets. Gad was influential and an advisor to King David (I Sam. 22:5). Nathan, like Elijah, was a forerunner of the literary prophets, as is shown by his insistence on social justice, and on the rights of the individual. This is an important issue with the development of monarchy which crushes the individual's rights and liberties.

These prophets condemn the injustices at court.

They are opponents of the despotism of monarchy. Samuel represents the transition between the old order and the new.

The third subheading under historical writing is that of political history. Throughout the accounts of David's wars we note that the author never makes David the aggressor. The other nations are the ones who start the quarrels and attacks. After David was firmly established on his throne, he started to carve for himself an Empire stretching from the Lebanon to the Red Sea. Four conquests of the neighboring people are recorded. In these campaigns the Moabites were decimated. Ammonites, Edomites and Arameans tasted David's brutality.

The campaign against Moab is recorded in II Sam. 8:2. "And he smote Moab and measured them with a line causing them to lie down to the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became David's servants and brought gifts." (A similar account is given in I Chr. 18:2.) This campaign clearly shows David's ruthlessness in his dealings with an enemy. Another campaign concerning which we have little information is the subjugation of Edom. Details of this war are lacking. It merely states (II Sam. 18:13-14) "And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting the Edomites [Hebrew text should be amended by changing the 'R' in Aram to read 'D'--Edom.] in the Valley of

Salt.... And he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David." I Chr. 18:12 records this account with but one change. It states that Abishai, son of Zuruah smote Edom. This difference is understandable when we realize that in ancient times it was customary to credit a king with the exploits of the servants.

The third campaign is that against the Ammonites. This war is told in more detail than the preceding two wars. In II Sam. 10:1-14 Hanun the son of Nahash, king of Ammon, shamed David's good will messengers. Hanun summoned Syrian princes to aid him in his war against David (vs. 6). Ammon hired Syrians of Bethrehob and Zoba, and the king of Maach, and the men of Tob. David sent Joab with choice men to war against Ammon. The Israelitish army apparently caught between the two armies, the Ammonites and the Syrians, divided their ranks. One part was led by Joab against the Syrians, while Abishai took charge of those who fought the Ammonites. The Syrians were unable to withstand Joab's veteran troops and fled. The Ammonites seeing the defeat of their allies, likewise fled. Later, a second campaign against Ammon was made. II Sam. 11:1 tells that Joab destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. This latter account includes the story of David's sin with Bathsheba, and the death of Uriah the Hittite.[1] In II Sam. 12:26-31 we have a

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1. From a description of this war we gain insight for an understanding of the Bathsheba incident. For both Uriah and Joab were connected with the Bathsheba affair, and the author described the siege at Rabath-Ammon to show Uriah's end.

further account of cruel measures meted out to captives.
(Vs. 31), the people were put under saws and harrows of
iron and made to pass thru brickkiln. It should be not-
ed that Shobi the son of Nahash of the children of Ammon
was amongst those who sent food to David when he fled to
Mahanaim during Absolam's rebellion (II Sam. 17:27).

The wars against Ammon and the Syrians were closely
connected. The record states (II Sam. 10:19) that when
Joab defeated the Syrian coalition in the war against the
Ammonites, "the kings that were servants to Hadarazer saw
that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace
with Israel and served them." From this we learn that a
number of Aramean tribes owed allegiance to one, Hadadezer,
son of Regob, king of Zobah. II Sam. 8:3,4,7,8, states
that David smote Hadadezer and took much booty from his
cities. And David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus;
and the Syrians became servants to David."[1]

These conquests consolidated David's empire. David
had peaceful treaties with Hamoth on the north, and Tyre
on the west. David's victories opened up new commercial
highways. New products, ideas filtered in from Damascus,
Arabia, and Phoenicia. Israel became an important people.

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1. It must be admitted that the exact chronological
order of these wars is not known. The campaign against
the Syrians is complicated. There are three accounts given
of the Syrian wars, and as they stand they are difficult
to harmonize with each other. Robinson in his book, His-
tory of Israel attempts to explain problems of these three
accounts. The solution he presents of the three accounts
are found on pp. 237-8, Vol. I.

. . .

The fourth division under history is that of the
historical anecdotes. These stories recount the exploits
of local or tribal heroes. Thus the story of Abimelech.
From this anecdote we learn that the relations between
Israelite and Canaanite were intimately established by
this time. Not only had Gideon's leadership proved ac-
ceptable to the population as a whole, but his son's par-
tial kinship with the Shechemites was deemed sufficient
ground for proclaiming him their king. It appears that
the Israelites had so consolidated their position as to
hold sway in political affairs over the older inhabitants
of the land. Abimelech is of mixed parentage. His
father was a Hebrew and his mother was a Shechemite.
Gideon, his father, ruled over Shechem, and his seventy
half brothers were to succeed their father. Abimelech was
an ambitious bastard. He succeeded in making the Shechem-
ites believe that it would be better for them if one of
their flesh and bone ruled, rather than a stranger. He
thus appeals to the Shechemites for leadership on the
ground of his mother's having belonged to their city.
They do not ask whether he is an Israelite or Canaanite,
but what is his town. To them he is a Shechemite, and is
favored. The people of Shechem took seventy shekels from
the temple's treasury for Abimelech's scheme. With it
they hired a band of men, went to Ophra, and killed his
seventy half-brothers; thus, Abimelech succeeded his father,

Gideon.

Abimelech ruled over a number of towns through local
agents. As a result of this policy he became unpopular
and opposition broke out. He did not make his headquar-
ters at Shechem, but he resided at Arunah (Ju. 9:41).
The people of Shechem became unfaithful to him and robbed
his caravans.[1] There seems to be two accounts of the strug-
gle between Abimelech and the city.[2] Both narratives
show that opposition to Abimelech existed, and that this
opposition spread to other towns. Of important historical
value is the light this anecdote throws on the relations
between the Canaanites and Hebrews.

Another heroic anecdote is that described in I Sam.
1:11. The Ammonites threatened the city of Jabesh Gilead
with complete subjugation. Jabesh Gilead sought the aid
of their brethren across the Jordon; for if help did not
arrive they must submit to Ammon and forgo bodily muti-

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1. Ju. 9:25.

2. Ju. 9:26-41, does not follow verse 25. It is a
separate account. It tells how a certain Gaal, the son
of Ebed, rebels against Abimelech. Zebul reports it to
Abimelech, his chief. Zebul, the next morning deceives
Gaal who sees an army descending the mountains. When Gaal
realizes that Abimelech's army is approaching, it is too
late. Verses 22-5, 42-45 form the second account. The
Shechemites resort to brigandage, which challenges Abimelech's
authority. Without delay he sets a trap for the Shechemites.
He divides his force into three camps; places two divisions
near the gate of the city, and one in ambush ready to at-
tack the Shechemite raiders. When the Schemites pursue
the Israelites, one force lays waste the city, while the
other turns back on the Shechemites and slays them.

lations. Saul returning from his work was told of the Ammonite threat to Jabesh Gilead. The spirit of God descended upon him, he took the yoke of oxen and cut them up into twelve pieces, and sent the fragments throughout Israel, "Whosoever comes not after Saul shall be treated thus". On the morrow Saul utterly defeated the Ammonites.

In the accounts of David's mighty men, in II Samuel 23:8-39 there are many historical anecdotes. They concern feats of valor done on Philistines. Verse 9-10, tells of Eleazar, the son of Dodai, an Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, "when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away". He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand clave unto the sword.

The anecdote in II Sam. 23:13-17 is very interesting. The campaign which is recorded in II Sam. 5:17-25, concerns the Philistines who invaded the highlands and incamped in the valley of Rephaim, on the road to Bethlehem.[1] David stategically hastened to Adullam, while the Philistines seized Bethlehem. David finally defeated the Philistines at Baal Perazim. It is to this battle that the anecdote in II Sam. 23 assigns the feat of the three mighty men. These heroes broke through the Philistine garrison,

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1. Cesterley and Robinson, A History of Israel, p. 213.

entered Bethlehem and drew water from the well for David.

Israel was not always victorious. The anecdote of Eleazar stated above shows that Israel fled, that he alone remained to fight the Philistines. II Sam. 21:15-17, Abishai, the son of Zuriah saved David's life when Ish-binob, thought to kill David. On the other hand, there is a list of encounters with Philistinian giants in which Israel is successful. Elhanan, the Bethlemite, slew Goliath, the Gittite.[1] Jonathan, the son of Shemiah, slew a giant of great stature, "that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes".[2] Sibbechai, the hushathite slew Saph, a giant.[3] Beniah, the son of Yehoiadah, the son of a valiant man, did many mighty deeds. "He slew two lion-like men of Moab; slew a lion in a pit; slew an Egyptian; the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and smote him with his own spear."[4] The story of David and Goliath has been discussed in detail on pages 32-35. There remains the anecdote of Gad and Nathan to be discussed.

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1. II Sam. 21:19.

2. II Sam. 21:20-21.

3. II Sam. 21:18.

4. II Sam. 23:20-21.

The anecdote of David's sin and Gad is told in II Sam.
24. David compelled Joab to take a census of the people.
The census was to determine the military levy and to ap-
portion the taxes. Gad, David's seer, is commissioned
by YHWH to tell David that the census taking was a sin.
David is given the choice between three forms of calamity;
three years of famine, three months of flight before his
enemies, or three days of pestilence. David chooses the
last. Afterward, Gad tells David to erect an alter on the
threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, where the angel
of YHWH stayed his hand from destroying Jerusalem.

The second of the prophet stories is that of Nathan.
Nathan's excellent parable of the poor man's lamb, point-
ing to the dastardly deed done to Uriah the Hittite is too
well known for repetition. The rebuke of Nathan and the
repentence of the king is an excellent example of what
was demanded of a prophet. Both of these anecdotes, Gad
and Nathan, show the independence of the prophet in Is-
rael. That the prophets stood for the rights of the sub-
jects against the kings, was unique during those times.
These prophets became popular heroes because of their
courageous stand.

The Court History of David is the final stage of
historical writing in the Books of Samuel. In this ac-
count of David's court we reach the acme and culmination

of the historiographical process. Of course the purpose
of this chapter, as has previously been stated, is to
state the facts as they present themselves in the book.
Opinions concerning the various types of literature which
have been presented and the development of the histori-
ographical process have been reserved for the concluding
chapter.

The narratives contained in II Sam. 9-20 are universal-
ly admitted to be drawn from contemporary records, dealing
almost entirely with the domestic life of David. The
value of these chapters lies in the portrayal of David's
life and those nearest to him. In them David is pictured
at his worst and at his best. For example, in chapter 9
we are shown his kindness to Saul's house. It must be
remembered that David's marriage to Michal made him the
only available prince connected with Saul's house.
Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was crippled by his nurse's
carelessness.[1] (Perhaps, were he not lamed he might have
contested the throne. But, David had nothing to fear
from Mephibosheth.) He gives him a place of honor at
court. That is an example of David's magnanimity. How-
ever, the famous intrigue involving David, Bathsheba,
and Uriah portrays him at his worst. Such an incident

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1. In Chr. 9:40, the name Mephibosheth appears as
Meribaal.

was natural amongst oriental monarchists. It was nothing
out of the ordinary for a king to take a wife of a sub-
ject. No oriental king would have felt it necessary to
conceal the act, or have the husband murdered. But such
was not the case in Israel. Even a foreigner's rights
must be respected. Nathan rebukes the king for the
heinous crime. Family complications increase in chapters
13-19. The first few chapters tell of how Absalom avenges
Tamar, while the remainder deals with Absalom's attempt
to usurp the throne. From these chapters we receive a
glimpse of the intimate life of the court and people.
We learn that the king's daughters that were virgins wore
garments of divers colors[1]; it was not customary for
kings' daughters to enter the kings' sons' homes,[2] ex-
cept in case of illness, for we learn that Amnon had to
resort to trickery to get Tamar to come to his home. Ab-
salom had an estate in Baal-hazor, where he invited all
the king's sons for a festival. It was there that Amnon
was killed. Absalom fled to Talmi, king of Geshur.
Joab resorts to court intrigue to bring Absalom back from
exile.[3] Through the trickery of a wise woman of Tekoa,
hired by Joab, Absalom returns to Jerusalem. From this

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1. II Sam. 13:18.

2. II Sam. 13:5-6.

3. II Sam. 14.

story we learn that the king could prohibit blood revenge.[1]

The last four chapters (15-19) of the court history tell the story of Absalom's rebellion. David has become old and is no longer able to attend the judiciary functions of the people as he did in former years. Absalom took advantage of this situation to stir up dissatisfaction against the king amongst those who came for judgments. He would stand in the gate vowing to those who came seeking justice, that were he in the position he would mete out justice to the petitioner. He thus formed many friends throughout the country. After four years of such intrigue he took leave of his father to go to Hebron under the pretext of paying a vow for his return to Jerusalem to the YHWH of Hebron. At Hebron he raised the standard of revolt. He sent emissaries to all the tribes of Israel saying, "When ye hear the sound of the trumpet then shall ye shout, Absalom reigneth in Hebron".[2] He must have had the support of Israel, for when David heard the news[3], he immediately fled from Jerusalem accompanied by his personal court and the royal bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites. Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai were left in Jerusalem to defeat Absalom's conspiracy.

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1. II Sam. 14:11.

2. II Sam. 15:10.

3. II Sam. 15:14-15.

Absalom took possession of Jerusalem and David's harem without any resistence.[1] Achitophil's advice to pursue David immediately was defeated by the treacherous advice of Hushai. Hushai's advice was for Absalom to tarry and assemble all the troops, then deal a crushing blow to David. In the meanwhile Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar of the plans, and they relayed them through a maid up to their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan,who were spies for David. On receipt of the news David crossed the Jordon to Mahanaim where he established his headquarters, and organized his men for battle. Although Absalom's army outnumbered David's, he was no match for him. David's three generals, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai were seasoned veterans, and easily routed Absalom's forces. Absalom was killed by Joab contrary to David's wishes.

Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, stirred up another revolt. The northern tribes considered themselves slighted by David and followed Sheba.[2] David commanded Amasa to assemble an army in three days.[3] Abishai was hurried off in pursuit of Sheba and Joab accompanied his brother. At Gibeon the rival kinsmen met and Joab murdered Amasa, then continued to pursue Sheba. Sheba took

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1. II Sam. 16:21.

2. II Sam. 20:1-22.

3. II Sam. 20:5.

refuge in Abel of Betmaacha. Joab besieged the city. In
order to save the city Sheba is put to death and his head
is thrown over the wall to Joab. Joab was an important
figure at court and he had influential enemies--Benaiah,
head of the bodyguard, Zadok the priest, Nathan, and Bath-
sheba. They disliked Joab because of the power he wield-
ed; the people now turn to Beniah who commanded the royal
guard and therefore was closer to the king than Joab.
The courtiers, realizing that the time for David's reign
was almost at an end, began planning for the future.

Adonijah was the eldest son and the logical one to
succeed. At the approach of his father's death he pre-
pared a bodyguard of chariots and fifty runners to pre-
cede him. He had the support of Joab and Abiathar, the
priest. However, Adonijah's claim was contested by Bath-
sheba who had given birth to Solomon. Nathan, the prophet,
Benaiah, and Zadok, the priest, rallied to her support.
Adonijah, fearing lest Bathsheba and Benaiah supported by
the royal bodyguard place Solomon on the throne, summoned
all the nobles of Judea and David's sons to En-Rogel to
proclaim himself king. Here, once again, we find an ex-
cellent account of court intrigue. The account of events
is enumerated in I Kings 1-2:46a. Not only was the author
a contemporary, but he was present at the time of its

1. I Ki. 1:17.

taking place, and perhaps, he was one of the participants. For the scene in King David's bedroom is so vivid that only a spectator could have written the details. For example, Nathan reveals his plan to Bathsheba.. She is to go to the King and tell him that he swore by the Lord that Solomon, her son, shall rule after him[1], and while she is speaking he will enter and confirm her words. Nathan tells Bathsheba that she must do this to save herself and her son's life. (In reality he realizes that it is to save his own skin, too.) Thus, she carries out the plan.[2] She entered into the chamber and bowed down. And the King asked, "What wouldst thou?"[3]. (Note the formality between the King and his concubines.) She sets forth her case. While she was yet speaking Nathan entered.[4] We note here another court formality, for Bathsheba apparently retired when Nathan entered and has to be recalled.[5] Nathan cleverly states, "O king, hast thou said Adonijah shall reign after me; behold he has gone down with all the king's sons, Joab, and Abiathar, they proclaim him king. But thy servant [Nathan], and Zadok, and Benaiah, and Solomon

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1. I Ki. 1:17.

2. I Ki. 1:16.

3. I Ki. 1:23.

4. Ibid.

5. I Ki. 1:28.

he hath not invited."[1] "Is this thing done by the King, and thou hast not showed it unto thy servant?"[2] The plan worked. David was moved and he recalled Bathsheba, and reaffirmed his promise, that Solomon, her son, should rule after him. He tells her to hasten Solomon to Gihon, and there let Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, annoint him King over all Israel. When Adonijah's group heard that David had made Solomon King, they fled. Solomon allows Adonijah to live on condition that he prove himself a worthy man; if wickedness be found in him, he shall die. However, a pretext is found for him to be killed. Adonijah has been warned that he lives only by sufferance, yet he goes to the Queen mother and asks for David's cast off wife, which, according to oriental custom, is a claim for the throne. Oddly enough, this shrewd Queen mother who had schemed and plotted for her son's accession, never suspected that this request was really a bid for the throne, and in all innocence she begs Solomon to grant it, and clever Solomon, twelve years old, saw through the plot. Solomon decrees death to the ungrateful Adonijah, and begins his rule where our present study ends.

The person who depicted this period presented us

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1. I Ki. 1:24.

2. I Ki. 1:27.

with genuine history. This is not an inspired annal of
a monarch's war, nor is it a brief dry chronicle, or folk-
tale of past heroes; it is a contemporary history. Our
historian has been behind the scenes, and he vividly por-
trays an account of the facts for posterity.

CHAPTER IV

Israel's Contribution to Historical Writing

"The making of great history gives an impulse to the writing of history." In Israel such history was made during the reigns of Saul and David, and, therefore, marked the beginning of historical writing. In the previous chapter it was shown that the crisis in the history of Israel was created by the invasion of the Philistines. The long struggle with the Philistines led to the emergence of a political and religious consciousness, which resulted in the establishment of a national kingdom. The heroic deeds of those who participated in this fight for independence, --Saul, David, Jonathan, Joab, Abner, etc. --aroused the soul of the people and stirred men to write about it. Of course, stories were woven about these popular heroes, such as the David-Goliath legend.[1] Let us not make the mistake of thinking that legendary traits in the stories of David prove that they are remote from their times. A glance at present day society in certain Fascistic countries proves otherwise, namely, that certain so-called heroes have impressed the imaginations of their

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1. Moore, Literature of the Old Testament, p. 96.

contemporaries so as to have been placed amongst the gods.
Thus, men err in supposing that embellishments of a per-
son or the deeds of a hero arise only at a distance and
take generations to develop. The ever increasing arch-
aeological discoveries are constantly revising antiquat-
ed theories concerning biblical accounts.

Stress must be laid upon this authentic piece of his-
toriography as against the prevailing tendency to discover
the Pentateuchal sources in the Books of Samuel. Higher
biblical critics, Budde, Hölscher, find 'J' and 'E' run-
ning throughout the books. They lay stress upon later
compilatory and editorial work. True. it is that these
books are a continuous history, but not in the sense that
a Judean or Elohist writer decided to write the history
of Israel from its beginning to 561 B.C. These two auth-
ors are historians, but they follow the first rate his-
torical writing which had begun during Saul's and David's
time. The consecutive narrative in Samuel is owing to the
early scribes who gathered the editorial supplementations
until their time and compiled them in an organized whole.
Of course there is that annoying textual problem. At
times, the text is so corrupt that an intelligable meaning
is impossible. However, this is understandable when we
realize that the earliest Hebrew manuscripts are about
one thousand years later than the latest portion of our
Bible, and two thousand years later than the earliest.

During this long stretch of time there was ample opportunity for copyists to err, not only in the copying of the **textus receptus**, but also by introducing marginal glosses into the text itself.

The present Hebrew Bible with its chapter divisions had its first appearance in the fifteenth century. "The Roman editors of 1587 applied to their text the medieval system of chapter divisions, which, first employed in Latin Bibles of the thirteenth century, had been pressed into the service of the Hebrew Bible in the Concordance of R. Isaac Nathan about the middle of the fifteenth."[1] The Greek version lists the four historical books under the title which is divided into four parts: **ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΩΝ Α, Β, Γ, Δ** . Thus we learn that the Septuagint considered the two **Books of Samuel** and the two **Books of Kings** a continuous story which covered the whole existence of the kingdom and later, the divided kingdom. Our study concerned the first two books only, the **Books of Samuel**.

The **Books of Samuel** are a compilation from the stories of three outstanding figures, Samuel, Saul, and David. The **Books** may be divided into six divisions:

        a. Eli, Samuel, Saul, I Sam. 1-16:13.
        b. Saul and David, I Sam. 16:14-31.
        c. David's rise to kingship over all Israel, II Sam. 1-8.
        d. David's Court History, II Sam. 9-20.
        e. An appendix drawn from many sources, II Sam. 21-24.
        f. David's death, I Ki. 1-2:46a.

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1. Swete, The Old Testament in Greek, Vol. I, p. xiv.

The institution of monarchy arose from the crisis of a Philistine threat to conquer and subdue Palestine. Israel was without weapons. The Philistines had deprived them of their arms (I Sam. 13:19-20). There was little unity in Israel. The sanctuary at Shilo was their rallying point, but Eli, the priest, was incapable of organizing the people to defend themselves. The Philistines, realizing this weakness, reduced them to the state of vassalage. In two battles they crushed Israel. The narrative of I Sam. 4-6 omitted the effect of this defeat on the country. But we learn from the text, that when the ark was returned to the Hebrews, it was sent to Bet-Shemesh, later removed to Kirjat-Yearin. Why was it not sent to Shilo, its former sanctuary? Shilo apparently was razed to the ground by the Philistines.[1] This is confirmed by later literature in Jeremiah and Psalms. Thus, the conquest and occupation of central Palestine by the Philistines led to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul, a Benjamanite. It then narrates the rise of his rival, the Judean, David, and the feud which developed between them. The first book ends with the disasterous battle with the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa in which Saul and Jonathan are killed. The second book is the history of David's reign, the tragedy of his house, and the intrigue by means of which Solomon succeeds David. The

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1. Supra, pp. 41-42.

final scene of the death of David, although placed by
the present division in the Book of Kings, really belongs
in the Books of Samuel. I Ki. 1-2:46a is the sequel to
the court history. The miscellany (II Sam. 20-24) is ap-
parently a collection of various materials which had not
been used in the earlier form of Samuel. It must have been
appended when the history of Solomon was undertaken. The
editor of the Solomon history took over the sequel of the
David history, thinking that his work was a continuation
of the older history, when in reality, he was starting a
new historical book.

Behind the accounts as recorded are the lives of
three main characters--Samuel, Saul, and David. In each
life account, mention is made of the other; no life of
Saul could have been written without refering to Samuel
and David. The historiographical process worked back-
wards, from more or less contemporary history to more re-
mote,--from David's detailed history to the more remote
Saul's, to the most remote Samuel's[1],(concerning whom there
is very little information and a great deal of theory).

The moralizing element which is found in Judges and
Kings does not occur in Samuel. Whatever faults Saul and
David had, they did not resort to the worship of heathen
gods. The national uprising against the Philistines was
not only a movement for the establishment of the monarchy,

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1. Supra, bottom p. 43 and p. 44.

but it was a religious revival as well. Perhaps in peaceful times the people prayed to the Baalim to increase the fertility of the soil, but in times of war they relied only on YHWH. Thus YHWH was most important for the rallying of Israel in their struggle against the Philistines. Even when Israel was defeated, they refused to impute blame for the defeat upon YHWH, (as would other Semitic peoples), they blamed themselves.

First Saul, the more remote will be discussed, then David.[1] Much of the history of Saul's reign has been so distorted in the attempt to minimize his part played in establishing the kingdom that it is difficult to get at the truth. Saul is placed in an unfavorable light. Saul was raised by YHWH to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines, yet Jonathan is made the hero of the story. Many of the chief events of his reign are recorded in the story of David. Saul became king c. 1025 B.C.E. His reign is marked with internal as well as external frictions. Soon after his accession, Samuel and he began to drift apart, and Samuel looked for a successor. The story which informs us that Samuel selected the youngest son of Jesse, David, and annointed him in the presence of the elders of Bethlehem is a lovely idyll. Had such

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1. The most remote character, Samuel, has been dealt with on pp. 41-47, supra. To discuss him at this point would merely necessitate repetion of what has already been stated.

an incident occurred Saul surely would have found out. Saul would have never disregarded such a challenge to his position. Had it really taken place, later narratives would have had some reference to it, but they simply ignore this story. Furthermore, Saul's relations with Jonathan and David were unhappy. His later life was embittered by the growing importance of his rival, David. David's success aroused Saul's jealousy, and he devised various plots to destroy David. The narrative at this point definitely shows the writer's bias. Young, beautiful, heroic David is placed at the mercy of the harsh, cruel, maniac, Saul. David is compelled to flee Saul's court. Saul pursued him vowing to kill him. The writer shows us David's magnanimity in sparing Saul's life (I Sam. 24, also I Sam. 26:5-25). David finally left the country and entered the service of Achish, King of Gath. The whole account is one sided. Had it been written from Saul's viewpoint, we would see David as an ungrateful rogue, who received many favours from Saul, and then attempted to win the people over to his side and overthrow Saul. In the end Saul fell a victim to his ancient enemies, the Philistines.

We can see that Saul was really a greater hero and king than the narrator would have us believe. From the Book of Yashar (I Sam I:19:27) we have David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan. In it Saul is described as the fallen hero who was mighty; a warrior whose sword returned not

empty; swifter than an eagle, whose death would bring great joy to the Philistines. He must have been a strong king to hold his position on the throne, in defiance of Samuel and in spite of David's popularity. Ishbosheth, after him, held the throne for a time, even when David had actually become king of Judea.

Without Abner's support, (who was treacherously slain by Joab), Ishbaal was helpless, and was soon slain. The northern tribes then swore allegiance to David and he became king of all Israel. David captured Jerusalem by brilliant strategy and by a deft stroke of diplomacy he made Jerusalem the capital. It was neutral territory between the north and south. He decided to make Jerusalem the religious as well as the political center. His plan to build the temple did not materialize in his time. (It was only in Solomon's time when the temple was built that a definite move was made to centralize worship in Jerusalem.)

As is with all men who achieve great glory, so with David. He lived to dissipate the glories he achieved with his brain and sword. The account of these latter years of his life is related in II Sam. 9-20. The incidents narrated in the Court History are told with an objectivity and impartiality which can not fail to impress the reader.[1]

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1. This is dealt with in detail in supra, pp. 54-61.

The author has a high admiration for David, but that does not lead him to overlook his faults, nor does the author attempt to conceal the weakness of David's hand in maintaining order within his own household. The manner in which he develops the domestic tragedy is dramatic. As loyal as the author is to Solomon, still he does not conceal the harem intrigue by which he ascended the throne; nor the ugly beginning of Solomon's reign with the execution of Adonijah, and the murder of Joab to whom the family of Jesse owed the throne.

This account is really a product of the oldest Hebrew historiography. From a literary viewpoint it is unsurpassed. In the art of narrative, Herodotus himself could do no better. The author knew the facts of the latter part of David's reign from personal observation. He attempted to do more than entertain people. He did not deal with David, the hero, nor with David, the bandit, but occupied himself with King David, aged and weakened morally. It is a narration of fact. The writer disappears from the scene. He does not accuse the guilty, but merely states what they did. The principle character was David, the man. On the one hand we find him a despot, fond of luxury, a bad example for his family; on the other hand, a penitent sinner. The reader feels that his life was truly as it has been depicted. Joab is described exceedingly well. Loyal follower of David from former

days, never forsaking him. Weighed down with the murder of Abner, he was a willing tool of injustice in Uriah's case. He killed Amasa and Absalom. In time he became more and more uncanny in his relationship to David, and as we saw, he met an unjust death at the hands of Solomon. The impartiality with which the narrator faced great events and participants, the frankness with which he unveils David's weakness and crimes; the objectivity of Solomon, Adonijah, and Nathan, was of such a nature that we are almost at a loss as to whom to attribute foul play.

In retrospection of historical writings, we have seen the development from the historical anecdote, the earliest genre of prose, to the historical masterpiece of the Davidic Court History. These earliest anecdotalists arose at successive epochs under the influence and stimulus of heroic personalities, who in turn arose because of political crises. The writers were independent and original. They were connected by a literary tradition, went to school and assimilated it in their compositions. The other ancient civilizations only slightly parallel Hebrew historiography. For Babylonia and Assyria we possess hardly more than official annals. In Egypt, the diary of Thutmosis' war is a good historical annalistic document. Anecdotal histories are found in Egyptian literature but Egypt developed romance   the story, not history. There, his-

torical recording was the interest and perquisite of
the monarchs. But, the Hebrew anecdotal history and its
development into political and biographical history is
unique in the ancient world. Hebrew historiography ap-
pears to have arisen in private circles, during the estab-
lishment of the kingdom. They held an independent, crit-
ical attitude towards the crown, which reflected Israel's
democratic monarchy. In the Davidic Court History, it
is the interest of the subject matter which engrossed
the historian. So unbiased and objective is his approach,
that it is doubtful whether it comes from a partisan, or
an opponent of the dynasty. It is upon this historiograph-
ical account that Israel bases its claim of priority in
the writing of history.