

THE GIDEON AND ABIMELECH NARRATIVES

THE CONTRIBUTION OF FORM CRITICAL ANALYSIS TO THE CURRENT
DEBATE ON THE LATE DATING OF BIBLICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY
AS ILLUSTRATED IN A STUDY OF JUDGES VI-IX

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis arose on the one hand from the fact that in recent years no major works have appeared on the Book of Judges, yet on the other hand a number of studies have been published on the more general theme of ancient/biblical historiography which would radically challenge the conclusion of the last major contribution on the Book of Judges by W. Richter. Thus a fresh appraisal of the narratives of the Book of Judges in the light of recent developments seemed indicated.

In Part One we examined recent trends in biblical scholarship which we deemed to be directly relevant to form critical studies. In particular the nature of biblical historiography and the dating of the biblical narratives were considered. These two aspects were shown to be especially crucial for the investigation of the tradition's intention and *Sitz im Leben*. If the tradition can no longer be assumed to reflect historical recollections, its intention and setting must be sought from the ideological framework of its author(s). This inevitably means that extra-biblical evidence is fundamental to shed light on the texts. The dating of a tradition is paramount for any proper understanding of it.

Part Two of the thesis contains the analysis of the framework and individual pericopes of the Gideon-Abimelech narratives in the light of the conclusions reached in Part One. Thus, for instance, the antimonarchic viewpoint reflected in some of the texts is hardly conceivable to have originated at a time when the monarchy was still fully in operation, but rather it came about at a time when there was no hope or possibility anymore of restoring it, i.e. the post-exilic period should be the most likely setting for such an attitude to arise, especially if it is depicted against the idealized picture of a united Israel theocratically governed.

Again and again it could be shown that the texts - in particular their intention and setting - could be more satisfactorily explained by reference to comparative extra-biblical material than the "traditional" form critical method and its search for clues from within the traditions themselves and their implied "historicity".

With reference to the question of any contribution of form criticism to the current debate on the late dating of biblical historiography we had to conclude that its contribution is indeed minimal, as its methodology does not go beyond the text itself and therefore illuminate it adequately. Rather, form criticism should take into account the recent contributions on the late dating ranging from extra-biblical evidence to literary studies.

The thesis concludes that on the basis of the evidence available - especially that of comparative ancient historiography and extra-biblical evidence - it is more appropriate to assign a post-exilic date to the narratives in the Book of Judges. It is hoped that further research with this new perspective in mind will be fruitful to understand these traditions more adequately.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1983	Bachelor of Arts - European Nazarene Bible College and Mid-America Nazarene College (Schaffhausen)
1986	Bachelor of Divinity - University of Manchester
1986-89/ 1994	Research for the present thesis
1989-93	Associate Chartered Accountant - The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

ABBREVIATIONS

AASF	Acta Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Helsinki
AB	The Anchor Bible, Garden City, New York
ABI	Associazione Biblica Italiana
AION	<i>Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli</i> , Naples
ALUOS	<i>Annual of the Leeds University Oriental Society</i> , Leeds
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures</i> , ed. J.B. Pritchard, Princeton 1969 ²
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , ed. J.B. Pritchard, Princeton 1969 ³
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Neukirchen-Vluyn/Kevelaer
AP	<i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century</i> , ed. A. Cowley, Oxford 1923
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Zurich
AT	Altes Testament, Ancien Testament, Antico Testamento
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Göttingen
BA	<i>The Biblical Archaeologist</i> , New Haven, Conn., later Ann Arbor, Michigan
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> , New Haven
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge, Bonn
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver, C.A. Briggs (eds.), <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , based on the <i>Lexicon of William Gesenius</i> , Oxford 1907 and reprints
BeO	<i>Bibbia ed Oriente</i> , Genoa, later Brescia
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica</i> , ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, Stuttgart 1978
BK	<i>Bibel und Kirche</i> , Stuttgart
Bibl	<i>Biblica</i> , Rome
BiblOr	<i>Biblica et Orientalia</i> , Rome
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i> , Bamberg
BP	<i>Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri</i> , ed. E.G. Kraeling, New York 1953
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament, Stuttgart
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW, Giessen, later Berlin
CBQ	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> , Washington DC
Cl-G	Clermont-Ganneau, ostraca collection ed. by A. Dupont-Sommer
CRAI	<i>Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i> , Paris
CTA	A. Herdner, <i>Corpus des tablettes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras-Shamra-Ugarit 1929-39</i> , Paris 1963
DBAT	<i>Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament</i> , Heidelberg
Dtn	Deuteronomic (writer)
Dtr	Deuteronomistic [writer/history (Deut.-2Kings)]
DtrH(G)	Deuteronomistic history, earliest stratum

DtrN	Deuteronomistic history, nomistic stratum (latest)
DtrP	Deuteronomistic history, prophetic stratum
EA	El-Amarna letters
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum AT, Münster im Westfalen
ET	English Translation
ÉtBibl	Études bibliques, Paris
EVV	English Versions of the Bible
ExpT	Expository Times, Edinburgh
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Göttingen
Greg	Gregorianum, Rome
G-K	Wilhelm Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, ed. E. Kautsch, ET ed. A.E. Cowley, Oxford 1910
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Tübingen
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, Göttingen
HUCA	The Hebrew Union College Annual, Cincinnati
ICC	The International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh and New York
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal, Jerusalem
Interp	Interpretation, Richmond, Va
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society, New Heaven, Conn.
JBL	The Journal of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia, later Missoula, Montana
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies, London
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago
JPOS	Journal of Palestine Oriental Society, Jerusalem
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Sheffield
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford
K	Kethib
KAI	Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften, ed. H. Donner and W. Röllig, Wiesbaden 1963 (cited by no. and line)
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament, Leipzig
KHCAT	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum AT, Tübingen
KTU	Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, ed. Dietrich, M., O. Loretz, Sanmartín, J. Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1976.
L/	Old Latin
LH	Lettere aramaiche di Hermopoli, ed. E. Bresciani and M. Kamil, Rome 1966
LXX	Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT (LXX ^A = Codex Alexandrinus; LXX ^B = Codex Vaticanus)
MT	Massoretic Text
NCB	The New Century Bible, London
OG	Old Greek
Or	Orientalia, Rome
OrAnt	Oriens Antiquus, Rome
Orient	Orientalia, Rome
OTL	Old Testament Library, London and Philadelphia
OutHP	Die Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, Pretoria
PAE	Papiri aramaici egiziani, ed. E. Bresciani, Rome 1960
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly, London
Q	Qere
RANL	Rendiconti dell'Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Rome
RB	Revue Biblique, Paris/Jerusalem
RefTR	The Reformed Theological Review, Melbourne
RES	Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique, Paris 1900ff.
RivBibl	Rivista Biblica, Brescia
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Paris
RSF	Rivista di Studi Fenici

<i>RSI</i>	<i>Rivista Storica Italiana</i> , Naples
<i>RSLR</i>	<i>Rivista di Storia e di Letteratura Religiosa</i> , Turin
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i> , Rome
<i>RuBi</i>	<i>Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny</i> , Kraków
<i>S/</i>	Syro-hexapla
<i>SBS</i>	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, Stuttgart
<i>SBT</i>	Studies in Biblical Theology, London
<i>SBVT</i>	La Sacra Bibbia - Vecchio Testamento, Turin
<i>SMSR</i>	<i>Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni</i> , Rome
<i>Syr</i>	Syriac translation of the OT
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , ed. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, ET of <i>THAT</i> , Grand Rapids 1977ff.
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i> , Leipzig
<i>TR</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i> , Tübingen
<i>THAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> , ed. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, Munich 1970ff.
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i> , Cambridge
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> , Basle
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> , Leiden
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament, Neukirchen
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i> , Leipzig, later Berlin
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> , Giessen, later Berlin
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästinavereins</i> , Wiesbaden, later Tübingen
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i> , Tübingen

Abbreviations of the names of Biblical books (with the Apocrypha)

Gen.	Neh.	Hos.	1-2Esdras	Rom.	1-2Peter
Exod.	Esther	Joel	Tob.	1-2Cor.	1-3John
Lev.	Job	Amos	Jdt.	Gal.	Jude
Num.	Ps(s).	Obad.	Wis.	Eph.	Rev.
Deut.	Prov.	Jonah	Ecclus.	Phil.	
Josh.	Eccles.	Micah	Bar.	Col.	
Judg.	Cant.	Nahum	1-2Macc.	1-2Thess.	
Ruth	Isa.	Hab.	Matt.	1-2Tim.	
1-2Sam.	Jer.	Zeph.	Mark	Titus	
1-2Kings	Lam.	Hag.	Luke	Phlm.	
1-2Chron.	Ezek.	Zech.	John	Heb.	
Ezra	Dan.	Mal.	Acts	Jas.	

PART ONE

I. PRELIMINARY PROBLEMS AND CONSIDERATIONS

A. Introduction

The Book of Judges is probably one of the most neglected books of the Old Testament. Yet, it purports to describe a very important period of the Israelite history, namely the transitional period between a nomadic/semi-nomadic Israel and the emergence of the Israelite monarchy. Moreover, among the biblical traditions it is the only witness we have of this turbulent and crucial period.

The structure of the Book the Judges is clearly defined. A prologue and an epilogue embrace a number of judges-stories which are set within a definite framework. Some of these stories are among the most well known Old Testament narratives such as those of Samson and Gideon. In this study we will be mainly concerned with the latter to which we must also attach the Abimelech tradition which constitutes a kind of epilogue to the Gideon tradition and must thus be considered as an integral part of it.

This complex of narratives (i.e. Judg.6-9) has interested scholars for its manifold issues. It is widely held that different kinds of materials, some of which seem to constitute parallel traditions, have been linked together and shaped by various redactions until they reached their present form. This is the "traditional" view. Thus in the past to many scholars these chapters have appeared ideal to be divided into sources. A two-source theory (i.e. J and P) was first proposed by Budde

in 1890 and also followed by scholars such as Moore, Burney, Vincent, Simpson and Eissfeldt. Especially the attempt of the last remains a classic.¹ Others, on the other hand (Lagrange, Nowack, Steuernagel, Kittel, Schulz, Zapletal, Gressmann, Weise, Pfeiffer, Hölscher, Noth, Myers, Tamisier, and Täubler), have thought more in terms of a fragmentary-theory. "An author collected narratives of the tribal wars and the feats of heroes from the time of the settlement onwards, stories concerning the founding of sanctuaries and others wholly aetiological in origin putting them in a frame of a theology of history."²

A new impetus to the study of the Book of Judges came about with the publication of two major works by the German scholar Wolfgang Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch* (1963) and *Die Bearbeitungen des 'Richterbuches' in der deuteronomischen Epoche* (1964). Both these works have been very much welcomed and have made a very significant contribution to the study of this book, especially in their decisive refusal of the two source theory and in the working out of a pre-deuteronomistic "Book of Saviours" (Richterbuch).

We will start with a brief review of Richter's works before discussing some new trends in biblical scholarship which will then provide the basis for our form critical analysis of the Gideon-Abimelech narratives.

B. The Work of W. Richter

The publication of Richter's work marked an important stage in the study of the Book of Judges and opened up ways for fresh investigations.

¹ O. Eissfeldt, *Die Quellen des Richterbuches*, Leipzig 1925.

² Mueller 1964:121.

However, even though his work sparked off some new efforts in shedding light on the sources of this book, very little has in fact appeared on the topics with which Richter dealt and scholars working on the Book have very heavily relied on his labour.³

By approaching the study of Judg 3-9 by literary, form, Gattung criticism and tradition historical methods Richter was able to discern three stages in the literary growth of this complex: (a) a pre-deuteronomic stage which was followed by (b) two 'deuteronomic redactions' and finally by (c) the deuteronomistic redaction by which the complex was inserted into the so-called deuteronomistic history (Dtr) as defined by M. Noth.⁴

1. The Pre-Deuteronomic Stage.

According to Richter the original units belonging to this stage and still detachable from chapters 3-9 are the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.15b-26 | an Ehud tradition |
| 4.17a,18-21(22) | a Barak tradition which was already framed into a Holy War scheme 4.10,12-16(22) |
| 6.11a,18f.,21-24 | an altar-construction tradition |
| 6.27b-31ab c | a tradition about the destruction of an altar of Baal |
| 7.11b,13-21 | a tradition about Gideon's dream and success |
| 8.5-9,14-21a | an East Jordan tradition |
| 8.21b,24-27a | a tradition about the making of the ephod |
| 8.30,32 | a grave-tradition about Gideon |

³ See e.g. Soggin 1981; Mayes 1983/1985; Greenspahn 1986; etc.

⁴ For an extensive summary see Schlauri 1973. I am here following his outline.

9.8-15 a fable

9.26-40,46-54 a cycle-narrative about Abimelech.

These were then expanded by being framed and connected by a single author whose hand can be seen in:

3.13,27-29;

4.4a,6-9,11,17b;

6.2b-5,11b-17,25-27a,31b β ,32,33f.; 7.1,9-11a,22,23f.,25-8.3,4,10-13,22f.,29,31;

9.1-7,16a,19b-21,23f.,41-45,56f.

The chapters which are the object of our investigation show a more complex redactional process than the other traditions.⁵ The Gideon-Abimelech complex starts with two religious traditions of altar constructions which preface Gideon's military actions. The first (6.11a,18f.,21-24) is expanded by the insertion of 6.11b-17 and the description of the Midianite danger (6.21-5). This is followed by another tradition in which Gideon destroys Baal's altar (6.27b-31a α) which is expanded at the beginning (6.25-27a) and at the end (6.31b β ,32).

These are then followed by Gideon's campaigns in Cisjordan and Transjordan. The first (7.11b,13-31) is framed by 6.33f; 7.1 and 7.9-11a to which 7.22, 23f. and 7.25-8.3 are then added. The second (8.5-9,14-21a) is framed by 8.4,10-13. To this is also added another old tradition about the making of an ephod out of the Midianite booty. Finally there is the tradition of Gideon's grave (8.30,32) to which 8.29.31 are added so as to prepare the transition to chapter 9.

Chapter 9 comprises narratives about Abimelech. The original story is preserved in 9.26-40,46-54 which the writer connected with 9.8-15, which also lay in front of him, through 9.1-7,16a,19b-21,23f., 41-45,56f.

⁵ I will here limit myself to summarize Richter's results with special emphasis only on the chapters with which we are concerned.

He was then responsible for harmonizing the original traditions with one another and also for the identification of Gideon with Abimelech's father.

Besides this Richter regards 6.20,33,36-40; 7.2-8,12; 9,16b-19a, 22,25,55 as later additions. He is not sure whether of these 9.16b-19a,22,25 should be attributed to the author of the deuteronomic framework.

The compositional similarities and the content-agreements of the redactional parts which make up a YHWH war scheme indicate that chapters 3-9 are due to one author. The extent of the work is not determinable since it does not have a formal beginning or end. There are no other traditions which could be compared with these. The YHWH war scheme does occur in 1Sam. 11 and Jos. 6 and 8 but the differences do not allow us to attribute them to the same hand. The same can be said of Judg.11 which shows only formal similarities. Therefore the extent of the book can be confined to chs. 3-9.

Further, several interests of the author emerge from Richter's study. The geographical framework arises from his interest to connect the traditions with one another and at the same time to expand the geographical horizon. In so doing the traditions are transformed from tribal to national narratives.

The theological purpose clearly appears in the choice of the schemes employed such as the "calling", "the YHWH war", in the stylistic devices of God's speaking, in the religious narratives, and in the fear-motive. All is intended to point to God's power.

The author is also interested in the old Israelite institution of YHWH war. This means that in the age of the author these stories (chs. 3-9) were religiously conceived, they are saviours' stories, hence Richter's designation of chs.6-9 as a pre-deuteronomic *Retterbuch*.

An anti-monarchic tendency appears through the insertion of Jotham's fable, Gideon's refusal of kingship and Abimelech's bloody act in killing his seventy brothers. The monarchy had led to the end of the YHWH war practice.

The geographical features as well as the saviour-nagid, the institution of the YHWH-war and Jotham's fable seem to point to traditions of the Northern Kingdom. The mention of a prophetess as well as the interest in Shechem (ch. 9) may indicate provenance from prophetic circles.

In regard to a possible time of composition Richter suggests the time of Jehu who slaughtered the seventy princes from the house of Ahab in Samaria (2Kings 10) which seems to be reflected in Abimelech's slaughter of his seventy half brothers. This date seems further confirmed by the lack of any Gileadic example (cf. 2Kings 10.32f.) so pointing to a time when it did not belong anymore to Israel. Also the tradition of the Baal conflict (6.27b-31) would fit well within this period.

2. The Deuteronomic Stage

As said above Richter's analysis has revealed besides the basic pre-deuteronomic stratum three further layers of which only the last can be attributed to the deuteronomistic historian. This is contrary to the previous more common opinion which held that the framework of these stories (the first layer in Richter's analysis) was the work of Dtr. The first two deuteronomic layers are called respectively Rdt1 and Rdt2. The first consists of framing the narratives, i.e. providing the individual stories with introductions and conclusions which are easily recognizable as additions because of their characteristic exclusions. The stories are

not expanded and are harmonized with the frameworks only at the seams.

This redactional method is especially clear in the Ehud story. In the Deborah-Barak and Gideon traditions it is evident at the beginning and end of the stories. The latter tradition is introduced by 6.1-2a followed then by 2b-5 (older than the framework) which is built in through 2a and 6a. 6b provides then the link with 7-10 which is *more recent* than the framework. 8.28 would then have been the original conclusion of the victory report which is now separated from it through the offering of kingship and the construction of the ephod. Both the bending-formula and the silence-formula in v.28 have been expanded. The former through the underlining of the victory, the latter through the indication of time "in the days of Gideon." This was inserted together with vv.27b,33-5 which are younger and stem from a later deuteronomic hand. In conclusion, 6.1,2a,6;8,28 are redactional. The numbers in 6.1 and 8.28 stem from Dtr while 8.27b, 33-35 are late deuteronomic additions.

The *Retterbuch* framework consists of five, once six, elements/formulas which basically agree in wording and content and have a constant sequence. Hence its designation as "Saviour-schema" (*Retterschema*).

(1) Sin-formula (*Sündenformel*). This element of the schema is found in a simple (cf.6.1; 2.11; 3.7) and expanded form through וַיִּסַּף (cf. 3.12; 4.1; also 10.6; 13.1). The enlargements are attributed to Dtr. This formula is found, outside the Book of Judges in older layers and in Deuteronomy.

(2) Handing over formula (*Übereignungsformel*). Several variations appear here. The number indication is the work of Dtr.

(3) Emergency cry formula (*Notschrei-formel*). The wording is constant throughout. It is found also outside the Book of Judges in

different strata of tradition.

(4) Raising-formula (*Erweckungsformel*). This formula is only found in the Ehud story (also 3.9). The lack of it in the other stories is probably due to difficulties in inserting it. This element has been inserted in the Gideon story (6.14f., 36f.) in dependence on the verb **עשׂ**.

(5) Bending down formula (*Beugeformel*). Undefined time indication is always included.

(6) Rest formula (*Ruheformel*). The wording is always the same with an indication of time, usually forty years. These time-indications are probably additions by the Dtr since their meaning can only be seen in connection with a greater chronological scheme.

Five steps clearly emerge from this scheme: sin - punishment - crying for help - help - rest. The kind of sin is not indicated, although it is clear that the formula is theologically motivated and has a concrete meaning, i.e. the evil done in the eyes of YHWH - the cultic service to foreign deities. The scheme however does not point to a greater historical connection since it cannot be proved that the time-indications and death-notice are original.

The completeness of the scheme and its aim is best explained as originating with a separate author. Deuteronomistic influence is only traceable in the sin-formula "they did evil" which is dependent on Deut. 17.2 (hence the siglum Rdt1 - deuteronomistic redaction). Since a complete framework is confined only to chs. 3.12-9 it can be assumed that this part of the Book of Judges represents a pre-deuteronomistic book which went through a new edition in the deuteronomistic period. Yet, the theological aim does remain. To be thanked for the "rest" with which the schema concludes is not the judge but the saviour sent from God.

As to the place of origin it is suggested that the "Book of Saviours" went through a new edition at the time of Josiah which was occasioned by the restoration of a popular army. The stories should be an incitement for the present. A pre-exilic time for the framework seems also indicated by its positive evaluation of the saviour, which waits confidently for peace in the land through the saviours sent by God.

The second deuteronomic redaction was responsible for the insertion of an example, ch. 3.7-11. This pericope is basically made up only of the elements of the framework of the saviour-scheme, all of which appear in this story. The insertion of numbers in vv.8 and 11 seems to be the work of Dtr.

Although Richter is more of the opinion that this piece-example is to be attributed to a later period, the possibility that this goes back to the same author of the framework is not excluded. "However, the distinction appears to him more likely in view of the explication of the nature of Israel's sin with the consequent divine wrath in 3,7 element without parallel in the framework, and in view of the new object of Israel's enslavement, gods (3,7b) as well as foreign oppressor (3,8b; cf.3,14). The emphasis on the cult of foreign gods reflects the viewpoint of Dt 13 and 17.2ff., whose influence on the author is postulated; hence his siglum Rdt2. He was probably a Calebite (cf.3.9); like Rdt1 he works only on the 'Retterbuch', and to the edition of his predecessor he adds the idea, probably current in the Josianic reform, of YHWH-cult bringing victory, the cult of foreign gods, defeat."⁶

A pre-exilic period is postulated also for this redaction. Pointers to this are the optimistic evaluations of the saviour and the fact that here for the first time a Judean figure is introduced which may

⁶ Moran 1965:224.

indicate a time when Judah was the only representative of Israel.

3. The Deuteronomistic Stage

The final stage concerns the inclusion of this body of tradition into the Deuteronomistic History.⁷ The siglum of this redactor is DtrG.⁸ Of all the authors he is by far the most profoundly deuteronomistic being strongly influenced by the so called framework of Deut., especially chs. 5-11 and 28.⁹ According to Richter DtrG had in front of him two traditions about the pre-monarchic period in written form. According to one it was a period of charismatic saviours, according to the other a time of institutional judges (the idea of a pre-monarchic time of judges precedes DtrG - 2Sam. 7.1.11; 2Kings 23.22; cf. Ruth 1.1). They were then connected by DtrG with the further introduction of the Jephthah and Samson traditions. The saviours are transformed into judges. This occurs particularly with the introduction of 2.11-19 where the two roots שפט and ישיע are put together (vv. 16,19). The scheme is that of *Retterschema* but it is a judge and not a saviour, who is sent by God to save Israel from the oppressors.

This connection of saviour-judge appears also elsewhere. Both the Jephthah and the Samson story are introduced by elements of the saviour-scheme and concluded with elements of the judge-scheme (*Richterschema*).¹⁰

⁷ Whether however Dtr reaches back through Joshua to Deut.1, as Noth suggested, is not clear to Richter (1964:81).

⁸ The siglum which we use to designate both the historian and the work is usually simply Dtr.

⁹ Moran 1965:224.

¹⁰ These are the elements of the scheme: (i) *Sukzessionsformel* - name and descent, future of the Judge; (ii) *Richterformel* - usually with

This assimilation is further achieved by the insertion of elements of the *Richterschema* into the deuteronomic framework of some individual stories (cf. 3.10; 4.4f.; 3.11; 4.1; 3:31). Through this process DtrG created the Book of Judges out of a deuteronomic *Retterbuch*. The aim is a religious interpretation of history according to which God is the real saviour.

Chs. 2-16 point also to a greater context. This took place through DtrG's insertion of *יָדָוּ* in the sin-formula (3.12; 4.1; 10.6; 13.1; cf. 8.33).¹¹ The point is not a continuous falling away from YHWH but a growth in sin which culminates in the demand of a king under Samuel (1Sam. 12.19).

The insertion of a chronology (i.e. time of oppression and rest) is also the work of DtrG (3.8,11,14,30; 4.3; 5.31; 6.1; 8.28; 13.1) whose chronological scheme is summed up in 480 years (cf. 1Kings 6.1).¹² Further, a connection with the time after the taking of the land is made through ch. 2.7-10 while the mention of the Philistines in 10.6 prepares already the way for Judg 11; 13-16; and 1Sam. 1-12. The period of the judges is continued through the judge-formula in 1Sam. 4.18 and 1Sam. 7.6,15 until the beginning of the monarchy, which DtrG concludes in 1Sam. 12 through letting a king now become a successor of the saviours and judges. In this way DtrG has built into his great history the period that spans from the occupation of the land until the beginning of the

uneven numbers; (iii) *Todesformel* - name of the Judge (missing in 10.2) and future; (iv) *Grabesformel* - name of a city or area.

¹¹ Richter 1964:63f.

¹² At this point Richter has proposed the most satisfactory explanation for the problem of the 480 years in Kg 6.1. The calculation is very simple: reign of Saul to Solomon = 46; years of judges from Eli to Thola = 136; years of peace under the saviours = 200; years of oppression = 53; years implied in Joshua 14,10 (years in the desert + Joshua and the elders) = 45. The sum amounts to 480.

monarchy.

C. The Problem of Methodology

W. Richter has contributed much to the study of the Book of Judges with these two superb works, the first of which (1963) is a very fine example of the critical methods at work. However, one wonders whether the Old Testament (historical) traditions can any longer be examined only with such a rigid use of these methodologies. Scholars build upon previous results yet the results as well as their presuppositions may be open to question.

In an article (1983) B. Lindars attempted to "banish" the existence of a *Retterbuch* as an intermediate stage between the separate traditions and the deuteronomic compilation of the Book of Judges. In his words, "the one thing which really binds those three constituents of the *Retterbuch* (i.e. the stories of Ehud, Deborah and Barak and the account of Gideon) is the transformation of secular stories of exploits by local heroes into an idealized picture of the Israelite tribes co-operating (or usually failing to co-operate) in the Holy War of YHWH. But this is too close to the view-point of the Deuteronomic school to prove that we really do have in these chapters an intermediate stage between the existence of separate traditions and the welding of them into a book... Thus it is not surprising that the theory is called in question today (e.g. by Crüsemann).¹³ It is really a hangover from the old documentary hypothesis of continuous sources, whereas it is much better to take its three items separately, just like the individual traditions - Jephthah, the Samson cycle, and some at least of the material in the so-called

¹³ 1978:41

appendix, chapters 17-21."¹⁴ But the problem is much more complex than this and requires a more systematic treatment. It is a methodological problem and it is thus the presuppositions employed which must be addressed.¹⁵ The question therefore which we should ask is whether such critical methodologies as employed by Richter are still valid to help trace the development of these traditions to their final form.

Although in recent years no major works have appeared on the Book of Judges which have challenged the results reached by W. Richter,¹⁶ several other works have been published which could radically change our understanding of the formation of this book and the value and use of form critical methods. For our purposes, we will consider here in particular two recent works by J. Van Seters and G. Garbini which in their analysis of the Old Testament historical traditions with reference to extra-biblical evidence have pointed out the importance of several issues which can no longer be ignored by form critical studies.

1. J. Van Seters - Sources and Unity in the OT Narratives

J. Van Seters, in his work, *In Search of History* (1983), has attempted a comparison of the Old Testament historiography with that of

¹⁴ 1983:7.

¹⁵ See e.g. Mayes (1983:73,164) who in a previous study (1977:291f.) had argued that the Jephthah tradition should have been included in the deliverers' collection. In this later study he recanted this view which according to him depended on an inadequate treatment of the traditional history of the Jephthah story. It seems to us that, if we accept Richter's basic methodology, there is no escape from his main results.

¹⁶ This seems true also of the most recent commentaries on the Book of Judges by Soggin (1981) and Boling (1975). While the former simply accepts Richter's conclusions though with some reservations, the latter does not even mention Richter's first work! An exception is the recent work by Webb (1987) who simply follows a different approach emphasizing more the unity of the book. We will consider this work later.

other ancient more or less contemporary works. A comparison of the two has brought to light alternative and probably better paradigms than those so far generally followed for postulating possible compositional stages by which the Old Testament writings came into being. It is with this in view that Van Seters writes, "What is sorely needed in the study of historiographic prose in the Old Testament is not the splitting up of prose works into various "traditions" in a highly speculative and uncontrolled fashion but a careful study of those literary qualities that the Old Testament shares with this large body of early prose works from antiquity."¹⁷ The reason for the lack of such extensive studies is partly to be sought in a wrong assumption which was widely accepted until some decades ago. It was the attribution of a unique historiographic maturity to Israel and with it a very early dating of the Old Testament traditions.¹⁸ For example, the so-called "Succession Narrative" (2 Sam.

¹⁷ 1983:359. A similar judgment has been expressed by G.L. Prato. He argues for placing the Bible, as an ancient text, within the wider sphere of ancient historiographic research. It is within this sphere that canons that have inspired the coming into being of many of texts ought to be researched. Towards this end he notices the two works by H. Cancik (1970; 1976) in which he has attempted to throw light on Israelite historiography through the Hittite world and the work by Van Seters (1983) who however still pays too much attention to a literary analysis of the texts and therefore shows his main interest in defining the historical genre. In general, however, though a more conscious evaluation of proper historiographic canons begins to emerge, immediate religious preoccupations or religious ideologies (they themselves, strangely, the fruit of a certain modern biblical fundamentalism such as is the case with the *Israelite and Judean History* ed. by Hayes and Miller, 1977) have been operating against this (1986:10-12).

¹⁸ Cf. also Soggin 1987:5-14. It is only in the 80's that a more conscious and prudent approach has been taken in regard to the OT historiography. The materials before the foundation of the state are and remain traditional legendary materials and as such far from adequate to be used for historiographical reconstruction. This approach is noticeable e.g. in the works by Van Seters (1983); Donner (1984); Soggin (1984); Miller and Hayes (1986); Garbini (1986) and Lemche (1988). It is, however, to be said that this more historically minded approach had already found expression in the works of Abraham Kuenen, *The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State*, trans. from Dutch by A.H. May, vol. 1. London/Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1874 (original ed.

9-20 + 1Kings 1-2) was presented in the scholarly world as one of the most ancient historiographical texts, if not even the most ancient. This view was not only accepted by biblical scholars, but also by orientalist and scholars of the world of antiquity.¹⁹

It is with the dawn of this optimistic approach and the realization that Old Testament historical traditions share much more in common with the ancient Near East literature that new and fresh approaches to this body of traditions could be made.²⁰

1869), pp. 12ff. and Bernard Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. 1. Berlin, 1885, pp. 16ff. According to the former it is only at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 8th century B.C. that we have reliable sources upon which it is possible to write a history of Israel (this dating was also held by H. Gressmann, "Sage und Geschichte in den Patriarchenerzählungen", *ZAW* 30 (1910) 1-34 and E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II, 2. Stuttgart-Berlin, 1931²). The latter proposes instead the epoch of the Davidic-Solomonic empire (i.e. 10th century B.C.). But the views of works such as those of J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, Berlin, 1914⁷ and R. Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Stuttgart, 1932⁷, which had the history of Israel start with the Patriarchs, imposed themselves over the others. So we ought to speak more of a process of devolution than evolution.

¹⁹ E.g. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II, 2, Stuttgart-Berlin, 2nd ed. 1931, pp.281-286:285 (Soggin 1982:1-3; 1986:21). Of course still today such views are defended especially within conservative and Jewish circles. See e.g. J. Licht (1983) in which the Israelite historiographic superiority within the cultural context of the ancient Near East is taken for granted. The ground for this approach with its revival in the second quarter of this century cannot simply be apologetic. Soggin attributes this phenomenon partly to the emergence in Europe of two authoritarian atheistic movements: the state Marxism and the National Socialism which put into crisis circles of liberal tradition (to this e.g. Albright belonged) which felt the need to oppose them with securities they thought to find (partly) in the biblical historiographic infallibility (1986:23-24).

²⁰ One of the earliest works towards this direction is by B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (1967) in which he attempted to demonstrate that those ideas which were thought to be exclusive to the Hebrews were in fact basically shared by all the people of the ancient Near East.

a) The Problem of Unity in OT Narratives

Going back to Van Seters' work two points are especially relevant for our discussion: the idea of unity and the problem of sources in the Old Testament. The most fruitful comparison turned out to be with the work of the Greek historian Herodotus (495? - 425? B.C.), the "Father of History". Van Seters refers to the nature of unity in Herodotus' work in order to shed some light on the existing tension in the study of Old Testament prose narrative between a developmental approach and a unitary approach. The evidence for disunity, in fact, may derive from using false criteria to judge the work's unity.²¹ Two main aspects are considered as important by Van Seters to bring unity to Herodotus' work: a) the theme or subject of the work, b) the structural character and literary techniques by which the material collected by Herodotus for his subject becomes a unified whole.²² From these points of Van Seters three aspects emerge which are relevant for the Old Testament. First of all, the Old Testament narrative structure ought to be seen from the aspect of unity. The Old Testament prose as well as Herodotus' work show a strong paratactic style. Old Testament prose narrative, as it has been generally observed, is made up of smaller and larger units which are loosely connected with almost complete lack of thematic subordination. As a result scholars have argued for a multi-stage traditio-historical process. But the presence of the same phenomenon in Herodotus would suggest the contrary. Here we are in fact dealing with a stylistic feature by which literary works are created, i.e. by the simple connection of smaller units. Consequently parataxis does not need to be

21 1983:31.

22 1983:31.

explained by the historical traditional method. Moreover, in Herodotus "parataxis often links units that are quite different in genre and style, in size and complexity of structure, and in refinement of presentation. This may say more about the author's sources than about the author himself. But it does not suggest that the tradition grew in stages, with the simplest forms being the oldest and the most complex the most recent."²³ All the genres in Herodotus were available for his use at virtually the same time, and the form of the unit says nothing about the age of the content."²⁴

Secondly, both Herodotus and the Old Testament prose share a variety of connective techniques. Common to both is the use of framing sentences or "ring composition"; the use of prolepsis; the use of royal chronologies, genealogies, or genealogical chronologies as a way of ordering separate story units;²⁵ the repetition of similar events and episodes; and the repetition of patterns. The exact repetition of thought patterns "or other connective devices is rare in Herodotus, and variation in fact seems to be deliberate. The tendency of some biblical scholars therefore, to see in any variation of a formula or pattern a distinct stage in the traditional or redactional process seems ill advised and unfounded."²⁶ In the light of these two points Van Seters questions the use of the term "redaction"²⁷ as well as the distinction of

²³ Here the implied contention is against Gunkel's thesis on the development of Israelite historiography.

²⁴ 1983:31.

²⁵ In the absence of a chronicle Dtr uses a succession of generations of forty years' length for the period of the judges and the early monarchy.

²⁶ 1983:31.

²⁷ Cf. Sacchi 1987:68f. who similarly questions the appropriateness of the term "redactor" in biblical studies. The term is likely to have originated to characterize the work of the redactor as less important than that of the author. But the term is far too restrictive even in the

various redactions in the light of variations in such connections.

Thirdly, both also show a thematic unity. Although they do not deal with the same period nor share the same presuppositions some interpretative themes of how historical events are to be understood are common to both. The issue of divine retribution for unlawful acts as a fundamental principle of historical causality is a dominant concern in both; human responsibility and divine justice are frequently stated themes; both, though with different understandings, deal "exclusively with law as an important element in understanding the actions of men and nations and the consequences of those actions. For both history is Theodicy."²⁸

As a further point in support of "unity" we may mention the recent book by Webb (1987) which concerns only the Book of Judges. His methodology is different from that of Van Seters' though in a different way he seems to say the same. Specifically for the Book of Judges he argues for its unity. Approaching the study of this book synchronically rather than diachronically,²⁹ he has convincingly argued that, whatever traditions may lie behind it, it must have been conceived as a whole by

way his activity is conceived in biblical studies. If sources were mixed and fused by the redactor it is obvious that he was more than an editor of texts. It is therefore justified to assume that redactors were in fact "authors" who made use of pre-existent material as well as of new material composed by them to write a work which did not exist before, following specific ideologies and aims. That which brings the work into being is the author's intention to create something new which was not there before even though he made use of pre- or partly existent material. Besides this, a distinction which he finds valid is between a glossator - whose additions are small, late and intended to clarify the meaning of the text - and interpolator - when these additions are longer and capable of a certain autonomy.

²⁸ 1983:40.

²⁹ On the question of the validity of the synchronic and diachronic approach we find ourselves largely in agreement with Polzin's pertinent discussion on the present tension between the two approaches and his argument that the two are actually not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Polzin 1980:158ff.

one mind.³⁰ Even the non recurring pattern in the Jephthah tradition which led Richter to exclude it from the *Retterbuch* can find an explanation in the light of the book's overall structure. It had already been noticed several years ago by J.P.U. Lilley³¹, quoted by Webb with approval, that "'the ground departure from stereotyped formulae' (is) in line with the progressive deterioration of Israel's condition as indicated in the successive narrative units. Thus the pattern of 3.7-16.31 is not merely repetitive or cyclic, but a downward spiral - a progressive exploration of a theme for which the groundwork has been laid in 1.1-3.6. The deterioration continues until the land no longer recovers its peace (from Abimelech onwards), enemies are no longer repulsed and there is scarcely any more will to resist (the Samson episode) and until finally, in the closing chapters of the book the civil war has added its special horrors to the tale of depression."³² The results of this approach which is essentially based upon structural and literary observations thus strengthen the previous arguments against seeing the Old Testament historical narratives in the light of a developmental process, but rather as writings which were basically conceived as unity.

b) The Problem of Sources in OT Narratives

The second main point is the problem of sources. Both Herodotus and the Old Testament share the characteristic of being based on a variety of written and oral sources. The problem of sources is

³⁰ This had already been argued by D.W. Gooding (1982).

³¹ 1976.

³² 1976:101, quoted in Webb 1987:30.

problematic in Herodotus as well as in the Old Testament and will probably always be. In this regard the works of von Fritz and D. Fehling³³ who have dealt with this problem in Herodotus are taken in consideration by Van Seters. According to the former the total amount of information or direct quotation from literary sources available to Herodotus was a rather small part of the whole. The most important source of information for Herodotus' work was oral tradition. The latter however has challenged this view suggesting that Herodotus' source designations must be viewed only as a literary convention which follows a number of principles and patterns which betray its complete artificiality. The purpose of course would have been to enhance the credibility of his reports. This convention is well attested in later historiography as well and attempts to disguise the fact that the information was drawn from a prior literary source. If this was the case Herodotus' editorial activity of collected traditions is called into question and it cannot be excluded that he created a good part of his stories. Of course he did not create all of them *ex nihilo* nor did he pass on traditions in any fixed form. On the other hand, Herodotus was simply following a principle which he himself states and which was followed later by other writers as well: "one could not deal with the same subject about which others had written unless one was writing from a different point of view or correcting an earlier presentation. Thus there are many versions of the same event, but they are not the result of new information or "new" oral sources. Instead they derive from the free inventions of the author."³⁴

³³ von Fritz, K, *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung*. Vol. 1: *Von den Anfängen bis Thukydides. Text und Anmerkungen*. Berlin 1967; "Herodotus and the Growth of the Greek Historiography", *TAPA* 67 (1936):315-40; Fehling, D., *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot: Studien zur Erzählkunst Herodotos*. Berlin and New York, 1971.

³⁴ Van Seters 1983:44. In this regard it is instructive to consider

Other points ³⁵ of comparison are: the nature of Herodotus' literary inventions; ³⁶ the use of Homer's Iliad which provided a model for Herodotus; the free use of story themes and simple motifs in the creation of his many anecdotes; ³⁷ and finally Herodotus' use of typical numbers which are derived from the sources directly.

In conclusion, it is Fehling's opinion that "very little in Herodotus is derived from actual historical or traditional sources and that most of it is free invention...Everything that Herodotus learned from anyone he completely reworked for his own use. The *Histories* contain material for certain individual data but not for entire accounts."³⁸ The two views by von Fritz and Fehling show the wide range

the work of Josephus and his reworking of the biblical material in his *Jewish Antiquities* in which he claims to provide a correct and complete repetition of the text (*Jew. Ant.* 1.17). He tells us also about the period of the judges yet his account significantly differs from that of the biblical traditions. "He first surveys the material in 1. 1-2,5, then moves directly to the outrage at Gibeon and the resulting civil war in chs. 19-21. He gives a brief account of the northward migration of Dan (chs. 17-18) omitting the parts of this narrative involving Micah's image. He then returns to 3.7 (ignoring 2.6-3.6) and moves systematically through the stories of the individual judges, omitting Tola (10.1-2), and climaxing his account of the age with the Samson story" (Webb 1987:214). In the story of Gideon the making of the ephod is avoided so that the hero is more idealized. The terminology in describing the "judges" and their function also differs. The freedom of treatment with the claim to fidelity is very interesting. Moreover, it is worth noticing that a "frame" so to say is only noticeable in the case of the first two judges. If we followed Richter's approach we should argue for an original book with only two saviours!

³⁵ These are basically Fehling's arguments which are conveniently summarized by Van Seters 1983:44ff.

³⁶ Here Fehling points to the literary function which many of these invented stories have in the composition as a whole (cf. *Jdg.* 3.7-11) and "to the principle of economy of narration, according to which the supposed tradition or anecdote recounted by Herodotus contains only what is appropriate to this purpose or theme." (Van Seters 1983:45).

³⁷ He often repeats the same motif in different contexts very close to one another but sometimes widely separated from each other, in which case they help to create analogies between different events (cf. *Jdg.* 6.11-24; 13).

³⁸ Van Seters 1983:46-47.

of opinion. Yet the difference between the two is more a matter of degree (how far was Herodotus creative?) than kind.³⁹

This brief discussion on Herodotus' work raises similar questions about the Old Testament. The following points are made by Van Seters: first of all, the Old Testament just like Herodotus refers to sources. This is obvious e.g. in the Books of Kings which refer to a specific source. Yet, only a small portion of the work is attributed to them. The remaining material therefore must be attributed to oral sources or to the author's own creativity. Moreover, in a small society like the religious community of Jerusalem every possible literary dependence must be taken seriously since it is likely that each "history" would have been well known by the subsequent historians.⁴⁰

Secondly, in both Herodotus as well as his predecessor and the Old Testament are found those genres which are regarded as oral in source and origin. "One certainly cannot apply to the *Histories* an evolutionary scheme of historiographic development from the simplest etiological form to the most complex narrative. The simplest forms in Genesis dealing

³⁹ The contrast von Fritz-Fehling is comparable to the same problem in R. Rendtorff - B.J. Diebner's understanding of *Heilsgeschichte*. While for the former it is nothing but history (R. Rendtorff, "Hermeneutik des Alten Testaments als Frage nach der Geschichte", originally published in ZThK 57, 1960. Republished in *Ges. Stud. z. AT*. TB 57. München 1975, p.23f. See also J. Licht 1983 esp. pp.113ff.) for the latter it is not a historically describable history (Diebner 1984). The same *mutatis mutandi* has a parallel in NT studies in the search for the *ipsissima vox Iesu* in the two main exponents J. Jeremias - R. Bultmann.

⁴⁰ Though Van Seters does not question the sources of these books he considers entirely fictitious those mentioned in the Books of Chronicles. This work is dependent on the Pentateuch and the Dtr and the reference to sources is a way to disguise the alterations, additions and deletions brought to these books. For a different view on the nature of the sources in the Books of Kings see Garbini (1981) who attributes them to the deuteronomistic redactor's creativity and suggests as sources of these books: (a) a collection of legendary traditions regarding the prophets; (b) a "History of Kings" - a historiographic work of Northern origin; (c) an annalist work created in the environment of the temple and the palace of Jerusalem.

with cultural and national eponyms and ancestors belong to precisely that body of pseudo-history in Herodotus and other prose writers that is mostly easily recognized as invented. The variations in the genealogical schemes are of the same kind and order that we find between the genealogy of Cain in Gen. 4.17-26 (J) and the genealogy of Seth in Gen. 5 (P). This difference is not due to anthropological factors; it is purely literary."⁴¹ Consequently, if Herodotus was himself able to create stories and anecdotes then the same was not impossible for the biblical writer.

Moreover, if the full range of "oral" forms could be invented by Herodotus to fit his purposes, this means that the identification of a genre does not tell us anything about its "original" *Sitz im Leben*. The story may have existed only in literature. Suspicion about this is especially raised by those stories which are based upon a set motif. Further, it cannot be assumed "that doublets are a clear indication of variants in oral tradition; they may also be literary - a pattern repeated by the same author or a story borrowed by a second author. Repetition in narrative has many literary functions in writing compositions. It is not just a phenomenon of oral tradition, and traditio-historical analysis founded upon such a principle is a delusion."⁴² A further point which he discusses in this connection is the significance of the formula "to this very day" which was identified by Gunkel, Alt, and Noth as one characteristic feature of oral tradition. This formula had already received extensive attention by B. Childs⁴³ in which he observed that this formula also appeared attached to

⁴¹ Van Seters 1983:48.

⁴² Van Seters 1983:49.

⁴³ 1963:279-92.

"historical" material elsewhere. Consequently he suggested that this formula was motivated by historiographic interests and it should be considered as secondary and "redactional" to the received tradition. Van Seters, however, disputes this conclusion and rather suggests that it "falls in the same category as source citations, which have the function of raising the credibility of the writer."⁴⁴

Finally, the use of typical numbers is discussed. Typical numbers of course may be rooted in tradition. "But when a larger pattern of numbers is established that cuts across several literary units, the imagination of the author is at work."⁴⁵ A typical case in the Old Testament is the number twelve.

The above remarks may already suffice to question the existence of a *Retterbuch* as postulated by W. Richter and the various stages before it became part of the DtrG.⁴⁶ If such an intermediate stage did not exist as B. Lindars had already suggested it is more likely to attribute the collection of stories to Dtr or whoever was responsible for the compilation of this book. In fact, to quote Van Seters again "in spite of the Near Eastern propensity for collections, we cannot find any that corresponds to such collections of stories as have frequently been proposed in the analyses of Judges and Samuel. As it is evident from the early Greek historians ("logographers") and from Herodotus in particular, this kind of collecting arises only out of a much broader historiographic concern, namely, to create a historical continuum through a set period of time. It was Dtr himself who collected his material and put it into the sequence and chronological scheme in which it now appears from

⁴⁴ 1983:50. Cf. Judg. 6.24.

⁴⁵ 1983:50.

⁴⁶ We will deal more specifically with Richter's conclusions in the analysis of the individual pericopes.

Deuteronomy to 2Kings."⁴⁷

An intermediate stage, though argued from a different point of view, is held by R.G. Boling. He recognizes four main stages in the growth of this book: "(1) composition of individual narrative units and the formation of early Israelite epic, (2) a didactic collection of such stories (the pragmatic edition) completed by the eighth century, (3) incorporation of the collection in a seventh-century Deuteronomistic historical work (the book of Deuteronomy through II Kings), (4) a sixth century updating to produce the final or Deuteronomistic edition of the same books."⁴⁸ The process by which Boling suggests the coming into being of the Book of Judges is clearly stated but in the light of what has been said above, the criticisms raised against Richter's work apply to this proposal as well. Moreover his argument that "the fixation of ancient Israelite tradition in written form, from roughly the ninth to the seventh centuries B.C.E. (by which time...the Book of Judges was virtually complete), means that certain oral narrative tradition was itself considered inviolable, whether for artistic considerations, or theological or both...(and that) wholesale revisions were out of the question"⁴⁹ is completely unfounded.⁵⁰

47 1983:355-356.

48 1975:30-31.

49 1975:11,31.

50 For a general critique of the belief/opinion that texts and especially oral traditions would have been transmitted unaltered see Garbini 1986A; 1986B. If written texts existed, these would have been altered, sometimes extensively, when incorporated into a new literary work. There is no evidence that this was not done or even more that artistic or theological reasons would have not played any role especially at this early stage.

2. G. Garbini - Methodology and Dating

The second book we want to consider is Garbini's work, *Storia e ideologia nell'Israele antico* (1986). The book is basically a collection of essays written at different times and revised for re-publication. The work is ~~deliberately~~ polemic and provocative and casts strong doubts on the historicity of the biblical traditions. The method is rigorously philological. His conclusions are not free from objections, but his methodological approach and dating of the Old Testament traditions are relevant.

a) Ancient Historiography - Methodological Principles

Contrary to what has been done so far, Garbini's point of departure is not the basic assumption of the historicity of the biblical traditions. He seriously takes into account extra-biblical evidence, whatever it may be, as long as it throws light on the period/figure under consideration. An Israelite history can only be written with the determinate help of external sources which will allow us to ascertain the value of the biblical data.⁵¹ This is exactly the opposite of the "traditional" approaches which rather start from the biblical account

⁵¹ A similar line, it seems to us, is taken by B.O. Long "On Finding the Hidden Premises", *JSOT* 39 (1987) 10-14. Compare also the important article by J.J. Collins "The Historical Character of the OT in recent Biblical Theology" *CBB* 41 (1979) 185-204. Approaching the problem of the historicity of the OT from a different perspective he also states that "'Facts of history' can only be established by historical methods, and whatever can not be established by these methods cannot be called historical fact. This is not to say that only those things that can be verified by historians can have actually happened. Historical criticism can never deny the possibility that a particular event (natural or supernatural) may have taken place. The point is that a mere possibility should not be classified as 'historical fact'." (p. 191). Cf. also Lemche 1983:47-55.

which is basically regarded trustworthy, if not in all its details at least in the general outline of Israel's history. The text is then supplemented by data emerging from historical and archaeological research.⁵² Garbini's approach⁵³ strongly objects to the validity of this methodology which has brought into being a modern genre: the "History of Israel". The trustworthiness of the biblical traditions cannot be taken *a priori*. Moreover extra-biblical evidence is often used selectively only in order to confirm the biblical picture. Otherwise their existence is often ignored especially when this stands in sharp contrast to biblical traditions. The same problem is also addressed by M. Liverani

⁵² This is basically the methodology of the a) traditional or orthodox approach (conservative/fundamentalist), b) archaeological approach (cf. Albright, Bright, etc.), and c) traditio-historical approach (cf. Gunkel, Alt, von Rad, etc.). The last approach, in spite of current opinion, does not substantially differ from the former two. The difference lies in that while the Albright school reads these traditions with some degree of naivety, the German school, on the other hand, reads them as being full of problems, but these are basically concerned with the formation of the text and secondarily with their substantial validity as historical accounts (Richter also is basically relying on the historicity of the OT traditions). A classical example is Noth's *History of Israel* (ET 2nd ed. 1960). Even though he starts his history with c. 1200 B.C. he does not have any problem to affirm that that which is written in the Pentateuch is basically historical. His basic concern is that of dividing up the biblical traditions and even to re-arrange them differently, but the basic data are those given by the biblical traditions (cf. Sacchi 1983:218-19). For a defence of the traditional approach see the recent essay by Malamat (1983) who in spite of the bold claim that "we must shake free from a characteristic short-coming - sole dependence upon the reliability of biblical historiography" (305) he then concludes in response to those who borrow models from such fields as sociology and anthropology (e.g. Mendenhall and Gottwald) "Let us regard the biblical account itself as a conceptual model of Israel's genesis" (312). The biblical traditions are again preferred as trustworthy against anything that may considerably change its overall picture. For the same contradiction in methodology see also H. Marshall's essay on *Historical Criticism* (1977).

⁵³ This approach is typical of that which may be called the "scuola di Roma" (from Garbini to Liverani etc.). This definition has been given to this group of scholars by G.B. Boschi in his reviews of two works by Soggin and Garbini (1986; 1987). By the same author see also his recent work (1989) on the question of methodology and ancient historiography in which he clearly defines historiographic problems and how they are dealt with by different scholars/schools.

in his review of R. de Vaux's *History of Israel* (from the French edition). Acknowledging duly the great learning of this scholar, Liverani remarks that "one could paradoxically say that de Vaux himself is a 'stratum' of the text, the last redactional stratum which tries to rationalize and to heal the contradictions of the precedent redactional strata, but to produce a work which is on the same line of those traditions."⁵⁴ This quotation well exemplifies what Garbini is saying of the current methodology underlying the various "Histories of Israel". This way of writing "history" started already within the biblical traditions themselves.⁵⁵ Outside them it finds its first representative in Josephus who accepted without discussion the biblical data and attempted to fit all other data available to them. That is why Josephus, as well as modern scholars, has produced merely a paraphrase of the biblical text.⁵⁶ This new rise of historical consciousness is also increasingly evident among English speaking scholars.⁵⁷ Miller and Hayes

⁵⁴ 1976:145. It seems to us that this way of writing has partly arisen from an inadequate understanding of the nature and function of the biblical historical narratives. These traditions are basically "stories" or "history-like" narratives and must be interpreted as such because as such they convey their message. If the Hebrews have historicized myths many modern scholars have historicized "stories". This has resulted in a pseudo-history which fails to perceive the ideological motivation behind these stories as well as to give any accurate description of the "real" historical situation.

⁵⁵ Cf. e.g. 1Sam. 17:49 and 2Sam. 21.19. The killing of Goliath is attributed to David in the first and to Elhanan, one of David's heroes, in the second passage. 1Chron. 20.5 harmonizes this contradiction (even a giant cannot die twice!) stating that Elhanan did not slay Goliath but Lahmi his brother. In the targumic and midrashic literature the problem was eliminated by identifying David with Elhanan. The identification of the two has been especially defended, in recent times, by A.M. Honeyman (1948:23-24) who suggested that Elhanan was David's personal name and the last his throne name. But this proposal creates more problems than it solves. See McCarter 1980:291 and 1984:450-51.

⁵⁶ Garbini:1984b:45f.

⁵⁷ Among the few who have never accepted any close connection between Old Testament traditions and history is the American scholar Morton Smith. See esp. his essay of 1969.

e.g. in their *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (1986), though still following a methodology criticized by Garbini, have declined any attempt to reconstruct the history of "the period of the Judges" on the basis of the narratives of the Book of Judges.⁵⁸ More interesting still is the final comment by A.G. Auld in his article "Judges I and History: A Reconsideration" who seems to think along the same lines of Garbini: "If this article has removed from the modern historian some 'early' and 'authentic' source-material, it has at least replaced this with a glimpse of one of the biblical historians at work. If he is in any way typical, we may take comfort that as historians of Israel's origins we are in principle in a situation no way inferior to that of the biblical editors. They preserved their sources for our inspection, so giving us - who have other sources - a view of the 'events' no more distant than their own. And of their prejudices we may be as aware as we are of our own!"⁵⁹ This dissatisfaction with the traditional approaches to the history of the Old Testament has also found expression in the recent work by N.P. Lemche *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society* (1988). He also judges most scholarly interpretations^{of} Israel's history until the present as "more or less rationalistic paraphrases of the biblical version of the history of Israel and its religion."⁶⁰ As he pertinently remarks elsewhere "Only seldom are we presented with the necessary question as to

⁵⁸ 1986:90. For a general discussion of this work see "A History of Ancient Israel and Judah: A discussion of Miller-Hayes (1986)", eds. P.R. Davis & D.M. Gunn, JSOT 39 (1987)", 3-63. On their approach on Judges see the comment by Long on p. 11.

⁵⁹ 1975:275. Cf. Auld 1980:110. A similar conclusion, in more general terms, seems also to be held by J. Jobling. In his analysis of the issue of oppression in the period of the Judges (Judg. 2.11-1Sam. 12) he concludes his analysis to be "quite damaging to the prevailing historicist understanding of the Deuteronomistic History... Israel's enemies need not be viewed in any realist historical terms; 'foreign oppression' has become simply a theological variable." (1986:65).

⁶⁰ 1988:7.

the most important problem, the relationship between textual evidence and the events which the written source narrate."⁶¹ In this work he builds on the results of his previous work *Early Israel. Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society Before the Monarchy* (1985) in which he argued that "it is absurd to speak of historical recollection in the Old Testament which date from before the introduction of the monarchy. It is accordingly methodologically wrong to base one's reconstruction of the emergence of Israel in the late second millennium BCE on the Old Testament itself."⁶²

A further point which Garbini makes in this connection is also that it is the realization of the nature of these narratives, more than the date, which determines the degree of historical validity.⁶³ What we have in fact are not historical but theological reflections. The historical value of the biblical narratives cannot be taken for granted until they are confirmed by other evidence. In the same line C. Grottanelli had already expressed several years ago (1976) the view that in spite of the many scientific publications on the Old Testament the problem of a critical redefinition of the character and value of these texts has not been adequately given. Two main points are then raised:

1) the "narrative" books of the Old Testament (i.e. the narrative sections from Genesis to Judges) contain neither myth nor history in "our" sense⁶⁴ but a "third thing", namely the sacred events of a people and its national deity, redacted very probably by a priestly group of

⁶¹ 1988:260.

⁶² 1988:7; cf. 166f.

⁶³ On this see also Auld 1975:285.

⁶⁴ As it has been observed by D. Sabbatucci, ["Mito e demitizzazione nell'antica Roma", *SMSR* 41 (1970-72) p. 582] this is the only sense since the concept of history is "our". Grottanelli 1976:116.

scribes and having the sacred function of *founding* (as the myth does and not simply of "narrating" or "explaining" but neither for example, of constituting the "booklets" for certain rituals or of "rationalizing" naturalistic myths) the reality of that people, that deity and the ways of contact between deity and people, ways which were nothing else but the ideological formalization of the present economical and politico-social structures.⁶⁵

2) This sacred not mythical narrative however (a) contains and re-elaborates elements of a very ancient actual mythical traditional heritage; (b) presents a structural logic of a kind which is much nearer to that of the myth than to that of the modern historical literature; (c) abounds with "topical" motifs also of not actual mythical origin; (d) is influenced by literary genres spread in the cultural environment in which its creators are active, genres which however do not influence the essence but the style; (e) has received a part of its traditions, filtrated through an actual epic literary production.⁶⁶

Grottanelli's definition of the nature of these texts is pertinent. This is especially true with respect to the first point. Garbini also has paid special attention to the nature of the historical traditions in the Old Testament and their value as historical sources and has ably demonstrated that they must be understood as ideological narratives. In his view much that is contained in these traditions is a late projection into an idealized past of conditions and concerns which really existed in the exilic and post exilic community.⁶⁷ For him

⁶⁵ Cf. Collins 1979.

⁶⁶ 1976:116-17.

⁶⁷ If this should turn out to be true we find ourselves very much in agreement with P.R. Davis' remark, in his preface to the edited essays (together with D.M. Gunn) discussing the recent *History* by Miller-Hayes

"sacred" history is a much more complex phenomenon than it has so far been realized. Though the Old Testament traditions show affinity with Greek historiography, that which distinguishes the former from the latter is not the presence of an ideological motivation which leads the exposition of the event, but the fact that this ideological motivation (i.e. theology) has a determining value and not infrequently conditions the historical narration itself.⁶⁸

The search for a possible ideology behind the biblical traditions has proved to be a very enlightening path of research: e.g. the story of the patriarch Abram. The specific mention of Chaldeans, Ur and Haran leads us to suspect that this tradition had its origin during the exilic time as both Thompson⁶⁹ and Van Seters⁷⁰ have noticed. These references clearly point to Nabonidus and his devotion to the moon god Sin whose *most important centres of worship were at Ur and Haran*. Abram is thus given the geographical and chronological background of Mesopotamia and Syria at the time of Nabonidus. But, what is the reason for this? It is, as Garbini plausibly suggests, to be found in the desire of the Babylonian Hebrews to create a bond between themselves and the king whom they had to obey. This was a way for the exiles to gain the benevolence of Nabonidus. The very places which are now most dear to Nabonidus were also, though in

(1986) that "The result (what he says about Miller-Hayes is very much applicable to Garbini's as well) will invert the status of the biblical literature: instead of asking how the history can be explained from the literature, we must ask how the literature can be explained from the history." (1987:4).

⁶⁸ Garbini 1986A: 65-66. This is obvious in the Book of Daniel in which the reconstruction of the past events is subordinated to its "message": references to "historical events" are totally in the function of an ideology to propagate that which becomes an integral part of the "historical events". See Bonora 1986.

⁶⁹ 1987:298-314.

⁷⁰ 1975:24-26.

time far away, those with which the Hebrews associated their great ancestor and in Haran he even had a vision of God. Later on the Israelites did the same with respect towards the Persians, making Elam, the official residence of the Achaemenids, the first born of their own ancestor Sem (Gen. 10.22). For the same reason the Phoenicians set their origins in the Persian Gulf (not in the Red Sea!) as it is told by Herodotus (VII, 89). And again when Jonathan Maccabee wanted to ally with Sparta he discovered that Jews and Spartans were both descendants of Abraham (1Macc. 12.21).⁷¹

A similar conclusion, though approaching the problem of biblical historiography in the context of a literary analysis, has been proposed by T. Collins.⁷² Organisational activity is very clearly visible in the Book of Judges as well as in the Books of Kings from the divided monarchy onwards. In his paper he has convincingly demonstrated that a definite pattern does exist also in the whole block of material from 1Samuel 8 to 1Kings 15, thus being the work of an editor. The narratives of Saul, David, Solomon and Jeroboam display a fourfold pattern of (a) emergence and elevation; (b) period of success; (c) transgression and judgment; (d) punishment. Common literary features are used to a greater or lesser extent in each of these phases. Disparate material is thus arranged and ordered through the use of standardized narrative patterns.

Collins thus defends the need for a literary analysis besides other forms of analysis which when used without any such considerations do not properly take account of what the text *is* or *is saying*. He does rightly conclude what are the logical reflections on the observation that what we

⁷¹ Garbini 1986b:111ff.; 1987:32.

⁷² "From Saul to Jeroboam", unpublished paper presented at the Ehrhardt Seminar, Manchester, 9 March 1989. I would like to thank Dr. Collins for providing me with a copy of the conclusion to his essay.

have in front of us is first and foremost a literary creation following specific patterns. He thus suggests that:

as far as the narrative is concerned historical considerations are subordinate to literary ones. The literary presentation of the four kings is artificial. It is an artistic creation rather than an historical record. The stories do have an historical theme, but they cannot be reduced to mere history (any more than Shakespeare's *Macbeth*). To use the stories solely or even primarily as a source from which to extract clues for a reconstruction of events in Israel around 1,000 B.C. misses the point of the narrative and produces very doubtful "history". The four kings presented to us are no longer straightforward historical figures. Each story is a dramatic model presenting a vivid example of a moral lesson which is underlined by the fourfold repetition. There is an evident parallel between the stories of the kings and the story of the nation presented to us. Kings and people share a common pattern of rise and fall. The story of one is the story of the other: - chosen from obscure origins, guided and protected, exalted to a privileged position, happy and successful while obedient to God's commandments in the Law and the prophetic word, falling from grace through persistent disobedience and infidelity, punished by the division, diminution and eventual loss of the kingdom. Each of the four kings is an embodiment of the story of the nation. They are symbolic images carrying a significance that transcends the limitations of any set of specific historical contingencies.

These stories are thus a work of imagination "working on minimal historical information" and as such they have produced a marvellous timelessness which the original characters would have never had. Collins' observations besides supporting Garbini's thesis are important because often scholars working with "literary analysis" seem to embrace such a methodology to escape matters of historicity without in fact realizing the radicalism of such an approach.⁷³

⁷³ See for e.g. Webb 1988. He does not draw any conclusion as to how literary features do affect the historicity of a narrative. Of course, the fact that a story is cast into specific literary patterns is not a proof of unhistoricity. But the fact that such patterns are predominant and found throughout does indicate that historicity definitely plays a subordinate role and that much of the narrative goes back to the creative genius of the writer. Cf. Lemche 1991:152. For a discussion of the fictitious/historical nature of the biblical historical traditions see Fensham (1991:77-87). Fensham rightly suggests that the clear division

b) Dating Ancient Traditions - Working Presuppositions

Garbini's approach is also controversial in his very late dating of the Old Testament historical traditions. The majority of the biblical traditions are dated as late as the third century B.C. in their final redaction and the canonical Ezra even at the beginning of the second century A.D. Of course this does not mean that all the traditions originated in the post exilic period (e.g. the song of Deborah is dated in the IX cent. B.C.).

The tendency towards a later dating of the biblical traditions is however a more general phenomenon which is also seen at present in the exilic dating of the pentateuchal source J (apart from the question of whether its existence is accepted or disputed).⁷⁴ This new direction is followed by several scholars among whom are R. Rendtorff, H.H. Schmid, M. Rose, T.L. Thompson, and recently N. Whybray and A.J. Soggin. The years of consensus seem past and issues on pentateuchal studies are open again. Although it may be true that the so-called Dtr is a separate body from the Pentateuch (at least according to current opinion), completely to separate the two is unwarranted. The two are part of the same body of tradition and moreover the attribution of a late date to the Pentateuch would make the two contemporaneous. Further, the deuteronomic-deuteronomistic insertions⁷⁵ which have been noticed should warn us of a

between historical and fiction, which we make, does not seem to play any role in the ancient Semitic world. When they tell a story, whether fictitious or historical, they employ exactly the same literary devices. This means that in order to reach a definite conclusion independent evidence is necessary.

⁷⁴ This source is usually attributed to the ninth century and there are also some^{who} would like to attribute it to the tenth century.

⁷⁵ This discussion is still open. However with a degree of certainty

much closer relationship between the two than so far has been acknowledged. Consequently development in the one may have had repercussions on the other. This general tendency seems to support Garbini's contention to a certain extent, namely to regard the exilic/post-exilic period as the formative time of these traditions.

The matter of dating the biblical traditions is a problem which needs to be dealt with, as far as possible, first.⁷⁶ This is especially true if the "genre" of the individual pericopes cannot tell us anything about their original *Sitzen im Leben*. The determination of the date of composition or the approximate time - more cannot be expected⁷⁷ - may guarantee a more valid interpretation of a given text, its function, and

the following passages are attributed to dtn-dtr: Gen. 15.7, 18b-21; 26.3b-5; 50.24; Ex. 13.5,11; 19.3-6,11; 20.1-17 (with 'P' elements constituting the variants in cf. of the parallel Dt 5.6-21); 24.3-8; 32.9-4; 33.1 and 34.10-16. Recently also the characterization of Egypt as "house of slavery" (P.A.H. de Boer), one of the most typical elements of the Israelite faith, and an "ancient" song such as Ex. 15.1ff. have been claimed as dtr or dtn (A. Reichert). As Soggin notes not only the quantity but the quality of these passages is relevant which can no longer be seen as simple glosses but suggest that the tetrateuch underwent a redaction and edition by dtr-dtn before 'P's final edition (Soggin 1982:8-10). The same phenomenon is also met in the prophets Amos and Isaiah. For Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, this phenomenon had already been observed many years ago.

⁷⁶ Cf. Lemche 1993:170f. who concisely states the importance of dating the traditions: "any literary work must be considered a reflection of its age and origin, as nobody can escape being a child of his or her own time... It is surely extremely naive to believe that the meaning of biblical books can be properly exposed without knowledge of their date of composition, about the ideas current in that age or the beliefs common to their audience; and it is of no consequence whether the subject is a narrative as a whole or parts of it or just single concepts and phrases".

⁷⁷ By date of composition we understand not the date of origin of the elements which have gone into the formation of our book (the dating of these elements is extremely difficult for the lack of clear historical allusions), but only the redaction context of these elements (this was expressed by T.L. Thompson in reference to the Book of Genesis, but it is valid also in our case, "A New Attempt to Date the Patriarchal Narratives" JAOB (1978) 76-84:84 - This review-article is important in terms of methodology).

its *Sitz im Leben*.⁷⁸ The determination of the date cannot be determined only by the content. The assumption that the biblical writings were written at the time of the described event or soon after that, has no foundation and cannot be taken anymore as a guiding principle. Other principles and considerations must therefore guide us.

In Garbini's view the composition of our book as well as the Book of Joshua is to be attributed to the third century B.C. This dating, which at first glance may appear very late, is at a closer examination simply an alternative view and has its valid points as well.⁷⁹ We do not want here to defend his view but as we will be suggesting, it seems more likely that the composition of the Book of Judges did not take place before the neo-Babylonian period.

A late dating of the biblical traditions, however, is not new to the scholars mentioned above, and has been argued for many years by the editors of and contributors to the *Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament* (Heidelberg). While Garbini has argued for the late dating of the biblical traditions on the grounds of historical and philological considerations, the reasons for this group of scholars are mainly literary (if we understand them correctly) though historical considerations are not absent.⁸⁰ In a recent article Diebner has attempted to state some methodological principles in dating the biblical

⁷⁸ The argument here is necessarily, to a certain extent, circular. The *Sitz im Leben* would be here the place in which it more likely some ideas, motifs, etc., to have originated.

⁷⁹ See e.g. Josephus, *Jew. Ant.* 12.7-2. We have in this "historical" event described by Josephus the perfect outline of the Genesis-Exodus tradition. If we accept a late dating of the biblical historiography narratives like this become relevant since they may provide the narrative background structure out of which similar biblical narratives were developed.

⁸⁰ This is especially true of the contributions by the Danish scholar Heike Friis.

traditions. His starting point is the basic consideration that no tradition of pre-exilic Israel is preserved for us outside redactional contexts which are not post-exilic. This result of historical critical research, in his view, should be implemented in any methodological reflections. Two axiomatic methodological consequences (one general and one concrete) are then suggested: (a) the point of departure for the dating and determination of the function of Old Testament traditions and texts should be the date of the final redaction of an Old Testament writing;⁸¹ (b) as the time of origin for the traditions and texts which are contained in a piece of literature, the conceivable situation of origin immediately preceding the date (of course always hypothetical) of the final redaction has the methodological priority over against any other conceivable more ancient ones. Who disagrees with respect to a certain tradition or certain individual text for whatever reason has the burden of proof.⁸² These general principles

⁸¹ In a different way, a similar judgment has also been expressed by T.L. Thompson in his review of Van Setters's work, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975, "Any really 'fresh approach' must begin with the Genesis we have, at the stage of its final redaction" (1978:80). In this connection it is also relevant to quote Thompson on redaction criticism, "*Redaktionsgeschichte* is perhaps possible if enough sources are available. But this condition nowhere obtains in either biblical or ancient Near Eastern studies. Walter Anderson, in his *Redaktionsgeschichte* of the story of King John and the Bishop (W. Anderson, *Kaiser und Abt*, FFC 42. Helsinki, 1923), identifies as many as 18 separate recensions of this one tale. His study, however, is based on approximately 600 hundred oral variants and 151 distinct literary versions. The implication of this work alone should undercut forever any attempt to trace with precision the origins of the Old Testament traditions. Anderson, moreover deals with an entire tale, a very substantial and relatively easily traceable unit of tradition." (1978:80 - Although Thompson has in view the work of Van Setters on Genesis this does not diminish the value of this comment for a general application.) Cf. also Thompson 1987:43ff.

⁸² Diebner 1975:52. The last point especially goes very much against the more common tendency which attributes the burden of proof to those who challenge the more traditional view. Cf. Lemche 1993:170 who suggests the same methodological principle.

will be broadly followed by us.

c) The Old Testament - A Hellenistic book? Lemche after Garbini

Since Garbini's English translation of his work *History and Ideology in Ancient Israel* (1988) several works have been published which have addressed the problem of biblical historiography and questioned both the historical reliability of biblical narratives and their conventional early dating.⁸³ We will review here one of them, namely, Lemche's contribution. In his recent article "The Old Testament - A Hellenistic Book?" (1993) Lemche proposes the Hellenistic period as the most likely time in which the Old Testament books were written down.

The first point which he addresses is the dating of the Samaritan schism, usually dated ca. 300 B.C. and which is commonly used as evidence of the existence of the law by that time. Yet, this argument is not conclusive as the date of the schism is simply not known and thus the above argument does not preclude the Law being Hellenistic. The acceptance of the Law in favour of the other books can simply be explained in the light of the prominent place that Jerusalem was given in the other books while it plays a very reduced role in the books of the pentateuch which, on the other hand, display more interest in the homeland of the Samaritans.⁸⁴

Secondly, he addresses literary matters. In this he suggests that

⁸³ See e.g. D. Edelman (ed.), "Towards a Consensus of the Emergence of Israel in Canaan", *SJOT* 8/2 1991, 1-116 (including contributions of N.P. Lemche, G.W. Ahlström, I. Finkelstein and others); Lemche 1991 and 1993; Davis 1992; Ahlström 1992; Thompson 1992. See also J.A. Emerton, *Congress Volume Leuven 1989*, Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* XLIII, Brill: Leiden 1991, which includes several articles pertinent to the discussion.

⁸⁴ 1993:167.

dating is important, as "a literary product must be considered a reflection of its age and origin, as nobody can escape being a child of his or her own time".⁸⁵ The dating thus has a direct bearing on the interpretation of a text. Very much like Diebner, he argues that in dating any text we must start with the *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* of a text, the latter being given, of course, by the earliest extant manuscript tradition. Methodologically, the *terminus ad quem* should be the starting point and trying then to trace a book as far back as possible.

The third point addressed is the relevance of the historical information provided by a biblical book for dating the book itself. The attempt is here to try "to establish the time and place for whatever information the text in question provides".⁸⁶ The books of Joshua and Samuel are then used to demonstrate the point.

Modern research, especially archaeological, has demonstrated that there was no conquest of Israel as suggested by the Book of Joshua.⁸⁷ Why was then such a story written? The answer is here speculative but a suggestion could be to create a racially pure Israelite nation and this could have originated at a time when "certain individuals who considered themselves to be *Israelites* saw other individuals who (*sic*) they did not consider to be Israelites to be occupying 'their' land".⁸⁸ This would suggest a post exilic date of the Book.

The second example deals with the Books of Samuel's central figure David, reckoned to be the creator of a great Israelite empire. Again the

⁸⁵ 1993:170. See note 76 of this chapter for a fuller version of this quotation.

⁸⁶ 1993:172.

⁸⁷ This will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

⁸⁸ 1993:1975.

starting point is recent research which has cast doubts on the historicity of these accounts and the existence of a united Israelite kingdom in pre-exilic times.⁸⁹ Again he asks the question why the idea of a Davidic empire arose, if it was totally without historical support. A suggestion could be "in order to create an 'Israelite' great king comparable to the great kings said to have ruled other nations".⁹⁰ He then attempts to justify the Hellenistic period as the most likely time of origin for this.

Worth noting is his clarification of the term *exilic*. He stresses the point that the exile did not end with the Babylonian period but continued almost forever though now as a self-inflicted one. The exiles and following generations continued to live in Mesopotamia as long as the Persian empire existed but also under the following empires of the Seleucids, the Sassanids and the Parthians. In this sense it can be said that the Old Testament is in fact *exilic*.

His most significant contribution, however, to the discussion of the dating of the biblical traditions is in having given a rationale to the suggestion that the Old Testament books are a product of the post-exilic period. The most important argument in this respect is the recent recognition that the Old Testament writings appear to know and thus be dependent on Greek historiography. If this is the case then we need to establish what could have been the best period in which this occurred. The Persian period, which most scholars have ^{regard as a} continued to ^{time of peace and}

⁸⁹ On this see Garbini 1986b:37f. D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton 1992), 297-311 and D.W. Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah* (JSOT 88 109; Sheffield 1991) (the last two works are mentioned by Lemche 1993:175 notes 22 and 23). A similar view is taken by Thompson 1992.

⁹⁰ 1993:176. Cf. Garbini 1986b:113ff. who had suggested a similar methodology using the example of Abram's association with Ur and Haran. See pp. 46f. of this chapter.

prosperity and thus ideal for intellectual productivity, is doubted by Lemche as there is no factual evidence that this was the case. In fact what is actually known of this period suggests poor administrative conditions and thus unlikely to have been able to provide the necessary conditions in which great literature could have been composed. A more ideal setting is instead provided by the Hellenistic period which witnessed a revitalization of the ancient Near East.

Lemche's suggestion is attractive, and ultimately may be vindicated by further studies. But as he acknowledges few works have been published on the Persian period and thus more extensive research is needed in order to give a better assessment of the period.

II. FURTHER SURVEY OF RECENT THOUGHT

Besides developments in the field of methodology and ancient historiography, Old Testament research is also changing our "old" understanding of the socio-religious conditions of the ancient Israelites. Two particular developments, I believe, are especially relevant to our traditions, namely the origin and religion of Israel and the problem of syncretism. Recent research has contributed greatly to shed light on these two Old Testament aspects and to open up avenues for a different understanding of the significance of these themes in the context of the Old Testament narratives.

These motives are relevant, in different degrees to all the Old Testament historical traditions and they are explicitly reflected in Judges 6.25-32 in which Gideon is depicted as a religious reformer.

The background to this passage in Judges is found in Judges 3.5 according to which the Canaanites were left in the land "for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of YHWH, which he commanded to their fathers by Moses". Against this background Gideon emerges as the defender of the Yahwistic faith. How far do we have here, as well as in other parts of the Old Testament, a realistic picture?

According to scholarly traditional views Israel mingled with the indigenous population since its occupation of the land, adopting customs and religions and giving thus rise to the so-called syncretism. This is the picture which is given to us in the biblical accounts. Israel is

depicted as a foreign entity coming from outside the land of Canaan, worshipping one God and intolerant to any form of religious syncretism. But this religious purity did not last very long. As soon as Israel settled in the land the Israelites began to worship other gods besides or instead of YHWH. Pure Yahwism was thus threatened. Scholars have thus argued, especially on the basis of the Ras Shamra texts, which have shed light on Canaanite religion, that Yahwism, especially in the earlier stages when the Israelites began to take up agriculture, was influenced by Canaanite thoughts, particularly in those areas where the Canaanite god Baal had attributes which were lacking to YHWH. Baal was a god of fertility, YHWH was not and this concept needed to be implemented if YHWH was to be the supreme god. But this led to a polemic between Baal and YHWH. People began not only to assign attributes of Baal to YHWH but also to identify the two. This is the whole matter of concern at Mount Carmel (1Kings 18): the people had identified the two and had to be reminded that YHWH was the God of Israel and the one who was able to do something for his people.

This reaction arose from the urgent need for self-preservation. Later on, i.e. within the range of the Deuteronomistic theology, any taking over of Canaanite cultic usages, or even any borrowing from them, was regarded as the most serious form of apostasy from YHWH. Yet, in the earlier stages Canaanite religion helped Yahwism to express itself in new forms which were demanded by the cultural environment. But the ideas which they borrowed they also transformed in conformity with the faith of Israel. So far the traditional reconstruction of the events.¹

In recent years various approaches to the Israelite settlement have found expression attempting to replace the so-called "conquest" approach

¹ Cf. Eissfeldt 1975:560-69 (VI. Canaan and Israel).

especially as advocated by the the Albright school. Worth noticing are the "peasants' revolt" and the "tribal-egalitarian society" model as advocated by Mendenhall (1962) and Gottwald (1979) respectively. Both models basically understand Israel as having emerged from a Canaanite population. For Mendenhall the "conquest" was "a peasants' revolt against the network of interlocking Canaanite city-states." The catalyst was provided by a group of slave labourers captive in Egypt who escaped from there and made a covenant with the deity before entering Palestine. Gottwald, similarly, speaks of Israel as having been formed from marginal and depressed Canaanites and of a conscious retribalization process. Yahwism was then the unifying element which made the people Israelite.²

In spite of this more indigenous origin of Israel for both these scholars Israel is still something foreign to Canaan. This can be understandable for Mendenhall's thesis but not so for Gottwald's. Where did Yahwism come from? If Yahwism is the "symbolic expression of the Israelite socio-economic revolution", does it mean that it was created *ad hoc* or that the Israelites were already worshippers of YHWH? It is obvious then that also these two models, in spite of their apparent detachment from the biblical data do in fact attempt to historicize the biblical stories which are also their indisputable starting point for understanding the origin of Israel as well as Yahwism. They do not thus take into serious consideration the implications that such an approach would have for understanding of the Israelite religion as deriving from within the Canaanite context.

² See Ahlström 1986:6ff. for a discussion and criticism of these two views.

A. The Origin of Israel

In order to assess our biblical traditions it is important to discuss first of all to what extent they do portray a true picture. In doing this we propose to look again at the origin of Israel and the Israelite religion and thus hopefully suggest new paradigms for the interpretation of these traditions.

1. Israel: The Earliest Evidence

The biblical account tells us of a foreign provenance of Israel and scholars have carefully built upon this presupposition. But how far can this picture be sustained by extra-biblical evidence?

The most ancient extra-biblical source available to us in which the name Israel occurs is Merneptah's stela of the XX dynasty. It is often referred to as the "Israel Stela",³ and is dated at the end of the 13th century (1207 B.C.). The poem at the end of the stela may be rendered as follows:

The princes are prostrate, saying "Peace!"
Not one is raising his head among the Nine Bows.
Now that Tehenu (Lybia) has come to ruin,
Hatti is pacified;
The Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe:
Ashkelon
has been overcome;
Gezer has been captured;
Yano'am is made non-existent.
Israel is laid waste and his seed is not;⁴
Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.

The mention of Israel in this text seems to exclude an external origin of

³ For the text see *DOTT*, 137-141; *ANET*, 376-78. Merneptah is sometimes written as Merenptah.

⁴ This text has been so rendered by Stager 1985:56*.

Israel, at least for this period, in that an entity, be that ethnic or geographic was known. It is mentioned as belonging to the Canaanite region, and together with the Canaanites cities of Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yano⁴am it was the object of a punitive attack by Egypt. Thus a people of this name existed already in those parts, probably in the North.⁵

In this respect, a recent article by L.E. Stager (1985) is particularly interesting: Merneptah's campaign in Palestine would in fact be represented "on the four battle scenes at Karnak,⁶ which flank the wall stela of Ramesses II's Hittite Treaty, on the outer western wall of the 'Cour de la Cachette'",⁷ and wrongly attributed to this pharaoh until the brilliant detective work of F. Yurko.⁸ The lower Scene 1 can be identified, from the accompanying inscription, as the siege and capture of Ashkelon.⁹ The third and fourth¹⁰ to the right of the Hittite Treaty Stela depict two fortified cities conquered by the pharaoh.¹¹

Just above is Battle Scene 2. It is fragmentary and the upper part of the relief has been destroyed. The use of chariots on both sides suggests, however, that the battle is fought in open country with no fortified cities forming centres of resistance.¹²

The re-assessment of the four battle reliefs leads Yurko to the

⁵ Arata Mantovani 1988:49.

⁶ For a plan of the Karnak temple, showing the location of the reliefs, see Redford 1986:195.

⁷ Stager 1985:57*.

⁸ 1978:70. So also Kitchen 1983:220, fig. 70; Singer 1988:2f. This identification has, however, recently been questioned by Redford 1986:192ff. who has argued again for the traditional attribution of these scenes to Ramesses II. As to the Merneptah stela he regards its historical recollection unhistorical (199).

⁹ Wreszinski 1935, pls. 58 and 58a.

¹⁰ Scenes 3 and 4 = Wreszinski 1935, pls. 57a and 57 respectively.

¹¹ Stager 1985:58*; Arata Mantovani 1988:49.

¹² Stager 1985:58*.

conclusion that these reliefs illustrate the same people and places in Palestine, mentioned as Merneptah's chief antagonists in the victory hymn of his stela. If this is correct, Ashkelon is Scene 1, the other two fortified cities (Scenes 3 and 4) in the Karnak battle scenes represent Gezer and Yano'am, and Scene 2 depicts Israel.¹³ Provided this identification is right we would have the proof that the Israel of the Merneptah stela was considered by the Egyptians as a people with Canaanite characteristics in that iconographically they are represented with the same typology as the Canaanites of Ashkelon, Gezer and Yano'am: long robes with cape-like tops; full, rounded beards and long hair falling in mass to the shoulders, with a head band around the top as well as bald or shaved heads. Weippert's thesis on the identity between the Shasu bedouins of the Egyptians texts and the Israelites¹⁴ would also lose credibility in that the Shasu are differently depicted in Egyptians reliefs: wearing kilts; sharply pointed beards; a number of distinctive head-dresses such as loose-fitting beret and skull cap with a row of streamers down the centre.¹⁵

Yurko has further shown that the "people" determinative for Israel is not a haphazard designation in that determinatives are carefully used in the stela. Thus the Egyptians regarded Israel not as a city-state with fixed territorial boundaries such as Ashkelon, Gezer, and Yano'am

¹³ Stager further remarks that "The pictorial distinctions correspond exactly with those made in writing the names of the Palestinian adversaries of Merneptah. Unlike the three city-states (Ashkelon, Gezer and Yano'am) and the larger territories (Tenehu, Canaan, Hatti, and Harru), the name 'Israel' (ysr3I) is written with the determinative for people rather than land" (59*).

¹⁴ Weippert 1971 and 1979:15-34. A similar view is also held by Giv'eon 1971:235-37; Hermann 1973:56-59; Thompson 1987:157-59 (cf. also 250f.); Redford 1986:199f.

¹⁵ Stager 1985:60*. For Shasu depictions see *ANEP*, nos. 326, 329, 330 and 334 and Giv'eon 1971, pls. V-XVII.

had and for which the respective determinative is used but as a distinct group of people not named after any particular territory or city. The fact that Hurru (the term was used in Egyptian texts to denote Palestine and Syria or its inhabitants) and Israel form a distinct complementary pair in the ode (i.e. husband [Israel] and wife [Hurru]) means that they were never so small as the individual city-states which precede them in the ode. "On this occasion Israel was sufficiently strong to field a sizeable fighting force against pharaoh's chariotry and infantry, so as to be placed on a par with Hurru."¹⁶ This provides a striking contrast to the Israel of the Book of Judges in which its military might is greatly belittled (see e.g. 1.19), and apart from editorial remarks there seems not to be any kind of political national awareness. This confirms the opinion that the redactor had little to no knowledge of this period.¹⁷

A different theory has been suggested by Ahlström in his recent investigation of the origin and history of the name Israel.¹⁸ The Merneptah stela is also one of his starting points to show that already

¹⁶ Stager 1985:61*. Cf. Ahlström 1986:39 in whose opinion the coda section of the ode has a ring structure in which Hatti (B) pairs Kharru (B₁), Canaan (C) Israel (C₁), and Ashkelon (D) - Gezer (D₁) - and Yano'am (D₂) form a group together. "Each of these groupings in turn define a more precise geographical territory: Hatti and Khurru stand for the whole area of Syria-Palestine; Canaan and Israel represent the smaller unit of Palestine; and finally, within this this area, we find the three specific city-states." However, see J.A. Emerton's review of Ahlström in *JT* 38 (1988) 372-73 for criticism.

¹⁷ Stager 1985:61* suggests that the Israel of the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5) is rather compatible with the few clues concerning the "people" Israel in the Merneptah's ode. As to Israel's diminished military capability he attributes it to "its defeat by Merenptah and its isolation in the hill-country, produced in part by the invasion and settlement of the coastal plain by the Sea Peoples, early in the reign of Ramesses III." This is possible but not the only explanation. Similarities could also be accidental. Moreover, if this as well as other OT texts were really so ancient their total silence about this defeat is strange. As a matter of fact the OT is not aware of any defeat by the Egyptians before the solomonic period (cf. Ahlström 1986:42).

¹⁸ 1986:37ff.

at the end of the 13th century the name Israel was known. He proposes that Israel was not originally a people, but the name was used to define a territory and more precisely the hill country near Shechem. The name Israelite was thus based not on ethnic origin but on geographical location. He thus rejects the theory that the name Israel stood for a new tribal society created in the hill country. It was only with the emergence of Israel's kingdom under Saul that it became a political entity. He also finds evidence for this in the tradition of Gen. 32.23-30 in that "Jacob's name change may reflect an old tradition which remembered that a former Transjordanian clan moved into Cisjordan and settled in a territory called Israel."¹⁹

Ahlström's proposal partly relies on the fact that the Israelites were not newcomers in the land.²⁰ The idea that Israel originally designated a geographical location is possible and does not necessarily contradict the notion that the Egyptians gave them the people rather than the territory determinative. Israel was in fact not met by the Egyptians in the hill country but in a plain or valley since the use of chariotry was made. The suggestion, however, remains only an hypothesis.

2. (Further) Archaeological Evidence²¹

Further light on the origin of Israel is shed by the considerable increase of archaeological excavations which show that at the beginning of the Iron Age (ca. 1200 B.C.) urban life of Palestine underwent a general decline while at the same time a new type of settlement pattern

¹⁹ Ahlström 1986:16; cf. 37.

²⁰ 1986:1-36.

²¹ Ahlström 1986:25-36; Arata Mantovani 1988:50-55.

arose on the hill country of the Palestinian region. It comprises agricultural villages, without fortifications and of limited dimensions which appear in considerable number in areas which were previously scarcely populated. The majority of them is found in the region called Ephraim and Manasseh which saw their 50 settlement sites in the Late Age Bronze II increase to ca. 115 in the Early Iron Age I.²² The common characteristics of these new settlements as well as their material culture were:²³

1. Reduced dimensions. The majority of them has a surface of 4,000 to 8000 m².²⁴ Simultaneously, this phenomenon is accompanied by an increase in the number of settlements. The problem of survival might have been the direct cause for this phenomenon of fragmentation and dispersion since in the hill country the agricultural production was considerably inferior to that of the fertile land of the plains and villages. Thus, it could sustain only a limited number of people who derived their livelihood from agricultural and animal breeding.
2. Lack of fortifications. At the most, houses were set in such a way as to form a continuous defensive curtain at the end of the settlement.²⁵

²² Ahlström 1986:25; Arata Mantovani 1988:50. Cf. also Kochavi 1985:54-60 and Callaway 1985:75. The latter similarly reports Stager's discovery in a survey of village sites from Hebron to Shechem according to which the density of permanent settlements increased dramatically in the transition from the Late Bronze to Iron Age I (L.E. Stager, "Highland Village Life in Palestine Some Three Thousand Years Ago", *The Oriental Institute Notes and News* no. 69 [1981] 1). "By about 1200 B.C.E., the number of villages in an area of 4,200 sq km had increased from twenty-three in the Late Bronze Age to 114 in Iron Age I" (72).

²³ Arata Mantovani 1988:51-52.

²⁴ Exceptions for their considerable dimensions are Shiloh (16,000 m²), Tell Masos (48,000 m²) and Dan (200,000 m²), though Arata Mantovani 1988:51 suggests that because of their size they might be considered cities and not anymore agricultural villages.

²⁵ So e.g. Giloh and Beersheva. See Z. Herzog 1983:41-49.

3. "Four-room house" building pattern. Characteristic of this is the presence of pillars which divide a covered from an uncovered space. This type seems to have originated in the Late Bronze Age (it is found at Timna in the 14th century B.C.) and is also found in the Transjordan in the Iron Age settlements at Kh. Medeinah and Sahab. It became the habitual "Israelite" type²⁶ though it is also found in Philistia (Qasile 10, Sipport and tell Ser'a) and in the north regions of Palestine bound to Phoenician culture (Megiddo VIb, tell Keisan, tell Abu Hawam IV).²⁷
4. Collared rim jar. This type is found from Transjordan (at Sahab) to the whole region of Palestine, from the Jezreel valley to the Hebron zone. This type is clearly present among the ceramic finds of the Late Bronze Age of Aphek in the 13th century B.C.,²⁸ but is spread especially in the Iron Age.
5. Plastered and impermeabilized hydric cisterns. It was at first thought that they were innovations of the Iron Age I and a characteristic of "Israelite" settlements. In fact it was discovered that they were already known in Canaan in the Middle Bronze Age (at Hazor) and sporadically used in the whole Late Bronze Age (at Taanach).

Recent archaeological research has demonstrated that any characteristic element from sites of Iron Age I has its roots in the local culture of the preceding period. Thus the most obvious conclusion is that the Iron Age I culture is the direct continuation and evolution -

²⁶ Cf. Shiloh 1970:180-90.

²⁷ Cf. Ahlström 1986:34f.

²⁸ P. Beck and M. Kochavi 1985:29-42. Cf. also Ahlström 1986:28.

or regression, depending on the circumstances, of the Palestinian culture of the Late Bronze Age. Thus in the light of the archaeological evidence it is not possible to speak of either "conquest" or "settlement" as it is impossible to attribute the creation of the villages in the hill country of the Iron Age I to a different ethnic element than that which contributed to develop the culture of the Late Bronze Age. We ought rather to speak of a movement of people towards the highlands who had their cultural roots in the Shephelah and in the coastal plain. On the other hand, if the Sea Peoples settled in these areas as the historical and archaeological Egyptian sources witness - since they could have not possibly destroyed the entire indigenous population, the latter had to settle somewhere else - it is obvious to think that a migration towards the hill country took place. As it always happens after invasions, those who remain of the leading class and the cultural elite amalgamate with the newcomers after the first confrontation is over. In the Iron Age II, in fact, it will re-emerge as a local culture in the Philistine area. It was the indigenous peasants and craftsmen who had to pay the consequences of an invasion by moving away to make place for the newcomers. As for the priestly class it is possible that they were able partly to preserve their power in that the Philistines adopted the cult of the local divinities.

A further observation to which Callaway has drawn particular attention is the fact that the new wave of settlements in the highlands cannot be attributed to nomads or semi-nomads coming from the desert fringes in a process of sedentarization.²⁹ The high technological level displayed in some of the villages in the highlands points rather to farmers with specialized techniques able to render productive the arid

²⁹ Callaway 1985:72-78. Cf. Arata Mantovani 1988:53f.

and inhospitable hills of central Canaan either by providing water supply away from natural water sources or by terracing virgin steep hillsides for crops and gardens.³⁰

The high technological degree of sophistication of the cisterns and the well structured urban plan of these villages suggest that these new settlements were not the fruit of a quick process or first attempts of sedentarization but rather "reflect a tradition of planning for sedentary life that the occupants brought with them."³¹ Gottwald's theory that "the first Israelites established their identity in a social revolt against their Canaanite overlords" is thus questioned by Callaway in that there was no Canaanite overlords present in the central highlands at the beginning of Iron Age I nor does the evidence of small unfortified villages imply that their claims to the land was contested. "The movement into the hills seems to have been peaceful, and indeed, the newcomers probably took refuge on their mountain tops to get away from strife and conflict."³²

The picture which thus emerges at the beginning of the Iron Age I is that of change in territorial settlements. This was sided by a decline of urban life as commercial activities stopped upon which the economic life of the city depended as well as the weakening of the Egyptian domination over Palestine. The changed economic situations and the new pressures caused by the arrival of new peoples from the coast

³⁰ Callaway 1980:245-250 and 1985:73.

³¹ Callaway 1985:74.

³² 1985:75. Cf. Ahlström 1986:19, "The hill country was a suitable place to go to avoid wars, the devastation of property, and the tax burdens of the Egyptians and the city rulers. Due to its difficult terrain, the hill were seldom penetrated by foreign armies. An accurate label for the new settlers of hills would be 'pioneers'".

pushed the inhabitants of plain areas to settle on the highlands.³³ Such movements reached as far as the Syrian costal region in the North and the Egyptian delta in the South. Thus the cultural background of the highlanders resides in the Shephelah and costal plain. "In biblical terms," as Callaway puts it, "they have their origin among the Canaanites, participating in both the culture and the religion of the Canaanites."³⁴

It seems thus possible to conclude that the necessity to distinguish between Canaanites, including the negative connotations that this term has assumed, and Israelites as a foreign body settled in the land of Canaan, is a prejudice which has come to us from the Old Testament. But it is this very prejudice which has so far guided much of

³³ Callaway 1985:73ff.; Arata Mantovani 1988:55. Cf. Albright 1961:328-62.

³⁴ 1985:77. This is further supported by several discoveries of artifacts in the villages between Jerusalem and Jezreel (Callaway 1985:76f.). A cuneiform tablet discovered at Taanach (probably written there or nearly) in destruction debris dated to the first half of the 12th century B.C. (P.W. Lapp, "The 1963 Excavation at Taannek", *BASOR* 173 [1964] 23) exhibits a similar alphabetic cuneiform to three texts at Ugarit, and two other texts from Canaan (R. Hillers, "An Alphabetic Cuneiform Tablet from Taanach (TT 433)", *BASOR* 173 [1964] 45-50). At Beth-Shemesh in the Shephelah, a cuneiform tablet written in South Canaanite alphabetic cuneiform (W.F. Albright, "The Beth-Shemesh Tablet in Alphabetic Cuneiform", *BASOR* 173 [1964] 51-53) and two ostraca were found. The tablet which links the inhabitants of Beth-Shemesh with the larger cultural context of the Phoenician costal region was thought to have come from indefinite Late Bronze strata but in fact it has its closest parallel in the Taanach tablets just discussed. Similarly, the two ostraca dated to Iron Age I most closely parallel an inscribed jar handle found in the destruction debris of a pillar house at Raddana thus suggesting a relation between the Canaanite of Beth-Shemesh and the settlers in the highlands. A number of further examples could be provided by numerous bronze and pottery artifacts at 'Ai and Raddana which have also cultural parallels in the costal and lowlands regions (Callaway 1985:77). Cf. Ahlström 1986:25-36. He too suggests that the settlers of the hill country were basically Canaanites and objects to the "Israelite" label to any change in material culture in Iron Age I. He briefly reviews recently excavated sites in the hill country attempting to demonstrate the cultural connection between artifacts discovered in the highland villages and those of the Shephelah and costal plain area. Cf. also Ahlström 1984:117ff.

biblical archaeological research and created the need, no matter in which way, to identify in the archaeological finds between the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of Iron Age specific "Israelite" material remains. This certainty by ^{and} large is never doubted even as a working hypothesis. On the contrary, attempts are even made, especially by Israeli scholars, to find out and underline that which is specific ^{ally} Israelite, creating thus far too subtle terminological variations. Thus, e.g. Aharoni (1982) abandons the traditional division between Bronze and Iron Age in favour of Canaanite and Israelite, and this has recently been repropsoed by Dothan³⁵ as most faithfully representing the history of these two periods. Typical of this approach is particularly the position of Mazar³⁶ in that he provides the specific characteristics before a site may be defined as "Israelite": 1) it must coincide with the pattern of settlement of that non-urban wave in Iron Age I; 2) display a certain type of material culture: four-room pillared houses, plastered water cisterns, limited pottery repertoire: large pithoi and storage jars as well as cooking pots. Naturally, he acknowledges here the existence of a certain continuity of these material remains with pre-existent Canaanite culture though he does not have any difficulty to suggest that if these features were not Israelite they were adopted by them. Consequently, any variation from "Canaanite" or earlier material remains are labelled as Israelite. We are thus in a vicious circle. A site was settled by Israelites if it comes from a certain period (Iron Age I) and being from

³⁵ M. Dothan, "Terminology for the Archaeology of the Biblical Periods", 1985:136-141.

³⁶ A. Mazar, "The Israelite Settlement in Canaan in the Light of Archaeological Excavations", *BAI* 1985:61-71. Cf. also Mazar 1990:295-367 in which he specifically addressed the archaeological evidence during the period of the judges. Cf. also Mazar 1990:295-367 in which he specifically addresses the archaeological evidence during the period of the judges.

a certain period it displays specific material cultural remains which make it Israelite.³⁷

It is thus better to eliminate such ethnic dichotomy and assume that all the people of Canaan and Palestine were Canaanites. Apart from the Old Testament there is no evidence to support that in this age there was any distinction between Hebrews and Canaanites within the Canaanite population.³⁸ And it is probable, as Arata Mantovani suggests, that there was no distinction till the post-exilic period in that Israel as a distinct religious entity over against its surrounding does not emerge before the Persian period and it is even difficult to notice it before the hellenistic period.³⁹

3. Historico-Linguistic Evidence

We may take here the opportunity to clarify also the differentiation which is often made between Canaanite and Phoenician, since such a distinction is also made consciously or unconsciously in the

³⁷ Arata Mantovani 1988:56f.

³⁸ Cf. Franken 1975:337 who remarks that "the archaeologist would be totally unaware of any important ethnic change at the end of the Late Bronze Age were it not for the biblical traditions."

³⁹ Cf. Garbini 1986a:39ff. On this topic an important contribution has been given by Lemche who in his recent examination of the term Canaanite (1991) has concluded that the Canaanites, as portrayed in the Old Testament, are not historical people but actors in a play in which the Israelites have got the hero's part (p.155). The origin of its use arose in the post-exilic period by the Jews who had been in exile to refer to those "Palestinians" (i.e. the old Israelite population) who had not taken part in that experience and did not convert to the Jewish religion of the exiles or were not ready to acknowledge the new religious innovations which they brought with them. The distinction between Canaanites and Israelites was thus religious and not ethnic (p.162 n.12). The Canaanite picture portrayed in the Old Testament traditions has thus nothing to do with the ancient pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine but reflects the reality of the period after the official return of the Jews to Jerusalem after 538 B.C. in which the "historical" narratives were reduced to writing (p.165).

description of material artifacts. Just as in the case of the Israelites and the Canaanites the distinction which has been made between Phoenicians and Canaanites as if they were two distinct ethnic groups is erroneous and it is Garbini's merit to have recently drawn attention to the confusion about the identity of these "two peoples".⁴⁰ Their ethnic identity had already been noted by Albright in an article of 1942 a revised edition of which was published in 1961.⁴¹ At the beginning of the article he clearly stated that "the word 'Canaanite' is historically, geographically, and culturally synonymous with 'Phoenician,'" ⁴² though for convenience the two terms are still employed: "'Canaanite'... to designate the Northwest Semitic people and culture of western Syria and Palestine before the 12th century B.C. and the term 'Phoenician' to indicate the same people and culture after this date."⁴³

However, at the end of his historical reconstruction, Albright presents a different picture according to which the "Canaanites" were all inhabitants of Canaan - till their destruction, those South of Carmel and till their eclipse in 1200 those North of Carmel. The Phoenicians are thus the ex-Canaanites North of Carmel revitalized by the Arameans and the Israelites. The Albright position aimed not so much at denigrating them but rather at giving most prominence to Palestine and especially to the Israelites. Garbini restates the starting point of Albright. The term Phoenician, after all, was invented by the Greeks when they came

40 Garbini 1980b:1-11 and 1983:27-33.

41 W.F. Albright, "The role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization", in *Studies in the History of Culture: W.H. Leland Anniversary Volume*. Menasha, Wisc.: The George Banta Publishing Company, 1942, 11-50. Revised ed. published in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. G.E. Wright. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, 328-62.

42 1961:328, 351 n. 1.

43 1961:328.

into contact with this Asian population while the latter called themselves Canaanites, i.e. inhabitants of Canaan. More circumscribed designations were of course known corresponding to the political region (e.g. Sidonians, Tyrians). But the existence of a more general term geographically based reveals the consciousness of a unity which went beyond the boundaries of the city-states. Further, Garbini questions the actual character of the Israelite states as centres of a culture different from that of Phoenicia because Phoenician culture and language continued to exist in Palestine as Palestinian epigraphic remains attest.⁴⁴ Hebrew inscriptions coming from the Southern kingdom are numerous but none of them dates before 800 B.C. Almost all of them date between the end of the 7th and beginning of the 6th century B.C. (the inscription of Gezer, 10th century B.C., is written in a linguistic form different from Hebrew). As to the Northern Kingdom the Samaria Ostraca are written in a linguistic variety different from biblical Hebrew which is defined as "northern dialect" but which in fact is indistinguishable from pure Phoenician.⁴⁵ Similarly, the other few inscriptions which so far have been attributed to Hebrew epigraphy have been recently recognized largely as Phoenician.⁴⁶ It is also interesting to notice that throughout the Palestinian territory, from Hazor to Elat, sporadic Phoenician inscriptions have been found which range from the 13th to the 2nd century B.C. Garbini thus concludes that the Palestine of 1200 onwards fully resides within the circumscription of the history and the culture of the Phoenicians, though it is also obvious that the kingdom of Judah at a certain time rejected the tradition on the basis of a

⁴⁴ See Garbini 1977A:294.

⁴⁵ Garbini 1977A:294.

⁴⁶ Cf. B. Delavault - A. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions phéniciennes de Palestine", *RSF* 7 (1979) 1-39.

religious reform attested in the Old Testament and epigraphically documented by the vast number of Yahwistic personal names.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the kingdom of Israel seems to have adopted the culture and language of the Phoenicians.

Though the problem has here been dealt with from a different perspective the main conclusions largely agree with the archaeological evidence as interpreted above and strengthen the view that the differentiation between Canaanites and Israelites as two different ethnic groups is artificial and misleading.

B. The Religion of Israel

The continuity of cultural material between the Canaanite population of the Shephelah and the coastal plain, and the new settlements in the highlands has led us to conclude that we ought to identify the new settlers as Canaanites and reject the ethnic dichotomy suggested in the Old Testament. This is further supported by some linguistic observations which suggest that not only culture but also Canaanite language survived in ancient Palestine. Also the supposed origin of the Israelites coming from outside Palestine with a monotheistic faith settling in the Canaanite polytheistic religious society has created a further prejudice in historical research, namely the so-called "syncretism". The phenomenon is thought of as a process of degeneration from an original henotheism to a polytheism connected with the reception of Canaanite deities. In fact, such a syncretism never existed except in the minds of some late biblical redactors. It is rather likely that Israel (and Judah) did share by and large the same polytheistic and religious

⁴⁷ Garbini 1980A:79-88 and 1986B:95.

permissiveness of Canaan.⁴⁸ This is the logical implication suggested by the conclusions above. Traditions such as Judg. 6.25-32, to mention a passage with which we will be concerned, cannot thus be used for a reconstruction of the ancient religion of Israel. Rather, they reflect a polemic which only originated in the exilic and post-exilic period when Yahwism became exclusivist and intolerant.

The same view has also been suggested by Dever in a recent article in which he very perceptively provides a critique of biblical scholarship's lack of ability (or unwillingness?) in correlating archaeological discoveries and the cult of ancient Israel. As an alternative to the traditional ways of approaching the Old Testament cult he too suggests:

that early Israelite religion developed gradually out of the Late Bronze and early Iron Age fertility cult of greater Canaan, and that despite the growth of a royal/priestly cultus and its theology in Jerusalem, local cults continued to flourish and some of them reflect a highly syncretistic blend of Yahwism and pagan practice until the end of the monarchy. "Normative Judaism," as portrayed in the Deuteronomic and Priestly literature, is a construct of the late Judean Monarchy and in particular of the exilic period."⁴⁹

Where then did Yahwism come from? Its origin is far from sure. Some biblical evidence suggests an Edomite provenance thus assuming that it was brought to the North by Edomite groups which moved to the hills from the South. Various biblical traditions seem in fact to preserve

⁴⁸ The continuity of religion in the highlands in the Early Iron Age I is e.g. indicated by the plaque-figurines of the Late Bronze Age which have been found in Early Iron Age strata in the hill country and which continue in some sites in the northern kingdom while in Judah they "are generally absent from Iron Age II sites" (Tadmor 1982:172).

⁴⁹ Dever 1983:578f.; see also his more recent work 1990:121-166. Cf. Saggs 1978:6,21f.; Ahlström 1984:10 and 1986:83.

evidence of such an origin. In Judg. 5.4 it is said:

YHWH, when thou didst go forth from Seir
when thou didst march from the region of Edom.

In Deut. 33.2 we read:

YHWH came from Sinai,
and dawned from Seir upon us
he shone forth from Mount Paran

And again in Hab. 3.3 it is written:

YHWH came from Teman
and the Holy One from Mount Paran.

Seir, Paran and Teman are all names of areas in Edom and the tradition of such a provenance is also attested by an inscription from Kuntillet 'Ajrud (ca. 800 B.C.) where the phrase "YHWH of Teman" occurs.⁵⁰

Other epigraphic evidence, however, suggests that originally he might have been a Syrian god, since various forms of the divine name occur in non-Israelite theophoric names. This god seems also to have been known at Ugarit. A fragmentary text found there, belonging to the mythological cycle of Baal, has made known a verse in which the god El says:

šm. bny. yw. iitl.w
the name of my son is Yaw, o Elat land⁵¹

This god continues to be attested in the area in the successive millennium as Porphyry witnesses when he affirms that in Berytus the god Ieuw was worshipped.⁵² Thus, a form of the name of the Israelite god was

⁵⁰ See Ahlström 1986:57ff., 92ff.

⁵¹ Virolleaud VI AB, iv,13-14; CTA I.iv,13-14; KTU 1.4,13-14. For translation see Gibson 1978:39 (I.iv,13-14).

⁵² Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 1.9.21.

already known in Syria towards the middle of the 2nd millennium.⁵³

The Ugaritic evidence, in spite of some scholars' reluctance to accept it as an extra-biblical attestation of the god YHWH,⁵⁴ with YHWH as a god of the Canaanite pantheon subjected to El, is further confirmed by some texts of the Hebrew Bible itself which are capable of this interpretation. Deuteronomy 32.8-9 is commonly rendered as follows:

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he separated the sons of men,
he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number
of the sons of God

For YHWH's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage.

The MT ישראל, the last word of v. 8 can be emended to אלהים following the reading from LXX⁵⁵ which is also confirmed by a Qumran fragment.⁵⁶ But LXX is likely to have preserved the original reading of v. 9 as well, later emended in MT because offensive to orthodox Yahwism:

καὶ ἐγενήθη μερὶς κυρίου λαὸς αὐτοῦ Ιακωβ,
σχοίνισμα κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ Ισραηλ
and YHWH's portion was his people Jacob
his allotted inheritance Israel

thus presupposing the following (or similar) Vorlage:

ויהי חלק יתרה עמו יעקב חבל נחלתו ישראל⁵⁷

If this reading is accepted we have here evidence that originally YHWH was considered as a god of the Canaanite pantheon and subordinate to El Elyon, the Most High god. MT has been emended as to make YHWH the same

⁵³ Garbini 1980b:80ff. and 1986b:87f.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Gibson 1978:4 n. 2. Cf. Cazelles 1967:84 and Garbini 1986b:87.

⁵⁵ LXX actually reads ἀγγέλων Θεοῦ for MT בני ישראל.

⁵⁶ See Skehan 1957:21.

⁵⁷ Cf. BHS ad loc.

as El Elyon and not one of the sons of the main god.⁵⁸

A similar interpretation is also yielded by Ps. 82.⁵⁹ El figures here as a king god over other gods. YHWH is in the congregation of El and thus in the council of gods of which El is the judge and accuser of the gods, the sons of the Most High. These, having failed to do justice are condemned to perish like men. As a climax the poet concludes the psalm with a challenge to YHWH who is invited to rise and judge the earth for he will inherit all peoples.⁶⁰

When was then this god taken up as the Israelite national god? To give a precise answer is just impossible. Yahwism's original starting point is lost in the darkness of the past and we are only confronted with traditional material. What is sure is that YHWH, at a certain point emerged as the national god of Israel as well as the highest among the Canaanite gods in the same way^{as} Marduk became at a certain point the king over all the Babylonian gods. Apparently, YHWH had already become the national god of Israel by the time of Ahab (896 B.C.) in that Mesha, the king of Moab, refers to YHWH, presumably as Israel's national god, as he

⁵⁸ This interpretation was suggested by Eissfeldt 1956:29 and it has been recently repropounded by Lemche 1988:255f. For a different view see Albright 1959:343 and Mayes 1979:385. A similar tradition is reported by Eusebius in his *Praeparation evangelica* as he quotes from Philo of Biblos' *Phoenician History* (I.9.20-10.55) who in turn made use of an earlier work written in Phoenician by a certain Sanchuniaton: "And when Kronos (= 'whom the Phoenicians call El', I.10.44) travelled over the inhabited earth he gave his daughter Athena rule over Attica... Then Kronos gave the city of Byblos to the goddess Baaltis, who is also called Dione, and Berytus he gave to Poseidon and the Kabirs... And when Kronos had come to the land of the south wind he gave the whole of Egypt to the god Tauthos so that it might be his royal residence." (I.10.32,35,38) - Beyerlin 1978:267. For a critical edition see K. Mras, Eusebius, *Werke VIII, Praeparatio evangelica* (GCS 43) I, 1954, 39-54.

⁵⁹ Cf. the Ugaritic prayer song to El in which the expression "sons of El" occurs (CTA 30; UT 107; Beyerlin 1978:222).

⁶⁰ Eissfeldt 1956:29f.

commemorates his victories over Israel (2Kings 3.4).⁶¹ The single mention of YHWH only does not mean, however, that he was the only god worshipped. This is clearly suggested by one of the inscribed prisms of Sargon II from Nimrud, who included, among the booty listed as taken from Samaria in 721 B.C., "their gods":

ū ilani(MEŠ) ti-ik-li-šú-um šal-la-[ti-iš]
and the gods their trust, as spoil⁶²

"Whatever tendentious elements there may have been in statements made by biblical writers about the cultus in Samaria, it is unlikely that the Assyrians, who possessed not only representations of their gods but also such subsidiary images as *kuribu* ('cherubim') and winged bulls and lions, would have mistaken mere specimens of these classes for gods, particularly as their gods were predominantly anthropomorphic and not theriomorphic."⁶³ YHWH began to assume a more prominent role only from the 7th century B.C. onwards as it is evidenced by the onomasticon of the Judean region. But even then it is likely that he was not the only exclusive god worshipped.⁶⁴

Evidence that this was in fact the case comes first of all from the Old Testament itself if more attention would be paid to what far too often is simply dismissed as "syncretistic".⁶⁵ Here, we shall now

⁶¹ Ca. 830 B.C.; DOTT, 195-98.

⁶² Gadd 1954:179., line 32.

⁶³ Saggs 1978:23.

⁶⁴ Garbini 1980:84ff. and 1986b:95; Arata Mantovani 1988:58.

⁶⁵ For a very useful summary of OT evidences see Saggs 1978:21ff. In this regard it is worth quoting Saggs in full as he very perceptively points out some of the reasons which often prevent us to give more objective assessment of the OT traditions: "In any study involving examination of the nature of Israelite religion, there is the danger, because so many scholars (including the present) accept it as the living root of their religion, of making a deliberate selection of evidence from the total evidence, treating that part of the evidence which meets with

concentrate, however, on some extra-biblical evidence which further sheds light on the Israelite religion. For convenience we will retain the word "syncretism" not to imply a form of degradation, this was never the case, but to refer to those features of pre-exilic Yahwism which were later on condemned as unfitting to what in the mind of later priestly circles the religion of Israel should have been but in fact was not.

1. Arad, Kuntillet 'Ajrud, and Asherah

The most important finds which can be confronted most directly with the biblical traditions are the discoveries of Arad and Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teiman) and possibly el-Qom.⁶⁶

approval as alone representing 'true' Yahwism and the features found objectionable as false or corrupt Yahwism or contamination imported from something which was never any part of Yahwism at all. The justification claimed, or tacitly assumed, when this is done is that authoritative biblical writers themselves rejected certain elements of popular Israelite worship as not true Yahwism. But it was not, with rare exceptions, the purpose of such writers to offer historical judgments as to whether certain rejected features ought to be present within Yahwism, and in most instances their criticisms make it clear that as an historical fact the element in question either was, or had been, present there" (21).

⁶⁶ For a brief review see Kenyon 1987:120-22. Besides these finds we could also mention art and artifactual evidence. Not much of this type of evidence has been preserved except for two cultic stands from Taanach, 8 kms south-east of Megiddo, with representations of what appears to be Asherah as the "Lion Lady" (Lapp 1969:42-44; Glock 1978:1142-144; Dever 1985:573). The two finds are dated to the 10th century by which time Taanach is supposed to have been an Israelite administrative and religious centre (Jos. 17.11; 1Chron. 7.29; Jos. 21.25; Judg. 1.27f.; 1Kings 4.12). A similar representation of this goddess is found in a numerous number of "female terracottas, ...mostly Judean pillar base figurines of the 8th-7th century B.C., ... (and likely to be) talismans to aid conception and childbirth...designed for sanctuary usage." (Dever 1983:573f.)

a) Arad

The site is located at 30 kms east-northeast of Beersheba and ^{was} first excavated by Y. Aharoni in 1963.⁶⁷ A Judean fort was found at this site, though the most important discovery lies in its adjacent large shrine. It is a unique find in that its cultic structure makes it, at the moment, the only real candidate for a "temple" rather than a *bāmā*, besides the Jerusalem temple.⁶⁸ More interesting further is its history. According to Aharoni's later opinion the "temple" was destroyed during the later part of the 7th century,⁶⁹ thus confirming the biblical account of the great religious reform carried out by Josiah.

The data for the date of this Judean "temple" has recently been reassessed by D. Ussishkin with surprising conclusions. First of all, he notices that it is impossible for the temple to have been constructed already in stratum XI, since there is no material evidence of the temple's destruction by fire at that time (ca. 920 B.C. - the destruction is attributed to Shishak). On a closer look at the data he rather suggests that this temple could have been founded before the later part of the 8th century B.C. at the earliest and most probably not before the beginning of the 7th century B.C. His conclusion is then that "the final destruction of the shrine by fire occurred at the same time as the final destruction of the Judean fort, at the end of Stratum VI",⁷⁰ i.e. early

⁶⁷ See Aharoni 1975:74-89.

⁶⁸ See Dever 1983:576; Kenyon 1987:120. The "temple" consists of a fairly large structure, covering, as Aharoni suggests, an area of at least 12x15 m. The building, with its entrance from the west, has three successive chambers "situated exactly on an east-west axis, the holy-of-holies facing east. This corresponds to the Solomonic Temple in Jerusalem." See Aharoni 1967A:248 and 1975:85f.

⁶⁹ 1967A:246 n. 27, 249; 1975:86.

⁷⁰ 1988:156.

6th century B.C. The re-assessment of its dating suggests, contrary to Aharoni's conclusion, that the temple's construction and destruction cannot be related in any way to Hezekiah's and Josiah's reforms. Contrary to the expectations derived from the Old Testament traditions, a temple outside Jerusalem had been allowed to be built and used at the Arad fort during the later years of the Judean kingdom till its final destruction.⁷¹

This conclusion raises also a further issue. It implies that the ostraca containing the letters to Eliashib found sealed beneath the destruction debris of Stratum VI, were in fact written while the temple was still in existence. And as Ussishkin remarks we should consider afresh the possibility that *בית יהודה* (line 9) mentioned in Inscription 19,⁷² refers to the temple at Arad and not to the one in Jerusalem.⁷³ Aharoni had discussed this possibility, which had already been suggested by Albright, but dismissed it. The main reason, if we understand correctly, is his conviction that after Josiah's reform there were no other temples and thus it must refer to the temple in Jerusalem to which, he deduces, Eliashib's subordinate was sent.⁷⁴

It seems to us that what should be called into question is rather the whole question of centralization. Was there ever such a phenomenon? It is possible that Josiah did start a religious reform, but it begins to be doubtful that the cult was ever centralized in the pre-exilic period.

71 Ussishkin 1988:156.

72 See Aharoni 1966:7 and 1981:35-37.

73 Ussishkin 1988:155. Cf. Garbini 1986:95f.

74 1981:37. See e.g. Beyerlin 1978:253 who takes these conclusions for granted.

b) Kuntillet 'Ajrud

One of the most significant archaeological finds yet made in the biblical world is likely to be the 9th-8th century sanctuary excavated under the direction of Ze'ev Meshel at Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teiman), about 50 kms south of Kadesh-Barnea.⁷⁵

Two large storage jars (pithoi) with crude drawings and Hebrew blessings were recovered. The plastered walls also display a number of ink graffiti. Most astonishing revealed to be the pithoi inscriptions of which Naveh⁷⁶ has recently offered a translation:

Pithos A: אָמַר אֶ אֶמַר לְ-ב וְלִיעֶשֶׂה וְלִג בְּרַכַּת אֲתֶכֶם
לִיהוָה שְׁמֹרֶן וְלֵאשֶׁרֶתָּה

X says: say to Y and Yau'asah, and [to Z]: I bless you
by Yahweh, our guardian,⁷⁷ and by his Asherah.

Pithos B: אָמַר אֶמַר לְאֶדְנִי [א] בְּרַכַּתָּךְ
לִיהוָה [שְׁמֹרֶן] וְלֵאשֶׁרֶתָּה (line division uncertain)

Amaryau says: Say to my lord X: I bless you,⁷⁸
by Yahweh [our guardian], and by his Asherah.

Pithos A inscription is found above a drawing, and thus possibly

⁷⁵ A preliminary report was published by Meshel (1978) and the official edition of the drawings was published by Beck (1982). For a comprehensive account of the significance of the finds in this site see now Dietrich-Loretz (1992).

⁷⁶ 1979:27-30; see Dever 1984:21f.

⁷⁷ Šmrn is vocalized by Naveh as Šomrenū (see Dever 1984:29 n. 9 for reasons) rather than Šomron, "YHWH of Samaria". The latter in fact is preferable (see Emerton 1982:9f.; Dever 1984:32-34 ns 5,27,45; Olyan 1988:27ff.). Similarly, the lacuna in Pithos B has now been restored by Meshel as tymn i.e. "YHWH Teman", comparable to "YHWH Shomron" (see Dever 1984:32 n. 5). Cf. Dietrich-Loretz 1992:95-97.

⁷⁸ Naveh attempts here to demonstrate the continuity of such "dedicatory formulae" over more than a millennium and a half (1979:28f.) and Dever thus concludes that "the 'Ajrūd pithoi may now be regarded...as additional examples of a hitherto little-known Hebrew dedicatory or blessing formula that couples Yahweh as an agent with something designated as his 'asherah'" (1984).

referring to it, of three human-like figures: two standing beside each other and a third, more in the background, sitting on a throne (?) and playing the lyre.

Scholarly discussions have mostly concentrated on the meaning of אֲשֶׁרָה and on the identification of these figures as well as their relation to the inscription.

אֲשֶׁרָה could basically be understood in two ways:⁷⁹

- a) as the noun of the goddess Asherah with pronominal suffix attached to it (his Asherah);⁸⁰
- b) as the noun asherah, the cult symbol of the goddess Asherah with the pronominal suffix attached to it.

The last view is mostly preferred by the majority of scholars⁸¹ though in

⁷⁹ A third way which has also been proposed is to take it as a common noun meaning holy place, as in Phoenician or Akkadian and thus render it "his sanctuary". This rendering is however unlikely since in Hebrew the word denotes always the goddess or her cult symbol. Gilula 1978/79:129-37.

⁸⁰ For this view see Dever 1984:22ff. who in spite of the linguistic difficulty to use a possessive suffix with a personal name has attempted "to show that 'Yahweh's asherah' at 'Ajrûd (and possibly at el-Qôm) may refer to the goddess *herself* - that is, to Asherah as a hypostatization of the Great Goddess, not simply to the use of the word 'asherah' to refer to an attribute or cult-image" (1984:22). Gilula (1978-79) reads also "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" and this possibility is also allowed by M. Weinfeld, "Kuntillet 'Ajrûd: A Sacred Site of the Monarchic period", *Shnaton* 4 (1980) 280-84 (Hebrew) who "cites (p. 281) Wellhausen's ingenious but largely forgotten emendation of Hosea 14.9 to read 'I am his 'Anat and his Asherah', rather than 'I have spoken and affirm it'" (Dever 1984:32 n. 7).

⁸¹ See Emerton 1982:19; Olyan 1988:31f. The unattested pronominal suffix to personal names in biblical Hebrew (Emerton 1982:3-9, 14f.) is the main objection in taking Asherah as the personal name of the goddess. In this regard a possibility which requires consideration is Zevit's suggestion in his analysis of an inscription from el-Qom where the same words with personal suffix occurs and which he renders as "O Asherata". The need to take -h as a pronominal suffix was suggested by its antecedent YHWH. The text from el-Qom, however, suggests a new possibility in that "l'srth has no antecedent and therefore it is impossible to consider the *he* a *mater lectionis* for the 3 m. s. possessive suffix *o*". Zevit rather suggests that to take it "as a *mater lectionis* for a final vowel *a*, marking, in this case, the double feminine form of the name 'šrt: *ašerata. This use of *he* as a *mater*

the last analysis the distinction between these two possibilities loses meaning in that the cult symbol would be here synonymous with the deity herself. For convenience we will refer to Asherah with a capital "a" whatever may be meant by it.

The two figures standing forward had first been identified by Gilula as YHWH and Asherah standing together. Later studies suggest that we have here the representation of "the god Bes, a collective name for a group of Egyptian dwarf deities".⁸² The figure with the lyre in the background is more controversial. Dever has attempted to show that it is a representation of the goddess Asherah. Olyan, on the other hand, explains the lyre player as a musician playing for the dancing figures in the foreground.⁸³

Olyan's argument is based on Beck's observation that the relationship between the figures and inscriptions is secondary. Though this may be the case, there is still the possibility, as Dever suggests, that the enthroned figure is in fact the goddess Asherah, since it is likely that the inscription was meant to have a certain correlation with the graffiti and this seems best explained by assuming that the playing musician was identified as the goddess Asherah.⁸⁴

lectionis is well attested from the 8th century B.C. on" (Zevit 1980 and 1984:45). If this is accepted we could read here "Yahweh and Ashera" instead of "and his Ashera". Cf. Olyan 1988:25 who disagrees with this suggestion.

⁸² Beck 1982:29. See also Stolz 1980:168; Dever 1984:26; Garbini 1986a:91; Arata Mantovani 1988:58.

⁸³ 1988:30f.

⁸⁴ Cf. Dever 1984:30.

c) El-Qom

The picture of Israelite religion given by the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscription is possibly further confirmed by one of the three Hebrew inscriptions, dated towards the end of the 7th century B.C.,⁸⁵ which have been found on the walls of two tombs discovered at Kh. el-Qom, a locality between Lachish and Hebron. This excavation took place some years before that at Kuntillet 'Ajrud the *editio princeps* of which was then published by Dever (1970). The inscription which concerns us, preserved in a museum in Jerusalem, is the longest of the three (inscription n. 3) and thus also the most interesting. It is the only one coming from tomb II. It is incised on several lines the last of which appears around a deep and hand-shape engraving in the wall. Since its discovery several scholars have dealt with it suggesting a variety of readings.⁸⁶ Of these Lemaire and Naveh read on line 3 לַאֲשֶׁרָה: "his Asherah". The conditions of the stone in which the inscription is incised, as Zevit has noticed, allow for a variety of interpretations of the various letter-signs.⁸⁷ A recent re-examination has been carried out by Zevit (1984) on the original inscription at the Israel Museum with the help of slides and new photographs taken in various lighting conditions. So far all previous scholars had basically relied on the photographs published by Dever. The

⁸⁵ This date is suggested by Garbini, "Su un'iscrizione ebraica da Khirbet el-Kom", *AION* 38 (1978) 191-93:191. Similarly F.M. Cross dates them ca. 700 B.C. or perhaps slightly later (Dever 1970:165 n. 53). Dever 1970:165 and Lemaire 1977:603 prefer a date in mid 8th century.

⁸⁶ See Dever 1970:159; Lemaire 1977:598; Garbini 1978:193; Naveh 1979:29; Mittmann 1981:142, 144.

⁸⁷ The reading difficulties are raised by the surface of the stone not properly smooth; letters incised with various degrees of pressure and possibly implements; the forms of a number of letters re-traced next to or partially on top of the original letters with the result of many letters having "ghost images".

text and translation as reconstructed by Zevit is thus as follows:⁸⁸

TEXT	TRANSLATION
1. 'ryhw h'sr ktbh	1. Uryahu, the prosperous, his inscription
2. brkt 'ryhw lyhwh	2. I blessed Uryahu to YHWH
3. wmsr'yyh/r hl'š'rttrhhwš'lh	3. And from his enemies, O Asherata, save him,
4. I'byhw	4. by Abiyahu
5. []d/r/b/g/?wll'šrth	5. [?]?? and to Asherata
6. []'??rth	6. [?]A[shel]rata

Our main concern is here the further attestation of YHWH together with Asherah, thus confirming that the two were in fact worshipped together in what was orthodox Yahwism in the pre-exilic age.⁸⁹

The text mentioning "Yahweh and (his) Asherah" is an obvious indication that the true Yahwism of the period before the exile was something different from the Yahwism which emerged after the exile. A hint to the nature of pre-exilic Yahwism is further indicated by an inscription in red and black ink on plaster which was also found at

⁸⁸ 1984:43. In interpreting the text Zevit has ignored all ghost images and the 'alep suspended between lines 2 and 3.

⁸⁹ Of those scholars who would not read I'šrth on line the best reconstruction is that by Garbini in that he is the only one who takes into serious consideration the meaning of the hand with the inscription. Basing his reconstruction on Dever's publication (1970) his text and translation are as follow (1978:1983):

TEXT	TRANSLATION
1. I'ryhw. hqšr. ktbh	1. Ad Uria è stata aggiunta la sua iscrizione
2. brkt. 'ryhw. lyhwh	2. Benedetto sia Uria da Yahweh,
3. wmsr' yd kl'šrt thhwš'lh	3. e maledetto sia la mano di tutte quelle
4. I'byhw	4. (?) che malediranno la sua salvezza,
	4. - Di Onia.

Garbini basically follows Dever except for line 1 where he reads hqšr instead of hqšb and line 3 which has been completely re-interpreted for "wmsr' yd I'šr thhwš'lh" proposed by Dever. The reading of hqšr means that the epigraphy has been added and this explains also "Oniyahu" as the one who added this inscription. Most of all it gives an explanation of the enigmatic hand.

Kunttiliet Ajrud mentioning Baal and YHWH in parallelism.⁹⁰ Scholars so far have been over cautious in drawing the obvious conclusions⁹¹ from finds which now date more than a decade. Only in the last few years some publications are beginning to emerge taking more seriously the implications of these finds.⁹² The cult of Asherah in ancient Israel, after all, was not unknown to the biblical traditions themselves though our own understanding of "Yahwism" has often resulted in not taking some traditions more seriously. Olyan who has recently investigated the role of Asherah in the cult of YHWH in Israel has pertinently reconsidered her role starting from the observation of the awkward association of Baal and Asherah in the Hebrew Bible (see e.g. Judg. 6.25-32), when in fact Asherah was El's main consort in Canaanite religion and we would expect her to have been YHWH's consort, as the inscriptions confirm, once YHWH was identified with El. Would two gods, depicted in continuous rivalry share the same consort?⁹³

d) Asherah in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew traditions the Asherah is very often the object of polemic. But much of this polemic, as Olyan has demonstrated, is restricted to the Deuteronomistic History or to passages influenced by this.⁹⁴ Outside these writings the Asherah does not seem to have been

⁹⁰ See Meshell 1978, quoted in Dever 1983:579 and Kenyon 1987:122.

⁹¹ See e.g. Emerton's mild conclusion of what is otherwise an excellent article: "The Asherah is probably the wooden symbol of the goddess, but the inscriptions do not prove that she was regarded as the consort of Yahweh" (1982:20).

⁹² See e.g. Dever 1983; Ahlström 1986; Garbini 1986b; Olyan 1988.

⁹³ Olyan 1988:xiv, 38f.

⁹⁴ Lemaire 1977:605; Olyan 1988:605f. Cf. Dietrich-Loretz 1992:101-103.

such and thus it seems that this goddess or cult symbol was accepted within Yahwistic practices as in fact some hints suggest. Jehu's coup and anti-Baal reform is telling in that this fanatical Yahwist not only accepted the golden calves of Dan and Bethel but also the Asherah of Samaria (2Kings 10.29) since one existed there during the reign of his son Jehoahaz. The way in which this fact is mentioned does not imply that this was an innovation of this king (2Kings 13.6).

To speak thus of syncretism or pagan influences, as if the Asherah was a Canaanite import to the Yahwistic cult⁹⁵ is misleading. Nor can it be assumed that the cult of Asherah was imported by Jezebel from her native land alongside that of Baal (1Kings 16.32f.) since, if that were the case it would have perished with the Baal cult in Jehu's religious reform. But it did not.

The most significant evidence for its associations with the cult of YHWH is probably Deut. 16.21:

You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of YHWH which you shall make.

The prohibition clearly implies that such a cult object must have stood often enough besides Yahwistic altars. This command thus introduced a new development of the Yahwistic religion.

A problem which must now be raised is the association of Asherah with Baal within the OT. The Baal polemic obviously precedes that of the Asherah in that e.g. in the Books of Hosea and Amos Baal⁹⁶ is attacked but there is no reference to the Asherah. Yet, in other OT writings we find

⁹⁵ See e.g. Reed 1949:39, 41; Patai 1965:45-48; Meshel 1979:28; Day 1980:392, 399f., 406; Tigay 1986:26.

⁹⁶ In the prophetic corpus the Asherah is only mentioned in four passages (Jer. 17.2; Isa. 17.8; 27.9 and Micah 5.13) all of which show either deuteronomistic influence or theology. Olyan 1988:14.

here and there Asherah associated with Baal. In some cases, as e.g. 1Kings 18.19 it is likely to be a gloss, since in the following verses the prophets of Asherah are mentioned no more. In others, the deuteronomist has more thoroughly reworked the traditions so as to appear to be genuine evidence of pre-exilic polemic.

In Judg. 6.25-32 such association occurs three times (25, 28, 30) and in Judg. 3.7 we read that "the people of Israel did what was evil in the eyes of YHWH their God and serving the Baals and the Asherah". Simultaneously, in other passages the deuteronomist associates Baal with Ashtart.⁹⁷ The association of Baal and Ashtart is exactly the expected combination, this being the traditional Canaanite consort of Baal. Thus, there seems here to be a confusion between these two goddesses either willfully done by the deuteronomist⁹⁸ or due to a lack of clear distinction at the time of writing.

The confused associations of these goddesses have been re-examined by Olyan. It is obvious from the inscriptions at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and el-Qom that Asherah was worshipped together with YHWH and this association seems also supported from the Hebrew Bible. He thus questions the common place assumption in biblical scholarship that Asherah was the consort of Baal in the Iron Age although she was the consort of El in the Bronze Age and rather suggests that "passages where Asherah or her symbol are associated with Baal are best understood as examples of deuteronomistic polemic. They are an accurate reflection of

⁹⁷ Judg. 2.13; 10.16; 1Sam. 7.3,4; 12.10; 1Kings 11.5,33; 2Kings 23.13. The vocalization "Ashtoreth" as appear several times in MT "is an intentional alteration made by the introduction of the vowels of *bošeth* 'shame' or 'shameful thing,' in order to indicate that his word is to be substituted in reading" (Burney 1920:58).

⁹⁸ Olyan 1988:10 prefers this option.

the practice and theology of neither Canaanite nor Israelite Theology".⁹⁹
The association was a good expedient devised by the deuteronomistic school to stamp the worship of Asherah as an unacceptable Yahwistic practice.

The main argument lies in his claim of the continuity and conservatism in Canaanite religion not only between the Late Bronze and the Iron Age but also by the turn of the first millennium, and, though he admits that "there is evidence of some fluidity in the associations of certain goddesses with certain gods", he argues that "the traditional pairings found in the Bronze Age texts remain, even to the end of the first millennium BCE: Asherah consort of El/Astart of Baal/Anat of Baal."¹⁰⁰ Throughout most of the mediterranean world the goddesses and their cults remain distinct. They retained their archaic epithets and distinctive characterization in iconography and mythology. Most of all, their consorts did not change.¹⁰¹

The basic thesis, as argued by Pope (1955), that "El loses Asherah to Baal, beginning in Late Bronze texts, due to El's alleged impotence and Baal's assumption of kingship over the gods" is rightly refuted by Olyan since biblical evidence alone in which the two gods are paired, is not sufficient to show that Asherah became the consort of Baal in the Iron Age. Also, the Canaanite mythological lore from Late Bronze Age cited in support of his thesis is not conclusive. The key text is the "El Kurnissa" fragment in which Asherah attempts to seduce Baal who in

⁹⁹ Olyan 1988:38.

¹⁰⁰ Olyan 1988:39. Among scholars who do not share this view see Kapelrud 1952:64-93; Pope 1955:32, 35-42; Cassuto 1971:55-57, 59, 67; Oldenburg 1969:101-63.

¹⁰¹ Olyan 1988:40.

turn is commanded by El himself to do this and to humiliate her:

Go, sleep with her! Lie with my wife and humble her!¹⁰²

But the text hardly suggests that Asherah is lost to Baal nor that El is impotent, since the two, at the end of it, are reconciled again.¹⁰³

Pope's further argument concerns the ritual texts from Ugarit in which Baal and Asherah are mentioned together (UT 9.8). But the "mention of two deities together in a dedicatory context does not necessarily indicate that they are paired as consorts, although this is often the case."¹⁰⁴ Some Punic dedications in fact pair together deities not associated together before or even deities of the same sex.¹⁰⁵ The ambiguity of this type of evidence cannot thus be used to support the view that Baal and Asherah were paired together.

Olyan adduces then a considerable amount of evidence supporting the view that the association of Ashtart with Baal and Asherah with El was consistent till the end of the first millennium. This is true even though these deities were known under different epithets such as Tannit (= Asherah in the Phoenician/Punic world of the 1st millennium) and Baal Hamon (=El) who are consistently associated together. The evidence supports the view that there was a continuous association of gods and goddesses. That of Ashtart with Baal in the deuteronomistic corpus¹⁰⁶ represents a more accurate portrayal of Canaanite religion both in the Iron Age as well as down to the end of the first millennium. On the

¹⁰² ANET, 519.

¹⁰³ See Olyan 1988:43ff.

¹⁰⁴ Olyan 1988:47.

¹⁰⁵ Olyan 1988:47. See e.g. KAI 73, "To Aštart and Pygmalia"; KAI 81, "to the ladies Aštart and Tannit in Lebanon"; KAI 119, "to the Lord Štrp and to mlk Štrt, lords of Leptis".

¹⁰⁶ Judg. 2.13; 10.6; 1Sam. 7.3; 12.10; 1Kings 11.5,33; 2Kings 23.13.

other hand, the association of Asherah with Baal is best understood as an example of deuteronomistic polemic and not of historical development in Canaanite religion. Thus a new picture of the deuteronomistic school begins to emerge: they "were innovators, and not conservatives attempting to purge the cult of Yahweh of 'foreign' or 'pagan' elements."¹⁰⁷ The Asherah, both as a cultic symbol and a goddess was part of the orthodox Yahwism of the pre-exilic period as it is attested by a careful reading of the Hebrew Bible, the recent finds at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and possibly el-Qom, not to speak of the numerous figurines of a goddess (Asherah?) found throughout Palestine. Similarly, we ought also to understand cult prostitution,¹⁰⁸ existence of various altars,¹⁰⁹ the use of images¹¹⁰ and human sacrifice.¹¹¹ There is nothing unorthodox about them for that time. These practices became intolerable only at a second stage of the Israelite religion, the beginning of which is probably to be seen in the prophetic ministry, finding its full development in the exile and after. The deuteronomistic school had a clear picture of what Yahwism had to be and accordingly reworked ancient traditions, but at the same time they conveyed an incomplete picture of what Yahwism was really all about in its first stages.

The development of Yahwistic thinking can be shown by comparing the deuteronomistic picture of it with the Jewish community at Elephantine.

¹⁰⁷ Olyan 1988:73.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. 2Kings 23.7.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. 2Kings 12.3; 15.4, 35; 18.22; 23.8; 2Chron. 15.17.

¹¹⁰ Cf. 2Kings 10.29; 11.18; 13.6; 17.12, 15-16; 18.4; 23.24; Jer. 7.30.

¹¹¹ Cf. Isa. 30.33; Jer. 7.31; 19.5; Ezek. 20.25-26, 31; Hos. 13.2; Micah 6.7. See Eissfeldt 1935; Olyan 1988:11ff. For a reassessment of a new version of the traditional view see Heider 1986.

The Aramaic papyri from the Jewish military colony of Elephantine are particularly relevant because they give us an idea of what Yahwism was before it re-emerged in Jerusalem after the exile. They are important because they describe events contemporaneous with the date of their composition and thus are not distorted because of time lapse. They further constitute, except for the Siloam inscription and the Samaria ostraca, the earliest Jewish texts we possess outside the Hebrew Bible.

The direct evidence of a Jewish settlement at Elephantine, an island located in upper Egypt at the first cataract of the Nile and known to the Egyptians as Yeb, comes from the papyri themselves the earliest of which (AP 1) is dated 495 and the latest (BP 13) 398. We know, however, that the Jewish colony existed before the Persian conquest, since this is explicitly affirmed in the petition about the reconstruction of the temple of YHW to the governor of Judea:

ומן יומי מלך מצרין אבתין בנו אגורא זך ביב בירתא וכזי
 כנבוזי על למצר
 אגורא זך בנה השכת ואגורי אלהי מזרין כל מגרו ואיש מאיש מגדעם
 באגורא זך לא חבל

Already in the days of the kings of Egypt our fathers had built that temple in the fortress of Yeb, and when Cambyes came into Egypt // he found that temple built, and the temples of the gods of Egypt all of them they overthrew, but no one did any harm to that temple. (AP 30.13f.)

There is no reason to doubt this statement since the Achaemenid administration could have probably verified this assertion. Yet, in spite of this chronological datum there is no unanimous consensus of how

¹¹² For a recent and comprehensive review of Aramaic documents for the Persian and Tolemaic period see Contini 1986:73-109.

and when this colony was first established. Suggestions vary from the middle of the 7th to the middle of the 6th century.¹¹³

The various suggestions cannot be verified though not all have the same weight. Those who tend to date it about the mid 7th century rely on the assumption that the religious practices at Elephantine and the very existence of the temple of YHW contradict the religious reform of Josiah. But, apart from this argument there is no other compelling reason for such an early date.¹¹⁴ As much as the existence of the temple may be surprising, we know that after the supposed deuteronomistic reform which attempted to concentrate the cult in Jerusalem there were still other temples in existence. We have already mentioned the one at Arad and we know of another three being erected outside Jerusalem, namely the

¹¹³ Contini 1986:85f. The various views may be reduced to three as to the nature and origin of these Jews:

1. Asian mercenaries, including Jews, were settled at Elephantine by Psammetichus I (664-609) after the existing had deserted and joined the Ethiopians. This view is taken e.g. by Meyer 1912 35ff. Cf. Herodotus II, 30. Porten 1968:11f. (cf. also Porten 1984:386) traces the birth of the colony at the time of Manasseh (ca. 650 B.C.). Vincent 1937:37ff., dating their origin between 630-621 B.C., proposes that the colony was founded by Jews, especially of Bethel, who opposed the Josianic reform and took refuge in Egypt.

2. They would have been pro-Egyptians who took refuge in Egypt after Nebucadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. See e.g. Grelot 1972:40. A similar dating has also been proposed by Silverman (1981) dating the colony between 600-570 B.C. on the basis of a statistical comparison between OT personal names and the Jewish onomasticon at Elephantine.

3. The Jewish mercenaries would have been settled on the prevailing Aramaic garrison of Syene-Elephantine at the time of Aramasis (567-526 B.C.) continuing then to serve also under the Persians. So Kraeling 1953:48. A similar dating has also been postulated by Bresciani 1984:367f.: the Jewish colonies of Elephantine were part of the returning exiles from Babylon after 538 B.C. who did not settle in Judea because of disagreements with the local authorities.

¹¹⁴ The *Letter of Aristeas* (13) may be used as an evidence in support of this early date. According to this Psammetichus had already enlisted Jewish mercenaries in occasion of his campaign against Ethiopia (i.e. Nubia). Provided, however, it is a reliable information it can be attributed both to the first (Porten 1968:8ff) as well as to the second ruler (Bruce 1963:112) of this name.

Samaritan temple on mount Gerizim,¹¹⁵ the Qasr el-Abd of Hyrcanus at Araq el-Emir in Transjordan,¹¹⁶ and the temple of Onias IV at Leontopolis in Egypt.¹¹⁷

From the evidence which is available to us there does not seem to be any compelling reason to date this Jewish settlement much before the Persian conquest. The exclusive use of Aramaic by this community as a written and very likely spoken language ties well with its use as *lingua franca* in the Aramaic Achaemenid Empire: being settlers in a garrison basically Aramaic-speaking the Jews would have undergone a process of aramaization.¹¹⁸

The major interest for our purposes is the picture conveyed about their religious life.¹¹⁹

a) The Religion

What seems to us important to emphasize, first of all, is that the religion of the Jews at Elephantine was not a form of depraved or unorthodox Yahwism. It was a genuine expression of the "normative Yahwism" of the pre-exilic age. Unfortunately, it has often not been taken more seriously into consideration because of scholars'undoubted reliance on the OT traditions. But the recent archaeological finds as discussed above do not allow us anymore to dismiss the Elephantine

¹¹⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* XI.7.2.302ff.

¹¹⁶ Lapp 1962:24ff and 1963:39ff.

¹¹⁷ Josephus, *War* I,11, 33; 9.4, 190ff.; *Ant* XIV,8.1,127ff; *War* VII.10,2-3, 420ff; *Ant* XII.9.7, 287f.; XII.3.1-3,62ff.; 10.4, 284ff.; XX.10.3, 236; *Contra Apionem* II.5, 49ff.

¹¹⁸ Contini 1986:87.

¹¹⁹ On the religion of the Elephantine Jews see Vincent 1937; Kraeling 1953:83-99; Porten 1968:103-186; Grelot 1972:345-423; Porten 1984:385ff.; Smith 1984:223-233; Contini 1986:90-97.

evidence as something else than pre-exilic true Yahwism. There is in fact no doubt that they were worshippers of the national god of Israel.

In the Aramaic Elephantine documents YHWH is not designated by the usual OT tetragrammaton, but with the trigrammaton YHW while in the ostraca the form YHH appears.¹²⁰ Both forms are likely to be simple variants of the divine name, which could be rendered as Yahô.¹²¹

Their temple, which must have existed before 525 B.C., is designated in the papyri with the Aramaic אגרה.¹²² Their concept of it bears a striking resemblance to the Jerusalem temple. It was the "House of YHW",¹²³ and "he" was "YHW the god who dwells in Yeb the fortress",¹²⁴ the "God of Heaven",¹²⁵ and "YHW of host".¹²⁶ While the first two terms express the nearness of god, the latter two express its transcendence.¹²⁷ As in the temple of Jerusalem so at Elephantine, where the temple is also referred to as "Altar House" (AP 32.3) daily sacrifices were made

¹²⁰ Porten 1968:105f.

¹²¹ Kraeling 1953:85.

¹²² AP 12.6,30; 13.14 // 31. *passim*; 33.8; BP 3.9; 4.10; 12.18.

¹²³ בִּית יְהוָה, PAE 1.1. Cf. Zech. 7.2; Ezek. 4.24; 5.2.

¹²⁴ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שֹׁכֵן יְבִי, BP 12.2. Cf. Ps. 74.2; 135.21; Isa. 8.18; Joel 4. (ET 3)17, 21. Kraeling 1953:85 remarks that "The Jews at Elephantine believed that Yahu was actually present in the temple. When the Deuteronomic doctrine was formulated, it reflected an enlightened skepticism which found it impossible to believe, with earlier, more naïve generations, that God literally "dwells" in his sanctuary. Accordingly, it was said, 'He caused his name to dwell there' - the 'name' representing a holy emanation from the deity, who really had his dwelling place far removed in heaven. This was a formulation (of Phoenician origin?) which preserved the sanctity of the temple, so that it could not become useless to go there, but at the same time met the critical doubts of an advanced age. The colony at Elephantine had no need for such subtleties. It was satisfied with the more primitive concept." For them Yahu dwelt in the temple.

¹²⁵ אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמִי, AP 30.2, 27f.; 31.2, 26f.; 32.3f.; 38.5. Cf. Ps. 136.26; Ezra 1.2; 5.11f.; Neh. 1.4f.; Dan. 2.18f.

¹²⁶ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, Dupont-Sommer 1947:175-91.

¹²⁷ Porten 1968:107ff. and 1984:386.

including meal offering (מִנְחָתָא), incense (לְבוֹנָתָא) and burnt offering (עֹלֹתָא).¹²⁸ Here as in the OT, the distinction is made between the priest of YHW¹²⁹ and the pagan priest.¹³⁰

Mention is also made, though not in very clear contexts, of two of the most characteristic institutions of Israel: the Sabbath and the Passover. The former is mentioned in a number of ostraca,¹³¹ the latter in three ostraca and possibly in a papyrus from Elephantine (AP 21) often called the "Passover Papyrus", though here the reference may only be to the Feast of Unleavened Bread.¹³²

From the features above it is obvious that the religion of the Jews of Elephantine was a direct continuation of the Yahwistic religion of Palestine. Two further aspects are still important to consider: temple and syncretism.

b) The Temple¹³³

The existence of a temple outside Jerusalem after the Josianic reform has often caused perplexity and several explanations have been put forward to justify its legitimate or illegitimate existence. But, it may

¹²⁸ Cf. Exod. 29.38ff; Num. 28.3ff. and AP 30.21f.; 31.21. Porten 1968:111ff. and 1984:386.

¹²⁹ כהם, AP 30.1, 18; 38.1, 12.

¹³⁰ כהר, AP 13.5; 27.3, 8; 30.5. Cf. 2Kings 23.5ff.; Zeph. 1.4. Porten 1984:386.

¹³¹ שבת is mentioned in C1-G 44, 152 and 186. In a fourth (C1-G 204) the Sabbath eve (עֶרֶב־שַׁבָּת) is mentioned. For C1-G 152 see *editio princeps* in A. Dupont-Sommer 1949:29-39.

¹³² That the Passover was mentioned here is held e.g. by Porten 1968:128-133 and Greenfield 1981:120; that only the Feast of Unleavened Bread is referred is held e.g. by Kraeling 1953:92-95 and Smith 1984:231.

¹³³ See Kraeling 1953 100-110; Porten 1968:284-298; Grelot 1972:388-419.

also be asked the other way around whether a centralization did actually take place at such an early time.

The Jews at Elephantine, in spite of what some scholars may say, do not seem to have been aware that their religious practices or the existence of their temple did fall into the category of "unorthodox practices" (this is a creation of later Judaism), rather they did recognize the supremacy of the Jerusalem religious leadership and looked to this for guidance.

Three years after their temple has been destroyed¹³⁴ the Jews of Elephantine wrote a letter which dates^{from} the 17th year of Darius II¹³⁵ to the Persian governor of Judea Bagoas (בגואס). It was a follow up letter since the senders, "Yedoniah and his colleagues, the priests who are in Yeb the fortress", refer to previous letters written near the occurrence of the event to Bagoas himself and "to Johanan the high priest and his colleagues the priests who are in Jerusalem, and to Ostanes the brothers of 'Anani, and the nobles of the Jews" (AP 30.18-19) asking for permission to rebuild their temple. None of these letters had any reply and they were now asking Bagoas once more. This renewed petition, they inform him, had also been sent "to Delaiah and Shelemiah the sons of Sanballat governor of Samaria" (AP 30.29).

This new petition for the construction of the temple to Bagoas, the governor of Judea and the Yahwists of Samaria proved to be more fortunate than the former request sent to the religious authorities of Jerusalem. The lack of any reply from the latter as well as the decline of a further attempt by the Jews of Elephantine may well be indicative of

¹³⁴ The reason is more likely to have been politically rather than religiously motivated. See Kraeling:1953:102ff.

¹³⁵ I.e. November 26, 407 B.C. AP 30-31.

the increasing opposition and intolerance of the Jerusalemite priesthood towards any other form of Yahwism outside of Jerusalem. This must have been felt as a novelty by the Jews at Elephantine, otherwise the previous letter to the religious authorities in Jerusalem is unexplainable. Obviously, they were not aware of a centralization law which forbade any other temple to be built outside that of Jerusalem. "Syncretistic" Yahwism was no longer tolerated and a new era started in Jerusalem of that "Yahwism" which became normative judging and evaluating the former religious traditions and institutions of Israel's religion.

Whatever the developments in Jerusalem, the temple was ultimately rebuilt.¹³⁶ The success of this petition is preserved in a *memorandum* to Arsames (AP 32) in which Bagoas and Delaiah acted in favour of the community in Yeb asking the authorization to rebuild the temple and to celebrate the sacrifices as before except for the burnt-offering,¹³⁷ probably due to a compromise with the Jerusalem religious authorities who attempted to preserve the monopoly and thus allegiance to deuteronomistic principles.¹³⁸

c) Syncretism

If the existence of a temple had caused some perplexity even more so did the syncretistic features of their religion. In this respect the most significant document is a subscription list to the temple of YHW (AP

¹³⁶ This must have been the case since it is mentioned in the topographical indications of a contract dated 402 B.C. (BP 12.18f). Cf. Kraeling 1953:110; Porten 1968:294f.; Grelot 1972:262, 419f.

¹³⁷ See Porten 1979:96ff. The word **ועלֹתָא** "and burnt-offering", included in Jedaniah's original petition (AP 30) suggests the request for the right to restore the temple cult in full, i.e., including burnt-offering (cf. AP 30.25).

¹³⁸ Kraeling 1953:107; Grelot 1972:416; Contini 1986:101.

22 - 419 (?) B.C.) in which it is specified that the sum collected is to be divided among Yahu and two further deities. The document begins:

On the 3rd of Phamenoth, 5th year. This is (a list of) the names of the Jewish garrison who gave money for Ya'u the God, man by man the sum of 2 shekels: (col.i.1)

In col. vii,120 the text states by way of conclusion:

The money which was paid on that day into the hand of Yedoniah b. Gemariah in the month of Phamenoth (was) the sum of 31 Kerashin 8 Shekels of which
12 Kerashin 6 Shekels for Ya'u
7 Kerashin for Eshembethel
the sum of 12 kerashin for 'Anathbethel

The "syncretistic" aspect of the Yahwism at Elephantine is here obvious in that the chief priest Yedonihahu received and paid contributions to all three deities. Explanations to wipe these aspects off by e.g. attributing the contributions to the other gods as an act of goodwill to the non Jewish contingent in the garrison from the Jews of Elephantine, are not tenable. Albright's description of this situation as "a symbiosis between heretical Yahwism and a syncretistic Aramaean cult, rather than a fusion between the two"¹³⁹ is more accurate. Contini suggests that the association of the god of the Jews with deities whose name is a compound of Bê'tel, the major god of the Arameans of Syene¹⁴⁰ may be an indication of a YHW-Bê'tel syncretism and worship of a divine triad of an Aramaic type i.e. father-mother-son.

A further aspect of syncretism may possibly be deduced from some of the contributors' names.¹⁴¹ 121 names are preserved of which 95 are sufficiently preserved so that one or two other component elements can

¹³⁹ W.F. Albright, "Review of U. Cassuto, 'The Gods of the Jews of Elephantine', in *Kedem: Studies in Jewish Archaeology*, Jerusalem, 1942, 1, 47ff. (in Hebrew)", *BASOR* 90 (1943) 39-41:40.

¹⁴⁰ A temple of Bê'tel is mentioned in *LH* 4.1.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Contini 1986:95f.

be discerned. A form of YHWH occurs in 40 of them, in others the names of different gods occur. Among the donors' names we find Pamut¹⁴² and Bagaphernes;¹⁴³ some bear parents' names expressing devotion to *Herem (חרמן - line 4),¹⁴⁴ Bethel (בית אל - line 6), Hadad (הדדנורי - line 23, cf. 16.19), Neith ('of Sais'), Thoth (טֹת, 'the weigher of souls' - line 83), Sati (?), Horus, and Anat.¹⁴⁵

If with the above document, not knowing the nature of the subscription, we can only speculate, a clear evidence of "syncretism" is attested in AP 44.3 in which a man did swear "By Ya'u the God, by msqd' (?)¹⁴⁶ and by Anathya'u". Whatever may be restored before Anathya'u, the man clearly did swear by this goddess¹⁴⁷ and thus this was the name of a god, probably considered the consort of Ya'u.¹⁴⁸ Kraeling, on the other hand, suggests ^{we shall} regard this goddess as the daughter of the god since he takes the goddess Eshembethel to mean "the spouse of Bethel"¹⁴⁹ in which Bethel, he argues, is likely to have been identified with Yahu as he was with El in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁵⁰ The existence of this god in the Hebrew Bible is witnessed in Jer. 48.13 in which the parallelism requires that as Moab shall be ashamed of Kemosh their god so the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel. In the Hebrew Bible the god appears as a theophoric

142 פמט - 'property of Mut', line 68.

143 בגפרן - line 133.

144 Cf. AP 7.7; 18.4 which suggest that Herem was considered to be a god.

145 Smith 1984:226-27.

146 See Kraeling 1953:91.

147 Cf. AP 22.125 ענתביתאל.

148 Cowley 1923:148.

149 See Kraeling 1953:90.

150 For a discussion of the god Bethel see Albright 1942:168ff.

element in Zech. 7.2 (Bethelsharezer)¹⁵¹ and here as in the Elephantine papyri the name appears to be attributed to a pious devotee of YHWH.¹⁵² If the identification is correct the two goddesses 'Anathyahu and Anathbethel may have been regarded^{as} identical.¹⁵³ Further, one may wonder whether the temple of Bethel at Hermopolis was not the temple of Yahu at Elephantine.¹⁵⁴

The worship of Anat (=the Queen of Heaven - מלכת שמים) of which a temple existed at Syene¹⁵⁵ is also attested in Jer. 44.15ff.¹⁵⁶ according to which this cult, denounced by the prophet, was practised especially by the Jews of Pathros and before them "in the cities of Judah and streets of Jerusalem" and before them by their fathers, kings, and princes.¹⁵⁷

Two further judicial oaths witness to syncretistic features. In AP 14.5 the Jewess Mibtahiah, divorced from the Egyptian Pi', swears to him by the goddess Sati who with the goddess Anuki was closely associated with Khnum in the worship of the local Egyptian temple.

In AP 7 Malchiah ben Joshibiah promises to a person whose name has not been preserved that he will 'call' to the god Herembethel.¹⁵⁸

The liberal attitude or syncretism of the Elephantine Jews is further attested in a number of greetings. In AP 21.2 (the 'Passover Papyrus') Hananiah, in writing to "Yedoniah and his colleagues to the

¹⁵¹ The Hebrew is also taken as a single personal name by Ackroyd 1968:206f. n. 121 and Petersen 1984:281.

¹⁵² Kraeling 1953:89.

¹⁵³ It is just possible that originally the terms Yah, Il and Bethel were used as a simple reference to "god". Cf. Garbini 1986:88.

¹⁵⁴ Kraeling 1953:88.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. LH 4.1.

¹⁵⁶ For a critical analysis of this passage see Cartoll 1986:733ff.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Porten 1984:393.

¹⁵⁸ Smith 1984:393.

Jewish garrison", greets, "The welfare of my brethren may the gods seek". A similar formula occurs in *AP* 37.1f.; 39.1; 56.1; and *BP* 13.1. The plural form **אלהיא** in these greetings may be the equivalent of the Hebrew **אלהים**, but since the plural verb is used there is no escape that a polytheistic formula was used though possibly at times mechanically or unconsciously. On two ostraca, Jews, writings to other Jews,¹⁵⁹ bless them by pagan deities. In *Cl-G* 277,¹⁶⁰ Yarho greeted Haggai by invoking Bel, Nabu, Shamah, and Nergal. In the second (*Cl-G* 70), the tailor Gadai blessed Micaiah by YHW and Hn(Qm) ([?Khnum=J...**ליתת ולתנ**]).¹⁶¹

Besides the positive documentation, the negative evidence may be mentioned. In contrast to the literary fecundity of the Jerusalem of its time and from which we know about it, the Elephantine community has preserved in no form any of the Books of the Hebrew Bible, nor is there any trace of a synagogue. The only writings found there were wisdom literature represented by the fragments of *Bar Puneš* and *The Words of Ahikar*.¹⁶² There is also no mention of "the law of Yahu". Disputes among Jews were in fact settled before Persian Judges. As any *argumenta e silentio* this has, however, a relative significance.

From an investigation of these texts we may conclude that the religion of the Jews at Elephantine was normative Yahwism: they had a temple of Yahu, there is evidence for a sacrificial terminology known to us from the Hebrew Bible, and of a more or less regular observance of the Sabbath, Passover (?) and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. More

¹⁵⁹ So Smith 1984:393 and Contini 1986:95. According to Porten 1984:393 they are non Jews writing to Jews.

¹⁶⁰ Dupont-Sommer 1944:28-39.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Grelot 1972:349. For a discussion on both ostraca see Porten 1969:116-21.

¹⁶² Smith 1984:232f.; Contini 1986:97.

relevant for us is the syncretistic aspect. It is true that some forms of syncretism were due to the assimilation of Egyptian gods, and in this case we can really speak of syncretism, but it is also true that many forms of "syncretism" were also imported from Palestine and surely not acquired there. Yahweh was in fact worshipped with a consort, be that Eshembethel (more likely) or Anathyahu. Yahwism was more of a syncretistic as well as polytheistic religion than so far has been acknowledged and it was able to exist peacefully in a pluri-religious context as it is evidenced by the freedom taken in greetings, association and worship¹⁶³ of Yahu with other gods and in oaths. This evidence ought to be taken seriously because it gives us a glimpse of what actually was the Israelite religion before the exile. There is also no reason to try to argue that the Jews at Elephantine were from the north since they regularly call themselves Jews. Syncretism and polytheism went for a long time alongside the Israelite worship of their national god YHWH.

The association of Yahu with Anathbethel of Eshembethel, however, is strange since Asherah had so far been the traditional consort of YHWH and Anath of Baal unless one of these goddesses was identified with Asherah. But it is also possible that here we have the reflection of another aspect of Yahwism, namely its identification not only with the god El but also with Baal. This could just be argued from the many Israelite names bearing the theophoric component Baal and possibly from another inscription on plaster in black and red ink found at Kuntillet

¹⁶³ Cf. Cl-G 70 in which Yahu is worshipped together with Egyptian gods.

'Ajrud which reads as follows:

... ובארת \ אל \ ב ...
... ברך \ בעל \ בים \ מל ...
... שם \ אל \ בים \ מל ...

... and in the way of the god [or El] ...
... blessed be Baal in the day of ...
... the name of the god [or El] in the day of ...

Possibly Baal and El are here paralleled and identified. The fragmentary nature, unfortunately, does not allow us to be more definite.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Catastini (1982) uses this evidence as well as others to suggest that Kuntillet Ajrud probably was a prophetic centre. The suggestion is possible, though before any more definite conclusion is reached a full publication of the finds is needed.

III. DATING THE TRADITION

A. The Deuteronomistic History

1. Current Approaches

The Book of Judges is considered to be part of a larger complex usually known as the deuteronomistic history (Dtr). As to its extent, form, and date of composition scholars are still divided. Three main strands are usually recognized in the attempt to discuss how the work came into being. Besides the defenders of a Dtr there are those who would argue against it and would rather speak of a Hexateuch (Gen.-Josh., e.g. von Rad) and the following books as having been deuteronomically-deuteronomistically edited.¹ As a matter of fact the problem of whether we have to think in terms of Hexateuch, Pentateuch, or Tetrateuch is not clear, especially now that scholars begin to see in the Pentateuch dtr-dtn insertions as well as ideologies (e.g. the continuous movement back^{to} and away from God). Yet, the majority of scholars seems to be more inclined to talk of a Dtr to which the Tetrateuch was then added which according to some never had an autonomous existence. Among the supporters of this view three main view-points can be traced. First of all there is the view of M. Noth who first gave a classical formulation of this theory. According to Noth Deuteronomy to 2Kings is the work of a

¹ See Fohrer 1970:192ff.

single author, composed during the exilic time. This theory has endured the criticisms of many years and still today Noth's work remains fundamentally important. This is demonstrated not only by the fact of its recent translation into English but also by its reproposal and defence by H.-D. Hoffmann and J. Van Seters.² Both have re-affirmed the unity of the work against the tendency to see in it various redactional strata. Both have also re-affirmed Noth's view that the deuteronomistic historian was an "author" rather than simply an "editor". While Hoffmann, however, accuses Noth himself of inconsistency in his later works on Joshua and Kings in that he opened the way in distinguishing more than one redaction in this work, Van Seters points to Noth's failure in missing to recognize the creative role of the historian. "He still attributed too little of the work to the author himself and too much to his sources and 'traditions'".³

A second view which has become very popular is that of a double redaction. It was first proposed by F.M. Cross⁴ who suggested a pre- and a post-exilic edition of Dtr. and has recently been advocated again by R.D. Nelson⁵ who has further refined Cross' original thesis. This view has found support in A.D.H. Mayes' recent book on Dtr.⁶

A third view of German origin finds its more eminent exponents in the names of a Göttingen group of scholars: R. Smend, W. Dietrich, and T. Veijola.⁷ According to this view three layers can be discerned in Dtr:

² Hoffmann 1980; Van Seters 1983.

³ 1983:359.

⁴ 1973.

⁵ 1981.

⁶ 1983.

⁷ 1971; 1972; 1975 and 1977; respectively. For a brief review see Kaiser 1984:150f., 175-77; and Webb 1987:22-25. For a general overview see Radjawane 1973 and Mayes 1983.

the basic layer (DtrG) consisted of the proper historiographic work which went then through two successive major recensions: one "prophetic" (DtrP) concerning traditions about the prophets; and one "nomistic" (DtrN) concerning the observance of norms. According to Dietrich "the two later redactions by DtrP and DtrN were no minor ones but included rather major additions, both of older traditions and of new compositions. By comparing the language and style of these three redaction with other Israelite literature Dietrich concluded the DtrG had been written around 580 B.C., DtrP about ten years later, and DtrN another ten years later."⁸ Of these layers the first two are pro- and the last anti-monarchic.

Whatever the approach, all three views date the final form of Dtr during the exilic period. The Book of Judges therefore would have had its origin at that time. A problem, however, which is often pointed out, is the relationship of the individual books as we have them now within the larger complex of Dtr. There is no doubt that the various books were conceived to be in the sequence in which they are now. Connectives holding the various books together were very well pointed out by Noth and have been differently re-emphasized by Van Seter's. The chronological scheme, especially as suggested by Richter, is a strong pointer towards its unity. Yet, the idea that a continuous historical work was then broken up into books as Noth suggested has been an obstacle to several scholars for accepting Noth's thesis. They argue rather that Joshua-2Kings were books simply deuteronomically edited. This is also supported by those scholars who tend to approach the biblical books as literary units. B. Webb thus concludes his work as follows: "One of the implications of my work is that it may be time to re-open the question of

⁸ Webb 1987:216 n.39. Cf. Polzin 1980:13.

how the Deuteronomistic History as we have it came into existence."⁹

2. Towards an Alternative View

In a recent article A. Rofé arguing from a historical-philological approach has also suggested that "the widely accepted view about the wind-up and the last redaction of the Deuteronomistic work in the Exilic period (mid-6th century)¹⁰...needs to be reconsidered."¹¹ The evidence which he adduces for it is the post-exilic interpolation into 1Kings of the Naboth story (ch. 21.1-16) which he clearly shows to be a post-exilic composition. "In the light of this evidence", he continues, "the formation of the books of the Former Prophets will be better explained as a long process lasting for a period of about four-hundred years, beginning in the 8th century, when the Ephraimite historiography came into being,¹² ending in the 4th century, towards the end of the Persian dominion, when the last paradigmatic narratives were incorporated. The Exile of Judah marked just one phase, not necessarily the most important, in the process."¹³

⁹ 1987:211.

¹⁰ Cf. the excellent review and the taking of position of Long 1984:11-32.

¹¹ 1988:103.

¹² Cf. Burney 1920:xli-1.

¹³ 1988:193. Though we fully agree with Rofé's emphasis on the post-exilic period as the time of these traditions' final revision, which he was able to support with valid arguments, we disagree with his minimizing of the exilic importance as well as with his view that Ephraimite historiography came into being at the beginning of the 8th century. It seems to us that a later date would be more conducive. In connection with the post-exilic dating of traditions we may also remember Mowinckel who had already expressed thirty years ago the view that Deuteronomy is a post-exilic composition: "die *qahal* - Theologie in D ist mit ein Beweis dafür, dass D kein vorexilisches Buch sein kann; es ist eben als das "Konstitutionsbuch" der nach der Heimkehr sich bildenden jüdischen Gemeinde zu beurteilen". (1964:90)

From a different point of view the existence of such a work running from Dt to 2Kings has been rejected by Garbini who regards the existence of such a literary work around the VI century B.C. to be absurd not least for its dimensions: we would have a "monstrum" of about three hundred pages of modern printing without counting the Book of Deuteronomy, while all the literary works of the ancient East are considerably shorter.¹⁴ In fact the phenomenon of its size (though it is only an exterior and formal element) would bring it closer, chronologically speaking, to the great works of Hellenistic historiography from Herodotus onwards. In the light of this even Soggin, who has taken up this observation with approval,¹⁵ admits not to be able at present to see what form Dtr could have had in its more ancient phase, nor at what time it was terminated.¹⁶ However, in the light of the many elements which the Deuteronomistic historiography shares with that of Herodotus' Soggin suggests that the logical consequence is to date the former after the latter. In that it is possible to explain a number of elements in Dtr with Herodotus' work while the contrary is not possible.¹⁷

¹⁴ See e.g. the *Gilgamesh*, the main ancient ^{Near} Eastern literary work and also the largest, which did not extend for more than twelve tablets, i.e. twelve chapters. This view was first expressed by Garbini in passing in the context of a recension from which I am quoting (*AION* 42, 1982, 497-499) and then re-expressed in his recent work of 1986. Contrary to Van Seters who considers the Deuteronomistic historian not only as the first Israelite historian but also as the first known historian in Western civilization who truly deserves this designation (1983:362) Garbini argues for a dependence of the biblical historiography on the Greek. The same point has been re-expressed by Garbini in his review of Van Seters' work, *In search of History* (1983) who, among many other criticisms, in the view of the reviewer, has failed to pay attention to the "quantitative" aspect of the Near Eastern literature with the supposed Deuteronomistic History (G. Garbini, Review of Van Seters 1983, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 56 (1982) 193-94).

¹⁵ 1986b:24.

¹⁶ 1986b:24-25.

¹⁷ 1987:11 n.21.

These brief remarks, especially the presence of dtr-dtn elements in the Tetrateuch, seem to open up new avenues of research. After all Noth himself worked with the presupposition of lack of dtr-dtn traces in the Tetrateuch. Possibly, had he been aware of this, he would have reached different conclusions. It is in fact possible that we ought not to speak of Dtr, Hexateuch, Pentateuch, or Tetrateuch, but rather of a work which was conceived as a unified whole going from Genesis to the end of 2Kings.

This view has also been expressed by Sacchi¹⁸ and is considered by him as a possible working hypothesis. He observes that the break between the work of the Deuteronomist and the one who put together the Pentateuch is far from clear. The fact that scholars take them as two different works rests essentially on the presupposition, taken for granted, that the redactor of the Pentateuch only aimed at laying the foundations of the faith and life of Israel. In other words, he would have had an ideology and aim different from those of the Deuteronomist: he would have written the Torah. But on this Sacchi expresses doubts. On the other hand, there is a lack of studies on the ideology of this redactor, perhaps because it is thought that he had none. In any case, the Pentateuch cannot be said to lack any specific design or structure. This does not indicate that it should be seen as the product of continuous manipulations but rather it points to the figure of an author.

A definite break between the end of 2Kings and the beginning of Isaiah (as . is the order in the Hebrew Bibles) is recognized both by the traditions and by modern scholars. It is clear in the Christian Canon which has the Books of Chronicles following 2Kings. If there is an end there must also be a beginning as well as a redactor/author. The most obvious beginning would be 2Kings 1.1 but it is also clear that the

¹⁸ 1987:65-86.

narrative does not begin there. If we proceed with this method it is difficult to find any clear break before Genesis 1.1 since one has the impression of a continuous narrative. Also, if two different works are to be postulated it is hard to explain why certain books have an exclusive interest in the proto-history of Israel while others deal only with Israel's "historical" events. Whatever difficulties may be met in a unitary reading, the material of these two presupposed independent works is arranged according to a precise chronological line in such a way that it has been possible to reconstruct the date of the creation of the world.¹⁹ If traditional modern historiography has been able to claim that all is clear until the exile and then everything becomes obscure,²⁰ it is just because someone has left us with a well organized chronological system which does not go beyond 561 B.C. It is therefore an hypothesis worth considering, as Sacchi puts it, that the author of that work which ended with 2Kings was responsible for the whole structure which runs from the beginning of the world to the time of King Jehoiakim.²¹

Further evidence that this work actually did start with Adam is provided by the parallel Book of Chronicles. If a parallel work exists it means that the need was felt to write one because evidently the earlier edition did meet total or partial disapproval. The author of Chronicles²² obviously knew the successive events up to the Cyrus edict as

¹⁹ The earliest chronological system is probably that of Archbishop James Usher (or Ussher) in the 17th century in his work *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (1650-54). According to his reckoning the world was created in 4004 B.C.

²⁰ Ricciotti 1953:167.

²¹ Sacchi 1987:81f.

²² With Sacchi, we are also of the opinion that the Book of Ezra and Nehemiah are not part of the Book of Chronicles.

it is deduced from the genealogies in the first chapters of 1Chronicles which go beyond the narrated facts, but he also stops more or less at the point the author of Gen.-2Kings did. This again gives support to the view that the intention of the work was that of replacing *a* previous *one*. The fact that tradition ultimately was able to preserve both was probably due to compromises or similar events among opposite parties.²³

The main objection to this line of argument is, however, that there is a lack of any reference to the Torah so that it is often suggested that the Chronicler based his account only on parts of the books of Samuel and Kings. Sacchi presents here a very plausible solution. In his view contemporaneous to the formation of 1-2 Chronicles was also the coming into being of the Torah. Judaism was becoming normative and the need was felt to select those texts which would serve this purpose. The legislative corpus was not created as such but entered the tradition as historical memory so that the law came into being even retaining those narratives which had nothing to do with it. These narratives neither undermined nor created any tension in the Judaism which existed between the V and IV century B.C., but the theology reflected in other "historical" books had become unacceptable.²⁴ Thus he recapitulated all past history of the people of Israel from Genesis to 2 Kings, but his main interest was not to write a history of his people but to correct an

²³ Sacchi 1987:81f.

²⁴ Sacchi suggests here that the theology of this redactor (R1) had become unacceptable (p. 83) because it gave the Davidic monarchy an importance which Judaism did not acknowledge anymore. On the whole "Dtr" in his opinion had a positive concept of kingship. We have rather taken a different view on this (see later the discussion on Judges 9). Kingship was basically condemned in "Dtr" and it was then differently re-evaluated and accepted in the books of Chronicles. This, however, does not undermine what is said above. The fact remains that the Chronicles felt the need to re-write Gen.-2Kings because of clashing interests and ideologies with his own and his own time.

ideology which he regarded to be wrong.²⁵

In spite of opposition to the redactor(s)/author(s) of Gen.-2Kings it was thanks to his genius that the people of Israel were able to survive as a people. He understood that a people is such only if it has a history and that history is the chronological arrangement of the facts which we know.²⁶

Thus the question of the extent of this historical work must remain open as well as its time of composition. We will however, consider the exilic period as the earliest possible time for the final composition of our book, though, as we will be arguing the post-exilic period seems the most appropriate time in which this book gained its final shape.

B. The Period of the Judges

The biblical accounts schematize the history of the Israelites into periods starting from the very beginning of the world and ending with the fall of the Judean kingdom. The phenomenon *per se* is unique that a people should have preserved their "historical" traditions from a time far before their establishment as a monarchy.²⁷

The period of the Judges with which we are mainly concerned follows the period of the conquest and precedes that of the monarchy in the biblical narratives. However, the date and even the existence of such a

²⁵ Sacchi 1987:83.

²⁶ Sacchi 1987:86.

²⁷ I am here accepting Soggin's (1986^B:25) and Garbini's thesis that real "historiography" started only with the monarchy as it was the case in all the ancient East (1986^B:243). This is exactly the opposite of Van Seters' according to whom "...only when the nation itself took precedence over the king, as happened in Israel, could history writing be achieved" (1983:355).

period are far from clear.²⁸ The period is usually dated in relation to whatever dates are assigned to the "conquest" and to the rise of Saul.²⁹ The problem becomes even more acute as we realize that the stories of the "major judges", once stripped of their frameworks, virtually stand in a historical vacuum. The conjecture, therefore, seems plausible to understand this period as a creation of the historian who attempted to describe the early history of Israel, to which end also he made use of ancient traditions (e.g. the song of Deborah) whatever their nature.³⁰

The depiction of such a period which can only make sense within a larger literary context has a specific purpose. Describing both major

²⁸ As Garbini remarks we have no proof that such judges ever existed and that eventually they did not bear the title of king. The Merneptah stele, however, witness the existence in Palestine of a group of semi-nomadic people called Israel. The transition between the existence of such a group and the Israelite kingdom may not be far from similar events as narrated in the Book of Judges (1986A:66; 1986B:34). Cf. also Lemche 1988:108-9 in whose view the early history of Israel is in fact a late Israelite construction.

²⁹ Suggestions have been made, however, to see this period as embracing a broader time than so far has been attributed to it (i.e. between c. 1200 B.C. -1020 B.C.), e.g. Mayes (1985:66-68). S.N. Warner has also addressed this problem and concluded "that there is a strong *a priori* case for placing the judges before a period of conquest or infiltration (1978:463). Garbini, on the other hand, talking of Israel's proto-history, suggests to extend it to the time in which the biblical tradition places the first kings, i.e. the tenth century B.C. (1986B:175).

³⁰ A similar position seems also taken by Wellhausen: "the historical continuity on which much stress is laid by the scheme, is in no way shown in the individual narratives of the Book of Judges. These stand beside one another unconnectedly and without any regard to order or sequence, like isolated points of light which emerge here and there out of the darkness of forgetfulness. They make no pretense of actually filling up any considerable space of time; they afford no points of attachment whereon to fasten a chronology. In truth, it is hardly the dim resemblance of a continuity that is imparted to the traditions by the empty framework of the scheme. The conception of a period of judges between Joshua and Saul, during which judges ruled over Israel and succeeded one another almost as regularly as did the kings at a later period, is quite foreign to that tradition" (1885:232f.).

and minor judges³¹ as heads over Israel (i.e. the twelve tribes) the historian attempted to link the two periods of a united Israel: the twelve-tribe-Israel and the united Israel under the monarchy.³² The so-called Chronicler's historical work does not know of any such period but provides the connection between the two periods of the united Israel at two different levels: first of all, through the genealogical derivation of the chosen dynasty from one of the eponymous tribes³³ and secondly through keeping the twelve tribes constitution of Israel besides the monarchy.³⁴ The purpose of this was to maintain together the spiritual unity between the Northern and Southern kingdoms through the merging of their religious traditions. This presentation finds its most likely place of origin in the exilic/post-exilic Israel and becomes clearer as soon as we ask the question "why judges"?

1. The Use of the Term "Judges"

The answer to this is given by the biblical text itself **יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה**

³¹ The difference between the two is not to be pressed. Cf. Webb 1987:176f.; Boling 1975:7f.; Diebner-Schult 1975:46 n.6. As Ahlström has rightly remarked "The classification into 'major' and 'minor' judges is no more than a scholarly-theological invention inspired by Max Weber's theory about 'charismatic' leaders, which he thought to be the real judges (*Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie III: Das antike Judentum* (Tübingen, 1921) 92-95)2. (1986:76 n.66). For a general discussion see N.P. Lemche (1983:47-55). In his view the difference between the two is literary, moreover the minor judges' "list have no bearing at all on any specific office in pre-monarchic Israel." (p. 55)

³² This implies that there was never such an institution of judges in pre-monarchic Israel.

³³ Diebner-Schult 1975:42.

³⁴ Cf. 1Chron. 6.39-9.34; 12; 26.32-27.22 and further the frequent occurrence of tribal names in the special material of Chronicles. Tradition-historically the occurrence of the "tribes of Israel" in the Books of Samuel and Kings is to be distinguished from that, cf. 2Sam. 5.1; 1Sam. 16.17; 1Kings 14.21; etc. Diebner-Schult 1975:46 n.8.

שפטים ויושעוּם מִיר שִׁסְיָם (Judg. 2.16). But where does this idea originate from? It is clear from the use of the word שפט that in the mind of the writer it had a wider semantic connotation than simply 'to judge'.³⁵ The best parallel to this is the brief appearance of a similar institution in the government of the city of Tyre during the Neo-Babylonian period.³⁶ Of this we are informed by Josephus according to whom Nebuchadnesor having defeated Ithobal, the king was replaced by Baal who reigned from 574 to 564. Then there was a succession of "judges" (suffetes) for seven years. However, a king (Balator) reigned for a year. After this period the monarchy was resumed with Merbal who returned from Babylon in 556. He reigned for four years and was then succeeded by his brother Hiram (552-532).³⁷ To quote Josephus directly:

Under King Ithobal, Nebuchodonosor besieged Tyre for thirteen years. The next king, Baal, reigned ten years. After him judges were appointed and held office as follows: Eknibal, son of Baslech, two months; Chelbes, son of Abdaeus, ten months, Abbar the high-priest, three months; Mythyn and Gerastratus, son(s) of Abdelimus, six years; after then Balator was King for one year. On his death his subjects sent to Babylon and fetched from there Merbal, who reigned four years; and on his death they sent for his brother Hiram, who reigned twenty years. It was in his reign that Cyrus became monarch of Persia. (*Contra Ap. I.* 156-158)

Besides the "judges" of Tyre a similar institution was known also at Carthage and other Punic cities. The suffetes of Carthage must, at least in name, have been a continuation of this system. The change from the

³⁵ A fundamental study on the meaning of שפט is Richter's 1965:40-71. For further bibliography see Soggin 1981:2 n.2.

³⁶ This view is of course not new. Such parallel had already been observed for years, see e.g. Richter (1965:68-71), Soggin (1981:2f). Nobody, however, apart from Van Seters (1983) (as far as we are aware of) has drawn any conclusion of how the two relate. A similar view had been proposed by A. van Selms in whose opinion the term שפטים had been borrowed by the editor of the Book of Judges from city-states at the cost during the reign of Hezekiah (1959:49f.). Cf. T. Ishida 1973:529f.

³⁷ Moscati 1968:23.

title king to suffete probably took place around the middle of the fifth century when a reaction occurred against the Margonids family.³⁸ The governmental system of Carthage, as Aristotle, writing in the fourth century, tells us, consisted of two magistrates (kings or suffetes). In the report of Josephus, however, only once the magistrates were appointed together over Tyre: Mythyn and Gerastratus who ruled for six years.³⁹

To what extent this form of government was known to our historian cannot be said, but it must have been sufficiently known to provide him with a working framework which adequately fit his purpose.⁴⁰ "The application of such an institution to pre-monarchic Israel may be both anachronistic and artificial, since it presupposes a highly unified state, but it was Dtr's way of trying to come to terms with a little-known period of Israel's history. On the other hand, he made no effort to create any real uniformity among the rather broad diversity of persons who were thought to fill the ranks of the judges of this period,

³⁸ This change is reported in a passage by Justin, "At length, however, as so numerous a family of commanders was dangerous to the liberty of the state, since they themselves managed and decided everything, a 100 judges were chosen out of the senate, who were to demand of the generals, when they returned from war, an account of their proceedings, in order that, under this control, they might exercise their command in war with a regard to the judicature and laws at home" (Justin XIX, 2, 5-6). Cf. Moscati 1968:132.

³⁹ The political organization of the Punic cities in Sardinia was also based on Carthaginian politics. There too we find the appearance of two suffetes governing the cities. The common appointment of two magistrates may throw light on 1Sam 8.1-2 where both Samuel's sons are judges in Beer-sheba. Cf. also KAI, 172.

⁴⁰ The view that this period was due to Dtr was already expressed by Noth. In his words, "Dtr did the largest amount of original work on the period between the occupation and the beginning of the monarchy - here he created the idea of a specific period of 'judges' - though even this work is based on influence from traditional material" (1981:77). Less satisfactory however seems to us his explanation of "why judges?" which according to him was the conjunction of two basic traditions, (a) a series of stories about various tribal heroes and their histories, which came from different sources and were probably collected before Dtr; (b) a list of judges, in the figure of Jephthah that caused Dtr to call the heroes of the great legends "judges" as well. Cf. 1981:42ff.

apart from the fact that they act in some way to deliver the people from their enemies - and even this needs qualification in some cases."⁴¹

2. Anachronistic Aspects

This anachronistic aspect has well been pointed out by Garbini who describes the Books of Joshua and Judges as the reflection of ideologies which existed during the period of third century post-exilic Jerusalem hierocracy when the political power, whatever that was, resided in the hands of the priestly class.⁴² This is evident in the dominant theme of the Book of Joshua - and observable to a certain extent in the Gideon tradition - namely submission of the political (Joshua) to the religious power.⁴³ Therefore, to rely on these two books to describe the historical events of a united Israel leads us to admit a historical absurdity as that of a social body notably wide, yet without a head. Garbini rather suggests that the Israelites just as other cities in the ancient Syro-Palestinian area (often of small dimension) did not differ in their form of government, but that they had their "kings" though with a different politico-religious connotation. Further it cannot be supposed that the vacuum of power that came into being could be filled by

⁴¹ Van Seters 1983:346. For a different view see Ahlström's post-humous publication (1993:371ff.) in which he argues that there is no real difference in character between the "judges" and the later kings. The difference is one of degree. He thus does not attribute any particular significance to the use of this term to the leaders so-called in the Book of Judges. The ideological nature of the Book is, however, recognized: "The 'history' we find in the Book of Judges... is an ideological reconstruction and as such is a product of the later pure-Yahwistic circles" (p.376). In spite of this, he appears to treat the separate traditions as factual historical events!

⁴² Garbini 1986B:181.

⁴³ For the subordination-role of Joshua under Moses in the Book of Joshua see Auld 1980:83-85.

the "judges" since their sporadic appearance as saviours does not solve the problem that Israel was often without a leader. This situation is unlikely for Palestinian social groups at the beginning of the Iron Age but it is well conceivable for a small group as that of post-exilic Jerusalem with a hieratic form of government.⁴⁴

a) Israelite Proto-History

This argument of anachronism finds, in our opinion, support in recent developments in the field of historical inquiries into Israelite proto-history.⁴⁵ In order to explain Israel's rise to power and its previous *status quo* scholars have proposed models such as the conquest, immigration, or the social revolution model. Also concerning Israel's tribal organization models have been suggested such as the pastoral nomadic, the religious league (amphictyony), the socio-religious retribalisation and the segmentary society model.⁴⁶ The choice of models proposed by scholars seems to be guided by two different methodologies. First of all, there are those who propose models into which the biblical traditions fit best. Typical of this is the proposal of the amphictyonic theory by Noth, the conquest model of the Albright school or even the latest model of pre-monarchic Israel being a segmentary society. Secondly, there are those who have attempted to reconstruct the proto-history of Israel in the light of extra-biblical evidence taken

⁴⁴ Garbini 1986b:181.

⁴⁵ For a convenient summary of the various models and theories, see Gottwald 1980:261-88.

⁴⁶ The last model is not discussed by Gottwald. It has been suggested by Malamat, Crüsemann, and Lohfink in analogy with some African tribal societies. It has also been accepted by Mayes. For a summary see Mayes 1985:65-74.

globally rather than selectively, as for example in the Albright school, to confirm a certain picture (e.g. Mendenhall, Garbini).⁴⁷

What is interesting to notice, especially with the second group of scholars is, that a considerable departure has taken place from the description of the pre-monarchic Israel in the biblical traditions and their reconstructions. Even the first group of scholars had to make considerable adjustments in order to fit the biblical picture with possible models which more or less would confirm the biblical traditions. This supports our previous argument that the historian in his attempt to describe "the period of the Judges" was simply filling a gap in his "historical" presentation of the proto-history of Israel. The purpose was to link two bodies of traditions in which Israel was already described as a united entity. To rely, therefore, on this book to reconstruct the actual history of this period would be quite misleading.

b) Anti-Monarchic Strand

Apart from the above observations other considerations also suggest the origin of the Book of Judges to be during the exilic/post-exilic period.⁴⁸ The anti-monarchic strand which is found throughout Dtr is more satisfactorily explained as originating during the exilic/post-exilic period.⁴⁹ In it the monarchic (judges) institution is not a political

⁴⁷ The recent work by R.B. Coote and W. Whitelam (1987) seems also to take this position. A similar position is partly taken by those scholars (e.g. Gottwald) who argue for Canaanite origin of the Israelites.

⁴⁸ The arguments present below are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

⁴⁹ Cf. Soggin 1982:4-8. Soggin, however, develops this theme attempting to show that while DtrG and DtrP (according to the Göttingen school distinction) fit better in the pre-exilic period, DtrN (anti-monarchic) is better explained in the post-exilic period.

entity but a religious event. It is essentially blasphemous because it takes away from God that which is essentially God's. Political considerations are almost completely absent in favour of exclusively theological ones. Some examples will elucidate this point. In 1Sam. 8.7ff. YHWH replies to Samuel's prayer who is displeased about the people's request of a king:

Harken to the voice of the people in all they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them...

The alternative "theocracy"-"secular government"⁵⁰ is expressed here in most extreme terms. Interesting, moreover, is the vagueness with which this is expressed. There is no mention (neither here nor elsewhere) of the means, be they political or administrative, by which YHWH should have exercised his rule on a practical level.

A similar situation we find in Judges 8.22-23 where, after Gideon had successfully won a victory over the Midianites he was offered dynastic kingship. Gideon's reply again exhibits this "alternative" in clear terms:

...I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you, the Lord will rule over you.

Gideon's refusal is then contrasted with Abimelech's kingship and his miserable death.

The viewing of political problems in "exclusively" theological terms is typical of sources of the post-exilic period. This is especially true of the Chronicler and the texts connected with him. But in the pre-exilic narratives a similar alternative was known as well. As

⁵⁰ The idea of "theocracy" is a back projection into the pre-monarchic period of a concept which is used by Josephus to describe the Israelite government of the post-exilic period. Soggin 1982:5.

conveyed by the prophets, it was then however one of subordination rather than choice for the authority of YHWH. The time of origin is to be sought in the post-exilic period when, because of the impossibility of restoring the house of David to the throne of Jerusalem, it was necessary to legitimize the only possible form of government in a territory permanently occupied, namely theocratic.⁵¹ At this time the high priest came to acquire a series of prerogatives (though of course politically very limited) which had previously been attributed to the monarchy. Only then (we can) explain the "restoration" of federative tribal organs which are implicitly presented as the valid and in fact the only legitimate alternative to the monarchic institution: they prefigure in fact the post-exilic theocracy.⁵²

⁵¹ Soggin 1982:7.

⁵² *ibid.* In the light of this back-projection of post-exilic anxieties Soggin suggests that the work of M. Noth, *Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israel*, Stuttgart 1930 and his own work *Das Königtum in Israel*, Berlin 1967 should be re-read. Further in his opinion the hypothesis of Israel as a tribal confederation is not impossible. The question is however whether this theory can really find support in the biblical traditions. All of them are late. An exception is the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), but it simply creates more problems than it resolves. These traditions therefore tell us only about the way Israel saw herself in the pre-monarchic period rather than what it was. It is the "propagandistic" nature of the OT traditions which, in our opinion, has not been sufficiently emphasized. The idea that the Book of Daniel is a "political manifesto" has been suggested by J.J. Collins. In similar terms we ought also to think of the other traditions. While, however, for the Book of Daniel the past is re-thought starting from an interrogative question about the present, "will there be a delivering and judicial divine intervention in favour of the Israelite people against the politico-religious persecutors?" (Bonora 1986:77-78) for the Book of Judges the question is of thinking of the past as a means of legitimization of the present status quo. The past "history" is considered important in order to understand the present which is taken as the interpretative criterion of the past. "History", therefore, is not written in a neutral way but pragmatically with a view to the present. Historiography, therefore, is not motivated by a historical need to describe accurately the past, but it comes out of a need either of a legitimization of the socio-political order (e.g. the Book of Judges) or providing an ideological support in the light of a socio-politico-religious change (e.g. the Book of Daniel). The informative function of the past is therefore sided by an apologetic propagandistic view as well.

c) Israel and the Other Peoples

The late date of composition of the Book of Judges is also perceivable in its presentation of the Israelite people in relation to the indigenous inhabitants of the land. According to the historian:

the people of Israel dwelt among the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites (Judges 3.5).

We would argue that this is an artificial picture. The lists of the original people of the land are not intended to provide historically reliable data but their use is rhetorical.⁵³ They are intended to give a flavour of authenticity and antiquity to these traditions. It ties in perfectly, however, with the idea of the twelve Israelite tribes coming from outside Palestine and therefore constituting a single distinct entity. But this picture is only an ideological description of how the historian thought of the origins of the Israelites. A neat distinction between Israelites and Canaanites is misleading.⁵⁴ In theory it is not impossible to envisage the biblical picture depicting a confederation of twelve tribes in the thirteenth century B.C. coming from outside Palestine and taking possession of the land. However, doubts arise as soon as we start comparing this phenomenon with similar ones in the ancient Near East. In fact, as it was usually the case, nomads⁵⁵ in

(Cf. Bonora 1986:91).

⁵³ Cf. Van Seters 1972b:64-81.

⁵⁴ This is increasingly being recognized by scholars. This is particularly true of the studies of Mendenhall and Gottwald. See also Friis 1984A and especially Ahlström (1986). See our discussion in chapter II.

⁵⁵ The question whether the Israelite were nomads or semi-nomads or else is not of relevance here.

transition to a fixed way of life assimilated themselves and immigrants did not cause cultural changes. So also political and religious history of Israel must be considered within the context of the remaining ancient Near East.⁵⁶ But ancient history in general and that of Semitic peoples in particular does not offer any model of comparison to the Israelite historico-religious process as delineated in the Old Testament. On the contrary, historical experience tells us that when two types of religions came suddenly into contact following military conquests, one of the two had to give way to the other. It never happened that both were preserved: either the winners imposed their religion upon the conquered or the former themselves assimilated to that of the latter.⁵⁷ For example in the Phoenician colonization of the Occident the various populations of the mediterranean world that came into contact with them (e.g. the Libyans and the Sardinians) adopted their religion, language and culture even though new elements were also introduced. On the other hand, the Amorites who at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. conquered Mesopotamia were completely assimilated by the pre-existing culture. This involved also the religious dimension. Partially analogous is the case of the Arameans in Mesopotamia and Syria between the end of the second and the beginning of the first millennium B.C.; they kept their own linguistic autonomy while on the religious and cultural level they were involved in a syncretism in which the elements adopted from the local cultures clearly prevailed over those original.⁵⁸ The last two

⁵⁶ Friis 1984b:68ff; Garbini 1986b:82ff.

⁵⁷ Garbini 1986b:83.

⁵⁸ A further example is provided by the Philistine rule among the people of the costal area of southern Palestine who allowed local worship and customs to continue during the first hundred years after they settled on the cost and by ca. 1000 B.C. the Philistines had been assimilated into the Palestinian culture of the costal area (cf. Ahlström 1984:119).

examples are of particular relevance since they share with the Israelites (at least partly) the initial social structure of a nomadic type. Therefore, even though the fact that the pre-exilic Israel is depicted as from time to time backsliding into syncretism with the Canaanite religion, its socio-politico-religious structures may have not been much different from that of the surrounding peoples.⁵⁹

d) The Past Revived

The situation which gave rise to this new outlook, namely the vision of an Israel that originated from outside into Palestine is best explained during the exilic or post-exilic period which forced the Israelites into new considerations and visions. There new traditions came into being as well as old ones being revived. This process culminated into a "historical" presentation of the supposed historical past. Such an interest in a glorious past and its nostalgic resuscitation was not peculiar to Israel but finds parallels in Babylon and Egypt. The phenomenon may be explained by the unstable situation at the time as well as insecure social conditions. In Egypt it was the time of the Saitic Renaissance (26th dynasty - 663-525 B.C.) in which the people attempted to turn away from their drastic conditions. The period of weakness between the 23rd and 24th dynasty gave rise to big rivalries between the generals and the high priests. The land was divided in feudal- and city-states which strove to remain independent from each other. This led to an interest in the Old and Middle Kingdoms which were revived through literature and art. In the religious sphere old gods and cults were revived. This strong interest for the past was sided by a

⁵⁹ See Garbini 1986a:83ff.

strong emphasis on rites and commandments. Ritual norms and food commandments acquired a significance which was never known before. The fulfillment of the law became the core of all practices. At the same time there arose a strong hatred towards those who did not keep the many commandments. They would be considered impure and this was true especially of foreigners (cf. Gen. 43.22).⁶⁰

A similar phenomenon could be observed in Babylon with its peak during the reign of Nabonidus. In his attempt to restore the past he superseded all his predecessors. He restored fallen temples and revived old cults and rituals. Well known is his reconstruction of the Sin temple in Haran. But with this he evoked the jealousy of the Marduk priests who after his fall condemned him for having introduced new things - in analogy with the contemporary spirit.⁶¹

Israel was not immune from this new atmosphere and this was the context in which the biblical writers worked and were influenced. Most of all the greatest influence was the experience of the exile. It was there that the global picture of the Israelite historical events began to be elaborated. In this respect, the origin of Rome⁶² provides a possible analogy to Israel's proto-history.⁶³ In it both of them have the migration motif from a far away land after they had gone through negative experiences: the slavery in Egypt and the flight from Troja now destroyed. These materials are not able to be subject to historical verification and both have clear pedagogic aims, i.e. to instruct future

⁶⁰ Friis 1984b:74f.

⁶¹ Friis 1984b:75.

⁶² For the Roman History see C.G. Starr, "The Roman Place in History", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. H. Temporini, I, 1, Berlin, 1972, 3-16.

⁶³ Soggin 1984, ch. 2 and 1987:10ff.; Donner 1984:73.

generations and make them better member of society, civil or religious. While ancient Roman history was also meant to explain the end of the republic and the beginning of the Empire which arose out of civil wars - events which could have easily led to a national catastrophe - the account from Genesis to 2Kings was aimed to provide a theological explanation for the end of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile thus giving these events meaning and significance. The reconstruction was obviously based on those materials available to the historian(s) who also, where necessary, created some. Of the traditional material available, when he was not aware of its specific historical context he himself provided one.⁶⁴ What we have then especially in the pre-monarchic traditions is mainly an ideological reconstruction of how later historians thought of their past. Today we are so accustomed to them that we cannot help but think of the course of events in this way.

⁶⁴ See e.g. the Balaam story (Num. 22-24) which apparently belongs to a much later historical period. This tradition, in fact, is now well attested archaeologically by the plaster inscriptions at Tell Deir Alla near the mouth of the Jabbok and are dated in the eighth or seventh century B.C.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

A. Review

We may now draw some conclusions from our discussions in part one.

- a) As to its nature the Book of Judges is basically a unity. There is no reason to postulate several stages before it reached its present form. This was conceived at the time the book originated. The period of the Judges is an hypothetical reconstruction attempting to link two bodies of tradition which depicted Israel as a unified body before (e.g. the conquest) as well as after this period (the united monarchy).
- 2) As to its sources the writer will probably have had at his disposal some traditional material in oral or written form. The framework is most obviously a literary composition and the same may be true of stories reflecting traditional themes. On the other hand, those stories which fit least the overall purpose of the Book may go back to tradition.
- 3) As to the question of historicity of the actual stories or the traditions behind them,¹ nothing can be said a priori. However it

¹ It is a false equation to assume that the most ancient stratum equals the most historically reliable tradition. E.g. this was C.H. Dodd's methodological fault in New Testament studies. Cf. A. van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief*, S.C.M.: London, 1967, pp. 110f.

needs to be underlined that the "historical" traditions of the Old Testament are basically religious traditions, i.e. by their very nature historical reliability cannot be assumed. The historiography of the biblical writers is not primarily motivated by a desire to pass on accurate information, but rather it is inspired by a religious passion that seeks to legitimize the socio-political order at the time of writing by interpreting the past; e.g. Dtr giving a theological explanation of the fall of the two *kingdoms*.² Thus their historiography is not only informative but also apologetic/propagandistic.³ If the Book, as we shall suggest, reflects the situation and concerns of the post-exilic community, we see that the traditions here were meant to show the origin of the Israelite religion and, so we may propose, to sanction ideas and developments of that community. It was the effort towards a sacral systematization of the origins and events of a people which by itself constitutes an overcoming of that horizon of mythical thought. With this follows a substitution of a mythical understanding of time with that of linear time.⁴ This view has important implications for the classic thesis of a contrast between pre-exilic Hebraism and post-exilic Judaism in that it might need to be modified to the extent that we may regard them as being really the same.⁵

4) Monotheistic Yahwism is the fruit of the exilic and post-exilic age.

The continuity of pre-exilic Yahwism is still witnessed in the

² Perlitt 1969:7.

³ Since it is the socio-politico-religious concerns of the time of the "final edition" which would have primarily determined its content and presentation this is the reason why we must start from the "latest" date of composition in our investigation.

⁴ Grottanelli 1976:117. This may also explain the broken use of myth in the Old Testament.

⁵ Soggin 1982:12; 1987:12f.; Friis 1985:26.

Elephantine papyri which after the finds at Kuntillet 'Ajrud ought to be given more adequate attention as an accurate reflection of what Yahwism was before the exile. The religion of Israel was analogous to that of other neighbouring peoples. YHWH was Israel's national god as Chemosh was of Moab or Melkart of Tyre, within a polytheistic context, a feature which is prominently witnessed by the Elephantine papyri. Baal as well as other gods were peacefully worshipped beside their national god. Only at a later time Yahwism emerged out of a polytheistic Canaanite background and rejected this altogether. Its beginning took place in the 7th century B.C. as it is attested from that time by a rich Yahwistic onomasticon. It is against this background that, e.g., Judges 6.25-32 and similar passages must be interpreted.

- 5) As to the date of its composition, as already hinted above, the tendency to date it later rather than earlier will be taken as a working hypothesis. The common opinion to consider the post-exilic period as degenerative and epygonous is not shared. Further we will consider only such traditions or texts as pre-exilic, the origin and literary fixation of which cannot be more easily and satisfactorily explained from the exilic/post-exilic conditions of Judaism. These seem to be reflected in a number of ideologies found in our text, e.g. the contrast theocracy/monarchy; the idea of Israel being a separate body from the indigenous people of the land which they conquered; the confederation of tribes saved by a saviour in a time of emergency/need.

B. Outlook

In part two of this thesis we will now proceed with a form critical study of the Gideon-Abimelech narratives taking into account the above considerations and assessing thus how far form criticism can contribute to the current debate on the late dating of biblical historiography.

The above conclusions have a direct bearing on form criticism in that they provide the basis for a fresh approach to the biblical narrative especially with respect to the nature of the biblical narratives and their dating.

The doubtful historicity of the biblical narratives means that we can no longer rely on the events described in the biblical narratives to enlighten others unless these have first been independently proved to reflect actual historical events.

More importantly the investigation of a tradition's "intention" and "Sitz im Leben" can no longer be discovered from within the tradition itself. For instance an "altar narrative" can no longer be assumed to be the recollection of an actual altar and thus the tradition be considered as originating for the purpose of explaining the origin, or else, of that altar. Its function can simply be literary. This leads us to underline the importance of dating a tradition. If the genre of a tradition does not necessarily tell something about its origin, it is then its dating and thus the ideology of that narrative which can best explain its intention and *Sitz im Leben*. In our overview of recent developments this approach can be seen e.g. in Garbini's attempt to explain the Abram tradition and its connection with Ur and Haran and Lemche's examples of Joshua and David.⁶

⁶ See pp. 45f. and 53ff.

There is thus an intrinsic relationship between dating, ideology and the *Sitz im Leben* of a tradition.

In our analysis we shall also account for what was said in this part of the thesis about the unity of the work and the possibility of a unitary-- versus a developmental approach to these traditions. Some of the aspects which we have investigated such as intolerance, syncretism, foreign provenance will guide our analysis below as these are pointers to the development of the narratives in specific situations.

PART TWO

V. THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GIDEON-ABIMELECH NARRATIVES

A. Introduction

The Gideon-Abimelech tradition together with five other main stories of deliverers make up a good part of the Book of Judges. These narratives as well as the others are enclosed within a framework which provides a link between the various stories and sets them into a continuous chronological narrative. The pragmatic pattern of the framework has already been anticipated by the second prologue to this book (2.6-3.6) and is fully expanded in the first story of the "major judges", i.e. Othniel's (3.7-11), which is made up exclusively of framework elements and does not have a traditional nucleus.¹ This story which starts a cyclic repetition of apostasy - oppression - crying for help - raising of saviour does not only function as an exemplary piece (*Beispielstück*) but is also intended to give Judah a judge of its own. In fact, all the other stories have a northern provenance, which suggests that they were redacted in Judah and narrated from its perspective. This is further supported by ch. 1.1ff. which also starts addressing Judah first.² The desire of relating these stories more closely to a Judean

¹ This story is an artificial construct and attempts to find any possible historical kernel are misleading - see e.g. Burney 1920:64f. and Moore 1898:84f. Its function is simply literary - see Webb 1987:210,265 n. 6.

² Wellhausen 1895:132. In general the final redaction of the OT traditions is of southern origin; this is true also for those traditions

audience seems also at work in the Gideon complex through the insertion of the Amalekites and the People of the East or Kedemites (בני-קדם). As E.J. Payne remarks, "the Amalekites, normally associated with the desert of the south and southeast of Judah, are unlikely to have been the historical allies of the Midianites so far north. An editor from the south, however, might have several reasons for including them here." Three reasons are then suggested: (a) "as notorious raiders of the Negeb, their mention would serve both to bring alive the narrative for a Judean audience and to nationalize a legend"; (b) "the inclusion of a riding tribe would add weight to the overall picture of an incursion by outsiders which the editor was attempting to create. Similar remarks can be made concerning the desert dwelling people of the East whose activities have been all too familiar to the inhabitant of eastern Palestine. From Ezek. 25:4,10 it is clear that their pillaging activities had become proverbial for destruction"; (c) "had the editor been influenced by the Deuteronomist thought, he may have wished to see the arch enemy of Israel included in the narrative (cf. Deut. 25:17-19)."³

The Gideon-Abimelech tradition in the Book of Judges follows the Barak-Deborah account. The framework elements are mainly found in the first ten verses (6.1-10) which also provide an introduction to the whole story. The tradition itself however was not simply inserted into the Book of Judges by means of the framework. As it stands now, in spite of

(e.g. E) which are thought to be explicitly northern. We may observe for example that the form יהוה for the divine name which is also known to E (cf. Ex.3.14), commonly attributed to the North, is not known by the Samaria ostraca which always render the divine name as יה: either E is not of northern provenance or it underwent southern redaction - see Garbini 1977:243.

³

1983:169.

all the inconsistencies, contradictions and various strata which "may" be discerned, it has been carefully constructed to be the central piece of the book and it can be considered as a "proleptic anticipation of the monarchy."⁴ The theme in fact seems one of comparing and contrasting the supposed institution of the judges with the emerging and finally succeeding monarchic regime. In contrasting these two institutions, this as well as the other traditions of "judges" bear different messages and concerns. While e.g. the Samson stories may have been a hidden polemic against mixed marriages,⁵ the Gideon-Abimelech tradition seems to be more oriented towards a strong anti-monarchic polemic and advocates in its place a theocratic form of government. In these few chapters the narrator summarizes and gives a judgment on the entire Israelite history. Gideon's call is reminiscent of Moses' and he - just as Moses - is called to deliver YHWH's people. Yet, in spite of Gideon's extraordinary call over against the other judges, not even he is able to escape the weaknesses of any human leader and eschew idolatry: at the end of his judgeship, though unintentionally, he leads the people into apostasy.⁶ Kingship is then contrasted with Gideon's judgeship as an alternative form of government (Judg.9). The judgment on it is very negative and the story ends with the death of Abimelech and his short-lived rulership. Besides this motif two others emerge, one in the structure of the framework itself and the others in the war tradition. Both are to a *greater*

⁴ Jobling 1986.

⁵ Cf. e.g. Mal. 2.10ff.; Ez. 9.1-5; Neh. 13.22ff.; etc. Cf. also Mal. 2.11 and Judg. 3.5-6 the contents of which are very close.

⁶ Długosz comments that it was after the death of Gideon that devotion began to be offered to the ephod and thus idolatry arose (1980A:161). However, whether we want to discharge Gideon from having himself been an idolater or not the point remains that in the mind of the author it was through his making of the ephod that the people were led astray.

or less extent present in the other judges stories as well.

In its present form this tradition never had an autonomous existence. The same may not be the case of some of the individual stories which now form part of this complex, but even these have been reworked to a certain extent. Therefore, as it stands now, the message is communicated by the tradition with an idealistic presentation of Israel's past, a past which finds its reality and "a message to say" in the situation and concerns of a community which, so depicting its past, could transform it into a lesson for their present.⁷

B. Framework and Structure

The framework of our tradition - the most obvious part of editorial activity - is made up of various elements (six is the maximum number) most of which are common to all the stories of the major judges.⁸

⁷ Soggin suggests that this presentation of history was meant to be a lesson to the Israelites in exile (its audience) who had been delivered over into the hands of Babylon for a final definite judgment, just as their ancestors were delivered over into the hands of the surrounding peoples (1981:111).

⁸ This editorial framework appears as follows in the other traditions:

	2.11-3.6	3.7-11	3.12-30	4-5	10.6-12.7	13-16
1	2.11	3.7	3.12ab	4.1	10.6	13.1
2	2.14	3.8	3.12,14	4.2f.	10.7	----
3	----	3.9	3.15	4.3	10.10	----
4	(2.16,18)	3.9	3.15	---	----	----
5	----	(3.10)	3.30	4.23	11.33	----
6	----	3.1	3.30	5.31	----	----

F.E. Greenspahn suggests that only the phrases in 1,2,3,5 and 6, which occur with sufficient regularity are to be deemed part of this presumably earliest, all embracing framework (1986:388). It may, however, be observed that the lack of this formula in the last stories may be due to the author himself as he developed his narrative. Saviours are not anymore raised by God because human initiative comes in and prepares the

The framework of our tradition is as follows:

1. *Apostasy formula*

(6.1) ויעשו בני-ישראל הרע בעני יהוה...

2. *Handing over formula*

(6.1) ויתנם יהוה ביד-מדין שבע שנים

3. *Cry for help formula*

(6.6f.) וידל ישראל מאד מפני מדין ויזעקו בני-ישראל אל-יהוה:
ויהי כי-זעקו בני-ישראל אל-יהוה על אדות מדין:

[4. *Raising formula*

(6.12,14) וירא אליו מלאך יהוה ויאמר אליו יהוה עמך גבור החיל:
לך בכתך זה וזה שעת את-ישראל מכף מדין הלא שלחתך:

5. *Bending down formula*

(8.28) ויכנע מדין לפני בני ישראל ולא יספר לשאת ראשם

6 *Rest formula*

(8.28) ...ותשקט הארץ ארבעים שנה בימי גדעון:⁹

If the framework has created a chronological continuity with the other traditions, the structure of our complex has created an artificial unity within it as well. The structure of the book may be described as follows:¹⁰

Introduction.....6.1-10

6.7-10 -Anticipation of Gideon's call and reply - 6.12-14

Gideon's Call.....6.11-40

(i) Against foreign oppressors (6.11-24)

(ii) As a religious reformer (6.25-32)

way for the raising not of saviours but of kings. For a sociological analysis of these formulas see Brueggemann 1981.

⁹ As we shall see the framework itself has a didactic purpose; it is intended to teach a lesson to the people of Israel. The detachment of the framework from the tradition(s) does not, however, leave us necessarily with earlier material. Much of the material may have come from the same pen of the editor responsible for the framework. Richter's argument e.g. that 6.1,2a,6b and 8.28 are later than 6.2b-5 and that 6.7-10 is still a later addition to the tradition (1964:9-12) may be misleading.

¹⁰ For other possible alternatives to describe its structure see Webb 1987, Gooding 1982 and Hoffmann 1981.

6.33-35 - Anticipation of war traditions

War Traditions.....7.1-8.35

(i) Campaign in Cisjordan (7.1-8.3)

(ii) Campaign in Transjordan (8.4-8.35)

8.22-32 - Anti-monarchic epilogue anticipating ch.9

The Reign of Abimelech.....9.1-57

A small paragraph in the preceding unit seems always to anticipate the theme of the following tradition and thus to create a stronger bond between the various pericopes. The Abimelech tradition which is usually considered simply as an appendix is also part of the Gideon narrative. In fact, this tradition has been carefully inserted into this complex, not simply by breaking the account of Gideon's blood revenge at 8.21 and continuing it with 8.22ff. - the motif of which clearly prepares the way for the Abimelech account - but also by the insertion of Gideon's second name aetiology (6.25-32). Its function is here twofold: first, to create a parallel tradition to the previous religious tradition, emphasizing thus a different aspect of Gideon's call; secondly, to provide at a literary level the needed link of ch. 9 to the previous traditions, since in this chapter Gideon is always referred to as Jerubbaal.

Both framework and structure are not, therefore, random accretions to the basic traditional nucleus. Whatever traditional material was accessible to the author/editor of our book, he carefully combined it to form a logic literary composition.¹¹

C. The Framework Theory of History

The pattern of the framework is clearly cyclic, though the phrase

¹¹ An exeption may be 6.7-10 which seems to be a later addition. The motif of Gideon's role in 6.11-40 is however anticipated also by 6.1-6.

ויספור בני-ישראל לעשות הרע points towards a climax: the demand for a king to reign over them. Its intention is obviously not historical but theological. Its very use is a sign of a disinterest in the historical events as well as in history in our "modern sense". As G. Cohen writes "Schematology always betrays a very superficial interest in the events themselves, but a deep desire to unravel their meaning and their place in the plan of history as a whole."¹² Even the Philistine threat which according to the biblical traditions was the main cause for bringing about the monarchy (though this may indeed have been the cause or part of it) in the last analysis has also a literary function. As D. Jobling has put it, "Israel's enemies need not be viewed in any realistic historical terms: oppression has become simply a theological variable. As the judge-cycles themselves suggest, Israel's relations with foreign nations are an *externalization* of its situation before YHWH. The basic problem in Judges and Samuel (which continues the period of the judges) is not how to deal with foreign threats, but rather how to deal with Israel itself under YHWH."¹³ The framework therefore is intended to clarify and bring home the basic lesson that oppression is a consequence of disobedience: YHWH demands exclusive and intense loyalty. Oppressors come and go as Israel's faithfulness moves from and to God. They belong to the historical scenario of the writer as mountains and trees belong to any nature landscape.

¹² The quotation is from Cohen's discussion of "The Symmetry of History" in his introduction to the historical work of the Spanish philosopher Abraham Ibn Daud (Middle Ages): "Book of the Tradition" (*Sefer Ha-Qabbalah*), pp. 189-222 - quoted by Yerushalmi 1982:39.

¹³ 1986:65-66. See also p. 140 n. 29.

1. The Concept of Causality

This stylistic pattern of describing events was common to the ancient Near East. In some extant Akkadian and Egyptian "prophesies" the idea of alternation between orderly and chaotic periods occurs.¹⁴ More important still is the concept of causality according to which the sin of a people against their deity is punished through the occurrence of a catastrophe. The concept was already common in the ancient East at an early time. In the "Lament of Ibbissin" coming from the late Sumerian time this thought is already hinted at: Enlil gives up the people of Sumer to their enemy. That this is because of her guilt however is not said.¹⁵ A more explicit "doctrine of causality" is present in the Hittite texts dated in the last part of the second millennium according to which a national catastrophe is understood as the judgment of the gods caused by human guilt, namely, their violation of a treaty which had put them under certain obligations to the gods.¹⁶ The stele of Mesha, king of Moab,¹⁷ Israel's immediate neighbour also witnesses to a similar

14 See e.g. W. Helk, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.ti* (Kleine Ägyptische Texte: Wiesbaden, 1970); R.D. Biggs, "More Babylonian Prophecies", *Iraq* 29 (1967) 117-132:117f.; H. Hunger and S.A. Kaufman, "A New Akkadian Prophecy Text", *JAOs* 95 (1976) 371-75 - Hunger and Kaufman date the text examined by them during the co-regency of Nebuchadnezzar and Amel-Marduk. For the stylistic pattern see e.g. T.E. Peet, *A Comparative Study of the Literature of Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia* (Schweich Lectures 1929. London/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931) 120f.; H.G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern", *ZA* 42 (1934); the so-called "Akkadian Weidner Chronicle" - for the text see A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Texts from Cuneiform Sources; Locust Valley, N.Y., 1975) 43, 145. Ahlström 1986:75-76. See also von Rad 1962:330, 330 n. 6.

15 Cf. A. Falkenstein - W. v. Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Zürich-Stuttgart 1953) 189ff. and A. Falkenstein, "Ibbisin-Išbierra", *ZA* 49 (1949) 59ff. Beyerlin 1963A:16.

16 See A. Malamat 1955:1-12.

17 The stele dates not later than the second half of the ninth century.

understanding of their foreign oppression and humiliating experience: it was the judgment of Chemosh their god because he was angry with the land:

Omri was king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for a long time, for Chemosh was angry with the land.¹⁸

This common ancient Near Eastern concept was therefore no novelty to our author as he gave expression to a religious portrayal of a past history.¹⁹ However, what distinguishes most of the biblical traditions from other ancient writings (though not exclusively) - apart from the fact that they were written closely after the events²⁰ - is the degree to which

¹⁸ Line 5. Beyerlin 1978:237-240(238).

¹⁹ The framework of these stories could have originated at any time between the united kingdom and the post-exilic period. Beyerlin (1963A/B) independently from Richter (1963; 1964:56-62) has reached similar conclusions in that he as Richter argues for a pre-deuteronomistic date of the framework, a conclusion which is reached after a thorough linguistic analysis. Though it is possible that the framework is deuteronomic and not deuteronomistic as it is often called (this view has also been taken by Greenspahn 1986:389-391), the conclusion does not necessarily follow that it must be pre-exilic. After all this dating is reached e.g. by Beyerlin in relation to certain texts that he dates as pre-exilic, e.g. Gen. 38.7,10 ("Jahwisten im 10.Jh" - 1963A:12); Ps. 78 ("frühe Königszeit" - 1963A:16); etc. If these texts are dated in the exilic or even post-exilic period, the whole argument collapses. As a matter of fact, as argued before, the last revision time must be our starting point and if there is no good reason to back date other editorial activities to a much earlier time it is preferable to think that they had their origin in the near by time. This of course may not be argued from the single tradition which "may" be very old. Moreover, that the framework is not deuteronomistic (for a different view see Schmid 1976:61-82, who uses the close similarities between the judges framework and the wilderness traditions as further evidence to date the Pentateuchal source J closely to the period of the deuteronomistic work) does not prove that it must have originated before the Book of Deuteronomy. Even the characteristic idea of centralization peculiar to the Book of Deuteronomy and lacking in the Book of Judges need not to be a reason to date the framework at an earlier period. This theme could very well be late. Von Rad had already pointed out long ago this possibility (1953) which has also, though independently, been recently advocated by Garbini (1986B) according to whom the idea of centralization arose only at a very late period in the light of the Gerizim controversy. In this scholar's view the Josianic reform was not concerned with the problem of centralization. See chapter II, pp. 97ff.

²⁰ See for e.g. the Mesha inscription which was written near the time of the of the described events.

ideological motivation has influenced the content of the narrative itself.²¹

The Cyrus Cylinder is a further example of the widespread idea that defeat was a form of divine punishment. However, here defeat means at the same time deliverance from the wicked Nabonidus who had forsaken the cult of Marduk. Because of this the god became angry, yet he has compassion upon his people who can no longer worship him. He then raises a "righteous ruler" who will re-establish his cult. The text is very much reminiscent of the framework of the Book of Judges.²²

2. The Framework

We may now turn to the framework itself and see how the alternation of good and bad as well as the doctrine of causality were used and developed. The first element is the assertion **ויעשו בני-ישראל הרע בעיני יהוה** (6.1a). The phrase is clear and yet vague. The evil which the people of Israel did is not specified, but it is left to be understood from what had been said before, namely, their serving of the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and forsaking of YHWH the God of their fathers and all that he had done for them (2.11ff.). A clearer reference in the same complex comes only in the prophetic speech (6.10) and in the second altar tradition (6.25-32). However the chronological connection between this

²¹ As for the Book of Judges it is usually said that it is one of the books in which the editorial activity is most easily discernible since the framework into which the various stories have been built is clearly recognizable and therefore detachable. But this seems to us to be an oversimplification. The author could have also composed himself and/or re-written previous traditions the editorial activity of which is no longer discernible. We must therefore be careful to assign traditions too easily to different periods.

²² See ANET 315-316.

tradition and the previous one is missing, while, in fact, the other traditions are chronologically connected by the use of ²³וַיִּסְפֹּר and ²⁴אַחֲרֵי. Whether we should see any significance in this is not clear.²⁵ The formula itself, as Brueggemann has suggested, besides having clearly theological overtones, "is also used to maintain social order and at times social control."²⁶

The wickedness of Israel is followed by YHWH's reaction in giving them (נָתַן) into the hand of Midian. The violated social order is punished with social oppression. The idea of the deity giving his people over to an oppressor is also found in extra-biblical sources such as the Amarna letters, a building inscription by Nebuchadnezzar II, and the Cyrus Cylinder already mentioned.²⁷ The relationship between evil and handing over is one of causality. In other places this causal relationship is further elaborated (2.14; 3.8; 10.7). The use of the verb "to hand over" is also not fixed: alternative expressions occur as well.²⁸

The oppression by the enemy is then followed by a cry for help to YHWH. This is a constant element to which we will turn shortly.²⁹

²³ See e.g. Judg. 3.12; 4.1; 10.6 and 13.1. וַיִּסְפֹּר provides the chronological connection among the major judges. It does not occur in 3.7 because this story opens the cycle. The occurrence in 2.11 is only programmatic.

²⁴ See eg Judg. 3.31 (וְאַחֲרָיו); 10.1 (אַחֲרֵי אַבִּימֶלֶךְ); 10.3 (אַחֲרָיו); 12.8 (אַחֲרָיו); 12.11 (אַחֲרָיו); 12.13 (אַחֲרָיו). אַחֲרֵי occurs exclusively with the "minor judges".

²⁵ It is just possible that any chronological connection was omitted because of Judg. 6.7-10 which puts the evil done by the Israelites within a wider chronological spectrum. Else it could be suggested that with this the author wanted to single out the entire complex.

²⁶ See e.g. 1Sam. 15.19; 2Sam. 11.29; 12.9. 1981:103.

²⁷ See Albrektson 1967:39.

²⁸ For a thorough discussion of this formula through the biblical narratives see Richter 1963:21-25.

²⁹ The formula is lacking in ch. 2 and 13. See note 8 of this

The fourth element, the raising formula according to which YHWH raises a judge/saviour, occurs as such only in 2.16 (שפטים) and 3.9,15 (מרשיע). In the Deborah narrative the formula is totally missing, probably because she was *already* there as a judge ("Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time" - 4.4). In the Jephthah story God, after reminding the people that he had saved them from their oppressors (10.11-12), also expresses his unwillingness to save them anymore from such a calamity (10.13). In the Samson story we are then told that the hero only began to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines. With Samson the cycle begins to come to an end and the Philistine threat connects the period of the judges with that of the kings. The divine intervention will soon be substituted by the human agent. The raising formula does not occur as such in the Gideon narrative, but a more elaborated call (6.12-14) to the same effect takes place. What in the other narratives is expressed with a formula is here expanded into a visual picture.³⁰

The raising of the saviour is then followed by various events which culminate in the defeat of the enemies and the bending down formula which occurs, though not uniformly, in all the narratives except in the Samson story. Finally the rest formula follows.

chapter.

³⁰ Greenspahn suggests that this formula is "totally" absent from this narrative (1986:381). It is true that the formula as such does not occur but it seems to us that the failure to see that such a formula is not after all absent depends on the mistaken assumption that the author simply framed pre-existing traditions - but that this was the case cannot be assumed a priori.

a) The Theory of History

The theory of history is clear. The pattern is cyclic and in one way or another it is present in almost all the stories of the major judges. The questions which arise are, however, whether we do have here really a mechanical interpretation of history and whether the cry for help does imply repentance. Both questions are closely interrelated.

The sin of the Israelites is a continuous disobedience to YHWH: sin is then followed by punishment. Nevertheless YHWH acts on behalf of his people as they cry out to him. Is this an act of repentance which prompts YHWH to intervene, or, is it only a cry for help to which he responds? It is at this point that scholars are divided. Some take it for granted that **וַיִּזְעַק אֶל-יְהוָה** is a cry of repentance. The Israelites are sorry and repent of their sin: this is symbolized in their cry to YHWH.³¹ Others, namely Polzin and Greenspahn, have questioned this interpretation and rather argue that repentance is not part of this scheme.³² In the words of Polzin, "The cyclical preview of the entire period of the judges found in 2:6-3:6 is not...a recurring pattern of disobedience/repentance, but rather of punishment/mercy."³³ It is God's love and compassion that moves YHWH to act on behalf of his people rather than their repentance. In spite of their continuous apostasy YHWH consistently persists in protecting them.³⁴ This of course contrasts the

³¹ See e.g. Lindars 1983:1; Soggin 1981:4; Sacchi 1985A:62. For a brief summary of this position see Jobling 1986:137-138 n.7.

³² See esp. Polzin 1980:155-156, 159, 162, 177.

³³ Polzin 1980:155.

³⁴ As Polzin rightly notes **וַיַּעַשׂ** ought to be translated "to continue to do" rather than, so assuming repentance, "once again to do...". There is no claim in fact that they ever stopped doing so (p. 177).

mosaic covenant according to which their successes and failures are strictly conditional upon their obedience or disobedience to it.³⁵

The compassion of YHWH is an element clearly stated in Judg. 2.18. Here the raising of judges is not conditional on the cry of the people, which is missing altogether,³⁶ but it is YHWH's own initiative. This element excludes a mechanical understanding of events and brings the Book of Judges to share a closer relationship with the viewpoint of the Book of Job than it has been allowed so far.³⁷

b) The Use of *ṣāḥ*

The term *ṣāḥ* has been the object of a recent investigation by Greenspahn.³⁸ In his analysis "The 'crying out' to which the word refers cannot...be assumed to include repentance. Indeed one could reasonably argue that the cries so described have no spiritual or theological component, but are simply 'the loud and organized 'crying' of someone in

³⁵ The relation between action and consequence is very much reminiscent of the Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament. This sapiential principle is seen by some scholars (e.g. H.H. Schmid) as a constant in the ancient oriental world: if the universal order is disrupted this is due to human transgression. The same principle is at work in Israel as a means to explain reality. Yet, the failure of this principle to explain any happening gave rise to a different conception of history which avoided both a rigid schematization as well as skepticism, but founded itself upon faith in God and in his free acting. This crisis is to a certain extent reflected in the framework of the Book of Judges in spite of its schematized form and brings this book close to that of Job. Cf. Prato 1982:568.

³⁶ Cf. Soggin 1981:39 who wants to insert the formula.

³⁷ Cf. Polzin 1980:160. Compare e.g. the only instance where the cry to YHWH is also sided by the people's repentance (Judg. 10). In spite of the positive expected reaction we find just the opposite (cf. Polzin 1980:177).

³⁸ 1986:391-395, his conclusion supports very much Polzin's suggestion; cf. also Richter 1964:18-20.

acute distress, calling for help and seeking deliverance."³⁹ According to the Bible God often responds to such cries, demanding not deep commitment from those seeking his help but apparently only sincere need. Significantly, the response is sometimes termed 'salvation' (yš').⁴⁰

Such a meaning becomes clear in the Exodus traditions as e.g. 2.23-25 and in many of the narratives set in the desert in which also a similar scheme to that of the Book of Judges emerges: need - grumbling - anger and punishment - crying - help.

The crying to YHWH is not an act of repentance but it is an expression of agony and suffering. This is true of both those traditions in which suffering was not an immediate consequence of the Israelites' sin (e.g. Ex. 2.23-25; Deut. 26.7) and of those in which it was such. Though in the majority of the narratives the cry is directed to Moses who acts as a mediator, the one who is really addressed is YHWH. In Ex. 2.24 (פַּעַל) and Deut. 26.7 (פַּעַל) the cry is directed to God.⁴¹ 1Sam.

³⁹ G. Hasel, "xā'āq, x'āqāh, sā'āq, s'āqāh", in G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (ed.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* 2 (Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, Mainz, 1977), col. 631 = E. tr. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 4 (Grand Rapids, 1980), p. 115 - quoted by Greenspahn 1986:392. Cf. Brueggemann 1981:109 who also argues that פַּעַל does not imply repentance. Only in Jonah 3.7-8 is the term explicitly used in relation to repentance.

⁴⁰ Greenspahn 1986:392f. A close extra-biblical parallel can be found in the Cyrus inscription. Here too as in Judges (see esp. Judg. 2.15ff.) the deity acts moved by compassion at the distressful condition of his people.

⁴¹ B.S. Childs has more precisely distinguished two patterns in the wilderness wandering traditions which provide a framework to the various narratives. They are as follows:

I. Initial need (Ex. 15.22, 23; 17.1; Num. 20.2) - complaint (Ex. 15.24; 17.2; Num. 20.3) - intercession of Moses [Ex. 15.25 (פַּעַל); 17.4 (פַּעַל); Num. 20.6] - need being met by God's miraculous intervention (Ex. 15.25; 17.6f.; Num. 20.11).

II. Initial complaint (Num. 11.1; 16.41; 17.6; 21.5) - God's anger and punishment [11.1; 17.10 (16.45 EVV); 17.6-15 (16.41-50 EVV); 21.6] - intercession by Moses [11.2 (פַּעַל); 17.11 (16.46 EVV); 21.7 - a reprieve of the punishment [11.2; 17.15 (16.50 EVV); 21.19]. (1974:258) In both cases the scheme is very close to that of Judges.

12.6ff. summarizes the whole period from the time of Moses until the time of Samuel. Interestingly, the history of this cyclic experience of the Israelites starts with Moses and ends with the so-called period of the judges. The crying of the people is always directed to YHWH (cf. Neh. 9.).

The connotation therefore of **קָוָה** is that of a human cry of despair which arouses divine compassion.⁴² God responds not because of the people's repentance but because he is unable to ignore their suffering. The same happened during the wilderness period. Why this is so "can be ascribed only", as Greenspahn remarks, "to the divine election of Israel for reasons unstated. Although the term is never used, the concept of covenant seems the most appropriate explanation for this process in which God's actions flow out of his own commitment, freely made, rather than as compensation for Israelite merit."⁴³

A slightly different approach has been taken by Brueggemann who conceives the two intellectual constructs "deed-consequence" and "cry-save" as having had a previous autonomous existence before they were brought together. The two represent two different ways of looking at the world. The difference is between control and trust. The first two elements can be compared with the Book of Proverbs, the second to the Book of Job. But brought together they become the managed, comprehensive scheme of Job's friends.⁴⁴ "The use of the entire formula," Brueggemann remarks, "summons Israel to shift from one life-world to another, with its alternative theological, epistemological and political claims." In his view this further suggests that:

"repentance" as a change of life-worlds, both political and theological, is not in the third element ("cry out"), but

42 Greenspahn 1986:394 n. 38.

43 Greenspahn 1986:396.

44 Brueggemann 1981:114.

occurs between the two systems, i.e., between the second and the third elements of the formula. That is, the act of "cry out" reflects a changed orientation that is already accepted. The decision has been made to take a new risk. The "cry" acknowledges not only a new authority but also a new awareness of the situation. Now it is recognized that the world of "deed-consequence" is untenably oppressive. Until that is not recognized, there will be no "cry". Thus the act of "cry" involves a) ⁴⁵ a new theological commitment and b) new political awareness.

The contrast between the two modes of thinking may reflect the coming into being of a new situation which wants to oppose and contrast old forms of security, indeed it requires their rejection.⁴⁶

Brueggemann has made an interesting contribution not only in pointing to the separate histories of these two intellectual constructs but also in attempting to explain the new relationship that has been established between the two. His position is one in between those who take it for granted that קָרָא is a cry of repentance and those who deny it. Yet, the use of נִפְתָּח does seem to imply a continuous attitude of mind. If any repentance is implied it may simply be something which had to take place but which in fact did not. While each story taken by itself may yield this meaning, it is their grouping together which would suggest otherwise. It is the lack of such a radical demand to change from one system to another which finally brought about the destruction of the two kingdoms. The problem is now to elucidate this through a heavily theologized representation of their past history.

⁴⁵ Brueggemann 1981:113.

⁴⁶ Brueggemann suggests that such a radical demand may be conceived with reliance a) on royal modes of reality, b) on Torah-centered obedience or even c) on the seductive promises of Babylon (1981:114). Of course what may have been meant depends on our dating. Assuming a late dating it is possible that the framework may have been intended to encourage the worshipper adherence to the new Jerusalem hierarchy over against the fostered hopes of the re-establishment of the monarchy. This may have been intentional as well as dictated by the new socio-political condition. We will develop this theme later.

D. Date

The date of the framework is commonly considered to be pre-deuteronomistic, e.g. by Richter and Beyerlin.⁴⁷ The same has also been recently suggested by Greenspahn:

While the concept of a continuously sinful Israel and a consistently benevolent God are perhaps best known from later strata of biblical literature, there is no need to assume that this pattern developed in exilic times. What traces one can find of a Deuteronomistic redaction in the framework have been added to the earlier format here described (e.g. Judg. ii 11-13, iii 7, x 6), thus serving as a *terminus ad quem* for the original pattern. Moreover, conceptual parallels can be found in the Pentateuch's description of the wilderness period, in which a benevolent God repeatedly ministers to the needs of an endlessly sinful Israel, responding each time that they cry out (פֶּצַח).⁴⁸

The argument for his dating is twofold: (a) the framework is earlier than the Deuteronomistic redaction, traces of which are found in later additions to the framework; (b) the conceptual parallels are already found in the Pentateuchal traditions.

Both arguments are derivatory, and based on the dating of the DtrH and, if we understand correctly, of the pentateuchal source J to which most of the wilderness traditions belong. Moreover, he himself at the beginning of the quotation above envisages the possibility that the pattern could have been developed at a later time. Why this is not to be assumed is not clear. In fact this pattern could very well be late. As we hope to demonstrate later, some elements in the Gideon-Abimelech tradition do definitely fit better into the post-exilic period.⁴⁹ If this

47 See note 19 of this chapter.

48 Greenspahn 1986:396.

49 E.g. the anti-monarchic strand.

is right, a late dating for this pattern is not at all impossible to conceive. It is indeed preferable.

In regard to Greenspahn's two reasons to date this pattern early, objections had already been raised to the more commonly accepted date for the DtrH and also to the Pentateuchal traditions which scholars are tending to date, in recent debates, in the exilic period. Moreover, Greenspahn's own remark that God's persisting assistance to the Israel in need is best explained in the light of the covenant (if this is really the case) seems rather to support a late dating. The "Bundesschweigen" (Perlitt) in the prophetic books is an obvious pointer to the late date of its origin.⁵⁰ Similarly, we could observe that this scheme of a typologized view of history is neither found nor presupposed in the pre-exilic prophets nor in the conjectured pre-exilic Psalms.⁵¹

⁵⁰ See Dumbrell 1983:32 who also suggests that the Book of Judges addressed the exiles from the perspective of Israel's election.

⁵¹ Schmid 1976:78-79; Friis 1984:20-21. In Schmid's own words, "Mehrfach war darauf hinzuweisen, dass der immer wiederkehrende Ablauf von Not - Murren - (Zorn und Strafe) - Schreien - Hilfe seine nächste Parallele im Rahmen des Richterbuches hat, auf den wir schon im Zusammenhang des Berufungsschemas von Ex 3f. aufmerksam wurden. 'Diese Rahmenstücke (des Richterbuches)...zeigen alle den gleichen Aufbau: auf Israels Abfall folgen Jahwes Zorn und Strafe, Israels Schreien um Hilfe veranlasst Jahwes rettendes Eingreifen', und 'eine ähnliche theologische Konzeption scheint der Beurteilung der Wüstenzeit und der entsprechenden Interpretation der Wüstenüberlieferung durch den Jahwisten zugrunde zu liegen'. (V. Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Wüstenüberlieferung des Jahwisten*, Marburger Theologische Studien 7. Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1970, 119f.) Nun lässt sich das damit entstehende Datierungsproblem relativ einfach lösen, wenn man wie V. Fritz das Schema des Richterbuches in die frühe Königszeit datiert. Es ist dann mit dem (salomonischen) Jahwisten in etwa kontemporär. Dennoch wird man wohl angesichts der so engen Entsprechung des Richter-Rahmens zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbild und zur deuteronomistischen Diktion an der herkömmlichen deuteronomistischen Datierung festhalten müssen - um so mehr, als weder die vorexilischen Propheten noch die mutmasslich vorexilischen Psalmen dieses oder ein ähnliches Geschichtsbild kennen oder voraussetzen. Möchte man zwischen den einzelnen Belegen für den Richter-Rahmen zeitlich differenzieren, wird man angesichts der noch so völlig anders denkenden Texte der vorexilischen Zeit auch mit den ältesten Ausprägungen des Richter-Rahmens jedenfalls nicht hinter Josia zurückgehen können."

If we accept the view that this pattern in Judges was developed at a late time (exilic or post-exilic), we may explain it as an outcome of a crisis time which was meant to explain, as well as to provide a new point of departure. The experiences Israel had under the Assyrian and Babylonian foreign rulers as well as the catastrophe of the Babylonian exile needed an explanation. While in earlier times it was the king who was the guarantor of a just world order which he upheld through the cult, with the decline of the Royal House and the disappearance of the state a historical consciousness, as opposed to what probably could be described as a magic understanding of the world, arose. The present time is then given meaning and brought in order through the "historical" recapitulation of past events.⁵² The persistent mercy of YHWH in spite of his people's continuous disobedience could give hope to the exilic/post-exilic community. Their God had not forgotten them. As he had responded to the cry of his people in the past so will he now.⁵³

Brueggemann's analysis of the sociology of the deed-consequence teaching presented in the Judges formula indirectly supports also our suggestion. In his analysis he suggests that three options lie open for its political implications: (a) it may be a sanction of an early community of liberation (Mendenhall);⁵⁴ (b) it assumes a different meaning

⁵² Friis 1984A:21-22.

⁵³ A similar view is also taken by Dumbrell 1983:30-2 though he refers to the Book of Judges in general. As he comments, "Yahweh has been pleased to preserve Israel through the exile in spite of Israel itself. What would happen now when Israel had run out political alternatives?... The response of the writer is to point back to a time when the political accoutrements with which Israel became identified were in process of being acquired, when not even the land had been totally secured, when Israel was principally a tenuous theological ideal rather than a firm political reality. God alone had preserved the concept of Israel then, God alone in exile would do it again" (pp.31f.).

⁵⁴ This has been suggested by Mendenhall in an unpublished lecture, St. Louis, Mo., October. 1976.

in the context of the monarchy in which case it serves to rationalize, legitimize and justify the claims of the royal establishment; (c) finally - option preferred by Brueggemann - it "is neither the early radical formula of a community of liberation, nor the self-serving formulation of the monarchy. Rather it is the delicate posturing of reform teachers who hold for a particular vision of royal reality, tightly disciplined by Torah and resistant to syncretism."⁵⁵ Brueggemann's preference, if we understand him correctly, is guided by his dating. Should we, however, prefer to date this formula in the exilic/post-exilic period, Mendenhall's suggestion that "the formula reflects the discipline of a community of liberation which has learned that any relaxation of discipline (i.e., loyalty to the social vision of YHWH) leads to erosion and eventually reabsorption into the dominant system against which the liberated community is organized... (and thus) that the formula reflects political experience and realism"⁵⁶ fits perfectly. Though Mendenhall had in mind the pre-monarchic community it is more likely rather to envisage here a back projection of the experiences and situation of the exilic and post-exilic community.

E. Judges 6.7-10

1. Redactional Theories

Judg. 6.7-10 is a passage which has been interpreted in various ways. It occurs just before the actual account of Gideon and is therefore part of the whole introduction (6.1-10). It contains a

⁵⁵ Brueggemann 1981:108.

⁵⁶ Brueggemann 1981:107 n. 37.

prophetic speech recalling YHWH's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians, his giving of the land and yet Israel's disobedience. The passage apparently does not read easily within the introduction and its interpretation has been, and is, much dependent upon the presuppositions of scholars. Noth, who argued for the unity of Deuteronomy to 2Kings as the work of one editor, interpreted it as a deuteronomistic insertion. In his words:

The long Gideon story (Judg. 6:1-8:32) had already been compiled in the old tradition out of various different elements; to it Dtr. provides a relatively detailed introduction. He merely follows his usual practice by prefixing to the old account of the Midianite oppression (6:2-6a) a statement that the apostasy brought about this external affliction (6:1); but he also introduces an unnamed prophet who says that the incongruity between God's saving activities and the people's disobedience had grown greater and greater (6:6b-10). The prophet provides a reflection upon the situation such as Dtr. on occasion likes to put into his characters' mouth. That in this situation God is nevertheless ready to help is implied in the old Gideon story which follows immediately."⁵⁷

The same view is also taken by Van Seters⁵⁸ and Hoffmann.⁵⁹ The former basically repeats Noth's view, while the latter has attempted to demonstrate the deuteronomistic character of 6.7-10 as well as the fact that 6.1-8.35 is the result of a well planned redactional work. He sees 6.7-10 closely connected with 6.25-32. The fight against the foreign oppressor is first and foremost a battle against the foreign god Baal. Gideon's first and most important task is the battle for affirmation of YHWH's exclusiveness. Only then will he engage in military and political action against his enemy who has now become YHWH's enemy and because of this it is God who fights against him.

⁵⁷ Noth 1981:45

⁵⁸ 1983:344.

⁵⁹ 1981:275ff.

On the other hand, other scholars are of the opinion that 6.7-10 is a later deuteronomistic addition to the DtrH. This is the view e.g. of Richter who moreover sees in it the conflation of a prophetic (6.8-9a) and a priestly tradition.⁶⁰ Similarly, Beyerlin⁶¹ argues against M. Noth in seeing here a deuteronomistic composition. He back dates it suggesting "den altisraelitischen Jahwekult" as its *Sitz im Leben*.⁶² Soggin takes still a different view suggesting that "It is possible that the notice originally belonged to another context, but that it has been put here to give the Dtr interpretation greater authority...The incomplete character of the episode of the prophet could...be an element in favour of its antiquity."⁶³

The most recent as well as the most ably defended theory for 6.7-10 being a later redaction comes, however, from R.D. Nelson⁶⁴ who has demonstrated the formal similarities which exist between Judg. 2.1-5 and 6.7-10. Nelson compares Buis' 'simple indictment'⁶⁵ with a further subdivision of his own, with Judg. 2.1b-3 and Judg. 6.8b-10. As he remarks the comparison proves enlightening. It is as follows:

Judges 2.1b-3

Judges 6.8b-10

Historical

אעלה אתכם

אנכי העליתי אתכם

⁶⁰ 1964:97-109. A similar view is also taken by Długosz 1979:84-85.

⁶¹ 1963b:10-13(10).

⁶² Beyerlin's arguments are, however, untenable in the light of the recent re-assessments of the old Israelite institutions (e.g. the amphictyony) and of biblical passages. E.g. Beyerlin refers to Amos 2:10 to prove the antiquity of 6.7-10. Cf. Wolff who regards these verses (2.10-12) as Deuteronomistic redaction (1977:112-13; 141-2; 167). Cf. also Nelson 1981:48-49.

⁶³ 1981:112-113. For other scholars' views see Nelson 1981:48 ns. 26 and 27.

⁶⁴ 1981:47-52.

⁶⁵ The article to which Nelson refers is, Buis Pierre, "Notification de jugement et confession nationale", *BZ* 11:193-205.

review:	ממצרים	ממצרים
exodus	ואביא אתכם	ואציא אתכם
	אל-ההרץ אשר	מבית עבדים:
	נשבעתי לאבותיכם	ואציל אתכם
		מיד מצרים
		ומיד כל-לחציכם
		ואגרש אותם מפניכם
		ואתנה לכם את-ארצם:
Quoted basis for the covenant	ואמר לא-אפר בריתי אתכם לעולם:	ואמרה לכם אני יהוה אלהיכם
Content of the covenant	ואתם לא-תכרתו ברית ליושבי הארץ הזאת מזבחותיהם תתצון	לא תיראו את-אלהי האמרי אשר אתם יושבים בארצם
Accusation	ולא שמעתם בקולי מה-זאת עשיתם:	ולא שמעתם בקולי:
Announcement of judgment	וגם אמרתי לא-אגרש אותם מפניכם	

Nelson's comments which follow this comparison are worth quoting in full:

Here, as in Judg. 2:1-5, we have a literary imitation of a simple indictment speech following the same structural outline. Both even have the same tripartite subdivision of the historical retrospect, a subdivision not present in the other example of this structure. Instead of being set into the frame of traditional saga as Judg. 2:1-5, however, this speech is set into a literary imitation of the introduction to a prophetic judgment speech, one without any historical basis whatsoever. The prophet is not only anonymous, which is completely unusual, but has no notice of where he is from or his association with a master or group, which is most unusual. He is no more than a two-dimensional, paper-and-ink figure.

The absence of the last element of the structure, the announcement of judgment, is merely the result of this author's ceasing his imitation before it became inappropriate, for the punishment is actually already in progress, and the next order of business is salvation. The

⁶⁶ This literary feature is not so uncommon as stated. Cf. 1Kings 13 where the prophet is also unnamed.

second editor is reminding his readers why the Midianites are attacking by restating the programmatic accusation of Judg. 2:1-5. He intervened here, and not somewhere else in the history of the judges, because only here in the Gideon narrative did he find a concrete example of fearing the gods of the Amorites (Judg. 6:10) upon which he could comment: Judg. 6:25-32."⁶⁷

Besides his argument of formal similarities between Judg. 2.1-5 and 6.7-10 he supports his arguments by referring to linguistic similarities as well and arguing that the characteristic expressions of these passages are basically not used by the Deuteronomistic historian.

In the light of the scarce objective material at our disposal it is always difficult to assess redactional stages clearly. Judg. 6.7-10, as it stands now, has been inserted into the preface to the Gideon complex with a logical purpose. Yet, it seems to stand in isolation from its context and, strictly speaking, it could be omitted without being missed. The sequence vv. 1-6 - 11ff. would read much more smoothly and the sequence seem more logic. Moreover, the usual scheme of sin - oppression - crying to YHWH - and sending of a saviour would emerge more clearly. Whether or not, however, it should be understood as a commentary on Judg. 6.25-32 (Nelson) is not clear.

2. Textual Tradition

The complexity of the redactional history of this passage is already witnessed in the textual tradition itself. The MT is closely followed, contrary to expectation by LXX^A, while v.7a is apparently missing in LXX^B as well as in the Syriac tradition. A synopsis of the textual evidence

⁶⁷ 1981:50-51.

is as follows (Judg. 6.6b-7a):

MT	LXX ^A	LXX ^B	Syriac
וַיִּזְעַק	καὶ ἐκεκραξαν	καὶ ἐβοησαν	wz'qm
בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל	οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ	οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ	bny 'sryl
אֶל-יְהוָה	πρὸς κυρίον	πρὸς κυρίον	lmyr'
וַיְהִי	καὶ ἐγενετο		
כִּי-זָעַק	ἐπει ἐκεκραξαν		
בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל	οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ		
אֶל-יְהוָה	πρὸς κυρίον		
עַל אֲדֹרָת	δια	ἀπο προσοπου	'l sbwt'
מִדִּין	Μαδιαμ	Μαδιαμ	dmdyn

As a rule LXX^B always follows the MT. Here, it does not, while LXX^A which usually differs from it at many points is here in agreement with it. LXX^B has further the support of the Syriac and Vulgate. The Syro-Hexapla follows the MT.

It is possible that 7a could have originated as a dittography or that LXX^B omitted it by haplography since very easily one could move from the first occurrence of אֶל-יְהוָה in 6a to the second in 7a which exactly brackets the missing half verse. The close adherence of LXX^B to MT may also suggest that 7a was already missing in its *Vorlage* be this by haplography or even by preserving a different Hebrew tradition. After all the omission of 7a would even smooth the reading of the whole passage. The overall evidence, however, seems to suggest that the OG is preserved by the LXX^A tradition⁶⁸ which very closely follows MT even in making the distinction in translating מִפְנֵי (6a) and עַל אֲדֹרָת (7a) as ἀπο προσοπου and δια respectively. The LXX^B tradition reads in both

⁶⁸ BHS seems to us misleading in suggesting that 7a is missing from the OG.

instances ἀπο προσοπου which suggests some textual disorder.⁶⁹

On the whole textual criticism seems to support the possibility of 6.7-10 being a later addition in the formation of this tradition. In support of this we may also mention 4QJudges^a consisting of 6.3-13. Unfortunately the meagre fragments found at Qumran do not allow any definite conclusion. Yet, some interesting peculiarities may be noticed.⁷⁰ In fact, in 4QJudges^a it is not only 7a that is missing, but there is a long omission from vv.7-10. Though it is difficult to come to definite conclusions in the light of this minute fragment, we may yet notice that the lack of these verses confirms the suggestion of editorial activities and it is likely that this fragment preserves a more ancient tradition which is also witnessed by many other interesting variants present in it.

In the light of Nelson's observation of the formal relationship between 2.1b-3 and 6.8b-10 it is possible to attribute 2.1-5 and 6.7-10 to the same redactional hand. Whether, however, this is to be identified with the second Deuteronomistic redaction, as Nelson proposes, is not clear. Van Seters e.g. attributes 6.7-10 to P. Soggin thinks that 6.7-10 may be an old piece of tradition though added at a later time than the composition of the Book. Following the line of a triple redaction (DtrH, DtrP, and DtrN), he attributes 2.1-5 to DtrN which he dates,

⁶⁹ Schreiner envisages the possibility that LXX^B deliberately corrected the text as dittography (1957:47). This is possible, but it seems more likely that this textual variant arose accidentally since LXX^B usually follows very closely MT. It is rather possible that LXX^B was following a different *Vorlage* than our present MT.

⁷⁰ For a list of variants contained in this fragment I am relying on a paper by J. Treballe read at the symposium on the Dead Sea scrolls held in Israel on Sunday-Thursday, March 20-24, 1988. The Judges fragments of cave 4 are still unpublished. Those of cave 1 have been published in *Discoveries in the Judean Desert I. Qumran Cave I*, by D. Barthélemy and J.T. Milik. Oxford: OUP, 1955. Pp. 62-64. For a brief overview on these fragments see Boling 1975:39-40.

because of its anti-monarchic trend, in the post-exilic period as the most suitable time. This dating is also shared by us and if we take into account the formal similarities which exist between 6.7-10 and 2.1-5 we may place both into the time of the same redactional activity.

The lack of 6.7-10 in 4QJudges^a may support the view of dating this redaction as late as the post-exilic period. It seems difficult to think that a text would have remained unaffected for a very long time once further redactional elements had been inserted into what may have been an "official" form. The linking together of 2.1-5 and 6.7-10 with the anti-monarchic strand may also lead to suggest that, at least 8.22-23; 9; and 6.25-32 without which ch. 9 cannot be understood may have been inserted or re-elaborated about the same time.

F. The Midianites

The description of the Midianites' role, as it has been already suggested, is best understood as literary. Their oppression is the direct consequence allowed by YHWH for the continuous evil of the Israelites. The final disaster with which the Israelites were confronted was nothing new but the history of a perennial disobedience. The oppressors are always different which is meant simply to widen the geographical perspective.

To the Midianite oppression however there may be something more than a merely literary use. The remembrance of a Midianite oppression is fairly well established in tradition for allowing us to treat it only as a literary creation. An investigation of the historical value of this complex may also help us better to understand the nature of this material.

Outside the Book of Judges the clearest references to this tradition

is found in Ps. 83.10ff. (EVV 9ff.) which seems to presuppose the whole redactional unit of Judg. 6-8 and in Isa. 10.26 which may, though not necessarily, depend on Judg. 7.25. Allusions to such an oppression further occur in Isa. 60.6 and Hab. 3.7. As to how such a Midianite oppression came to acquire such an exemplary value or the extent of such a conflict we do not know. Yet, "quite independently of the dimensions of the phenomenon, it came to be the symbol of the struggle which Israel had to maintain its own character, especially with people who came from outside."⁷¹

The account has usually been held by historians as essentially reflecting history, but no attempt so far has been able to substantiate this claim and/or to explain the nature of this phenomenon.⁷² A variety of suggestions have further been proposed which have been basically derived from the text itself.⁷³ Two major problems, as Soggin points out, are usually noted: a) the reference to camels which has been claimed to be the earliest on record⁷⁴ and b) the presence of the Midianites in an area which is not easy to explain.

1. Camels in the Ancient World

Soggin rightly comments, quoting de Vaux, "that too much importance has been attached to these camels of the Midianites."⁷⁵ The process of camel-domestication in fact was a process that started much earlier than

⁷¹ Rösel 1976:10f. In Soggin 1981:107.

⁷² See e.g. Noth 1960:161f.; Bright 1981:180; de Vaux 1978:813f.; Hermann 1981:116f. Quoted in Soggin 1981:105 n.3.

⁷³ See e.g. Soggin 1981:105-106 and Payne 1983:163,164f.

⁷⁴ This is especially the view held by Albright and his followers. See e.g. Bright 1981:180. For a different view see de Vaux 1978:815.

⁷⁵ de Vaux 1978:815; Soggin 1981:108.

the supposed period of the Midianite oppression.

According to the study of R.W. Bulliet an exact date for the domestication of camels cannot be given, since it was a process which lasted many centuries. This process, however, can be divided into four stages.⁷⁶ Stage I is dated in the 4th or 3rd millennium B.C. It is located in southeastern Arabia and their use spread from there to southwest Arabia. The camel was almost exclusively a dairy animal. "The transition to stage II occurred in West Arabia, probably before 2000 B.C. The people living along the 'incense road' began to use the camel as a beast of burden." In stage III (the proto-bedouin stage)⁷⁷ the first attempts were made by nomads to use it for military purposes. The earliest extra biblical evidence for this stage of domestication is found in a relief from Tell Halāf (9th century) and in the Assyrian report of the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.). This stage probably started in North Arabia at least by 1000 B.C.⁷⁸

The final stage took place with the beduins who emerged somewhere between 500-200 B.C. in North Arabia. While in the previous stage a cushion saddle had been developed enabling the rider to fight to a certain extent with bow and arrow, now with the use of the šadād-saddle the rider was able to fight with lance or sword.

It is obvious therefore that the use of the camel was much more common than had been assumed in earlier years. In theory, therefore, we may have in the Gideon narratives historical reminiscences. However, it

⁷⁶ I am here depending on Knauf 1986:149-151 who summarizes Bulliet's results with slight modifications concerning the biblical data (155 n. 17).

⁷⁷ This term was coined by W. Dostal, "The Evolution of Beduin Life", in *L'antica società beduina*, ed. F. Gabrieli, *Studi Semitici* 2. Rome: University of Rome, 1959, 11-34 (22).

⁷⁸ According to Knauf it is to this stage that the Ishmaelites belong. This detail is important for our later discussion.

is more likely that we have here redactional elements. In fact, as Soggin remarks "the text speaks of camels only cursorily and does so in passages coming from the Dtr redaction, whereas protective measures of the kind which appear at the beginning of ch. 6 also can be found in ISam. 13.6, where there is no mention of camels."⁷⁹ Furthermore the use of camels seems an element only of the younger strata of the complex. "The description of the battle fought near En-harod and of the pursuit that followed (7:1-25) would seem to indicate that both the Midianites and the Israelites fought on foot. The same is presupposed in the description of the further pursuit into Transjordan (Judges 8), since it is obviously impossible to catch up with men fleeing on camels if one is on foot."⁸⁰

The redactional nature of the camel reference seems also to find support in 4QJudges^a v.5 which Treballe describes as follows:

In v.5 there is no difficulty in reading the terms ארבה לרב ולחם. After a lacuna of ten spaces, the letters באר are read easily (*sic*). They correspond to MT ויבאו.

4Q	ויבאו	ויבא כדי ארבה לרב לחם
MT	ויבא כדי ארבה	לרב לחם ולגמליהם אין מספר ויבאו

The MT has a reading, encompassing 19 letters, ולגמליהם אין מספר, while 4Q has a shorter reading, reduced to the last two words אין מספר (exactly 10 spaces long), omitting therefore ולגמליהם.⁸¹

The OL supports also Treballe's reconstruction of the text which simply reads *quoniam non erat numerus* thus omitting ולגמליהם though it inserts *et camelos suos ducebant* early in the same verse. The versions as a whole show several variants in v. 5 and Treballe suggests that "All

⁷⁹ 1981:108.

⁸⁰ de Vaux 1978:814-815. It is interesting to notice that apart from the Gideon narratives the mention of camels employed in battle does not occur elsewhere. A possible allusion to war use is found in Zech. 14.15.

⁸¹ 1988:4-5.

these variants and repetitions are to be related with the interpolation of the words כְּרִי אֲרֵבָה וְלָהֶם אֵין מִסְפֵּר.⁸² This gloss is then enclosed between the first occurrence of יִבְאֵר and the second (וְיִבְאֵר). The repetition of the second verb, if we understand him correctly, he proposes to be a compositional technique, namely, that of "resumptive repetition" which encompasses the text of a gloss. Trebolle attempts to demonstrate this technique from a variety of passages where repetitions of similar sentences occur and which have usually been attributed to dittography. If this suggestion is correct, this confirms our view in understanding the reference to camels as a literary embellishment. The fact that it is missing from 4QJudges^a may even indicate its very late insertion. Unfortunately we do not have from Qumran other fragments of the Book of Judges where references to camels occur (7.12; 8.21,26) to establish whether this detail was derived from an existing reference in the complex or whether all of them were introduced "en bloc".

2. The Midianites in Central Transjordan

The biblical tradition depicts the Midianites as a type of nomadic/semi-nomadic people. Midian is said to descend from Abraham and his third wife Keturah (Gen. 25.2ff.; 1Chron. 1:32). Their relationship to Israel is variable. Their first mention occurs in Gen. 36.21, the Joseph narrative, according to which Joseph was sold to/kidnapped by Midianites who took him to Egypt. Moses' father in law is also a Midianite (Ex. 2.15, 18ff.; Num. 10.29-31). On the other hand we read of a coalition between Midian and Moab (Num. 22.4-7) against Israel and later the marriage of an Israelite with a Midianite woman and the

82 1988:5.

following seduction of the Israelites into Midianite pagan worship (Num. 25.6-18) at Baal Peor. This led to a divinely commanded war against the Midianites (Num. 31.1-12; Jos. 13.21). The biblical picture builds up a historical background against which an explanation of both their presence and incursion can now be attempted. Soggin suggests that "if the mention of Qarqar in 8.10 is really a reference to present-day *qerāqir*, situated in the *wādī sirhān* we would have a location in the northern *heḡiāz* and therefore precisely in the region traditionally given as their habitat. They would therefore have left from there for their incursions. And in that case, incursions these would certainly be: the Midianites would then be semi-nomadic raiders, probably not yet in the sedentary stage."⁸³ Moore simply attributes these forays to the named branches of the Midianite tribe.⁸⁴

In the same line, following the biblical evidence, E.J. Payne has rather argued that "in the period prior to Israel's bid for domination in Palestine, Midianites were actually sedentary in an arc of territory almost surrounding the southern portion of lands held by the Canaanites."⁸⁵ The Northern sector of the Midianite area extended from the South-Galilean foothills to the vicinity of Ammon. For this she finds evidence in those biblical traditions which mention their presence with other groups in the Negev,⁸⁶ Edom (1Kings 11.18; cf. Hab. 3.3-7), Moab (Gen. 36.35), the Amorite kingdom south of Wadi Zerqa and North of Wadi Mujib,⁸⁷ the east bank of the Jordan between the Bethshean crossing and Tell Deir 'Alla (Judg.7.22-8.3), the Plain of Jezreel (Judg.

⁸³ 1981:107-108.

⁸⁴ 1898:177.

⁸⁵ 1983:163.

⁸⁶ Num. 10.29ff. with Judg. 1.16; Num. 25.6ff.; cf. Josh. 15.61.

⁸⁷ Num. 31.8 with Josh. 13.21; Judg. 8.4.

6.1-7.22), and the hills of southern Galilee (Josh. 11.1; Judg. 4.11). The association of Midian with North Arabia arose, in her opinion, only at a later time. "As a result of a series of reverses over the following centuries, the Midianite population, which was not absorbed into the new socio-political units of Israel, Judah, Edom and Moab was pushed back into the deserts of North Arabia."⁸⁸ Evidence of this connection are found in the eighth century B.C. Assyrian annals,⁸⁹ in the 6th century B.C. biblical records (Gen. 25. 1-4; Isa. 60.6), Josephus⁹⁰ and Ptolemy.⁹¹ "The later association of Midian with Northern Arabia however," she concludes, "does not necessarily confirm that the tribe occupied this area in either the late Bronze or Early iron Age."⁹²

The following part of the article is then aimed at showing that in the Gideon complex the reference to the Midianites' raids are redactional. These stories do really testify to an internal conflict among the Midianites. Once the work of the final editor is removed three stories emerge: the first describing the expulsion of Midianites from the Plain of Jezreel by Gideon; the second "seems to have as its basis a Midianite raid from an east bank base on the strategic Ephraimite-held mount of Wadi Farah (Judg. 7:24-8:3)."⁹³ The third (Judg.8.4ff.) "recounts how a band of Abiezrites connected a reprisal attack on Midianite Succoth for the murder of a number of their leaders at Tabor in

⁸⁸ 1983:163. For the difficulty in using some of the biblical passages mentioned above see Knauf 1983: n. 13.

⁸⁹ ANET pp. 282-286.

⁹⁰ Ant. 2.257.

⁹¹ Geog. VII. 2.27.

⁹² 1983:164.

⁹³ 1983:165.

southern Galilee."⁹⁴ Her contention is that the first story, once stripped from redactional elements indicates that the Midianites were the inhabitants of the Plain and moreover that the inhabitants of Ophrah as well as Gideon were Midianites. Gideon probably destroyed what was a Midianite altar so that "the Midianite conflict of Judg. 6:11-7:22 may have thus arisen out of the championship of Yahweh by one priestly family within the Midianite sector and its opposition by more conservative elements of the same group."⁹⁵ All further arguments adduced by her are in support of the sedentary nature of the Midianite presence in this region.

Payne's reconstruction is very suggestive and in theory it is possible. Yet, the main objection is archaeological. In fact, her suggestion that the Midianites' association with North Arabia took place at a later time does not stand the evidence. The recent identification of Midianite pottery from N.W. Arabia, one region generally identified with biblical Midian, does seem to confirm the view that the Midianites were basically sedentary people and that this association did not originate at a later time but that it existed during the 13th and 12th centuries as the dating of the pottery indicates.⁹⁶ The peculiar constituents of this pottery indicate, as far as research has shown, that it was manufactured at or near Qurayyah. Thus, as it has also been found in various other sites, i.e. Israel, Sinai, Edom, Timna', and the 'Arabah, it must have been imported there. The wide distribution of

⁹⁴ 1983:165.

⁹⁵ As she herself comments "This would provide supportive evidence for the thesis of N.K. Gottwald (1980) that Israel came into existence in Canaan as the result of a successful internal campaign of opposition against the existing Canaanite system, the opposition being identified with the Yahwistic faith." 1983:171 n. 7. For a critique of Gottwald see Thompson 1987:17-20.

⁹⁶ See B. Rothenberg and J. Glass 1983:65-124.

pottery outside the Qurayyah may have had connections with the Egyptian control of this region during the 19th-20th dynasties. Further, the finds of Midianite sherds in copper smelting camps in the 'Arabah and the connection of Midian itself as an ancient mining centre may indicate a connection between Midianite Pottery and metal production and trade.⁹⁷

As a further objection we may observe that the geographical descriptions of the biblical traditions after all may not be taken as absolutely accurate in all their details. Though they "may" preserve ancient and valuable information this cannot be taken for granted. They may have been employed simply to provide literary links. Moreover, the suggestion that Gideon destroyed what probably was a Midianite altar assumes that we have here historical reminiscences, while it is possible that the whole pericope is indeed a late composition. At present, in fact, it is employed with specific literary functions in the complex: (a) it shows that as oppression comes from the people's apostasy, deliverance starts with their rejection of foreign gods; (b) it links the Gideon complex to the Abimelech story.

A different approach has been taken by E.A. Knauf who has tried to clarify the relationship between Midianites and Ishmaelites since in Judg. 8.4 the two are equated while other biblical traditions assert that the two were half brothers but not the same individual.⁹⁸ The two, in fact, "had nothing to do with each other in terms of their way of life, the geographical areas they occupied, or the time at which they flourished."⁹⁹ In order to clarify the problem he first attempts to

⁹⁷ Rothenberg & Glass 1983:115.

⁹⁸ Cf. Gen. 25.13-15 and Gen. 25.2/1Chron.1.32. An attempt to equate the two occurs already in the Joseph narrative, Gen. 37.36ff. For a recent treatment on this problem see Thompson 1987:116ff.

⁹⁹ 1983:152.

define both Ishmael and Midian with the aid of biblical and extra-biblical evidence. In regard to Ishmael he concludes that it "probably existed as a tribal federation in the central North Arabian and Syrian desert at the end of the 8th century, was flourishing by the middle of the 7th century and possibly existed into the 6th century BC."¹⁰⁰ As to the land of Midian it "extended east of the Gulf of 'Aquaba; the city is certainly identical with one of the fields of ruins at the present oasis of al-Bad' in the Wadi l-Abyad."¹⁰¹ The exact borders are, however, unclear and it is likely that they varied over the course of time.¹⁰² Though Midian, as far as we know, was unimportant in the first millennium, Knauf suggests in the light of its prominence in the biblical traditions¹⁰³ that it must have been important at some time. This he suggests was in the second millennium B.C., "the reason may have been its location on the 'incense road'. Midian was most probably actively engaged in trade...Still in the region of Midianite influence, it branched off towards Egypt... At the time of Sargon II, however the road seems to have shifted further inland, perhaps following the route of the present-day Hejaz Railway."¹⁰⁴ The reason for the shift of this route he thinks to be found in the history of the camel which may explain in his opinion the Midianite raids carried out into Palestine at the beginning

¹⁰⁰ 1983:148.

¹⁰¹ 1983:148.

¹⁰² According to Gen. 25.2 Midian divided into 5 sub-districts: Ephah, Ephar, Hanoah, Abida, Eldaah. Though the Bible is silent of Midian's late history the biblical Ephah is identified with the tribe Hay(ya)pa mentioned by the Assyrian kings Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II. Knauf further suggests the possible identification of the biblical Abida with Ibadidi, another tribe from Sargon's list, provided both names come from the same root bd' (1983:149).

¹⁰³ see Knauf 1983:155 n. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Knauf 1983:49. See also the article by Rothenberg and Glass (1983) who seem to suggest the same from the archaeological evidence.

of the Iron Age.¹⁰⁵ The re-routing of this road to the east prior to the 8th century was due to the transition from stage II to stage III of camel domestication in this part of Arabia.¹⁰⁶ During the late bronze and the early Iron Age camels did not play a major role in the Midianite economy. "The archaeological evidence as well as the place names themselves...would tend to indicate that the Midianite was a sedentary agricultural society, employing terrace and other irrigation techniques in their wadis."¹⁰⁷ However, Knauf advocates the hypothesis that "with the breakdown of Syrian-Aegean culture at the end of the Bronze Age, trade also succumbed. The out-of-work Midianite traders employed the camel, their means of transportation, to transport men instead of merchandise, to take by force what they could not gain by trade. The raiding parties were apparently small. According to the most ancient strata of the Gideon tradition, only the men of Gideon's own clan, some 300, participated in his fights... The use of the camel as a means of transportation explains the extensive Midianite activities at that time."¹⁰⁸

This hypothesis is then followed by his main conclusion on the relationship between Midianites and Ishmaelites which is worth quoting in full:

Only one passage in the Old Testament, Judg. 6.1-5, depicts the Midianites as nomads who invade the land with immense herds and devastate it. This passage, however, belongs to the editorial framework of the book of Judges and probably was not written before the 6th century. At this time, the inhabitants of Palestine had already had plenty of opportunity to become acquainted with another type of

¹⁰⁵ With this hypothesis Knauf does not want to support the Gideon complex but simply to explain historically how the Midianite clashes with Israel may be historically explained.

¹⁰⁶ See above. Knauf 1983:150-1.

¹⁰⁷ Knauf 1983:151. See also p. 156 n. 24,25.

¹⁰⁸ 1983:151.

camel-rider. According to Assyrian accounts, Qedar,¹⁰⁹ a tribe of Ishmael, raided the countries west of the Arabian peninsula "again and again". In the middle of the 7th century, the king of Moab managed to drive them back. One hundred years later, however, there was no king of Moab, no King of Ammon, and no King of Judah any more. There was no military power which could have prevented the proto-beduins from raiding anywhere they wanted.¹¹⁰ Judges 8.24 ("For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites") is most probably a gloss, but the glossator is completely correct. The historiographer of the exilic or post-exilic period used the Ishmaelites, with whom he was acquainted, as a model for his depiction of the Midianites. These "Midianites" were indeed Ishmaelites."¹¹¹

Knauf's contribution is very interesting in shedding light on the use of the term "Midian" in the Gideon complex and we find ourselves largely in agreement with his main conclusion. Whether 8.24 is actually a gloss is not clear. In fact, his remarks seem to confirm our previous suggestion that the motifs of any given tradition are likely to have been influenced by events near to the time of the final redaction rather than necessarily preserving (though this cannot be excluded) ancient traditions. We also find ourselves in agreement with his objection to Richter's analysis in regarding Judg. 6.2b-5 to be older than the clearly "deuteronomistic" verses 1-2a and viewing it rather contemporary.¹¹²

It is with the hypothesis on the Midianite incursions that some difficulties arise. The main problem, as we see it, is the reluctance to move completely away from the biblical text. Because the memory of a Midianite oppression is recorded in other sources it must have some historical kernel. Though this may be true it is very difficult, if not impossible, to define its nature. Moreover, when we analyze the

¹⁰⁹ According to Gen. 25.13 he was the second descendent.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Lam. 5.9, "We get our bread with the peril of our lives/because of the sword of the wilderness." Cf. Knauf 1983:157 n. 33.

¹¹¹ 1983:151-2.

¹¹² See Knauf 1983:155. Whether this is "even younger" is however doubtful, p. 157 n. 33.

references to the Midianites which may possibly refer to the Gideon complex several are directly dependent on the Book of Judges (see e.g. Ps. 83). More problematic is even this necessity to explain possible Midianite raids through the use of the camels. Again, it is of course possible though for this Knauf was unable to provide any positive evidence from extra-biblical sources. The mention of camels, in fact, seems to be entirely redactional.

We may thus conclude, from what was said above that, a) the use of camels took place much earlier than it was thought. Their reference in the Book of Judges is, however, redactional; b) the Midianite presence in central Transjordan remains unclear. It is possible that such Midianite/Israelite clashes did occur or at least that Midianite trade was known in Israel (see e.g. Gen. 37.28,36). However, their actual nature is no longer accessible.

VI. GIDEON AS A RELIGIOUS REFORMER

A. JUDGES 6.11-24

Judges 6.11-24, the first Gideon narrative following the prologue, deals with Gideon's call and the subsequent construction of an altar which derives its name from the recognition of his guest as the messenger of YHWH himself, "Peace be to you... Then Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it, The Lord is peace..." (vv. 22-24). Although it stands as a unity the pericope appears to show signs of being composite in nature and commentators have pointed this out consistently. The grounds for this are:¹ a) Verse 11 as it stands can be divided into two parallel parts 11a and 11b which are both indications of place: 11a the oak or terebinth at Ophrah, 11b the wine press where Gideon was beating out wheat. The two parallels are syntactically a unit, in content however no effort is made to relate the two.² The oak is simply associated with Joash the Abiezrite and then suddenly Gideon is introduced who is described as his son.

¹ Cf. Richter 1963:122-24.

² The N.I.V. renders it, "...where his son Gideon was threshing wheat..." so creating a connection between 11a and 11b. It further renders 12a "When the angel..." smoothing the tension with v. 11a in which case the two would not necessarily contrast. This would also solve the problem of verse 20 where a rock is mentioned. In this case the reference would be to the vat. Such translation seems forced, yet it may well give us a hint of how the compiler himself would have explained the tensions!

a) Verse 11a clearly contains two subordinate clauses,³ one of place and the other of possession. The Hebrew construction is possible although it is clumsy in that it makes Joash appear to be the owner or mayor of the city, a fact which is stated nowhere else in the following narratives.⁴ However, the fact that in verse 29 Joash occurs again only as the father of Gideon while in v. 24 and 8.32 "at Ophrah of the Abiezrites"⁵ occurs without the mention of Joash seems to suggest that the second relative clause is an addition, a combination of v. 24 and 29 (25-32) probably in order to introduce Joash already here (so Richter). It is also possible that the original reading simply omitted **ליראש אשר** and read similarly to v. 24 (**בעפרת אבי העזרי**). The insertion then caused **בעפרת** to change from the construct to the absolute state. Whatever the case the thrust of 11a clearly seems to be threefold: to locate the story at Ophrah, so preparing the way for the next account (25-32); to introduce Joash, Gideon's father; to introduce the Abiezrite clan among which Gideon will operate.

Verse 11b does not relate well to 11a but fits well with the following verse (12) till verse 17, while verse 18 would fit better with verse 11a otherwise it seems that Gideon would have offered his meal-sacrifice in the wine press and there also built an altar to YHWH since (12-17) no

³ **אשר בעפרת אשר ליראש שבי העזרי**.

⁴ Commentators in fact usually point out that **אשר ליראש** does not refer back to the city, which grammatically would be more logical but to the **אלה** (cf. e.g. Gray 1977:230, Moore 1895:185, Burney 1920:187). Probably the intention was to make Joash either the owner or the custodian of the tree.

⁵ **בעפרת אבי העזרי** - 8.32 reads **בעפרת** which probably should be amended to the construct state. **אבי העזרי** could be translated as "father of...", but it seems rather to be a fixed term as a clan name and therefore cannot be translated as "father of...". This is further suggested by v. 34 and 8.2 where this term occurs without the article and as one word to designate the clan. The term occurs again in Jos. 17.2 (**אביעזר**) according to which it was a clan of the tribe of Manasseh, Num. 26.30 (**אביעזר**) and in 1Chron. 7.18 (**אביעזר**).

change of location is indicated.

b) Gideon's interlocutor is differently designated. In 6.11,12,21(2x),22a,22b,23 מלאך יהוה⁶ is found; in 6.20 מלאך האלאלך יהוה is mentioned only once and does not fit well within the pericope.⁷

c) In verse 17 it is implied that Gideon had already recognized his supernatural interlocutor otherwise the request for a sign would not be understandable. This is in contrast with v. 22 according to which Gideon perceived the nature of his interlocutor only after his disappearance in v. 21b.

d) 11a and 12a are two parallel accounts of the messenger of YHWH which stand in opposition to one another. According to v.11a the messenger of YHWH sat under the oak at Ophrah which does not necessarily imply immediate recognition of who he was and links well with 19c where תחת האלה occurs again and with v. 22 where Gideon first recognizes the nature of his interlocutor. 12a rather follows 11b and the thrust of it does not seem to be the recognition of the messenger of YHWH which seems to be taken for granted but Gideon's mission; moreover the whole dialogue is placed in the wine press and there is no indication that the two moved from there to the oak.

e) In verse 20 אסלע is found to indicate the oak, in verse 21 הוזר is used.

⁶ In this regard Gray sees in the pericope two distinct traditions simply "by the fact that in verses 14,15,16 Gideon's interlocutor is known and addressed as the angel of God, whereas in verses 19-24 he is known as God only when fire devoured Gideon's food-offering (verses 21-22) (1977:171). Verse 18 is then editorial.

⁷ According to Moore 1895:189 and Burney (quoting Moore 1920:171) the present variation may be due to transcriptional accident, although Moore (p. 188) seems to agree with those scholars (Böhme and Budde) who would regard v. 20 as a later addition to the story in the light of this variation for the name of God, other peculiar expressions in the verse and the content itself.

f) In vv. 14-16 the theme is Gideon's call and his commissioning to save Israel, in vv. 22-24 then it is the appearance of the messenger of YHWH which leads to the altar construction. Moreover, the latter seems to show tensions within itself. In verse 21b the messenger of YHWH disappears from his sight, yet in verse 23 YHWH still speaks with him and there is no indication that the voice comes from heaven.⁸

g) In verse 17 a sign is asked for, but in v. 18 there seems to be a change of theme. The sign which actually comes in v. 21 seems unexpected and is therefore in contrast with v. 17 where a sign had been explicitly requested.⁹

h) In verse 18 the word מִנְחָה occurs. The idea here seems to be that of a meal offered to the guest. The word however is ambiguous since it could refer both to a present and to a sacrificial offering¹⁰ and it is strange to find it in a hospitality context. However, in v. 20 it clearly appears that a sacrificial offering is meant.¹¹

i) In the first part of the pericope Gideon is addressed as גִּבּוֹר חַיִּל while in the second he simply plays the role of the host.

The points outlined above indicate too many tensions and

⁸ Moore 1895:188f. realizes this conflict and suggests that the words וּמִלֶּאךָ יִהְיֶה הַלֵּךְ מַעֲיָנֶנּוּ (v. 21b) are additions suggested by 13.20 and maintains with Böhme and Budde against Wellhausen that v. 22-24 are an integral part of the original narrative. Burney 1920:193 following Wellhausen, thinks rather "that vv. 22-24 may be due to a later hand in explanation of the name of the altar, *Yahweh shalom*."

⁹ Gray 1977:171f. suggests, very plausibly, that the sequel to vv. 11-17 is to be found in vv. 36-40. This seems to be confirmed by the pattern of divine call followed then by a confirmatory sign as in the case of Moses (Ex. 3.10-12) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1.5-10). Soggin 1981:121 also points out that in the OT, contrary to the NT, the request for a sign is indeed desirable: Ahaz (Isa. 7.11-13) is blamed for not asking such.

¹⁰ Gray 1977:172.

¹¹ Moore and Burney see in here the probability that the word is a substitution in order to imply that the meal was meant as a sacrifice from the beginning since it turned out to be so.

inconsistencies within a short pericope for it to be considered a unit. Yet, some scholars (e.g. Moore and Burney) argue for just that with additions. However, this proposal is not the best since the narrative as it stands does not run smoothly even if the supposed additions would be eliminated. For instance, in order to obtain a smooth narrative it is suggested that v. 17a is an editorial addition "probably by the same hand which inserted v. 20 under the impression that the meal Gideon prepared was intended from the first as a sacrifice, contrary to Gen. 18.3-5 and especially Judg. 13.15f. That the words are not part of the original narrative, is in some degree confirmed by the unusual relative particle *ו*."¹² But this suggestion may remove only one tension while many others remain throughout. The problem with this approach as well as that of those who want to see here parallel traditions lies in the fact, according to Richter, that "Beide machen den Fehler, daß sie die Spannungen als heuristisches Prinzip für die Einzelverse nehmen statt dort, wo sie festgestellt sind: im ganzen Kontext."¹³ In other words the tensions must be analysed in the light of the whole pericope rather than in the specific places where they occur.

If this principle is accepted literary analysis will confirm Richter's conclusion that we have here two pericopes: 11a, 18f., 21-24 and 11b-17 (which presupposes vv. 2b-5).

Verse 22 stands against v. 14 in the knowledge of who the interlocutor was. Vv. 21-22 stand against vv. 14,16 in their identification of the interlocutor.¹⁴ Moreover, the purpose of the two is

¹² Moore 1895:186-7.

¹³ 1963:186f.

¹⁴ However, this point should not be pressed too much. In fact according to Soggin 1981:114 "Here as in other ancient narratives (Gen. 16.7ff., 21.7, 22.11.; Ex. 3.2; Judg. 13.2ff.) and in the present text at vv. 14,16 and 23, the 'messenger' is a being who is interchangeable with

different: call/sending - altar-construction. Verse 11a stands against v. 11b and v. 12a against 11a. Verse 20 and 19 understand the guest-meal differently and the latter would precede smoothly verse 21 without v. 20 which makes the meal into a sacrifice. V. 21 also mentions only the meat and the unleavened cakes, which would correspond to 19a. This may suggest that 19b is an expansion into 19ac as well as v. 20 which tends to transform the meal into a sacrifice. If one removes 19b,20 the narrative reads smoothly till the end except for a tension between v. 21 and 23. Verses 18, 19ac would point back to 11a. The pericope would then consist of 11a, 18-24 which however is not capable of autonomous existence.

Verses 11b-17 seem to stand also as a unit and this account reads more smoothly than the other. Verse 11b constitutes a good introduction to the appearance of the messenger of YHWH and to his sending.¹⁵ The incident is anticipated in vv. 2b-5 while this is not true for 11a, 18-24. However, in the process of the fusion of the two accounts, the former seems to have forced into the latter some foreign elements such as the transformation of the guest meal into a sacrificial meal. In such a case Gideon would have been aware of the nature of his guest, a detail probably absent from the second story where Gideon becomes aware of his nature only after his vanishing. The request for a sign offered actually a point of contact where the two stories could be linked and this may be one of the reasons why the second pericope is put within the context of the first section. Now the springing up of the fire from the stone is seen as the requested sign of Gideon which he wants as assurance from the

Yahweh, identical to him, and does not exist in a separate form, being his visible manifestation."

¹⁵ In 11b וַיִּקְרָא may be editorial in order to link the two stories together.

Lord, before he endeavours to fight the oppressor. Consequently v. 17 can stand as it is (*contra* Burney and Moore) following smoothly after v. 16.

In conclusion, two pericopes have emerged from this analysis: 11a,18f.,21-22 and 11b-17. Yet we should remark that none of them would be capable of standing as a self contained unit. Some details of the original pericopes (if this was ever the case) have been pushed away as they came to be fused together to form the present unit.

B. Judges 6.11a,18-24

1. Structure

I.	Introduction	11a,18
	A. The setting: The messenger of YHWH comes and sits under the terebinth	11a
	B. Hospitality motif: Gideon invites the guest for a meal	18
II.	Gideon prepares the meal	19ac,21
	A. Gideon prepares and offers the meal to the guest	19ac
	B. The messenger of YHWH touches the meal which is then devoured by fire and disappears from Gideon's sight	21
III.	Gideon recognizes his guest	22-24
	A. Recognition and fear motif	22
	B. YHWH's greeting and assurance	23
	C. Aetiological conclusion: an altar is built	24

As has been pointed out above this unit is not by itself self-sufficient to stand alone. Originally it "may" have done so but now it has been skillfully combined with another (11b-17). Both of them are now necessary to form a complete and self contained unit although it is likely that in the mind of the author the unit was even extending up

to v. 11 to 32. Verse 25 is in fact connected to v. 24 in a temporal manner with the words **ויהי בלילה ההוא**.¹⁶ As it stands now the division of this (incomplete) unit is threefold.¹⁷

The first scene is comprised in verse 11a and 18. V. 11a introduces the messenger of YHWH, although from the context it is not clear whether we should take Gideon as the main figure or the messenger of YHWH. The first relative clause **אשר בעפרה** already prepares the ground for the concluding verse 24b rounding off the unit with the mention of the same place name as the location where Gideon builds an altar to YHWH. In other words the interpretation of it is left to a later time at the climax of the story. If we take both relative clauses into consideration they anticipate not only 24b but also the following pericope where Joash is then also put into the scene. Verse 18 introduces the hospitality theme which may have been the sequel of a narrative between 11a and 18 which has not been preserved here. In the story Gideon might have shown his willingness to serve which is responded positively by the guest by accepting his hospitality. With the messenger's reply the scene is then interrupted.

The second scene comprises verses 19ac, 21. The beginning is clearly marked by having a noun starting off verse 19 (**וגרעון**). It is set only within a temporal framework describing first the actions of Gideon in preparing the meal and then those of his guest. As the messenger of YHWH touches the meal with the tip of his staff fire comes out of the rock upon which the meal was placed. With this the story

¹⁶ Boling 1975:129-130 in fact argues that the two supposed pericopes (i.e. 11-24 and 25-32) are a unity, although he is here arguing against the documentary hypothesis which want to assign vv. 11-24 to J and 25-32 to E.

¹⁷ Richter 1963:130-32.

reaches a climax although it is not clear at this point what the aim of the author is, as this becomes apparent only in the last scene.

The third scene is comprised of three verses (22-24). In contrast to the previous scene where verbs of actions are used, the use of sense-perception verbs in this scene introduces a different character into the pericope. Here Gideon perceives who is his guest and verse 22b, the seeing of God face to face, prepares the way for YHWH's reply of assurance. The implication of Gideon's reaction (v. 22) is that he was aware of the danger of seeing God. The climax however had already been prepared by v. 11a - the messenger of YHWH was Gideon's interlocutor. The climax of the whole pericope then is reached in the last two verses. That YHWH is now the speaker was already introduced by Gideon's exclamation **אֵתָהּ אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה**. YHWH addresses Gideon with a greeting, the **אֵל-תִּירָא** formula, and the assurance that he will not die. These three elements are unusual: the greeting which in fact was customary among men is found in the mouth of YHWH, the revelation formula occurring without a theophany, and the opinion presupposed in the third part of the sentence that a messenger-theophany has a mortal effect.¹⁸ However, the aim of this verse (23) is clear and becomes evident in v. 24 in the construction of the altar and in the giving of the name. Strictly speaking the greeting of YHWH **שָׁלוֹם לָךְ** and the name given by Gideon to the altar are not the same. This suggests that the name of the altar was already known and provided for those words which are now put into the mouth of YHWH. On the whole however, it is in this final verse that the climax is reached.

¹⁸ 1963:131f.

2. Genre

The genre of this pericope has been variously classified.¹⁹ The first part could well be called "narrative" especially if at a previous stage the reference was to a "man" who appeared rather than an angel. However, the story as it appears has a religious interest and the full purpose of it is only shown at the end of it. To this we must turn now, in order to determine the literary genre of this pericope. The name of the altar is made dependent on the words said by YHWH although it can be noted that if the aim of the story were YHWH's words, the words of assurance would have been found at the end of YHWH's speech: "you will surely not die because...". However this is not the case. What rather seems the point is the construction of the altar in response to the recognition of his guest. Perhaps the story was then a legend of a holy place recalling the incident which brought about the construction of an altar at Ophrah whose writer testifies it to be still there: "To this day it still stands at Ophrah...." (v. 24).²⁰ Its literary genre however will become more apparent still as we compare the themes which occur in this

¹⁹ Richter 1963:128f. gives a summary of the various classifications given by scholars to vv. 11-24. Moore 1895:182 speaks of "account"; Gunkel calls it a "cult-saga"; De Fraine, a kind of hieros logos over the construction of the altar of YHWH in Ophrah; Simpson 1957:26 calls the nucleus of this section "an inaugural legend of a certain sanctuary"; Täubler an "Ätiologische Altar-Stiftungslegende"; Gressmann finds two points, an "Ätiologische Kultsage" and a "Berufungssage"; according to Kutsch the aetiologies are "Ortssage" and for the call he makes a comparison with other Berufungsschemata. Alonso-Schökel distinguishes between "epica fantastica" and "epica narrativa". Among the modern commentators Gray defines vv. 1-17 as a hero-saga of Gideon while vv. 19-24 an aetiological legend of the foundation of the altar of "God is peace"; Penna 1963:113 as "leggenda"; Boling 1975:135 connects 6.11-32 with the preceding stories with which he sees here and early epic or saga book; Tucker 1971:38 classifies 6.11-24 as a legend for the explanation of the altar at Ophrah; Soggin speaks of 11-24 as a cultic legend of the sanctuary at Ophrah and a narrative describing the call of Gideon.

²⁰ However, see chapter I, pp. 36f. on the use of this phrase.

pericope with others in the OT and possibly thereby try to trace its setting and intention.

3. Parallel Motif Traditions

a) The appearance of the messenger of YHWH²¹

The appearance of the messenger of YHWH is also found in several other instances in the OT especially throughout the early biblical narratives. He communicates with men either from heaven (e.g. Gen. 21.17) or in a dream (e.g. Gen. 31.11) or he finds himself being on earth. Of the latter instance, examples (מַאֲלַךְ יְהוָה) are found in Gen. 17.7ff. where he finds Hagar, converses with her and gives her a promise; in Ex. 23.23 and 32.34 he goes before the people of Israel; in Num. 22 he puts himself in the way and speaks with Balaam; in Ex. 14.19 he appears on earth and in Gen. 32.2 where Jacob meets the angels of God. Outside the pentateuchal sources references are found in Judg. 2.1 where the angel of YHWH goes up from Gilgal to Bochim; Judg. 13.3ff. with Manoah and his wife; 2Sam. 24.16 in reference to David and 1Kings 19.7 with Elijah.

The following differences can be noticed: a) nowhere but in Judg. 6.11-24^{does} the appearance of the messenger of YHWH cause the construction of an altar. Such encounters are sometimes only the occasion of a name aetiology.²² b) The disappearance of the messenger of YHWH occurs only in

²¹ Richter 1963:133-34.

²² Cf. Gen. 16.14 "Therefore the well was called Beer-la-hai-roi..."; Gen. 22.14 "So Abraham called the name of that place The Lord will provide..."; Gen. 32.3 (EVV v. 2) "and when Jacob saw them he said, 'This is God's army!' So he called the name of that place Mahanaim".

Judg. 6.21 "and the messenger of YHWH vanished from his sight" and in Judg. 13.20 "And when the flames went up towards heaven from the altar, the messenger of YHWH ascended in the flame of the altar..." c) The recognition of the messenger of YHWH seems to be found only in Judg. 6.11-24 and Judg. 13. d) Nowhere else the actual vision of the messenger of YHWH causes fear of death (cf. 6.22). In Judg. 13.20 the fear of death comes in recognition that the guest was YHWH. Elsewhere the expression "face to face" is usually used for YHWH, which generates then fear of death (e.g. Ex. 33.20).

The theme of the visit of the messenger of YHWH followed by an altar construction is unique in the OT as well as the mentioning of his disappearance and fear of him. It may be suggested that here the messenger of YHWH and YHWH himself are understood as being identical, with no particular significance attached to it. The text reflects a period when a distinction between the two was not yet made or even a later period when an original YHWH may have been read throughout but then substituted in order to attenuate anthropomorphisms. If this is the case, observations a) and d) lose relevance. Yet b) and c) are still not explained. The original pericope may have thus referred to the visit of a divine being followed then by the construction of an altar. The etymological aetiology which seems to be in tension with the flow of the narrative may have been a later accretion to the original tradition.²³

²³ Richter concludes here differently. He regards the altar tradition as a secondary element rather than, as I have suggested, an original part to the story. In his opinion the analysis rather shows that here (especially in v.22 and 24a) we find the reflection about the old narrative elements. Also the fear of YHWH now transferred to the messenger of YHWH would be the result of reflection.

b) Epiphany and altar tradition²⁴

Many passages throughout the OT describe altar constructions especially in those books which refer to the pre-monarchic period.²⁵ The occasions which brought about an altar construction are various. However, there are some traditions which as in Judg. 6.11a,18-24 are connected with a theophany followed by the construction of an altar: Gen. 12.7-8; 13.18; 26.23-25; 28.10-19; 35.7.²⁶ These passages seem to follow a definite pattern. For convenience we will outline only Gen. 12.7-8 and 26.23-25 where the pattern is most clearly defined:

a) Place description

Gen. 12.6	Gen. 26.23
Abraham passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh.	From there he went up to Beersheba

b) Appearance of YHWH

Gen. 12.7	Gen. 26.24	Gen. 12.7	Gen. 26.24
Then the Lord	And the Lord	וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה	וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו

²⁴ Richter 1963:134-37.

²⁵ The reason for this may be twofold: a) it may be due to the fact that many references to altar construction reflect traditions recording the event when a particular "Canaanite" altar or holy place was officially authorized as a Yahwistic place. b) Although this belongs to a later period in the history of Israel, the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem made the building of new altar illegal.

²⁶ In the last two passages the pattern of altar construction is slightly broken although all the elements are there. In Gen. 35.1 it is God himself who tells Jacob to go to Bethel and to make there an altar to God since he had appeared to him there (cf. Gen. 28.10ff). Yet, the four elements which will be outlined below also appear here a) place description (28.10); b) appearance of YHWH (28.11ff.; 35.1); c) word of promise (28.13ff.); d) altar construction (35.7).

appeared to
Abram and said,

appeared to
him

אל-אברם

יהוה

c) *Word of promise*

Gen. 12.7b

To your descendants I will
give this land

Gen.26.24

...and I will bless you
and multiply your descendants...

d) *Altar construction*

Gen. 12.7b

So he built there
an altar to YHWH

Gen. 26.25

So he built an
altar there and
called upon the
name of YHWH

Gen. 12.7b

ויבן שם מזבח
ליהוה

Gen. 26.25

ויבן שם מזבח
...

The above examples seem to point to a certain pattern in which an appearance/speech of YHWH was followed by the construction of an altar.²⁷ The first element is very different and seems to be more or less governed by the running of the narrative. The second appears fairly constant. The third varies. On the whole these passages reflect a unity of theme due to the hand of the same writer. The last element is quite similar. It may be noted that sometimes the altar is built ליהוה while other times the expression ויקרא בשם יהוה occurs.

According to Richter²⁸ the analysis would confirm his previous suggestion to consider 22-24 as secondary addition. Vv. 23-24 very succinctly comprise the second, third and fourth element of the altar

²⁷ Here I am not concerned at the moment about analyzing the literary unity of these pericopes, but only in pointing out the structure into which they are built.

²⁸ Richter analyses the altar construction within a threefold pattern (b,c,d).

construction scheme as noticed above. For the sake of the YHWH-shalom altar in Ophrah the greeting of YHWH "Peace be to you" was formed which was connected with the messenger of the YHWH tradition. He further suggests that the scheme was found with names to which a theophany was attached since it was presupposed that the two went hand in hand. The reason may originally have been because Yahwism was taking over and previous non-Yahwistic traditions were absorbed and transformed into Yahwistic ones. According to Richter the analysis also confirms and differentiates the conjecture of Eissfeldt, that in 6.11-24 "offenbar das Gedächtnis des fremden Gottes getilgt und als Grund für die Heilighaltung der Stätte vielmehr eine Erscheinung Jahwes oder seines Boten angegeben wird."²⁹

B.O. Long in his investigation of v. 24 also concludes that the etymological elements are secondary. Verse 23 which gives the reason for the name of the altar breaks the sequence between 21f. and the altar construction (24a). Moreover, while previously the speaker was the כֹּהֵן יְהוָה now the speech is attributed to יְהוָה. V. 22, Gideon's recognition, represents the climax of the guest's visit. He concludes that "it seems likely that a genuine etymological etiological report is not present. Rather one sees the secondary accretion of etymological interests which are expressed in an oddly mixed form."³⁰

A different analysis of the pericope is suggested by Kübel (1971). The aetiology in vv. 22-24 should not be taken as a secondary element over against the theme of the guest-meal. We should distinguish between

²⁹ "Ba'alsamen und Jahwe", ZAW 57 (1939) 18, quoted by Richter 1963:136f. "Obviously the memory of the foreign god was extinguished and as reason for keeping the place holy rather an appearance of YHWH or his messenger is indicated." This possibility is also envisaged by Soggin 1981:117.

³⁰ 1968:63-64.

the altar construction and the giving of the name, the former being the original aetiology which only referred to the construction of the altar. He further asks whether or not it is possible that the original aetiology had no message. For instance this would be the case in Gen. 28.10-19 if we omit vv. 13-16 which are usually considered as a Yahwistic insertion.³¹ If this is the case, we may suggest that the whole pericope could fit within an altar-building scheme.

a) *Place description*

Gen. 28.10,11

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran, and...

Judg. 6.11

(i) Now the messenger of YHWH came and sat under the oak at Ophrah...[(ii) and Gideon was ...in the wine press]

b) *Appearance of YHWH*

Gen. 28.12

And he dreamed...and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

Judg. 6.11a

Now the messenger of YHWH came ... (v. 12 - and...appeared to him...)

c) *Word of promise*

Gen. 28.13-16

[I am YHWH...; the land on which you lie I will give to you and...]

Judg. 6.12-17

[And YHWH...said, "Go ...do not I send you? ...And YHWH said to him, "But I will be with you...]

³¹ Whether 13-16 are to be considered a Yahwistic insertion or not is of no concern here since what is relevant is whether they were in the original story or not. Westermann seems also to suggest that the original story contained only the dream (v. 12), vv. 13, 14 (15bß) being a further elaboration. According to him "the goal of the narrative is the origin of a sanctuary or holy place" (1984:452f.).

d) *Altar construction*

Gen. 28.18ff.

Judg. 6.24

So Jacob...took the stone which he
had put under his head and set it
for a pillar...

Then Gideon built an altar to
YHWH...

The scheme above shows that although there are some similarities there are also differences: a) the place description refers first to the messenger of YHWH while Gideon's place description which would parallel the Genesis account belongs to the next pericope. b) The appearance of YHWH is in both examples *different*. In the Genesis account Jacob has a dream, in Judges the messenger of YHWH does simply come and sit under the oak and only in the second pericope he appears to Gideon. c) The word of promise is different in content in both accounts although this is so with some necessity as the situations addressed are different. But what is of interest here is that the word of promise is in both cases given to YHWH and this may clarify why in Gideon's call any time a word of promise is given it is YHWH who speaks and not the messenger of YHWH (v. 14,16,23).³² d) The altar construction is very different. In Genesis the altar construction takes place later (Gen. 35) through a direct command of YHWH while in Judges Gideon does build an altar at once in response to the recognition that the guest was YHWH's messenger.

Whether we are dealing here with an original altar aetiology (Kübel) or whether the altar construction was independent is not clear. It is true to say that if we have here an original altar aetiology there are no similar parallels to it. Other narratives which are similar to Judg. 11a, 18-24 are found in Gen. 18.1ff. and Judg. 13. Unfortunately none of

³² The same case seems to be in Gen. 18 where Abraham is visited by divine beings. Yet the word of promise is spoken by YHWH (v. 10, 13-14).

them is then followed by an altar construction in response to the divine promise. On the other hand, although the various reasons given in those passages which deal with an altar construction differ it is to be noticed that in those cases where the altar construction is the result of an appearance of YHWH (Gen. 12.7; 13.18; 26.25) the altar construction is not the main purpose, but it is a response to the promise of YHWH.³³ Perhaps this observation may help us to clarify the significance of the altar construction here as we will suggest later.

As a final remark we may conclude here that although it is not clear whether we should take vv. 22-24 as a unit by itself, we suggest taking it as an integral part of this pericope since it does make good sense if we omit from it the giving of the altar name as a secondary addition. In fact, if we argue for its independence the visit of the messenger is left hanging in the air with no real conclusion while in the other two parallel stories the promise of a son is the point (at least this is the case in Gen. 18).

c) The motif of hospitality³⁴

Other parallel motives to Judges 6.11a, 18-24 can be found in Judg. 13 and Gen. 18, both dealing with the motif of hospitality.

³³ Westermann 1984:155 for example commenting on Gen. 12.7 argues that it is a misunderstanding to interpret it as a reference to Abraham founding there a cult centre. "The building of the altar is not a general reference to a divine revelation, but to the oracle given to Abraham, the promise. Because the promise refers to the possession of the land, the building of the altar is Abraham's response." (Cf. Gen. 13.18; 26.25). Probably Gideon's action should also be interpreted towards this line. The content of 12-17 would confirm this suggestion.

³⁴ Richter 1963:137-144.

i) Genesis 18 and Judges 6

According to Westermann³⁵ Gen. 18 is made up of two units 1-16a and 16b-33 which are also composite. The first unit which has some resemblance to Judg. 6 is made up of two parts, the visit of three men to Abraham (1-8) and the promise of a son (9-16a). The main point of the story is the promise of a son which is received with skepticism and doubt. Yet, it seems that the main role in the story is played by the guests and the detail of the couple being childless is only introduced in v. 11 although Sarah, Abraham's wife, and the tent where she was, are details already mentioned earlier (v. 6). They are taken up again with their full relevance later in the story.³⁶ Moreover, it can be noticed that the birth comes only later (21.1-7) and the promise of their return is not fulfilled. Westermann explains these peculiarities suggesting that Gen. 18.1-16a is the outcome of two narratives which have overlapped and have been fused into one: "(a) the promise of a child to a childless couple...and (b) the visit of a divine messenger(s) or a god(s) who rewards the reception and hospitality with a gift."³⁷ The original narrative of the promise of a son could have spoken only of the woman as the recipient of the promise (cf. Judg. 13). So it is possible that here we have the fusion of two stories of which one may have spoken of the deliverance from stress with the promise of a child, the other of the visit of divine men who recompense the given hospitality with a gift, in

³⁵ 1984:274-76.

³⁶ This is a common feature in Hebrew composition (cf. Judg. 3.7,12).

³⁷ Westermann 1984:224. The structure of a) is: "childlessness as an affliction - announcement of the birth of a child as salvation." (Cf. Gen. 15.2-4; 16; 1Sam. 1, and the Ugaritic parallel *keret*/IK 1-58). The structure of b) is: visit of the god (messenger) - reception and hospitality - promise of the child (as a gift of the guest)."

this case the promise of a child. Of the latter a suitable example is found in 2Kings 4.11-17 where the hospitality of the Shunammite woman is recompensed with the conception of a son. She, just as Sarah, replies to the promise with skepticism and doubt.

Although the analysis reveals that in Gen. 18 we have a composite narrative, nevertheless it is still possible to notice some common features with Judg. 6:³⁸

Genesis 18.1-16a	Judges 6.11a,18-24
2. Three men	11a Messengers of YHWH (originally a man?) plus place indication
3-5. Very wordy invitation	18. Brief invitation
6-8a. The preparation of the meal shows Abraham's zeal; Sarah introduced	19. Briefly depicted meal - preparation
8b. Meal	21 Fire miracle and disappearance of the messenger
9ff. The old woman and the child etc. (redacted)	22ff. The turning up of the altar aetiology

As Richter points out soon two differences appear. First of all the main difference is already noticeable in v. 6 with the introduction of Sarah who prepares the way for the promise of a child. There is no hint in Judg. 6 that a woman would have played any role. Secondly, the aim of the hospitality is different. In Judges it is the means by which Gideon recognizes his guest, in Genesis it is only preparatory. The features of the Genesis account seem to suggest a more ancient tradition which dealt only with the theme of hospitality. In Genesis the main theme is the promise of a birth and the theme of hospitality may have been a later expansion of the original tradition. With Judges however the original

³⁸ The scheme is from Richter although for Genesis he takes into consideration only vv. 1b-15. He rightly omits 1a as redactional (so also Westermann 1984:277).

aim of the visit is not clear. Richter, who does not accept the altar aetiology as an integral part of the narrative, concludes that "Der ursprüngliche Anlaß jener ist nicht mehr auszumachen, da der letzte Teil auch nicht vermutungsweise wiederherstellbar ist. Nur so viel scheint sicher, daß auch er eine Erklärung gewesen sein muß. Und aus dem Vergleich mit Gen 18 erhellt auch nichts."³⁹

The point however, in our opinion, remains unclear whether in Judges the altar construction is really a secondary element or whether it belonged to the narrative originally. What the parallel of these two narratives may suggest is actually the fluidity with which common themes were freely employed to create stories with different aims. What is however of interest is that in Genesis the two stories could come together because both could end with the promise of a son. If then in Judg. 6 the story did not originally stand with an altar construction in response to the recognition of the divine guest it would be difficult to explain how the altar aetiology was actually added to the hospitality motif letting off the original ending. It may be suggested in conclusion that it is probable that the two motives in Judges originally stood together.

ii) Judges 13 and Judges 6

Judges 13 is usually taken to be a unit composed to serve as an introduction to the Samson stories (chs. 14-16) which are of a different type. This becomes plain when a comparison between ch. 13 and 14-16 is

³⁹ 1963:139. "The original occasion cannot be identified anymore, since the last part cannot be restored even by conjecture. Only that much seem sure, that it (the occasion) must also have been an explanation. And from the comparison with Gen 18 nothing is illuminated."

made. While ch. 13 is clothed with a religious atmosphere, the other chapters describe Samson in a worldly fashion, successful with women, strong, playing unpleasant jokes on the Philistines, etc. They have all the features of folk stories portraying Samson as "the typical individualistic hero of popular fantasy."⁴⁰ Yet, the motif of his strength being dependent on his hair brings us back to ch. 13, i.e. to his Nazarite. However, as Soggin suggests, it is probable "that in the later stories the question of the Nazarite vow was not known, but belonged to the prologue which was composed *ad hoc*."⁴¹ In so doing the Samson stories are transformed "into the narrative of 'the violation of the Nazarite's vow'."⁴²

The chapter, which was to serve as an introduction, was composed by using familiar themes which occur in other parts of the OT and which are now combined together to form a continuous narrative: a) the promise of a son (1Sam. 1.17; Gen. 18.10; Isa.7.14);⁴³ b) the miraculous birth by a woman who was old/previously barren (Judg.16; Gen. 18; 1Sam. 1); c) the hospitality motif (Judg. 15.15ff.; Judg. 6.18ff.; Gen. 18.3ff);⁴⁴ d) the recognition of the interlocutor/guest;⁴⁵ e) the refusal to reveal his own

⁴⁰ Soggin 1981:139.

⁴¹ Soggin 1981:236.

⁴² Soggin 1981:236.

⁴³ In Gen. 18 is by the promise of YHWH, in Judg. 13 by the messenger of YHWH, in 1Samuel there is no promise as such but only the comforting words of Eli which have the effect of a promise. In 1Samuel the Nazarite is a vow for gratitude, in Judges it is a command of the messenger.

⁴⁴ In all three passages the motif is the same but not the details. In Genesis the meal takes place, in Judges 6 only the preparation of the meal occurs which subsequently becomes a sacrifice. In Judges 13 the meal is from the outset a sacrifice being suggested to be so by the messenger of YHWH. In the latter then the motif of hospitality has been reworked the most.

⁴⁵ The recognition in Genesis 18 occurs at the end of the pericope (v. 14) as it is usually the case in the **מלאך יהוה** narratives. That it was YHWH speaking will be confirmed when the promise occurs; in Judges 6

name (Gen. 32.30 (EVV v. 29), Ex. 3.1ff.); f) the fear motif. The last is missing in Gen. 18; in Judg. 6 it occurs after the disappearance of the messenger of YHWH followed by a word of comfort from YHWH. In Judg. 13 the motif occurs only after Manoah and his wife have recognized who their guest was, but it is overcome rationally.

The coming together of so many motifs in Judg. 13, which were probably very popular and loved among the people, is impressive, yet one cannot be sure of literary dependence since their occurrence elsewhere shows that they were common themes. That these motifs were widely spread is indicated by the place indications in the various narratives. In Gen. 18, where some of the motifs occur, the location of the events is Mamre in the South, in Judg. 6 it is Manasseh, in Judg. 13 it is Dan.

So far motifs have been noticed which are found in Judg. 13 and 6 and occur elsewhere as well. What then about the traditions common only to both of them? Here only one theme can be pointed out, namely the hospitality motif. The question arises whether or not this motif was originally standing by itself or whether it was followed by a promise, whatever it was, as a token of gratitude (e.g. Gen. 18), or whether it was followed by the construction of an altar after the recognition of the guest. W. Richter suggests that in Judg. 6 the construction of the altar did not originally belong to the hospitality motif but was only later added to it as Gideon began to acquire more and more religious significance. However, as it has been suggested elsewhere, it is possible that the hospitality motif never stood by itself. In Gen. 18 it is followed by a promise, while in Judg. 6 it is followed by the

through the disappearance of the messenger in the fire miracle. In Judges 13 the recognition is an inference from the fact that he appeared no more. Again in Judges 13 the theme does not follow the more common pattern which puts the recognition at the end of the encounter.

construction of an altar. In both cases the motif is employed for a different end than the meal itself. This is the case in Gen. 18 as well as in Judg. 13 and we should also suppose the same for Judg. 6 where the hospitality motif is used to lead to the altar construction.

Among modern scholars the relationship between these two chapters has been again re-examined by P. Kübel and Y. Zakovitch. According to the former we should probably see in Judg. 6.11a, 18-24 an altar aetiology rather than two different separate motifs which originally belonged to a Canaanite sanctuary. In his analysis he further suggests that also Judg. 13.15.21 was originally an altar aetiology which has been however considerably worked over. According to his suggestion the two stories originally could have read as follows:

Judges 13.15-21

15. Manoah said to the messenger of YHWH: "Pray, let us detain you and prepare a kid for you."
16. ... For Manoah did not know that he was the messenger of YHWH.
19. So Manoah took the kid with the cereal offering, and offered it upon the rock
- [... and there sprang up fire from the rock]
20. And when the flame went up towards heaven from the altar, the messenger of YHWH ascended in the in the flame of the altar.
21. The Manoah knew that he was the messenger of YHWH... [And Manoah built there an altar to YHWH.]

Judges 6

18. "Do not depart from here, I pray thee, until I have come to thee, and set it before thee." And he said: "I will
19. So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the oak and presented them.
21. Then the messenger of YHWH reached out the tip of the staff ^h that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes; and there sprang up fire from the rock and consumed the flesh and and the unleavened cakes. And the messenger of YHWH vanished from his sight.
22. Then Gideon perceived that he was the messenger of YHWH.
24. And Gideon built there an altar to YHWH.

Zakovitch approaches the problem from a different point of view. His main concern is not to demonstrate whether the altar aetiology was an integral part of the hospitality motif or not, but whether or not the story is dependent on the other. He rightly suggests that when so many figures play similar roles in the life of a nation it is easy to see how motifs associated with one character can easily be passed on to another. Typical is the example of the two prophets Elijah and Elisha or the description of the appearance of YHWH to Moses (Ex. 33.17-23) and Elijah (1Kings 19). Also we can compare Ex. 3.5 where YHWH commands Moses to put off his shoes, for the place where he was standing was holy ground with the same words spoken by the commander of YHWH's army to Joshua (Jos. 5.15).⁴⁶ These and other examples can be traced throughout the OT. The question which he now raises is whether or not we can speak of literary dependence between the two Judges accounts. As a result of his analysis he suggests that the motif of Manoah's sacrifice is borrowed from Judg. 6 and that the sacrifice/hospitality motif in ch. 13 was not originally included in the story. At this point a comparison of the two scholars' reconstructions of Judg. 13 is interesting:

Kübel

15. Manoah said to the messenger of YHWH, "Pray, let us detain you and prepare a kid for you."
16. ...For Manoah did not know that he was the messenger of YHWH.

Zakovitch

17. And Manoah said to the messenger of YHWH, "What is your name so that when your words come true, we may honour you?"
18. And the messenger of YHWH said to him, "Why do you ask my name seeing it is wonderful?"

⁴⁶ The similarity in wording is here impressive.

19. So Manoah took the kid with the cereal offering, and offered it upon the rock... [and there sprang up fire from the rock]
20. And when the flame went up towards heaven from the altar, the messenger of YHWH descended in the flame of the altar...
21. *...Then Manoah knew that he was the messenger of YHWH. [And Manoah built there and altar to YHWH.]*
21. And the messenger of YHWH appeared no more to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was ~~the~~⁴⁷ messenger of YHWH.

What appears clear from this comparison is that both scholars have been able to detach from this chapter some of the recurring themes without destroying the logic flow of the narrative. This would confirm the previous suggestion that here we have a variety of familiar motives employed to narrate Samson's miraculous birth which have been skillfully built together, one into the other. What then about the relationship between ch. 6 and 13? Zakovitch suggests that since the sacrifice is secondary in ch. 13 this motif is borrowed from ch. 6. The suggestion is possible although if that were the case we would have expected more differences in wording and vocabulary rather than similarities in structure only. Kübel's suggestion may also be possible, namely that in ch. 13 we have an altar aetiology as well which has been considerably worked over. In this case its inclusion in ch. 13 was influenced by its occurrence in ch. 6 and possibly by its association elsewhere with the promise of a child in the same manner of Gen 18. This would then account for the commonness of theme but difference of vocabulary between the two accounts. However, Zakovitch is right to see it as a later accretion in the formation of the story since it would have been more logical that the

⁴⁷ He would further exclude from the original story the words "he would not have accepted a holocaust and cereal offering from our hands, nor would he have let us see all this just now" in v. 23.

recognition of the guest would have occurred at his miraculous disappearance rather than from the fact that he did not appear anymore. That originally there existed an altar aetiology with Manoah at the centre of it may be possible, especially if we should accept the suggestion of S.A. Cook, following Wellhausen, that "we may regard Manoah as the eponymous ancestor of a family which, later at all events, is varyingly associated with Kirijath-jearim and with Bethlehem, and incorporated in the tribe of Judah."⁴⁸ Then it would be probable that Manoah would have been described in some stories as the receiver of revelation or mediator of religious experiences in the same manner of the patriarchs. In this instance he would have been the protagonist of a theophany followed by the construction of an altar.

4. Conclusion

The text has clearly revealed itself to be composite in nature. An original altar legend was fused with the call of Gideon. The legend may have been of Canaanite origin which was later re-interpreted as referring to YHWH. The giving of the altar name may be an addition since it disturbs the flow of the narrative which may have consisted only of v. 24a after v. 22.⁴⁹

The question which then arises is that of the reason for its incorporation into the call of Gideon. The latter could well have been followed by vv. 36-40 (so Gray) rather than by the legend of an altar

⁴⁸ 1927:373.

⁴⁹ It could however just be possible that the giving of the name was also original: v. 22 - then Gideon perceived that he was the messenger of YHWH... 24 - Then Gideon built an altar there to YHWH, and called it "YHWH is peace" (cf. Gen. 33.20).

construction which does not seem to be the main point of the narrative. Kübel⁵⁰ suggests that the connection was made by the fact that the miraculous transforming of the meal into a sacrifice is now meant to be the sign which was asked by Gideon. The joining however brought about several tensions between the two units which can be easily pointed out. This is a sign that they have gone only through a minor redaction. However, it could be suggested that the altar construction itself plays a more important role than has been expressed so far. According to the previous scheme of altar construction four elements could be observed. In some examples it had been suggested that the construction of the altar was not the main emphasis of the stories but the promise of the land by YHWH which was responded to by the construction of the altar which in our opinion does not really need factually to imply that an altar was built, but it may simply have had a rhetorical or functional role in the story. The same pattern seems at work here modified according to the theological tastes of the time. Therefore, the original altar legend had here the function only of showing Gideon's response to the call and promise of YHWH. The meal which precedes the construction and its miraculous transformation provided also an ideal link since now it becomes the sign which Gideon has requested. This reworking fits also with the view that man cannot see God or at least it is not advisable. In fact if Gideon's call were followed by vv. 36-40 or something similar, as it was probably the case in a pre-literary stage, it would have implied first of all the clear recognition of his quest and secondly the possibility for human beings to speak with God without the fear of death. The fitting of Gideon's call within a scheme similar to some already observed in Genesis puts the hero also into the same tradition of the patriarchs and the

⁵⁰ 1971:229.

promise of the land. This conveniently provides a link with the previous "historical" traditions and a continuity of theme. Gideon responds to the promise of YHWH with the same action of the patriarchs, namely the construction of an altar.

The last point leads us to a final observation in regard to the definition of "legend" as this pericope has been defined. According to the common definition, legends "usually explain and justify the sacredness of the place or the religious practice in terms of some miraculous occurrence or historical event."⁵¹ However, this does not always seem to be their purpose necessarily. In other words legends, if we still want to maintain this terminology, do not necessarily imply a certain historical practice or custom which they want to justify but may simply be used rhetorically or have a functional purpose within established patterns of composition. In our specific case it may be that originally the pericope referred to the actual construction of an altar but the possibility must not be overlooked that the actual purpose of it may have been more functional than explanatory in spite of the final note in v. 24 which attempts to place the event in time and history.

C. Judges 6.25-32

Ch. 6.25 marks the beginning of a new pericope (6.25-32) which has been joined to the preceding one by the temporal clause **ויהי בלילה** thus setting the two pericopes into a chronological sequence.

This section recalls the events by which a second altar, presumably

⁵¹ Tucker 1971:38.

in Ophrah,⁵² was built and the reason why Gideon was given a second name Jerubbaal.

The problems which arise from an analysis of this pericope are various, but two areas especially, as L. Schmidt remarks, are always discussed: a) does the narrative of the altar tradition depict how the Baal-cult in Ophrah was superseded by the YHWH-cult or has it not come into being out of such a cult-aetiological interest? b) Does the explanation of Jerubbaal's name in v.32 belong to the basic narrative? Does it therefore deal with a name aetiology or was v. 32 added by a later redactor?⁵³ A further question concerns the possibility that here we have a parallel tradition to the previous pericope in which case both would be dealing with the same altar. Alternatively we may consider it a different tradition altogether which only at a later stage came to be attached to the previous one.

Before we start the literary analysis of the pericope and discuss various scholars' views which are far from being unanimous the reading of the text itself confronts us with textual problems which need attention.

1. Preliminary textual problems

At the outset of the story Gideon is commanded by YHWH to take את-פר השני, to destroy the altar of Baal which belongs to his father (v. 25) and to build an altar to YHWH (v. 26a). Then Gideon should take הפר השני and offer it as a burnt offering on the newly built

⁵² Gideon had already built an altar to YHWH in the preceding section (6.11-24). In 6.25ff. Ophrah is not mentioned but the temporal link suggests that this was the intention of the writer.

⁵³ 1970:5.

altar (v. 26b). On the next day the men of the city find the destroyed altar and **הפך השני** which has been offered on the newly built altar as a burnt offering (v. 28).

Verse 25 presents various problems. a) It seems that there are two bulls in question, but then only one (the second) is mentioned (vv. 26,28). Does this pericope deal with one or two bulls? b) How are we to account for the expression **את-פר-השר**? c) How are we to explain the lack of article in the 2nd **זכר**? d) What is the relation of **שבע שנים** to the preceding sentence? For these and other problems which emerge from this verse several proposals have been put forward. That which divides scholars, however, is whether the bull in question must have been one.⁵⁴ This appears to be the case since in vv. 26 and 28 the bull which is mentioned is only one while there is no mention of the first after v. 25.

If then only one bull was meant how are we going to explain the reference to the second bull? In this regard two different proposals have been made: some have tried to solve the problem reconstructing a presumed original MT while others have tried to retain the Hebrew consonantal text as far as possible by means of exegetical, grammatical and/or philological considerations.

To the first group belongs e.g. Burney⁵⁵ who after a careful examination of the various variants decides for Kuenen's suggestion to restore the text of v. 25 after v. 27a. Accordingly he removes the

⁵⁴ An exception to this are the older Jewish commentators according to whom Gideon was commanded to take two bulls the first of which was in order "to deprive the Abiezrites of it so that they might not offer it to Baal" (Kimchi) or "that it was slaughtered by Gideon, but not offered, for the same reason" (Ralbag) (Stolki 1950:212). Some scholars, e.g. Penna and Sacchi, simply note the problem without suggesting any solution. They retain the MT. According to Penna the lack of objective elements does not allow us with surety to resolve such difficulties which however are of secondary importance (1963:118f.).

⁵⁵ 1920:194f.

problematic ⁵⁶ את-פר-השור and replaces it with קח עשרה אנשים מעבדיך ופר ⁵⁷ שבע שנים. Consequently he also omits the word שני from this verse as well as from vv. 26 and 28. However, although he is right in arguing that "such detailed repetition is characteristic of Hebrew story-telling, as of Babylonian; and this is a feature which, so far from appearing tautologous, adds a certain vivid picturesqueness to the narrative" ⁵⁸ (cf. Judg. 7.10b, 11b), such a radical emendation should be resisted, since there is no ms support for such a proposal and it involves the emendation of not less than three verses.

In the same line stands also Rudolph ⁵⁹ who thinks that in את-פר after קח we have a mutilation and restores it as אֶתְּךָ אֶנְשֵׁי מִקַּמְּךָ. ⁶⁰ However, also such a proposal seems to be unfounded and it does not shed any light on any of the various readings in the versions nor has it any support from them.

⁵⁶ Literally the phrase means the "bullock of the bull" and it could be an alternative circumlocution to the more common one פר בן-בקר (cf. Lev. 4.3,6; 16.3; Ex. 29.11,12; Num. 7.15; 15.24; etc.) in which case it should be translated with a single word, but this however does not seem to be the case. It is probably a textual corruption since according to the concordance here it is the only place where this expression occurs. Nevertheless there have been recent defences to regard this expression as original. L. Schmidt maintains e.g. that although פר השור occurs only at this place it has the same sense of the current formulation פר בן-בקר and sees no reason for emendation (1970:6 n.3). Similarly Barthélemy does not favour an emendation of the text. He starts making clear that פר is the usual term to designate a young bull which is offered in sacrifice. The normal age to sacrifice a פר is three years (cf. Gen. 15.9 and 1Sam. 1.24 according to *G). Therefore seven years is an advanced age, this is why the expression פר השור renders a probable sense, "the young-bull destined to sacrifice that [having been guarded for seven years] has become adult" (1982:92).

⁵⁷ "Take <ten men of thy servants>, and a bull [] of seven old..." (1920:195). This is followed by Budde, Nowack, Gressmann, Kittel and Gray.

⁵⁸ 1920:195.

⁵⁹ 1947:202.

⁶⁰ "Take with you a number of people".

There are still a number of further scholars⁶¹ who would simply emend שני to שמן with the support of the LXX mss of the A family which rendered שני as τὸν οὐτεύτεον.

However, a considerable number of scholars take the other view. The majority of them would resort to understand the 2nd ל as *explicativum* and several suggest also a revocalization of שבע שנים. That the waw should be understood as epexegetic was already suggested by Studer (and even earlier) noting that if the narrator would have wanted to say in v. 25, "and a second bull" (cf. Num. 8.8) he would have said ופר שני, therefore the article attached to the adjective in ופר השני seems to indicate that we already know which bull is meant (cf. Gen. 41.26 השובות שבע). The further point that in vv. 26 and 28 it is only one bull which is mentioned would naturally lead us to assume that the conjunction in ופר is to be taken as epexegetic.⁶²

Some scholars in this group have not only accepted that the text is here dealing with one bull, but have also tried to retain the idea of secondness. This was already the view of Tanhum who, commenting on 1Sam. 15.9 in reference to the word והמשנעים (same root as שני), makes mention also of Judg. 6.25.⁶³ His commentary on it reads as follows, "והמשנעים" that is אלהאני (=the seconds), that is the animals which will have come

⁶¹ E.g. Lagrange, Moore, Billen. The latter for example regards השר and השני both a corruption of an original שמן (1942:15).

⁶² Barthélemy (1982:91f.). The waw was already taken as epexegetic by Tanhum Yerushalmi. Among modern scholars Richter (1963:160), Boling (1975:129), Soggin (1981:122) follow the same view.

⁶³ In the first part of his commentary Tanhum quotes Abulwalid (Usul 735,16f.) without mentioning his name and in the second Judah Ibn Balaam (commentary in law, according to the Hebrew-Arabic ms I 1377 of the Saltykov Shschedrin Library of Leningrad) (cf. Barthélemy 1982:93). We may notice however that modern commentators usually emend והמשנעים in 1Sam. 15.9 (which is taken at its face value by Tanhum) to והמשנעים in the light of the Syr () and the Targ. (רשמיניא) which render the word as "and the fat animals". Cf. McCarter 1980:262.

out of a female when she gives birth for the second time and are of a better quality than those which are born much before and afterwards. It is also used for the name of the animals that are born in spring, that is the second time in relation to the autumn."⁶⁴ J.A. Emerton takes this view also into consideration, but finds it unlikely since there is no evidence of such a belief in Ancient Israel.⁶⁵ Barthélemy, on the other hand, seems to favour such an exegesis over against Guillaume's proposal (which we will discuss below) since it has a better foundation in the medieval Jewish - Arabic tradition. In support of his argument he suggests that since "all the males that first open the womb" had to be sacrificed to YHWH (Ex. 13.15), as a matter of fact it is the produce of the second litter that the breeder could fully fatten.

In this same line stands also Boling who simply translates שני as "the second one" throughout and the 2nd wow as being in apposition to פר-שור, "Take the bull which belongs to your father - that's right, the second one, seven years old..."⁶⁶ The second bull, according to Boling "is presumably the older bull, rather than the prime bull, which would be needed for the future of the herd. It is another example of considerate and gracious administration in this story of domestic reform."⁶⁷ As Emerton comments, however, this "explanation is more edifying than convincing."⁶⁸ Boling's suggestion moreover stands in contrast to Ex.

⁶⁴ The quotation is translated from the French, cf. Barthélemy 1982:93f. (The commentary by Tanhuni Yerushalmi has been edited and translated by Haarbruckner according to the copy prepared by Schnurrer of the ms Pococke 314 of the Bodléienne.) A further interesting note by Barthélemy is that "the Arabs call the produce of this second litter תני" which is also confirmed by El-Azhari (XV 137b top) - p.94.

⁶⁵ 1978:53*.

⁶⁶ 1975:129.

⁶⁷ 1975:134.

⁶⁸ 1978:53*.

13.15 according to which the first born male of beasts was to be sacrificed to YHWH (see above Barthélemy's view). That שני has the meaning of second is also argued by Richter⁶⁹ according to whom however שני is an addition which came about when waw designating the seven year old bull was no longer understood in apposition and a later person wanted to differentiate the two introducing השני in vv. 26,28 and later in v. 25.

Other scholars again have retained the consonantal text but with a different vocalization. Already before the turn of this century Ewald⁷⁰ attempted to relate the word to the root שנה meaning "year". Accordingly he pointed it as השני giving to it the meaning of annosus "aged" like Arabic 'asnahu. But this proposal has not found any support.

A different solution has been proposed by Bruno⁷¹ who does not understand Gideon's act as an offering (in his opinion עולה in v. 26 is not original) but as a purification ceremony (Reinigungszeremonie) in the light of which he interprets the incomprehensible השני of v. 25. He argues that 2nd ל should be understood as explicativum and he proposes to vocalize השני as השני (red). To support his argument he appeals to Num. 19.2, the purification ceremony, according to which if one pollutes himself with a dead person a red coloured heifer (פרה אדמה) is burned with cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet stuff and with the ashes a cleansing water is produced. He notices however that in Num. 19 the word used is אָדָם and not שָׁנִי. Perhaps שני signifies a high red colour.

A similar re-vocalization and meaning has also been suggested by

⁶⁹ 1963:160.

⁷⁰ H. Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, II (Göttingen, 1845), 385f.; (2nd edition, 1865), p.340. Cf. Emerton 1978:53*.

⁷¹ 1923:123f.

Tur-Sinai who has carried the argument even further.⁷²

A different kind of suggestion, which has found wide support, was put forward by Guillaume many years ago.⁷³ The LXX^{AL} which reads $\tau\omicron\nu\ \mu\omicron\sigma\chi\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\nu\ \sigma\iota\tau\epsilon\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ seems to have read השמן as also some have suggested to emend. Guillaume argues however that it is unlikely that "a Hebrew scribe should have made the same mistake in three verse; if he had wanted to say that the animal was fat (שמן) he would have not thrice failed to convey his intention. Therefore it seems reasonable to infer that שני must have had a meaning which the Greek translators believed that they understood."⁷⁴ He suggests therefore that שני was not properly pointed. The needed word is שְׁנִי which must be the Hebrew equivalent of a similar Arabic word (ṭaniyyun) meaning "full grown", a word applied to animals including cows and bulls. "The rendering of the LXX is a justifiable paraphrase because a full-grown beast is likely to be a well-fed animal."⁷⁵ Guillaume's reference for the derivation of this etymology is

72 1959-60:1-4.

73 1949:52f.

74 1949:52.

75 1949:53. The suggestion has found the approval of L. Koehler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, (Leiden, 1957) 998a; Schreiner 1957:33; and possibly this is the root which R. Meyer has in mind in his proposal to read השְׁנִי for השני in Judg. 6.25,26,28, "Joshua et Judices" in *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* 4 (Stuttgart, 1972), 410f. This suggestion has also been accepted by Driver according to whom ṭaniyyu(n) means literally "two year old, having the second teeth." It follows that it contradicts the notion that the bull was seven year old and he suggests to repoint שבע שנים as שְׁבַע שָׁנִים "full of years, mature" a phrase however which does not occur elsewhere but which is comparable to ימים שבע which is found in several passages. He then concludes that we should delete it as a gloss (1964:12,24). However two objection have been raised to this by Emerton: a) "an examination of the Arabic evidence disproves his claim that ṭaniyyun means 'two year old, having the second teeth' (this objection has also been raised by Barthélemy 1982:93); b) " שבע ימים is used of someone who is old (Gen. 25.8; 35.29; Job 42.17; 1Chron. 29.28) and we should expect the phrase שבע שנים to have a similar meaning, rather than mature" (1978:53*).

to Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon* which uses as one of its sources the *Tahdhib of El-Azhari* (Arabic *thesaurus* composed in the fourth century of the Hegira) which "has the interesting note that the term is applied to a camel when it reaches the age at which it may be sacrificed."⁷⁶ As Barthélemy comments since the publication of Guillaume's article the *Tahdhib* has been published and the reference concerned reads as follows (XV 139b, below), "the camel when it has reached its fifth and enters its sixth year is זכר and the female אנה and it is the minimum (number) of the years which make the camel fit for the אצאח sacrifice. The same is for the bovine and the caprines. As to the ovines, the young is suitable for the אצאח [sacrifice]."⁷⁷ Here it is interesting to notice the closeness of the biblical text (6.25) in defining the פר-השני as a פר seven years old.

Emerton⁷⁸ has proposed still a different approach to the problem. He follows the suggestion of W. Thomas and others who proposed the existence of a Hebrew root שנא which is found in Syriac, Arabic and probably Ugaritic, meaning "to be exalted, of high rank". In a previous article of his he had suggested this meaning for שנא in Ps. 127.2 and in a later article he tried to shed light on the problem of השני in Judg. 6.25,26,28 with the aid of the same proposed root-meaning. Accordingly, if the existence of such a root is accepted then "the reference may be to the bull of the highest rank, the most distinguished bull, the finest bull. Gideon would then be told to take his father's finest bull and offer it as a sacrifice. The reason for the repetition of the adjective

⁷⁶ 1949:52.

⁷⁷ Cf. Barthélemy 1982:92. He further notices that the term used to indicate the young ovine in אלנדע which for a ram denotes the age of nearly a year.

⁷⁸ 1974:15-31. This proposal has also been accepted by Soggin 1981:123f.



in verse 26 and 28 would be to stress the fact that the best bull is being sacrificed, the one most suitable for an offering to YHWH."⁷⁹

So far then the review of several of the proposals which have sought to resolve the problem of the second bull. What are we then to conclude? First of all, it seems clear that שני here should be retained and explained in the light of a cognate root. Both Emerton's and Guillaume's proposals are good alternatives since they would allow us to retain the consonantal text and provide a suitable meaning for the narrative. However, Guillaume's proposal may still be preferred since it would imply a change in vocalization only in שני without revocalizing שבע which would be needed for Emerton's proposal.⁸⁰ This suggestion is also supported by the OG and the whole context of the Gideon cycle.

a) The Septuagint

The Greek text of Judges, as it is known, is preserved in two ms traditions (A and B) which diverge at several points as can be noted below:

A

B

6.25

Λαβε τον μοσχον τον σιτευτον
του πατρος σου,
μοσχον τον επταετη

Λαβε το μοσχον το ταυρον
ος εστιν τω πατρι σου,
και μοσχον δευτερον επταετη

6.26 τον μοσχον

τον μοσχον τον δευτερον

⁷⁹ 1978:55*.

⁸⁰ Emerton himself envisages the possibility of reading שבע after Tur-Sinai and Driver, (1978:55*).

The Greek text of A differs from B and MT and preserves a meaning, (as has already been pointed out above), which fits the context of this story better than B. In fact omitting the καὶ before the 2nd μωσχον which is present in B and MT and rendering השׁור as στευτον, it is assumed that the bull in question was only one. Consequently, the reference to the second bull in MT and B is taken here as a further specification of one and the same bull. As far as ms evidence is concerned the OG is best preserved in the Greek text of A⁸¹ and if any emendation is to be made to the MT there is no septuagintal support for emending also שבע. If we chose Emerton's suggestion, an emendation of שבע would be needed since the term פר does denote a young bull which would be in contrast with the שבע שנעם unless we do take it as a gloss (so NEB, JB, Driver). However, this further emendation could be avoided if we accept Guillaume's suggestion. This has been further illuminated by the publication of the Tahdhib of El-Azhari according to which the term תני is applied to a bovine in its sixth year in which it is fit for sacrifice. Therefore, if

⁸¹ The LXX evidence reads as follows:

- a) 6.25 אֶת-הַשּׁוֹר-פֶּרֶאֱתֹן B τον μωσχον τον ταυρον: AI (Aabck) AII (gnptv) AIII (MNyb₂), Arm. E. L/ S/ τον μωσχον τον στευτον. Of the AII mss only d omits τον στευτον. e and j of the B family read a variant of A text which is very interesting since the B family has been mainly approximated to the MT. The synonym ταυρον may be explained as a stylistic improvement. In fact in Judges it occurs twice only in B as a translation of שׁור (6.4 and 6.25) but not of פר which ej suppose. נִרְפֵּר הַשְּׂנִי B καὶ μωσχον δευτερον: A μωσχον (d - καὶ τον στευτον)
- b) 6.25 נִרְאֵת-הַפֶּר הַשְּׂנִי B τον μωσχον τον δευτερον: AI (Aa) AII (dglnptvw) AIII (MNhyb₂) Sahidic L/ τον μωσχον (τον δευτερον om.). It is likely that the Hebrew Vorlage did not have הַשְּׂנִי.
- c) 6.28 נִרְאֵת הַפֶּר הַשְּׂנִי B τον μωσχον τον δευτερον: AI (Aak) AII (dgnptvw) AIII (MNhyb₂) B (Za₂) Arm. E. L/ S/ ὁ μωσχος ὁ στευτος.

We may conclude that the OG of these passages has been best preserved in A.

this is the right connotation of שני, i.e., a full-grown bull in the 6th year ready for sacrifice, the שבע שנים may have been original to the text further clarifying what kind of bull was meant. No emendation then is needed.⁸²

b) The context

The context also seems to support the view that שבע שנים needs to be read. As has been noted by many scholars, any time a sacrifice is envisaged a seven-year old bull never plays any part.⁸³ Yet שבע שנים is exactly the same time which the Midianite oppression lasted at the end of which this episode is supposed to have taken place (cf. 6.1). Consequently, we may suggest that the further specification of שני after פר as well as שבע שנים [השנים] שבע שנים may stem from a redactional hand wanting to bring this sacrificial offering in connection with the seven years of Midianite oppression.⁸⁴ Through the command of YHWH to sacrifice a seven-year old bull, which originally was not part of the story, God is reconciled and a new era of salvation now starts for the oppressed tribes under the leadership of Gideon. Here we have an example of how an already written tradition was still interpreted and expanded as the body of the Gideon cycle was being shaped.

⁸² The fact that this does not conform to the sacrificial laws does not need to be a problem since the presence of anomalies is common in the Book of Judges.

⁸³ Cf. Penna 1963:118; L. Schmidt 1970:7.

⁸⁴ This would shed light upon Richter's observation that the extensive introduction of the one bull with additional elements which for the pericope have hardly any importance remains striking.

c) A reconstruction

Before moving into the determination of the literary units of this pericope a construction of the history of the Hebrew text can now be attempted. It is likely, in the light of the septuagintal evidence, that the Hebrew text may have read in vv. 25,26,28 as follows:⁸⁵

v. 25 את-הפר השני אשר לאביך (ו) פר שבע...

v. 26 את-הפר והעלית

v. 28 ואת הפר השני

In the course of transmission the first corruption crept into v. 25 where *השני* became *השור*. Consequently the definite article in front of *פר* dropped out to ease the construction which was then turned into a construct form. That an adjective was read there instead of a noun may be supported by the further consideration that *אשר לאביך* would not be needed if the preceding word was a noun (i.e. *שור*) as the construct could be used (*את-פר שור אביך*), but if it is an adjective (*השני*) it is required.⁸⁶ This indeed created some confusion. It led the corrector(s) to think that the bull in question was not one but two.⁸⁷ Henceforth it was supposed that the bull seven years old was a different one than that which belonged to the father. To distinguish the two more clearly *השני* was inserted in v. 25 after *ה2nd פר* in analogy to v. 28 which by now was no longer understood as "grown" but as "second".⁸⁸

⁸⁵ This seems at least to have been the Hebrew Vorlage of the OG. Compare it with BHS.

⁸⁶ This was suggested to me by Prof. Lindars.

⁸⁷ Stories such as 1King 18 might have enhanced the distinction between the two bull since we have here a similar context.

⁸⁸ The fact that in *ה2nd פר* there is no article may confirm the proposal

The *waw* before the 2nd γ may have been added after the confusion arose. However it could also have been already there and in this case it had an explicative force and later on enhanced the confusion being understood as *copulativum*.⁸⁹ This explanatory meaning of the conjunction γ /*kai* was also known in the Greek language⁹⁰ and there are also several instances of this usage in the NT.⁹¹ The fact therefore that the Greek text of A did not translate the *waw* may not necessarily indicate that it was not in its *Vorlage* but that it was understood as explicatory. To argue that it must not have been there because it is not translated is to impose on a translation unnecessary restrictions.

2. Literary criticism

The pericope as it stands seems to be self-sufficient. Neither what follows nor what precedes is strictly connected with it. The following pericope vv. 33-35 envisages Gideon getting ready for battle against the Midianites and does not have any relation to the destruction of the Baal altar. Vv. 25-32 neither presuppose the following pericope, nor is any

that השני was a later addition which was introduced simply as a numeral. According to G-K § 126-w "the article is not infrequently used also with the attribute alone, when it is added to an original indefinite substantive as a subsequent limitation." Although he considers Judg. 6.25 as a corruption it may very well reflect this rule. Guillaume (1949:53) on the other hand simply comments here that "the construction of an undefined noun with a defined adjective (רפר השני) in v. 25 is an inelegance characteristic of Hebrew in its decline."

⁸⁹ Burney is suspicious of such a suggestion. He argues that "a few cases can be cited in which the conjunction *waw* appears to have such an explicative force; but they are, and in most cases the text is open to suspicion" (1920:194). However, this does not necessarily need to be the case here. According to G-K § 154 aN(b) frequently *waw copulativum* is also explanatory.

⁹⁰ See for example Gen 4.4; Ex. 24.12; 25.12; Judg. 17.3; 2Sam. 13.20; Isa. 57.11; etc. in the Greek text.

⁹¹ See W. Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the NT* (Chicago and London, 1957), p. 393, 3.

attempt , made to make the two dependent on each other. It seems to be the case therefore that the two belong to two different streams of traditions. At first glance this does not seem to be the case with the previous pericope, since the two are connected by the temporal clause *וַיְהִי בַלֵּילָה הַהוּא* which leads us to think that the events described in 25-32 immediately followed the events of the preceding pericope. But a closer analysis clearly reveals that *וַיְהִי בַלֵּילָה הַהוּא* is redactional and that the two pericopes came to be associated with one another because both dealt with an altar and Gideon's call though the aim of the call differs in the two accounts. While in the first Gideon is called to save Israel from the Midianite oppression in the second he is called to act as a religious reformer whose premises are to be found not in the preceding narrative but in vv. 7-10.

What is not clear is rather whether we are here dealing with events which took place at different times on the same site or with two stories both having to do with an altar which in the course of tradition came to be joined together or even with the same event.

To start with, it seems unlikely that Gideon should have built two altars in Ophrah within such a brief span of time. Therefore, if the two accounts refer to two different events at Ophrah they may have taken place in a different chronological sequence and they would then reflect "the religious vicissitudes in the family cult at Ophrah of the Abiezrites."⁹² In this case the two stories would complement each other. However, this suggestion relies upon the assumption that the site of the two accounts is the same.⁹³ But there is really nothing that would compel

⁹² Cook 1927:382.

⁹³ This is proposed by Cook (1927:370f.) and also accepted by Dlugosz 1980B:265.

us to identify the two sites except the fact that tradition seems to locate Gideon's home at Ophrah (cf. 8.27).⁹⁴

Whether the two narratives are to be taken as parallels is also not clear. Both of them deal with the erection of an altar where Gideon acts under the direction of God. Yet there are several differences which need to be noticed:⁹⁵

Judg. 6.11-24	Judg. 6.25-32
a) Gideon - founder and builder of the altar YHWH-Shalom	a) Gideon - religious reformer
b) Specific indications of place: - Ophrah of the Abiezrites (11,24) - terebinth	b) Indirect indication of place: - the men of the town (27,28, - 30): inhabitants of Ophrah?
c) No indication of time	c) Indication of time
d) Foundation of a sanctuary: no mention of the existence of an earlier altar	d) New phase of the history of a holy place: existence of a pagan altar which is destroyed - building of a new altar to YHWH (v.26)
e) Terminology: sacrifice (זֶבֶח); sacrificial victim - kid (meat and broth) and unleavened cakes	e) Terminology: sacrifice (עֹלָה); sacrificial victim: calves
f) Two actors: Gideon and the angel of YHWH	f) Three actors: Gideon, Joash, the men of the city
g) Joash: merely mentioned	g) Joash: plays a main role - owner of the Baal altar and defender of his son
h) Purpose: aetiology of the erection of the altar of YHWH at Ophrah (v. 24)	h) Purpose: to show the heroic deed of Gideon and name aetiology

From the above comparison we may conclude that the traditions are not

⁹⁴ Haag 1967:305-314 is even of the opinion that Judg. 6.25-31 deals with the legend of an unknown sanctuary which was in the course of tradition connected with the previous legend.

⁹⁵ These differences are listed by Dlugosz 1980b:264f.

doublets describing the same events or different aspects of the erection of the same altar. They are two different narratives meant to refer to different events.⁹⁶

We are then left with vv. 25-32 forming a unit. At first reading the pericope appears to be homogeneous. Only one sentence in v. 31. **אֲשֶׁר יִדְרֹךְ לִי יוֹסֵת עַד-הַבֶּקֶר** seems to stick out. It does interrupt the flow of the verse without having any logical connection within it. Verse 31 starts with a double rhetorical question put to the people of Ophrah by Joash⁹⁷ in which he challenges the power of their god. If he is a god he should contend against the destroyer of his altar otherwise what kind of god is he that needs his worshipers to defend him? Yet, the clause under consideration switches this emphasis into a death-threat against those who will contend for Baal so contradicting the original challenge. Indeed the whole structure is destroyed. It is more natural to take it either as a gloss that eventually got into the text or "as Budde thinks, the insertion of a ^aZelot for YHWH who, not satisfied with so mild a method of procedure as is suggested by Joash (the leaving of the god to take care of himself if he can), puts into the mouth the statement that the service of a false god deserves the death-penalty (cf. Deut. 13)."⁹⁸

However, this is only a marginal tension in comparison with the tensions and inconsistencies which arise from a closer look at the

⁹⁶ Dlugosz 1980b:265. If it is accepted that the second also describes an event at Ophrah, they complement each other in giving us a picture of the developments in the family cult of the town. However, the evidence seems to point otherwise. See on.

⁹⁷ For a comparative study of rhetorical questions in Hebrew and Ugaritic see Held 1969:71-79.

⁹⁸ Budde 1897:56, quoted by Burney 1920. The view that it is a gloss/interpolation is accepted by almost all commentators. Some scholars take 31b β as an addition providing the bridge between v. 31 and the aetiology of v.32 which is also considered an addition (so Richter, Nowack, Moore, Gressmann, Long). Cf. L. Schmidt 1970:9.

pericope as a whole. In fact, even though it stands as a unit, v. 25 cannot be the original verse which introduced it. Even if we should delete **ויהי בלילה ההוא** as editorial, the figure of Gideon is presupposed since YHWH is addressing him simply with the particle **לך**. As L. Schmidt points out here, a clear alternative emerges out of this: "either the beginning of the narrative has been broken away, or vv. 25 and 26, which cannot be separated from each other, were already formulated out of the greater context of 11ff."⁹⁹ The resolution of these verses is then found in v. 30 where the men of the city require from Joash his son in order that they may put him to death because of his crime. However, here only the altar of Baal which he pulled down and the Asherah which he cut down are mentioned, while there is no mention of the newly built altar to YHWH nor of the sacrifice. Accordingly, Gideon is accused only for those two actions. The construction of the altar to YHWH and the offering fall into the background. Schmidt here comments that "Einen ganz anderen Akzent setzen die Verse 25 und 26" and sees between them and v. 30 "eine so starke Diskrepanz daß beide Stücke nicht von dem gleichen Verfasser stammen können."¹⁰⁰ In order to support his argument a terminological observation is pointed out: while in v. 25b the root **הרס** is used in v. 30 **כחץ** is employed as well as in vv. 28, 31 and 32.

Two other considerations may actually support this analysis. First of all¹⁰¹ there seems to be an obvious tension between the first part of the story and the second. According to v. 25 the altar of Baal which Gideon is to pull down belongs to his father. This may explain Gideon's fear not only of the citizens of the city, but also of his father. Yet,

⁹⁹ 1970:8. L. Schmidt's analysis, which is based on Richter's with the aim of examining and improving the latter's, is probably the best.

¹⁰⁰ 1970:8.

¹⁰¹ See Richter 1963:158f.

as the story proceeds, Joash, whose altar was destroyed, does not take care to punish the one who was responsible for it but the defence is left to the citizens of the city who ask for Gideon's life after they had discovered that he was the doer. More striking still is Joash's behaviour. Rather than defending the altar of Baal he boldly defends his son against the citizens. Moreover, it seems that the first part of the narrative presumes that Joash was a worshiper of Baal and this holds true even though we should take **אשר לאביו** 2nd as a gloss since Gideon was afraid of his family too. In the second part he appears to be a convinced Yahwist or at least someone who very much doubts the power of Baal.

Secondly,¹⁰² v. 30 with which L. Schmidt contrasts vv. 25-27 does not stand in isolation but is linked with what follows and precedes. Verse 31 in fact must presuppose v. 30 which logically links well. The request of the men of the city (v. 30) is then followed by Joash's reply (v. 31 - of course the interpolation in this verse has not been considered). In turn, looking backwards v. 30 presupposes both vv. 29 and 28a. Verse 29 describes the natural step of inquiry before any action can be taken against the crime and the one responsible for it. Then in v. 30 Gideon's handing over is requested by his father in order to put him to death. V. 28a on the other hand describes the actual discovery of the deed before the search for the guilty can be carried out (v. 29). V. 28a mentions only the altar of Baal and the Asherah, which fits well with vv. 29ff. Verse 28b, however, does not fit well, since in the following verses the bull which was sacrificed as well as the altar do not play any part. Moreover, two further tensions may be noticed. a) The offering was a burnt offering (**עולה**) and the wood of the Asherah was to be used for it.

¹⁰² L. Schmidt 1970:8f.

How could then the people of the city see them? The removal of 28b would avoid this inconsistency. b) In v. 26 Gideon is instructed to build the altar of YHWH in a different place from that where the altar of Baal and the Asherah were originally found. It seems therefore probable that v. 28b stems from vv. 25-26 in order to make a clear link between the two parts.¹⁰³ Verse 27 does not belong to v. 28 but to v. 26. In v. 27 Gideon carries out YHWH's order but here he is afraid of his family and of the men of the city. But it seems to us, as it has been suggested above, that vv. 28ff. do not portray Gideon's father as a worshiper of Baal therefore it seems possible to conclude that vv. 25-27, 28b form a unit as well as 28a, 29-31a α b, 32.

Before leaving this analysis two further observations need to be made which concern each unit respectively. In v. 25 וַיְהִי בַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא has usually been considered redactional and this seems to be supported by the fact that the chronological reference to the preceding section is not clear. The same seems to be the case in a singular reference of time in 7.9. This can be contrasted with similar references of time whose points of relation, however, are not clear, e.g. 6.32 כִּי־יִסַּד הַהוּא and 6.40-7.1 וַיִּשְׁכֶּם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא. Moreover, v. 27 implies either that the command of YHWH took place during the day so that Gideon waits till night since YHWH ^{comes before acting or that it took place the next night} spoke to him which seems awkward. This inconsistency suggests either that v. 25a is redactional, in which case God spoke to Gideon during the day or that v. 27b is an addition. That the event was meant to take place during the night is clear from v. 28a, which otherwise would not

¹⁰³ That this is the case may be find support from the septuagintal evidence. In fact it seems that הַשָּׁנִי was not read in the Hebrew vorlage of the LXX^A in v. 26 but it was in v. 25 and 28 which seems to indicate that v. 28b may have been introduced when the idea of the sacrificial bull was introduced in vv. 25-26 in order to create a clear link between the two parts.

make sense: it is only when the men of the city rose in the morning that they became aware of what had happened in the night. Verse 27b however cannot be attached to the second unit since Joash appears here to be a Baal worshiper, a view which seems to be denied in vv. 31f. It is probable therefore that either it was introduced when the pericope came to have the shape in which it appears now or it was not in the text and v. 25a was the original reference of time. The former suggestion seems to be more probable and it is likely that the reference of time in v. 25 was suggested by the fact that the episode took place during the night without realizing that this would create a tension with v. 27b.

These observations then lead us to ask the question whether it is possible to infer what was the original beginning of vv. 28ff. since these verses must have had at least a verse of introduction. In verse 27 we simply read that Gideon did as YHWH had commanded him. The object of the verb (עשה) is not expressed. Yet the ten men whom Gideon takes with him are not part of YHWH's speech which means that they may have already been part of the tradition of the redactor although their significance is not clear. The indication of time, the mention of his family and the men of the city however link vv. 25-27 to vv. 28ff. Vv. 25-26, have all the marks of being redactional, yet the mention of the altar of Baal and of the Asherah must have been part of the original tradition. The attribution of the altar to Joash seems however strange in the light of his son's defence. It is probable that it crept in when v. 27 was already part of the tradition. Someone may have thought that Gideon's fear of his family was due to the fact that the altar belonged to Joash and the role of Joash in v. 30ff. could have contributed to this misunderstanding. In fact the request to hand over his son could have been interpreted as if he were responsible for the keeping of the altar. In the light of what has been said all that we may conclude is that vv.

25-27 have retained elements of the original introduction which have however undergone expansion and redaction.

A second point which needs to be mentioned regards the literary unity of the second tradition, i.e. vv. 28-32. So far it has been assumed that v. 32, the etymological aetiology is an integral part of this unit. However, many scholars have taken it as a further addition. The most extensive analysis in favour of this view has been put forward by Richter (as far as I am aware). Richter starts pointing out that v. 31 is "reich gegliedert". Particular attention is paid to לָר (2x) which assumes a different meaning with the corresponding change of subject and to vv. 31 and 32 which according to Richter show a perfectly different tendency. In v. 31 it is a proof of power which is demanded of Baal by Joash whose outcome however is nowhere described. Here Baal's supporters are asked to let Baal "contend for himself" (לָר) and not them "for him" (לָר-לִבְעָל). The particle which is used to express "for himself" and "for him" is the same, but the meaning changes with the change of subject. To translate both "for him" is not adequate, since in the second instance it would be illogical; the required sense is "for himself". The verse concludes with a כִּי sentence which according to Richter does not fit well within the verse and which he considers therefore an addition. In verse 32 in contrast to v. 31 not only the outcome of the previous verse is presupposed but also לָר "for himself" becomes כָּר ("against him", i.e. Gideon) Baal being the subject of the sentence. The two verses have therefore a different trend. In v. 31 Joash demands a test of power. The challenge of strength is directed to Baal instead of his followers. In v. 32 however the success of the test is presupposed. Richter concludes therefore that the name aetiology is foreign to the pericope as well as v. 31b β , the latter being an addition by the redactor in order to provide a bridge for the name aetiology in v. 32. This shows also that

the name Jerubbaal must have been well known by the redactor. The question for Richter is only why the two were identified.¹⁰⁴

However, a different view has been taken by other scholars according to whom the aetiology is an original part of the tradition. Emerton is for instance one of the advocates for the unity of vv. 31 and 32. As he expresses in his own words:

verse 32 is a satisfactory sequel to verse 31, and there is no need to postulate the work of a later hand. The differences between verses 31 and 32 are compatible with the unity of authorship. Verse 31 introduces yareb lo in a way that is appropriate at this point in the story: Baal should act as his own champion. Verse 32 applies the words to Gideon in a way that will explain his second name Jerubbaal: it makes the subject Baal explicit, because it is the second part of the name; and it changes the preposition in order to bring in a direct reference to Gideon, the implied antecedent of the prenominal suffix, and does so because it needs to relate the saying to the person whose new name is being explained. It does not contradict the saying in v. 31, but fills it out by making explicit the subject and also the person against whom Baal is to plead his own cause. The differences are complementary and do not demand a difference of authorship.¹⁰⁵

The same conclusion has also been proposed by Schmidt though he reaches it by different means.¹⁰⁶ Two points in particular in his discussion seem to us especially important in support of this view. First of all, he points to the fact that if v. 32 is an addition as Richter argues the pericope is incomplete. Richter himself realizes this and suggests that the original conclusion, the success of the challenge,

¹⁰⁴ A further point which is usually used also as an argument to support the view that v. 32 is an addition is in relation to the etymology of Jerubbaal. According to v. 32 the meaning of the name is "let Baal contend against him" i.e. Gideon. Yet the course of the narrative seems to favour a different explanation of the name, i.e. "he who contends against Baal" since Gideon has destroyed the altar and therefore contends against Baal. These two different etymologies seem to stand in tension. Cf. L. Schmidt 1970:10.

¹⁰⁵ 1976:291.

¹⁰⁶ 1970:10ff.

was broken away in order to introduce the name aetiology. But, as L. Schmidt argues, this conclusion can only be supported once one can show why the original conclusion was broken away. This could have been the case if the conclusion of the challenge was negative, but this does not seem to be the case. Gideon was an Israelite hero and moreover the impotence of Baal had already been shown in v. 31 in the way the verse is formulated, as Richter himself has pointed out. Why then the original conclusion was broken away in favour of a name aetiology is not clear.

Secondly, he points to the fact that v. 32 links well to what has gone before. The content of v. 32 is closely connected to v. 31. In the latter verse the word **יִיב** is the central idea in one way or another and in v. 32 the word is also central in that it has the function of explaining the name Jerubbaal; the two verses then belong together. Moreover, it is only in the light of v. 32 that one can understand why Joash the name giver played such a central role in the tradition even though it deals with an act of Gideon who nevertheless is pushed into the background.¹⁰⁷

The evidence so far considered seems to lead towards the proposal that we should consider v. 32 as part of this pericope. Yet, in our opinion the tension between vv. 31 and 32 which led Richter to consider the latter as an addition to the original tradition has not been satisfactorily explained. Emerton has avoided this tension by proposing a very skilled exegetical explanation. L. Schmidt, on the other hand,

¹⁰⁷ Some scholars such as Gressmann, Nowack, Budde, Moore, Gray want to read in v. 32 the niphal form of the verb **וַיִּקְרָא** arguing for an impersonal subject. But this does not seem to be the case. First of all, as it has already been said, it is only if we take Joash as the subject of **וַיִּקְרָא** that we understand why he played such a prominent role in the preceding verse. Secondly, in v. 31 the expressed subject is Joash and this is implicitly carried on in v. 32 through the use of *waw* consecutive and the imperfect.

has given very plausible reasons why the aetiological conclusion is to be regarded as an integral part of the tradition. The tension could however be explained with a fresh look at vv. 31-32 in the light of textual variants.¹⁰⁸ In fact an examination of the septuagintal traditions reveals that in v. 32 **לֵאמֹר יְרֵב בֹּהַבֵּל** was very likely not part of the original text but that in all probability it came in from the hand of a later interpolator. The septuagintal evidence reads as follows:

LXX ^A	LXX ^B
και ἐκάλεσεν αὐτο ἐν τη ἡμερᾷ ἐκείνῃ	και ἐκάλεσεν αὐτο ἐν τη ἡμερᾷ ἐκείνῃ
Δικαστηριον του Βααλ	* Ιαρβααλ λεγω ¹⁰⁹ Δικασασθω ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ Βααλ
ὅτι κατεσκαψεν το θυσιαστηριον αὐτου	ὅτι καθηρεθη τοθυσιαστηριον αὐτου

As is clear from the comparison above the text is preserved differently in the two ms traditions. The text of A which in the light of ms evidence seems to have preserved better the original Greek¹¹⁰ renders the Hebrew **יְרֵב בֹּהַבֵּל לֵאמֹר יְרֵב בֹּהַבֵּל** as **Δικαστηριον του Βααλ** which leads us to suppose that its Hebrew *Vorlage* probably read **יְרֵב (ל) בֹּהַבֵּל** or simply **יְרֵבֵל**. The latter, in our opinion, is the more probable, the text of A wanting to spell out the meaning of the word **יְרֵבֵל** in Greek.¹¹¹ It is

¹⁰⁸ The fact that the use of textual criticism, as we will see, could help us here to solve what has been considered to be a tension in the MT should be a reminder of the need of textual criticism even in those cases where the meaning of the MT is clear. McCarter 1986:13f.

¹⁰⁹ The diacritical marks refer to S/ which seems however to have read **Δικαστηριον του Βααλ** (LXX^A) rather than **Δικασθω εν αυτω ο Βααλ** (LXX^B).

¹¹⁰ It has the support of MNadhlmntvwyb₂ Eth DL.

¹¹¹ That this is the case seems also to be supported by S/ although in it is **יְרֵבֵל בֹּהַבֵּל לֵאמֹר יְרֵבֵל** * which is asterisked and not **יְרֵבֵל בֹּהַבֵּל לֵאמֹר יְרֵבֵל**. However it is probable that Origen missed

therefore possible to suggest that v. 32b α is a later accretion in the tradition. Syntactically, it can also easily be removed from v. 32. It stands in apposition to ירבעל and is qualified by the following כי clause. If we remove this interpolation the כי clause would qualify ירבל; in other words, the name was given to Gideon את-מוזכר (cf. vv. 28,31).

It follows then that Richter was right to point out that there is a change in emphasis between vv. 31 and 32. In v. 31 Baal should contend "for himself" (לר) while in v. 32 he is to contend "against him" (בר), i.e. Gideon. But the basic tension does not lie between the tradition and the aetiological end but within the aetiology itself and more precisely between Jerubbaal's two etymological derivations.

In fact according to the narrative a first derivation of the name comes from vv. 31-32a. Gideon has already destroyed the altar of Baal and Joash is confronted with the men of the city who want his son's life. Joash defends his son and replies with ironic words from which the first derivation of the ^{name} comes:

...האתם תריבון לבעל אם-אתם תושיעון אותו v. 31
 [אשר יריב לו יומת עד-הבקר] אם-אלהים הוא
ירב לו כי נתן את-מוזכר:

ויקרא-לו כיום-הוא ירבעל v. 32

The second derivation in 32b (< LXX^A) basically derives from a

the point that $\Delta\iota\alpha\alpha\sigma\tau\eta\sigma\iota\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \beta\alpha\alpha\lambda$ was a paraphrase of ירבעל and not a translation of ירב בר הבעל. Consequently he inserted ירבעל לאמר ($\text{I}\alpha\rho\beta\alpha\alpha\lambda\ \lambda\epsilon\gamma\omega\nu$ - אמר ירבעל) pushing forward $\Delta\iota\alpha\alpha\sigma\tau\eta\sigma\iota\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \beta\alpha\alpha\lambda$ which now appears to be the translation of ירב בר הבעל. This seems to be the logical explanation of the S/ text in which nowhere in v. 32 is ירב בר הבעל translated.

different understanding of v. 31b which is repeated almost verbatim:¹¹²

יִרְבֵּ לֹ כי נתן את-מוֹבַחַר : v. 31b

יִרְבֵּ בֹ הַבַּעַל כי נתן את-מוֹבַחַר : v. 32

As Zakovitch has suggested in his study of double derivations of biblical names and places "there was a transition from an earlier derivatory method which did not require an outstanding resemblance between a name and its derivation, to a later method which attempted to embed within the derivation all the sounds and elements of the name being derived."¹¹³ It is in the light of this that the second derivation needs to be understood.¹¹⁴ In fact it is not necessary to the narrative and besides this it misses the basic point of v. 31.

While the first derivation speaks of Baal striving for himself the second speaks of the god striving against Gideon. The second derivation is formed simply by substituting בֹ for לֹ which being followed by הַבַּעַל yields almost exactly the same sound for יִרְבַּעַל. In such a way this second derivation is more closely linked with the name of בַּעַל but unfortunately the point which was made by the first derivation is missed altogether, namely that Baal is not capable of fighting for himself.¹¹⁵ The second derivation however lacks such irony and indeed misses the point. Now in fact Baal is capable to fight which was just the opposite of what was implied in the first derivation.

¹¹² Zakovitch 1980:31-33.

¹¹³ 1980:31.

¹¹⁴ However, both these derivations are based on popular etymology. For a discussion of the root and meaning see Soggin 1981:124f.

¹¹⁵ This conviction is expressed also elsewhere in the biblical traditions, cf. 1Kings 18.21ff.; Isa. 4.4.

3. Form critical analysis

a) 6.25-27 (28b)

i) Structure

As it has already been concluded, the pericope is not a unit but it is made up of two distinct traditions. This will obviously mean that in both a structure analysis can only be partial since at some points both traditions need to be taken into consideration together. The structure of 6.25-27 is as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| I. <i>Introduction</i> : YHWH speaks to Gideon in the night | v. 25a |
| II. <i>YHWH commands</i> | v. 25b-26 |
| A. to take a seven-year old bull | v. 25b |
| B. to destroy the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah | v. 25cd |
| C. to build an altar to YHWH | v. 26a |
| D. to offer the bull as a burnt offering | v. 26b |
| III. <i>Gideon obeys</i> | v. 27 |
| A. by taking ten men of his servants | v. 27a |
| B. by doing it by night because of fear | v. 27b |

Verse 25 and 26 constitute a long speech by YHWH. In v. 25 YHWH appears to Gideon (גִּדְּוֹן) whose name however is not mentioned till v. 27. The appearance is followed by a long string of commands. The first in the imperative form (קִי) is then followed by a series of perfects with waw consecutive which carries on the imperatival idea. V. 27a breaks off the verse with an imperfect with waw consecutive whose construction is then carried on. This points to a change of scene; here it is Gideon who is referred to as he follows up YHWH's orders. The imperfect and waw consecutive construction is also followed up in v. 27b except for the

static verb אָר (perfect) which describes Gideon's state of fear. The use of אָר at the beginning points also that here a new phase is introduced.¹¹⁶

ii) Genre

As it has already been said it is likely that the verses which make up this tradition are mainly redactional. The question yet remains whether a genre can be assigned to them. The content seems to be in the form of a "speech" and "narrative" which seem to recall the foundation of an altar which the redactional link in v. 25a would ascribe to have taken place in Ophrah. But as the previous analysis has shown it cannot be established any more whether here we are dealing with the same place of the previous pericope (vv. 11-24) nor whether an altar foundation was really the main aim of the whole pericope. That this does not seem to be the aim is suggested by the fact that it is attached to another unit (vv. 28-32) whose aim and purpose are different from that of the previous pericope (vv. 11-24) which recalls the event when an altar was established in Ophrah. Therefore we should not infer from these verses that the original reference was to a lasting foundation of an altar. In fact it seems that in the redactional history of these verses its original mention of an altar has undergone expansion and given an emphasis which is foreign to its original meaning. This is clear from the altar-mention in v. 28b which is clearly redactional and which was introduced in order to bind two units together more closely. Its aim therefore is not explaining why a Baal altar was destroyed in Ophrah.

¹¹⁶ Richter 1963:165.

This seems to be the case when we notice that Gideon's action in fulfilment of YHWH's command is very briefly stated: **וַיַּעַשׂ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**.

If the foundation of the altar was really the main concern it is strange not to hear of it any more in the light of the fact that detailed instructions were given. Also no real reason is given, except that it was an order of YHWH that an altar should be built on the top of the stronghold. In the previous pericope, as elsewhere, a more specific reason is given why a certain place was suitable for an altar construction, as for example the place of a divine revelation. Moreover the altar does not seem to play any relevant role in the next unit. If the altar motif would have been really important we would have expected at least a mention of the place where it stood or any similar remark in the following unit. But its silence is a clear indication that this cultic aetiological interest was not intended.¹¹⁷

A better parallel to these verses may be found in 1Kings 18. Here the main theme is Elijah's contest on Mt. Carmel against the prophets of Baal. Through the contest Elijah is again able to affirm the superiority of YHWH over against Baal.

A strict comparison between the two cannot be made, nevertheless some elements appear which are common to both traditions. First of all the mention of bulls is made in both of them; what is different, however, is the use which is made of them. In 1Kings the bulls are the means by which a contest takes place. In Judges the bull is the required offering by YHWH which is sacrificed on the newly built altar. Secondly, in both an altar is mentioned. In 1Kings it is also the means by which the

¹¹⁷ Bruno 1923. This view is also supported by Richter 1963:166 and L. Schmidt 1970:15.

contest can take place. In Judges it is built under the command of YHWH. Unfortunately, the brevity of our unit does not allow us to carry further the comparison nor to see whether the same genre of 1Kings 18 may also apply here¹¹⁸ but all that can be said is that these common elements may have been freely employed in the making of the narrative.

Before we draw some conclusions a final point needs to be mentioned in relation to v. 27b. The verse states that Gideon did what God had commanded him in the night because he was afraid of his family and the men of the city. The motif of "fear" calls us back to a characteristic element in the saga of the holy war according to which there is a tendency in it to describe the human agent of victory in the most humble possible terms:¹¹⁹ Gideon is said to have acted here by night because he was afraid. The two term מעון and מערכה in v.26 would also lead us to this understanding. The two words have a prominently military significance although here they assume a different meaning. The first usually indicates a defensive building (stronghold, bulwark) or a protective object (a helmet for example),¹²⁰ the second the drawing up in battle array.¹²¹ If this is correct two further points may be made. First of all it is just possible to understand the mention of the ten men, which is otherwise incomprehensible in the light of this attitude to play down the hero. Secondly, it may help us to establish a link to the previous tradition; namely 6.11b-17 whose shape has been clearly influenced by that of the holy war ideology.

¹¹⁸ 1Kings is usually classified under the genre of "legends of prophets". Cf. Koch 1969:188ff.

¹¹⁹ See next chapter.

¹²⁰ Cf. Isa. 23.4; 25.4; 30.2f.; Ps.31.3, 60.9; Deut. 11.7; etc.

¹²¹ Ex. 39.37; 1Sam. 4.16; 17.20,21; 23.3; 1Chron. 12.38; etc.

What are we then to conclude? It seems to us that the complexity of this short unit does not allow us to attribute to it any specific genre which supports the previous literary analysis in describing it as a complex redactional unit.

b) 6.28-32

i) Structure

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| I. <i>Scene one: the men of the city</i> | vv. 28-29 |
| A. Discovery of the crime in the morning | v. 28a(28b) |
| B. Search - inquiry - discovery of the doer | v. 29 |
| II. <i>Scene two: confrontation</i> | vv. 30-31 |
| A. The men of the city ask for Gideon to be punished | |
| B. Joash challenges them | |
| - with a test of power from Baal | v. 31ac |
| - with a death-threat (gloss) | v. 31b |
| III. <i>Scene three: name aetiology</i> | v. 32 |

The structure of this piece of tradition runs smoothly except for two later accretions which have already been pointed out and therefore they need not be discussed further.

The story can easily be divided into three scenes all starting with consecutive imperfects used here as the narrative tense. Perfects are then used simply to describe that which has happened. The first scene of course needs some introductory verses which describe the crime which had been committed in the night and which is discovered in the morning by the men of the city. The surprise is discovered in the morning by the men of the city. The surprise is beautifully depicted with the use of *והנה* which is mainly followed by the participle although here the perfect is used in order to express state and completeness. The actions follow one

after the other without any waste of words. Soon they search and inquire: Gideon is the person responsible. How they find it out is not clear and it seems unimportant to the narrator.

The second scene depicts a confrontation between the men of the city who ask for the life of Gideon and Joash who replies to them with a challenge **אם-אלהים הוא ירב לו** which forms the basis of the first etymological explanation of the name Jerubbaal. The result of the challenge is left unanswered. The reader/listener is left to draw the logical conclusions by himself, namely that Baal's powerlessness to act is demonstrated, the men of the city accept the challenge. This opens up the way to the third scene, namely the bestowal of the new name upon Gideon.

ii) Genre

In the genre examination of the previous tradition (vv. 25-27) we suggested that its purpose was not that of recalling an altar tradition. Indeed this trend is foreign to both of these traditions and should be considered simply as a transitory element.¹²² The tradition as a whole rather runs smoothly in the style of a narrative. More precisely, the features exhibited in it remind us of the general characteristic of saga.

To start with, "nothing distinguishes folklore more clearly from

¹²² According to Eissfeldt this story, which is similar in some respects to 1Kings 18-17-40, is the memory of a historical event when a foreign cult was pushed away by YHWH. Eissfeldt's conclusion depends partly upon the assumption that 6.11-24 describes also the same event (!939:18). Richter however rightly differs from Eissfeldt's. According to him "die älteste Erzählung schildert Plänkeleien der Jahweanhänger gegen Baalverehrer" (1963:64 n. 148). The latter view is also suggested by Soggin 1981:128.

modern writing and reality than the triad" (die Dreizahl).¹²³ Correspondingly, here we have three figures around which the story revolves: Gideon, the men of the city and Joash. We can compare this with the patriarchal saga such as Gen. 12.10-20; 20.1-8; 26.1-16 where also the narrative revolves around three figures: the patriarch, his wife, and the king or the Samuel saga such as it is found in 1Sam. 24.1-22; 26:1-25 which revolves around Saul, David and his men.

Secondly, closely connected to the previous feature is the "law of scenic duality" (das Gesetz der szenischen Zweiheit)¹²⁴ according to which it is common for only two main characters (or groups) to appear at one time on the scene. Accordingly, in our tradition Gideon, the main protagonist, withdraws into the background as soon as Joash and the men of the city interact with one another. In the last verse, accepting that the subject of יִקְרָא is Joash, the men of the city withdraw and Gideon appear again on the scene. The same occurs for example in Ex. 2. As soon as Moses' mother appears, the sister withdraws into the background (cf. 1Sam. 24; 26).

Thirdly, to the "law of duality" corresponds the great "law of opposition" (das Gesetz des Gegensatzes). Characteristic of the saga is the polarization of characters. In other words they are put in sharp

¹²³ Olrik, "nichts unterscheidet so deutlich die große Menge der Volkspoesie von der modernen Dichtung und von der Wirklichkeit, wie die Dreizahl es tut" (1909:4). Cf. Koch 1969:149. Olrik outlines in his article characteristic features of sagas which originated in the European world. According to him there are specific rules which guide the composition of saga for which he proposes the term "laws". These features/laws which he derives from secular European epics are interestingly applicable to the OT sagas as well. However, this does not mean that all features can apply also to the OT. Some in fact do not (see Koch 1969:150). An outline of the basic features of the saga in the OT is conveniently set out by Koch (1969:148ff); W.H. Schmidt (1984:64-70); for a more extensive discussion see Gunkel (1901).

¹²⁴ The German definitions in brackets refer to Olrik's article.

contrast with one another: young and old, big and small, good and bad, etc. Here the two cults are set one against the other as well as the boldness of a man (Joash) against the collective action of the many (the men of the city) who want the life of Gideon.

Fourthly, "what is historical or political is put forward as private and personal" (W H Schmidt). This is especially true of the patriarchal saga where the conflicts and relations of individuals have a much wider significance for peoples and nations than the mere individuals. This seems also to be the case with our tradition where the tension described here in terms of a family local affair reflects the tension reflected at a wider national scale.

Fifthly, the events are straightforwardly described (die Einsträngigkeit). One event follows the other, unessential details are left out and the events are described as concisely as possible. There is one basic line of thought which unfolds as the narrative develops. It does not go back in order to fetch a missing assumption. All which is essential is described in the course of the narrative.¹²⁵ It follows that some questions which we would have expected to be answered are left open. For example to the Israelites there would have been taken for granted that they knew about them.

Sixthly, "a saga has a clear beginning and end" (W.H. Schmidt). Usually it does not begin or end abruptly. The introductory verses usually set the development of the events which find their conclusion in the final verses. The climax however is reached before the conclusion.

¹²⁵ According to Olrik 1909:8 when this law is broken we cannot speak anymore of saga. In his own words, "wenn in den isländischen Geschichtswerken Sätze wie dieser vorkommen: 'jetzt gehn zwei Geschichten nebeneinander', dann ist die Stufe der Volkspoesie verlassen, es ist Literatur, die Volkssage hat nur eine Geschichte auf einmal".

Similarly, in our tradition the tension is already released in v. 31 and v. 32 provides the conclusion which rounds off the sequence of events to which they have been pointing. In the Samuel saga for example in 1Sam. 24 the tension between Saul and David is released before the end of it in Saul's acknowledgment of David's righteousness over against him. The concluding verse then bring down the high tension which had been reached before.

Finally, "the climax is reached in speech which usually takes the form of a dialogue" (Koch 1969:51). Similarly in our story it is reached in the dialogue between Joash and the men of the city; in the Samuel saga (cf. 1Sam. 24; 26) it is reached in the dialogue between Saul and David.

This brief recapitulation of several features which are typical of sagas would clearly indicate that we have here such a narrative which of course we could define more precisely in the light of its content as an etymological aetiology.¹²⁶

Our conclusion is also confirmed by Fichtner (although he refers only to v. 32) according to whom v. 32 follows the basic pattern in the formulation of etymological aetiologies which he classifies under his Form I.¹²⁷ According to Fichtner the scheme of Form I runs as follows:

¹²⁶ The classification however is not generally accepted. Much of course depends on our previous analysis, namely whether we include v. 32 or not in the basic unit of tradition. Richter 1963:65 for examples according to whom the basic unit of tradition is made up of vv. 27b-31 describes its genre as a "statement-narrative" (Aussage - Erzählung). However, one may question whether the term "narrative" as such is an appropriate way of defining a genre. Other scholars have defined it also in other ways. Keller (1955:162) considers it (6.25-32) as a "typisch hebräische Anekdote"; Simpson 1957:29 as "an old satirical cult story"; for Gressmann it is an "ätiologische Kultsage"; Soggin considers both accounts 6.11-24 and 6.25-32 as "aetiological legends on the foundation of two different sanctuaries near Ophrah..." (1981:105); Lindars (1965:318) refers to 6.25-32 as a "sanctuary legend".

¹²⁷ 1956:372-396. In this regard we should mention Richter's remark according to whom, referring to Fichtner article, the author of our

And he (she) called his (her) name so and so, for he spoke or thought (and now follows the etymological aetiology).¹²⁸

In the OT in its full form it is found in Ex. 2.22 but often it occurs with a variant. It compares with Judg. 6.32 as follows:

Ex. 2.22

וַיִּקְרָא (מֹשֶׁה) אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גֵרְשֹׁם

כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הֵיטִי בָאָרֶץ נַכְרִיָּה

Judg. 6.32

וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִרְבֵּעַל

לֵאמֹר יִרְבֵּעַל בּוֹהַבֵּעַל

כִּי נָתַן אֶת־מוֹבְחָו

Both start with an impersonal verb but in both cases the imperfects with *way* consecutive presume a subject which has been expressed in the previous verse and whose action is now carried on. In Judg. 6.32 *שם* is missing and it is only substituted with *ל*. This also occurs elsewhere (e.g. Gen. 31.47). The *ביום ההוא* in the first sentence is out of pattern. In fact such indication of time occurs in no other etymological aetiologies in the Bible. It may therefore be a textual expansion possibly occasioned by v. 24 in order to create analogy.¹²⁹ The

tradition used a foreign form, namely, the form of the place-name aetiology (Form II according to Fichtner) instead of the person-name aetiology. Consequently, he uses this argument further to support his view that the identification of Gideon and Jerubbaal is founded in tradition (1963:167). However, in this regard Richter seems to be mistaken since Fichtner clearly ascribes v. 32 to Form I (p. 379) and not to Form II. Cf. Emerton 1976:292 n.1. Similarly, L. Schmidt (1970) attributes v.32 to Form I according to Fichtner's classification. Long (1968:22) following Richter's analysis, simply dismisses v. 32 as a literary gloss and a case for discussion under aetiologies of the Form I type.

¹²⁸ 1956:379.

¹²⁹ L. Schmidt (1970:12) interprets this expression as a further evidence that Joash should be taken as the subject of *וַיִּקְרָא*. According to him "on that day" supplies the key for the interpretation of the

reason-statement for the giving of the name occurs twice in v. 32 and both forms have parallels.¹³⁰ In the first the **כִּי אָמַר** of Ex. 2.22 is substituted with **לֵאמַר** which is similar to Gen. 5.29 and 1Sam. 4.21. The second uses **כִּי** rather than **כִּי אָמַר** which is similar to Gen. 3.20. The choice of the particle or expression which introduces the reason-statement is usually dependent on the content of it. **כִּי** usually introduces a reason which is attributed to the one that receives the name: for example in Judg. 6.32 it is "because he pulled down the altar", in Gen. 3.20 it is "because she was taken out of man". **לֵאמַר** on the other hand introduces a "speech-reason" pronounced by the one who bestows the name. In Judges it is Joash's speech which is reported., "Let Baal contend against him"; in Gen 5.29 **לֵאמַר** introduces Lamech's words after having named his child Noah, "Out of the ground which the Lord has cursed this shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands" (cf. 1Sam. 4.21).

These etymological aetiologies in relation to names which are given to people usually occur in the occasion of a birth¹³¹ or of a name change.¹³²

passage in that it puts the act by which Gideon is named Jerubbaal in analogy to the name giving of a new born child. To a child his name is name given by an anonymous crowd but by the father or the mother. This is the reason why Joash plays such a central figure in the narrative. Although we agree that Joash is the giver of the name it is questionable whether **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא** was inserted for this reason. That Gideon received the name on the same day would have been implied anyway.

¹³⁰ The second simply recalls the reason which led Joash to challenge the men of the city and consequently to the bestowal of a second name upon Gideon.

¹³¹ In general one can observe three patterns with it: I. birth, naming, reason (e.g. Gen. 29.32; 41.51f.; Ex. 2.10,22); II. birth, indication of signs, naming (e.g. Gen. 25.25,26; 38.27-30); III. birth, exclamation (of the mother), naming (so almost exclusively Gen. 29 and 30). Cf. Fichtner 1956:381 n. 1.

¹³² See Gen. 17.5 (Abram/Abraham); 32.28 (Jacob/Israel); Judg. 6.32 (Gideon/Jerubbaal); 2Sam. 12.25 (Solomon/Jedidiah); sometimes without reason, Gen. 27.15 (Sarai/Sarah); 35.10 (Jacob/Israel); 2Kings 23.34

The fact that this pattern is used very often for the occasion of a birth may suggest that the change of name of an adult person was seen in analogy to a birth where one first gets his name. A new beginning and role is envisaged for the one whose name has been changed.¹³³

We can now briefly summarize our results. First of all vv. 28-32 are a basic unit with only two small interpolations. Secondly, the narrative shows several features of the saga and its content clearly leads us to define it as an etymological aetiology. Thirdly, its aim is mainly apologetic and reflects a time when Baal and YHWH began to be differentiated.

4. Setting and Intention

Though two different pericopes have been isolated the setting and intention of both is one and the same.

Of the two strata the older simply attested the destruction of the Baal altar and thus the name aetiology. The second inserts the destruction of the Asherah besides the altar and the replacement of this with an altar of YHWH. The story is clearly set in symmetry with the preceding religious tradition (6.11-24) in which Gideon is called to fight foreign invaders; here, against his enemies inside. In order to understand their setting and intention we must now turn to more general considerations than strict comparison with other Old Testament

(Eliakim/Jehoiakim); 2Kings 24.17 (Mattanaiah/Zedekiah) - in the last two instances the change may be due to throne-names. Gen 41.45 deals about a by-name for Joseph which of course is not explained and also is not visible anymore. A similar instance occurs also in Dan. 1.6. Cf Fichtner 1956:381 n. 3.

¹³³ L. Schmidt 1970:13.

narratives.

As discussed in chapter II the Asherah polemic is obviously deuteronomistic and late. The Asherah was worshipped in fact besides YHWH in the official state religion and not only in popular Yahwism. This is now attested at Kuntillet Ajrud and possibly at el-Qom thus giving also credibility to the further attestation in the Elephantine papyri (the goddess is there Anathbethel or Anathyahu). The construction of an altar to YHWH arose then from the fact that one cannot destroy any other altar without substituting this with a Yahwistic altar. Then what about the more ancient nucleus?

The narrative theme clearly spells out the religious intolerance of Yahwism though here there is no bloodshed as in other narratives which we have in the Hebrew Bible. In spite of the fact that Yahwism is so depicted throughout the Hebrew Bible it is likely that the cruelty and religious intolerance of the Hebrew people are in fact a late creation of priestly circles.¹³⁴ The Hebrews, in fact, were never less tolerant than any of the other peoples of the ancient Near East. The first time in which this motif appears in the Hebrew Bible is in Exod. 32 in which Moses, after the Israelites had sinned in making and worshipping the golden calf, calls the levites and sends them to kill those who had sinned against YHWH, brother, companions, and neighbours: "and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (v. 28). Similarly, it is the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1Kings 18) in which the prophet slays the 450 prophets of Baal and that of the bloodshed of the priests and followers of Baal by the hand of Jehu (2Kings 10). These stories strikingly contrast the religious tolerance of other surrounding peoples. This uniqueness is often explained as a direct consequence of

¹³⁴ See Garbini 1986b:144ff.

Hebrew monotheism.¹³⁵ But if, as we have argued pre-exilic Yahwism was a polytheistic religion how far are we to give credit to this tension between Baal and YHWH?¹³⁶

As for the kingdom of the north except for Jehu's bloodshed, there is no further evidence of tension.¹³⁷ Thus, it is likely that in the north Baal was tolerated alongside the cult of YHWH. The existence of other gods until the fall of Samaria¹³⁸ is attested in one of the inscribed prisms of Sargon II. This is also confirmed by the epigraphic documentation in that in the Samaria Ostraca of the 8th century, Baal and YHWH theophoric names are both attested among the royal administrative personnel.¹³⁹

As to the kingdom of the south it suffices to mention that the narrative of Josiah's reform tells us that the Baal cult was practised in the very temple of Jerusalem (2Kings 23.4).¹⁴⁰ A reform during this period, whatever shape it actually took is further confirmed by the increase of Yahwistic theophoric names attested starting from the mid 7th century and thus witnessing to a religious reform similar to that attributed to Josiah. But tolerant Yahwism did not stop with Josiah which marks only the beginning of that Yahwism which finds its full actualization in the post-exilic age. It continued on likely till the

¹³⁵ Cf. Soggin 1981:127.

¹³⁶ For the exilic/post-exilic dating of Ex. 32 as well as for the references to bloodshed in 2Kings 22-23 see Garbini 1986B:144ff. For hints of the post-exilic age of 1Kings 18 see Van Seters 1972A:453f.

¹³⁷ Cf. L. Schmidt 1970:16f. who uses 2Kings 10.18ff. to suggest Jehu's period for the origin of Judg. 6.28-32.

¹³⁸ See chapter II.

¹³⁹ Garbini 1986B:151.

¹⁴⁰ Hayes (Miller - Hayes 1986:398) tries to diminish the "syncretistic" aspect of Yahwism. The exaggeration being due to exalt the Josianic reform. But there is no need to minimize this description. In all likelihood this was the real case. See Garbini 1986B:152f.

fall of Jerusalem and surely in the Elephantine colony.

In any case, it is also important to notice that it was a bloodless reform 2Kings 23.5,20 being later additions and belonging to the same category as Exod. 32.¹⁴¹

It seems to us, thus, that the destruction of the Baal altar in Judg. 6.25-32 is likely to fall into the same category as the deuteronomistic Asherah polemic. The very name Jerubbaal is an obvious indication that he was originally a Baal worshipper and that the story of his destruction of the altar of Baal was created to discharge him from any association with this god. Hardly anybody who was not a worshipper of Baal would have born a name with the theophorous element of the god he opposes in fact. Moreover, the theophoric element always stands as the subject of the name and never as the object as it is interpreted by the aetiology.¹⁴² The fact that the altar destruction is strictly connected with its name aetiology is a further hint that we have here also a deuteronomistic polemic which only originated at a later time than the period in which the Gideon tradition is purported to have taken place. It is the motivation for destroying the altar, namely obedience to the command of YHWH which mostly speaks against its historicity since it is built on those very presuppositions, namely Israel as a different ethnic group from the Canaanites and the supposed phenomenon of syncretism, which we have attempted to demonstrate to be the fruit of a later period. Ethical monotheism did not arise, in fact, before the exilic period.

We may thus conclude that this tradition reflects a deuteronomistic polemic possibly originating in two stages. The Baal polemic is the more ancient stratum the function of which was to discharge Gideon of any Baal

141 Garbini 1986b:53.

142 Lemche 1988:225.

associations. At a later stage the story was **supplemented** with the Asherah polemic and the construction of the YHWH altar possibly by the same editor. Baal and Asherah take up here a symbolic meaning as the objects of any idolatrous form of worship from which Israel ought to disassociate herself. These stories do not enlighten us on the history of the religion of Israel but rather it is the history of the religion of Israel as we deduce from other sources which provide these verses with its setting in life.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ The willful alienation for anything Canaanite can be further seen for instance in the apparent distinction which the Old Testament traditions try to maintain between the transcendence of God and the humanity of the king. In fact the royal ideology of early Israel was of the same character as it is found throughout the ancient Near East. Any departure from this is to be attributed to thorough going monotheistic redactors of pre-exilic OT texts. Cf. Lang 1988:37-59.

VII. GIDEON AND HOLY WAR

A. INTRODUCTION

The altar traditions, followed by "war traditions", continue the theme of the Midianite invasion and make Gideon now a charismatic leader who saves Israel from the foreign oppression through the aid of YHWH.

The reading of these traditions (6.33-8.35) is not easy, since the traditional material was not sufficiently reshaped to eliminate tensions with the wider framework into which they have been placed. The feature of double or parallel traditions which was noticed in the previous section between 6.11-24 and 6.25-32 is also apparent here¹ and suggests that this was a technique used by the writer and does not necessarily reflect the use of separate similar traditions but may be the creative work of the writer himself.

The parallel traditions are reflected in the two campaigns undertaken by Gideon and compare as follows:

Judges 7.23-8.3

- a. Campaign in Cisjordan
- b. "Israel" in action
- c. Capture of the two princes of Midian

Judges 8.4-12

- a. Campaign in Transjordan
- b. Three hundred men in action
- c. Capture of the two kings of Midian

¹ See e.g. Soggin 1981:104ff.

Both traditions have further in common the themes of pursuit and killing of two Midianite princes/kings.

The above traditions which follow one another are introduced by a section consisting of the call to arms against Midian (6.33-35) and the test of the fleece (6.36-40) which is then followed by the campaign in Cisjordan (7.1-8.3).

Judges 7.23-8.3 apparently does not follow well after 7.1-22 which attempts both to give a pan-Israelite view of the war against Midian and at the same time explain why the war was fought with three hundred men only. The theme of the three hundred men is then picked up again in the campaign in Transjordan.

Judges 6.33-8.35, taken *en bloc*, introduces another theme into the Gideon-Abimelech narratives: it is YHWH who fights his people's wars and gives them into their hands. The theme of Holy War or YHWH's war was clearly the underlying motif which shaped these traditions and led the way in which traditional material was used and other created.

The theme of Holy War is not limited to the present section but occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern traditions.² We will thus explore this theme in more general terms first before addressing the specific pericopes in Judges 6.33.-8.35.

In recent years the debate on this subject has mainly centred on the concept of the Israelite idea of Holy War and how to understand it. The author who first gave rise to a scholarly discussion on this topic was G. von Rad in his work *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Testament*.³ In this brief

² For a comprehensive overview on this topic see the recent work by Kang 1989:11-108.

³ The original edition was published in 1951. The English edition was released in 1991, thirty years after the original publication, translating from the 1958 German edition.

overview we will attempt to define the term Holy War with reference to von Rad, look at the way the Old Testament portrays Holy War and suggest a possible approach to it in the light of what has been said in the previous chapters.

B. Holy War in the Old Testament

1. Definition and Origin

The idea of war in the Old Testament is very much linked to the salvific act of God so that it is not easy to separate neatly religion from the political actions of the tribes or state. Indeed the two go hand in hand. The problem then arises whether we should call Israel's wars, holy wars or YHWH wars or whether we should understand them merely as a phenomenon of the ancient Near East.

The term ἱερός πόλεμος does not occur in the Old Testament but it is interesting to notice that we do find it in Greek writers for a war that was undertaken for a sacrilege or crusade.⁴ In Old Testament studies it was with the work of von Rad that the term came to be used regularly to denote Israel's wars before the time of the monarchy. Von Rad accepted the view of the existence of an Israelite amphictyony⁵ with which he linked the Israelite wars. According to him the tribes, besides engaging themselves in cultic activities in the narrower sense, also safeguarded and defended their whole political existence sword in hand. This was not a secular matter, but a cultic activity which he called "Holy War" and it

⁴ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian Wars* i.112; Aristophanes, *The Birds* v.556; Cf. Jones 1975:642 n.4 and 1989:318 n.1.

⁵ This theory was first suggested by Noth (cf. Noth 1960:85-109) which he accepted without debate.

was the subject of laws and ideas. The proper period of it was that of the Judges. Before this period it was not known in its proper form and it came to an end with the monarchy although the concept of Holy War lived on till the time of David.⁶

Several scholars⁷ have objected to von Rad's use of the term Holy War on the ground that it never occurs as such in the Old Testament. They preferred to refer to these wars as "YHWH's wars" (מלחמות יהוה) a term which is derived from the biblical texts.⁸

Others⁹ agreed with von Rad's terminology although with the qualification that in antiquity every war was in a broad sense a "Holy War". R. de Vaux points to the Greek *ἱεροὶ πόλεμοι* and to the Holy War of Islam, the *jihad*, according to which it was the duty of every Moslem to spread his faith by force of arms.¹⁰ The major difference is not the link with religion but the ideology which stands behind the concept of war. Islam's ideology, for example, would be foreign to Israel. G. Fohrer takes a similar line. According to him, "like everything in life, the conduct of war was surrounded by religious rites. But these do not make it a 'holy' war and a sacral institution anymore than the religious conceptions, rites, and formulas that surround birth, weaning, marriage, death and sheep-shearing make them holy."¹¹ The only case in which he grants them to be called such are those specific instances where the Israelites believed that YHWH had intervened personally.

⁶ von Rad 1953:45-46.

⁷ E.g. W. Caspari, R. Smend, W. Richter, W. Zimmerli.

⁸ Num. 21.14; 1Sam. 18.17; 17.47; Ex. 17.16.

⁹ de Vaux 1961:258; Fohrer 1973:118.

¹⁰ 1961:258.

¹¹ 1973:118. Cf. Weippert 1972:490f. who maintains that there was no essential difference between Israel's holy wars and the holy wars of her neighbours.

Another view was suggested by G.H. Jones which he put forward in his article, "'Holy War' or 'Yahweh War'".¹² In it he considers two main objections to von Rad's thesis. The first is his connection of the Holy War with the amphictyony which was pointed out in particular by Smend¹³ who argued that its origin was not with the amphictyony but with the Rachel tribes and their exodus experience.¹⁴ The second objection concerns the understanding of it as a cultic institution. Von Rad had listed a series of rites which would take place before, during and after the battle although he realizes that in the Old Testament we do not have any instance where all of them occur in this way. Smend again has argued against this understanding denying that it was a cultic institution and that no visible pattern emerges from these wars. Here Jones takes a different approach and argues that it is possible to describe a Holy War scheme. His main argument is that there has been a process of schematization and development of the Holy War theory. He suggests three stages: firstly, episodes like 1Sam. 11 which describe an example of YHWH war which nevertheless has integral key elements of the Holy War scheme. In a second stage, the pre-deuteronomistic stage, the war episodes are set into a recognized framework. For example in Judg. 6.33-7.22 (also Judg. 7.23-8.21) three elements stand out: i) summoning of troops (6.33f.); ii) a rallying together and formation for battle (7.1); iii) a statement that victory was won (7.22). Also there are some significant insertions made which emphasize characteristic Holy War themes: 7.9 ("handing down" formula) and 7.10 ("do not fear" theme). In a third stage the Holy War scheme was adopted into the Deuteronomic

¹² The article was published in 1975 and his views reaffirmed in his later article of 1989.

¹³ 1970:13-25.

¹⁴ So also Zimmerli 1978:60.

tradition and acquired some formulaic and theological additions that conformed with the Deuteronomic understanding of Holy War. As an example Jones mentions Josh. 10.6-11. During an early pre-Deuteronomic stage v.11a - the account of YHWH throwing stones from heaven - was added to the basic narrative of a victory due to Joshua's strategy over the Amorite coalition. A further redaction introduced three additional elements into the narrative: i) an introduction which is the combination of the אל-תירא formula (cf. Deut. 20.1-4) and the *Übergabeformel*; ii) a direct attribution of the enemies' panic to YHWH (v. 10); iii) a final comment which ascribes unmistakably the victory to YHWH's intervention and not to Israel's fighting (v. 11b).¹⁵

Therefore Jones concludes that the Holy War theory followed rather than preceded the practice of YHWH war.¹⁶ Yet, he argues that this theory, though understood as a *post eventum*, does not deny its historical reality. The theory was rather an attempt to define and bring to full expression what was basic in their understanding of YHWH war. His analysis has also a further bearing on the question of terminology. In this regard he argues that the two terms Holy War and YHWH war can be both appropriate in that the latter describes those episodes which were attributed to the guidance of YHWH, while the former is the later formulation of these wars within an established pattern. For convenience we will refer to Israel's wars as Holy Wars.¹⁷

¹⁵ Jones 1975:653f.

¹⁶ *Contra* von Rad.

¹⁷ Cf. Jones 1989:311ff.

2. Conduct and Rites

If we accept the view that the Holy War ideology was a deuteronomic creation¹⁸ it is not possible anymore to argue that there must have been specific rules which guided it. A more appropriate approach then would be, to begin with, to look at the way in which the Old Testament portrays Holy War and its practices¹⁹ both in theoretical rules and battle descriptions, before addressing the more complex issue of the relationship that the Holy War traditions bear to historicity, theology and ideology.²⁰

At the cultic level the ritual of cleanness had to be observed (Deut. 23.9ff.) because the Lord was in their midst. This extended to the whole camp. The cultic requirements were important because the war was YHWH's and Israel's enemies' were YHWH's enemies. The victory was sure because YHWH's presence was among them and he fought for them. Hence YHWH is often described as a Warrior.²¹

Before the battle YHWH was inquired through the prophets and priests²² by the use of the ephod and sacred lots²³ to know whether to proceed or restrain (1Kings 22.5ff.). Prayers and sacrifices were also

¹⁸ So also Mayes 1979:64,292.

¹⁹ Cf. von Rad 1991:41-51 where he lists the supposed holy war schema as found in the texts of Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges.

²⁰ Comparative studies have confirmed that rituals before, during and after the battle were common features among the people of the ancient Near East. See Kang 1989 who deals specifically with these aspects in his study. For a brief description see Jones 1989:300-302.

²¹ Ex. 15.3; Ps. 24; Isa. 63.1ff.; etc. This theme has been extensively dealt in various works. See especially Cross 1973 and Miller 1973.

²² See e.g. Judg. 20.23,28; 1Sam. 14.37; 23.2,4.

²³ 1Sam. 23.9f.; 30.7f.

offered.²⁴ According to 1Sam 13.8-12 it seems that great significance was given to the sacrifice.

Faith was also an indispensable condition: the people had to have faith and to be without fear.²⁵ Those who were afraid were not fit for battle and were to be sent away.

The battle-cry (תְּרוּעָה) had a religious significance. It was a signal for battle²⁶ and also part of the ritual surrounding the ark²⁷ which symbolized God's presence.

"The spoil taken in such a war was תָּרֵם, 'under the ban', that is, the exclusive property of YHWH, and in consequence completely outwith human disposal. As to the range of what fell under the ban, the accounts vary."²⁸ The root has the meaning of separating something from the profane for sacred use. Later the term found its way into the general vocabulary of worship. According to some Old Testament passages²⁹ the תָּרֵם practice originated from an order of YHWH though in Num. 21.2 it is the result of a vow taken by the people. Von Rad thinks however that it is doubtful whether the usage can be brought at all within the category of the vow; if it can, then that would be a more mature concept.³⁰ Yet it may be observed that it could have originated in this way before it was understood as a command of YHWH in the Holy War. Whatever was the case it is clear that the fundamental ideology behind it was that it was conceived as an act by which Israel acknowledged the help of YHWH in war.

24 Ps. 20; Isa. 13.9ff.

25 Josh. 8.1; 10.8,25.

26 Judg. 7.18-20.

27 2Sam. 6.15.

28 Von Rad 1953:48.

29 Deut. 7.2; 20.17; 1Sam. 15.3.

30 Von Rad 1953:48.

Its observance was considered very important and failure to do so would have negative repercussions upon Israel. Achan's transgression³¹ e.g. brought a curse upon the people. Saul³² was also condemned by Samuel for not having strictly observed the commandment of YHWH to destroy utterly the Amalekites and everything which was with them.³³

3. Pre-Monarchic Period

Before the monarchy the Holy War ideology is more evident than during the monarchic period, especially in the Book of Judges. In this period we can perhaps distinguish between wars of judgment and wars of conquest and defence. The two types overlap to a certain extent and indeed are complementary.

We can notice that certain wars were to be started at the commandment of God who had proclaimed his judgment against a particular people. Thus Amalek was fought for having attacked Israel at Rephidim³⁴ as well as the Midianites who seduced Israel and led her into idolatry and immorality.³⁵

However, most of the wars before the monarchy were rather wars of conquest and defence against the Canaanites and the Philistines.³⁶ Here it was YHWH who fought for his people accomplishing the divine promise

³¹ Josh. 7.

³² 1Sam. 15.

³³ Cf. the Mesha inscription, Beyerlin 1978:236-41, in which several of the features observed in this section occur as well as the "herem" practice.

³⁴ Ex. 17.8-16; Deut. 25.17-19; 1Sam. 15.

³⁵ Num. 22-25; 25.16-18; 31.

³⁶ Some scholars argue that holy wars were only wars of defense (von Rad, M. Cross, etc.). Other think that they were also of conquest (e.g. J. Bright).

given to Israel's forefathers. The characteristics of Holy War are most prominent here.

These wars are mainly depicted as an activity of collaborating tribes who decided about them by common consensus. They were waged with a people's militia that was called to battle when it was necessary. The joining was left free to the personal decision of the tribes.

The battles were won not because of Israel's great military abilities but because YHWH was in their midst who gave them the victory according to his own purposes.³⁷ In order to make clear that the victory was YHWH's we find a tendency to represent the human agent of victory in the most humble terms possible. Gideon said to the Lord:

...how can I deliver Israel? Behold my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.³⁸

Saul, who was to conquer the Philistines, had to be fetched from among the baggage where he was bashfully hiding.³⁹ Yet, YHWH is always free to give Israel victory or to deny it⁴⁰ and give it to her enemies according to his will.

4. Monarchic Period

With the rise of the monarchy the sacred aspect of war began to disappear and the Old Testament presents a different picture about attitudes to war from that of the earlier period.⁴¹ YHWH's wars were not

³⁷ Amos 2.9.

³⁸ Judg. 6.15.

³⁹ Also David: 1Sam. 14.6; 17.45; Moses: Ex. 14.14. Cf. Zimmerli 1978:62.

⁴⁰ Num. 13-14; 1Sam. 4.

⁴¹ Von Rad in view of his connecting holy war with the amphictyony

fought to create an Empire but to bring about the fulfilment of God's promise. David's wars, on the contrary, aimed at the creation of an Empire. They were not fought anymore by a people's militia who freely joined it but by a professional army paid by the king. The citizens began to be obliged to serve in the militia and were recruited by the king's officials.⁴² The wars were not anymore guerrilla wars undertaken with simple weapons but were open pitched battles in extended campaigns fought with advanced infantry weapons and with chariotry.⁴³ A change took place also in leadership: it was not YHWH anymore who was responsible for Israel's battles but the king.⁴⁴

The picture which the Old Testament portrays is that this transformation naturally brought a crisis into the old order. Saul⁴⁵ broke the ritual laid down for the Holy War. David ordered a census⁴⁶ of the people for military purposes, wanting to know what was his military potential. This action met some opposition in Israel.⁴⁷ Moreover, it went against the very essence of Holy War according to which it was YHWH who assumed the responsibility of the defence of Israel.⁴⁸

Faith was not anymore put in YHWH but in political power and other means of protection. Consequently money was spent in armaments. These wars were not anymore an existential necessity, in the strict sense, but

comments that this institution was irrevocably sealed by the formation of the State. Nonetheless the concept of holy war still alive during the time of David (von Rad 1953:46).

⁴² 1Sam. 8, 11, 12; 14. 52; 2Sam. 8. 16-17.

⁴³ Gottwald 1976:943.

⁴⁴ 1Sam. 8. 20.

⁴⁵ 1Sam. 15.

⁴⁶ 2Sam. 24. 1-9.

⁴⁷ 1Sam. 24.

⁴⁸ von Rad 1962:59.

a matter of expediency for the king's purposes. Thus some doubt was raised whether these wars could still be called "YHWH's wars".

In the earlier years of the monarchy many features of the Holy War were still kept although the human agent as the one who secures victory became more prominent than the divine.⁴⁹

As time went on fewer and fewer of such features are mentioned. Yet, there was a period of transition where the prophets are described as still co-operating with the king's war enterprises before they rose against the monarchy in opposition trying to revive the old Holy War ideology to a full extent. They still intervened in wars proclaiming the will of YHWH to the king⁵⁰ and desiring that the Holy War regulations be kept.⁵¹ Yet, in spite of this harmonious co-operation between the prophets and the king a clash began to appear.

Between the 9th and 7th c. Yahwism is thought to have come to its full strength. By this time the political and economic life of Israel and Judah had long asserted their independence and autonomy from the religious sphere. On the other hand the prophets reaffirmed YHWH's sovereign sway "in the political sphere in which Israel lived. This made inevitable a head-on collision with the efforts which were made to further Israel's political security, especially with diplomacy and the policy of military armament."⁵²

The prophets did not only direct their criticism to the state as a whole but also against Israel's monarchy which had now been transformed from a gift of YHWH into punishment.⁵³ War itself is now condemned

⁴⁹ 2Sam. 12.28.

⁵⁰ 1Kings 20.13f.; 2Kings 3.11-19; 13.13f.

⁵¹ 1Kings 20.23-43.

⁵² von Rad 1962:98.

⁵³ Hos. 13.9-11.

because it is not anymore a tool to bring about YHWH's will but an instrument to satisfy the ruler's wishes. It is also the instrument by which YHWH brings his punishment upon Israel; he does not fight anymore for them but against them.

Among the prophets, Isaiah is portrayed as a defender of the ancient Holy War ideology against trusting in secular means. He condemned military preparations⁵⁴ and the seeking of help from Egypt.⁵⁵ He re-introduced a Holy War terminology including the confidence that salvation could come only from YHWH.

Some scholars have voiced the opinion that towards the end of the monarchy, the book of Deuteronomy (or a form of it) was compiled and as a result of the systematizing of it the traditional idea of the YHWH war was first brought into contact with a Holy War ideology.⁵⁶ This process may have been due to the hope of reviving that trust in YHWH as the warrior who fights for Israel, an ideology which had long been forgotten in Israel's political life. Yet, in spite of this attempt in prophets like Jeremiah, the Holy War ideology is totally absent from their message. The war of Judah against the Chaldeans recorded in Jeremiah has no religious overtone. YHWH had deserted his people and even fought against them.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Isa. 22.9-11.

⁵⁵ Isa. 31.1-13.

⁵⁶ Mayes 1979:292. Cf. Jones 1975:642ff.

⁵⁷ Jer. 21.6. Cf. de Vaux 1961:265.

5. Exilic and Post-Exilic Period

With the fall of Jerusalem the Holy War ideology assumed a different aspect. It was projected into a universal dimension: as YHWH had used foreign powers to destroy Israel's political existence so he could use foreign powers to re-establish the Davidic kingdom. However, this remained only a hope since Israel did not re-gain political autonomy, not even after the exile, but only after the Maccabean revolt. In this period there was a revival of Holy War regulations, yet it is not really possible to talk of the Maccabean revolt as a Holy War. Many features are missing: God is not the leader of it, neither did he command it. It was more a war of religion.

In Judaism the ideology of Holy War was kept alive in certain circles such as Qumran e.g., as a document found there shows (*Order of the Holy War*). They were expecting wars like those of past times where the "Sons of Light" (the faithful Jews at Qumran) would fight against the "Sons of Darkness" (all the pagan nations). Yet, even here, Holy War ideology is presented in such terms that it is more appropriate to talk of apocalyptic war.

In the New Testament the idea of war is not anymore a political-religious concept but it is set into a spiritual context. The fight is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities of this present darkness, against the spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places.⁵⁸ The adversary is not anymore a political but a spiritual entity: the devil.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Eph. 6.12.

⁵⁹ 1Pet. 5.8.

C. Between History and Ideology

The above review of the way in which the Old Testament narratives depict Israel's wars suggests that these were portrayed according to a well defined pattern. The pre-monarchic period is obviously the period which is most approved. There it was YHWH who as the Warrior fought for Israel who had to put her faith utterly upon him and acknowledge His divine help. With the monarchy it became more a matter of political affairs and it was the king and not YHWH who led the army and gave victory to Israel. This new understanding of war as a political enterprise was opposed by the prophets who still wished YHWH to be acknowledged as the real agent behind Israel's successes. In the exilic and post exilic period there is a movement from a political to a spiritual understanding which comes to full expression in New Testament times.

1. Historical Reality

We may now address the inevitable question of historical reality.⁶⁰ Von Rad admits that no one single narrative can be singled out in which all the elements of the Holy War occur, but he attributes this to the fact that in the realm of actual history Holy War could not have been carried out in such a schematic completeness.⁶¹ The historical reality, therefore, both of the Holy War practice and the battle accounts themselves is not questioned. A similar, though more cautious view is

⁶⁰ Lind 1980:24-31 conveniently summarizes views which scholars have adopted in respect to the miraculous element in the holy war traditions.

⁶¹ 1991:52.

also taken by Richter who is unwilling to attribute the Holy War schema entirely to the redactors.⁶²

Jones, who specifically addressed this issue in his articles of 1975 and 1989, departs from von Rad and Richter's views. He does not claim that the Holy War theory possesses no historical reality, on the contrary, "it represents rather a standardization of a tradition that was firmly attached to Israel's historical experience."⁶³ But he acknowledges that "there is no proof that the Holy War Scheme in its entirety was ever put into action historically. Whereas the material used was based on historical events, the Holy War theory, which was in some ways derived from that material, but yet as a formula was superimposed on it, had in itself no historical reality."⁶⁴

The current trend in Old Testament studies, as to the existence of an amphictyony or even the existence of such an elaborate cultic system in the pre-monarchic period as von Rad wholly embraced, lends support to Jones' view. Yet, one cannot miss feeling in this presentation the urge to preserve, in one way or another, the "historicity" of these battle accounts. Elements of a supernatural nature are dismissed as a later superimposition on traditional material which is then taken for granted to be of a historical nature. Why this should be so, however, is neither

⁶² 1963:178-9.

⁶³ 1975:656.

⁶⁴ 1975:656. In his 1989 article Jones basically expresses the same view: "Original historical events were presented within the formula set by later interpreters, and the whole account is then regarded as a true record of what had happened; in this way the dichotomy of event and formula is avoided. Furthermore, it seems that, after it had become standardized, the theory in turn influenced the practice; in some instances, such as the Aramean wars in 1Kings 20 and possibly the later Maccabean battles, the sequence of events had been determined by the theory" (1989:314). Though Jones' view is plausible it would be more cautious to talk about "original traditions" instead of "original historical events" which are beyond our grasp and it is likely that we may never be in a position to assert their historicity.

clear nor justifiable.

This attitude is more clearly evident in Kang's investigation of the concept of divine war in the OT and in the ancient Near East. Discussing Gideon's war against the Midianites he states, "there is no doubt that the war of Gideon and the Midianites has a historical reality..."⁶⁵ No further justification is given. Similar remarks are made about the Deborah and Barak traditions: "there is no doubt about the historical reality of the battle of Deborah and Barak against a Canaanite coalition, because this battle is reported in two literary forms: prose (Judg. 4) and poetry (Judg. 5)..." It is argued that the fact that an account is reported in two different literary types, even though in the same literary tradition, is sufficient to establish its historicity. This argument is weak and untenable and typifies an unsophisticated approach to preserve the historicity of the biblical accounts.

While we agree with the understanding that the Holy War theory had in itself no historical reality, we should be careful in asserting that it was a superimposition on historical events. These "historical" events could have been the fruit of popular traditions with no historical basis at all and indeed the Holy War features could have been original to several of the traditions which the Old Testament has preserved for us. Alternatively, battle traditions could reflect historical events radically different to the ones now depicted and could have taken place at any time during the history of Israel.

2. Origin and Provenance

Contrary to von Rad's belief, Holy War practices were not unique to

⁶⁵ 1989:174.

Israel but widely known in the ancient Near East. That Israel should have had rituals before, during and after battles should not therefore surprise us.⁶⁶ Yet it is an interesting feature that the Holy War theory is not accidental to the Old Testament traditions but appears to have been developed with a precise pattern in mind. While in fact it is likely that Holy War rituals would have been enacted only in the context of a more developed political form such as the monarchy,⁶⁷ the Old Testament traditions present to us a rather different picture namely that these rituals were already practiced since early times and then dying out during the monarchic period. This chronological presentation may arise from the conviction that it was with the rise of the monarchy that YHWH's miraculous intervention ended. Thus, this is an indirect attack on the monarchic institution, taken up later in Judges 9, which usurped the kingship of God over his people.⁶⁸

The presentation of Holy War in Israel is thus a later construct aimed at hammering home specific lessons to an audience who lived at a

⁶⁶ See the discussion on the existence and practice of holy war in the ancient Near East in Jones 1989:306-310 in which he reviews the main thesis of Stolz 1972. The conclusion appears to be that no definite distinction can be made between the "holy war" of Israel and those of her neighbouring peoples to make them specifically Israelite. Jones thus suggests that the transformation of what were originally profane "war" into a Yahwistic framework "was possible because there was no distinction in practice between profane and holy war; the latter was a matter of faith, but in practice there seems to have been no difference between them... It is also difficult to determine which rituals were connected with Yahweh wars in their three consecutive stages of making preparations, campaigning and final celebration... in other words, a given formula for Yahweh war cannot be established" (Jones 1989:309).

⁶⁷ Cf. Kang 1989 whose main conclusion is that it was only during the Davidic kingdom that the motifs of YHWH war appeared in historical battle. No such motifs were found in the historical realities of the Exodus-Conquest battles nor in the wars of the Judges and Saul, only in the later theological understanding of them in the light of YHWH war. Though Kang's understanding of historicity is questionable the point that it is during the existence of an established monarchy that holy war features are to be found as a historical reality is valid.

⁶⁸ Cf. Jones 1989:315.

time in which these events were far remote from their present circumstances and yet important to strengthen their faith and identity as the people of God. One suggestion is that this "formulation emerged when the old Yahweh war tradition was becoming extinct and the process of standardizing the tradition is to be interpreted as a salvaging operation which attempted to define, safeguard and perhaps revive the old tradition."⁶⁹ Perhaps we should rather suggest that this process was not a conscious process but part of a wider and more extensive attempt to collect, select and write a "history" of Israel from its beginnings to the the fall of Jerusalem. This may explain why no attempt was made to follow specific schemes consistently and throughout and why no one example can be singled out in which all the features of the Holy War scheme occur.⁷⁰ It is only in modern scholarship and notably with the work of von Rad that this specific aspect of the Old Testament traditions has been singled out. The development, highlighting and systematization of these features enabled the writer(s) to tell their "story" to a people who no longer had a monarchy, but was governed by a group of priests who zealously upheld the YHWH traditions. The historical realities of these stories are subordinate to the theological and ideological motivation which motivated the writer(s) to present those traditions in the way in which he/they did.

We may now turn to a form critical analysis of these narratives.

⁶⁹ Jones 1975:657; cf. Stolz 1972:203.

⁷⁰ On this point Jones refers to the work of Richter 1963 and to his conclusions that the holy war could be presented in a variety of forms and not only one as suggested by von Rad. Jones, however, disagrees with Richter on his conclusion that the narratives point to two distinct war schemes. Jones rather suggests that "what emerges is that the presentation exhibits a number of constant elements, but with room for flexibility and variety in the presentation" (1989:312).

D. Gideon's War - A Form Critical Analysis

1. Introduction

a) Judges 6.33-35

The altar traditions and the occasion in which Gideon receives his second name are followed by narratives which depict Gideon at war with his enemies. The first verse (v. 33) abruptly breaks the previous aetiological story and takes up again the theme of 6.1ff with the following changes:

- i) כל is added to Midian;
- ii) "together" is added;
- iii) all verbs are plural corresponding to the plural subjects.

The analogies and changes again point to the redactional nature of the framework which was composed in order to include the Gideon narratives within the Book of Judges. Verse 34 closely follows v.33 and consciously contrasts the numerous enemies with the small clan of Abiezer and the spirit of God which enables Gideon to do more than a large army.

The spirit giving idea, already met in Gideon's call (6.11-24), expressed by the verb לכש together with ורח points to a late time thus confirming the redaction aspect of the framework.⁷¹

These verses are thus a theological reflection about the relationship of divine and human power which is developed further in the next section.

⁷¹ Becker 1990:160; cf. Soggin 1981:129 who also, commenting on v.34, indicates the lateness of the expression לרשה - cf. 1Chron. 12.19, 2Chron. 24.20, Job 29.14.

Verse 35 introduces the call of other tribes besides the Abiezirites. It appears to disturb the contrast depicted in 6.33f as it now seems to strengthen Gideon's side. Yet in subject matter the verse depends on v.34 and prepares the way for the development of the narrative. The theme of the tribes called to army and the sending of messengers is again taken up in 7.23f. Verse 35 thus anticipates the developments in 7.22ff. but this anticipation of events is necessary in order to prepare Gideon's reduction of the army in 7.1-8.

b) Judges 6.36-40

The strange sign of the fleece is loosely connected to the narrative and the words **כִּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ** refer back to 6.14 in which Gideon is called to save Israel and he himself is the subject of the saving action. 6.36f, on the other hand, emphasizes the fact that YHWH alone is able to save Israel and Gideon remains an instrument of His will. This section, as it stands, could be removed without affecting the meaning of the narrative.

The above observations suggest that the verses in 6.33-40 are dependent on the original framework and 6.11-24. It is difficult, however, to establish whether they are to be attributed to a post deuteronomistic period as these verses could have very well originated at the same time of the composition of the Gideon tradition.⁷²

⁷² Cf. Becker 1990:160f. who suggests that the above observations lead to conclude that 6.33-40 are to be attributed to a post deuteronomistic time. It seems to us that these observations are not sufficient to attribute these verse to a later redactional hand just because their contents are dependent on previous verses. By necessity this must be so. His further argument of the use of **אלהים** which in 6.11-24 is only found in the late addition 6.20 is also inconclusive. A careful analysis of the use of **יהוה** and **אלהים** in the Gideon tradition shows that their alternative use may not be due to different traditions but to a precise

2. Campaign in Cisjordan

a) Judges 7.1-8

Judges 7.1-8 introduces the choice of the three hundred men which is prepared by the enlargement of the troops described in v.35 and presupposes also the attack on the Midianite camp (7.16-22) in which the three hundred are involved. The story is embraced by two virtually identical verses (1b and 8b) thus suggesting that we are here dealing with an interpolation.⁷³ Becker suggests, however, that the redactional process may have been more complex. If 8b takes up 1b then 1a should be older than 7.2-8 but this is not justified in that 7.2-8 is prepared by 7.1 in two ways:

i) Gideon's company is taken up again in 7.2 "the people with you..."

ii) the spring "Harod" mentioned in 7.1, serving as camp place,

stands surely in connection with חָרֹד "fearful".

Thus Becker suggests that 7.1 was composed from the outset as an introduction to 7.2-7 and comes into the same redactional line.⁷⁴ Further confirmation of this is found in an analysis of 7.8 which cannot be the conclusion of 7.2-7. It shows several textual problems⁷⁵ and suggests

narrative plan of the author (see Polzin 1980 *in loco*). Verse 36-40 could easily be removed without affecting the flow of the narrative. Yet, it is questionable whether this should automatically be interpreted to be an interpolation. Cf. Soggin 1981:134 who suggests that this tradition was always part of the Gideon cycle tradition and therefore, even though obscure, could not be suppressed. This may give weight to the suggestion that it may not have been a later addition.

⁷³ So Richter 1963:120; Rösel 1976:11; Soggin 1981:135.

⁷⁴ Becker 1990:162.

⁷⁵ See Soggin 1981.137f.

that more than one hand was at work here. The text is difficult to translate meaningfully and no particular suggestion is fully satisfactory. The verse presupposes 7.2-7 yet it does not seem to be the original continuation of the section. The mention of jar and horns appears to anticipate vv.16ff. and yet there horns, jars and torches are in the indeterminate form (i.e. without the article) implying that they appear only at that point, and are previously unknown.⁷⁶ These further elements, however, are indispensable for the subsequent events and are in perfect order:

- i) the rest of Israel is dismissed;
- ii) the three hundred are kept;
- iii) the camp of Midian was below Gideon in the valley.

The first element introduces the following scene in 7.9-15 while the other two are an introduction to 7.16-22. The above observations may suggest that it was v.8 and not v.1 which served as an introduction to 7.9-22 before 7.2-7 was introduced into the narrative. The more ancient tradition was thus preserved in 7.9-22 with verse 8 being an introduction to it and now preserved only in a mutilated form. 6.33 belongs also to the same redactional hand.

The story has clearly theological overtones and attempts to justify and put into a right perspective an older tradition which spoke of Gideon and three hundred men.⁷⁷ The purpose of this "commentary" was to give to

⁷⁶ Soggin 1981:138.

⁷⁷ The mention of the three hundred men with which Gideon won a victory over the Midianite army has always been interpreted as a sign that we are dealing here with an old tradition recalling actual historical events. An interesting study in this regard is Tolkowsky's 1925 which provides several examples, including ancient Greece, in which selected fighting units consisted of three hundred men. One may wonder then whether the choice of three hundred men is here an actual historical recollection or again a narrative device employing known military features of the ancient

the story a pan-Israelite framework and at the same time to make clear that the victory is not due to any human agent, but is divinely given. This may be further stressed if we accept the view that those who lapped with their tongue meant to designate those who were least fit for battle⁷⁸ thus reinforcing the message of the victory being entirely an act of YHWH.

b) Judges 7.9-15

This section seems in good order and except for a few verses it may reflect the earlier stratum of the Gideon tradition. Verse 12 is the most clear expansion of the tradition inserting the story into the wider framework in which the Gideon stories were developed. This verse belongs to the tradition of the three peoples. As Soggin comments it is foreign to the present passage and "contradicts it because it does not presuppose a camp under guard but an open and scattered encampment".⁷⁹ The purpose is here to enlarge the group mentioned in 7.11 of those ready to fight in Midian's camp. The dream thus becomes the more wonderful.⁸⁰

It is possible that the last two words of v.13 "and the tent fell" is a gloss as it constitutes a repetition of the expression ^{ליפל}⁸¹ though

world.

⁷⁸ See Soggin 1981:137 for a summary of the main interpretations of the meaning of the ordeal. Soggin declines, however, to see in it any particular meaning and suggests that probably no specific meaning was meant, but we are dealing here with a test by which God selects His men. For an imaginative, but unlikely, rationalization of the test see Trumper 1926.

⁷⁹ Soggin 1981:140.

⁸⁰ Becker 1990:164.

⁸¹ So Becker 1990:165.

this need not necessarily be the case.⁸²

The passage as it stands appears to be the work of the same redactor responsible for 7.16-22 and indeed the framework of the book of Judges. It is likely that at an early stage the dream was meant as a form of reassurance that God had given Gideon the victory.⁸³ Now it has received a slightly altered sense in that the dream does not serve anymore to reassure Gideon of his victory, but as suggested by the "hand over" formula, YHWH alone is the cause of the victory as He has already decided the doom of the enemies.

The formula is again found in v.14b and if the verse is considered carefully it shows that in it the formula exceeds the actual interpretation of the dream, according to which Gideon alone is the hero who can do without YHWH's help. The "hand over" formula occurs for the third time and the words used recall the same expression used in v.9. The words then reflected here constitute a fine transition to vv.16-22.

The story as a whole can be ascribed to the work of the redactor. As original elements of an earlier nucleus could be suggested the verses of Gideon in the Midianite camp listening to the dream and its interpretation. The story was then expanded and connected with the subsequent attack narrative. The main concern was to show that YHWH alone was the cause of the victory, a thought which is constantly expressed in the "hand over" formula. Verse 7, "...go down", clearly presupposes the mention of the camp of Midian situated lower (cf. 7.8) to which one must descend. The fear motif also reminds us of 6.14, a feature which again suggests that this section was the work of the same

⁸² See Soggin's discussion of this point - 1981:141.

⁸³ This form of divination is well attested in the Old Testament and also common in the Ancient Near East. See Soggin 1981:141f.

redactor.

"Holy war" elements, as discussed earlier can be noticed throughout the narrative. The more conspicuous elements are here the "weakness" of the hero and the victory which YHWH has promised and which is entirely due to His will. The human agent is minimized and almost annulled.

c) Judges 7.16-22

The precise course of events in the narrative of the attack on the Midianite camp is obscured by a number of uneven features:

- i) the trumpets are mentioned and their use explained at the outset of the attack but the role of the jars and the torches remains obscure;
- ii) the detailed description in v.20 is hard to imagine: how can Gideon's people perform three actions at the same time, i.e. the breaking of the jars, the blowing of the trumpets and the battle cry;
- iii) there seem to be inconsistencies about the numbers: according to vv.16,22a the three hundred men were divided into three companies, but in v.19a there are an extra one hundred men with Gideon or did Gideon keep this one group with him from the outset?
- iv) the blowing of the trumpets is repeated twice;⁸⁴
- v) surprising is also the double account of the Midianite escape

⁸⁴ The blowing of the trumpets is in fact mentioned a further time in v.19 even before the beginning of the attack. This is, however, not impossible in Hebrew which "often tends to anticipate events or facts which it considers particularly important, thus giving rise to dyschronological narratives" (Soggin 1981:143).

(vv.21b,22b) especially as v.21b is odd before the note that the Midianites killed each other in the camp (v.22a).⁸⁵

It is thus not surprising that scholars have suggested the existence of different sources especially in the light of the trumpets on the one hand and the torches and jars on the other hand. The mention of swords in v.22 has even led to suggest the existence of a third source.⁸⁶

The mention of swords has also led scholars to conjecture that a strand spoke of swords and thus the three hundred men being engaged in battle. But this is far too conjectural. Nowhere there is the suggestion of any actual fight by which the battle was won, at the most one may think of a surprise effect or device by which the victory over Midian was achieved.⁸⁷ It is thus possible to consider v.22 an interpolation which to a certain degree attempted to correct v.21 in that the victory of the three hundred is not due to the stratagem but to divine intervention. A closer analysis, however, may reveal a more complex redactional process.

Verse 21a connects well with what goes before in that the three companies post themselves around the camp according to Gideon's instructions. Verse 21b, however, shows some problems.

The meaning of לָרַץ is unclear; לָרַץ should mean, describing the Midianite reaction, "run crazy", "utter cries of terror", but this connotation is not evident. The verb in fact, usually in the hiphil, indicates the war cry of the acclamation in the religious or political sense of the term⁸⁸ and thus it seems inappropriate here.⁸⁹ This suggests

⁸⁵ Becker 1990:166f.

⁸⁶ Becker 1990:167f. Cf. Richter 1963:199.

⁸⁷ So Soggin 1981:146 and Becker 1990:168.

⁸⁸ Cf. Josh. 6.

⁸⁹ Soggin 1981:144 thus suggests, following P. Humbert's proposal, to transpose it to v.22 after "sounded the horns". The verb is, however,

that it is Gideon's people that are meant here as the subject, a view confirmed by a second verb form **וַיִּנָּסוּ** if one points the consonantal text to read the hiphil of **נָס** "to make to escape". The translation would thus read as follows:

They (i.e. Gideon's people) let out their war cry and made (the Midianites) to escape.

This is more likely to be the meaning of the last two verbs. The confusion may have arisen from the fact that this last phrase was probably a secondary addition. If this is accepted verse 21a, in fact, can be smoothly connected to v.22a. Three consecutive actions then follow:

- i) the Israelites surround the camp;
- ii) the blowing of horns as commanded;
- iii) YHWH causes in the camp one to pull the sword against the other.

This fits well in that it stresses the passive role of Gideon's people and the active role of YHWH.

Verse 22 itself, however, may have undergone expansion:

- i) the escape of the Midianite army (v.22b) is strange since v.22a suggests that none should have been left;
- ii) while in v.22a **מַלְחָתָהּ** clearly means "camp" in v.22b the reference is to the army.

Verse 22b is thus likely to be an expansion. It presupposes the events in 16-22a but with the thought of an escape which follows with difficulty after v.22a. A close consideration of the locations described in v.22b

used with the wanted connotation in the late text of Isaiah 15.4 so that it must not be excluded that this was also the meaning meant here.

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This is Becker's proposal which I accept.

suggests an escape in the direction of the Jordan and it is likely that the redactor was already pointing with this to the Cisjordan tradition in chapter eight and intended to put this narrative into a larger geographical and literary context. We can thus suggest that the note in v.21b stems from the same redactor in order to provide a smoother connection to v.22b. Verse 21b emphasizes that the battle cry made the Midianite escape before the bloody event in v.22. It is likely then that in the transmission of the text v.21b was misunderstood and taken to refer to the Midianites' reaction on the ground of the expression וירלץ כל-המחנה.

The original narrative thus excluded vv.21b and 22b and only dealt with the deed of YHWH emphasizing that it was not Gideon with his three hundred but YHWH alone who was the author of the victory.

Returning now to the main body of the narrative it can be suggested that v.20 is also an expansion into the older narrative whose interest was to provide a chronological sequence of the events. He also added the battle cry in order to fulfill Gideon's command in v.18f. which was then missing. The verse also explains and gives a different account to the use of the jars. The original function was probably to cause a war noise as empty jar were given to them (v.16). No mention of them is made, however, in Gideon's speech, v.18, and in v.22a. This lack is now made good in v.20 which not only supplies these details but explains how the horns and jars are held. The sense is also changed in that their use is to hide the torches. It is thus likely that the words "in the jars were torches" (v.16b) were also an expansion to the story thus also giving the impression that the attack took place in the dark of the night. This of course does not tie in well with v.16b in which it is said that the jars were empty.

The omission of v.20 gives the narrative a clear sequence of events

with the climax of YHWH's deed in v.22a. Verse 16 reports the division of the three hundred men into three companies and their being equipped with horns and empty jars. Gideon's speech (v.17f.) indicates the procedure: when Gideon comes to the edge of the camp three hundred men should do the same as he, namely all around the camp to blow the horn. Gideon now comes to the edge of the camp, blows the horn and smashes the jar (v.19). Subsequently the three hundred pose themselves around the camp according to the direction in v.18 and blow the horn. In front of this picture YHWH finally gives them victory over Midian. The three hundred men of Gideon are no more than passive instruments. It is possible that in an earlier stage the story may have spoken of a trick, a surprise effect or even an attack by sword. However, in the story, as it stands now there is no support for such a conjecture. The story clearly suggests that the battle was won only by the intervention of YHWH.⁹¹

⁹¹ The above analysis is "basically" the one suggested by Becker which I have accepted. It is worth noting that Soggin's analysis (1981:145f.) is equally tenable. He suggests that v.22 is an addition to provide a theological explanation of the story and he sees an accretion of the tradition in the introduction of the use of the trumpets. In a first stage the story may have thus spoken of a surprise attack with the sudden smashing of the jars and the war cry. This threw the enemies into confusion and fled. In a second stage the narrative, which was felt lacking in theological elements, was expanded with the introduction of the horns, thus obtaining a similar effect as that in Josh. 6.1ff.: "the three columns of the attackers became a procession, and it is God who gives the final victory in an operation similar to that mentioned in IIChron 20.1-30, without any help from human agents: the decisive element continues to be divine intervention in v.22a. Here, then, we have a slight cultic coloration which at the same time provides the key for a theological reading of the passage" (146). The similarities between this story and 2Chron. 20.1-30 (espec. vv.22ff.) are remarkable and we should not exclude in here dependence upon common traditional themes or even the accounts themselves. For a commentary on the element of surprise as a military stratagem see Efron 1978:196. For an analysis of Gideon's war from a military point of view see also Malamet 1952-1953 where an attempt is made to rationalize the account.

d) Judges 7.23-8.3

If we set apart the confusing frequency of unknown topographical indications⁹² 7.23 follows smoothly after 7.22b. The flight of the Midianites towards the Jordan is followed by a call to the men of Israel to pursue them. The same northern tribes - Naphtali, Asher and Manasseh - are mentioned as in 6.35 except Zebulun which would have completed the mention of all the Galilean tribes.

7.23 together with 7.22b clearly function as transitional passages. The persecution motif has the function to connect the attack on the Midianite camp (7.16-22a) with the Transjordan tradition dealing with the persecution of two Midianite kings and their army (8.5-21). For this reason the Israelites dismissed in 7.8 are now gathered again. As Soggin observes, from a logistical level the dismissal and recalling of the Israelites again is absurd also in terms of time, but we are dealing here with redactional elements which make sense only when these "absurd" details are seen and explained within a larger context and framework.

Verse 22.b and 23 are thus the expansion of the same redactor who also wrote 7.8 and who first created a cohesive story of the Gideon traditions.

7.24 reports then a call to Ephraim to go down against the Midianites and cut off the fords of the Jordan against them. The action, however, does not tie in well with the earlier call of the other tribes who would have taken action by that time. But the inclusion of Ephraim

⁹² Worth noticing here is the mention of two locations Beth-barah and the Jordan in v.24 simultaneously which makes the reading hard to understand. Together with Burney 1920:325 and Soggin 1981:147 it is best to understand the location Beth-barah as arising from a dittography of מַעְבְּרוֹת and a confusion of י and יָ: it should thus read אֶת-מַעְבְּרוֹת הַיַּרְדֵּן (the fords of the Jordan).

fits well to the following verses 7.25-8.3 in that we hear there about the killing of the two Midianite princes Oreb and Zeeb by Ephraim (7.25) which in turn constitute the background for the strange argument in 8.1-3. Also the strange connection אֵיר אַפְרַיִם (7.24) appears again in 8.1 (and 12.1). This suggests that 7.24 was formulated extra for the addition of the Ephraimite episode in 7.25-8.3. Thus over against 7.23, 7.24-8.3 must be considered as a whole an expansion by the redactor. Since 7.23 was already considered as a connecting verse between chapter 7 and 8, the whole section 7.24-8.3 may be considered on the whole as an addition. This is further supported by an examination of v.25. Verse 25b located the events in East Jordan even though Gideon is found there only at 8.4. This anachronism can be explained easily if one considers 7.24-8.3 as an addition between 7.23 and 8.4ff.

The debate in 8.1-3, reflecting rivalry between Ephraim and Abiezer is necessarily dependent on 7.25 and thus 7.23-8.3 must be considered a unit.

The reproach in 8.1-3 is identical to that directed by Ephraim to Jephthah in 12.1. These similarities, to which we must also mention 12.1ff. to 7.24ff., may suggest that we have in fact, ignoring which passage is dependent on which, stereotyped narratives which are employed by the redactor to build up his story. The story of the two kings is here clearly aetiological but its function is also to create a parallel story to the Transjordan campaign where two Midianite princes are mentioned. This feature of doublets has already been noted and seems to be a literary device used by the redactor in compiling the Gideon cycle. It is not impossible thus to suggest that, in spite of having all the features of a later addition, 7.23-8.3 may go back to the same redactor who was responsible for the previous sections.

3. Campaign in Transjordan

a) Judges 8.4-12⁹³

8.4ff. introduces a parallel story to 7.22-8.3, now taking place in Transjordan. 8.4 in its present form is not anymore quite intelligible. It may originally have formed the continuation of 7.23: Gideon comes to the Jordan (8.4a) and crosses over it. The verse as it stands has obviously a connecting function between the events of the preceding section and the campaign now taking place beyond the Jordan.

The mention again of the three hundred takes up the story in 7.16-22 though in the context of 7.23 we should expect to find here a more numerous army. The last two words, "exhausted and pursuing", are also strange since it is likely that they are meant to connect this verse to the following verse.⁹⁴ It is likely that the three hundred men came to be added later because of 7.16-22 and perhaps replaced another indication about Gideon's company. A further redactional element might be noted in וַיֵּצֵא. The Hebrew has the active participle qal but the imperfect qal with ו consecutive or the perfect qal with ו copulative are usually preferred. The change may have been because of 7.25b where Gideon crossing the Jordan is already presupposed. The verse has now signs of redactional elements meant to correct elements already mentioned in previous narratives as well as those to come.

Another tradition (older?) now appears at v.5ff. abruptly recounting

⁹³ The analysis of this passage and 8.13-21 are based on Becker 1990:173-177.

⁹⁴ I accept here Soggin's suggestion to follow LXX^A and Syr in reading וַיֵּצֵא (καὶ πεινῶντες) "hungry" which would explain better the request for food rather than a place to rest (Soggin 1981:149).

the pursuit and killing of the two Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna in the Transjordan. We first read of Gideon asking for food for his troops to the inhabitants of Succoth while pursuing the enemy kings (v.5). The request meets harsh rejection (v.6) upon which Gideon proposes a suitable punishment (v.7). He experiences a similar situation in Penuel (v.8f.). After victory over the enemy army and the capture of the two kings (v.10-12) Gideon returns (v.13) and punishes the towns of Succoth and Penuel. The action reaches its aim in the killing of the Midianite kings (vv.18-21). At the same time, this concluding scene brings to expression the purpose of the pursuing and killing being obviously a very personal matter, namely the execution of a blood revenge.

The brief overview above suggests that the narrative consists of relatively independent units being combined in a coherent way. On the one hand there are the scenes in Succoth and Penuel (v.5ff.), on the other the imprisonment and killing of the kings (v.10ff.). From a literary critical point of view it may be observed that these pericopes need each other as the punishment of Succoth and Penuel presupposes the imprisonment of Zebah and Zalmunna in v.12.

Also the way in which Gideon appears in Succoth, requesting food for his troops as well as how he finally punishes the disobedient men of the city, points to his noble origin and powerful position in vv.18-21.

This narrative section though may have also undergone expansion. It is just possible to suggest that the Penuel scenes were a later addition since they are only loosely connected with the context. In their subject matter they constitute only a shorter variation of the preceding Succoth scene even though v.17 introduces a totally new element in the killing of all inhabitants in a radically different way from v.16 in that it is not only the leaders as in v.16 but also those who are governed that are held responsible. The reason for the different punishments, however, are not

explained. Of course it is no longer possible to be sure whether these scenes are an expansion though the repetition of a scene in a different context has already been noted as a literary feature of the redactor.

The more notable unevenness on the narrative is however the frequent mention of the Midianite army in vv.10-13 hinting to a larger battle scene going beyond the imprisonment of the two kings. It is thus not surprising that scholars have suggested verses 10-13 or parts of these to be redactional. Their purpose was to insert the old tradition into a larger context. In fact the notes on the Midianite army can be easily removed, namely the mention of the strength of the army in v.10a, the attack on the army in v.11 and the escape of the two kings (v.12a). In v.12 however the note about the imprisonment of the two kings (v.12b) is probably part of the old tradition. This may explain the strange coincidence that in v.12 twice within a short time the names of the kings are mentioned. Also the remark that Gideon threw all the army of the enemy into panic (v.12b) really comes too late after the defeat of the army (v.11b). It may be due to the special character of v.12 which combines an old tradition with redactional material.

b) Judges 8.13-21

8.13-21 brings out clearly now the purpose of the pursuit of the Midianite kings. As already said above these verses are clearly related to what precedes and thus they form a unit with the previous section.

In v.13 only מן-המלחמה needs to be traced to the redactional hand. The rest of the verse belongs to tradition. As to the topographical indications (v.11a, 13b) it is likely that they go back to tradition, but it must not be excluded that they grew in the tradition itself.

The horizon then which appears is that of a rather personal conflict

of Gideon with the two Midianite kings (blood revenge) which has later been turned by the redactor into a comprehensive battle against the Midianite army by unifying probably independent Gideon-Midianite traditions (?) into a closed narrative complex with a unified direction: Gideon's actual deed now consists in him annihilating the whole of the Midianite army including their leaders and thus saving Israel from the hands of the enemy.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ We may remark that the episode of the blood vendetta has all the marks of genuine traditional material though whether this reflects historical reminiscences is hard to say. For a commentary on this passage see Soggin 1981:156f.

VIII. GIDEON, ABIMELECH AND KINGSHIP

A. Introduction

The battle narratives are followed by other narratives (8.22-9.57) which introduce the theme of kingship. The institution of kingship in the Old Testament is evaluated in a variety of ways some of which stand in direct opposition at times. There is a wide spectrum which goes from YHWH's blessing on it as e.g. in Ps. 2.7ff.:

I will tell of the decree of the YHWH: He said to me, You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession..."

to its utter rejection as e.g. in 1Sam. 8.7ff. after the people of Israel had asked Samuel for a king to rule over them like all the nations:

And YHWH said to Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them..."

The problem is complex and no consensus of opinion exists among scholars. The anti-monarchical texts are particularly striking, since on the whole the royal institution is evaluated positively throughout the Old Testament. Among texts that explicitly reject the monarchy two passages from the Gideon-Abimelech tradition are always mentioned, namely Gideon's speech in 8.22f. and the Jotham fable in 9.8-15. It is with these that we will mainly concern ourselves in this chapter.

The basic theme of these passages is that of divine *versus* human

kingship, a theme which after all, in our opinion, belongs to the entire Book of Judges¹ though it is expressed most fully and explicitly only in these passages. With respect to 9.8-15 M. Buber had already observed many years ago that it reflects a derogatory evaluation of the monarchy and described it as "the strongest anti-monarchical poem of world literature."² The debate is centred upon the institution of the judges³ which is compared and contrasted with that of the monarchy. The antithesis between these two institutions is well defined by von Rad as follows:

For the Deuteronomist's way of thinking, Israel stopped allowing Yahweh to bear rule over her when the monarchy came into being (Jg. VIII.23), but to his mind the institution of the judges still left room for this sovereignty of Yahweh over Israel. How different the phrases are on which the two offices lie is also seen from the fact that the Deuteronomist passes censure on the kings, but the judges are called directly by Yahweh, and so he does not criticise them. The real point at issue is Israel's proper ordering under God's rule, and it is understandable that the Book of Judges has been designated as the "*Plato Republic*" of the Bible.⁴ The Deuteronomist clearly regards the office of the judge as the form of government most appropriate to Israel: it was a tragedy that she asserted her own autonomy over against Yahweh by means of her kings.⁵

¹ The anti monarchical texts of the Book of Judges have always been noted by scholars but as to ascribing such a character to the entire book not much has been said. An exception is Buber 1967:66-84 who has suggested that the Book of Judges is the combination of two books, one anti-monarchical and the other pro-monarchical. The first is made up of the first seven stories comprised in chapters 1-12. The second is constituted of two distinct episodes in chapters 17-21. These in his view had only literary existence being written in response to chs. 1-12. The Samson saga (13-16) functions as a connecting link. For a different opinion see Smend 1983:256f.

² 1967:75. This view has been accepted by many scholars such as von Rad 1962:59, Veijola 1977:103, Crüsemann 1978:29-30 and Soggin 1981:177.

³ Though the institution of judges is chronologically set before that of the monarchy, the succession pattern is obviously modelled on the latter.

⁴ Buber 1967:84.

⁵ 1962:332.

The time of origin of this vision is however far from clear and both pre- and post-monarchical as well as the monarchical period have been suggested as possible settings.⁶ Our thesis, as we have already stated, is that the origin of such an attitude to the monarchy is best explained as an exilic/post-exilic development.⁷ The so-called anti-monarchic stratum seems to be, if not the latest, at least one of the latest. Since however, in these traditions no intrinsic details are given which could help us with some certainty to locate them into a particular historical period - except possibly some linguistic peculiarities⁸ - the

⁶ Older commentators (e.g. Moore, Budde, Burney) date it towards the end of the Northern Kingdom and see in it the reflection of the bitter experience of the monarchy. Others would date it approximately in the period it purports to describe (e.g. Penna 1963:139; Buber 1967:59-65,80ff.; Noth 1960:92; de Vaux 1961:92; Gray 1967:175; Weinfeld 1983b:86f.) and several connect it with the sacral confederacy of Israel. Crüsemann, in his monograph of 1978, dates it during the period of the United Kingdom (see also Crüsemann 1978:1-17 for a discussion of the problem). Other recent scholars have attempted to identify it with DtrN. Soggin, in an article of 1982 which appeared later than his commentary on the Book of Judges (1981), has suggested the post-exilic period as the most suitable time for DtrN. This is also our view (but see his recent *Introduzione all'Antico Testamento*, 4th ed. Biblioteca di cultura religiosa 14. Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1987, p. 236 - in which Soggin assigns 8.22ff. to a later stage of the Gideon-complex redaction though still pre-dtr!). A similar view had already been taken by Wellhausen whose views will be discussed later [cf. also Smend 1983:245-261, he too thinks that the so-called anti-monarchic texts, arguing against Buber (1967), are post- and not pre-monarchic (259). In his view there is no reason to suppose that the monarchy was forced upon the Israelites against their will]. The diversity of views is an obvious indication that hypothetically all views could be possible: such an attitude could have existed at any time. The dating therefore must necessarily rely on more general considerations such as historiographic, archaeological, literary, theological etc. Why a later dating in general ought to be preferred has been argued in the introductory chapters.

⁷ With this we refer to the time in which this attitude was able to find expression in an official and written form. But anti-monarchical attitudes as such could be older.

⁸ It is just possible that the use of φ , which occurs several times in the Book of Judges is a sign of lateness probably due to Aramaic influence. Its use in the OT seems in fact confined to late Hebrew or later books esp. Eccles. and the late Psalms, also Lam. (4 times), Jon. (1.7), Chron. (twice), Ezra (once), - and always in the Canticle (as for the last see G. Garbini, "La datazione del 'Cantico dei Cantici'", *RSO* 66

best way to proceed is in attempting to trace the *Sitz im Leben* of this literary motif. After all what we have is a literary work and such must also be, at least partly, our analysis. In this it is important to remember that here we do not have simply a negative remark of the monarchy but in the words of Soggin "a deliberate rejection of the institution...as such and not just of some of its worse aspects."⁹ This is all the more interesting once we notice, contrary to what we find here, that "in the ancient Near East kingship seems both obvious and necessary, and is coveted by all, here it appears to be fundamentally negative and only desired by the wicked."¹⁰

(1982)[1985] 36-46, who has again pointed out clear parallels of this with Hellenistic poetry and especially with Theocritus - first half of the third century). In the Book of Judges it occurs in 7.12, 8.26. The less frequent form ש occurs in Judg. 5.7 while ש before א (the only instance) occurs in Judg. 6.17 (elsewhere ש before a guttural) - G-K § 36. For a full list of occurrences see BDB pp. 979f. In support of this we may mention the recent article by Auld (1989) who uses a tiny linguistic observation, "despite Boling's opposition (1975:131f.) and Soggin's open mind" (1981:115-16), to add weight to his suggestion of the lateness of the Gideon narrative, namely the use of the relative marker ש in 6.17 (שאתה מרדכר עמי) which according to 4QJudg^a is also used in 6.13 שספר instead of MT אשר ספרו. As he remarks, "The post-classical *sr* could have been a copyist's alteration rather than an author's fingerprint. (Yet, if so, it has 'replaced' the classical *'sr* in 6.13, and the classical *ky* in v.17.)" We may further notice that, at least in the Jotham's fable the problems between the Q^{re} and K^{thibh} in vv. 8 (Q מלרכה) and 12 (Q מלרכי) could simply be resolved if they were vocalized as Aramaic (מלרכה and מלרכי respectively). Also in vv. 10 (מלרכי) and 14 (מלרכה) the respective imperatives could be treated as Aramaic forms. In such a case they would be vocalized as מלרכי (v.10) and מלרכה (v.14).

A final observation might be made in this respect. The word חרס (sun - 1.35; 2.9) is found with the Greek suffix -s joined to the semitic form חר (see Soggin 1981:25,39). This may be a further hint to place the final redaction of the Book of Judges at a much later period than it has been so far suggested (Garbini:1982:488).

⁹ 1981:177.

¹⁰ 1981:176. See Crüsemann 1978:25ff. He has made an extensive comparison of the fable with other ancient plant-fables both of Near East and Greek origin. Several are very close in theme to the Jotham fable. The appearance of the bramble as well as the theme of kingship are very popular and recurring motifs. But, in whatever light kingship may be

This phenomenon, in our view, cannot be explained by assuming that both pro- and anti-monarchical attitudes simply existed side by side since early times. It is difficult to imagine any such concrete historical situation where the abolition of the monarchic regime would and could have been desired. In the Book of Kings and Prophets some kings are strongly condemned because of their idolatry and it is often said of some that they did evil in the sight of YHWH walking in the way of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin. But, the legitimacy of the monarchy *per se* is never questioned. Not only could we refer to the "Royal Psalms", but also to some texts which explicitly and sincerely regret the disappearance of the monarchy.¹¹

B. Judges 8.22-23

According to Judg. 8.22f. Gideon is offered dynastic kingship by the men of Israel (אִישׁ-יִזְרָאֵל) for his military success over the Midianites, "מֶשֶׁל-בְּנוֹ גַם-אַתָּה גַם-בֶּנֶךְ גַם בֶּן-כֵּן כִּי הִרְשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִיַּד מֹדִיָּן". This, however, he refuses for theological reasons, "לֹא-אֲמַשֵּׁל אֲנִי בָכֶם וְלֹא-יִמְשֹׁל". Although here the root מִלֵּךְ is not used, possibly for theological reasons - מֶלֶךְ is only YHWH -,¹² מֶשֶׁל is used here with the same connotation. Gideon's refusal is strange at this point since the

presented, what is common to all of them is that all, both the fruitful and unfruitful plants, want to become king. It is here that a decisive difference between the Jotham fable and the others lies. As much as the Jotham fable comes close to other fables its attack on kingship sets it apart. In Crüsemann's words, "Sie greift in aller Breite vorgegebenes Material der Umwelt auf, wendet es aber gegen eine Institution, die in dieser Umwelt und praktisch in der ganzen sonstigen Fabelüberlieferung zur Selbstverständlichkeit gehört" (p. 27). See further on.

¹¹ Lam. 4.20; Dan. 3.38; cf. Hos. 3.4. Penna 1963:139.

¹² See Soggin 1981:158 and 158 n. 41 for bibliography; cf. Becker 1990:176.

people's offer of kingship has a right motivation (מדין כי הרשעתנו מיד) and is not the fruit of the people's sinfulness.¹³ Gideon's military success is a sufficient reason for the people to wish him to rule over them.¹⁴ But according to v.23 this is wholly unacceptable since YHWH is the sole king of Israel and any human made king would take away that which belongs to Him only.

This passage is then clearly hostile to the monarchy¹⁵ and has marks of being the fruit of a later ideology. Literary criticism shows that it has been integrated into earlier material which may not necessarily have been hostile to the monarchic institution. Vv. 22f. are generally acknowledged to belong to a younger stratum and form a unit together.¹⁶ A literary seam is noticeable between vv. 23 and 24. Both start with the introductory formula ויאמר אלהם גרעון and since there is no change of scene one of the two is secondary. The former seems to be the later one because the ephod tradition does not easily follow v. 23 but its immediate following is rather after v. 24. We may further notice that the offer comes here from the איש-ישראל. This not only points to a pan-Israelite version which clearly belongs to the younger layer of this complex¹⁷ but also it stands in tension with 8.4 according to which

¹³ Cf. 1Sam. 8.1ff. where the motivation for the request of a king was also rightly motivated.

¹⁴ Cf. Saul's defeat of the Ammonites (1Sam. 11) which together with the growing Philistine oppression (9.6) led the people to ask him to rule over them.

¹⁵ This is the view of the majority of scholars. Differently, G.H. Davies 1963:154-157, followed by others, has suggested that Gideon's refusal is only a polite form of acceptance. However, as we shall see this is hardly the case. This could just be argued, if Judg.8.22f. were an integral part of this tradition, but this passage has all the marks of an interpolation and lateness. See e.g. Veijola 1977:100; Crüsemann 1978:42ff.; Soggin 1981:158-60.

¹⁶ So e.g. Hertzberg 1953:199; Richter 1963:233; Haag 1967:309; Veijola 1977:101; Crüsemann 1978:45; Soggin 1981:1981:158.

¹⁷ This expression further occurs in Judg. 7.8 and 8.28.

Gideon's followers were not the *אִישׁ-יִשְׂרָאֵל*, but the three hundred men who belonged to his tribe. These verses therefore presuppose already the whole context of the Gideon stories. It is impossible to imagine the dependence on any narrative tradition behind them. Their origin is merely literary.¹⁸

The more ancient narrative dealt with Gideon's defeat of the two Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna. This has been broken at 8.21 with the loss of its immediate sequel. Vv. 22f. introduce then a different concept, namely, the idea of theocracy while in fact the original narrative might have presupposed that Gideon was king over Manasseh. This is at least a possible implication of 9.2 where Abimelech assumes that after the death of Jerubbaal his seventy sons will rule over Shechem.¹⁹ Its ideology is close to that of 1Sam. 8.6ff., 10.17-27 and 12. The narrative continues with an ephod tradition (24-27a) which may form still another tradition²⁰ or it was the original sequel of 8.21²¹ the original connection of which has been omitted by placing vv. 22f. in between. The ephod tradition has, however, also undergone redaction and been transformed into an act of idolatry by adding v. 27b.²² It is likely that the original account did not express objection to Gideon's refusal

¹⁸ See Crüsemann 1978:45f.

¹⁹ Cf. Nielsen 1959:143 n.1 who further suggests that "The raising of the *ephod* in Ophrah may even be connected with his royal election, as the function of the *ephod* was clearly oracular. The same is true of the mention of Gideon's harem, the political meaning of which evidently was 1) the securing of the dynasty, and 2) the establishing of valuable connections, for example with Shechem (!)." See however further on.

²⁰ So Soggin 1981:159. Cf. also Crüsemann 1978:45.

²¹ The sentence "and he took the crescents that were on the necks of their camels" in v. 21 is likely to be a redactional addition as well as that of v. 26. In both the reference to the Midianite Kings and the camels are meant to enhance the unity between the pericopes.

²² Veijola 1977:109 very plausibly suggests the identity of the same redactor for Judg. 8.27aγb,33-35 and 9.16b-19a,24bγδ,57. See later on.

of the gold for himself and the dedication of it to YHWH but saw it as a fine proof of his unselfishness and piety (Studer).²³ It was an expression of gratitude to the deity. Moreover, "according to the testimony of Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, such images were even in the Assyrian period a regular part of the belongings of the 'house of God' not only in Samaria but in Judah as well."²⁴ We may further observe that the negative note (v. 27b) has not only changed the original meaning of this tradition but also breaks the narrative pattern of sin - oppression - crying for help - raising of a saviour - deliverance - rest, since it introduces the notion of apostasy before the last two elements (v. 28). If v. 27b were omitted the usual pattern would appear again.

In recent time the anti-monarchical texts have been the object of investigation by the German scholar F. Crüsemann (1978) and the Finn T. Veijola (1977). The latter together with another two German scholars from Göttingen (Smend and Dietrich), has argued for a tripartite redactional division of the Deuteronomistic History.²⁵ Commenting on the possible traditio-historical phase of this passage, he assigns it to the anti-monarchic redaction (DtrN).²⁶ In his view the offer of dynastic kingship to Gideon would have been hardly an occasion for polemic for DtrH, for such a redactor is rather eager to show that the office of the saviour can continue undisturbed in the monarchic institution.²⁷ As for

²³ Wellhausen 1885:239-40.

²⁴ Wellhausen 1885:239.

²⁵ Though we do not fully subscribe to this view, we ourselves will be using the terms DtrH, DtrP and DtrN not so much to refer to specific redactions of a historical work that went from Deuteronomy to 2Kings as much as to strands and tendencies which are reflected throughout these books.

²⁶ So Soggin 1981:158.

²⁷ See 1Sam. 10.1,27a; 11.13; 14.48; 2Sam.3.18; 8.14. Veijola 1977:102.

DtrN he comments as follows:

Anders war es dagegen bei DtrN: Für ihn manifestierte sich das sündhafte Königsbegehren des Volkes in der Bitte nach einem *Kriegshelfer* (1Sam 8,20) und er stellte den irdischen König in einen bewussten Gegensatz zu dem "Retter"-Gott (1Sam 10,19a) und den von ihm beauftragten menschlichen Rettern mit Jerubbal-Gideon an der Spitze (1Sam 12,11-12), was kaum nur ein Zufall sein dürfte. Ohne Belang ist vielleicht auch der Sachverhalt nicht, dass in Ri 8,22 die Initiative - nach dem Vorbild von Ri 7,8.23 - kollektiv von der Mannschaft Israels ergriffen wird; denn auch in 1Sam 8,6ff. (DtrN) geht der Vorschlag zur Begründung der Monarchie vom *Volk* aus - im Gegensatz zu der älteren Darstellung des DtrG (8,1-5), der lediglich von den Ältesten spricht. Nach alledem dürfte die Zuweisung des Gideonspruchs an DtrN die grösste Wahrscheinlichkeit für sich haben.²⁸

With this judgment we agree and we too would suggest that we ought to relate this text, as well as similar ones, to a strand which developed in the political, social and religious life of Israel only at a late time when the monarchy was nothing but a reality which belonged to the past.

C. Judges 9.7-21 (8-15)

The second text which in its present context shows anti-monarchical tendencies is Jotham's fable or apologue. This and Judg. 8.22f. are ideologically closely connected.

The fable is directed against Abimelech, Gideon/Jerubbaal's son who succeeded in founding a local kingship in Shechem²⁹ after he had killed his seventy half brothers. Jotham, however, the youngest brother, was able to escape the bloodshed and after he was told that Abimelech had been made king he stood on top of Mount Gerizim and addressed the men of

²⁸ 1977:102-3. For a different view see Crüsemann 1978:42ff. Together with Richter 1963:235f. he attributes 8.22f. with 6.2ff. to the younger layer of the call narrative and in any case to a pre-deuteronomistic stage.

²⁹ The story actually seems to suggest that such institution was already there. The question was only of succession.

Shechem with a fable (8-15) which is followed by a corollary bringing out the meaning of it. Afterwards he escapes and does not appear anymore on the scene.

The problems which arise from a critical study of this fable are many and of various nature. We will start with those concerned with the nature of the fable.

1. The Nature of the Fable

a) Anti-Monarchic?

So far it has been assumed that the fable is an anti-monarchic text and falls into the category of those texts which witness a movement within the history of the Israelites/Jews which utterly rejected the monarchy. The refusal of kingship by the fruitful trees and the acceptance of it by the bramble,³⁰ a shrub which in ancient times was thought to be good for nothing, has been taken to reflect an attitude of ~~disrespect for~~ and rejection of the monarchy, which is taken up by worthless people only.

This view has, however, been challenged by Maly³¹ in whose opinion the fable was "not directed against kingship itself, but against those who refused, for insufficient reasons, the burden of leadership."³² Thus, only those who are unworthy for this task are ready to take it up. Similarly, he does not see any criticism of the monarchical institution

³⁰ The bramble (גִּזְאִ) is generally identified with *Lycium europaeum* (Buckthorn). With Lindars we will retain the common translation because of its familiarity to English readers. Lindars 1973:356 n.2.

³¹ 1960:299-305.

³² 1960:303.

in the biblical adaptation of it. "It is a criticism, rather, that is directed primarily against those who were foolish enough to anoint a worthless man as king, and, secondarily, against the worthless king himself."³³ Maly's suggestion is possible, but some considerations lead us to refrain from accepting this proposal. At first reading, the fable could yield such a meaning, but a closer examination would rather suggest that what seems to be under attack is not the decline of responsibility but an activity which is deemed to be useless and unproductive. It is in fact accepted only by worthless fellows and who in turn can offer nothing. The suggestion of a social aim seems out of place. Moreover, to find a setting for such an interpretation is very difficult if not impossible. Similarly Crüsemann, commenting on Maly's view, remarks that "die von ihm konstruierte Situation, auf die die Fabel antworten soll, für den politischen Raum unvorstellbar ist. Er muß ja voraussetzen, daß es keinen Streit um die Macht gibt, sondern diese als Last aufgefaßt wird. Ist derartiges aber in der Umwelt Israels, aus der er ja die Fabel herleiten will, oder in Israel selbst irgendwann wirklich denkbar? Für die vergleichbaren Fabelsituationen ist ja eher typisch, daß es zu viele

³³ 1960:304. A similar view is also taken by Fritz 1982:139f. in whose view the fable is not directed against kingship as such, but against the choice of an unsuitable king: "Die Fabel richtet sich somit nicht gegen das Königtum schlechthin, sondern nur gegen die Wahl eines für dieses Amt ungeeigneten Königs" (p. 140). The anti-monarchical character of the has also been denied by Halpern 1978:92-96 in whose view the fable lays out the usual blessing and curse based on covenant fidelity or disloyalty. Likewise, the equation of Abimelech with the bramble is not to be viewed as a polemical device, since "in Israelite lore, the abasement of the elected leader is common: it is precisely the most ignoble candidate who rises to the nobility" (94). He further envisages the possibility "that Abimelech may have been the fabulist of Judges 9" (96 n. 47). Reasons why it is better to consider the fable as essentially anti-monarchical have been given above. We may simply remark, against Halpern, that he completely ignores the mention of "shade" which plays a decisive role in deciding about its character. Further, he reads the whole of ch. 9 as well as 6-8 implying far too much historicity as well as presupposing a league of the Israelite tribes.

Bewerber gibt."³⁴

On the other hand, Lindars, who has followed up Maly's proposal, suggests that "such a situation is perhaps conceivable in a Canaanite city-state of the conquest period, in circumstances where local cohesion is disintegrating, and the landowners are more concerned to protect their own estates than to take responsibility for territorial claims which can no longer be maintained."³⁵ Again, this is possible, but it is difficult to substantiate. That such could have been the case is to envisage a united Israel in the form of a confederation before the monarchy where such a propagandistic campaign, to exhort responsible people to take up social responsibilities, could have been made. But objections to the existence of such an institution have been made and need not to be repeated.

We find ourselves in agreement with Soggin in suggesting rather that this fable "is the product of the experience which centuries of subjection have created in those who experience power, in those who are governed: the irrationality and arbitrariness of the claims, the emptiness of the promises...,³⁶ and finally the threats of repression against those who do not accept the rules of the game as they are imposed by the other party."³⁷

As far as its character is concerned, one further aspect needs

³⁴ 1978:28.

³⁵ 1973:365.

³⁶ Soggin further suggests in this context that the expression "Shall I sway (נָרַע) over the trees?", vv.9b, 10b, 13b, is also intended to bring out the futility and arbitrariness of power when it is confronted with real problems (1981:174). The intentionally derogatory use of the verb נָרַע is also suggested by Moore 1898:247, Simon 1964-65:I, and Crüsemann 1977:20 n.9. Differently, Lindars suggests that "it may be only intended to give a pictorial notion of a tree exercising rule over the rest of the trees, without any value judgment being involved." (1973:365 n.2)

³⁷ 1981:177. Cf. also Crüsemann 28f.

attention, namely the origin of the fable. Apart from this apologue and the one found in 2Kings 14.9 no other such genre is found in the Old Testament and questions about its provenance are often raised. Three places of origin are basically possible.³⁸

i) Greek

A similar version of the Jotham fable is found among the fables by Aesop, the fabulist who lived during the 6th century B.C. The fable appears there as *Ξυλα και ἐλαια*.³⁹ A Greek origin is, however, dubious as Adinolfi has demonstrated. To begin with, the title of the fable is strange. We would have rather expected something like "The trees that elected themselves a king". Further, the Aesopic version has several *hapax legomena* which increase the suspicion of its Aesopic origin.

Of the Greek manuscript traditions of the Book of Judges the Aesopic version shows affinities with LXX^A. It is interesting to notice the omission of Judg. 9.12-13 which is clearly a case of haplography since both v. 12 and 14 begin with *και ειπον τα ξυλα*. This version shows also concern to improve what are clearly semitisms brought into Greek.⁴⁰

The attribution of the Jotham fable to Aesop is not an uncommon phenomenon. In the ancient world well known figures were usually attributed literary works, sayings etc. This is also witnessed in the Bible. Moses e.g. is considered to be the author of the Pentateuch, David of the Psalter. The same happened to Aesop. As he was considered

³⁸ In this we are mainly following Adinolfi 1959:322-42.

³⁹ For the texts see *Æsopé, Fables*, trans. and ed. É. Chamby, Collection des Universités de France. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1967 (1927), p. 112 (n. 252).

⁴⁰ For further details on the un-Greek origin of it see Adinolfi 1959:326f.

the father of the fable, fables were attributed to him when he was already dead. Adinolfi concludes then that the Jotham apologue passed from its Greek translation (LXX^A) into the Aesopic collection and not vice-versa.

ii) Babylonian

A Babylonian origin is mainly argued by older commentators such as H. Diels, W. W. Baudissin, H. Gressmann and E. Ebeling. The fable *The Palm and the Tamarisk* is mentioned by these scholars as the most ancient example of this genre. This is an Accadian plant fable which was found in the library of Assurbanipal. These authors affirm that the motif of this fable as well as that in the Jotham fable is the same, namely a dispute of plants to decide who of them should have the right to royal dignity. Other ancient literature mentioned in support of Babylonian origin are *The Book of the Sycamore and of the Date-Palm*, a book belonging to the library of Amenophis III (1400 B.C.) of which only the title is known; *The Thorn-Bush and the Pomegranate*, a fable in an Aramaic version of the Babylonian novel by Ahiqar, found in the Elephantine archives; and finally three fables reflecting Babylonian influence. They are the Greek fable *The Laurel and the Olive* by Callimachus (III century B.C.), preserved in an Oxyrinchus papyrus, the Medio-persian fable *Draxt i asurīk* (*The Assyrian Tree*) belonging to the pehlevico *Bundahishn* (redacted in the IX century A.C.) and the Armenean fable which is attributed to Mechitar Gosh (XI century A.D.).

According to the authors mentioned above the common Babylonian origin of these stories is betrayed by α) the motif of the royalty of the trees which constantly occurs, and β) the despising connotation which is often attributed to the bramble.

Adinolfi, however, rejects this view on the following grounds. First of all, the bramble is only spoken of in three fables: the Aramaic, the Greek and the Armenean. In the Armenean fable the bramble puts also forth his candidature and after the palm is elected he receives a high appointment by the latter. Only in *The Thorn-Bush* and *the Pomegranate* and *The Laurel and the Olive* the bramble cuts a bad figure. How could such an interdependence be supposed between the last two and the first? The appreciation of the bramble is very different.

As to the motif of royalty this is found exclusively in the Armenean fable. In the others this is not a matter of discussion. The argument, therefore, for Babylonian origin is not proven. Further, Adinolfi questions whether *The Palm and the Tamarisk*, the most ancient Babylonian fable, should be attributed to this genre. He rather suggests "the sapiential dispute" (*adamanduga*) the aim of which is exhausted in the mere representation of it. The fable, on the contrary, has an implicit or explicit human application. To this genre he also attributes *The Laurel and the Olive* e *The Assyrian Tree* and therefore a common Babylonian origin. But these three compositions are not similar to the Jotham apologue, since this is a real fable. The only real parallel remains the late Armenean fable.

iii) Canaanite

The reason for attributing the fable to a Canaanite origin is mainly its mention of "gods".⁴¹ According to the fable the olive and the vine decline the offer of kingship, because the former does not want to

⁴¹ Adinolfi 1959:336ff. Among recent commentators this view is taken by Maly 1960:301 and Lindars 1973:336. The distinction between Canaanite and Israelite has been discussed in chapter II.

renounce its oil with which אלהים and men are honoured and the latter because it makes אלהים and men happy.

Adinolfi points out that in Hebrew אלהים does not necessarily denotes plurality of gods, but it is also used with reference to God. In this text there is no reason to take אלהים in the sense of pagan gods, because, among other things, oil and wine were used in the cult of YHWH. Oil was used for the sanctuary lamps (Ex. 27.20; Lev. 24.1-4) as well as in the liturgical oblation of cereals (Lev. 2.1ff.). The wine was sometimes offered in libation together with blood (Num. 15.5ff.) and bloodless sacrifices (Lev. 23.13).⁴²

Though Adinolfi is right in pointing to the oil and wine as very typical and precious products in Israel, the most immediate understanding of אלהים in this context is of gods. But even this should not be an obstacle to attributing the fable to an Israelite origin. The phrase אלהים ואנשים (9.9,13) need not be a problem. The implicit polytheism of this expression is not to be interpreted as a sign of Canaanite origin but rather as an indication of the existence of "unorthodox practices" which persisted until a very late time. That this was the actual case is evident from the sanctuary of Kuntillet Ajrud (IX-VIII century B.C.) where Hebrew inscriptions, mentioning YHWH and his consort Asherah as well as representations of the Egyptian god Bes, have been found and from the Elephantine papyri which witness to a state of "syncretism" down to the exilic and post-exilic period.⁴³ These give us a glimpse into the actual religious situation of that time. Most of all, the positive evaluation of the monarchy in the ancient Near East over against its negative presentation in Jotham's fable is a strong indication of

⁴² Adinolfi 1959:337.

⁴³ See chapter II.

Israelite origin. As Crüsemann remarks, "Die radikale Königskritik der Jothamfabel ist nun aber auch der wichtigste Grund, der gegen die These einer außerisraelitischen Herkunft des Textes im ganzen spricht, die man sonst gerade von ihrem starken Verhaftetsein an alte Fabel - und Königstraditionen her vermuten könnte. Aber Parallelen zu einer derartigen Beurteilung des Königtums lassen sich eben in der gesamten Umwelt Israels nicht aufweisen und sind auch, nach allem, was wir wissen, unter keinen Umständen zu erwarten."⁴⁴

As to its dating it is difficult to say anything with certainty. Such a composition could have originated at any time. If we attribute it to the same writer of the Jotham complex the post-exilic period is a possibility though such a period could also be envisaged even assuming different authorship in the light of its markedly anti-monarchic character. This in fact is the most likely period in which such feelings could find expression in a written and official form. This suggestion could just find further support in the fact that the extra biblical fables in which the bramble is also depicted negatively are late compositions.⁴⁵

b) Historical Nature

As has already been hinted the function of this fable is purely literary. It is therefore idle to ask questions of historical

⁴⁴ Crüsemann 1978:29. Cf Soggin 1981:177.

⁴⁵ Cf. *The Thorn-Bush and the Pomegranate* (the Aramaic version of the *Book of Ahikar* is not dated earlier than ca. 500 B.C. though it is likely that the Aramaic version is derived from an Assyrian work - for the text see Cowley 1923:204-48); *The Laurel and the Olive* by Callimachus (III c. B.C.) and *The Fox and the Bramble* (Chambry 31) and *The Pomegranate, the Apple-tree, the Olive and the Bramble* (Chambry 324) from the Aesopic fables.

nature.⁴⁶ At this point several scholars seem to be in agreement. Soggin e.g. points out the literary character of the whole of Jotham's appearance in ch. 9. He is the one who is able to escape the massacre and rather than keeping clear assumes later on a role of prime importance. But this is a feature which belongs to fable and folklore, not to history. Similar folkloristic themes are common in the Old Testament as e.g. the escape from a massacre by the boy Joash ordered in the name of Athaliah and who is able to regain the throne many years later (2Kings 11-12)⁴⁷ or the continuous attempts of Saul to eliminate David though unsuccessfully (it is unlikely that a king is unable to dispatch a defenceless adversary: this usually happens only in fables).⁴⁸ Soggin rightly remarks therefore that it is "useless to ask"⁴⁹... on the basis of the topography of the area how and where it was possible for Jotham to speak to the notables of Shechem 'from the summit of Mount Gerizim', or to ask whether by summit is meant the highest point of the massif or a platform half-way up, noted by travellers (Moore), or a ruin about 400 meters up, above present-day *nablūs*.⁵⁰

The literary nature of the Jotham narrative is also evident from the use of the number 70 referring to Jerubbaal's sons,⁵¹ the motif of the youngest son which is typical of Old Testament traditions as well as of

⁴⁶ However, cf. Adinolfi 1959:338ff. who attributes the fable to Jotham and Halpern 1978:96 n.47 who attributes it even to Abimelech!

⁴⁷ Soggin 1981:178. For a comparative study of the fable-like patterns in the stories of Idrimi and Joash, see Liverani 1974:438-53.

⁴⁸ Garbini 1979:39.

⁴⁹ See e.g. Moore 1895:246; Nielsen 1959:146f.; Boling 1975:172; Cobbe 1976:128-141.

⁵⁰ Soggin 1981:178. Cf. Maly 1973:300; and Veijola 1977:103.

⁵¹ Cf. 2Kings 10.1 and the inscription of Panammuwa II, KAI 215. For a discussion on the number seventy see Fensham 1977:113-115.

other ancient Near Eastern stories,⁵² and the use of the fable itself put into the mouth of Jotham which would rather be more appropriate to an orator or story-teller than to a young lad who had just witnessed the slaughter of his family.⁵³

We may further remark that the use of the apologue to illustrate certain situations of the king is a literary feature found elsewhere. In 2Sam. 12.1-4 e.g. we have such an apologue told by Nathan with reference to David's adultery. Similarly, in 2Sam. 14.3-7 the woman of Tekoa tells an apologue to David alluding to the king's position towards Absalom. We may further mention 2Kings 14.9 where the trees are, just as in Jotham's fable, the main protagonists.

The apologue, therefore, as well as the entire presence of Jotham in ch. 9 are of a literary kind and their function is not to record historical events but to illustrate and give force to the basic thesis of the author in his derogatory presentation of the monarchy. To ask questions other than literary ones is therefore misleading.

2. The Fable - Literary and Form Critical Aspects

A second set of problems concerns literary and form critical matters such as literary in/dependence of the apologue, its unity and its relation to its framework as well as to ch. 9. All of them are

⁵² See e.g. Gen. 42.4,36; 45.14,22. Among ancient Near Eastern texts see e.g. the inscription of Idrimi, a remain of a Syrian historiographic tradition where Idrimi is depicted as the youngest of his brothers (for further examples of this motif see Liverani 1972:414 n. 39). For the literary features in the description the hero see Liverani 1973:183. By the same author see also 1972:403-415 (esp. pp. 412-15) for a discussion of the relationship between the fable-scheme of the Idrimi story and historical truth.

⁵³ Maly 1960:300.

interrelated.

a) Literary Aspects

The fable divides in three parts: i) v. 8a - introduction; ii) 8b-13 - body; iii) vv. 14f. - conclusion. The story is about "the trees" that wish to anoint a king over them. Kingship is then offered to the olive tree, the fig tree and the vine. All of them decline this offer. Their productiveness is valued more than an office which they see as irrelevant and unproductive. Finally, they offer kingship to the bramble, the lowest plant in the rank of the trees and utterly useless. This in turn accepts the offer. V. 15 constitutes then the climax of the fable in that the bramble offers the trees, if they are anointing him in good faith, to take refuge in its shade, otherwise fire would come from the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon. The motif of shade occurs in the Old Testament in reference to God's protection⁵⁴ and only once explicitly with reference to the king (cf. Lam. 4.20).⁵⁵ In the fable this motif is its climax as well as its most important point. As Crüsemann remarks, this becomes clear once we notice "daß der Schatten des Königs als Symbol für dessen Schutzfunktion ein mit Varianten weit verbreiteter Topos altorientalischer Königsideologien ist."⁵⁶ This expression occurs frequently in Egyptian, Assyrian and also Mari texts.

⁵⁴ Cf. e.g. Isa. 49.2; 51.16; Hos. 14.8; Ps. 17.8; 36.8; 57.2; 63.8; 91.1; 121.5.

⁵⁵ The single appearance of this in a text which was composed after the fall of Jerusalem may just be an indication that this metaphor came to be known only after the Israelites came in direct contact with the Babylonians. This could tell us something about the date of the fable.

⁵⁶ Crüsemann 1977:21. Cf. P. Bordreuil, "'A l'ombre d'Elohim'. Le thème de l'ombre protectrice dans l'Ancien Orient et ses rapports avec 'L'Imago Dei'", *RHPHR* 46, 1966, 368-91. See also Crüsemann (same page) for further examples and literature.

Though in the Old Testament it is not used but once it may have been known. Here the answer is, however, clearly ironical, since the bramble cannot provide any shade. It offers therefore a protection which it cannot give even with all its good intention. The fable, therefore, is aimed at ridiculing the royal institution, and questioning the worthiness of those who take up positions as well as the absurdity and pretentiousness of their claims.

The fable clearly stands out in ch. 9 in that it is cast in rhythmical form⁵⁷ over against the rest of the chapter which is prose. The problematic nature of it, however, has not been seen by scholars in its style as much as in its loose connection with the rest of the chapter. Moore rightly observes that it is natural to see in the apologue a reference to Gideon's refusal of kingship (8.22f.) which was in turn assumed by the unworthy Abimelech. But then this allusion is not pursued by the author who directs his attention to ch. 9 through creating unfitting allusions. In v. 14 it is the trees that go to the bramble while in the Abimelech account it is he who takes the initiative. V. 15a refers then to the trees anointing in good faith and if such is the case they should put their trust in the bramble's protection otherwise the bramble threatens them with destruction (v. 15b). The theme of destruction by fire provides a fine and clear link with the rest of the narrative in that it is with fire that Abimelech destroys later the tower of Shechem (vv. 46-49). But, the offer of kingship to the bramble does not provide an exact parallel to the Abimelech account.

However, as Moore further remarks, "The most striking incongruity is the very point of the application. In v. 15 the question is, whether the trees are acting in good faith toward the box-thorn in making him

⁵⁷ See Burney 1920:272f.

king; in v. 16, whether in making Abimelech king the Shechemites have acted in faith and honour toward Jerubbaal and his house."⁵⁸ But, against several modern commentators who think that the fable could have had a history of its own,⁵⁹ he does not regard it necessary to postulate a different origin for it from that of vv. 7-21*, since in his view "such looseness of connexion is not altogether uncommon in the moral of apologues (therefore)...it remains the simpler and more natural hypothesis that the fable is of the same conception with the rest of the speech."⁶⁰ Similar is also the position taken by Burney⁶¹ who describes the lack of strictly logical connection as "a common characteristic of Oriental reasoning."

The problematic nature of the apologue has, therefore, long been recognized. In order to clarify some of the issues two aspects need to be addressed, namely the unity of the parable and the nature of ch. 9.16b-19a which is usually taken as a later expansion in order to smooth the relation of the fable to its framework.

b) Unity

Discussions on the unity of the fable have concentrated on v. 15 the assessment of which may have some bearing on its dependent or independent existence. Opinions widely diverge.

According to Richter and Veijola this verse belongs to the fable, indeed it is the climax of it. Richter comments "daß hier (i.e. v.15)

⁵⁸ 1898:245.

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g. Lindars 1973:356ff.; Crüsemann 1977:19; Soggin 1981:175, 178f.; Fritz 1982:139.

⁶⁰ 1898:245.

⁶¹ 1920:275.

der Höhepunkt vorliegt"⁶² and similarly Veijola remarks that "Es ist schon auf den ersten Blick klar, das V. 15 für die Fabel nicht zu entbehren ist, sondern sogar ihren Höhepunkt darstellt".⁶³ Others⁶⁴ see rather an addition which replaced the original conclusion. In favour of this view Soggin adduces the fact that the cedars of Lebanon in v. 15 do not otherwise appear in the story and therefore introduce a new concept. Further, the subsequent speech of Jotham has explicit references only to v. 15 (cf. vv. 16,19) which provides also a point of juncture between the fable and what follows.⁶⁵

The sudden appearance of the cedars of Lebanon at the end of the fable was first pointed out by Nielsen,⁶⁶ but he does not see in it a reason to consider v. 15 a later addition which substituted the original ending but rather suggests, accepting *a priori* the view that the fable had an independent existence before it was put into the present context, that it originally spoke of young cedar-trees which after the fall of the most ancient of the cedars were faced with the question of succession. This answers in his view a second question which he finds necessary to ask too, "why do the trees desire to have a king?".⁶⁷ But this explanation is far from adequate and as Lindars comments it "is fanciful and disregards the fact that the present opening of the fable, with its infinitive absolute construction, is extremely effective and economical, and shows no sign of loss or adaptation."⁶⁸

⁶² 1963:282.

⁶³ 1977:103 n. 18.

⁶⁴ Cf. Maly 1960:303f.; Lindars 1973:356-364; Boling 1975:173; Crüsemann 1977:19ff.; Soggin 1981:175; Fritz 1982:139.

⁶⁵ 1981:175.

⁶⁶ 1959:147.

⁶⁷ 1959:147ff.

⁶⁸ 1978:358. For a similar criticism see also Veijola 1977:104 n. 18.

Two further solutions to the problem have been proposed by Lindars and Crüsemann respectively. After a review of the various difficulties which the fable shows in relation to its context, Lindars too, with other critics, accepts the view "to detach the fable as an originally independent piece."⁶⁹ But the problem of the cedar-trees still requires an explanation. Lindars suggests that v. 15 is actually the work of the redactor⁷⁰ who made use of this fable. The original end he conjectures would have simply contained the bramble reply of acceptance, "אנכי אצלך אליכם". This was dropped by the redactor who inserted instead v. 15. A new aspect in Lindars' analysis is, however, the detachment of a proverb in v. 15b which in his opinion had separate existence and of which the redactor made use. Lindars observes that if we ignore the protasis in the clause, - which was needed in order to transform it into a curse - v. 15b emerges as a proverb. The apodosis in fact "appears as quite capable of standing on its own..."⁷¹

Crüsemann's suggestion is somewhat similar. His main focus is the loose connection which 15b has to the rest of the fable. In fact, it follows badly the preceding verses in that the bramble is spoken of here in the 3rd person and the appearance of the unfruitful cedar-trees introduces an new idea, since so far only trees in fruitful ground have been the object of consideration while the heights of Lebanon had not been in view. Further, the context does refer explicitly only to v. 15 while

⁶⁹ 1973:358.

⁷⁰ So also Maly 1960:303f.; Boling 1975:178; Crüsemann 1977:19ff.; and Soggin 1981:175.

⁷¹ 1973:359. Crüsemann 1978:20 n. 6 thinks this to be a possibility, "...ausgeschlossen ist das nicht." However, a different view is taken by Fritz 1982:139, "Die Deutung der Fabel in V. 15b ist allerdings kaum ein selbständiges Sprichwort gewesen, sondern stellt eine im Blick auf den weiteren Gang der Handlung vom Bearbeiter verfaßte Drohung dar, die in V 46-49 ihre Erfüllung findet."

"die eigentliche Pointe der Fabel in V. 15a außer Betracht bleibt." He concludes, therefore, that only v. 15b was a later addition and reconstructs v. 15 as follows:

Und der Dornstrauch sagte zu den Bäumen: "Wollt ihr wirklich mich zum König über euch salben, so kommt, bergt euch in meinem Schatten!"

The short reply of the bramble "באר חסר בצל", contains then the main point of the fable (see above). The bramble intends to offer a protection which it is not able to give.

These last two proposals are basically similar, but what is relevant is the point of attributing (at least) v. 15 or part of it to the author responsible for the Jotham episode. This is a plausible way of explaining the relationship between the fable and its interpretation.

It becomes now clearer that the crux of the matter is obviously our judgment of v. 15, namely whether to consider it as an integral part of the apologue, in which case the fable should be attributed to the same author of the framework, or as a later addition. It is true to say that v. 15 is the only clear connection with ch. 9 and more precisely with vv. 46-49 while vv. 8-14 do relate to this chapter only in a general way. On the other hand, they seem to allude to 8.22f. thus establishing a point of contact with the previous chapter and adding weight to the negative presentation of this monarchical episode. The suggestion that also vv. 8-14 originated with the same author of v. 15 is therefore not out of question altogether. If so, this is not a matter of a creation *ex nihilo* but of retelling and adapting pre-existing motifs. Further, if we accept the use of the apologue as a literary device we ought not to be worried, if the details in it do not fully match its context.⁷² After all, an

⁷² Cf. e.g. ch. 9 with 2Sam 11.2-12.23. The two accounts exhibit a similar outline in their description of events (9.1-2/11.2 - description

apologue is not meant to be an allegory - though it tends to become such once it is set into a specific literary context - but simply to reinforce the simple point of the fable: only unworthy people accept the burden of kingship, an activity which is otherwise considered unproductive. More than this cannot be said. If, however, we should feel uneasy to attribute vv. 8-14 to the same writer, Crüsemann's suggestion remains the most plausible solution.

c) Judges 9.16b-19a

Scholars have usually attempted to ease the relation of the fable to its framework suggesting these verses to be a later expansion.⁷³ This may be supported by the fact that the protasis of v.16a does not find its apodosis till v. 19b. These verses, in fact, form a parenthesis and could easily be omitted. Yet, we do not find these to be sufficient reasons to attribute them to a different author than the one responsible for the Jotham complex. Moore, also taking this view, remarks that "they have a vigour and an individuality of expression which are not usually found in glosses."⁷⁴ It is just possible that the same author introduced them at a later stage as he developed the narrative. We will assume that

of the situation; 3/3-4a - use of messengers; 4f./4b-25 - description of the crime; 6/26 - aim achieved; (7)8-15/12.(1a)1b-4; - use of apologue with reference to the king; 16-21/(5f.)7-14 - application; (17-18/ 7bc-8) recapitulation of good done to the malefactor(s); 22-57/14-27 occurrence of the prediction). Both make use of an apologue. It is interesting to notice that in 2Sam. 12 as well as in Judg. 9 the details of the apologue cannot be pushed too far. In both cases the use of the apologue must be interpreted as purely literary in function and strict parallelism between fable and events should not be stressed.

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So e.g. Richter (1963), Crüsemann (1978), and Fritz (1982)

74

1898:251.

the whole Jotham complex goes back to one and the same writer.⁷⁵

These verses clearly introduce a new idea. But the tension which they create in relation to the fable is necessary for the purpose of the author and may just be due to his unskillfulness rather than later redaction. Picking up the theme of "good faith" - though misinterpreting the fable - and relating it to the Shechemites' attitude towards Jerubbaal and his family the writer not only provides a further link with the previous Gideon narrative, but also makes it explicit that the citizens of Shechem did not, in fact, act in good faith and therefore they were doomed to destruction the fulfillment of which is then made explicit in v. 57. A further nuance is also introduced, namely that of collective responsibility. It is now not Abimelech but the Shechemites who are accused and held responsible for the death of Jerubbaal's sons and for the election of the son of a concubine as king. The same idea is expressed in vv. 24 and 57 which then belong to the same author. Especially v. 24 clearly appears out of context between vv. 23 and 25.⁷⁶

These verses show further contact also with the previous chapter precisely with vv. 27b and 33-35 which relate with each other in wording

⁷⁵ Cf. Veijola 1977:112 who attributes v. 5b,16b-19a,24b,28,57 to DtrN as well as 7-16a, 19a-21, "Es ist also DtrN der Redaktor gewesen, der auch die Fabel (V. 8-15) mit ihrer historischen Einkleidung (V. 7.16a.19a-21) in das Kapitel Ri 9 hineinkomponiert hat." As evidence to attribute vv. 16b-19a to DtrN Veijola draws attention to the similarity in structure with 1Sam. 10.18a,27b-19a which he also attributes to DtrN (111). The anti-monarchic tendency of the Samuel passage in which these verses are found as well as the same tendency found in our text is a further indication to attribute Judg. 9.16b-19a to the same author of the Jotham complex. A similar structure is also present in Judg. 2.1b-3 and 6.8b-10.

⁷⁶ So Veijola 1977:104f.; Nielsen 1959:153; Richter 1963:252; Crüsemann 1977:34f. The latter further comments, attempting to clarify the syntactical break between v. 23 and 24, as follows, "V. 24 schließt mit seinen Infinitiven hart an V. 23 an. Er ist deshalb häufig als Zusatz betrachtet worden...Die Möglichkeit besteht, die Gründe reichen jedoch nicht hin, da der Vers nicht schlecht harmoniert." 1963:311 n. 133.

and content. The second of these passages, vv. 33-35, shows two definite points of contact with 9.16b-19a. First of all, in v. 35 we find the double name Jerubbaal-Gideon. The two names are here attributed to the same individual making thus explicit to the reader that vv. 9.16b-19a refers to the Gideon narrative. Secondly, in v. 35 the Israelites are accused "not to have shown kindness to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good he had done to Israel". Here it is the Israelites that are accused not to have shown kindness to Jerubbaal's family. This is similar in Judg. 9.16b-19a, 24, and 57 in which it is the Shechemites who are accused for Abimelech's bloodshed. Further, the "good done" is a motif which occurs in both, 8.35 and 9.16b. While in the first the author speaks of the good done by Jerubbaal-Gideon to Israel (כָּל-הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה עִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל) in the second Jotham refers to the good done by the Shechemites to Jerubbaal and his house (וְעִם-בֵּיתוֹ) (וְאֵם-טֹבָה עָשִׂיתֶם עִם-יִרְבְּעֵל). The only noticeable difference is the different cycle of people. While in 8.33-5 the writer is talking about the Israelites, in 9.16b-19a, from the context, the people addressed are in fact the men of Shechem. The change of people in these two passages, as Veijola suggests, should not lead us to postulate two different redactional hands,⁷⁷ since it would have been quite impossible for the writer to bring in, in the context of 9.16b-19a, any mention of "Israelites", though he does not have any hesitation to include the men of Shechem under the umbrella of "Israelites" for whom Jerubbaal fought, risked his life and whom he rescued from the hand of Midian. We can, therefore, presuppose the same author for 8.27b, 33-35, 9.16b-19a, 24 and 57 as well as 9.7-16a, 19b-21.

⁷⁷ The remark is here against Richter 1964:100 who considers Judg. 8.33-35 as a "erweiternde Interpretation" from Judg. 9.16b-19a.

d) Judges 8.30-32; 9.1-6,56

We may further suggest that to this same author are to be attributed 8.30-32, 9.1-6 and 56. There is really no reason why we should regard these verses as a different layer. The fact that the whole Jotham complex could be omitted *en bloc* without being missed is really no argument. Nor do we find compelling the argument that the survival of Jotham, who was apparently one of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, contradicts the notion that all seventy were killed (vv. 5a,18,56). The problem of number needs in fact not to be a problem. In a literary composition of this nature strict logic must sometimes be set apart. The number 70 is obviously a literary convention to denote all the children of the monarch and cannot (against Veijola) be taken as a clear evidence for the later addition of the Jotham complex. This means that, after all 8.30-9.21, 24, and 56f. are the work of the same writer. All the traditions comprised in these verses are critical of the monarchy and in this they stand on the same level. Moreover, the episode of Jotham plays an indispensable role in the total composition to set out the theme of retribution after Abimelech's action in murdering his half brothers in vv. 1-6.⁷⁸

e) Judges 8.30-9.21,24,56f.

In our analysis so far we have suggested that it is better to take 8.30-9.21,24, and 56f. as the work of one author rather than envisaging two or more redactional hands. The attribution of these verses to one

⁷⁸ Cf. Lindars 1978:355.

author does not mean that he created this narrative *ex nihilo*. He could have based it on already existing stories about Abimelech's kingship over Shechem. But, if so, their literary history is no longer accessible to us. We may now further ask the question how these verses and motifs relate, if at all, to the rest of ch. 9.⁷⁹

The Jotham complex is followed, as it has usually been noticed, by two similar traditions of the military conflict between Abimelech and Shechem which are respectively found in vv. 36-41 and 42-49. Between the two there is an obvious break in continuity. V. 41 seems a concluding remark of an episode which starts with v. 26 and which is concluded at v. 40. Vv. 26-40(41) do therefore constitute a unit. V. 36 finds in fact its logical precedent in vv. 26-35. V. 42, by contrast, depicts the conflicts still as an open one and finds its conclusion in v. 54.

This break has been resolved in various ways. Richter takes 41(42-45) as a later redactional insertion⁸⁰ and proposes vv. 26-40, 46-54⁸¹ as the kernel of this chapter. The reason for omitting 41-45 is because in v. 45 and 46ff. the same occupation is reported twice. With Crüsemann, however, we would refrain from accepting this, since the first account can be understood as a partial conquest of the city. In any case, in the mind of the writer the Tower of Shechem was a different place from Shechem. Moreover, the similarities between the various battle scenes in vv. 42-54 speak against the separation of vv. 42-45 from 46ff. Richter, on the other hand, does not give any reason why the redactor should have duplicated the first account inserting 42-45. Further, with the driving away of the adversary (v. 41) the destruction

79 In this analysis we are mainly following Crüsemann 1978:32ff.

80 1963:252ff., 278ff.

81 1963:261ff.

of the city (42ff.) would have been superfluous. It is therefore better to assume, with Crüsemann,⁸² vv. 26-41 on the one hand, and vv. 42-54 on the other, to have been independent narratives which were brought together only secondarily.

The secondary association of these two blocks of narrative appears even clearer when we examine the reasons which are given for the rise of this conflict. The narrative starts in v. 22 with a chronological note after which we are told (v. 23) that "God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem" which in turn causes the men of Shechem to deal treacherously with Abimelech. In v. 25a the men of Shechem get in action and in v. 25b it is reported to Abimelech. On the other hand, a new situation is envisaged in vv. 26-29. Gaal and his kinsmen move into Shechem and stir up a revolt against Abimelech. The episode continues then and concludes with the victory of Abimelech over Gaal and his kinsmen and their subsequent expulsion from the city. As it appears obvious, the reason given here for the rebellion of the men of Shechem is different from the first and they do not supplement each other. But the scene set in v. 25 finds its following in vv. 42ff. Moreover, we may notice that in the Gaal-episode, it is Zebul, the שר-העיר (v. 30) or פקיד (v. 28) in Shechem, who sends messengers to inform Abimelech of Gaal's insurgence, while in v. 25 it is reported anonymously (ויגר לאבימלך). The same impersonal expression occurs also in v. 42 (ויגדו לאבימלך)⁸³ and 47 (ויגר לאבימלך). We may therefore suggest, with Crüsemann, that vv. 23, 25, 42-54 belong to the same layer.⁸⁴ The (almost) verbatim

⁸² A similar view is also held by Moore 1898; Burney 1920:267f.; Rösel 1976:24,31 and Fritz 1982:130.

⁸³ It is probably better to amend MT ויגדו to ויגר following 10b, LXX^A (απηγγελη), Arm, OL and Syh (*renuntiatus est*).

⁸⁴ Crüsemann further suggests that it constitutes the most ancient nucleus of the narrative. In our view, however, it is more *probable*, with

repetition of v. 25b in v. 42b as well as the insertion of 42a "on the following day the men went out into the fields" is an attempt by the redactor to create a continuity with the preceding narrative. Obviously v. 42a anticipates v. 43b "and he looked and saw the men coming out of the city..." - "an event which clearly took place *after* and not *before* Abimelech had laid his ambush as recorded in v. 43a."⁸⁵

f) Narrative Units

We have thus detached two narrative units, namely vv.23,25,42*,43-54 and 26-41. Both are able to stand by themselves and to form complete narratives.⁸⁶ The latter only lacks a chronological note.

As to their antiquity, however, there is no clear evidence. Crüsemann⁸⁷ suggests the former to be the most ancient nucleus of the chapter.⁸⁸ In support of this he points out the tragic character of the story which depicts the fate of Abimelech as being caused by a רעה רעת (v.23) sent by God (cf. the account of Saul) without any specific reason being given for this. The writer does not dare to attribute this directly to God but to an evil spirit, thus emphasizing in strong terms the tragic and incomprehensible. He concludes suggesting the indisputable old age of this narrative. In his own words:

Das hohe Alter einer derartigen Geschichtserzählung dürfte

with Fritz, to see this in vv. 26-41. See later on.

⁸⁵ Burney 1920:268.

⁸⁶ Cf. Moore 1898:237f.; Burney 1920:268; Crüsemann 1978:32f.; Rösel 1976:24-31.

⁸⁷ 1978:35f.

⁸⁸ This view is held as the most probable by Soggin 1981:165-66 though in the course of his commentary he tends to treat ch. 9 as an overall unit. Cf. also Campbell 1983:268-270 who suggests that Judg. 9 is a unity and presents an overall plausible face (270).

unbestreitbar sein. Parallelen zu ihrer tragischen Grundhaltung gibt es höchstens in einigen der Saulserzählungen; sie unterscheidet sich aufs deutlichste vom Charakter der alten israelitischen Sagen sowie von der Erzählkunst der frühen Königszeit und ist sicher vor ihr anzusetzen. Da es ihr überhaupt nicht um das Königsein Abimelechs geht, hat sie auch keinerlei königskritische Spitze.

If we understand the argument correctly the main point in favour of its antiquity is the lack of this tragic character in Israelite saga. But this can also be interpreted as a sign of lateness. "Studer remarks (in fact) that we have here (i.e. ch. 9) a religious conception of history very similar to that of the Greeks in the time of Herodotus and the contemporary tragic poets, 'who would have found in the fate of Gideon's house, if it had belonged to their national cycle, fruitful material for their magnificent composition'."⁸⁹ We could also mention the affinity with the Book of Job which we have suggested already in its unpredictability of events.

A different view, and possibly more probable, has been suggested by Fritz in whose view the most ancient kernel is made up by vv. 26-41. Both Crüsemann and Fritz agree that the two narratives are separate from each other and ought to be treated separately. However, while Crüsemann takes 26-41 to be a later expansion of the original nucleus Fritz suggests that vv. 1,5a,6,23,25,42-45, 50-54 and 56 are derived from vv. 26-41. The latter in his view gives a credible picture (the historicity of ch. 9 will be dealt with later). The acting individuals are named and topographical details are given.⁹⁰ The former, on the contrary is kept in general terms. Apart from Abimelech there is no further personal name

⁸⁹ Moore 1898:240.

⁹⁰ The topographical details, however, cannot anymore be determined with certainty. On this see Soggin *ad loc*; Rösel 1976:30; Campbell 1983:265f.

mentioned, though here too the writer shows good topographical knowledge. The literary motifs which run in the first narrative as well as its strong interest in the fate of Abimelech lead Fritz to conclude the dependence of the former on the latter though as he remarks "Die literarische Abhängigkeit der Abimelech-Erzählung von der Gaal-Episode ist zwar letztlich nicht zu beweisen, hat aber doch eine große Wahrscheinlichkeit."⁹¹ In any case there must be between both narratives a tradition historical connection. As a further argument for the literary dependence of the Abimelech narrative on the Gaal-episode, Fritz notices the similarities between the two accounts. Both of them correspond in the following points: 1) Shechem is not the residence of Abimelech; 2) in the city there is a temple, even though this is differently known (4/27); 3) the mention of a tree-sanctuary, even though with different names and in different contexts; 4) the army division in three and four companies respectively (43/34,37); 5) the decisive battle takes place at the city gate (44/35). In conclusion we may suggest, with Fritz, that it is just more probable to take vv. 26-41 as the more ancient nucleus.⁹²

We may now briefly conclude and summarize our results.

- 1) So far we have attempted to distinguish *possible* "redactional" layers from already pre-existing units. A more ancient layer has been suggested for 9.26-41, 9.23,25,42*,43-54. The former is possibly the most ancient of the two and Fritz suggests the early 9th century and the Northern kingdom as its time and place of origin. This is possible though as we have suggested elsewhere the actual place of origin of the single units is very difficult to determine, especially

⁹¹ 1982:138.

⁹² Cf. Rösel 1983:501f. who holds, however, just the opposite view.

when the only criterion is their content. Strictly speaking they could have originated almost in any place and time from the monarchic period onwards. Jotham's fable (9.8-15) had possibly an independent existence as well. As to its time of composition, it was suggested the post-exilic time in view of its anti-monarchic tendency.

- 2) A late redactional layer has been suggested for 8.27b,30-32,33-35, 9.1-21* and vv. 56f. to which also 8.22f. belong. Here, the writer probably made use of traditional material and motifs. In spite of the tensions which have usually been noticed in these passages the possibility of a unified redaction was suggested. 9.1-6* is clearly dependent on 6-8 and to envisage too many redactional layers in ch. 9 leads to presuppose an extremely complex process. The paratactic style of these passages should not lead, if it is unnecessary, to envisage different redactional layers.

D. The Reign of Abimelech and the Problem of Historicity

So far we have been concerned mainly with the redactional history of this chapter and especially with those layers, markedly anti-monarchic, which we would date in the post-exilic period. A question which arises is then about the value of these traditions for a historical reconstruction of the period they purport to portray.

1. Abimelech the Son of Jerubbaal

We may start our analysis by asking the question how far is the phrase "Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal" rooted in history. In spite of

the repeated claims to authenticity,⁹³ doubts arise from the textual tradition itself. The name Jerubbaal, apart from our tradition, occurs in 1Sam. 12.11 (ירבעל) and 2Sam. 11.21 (ירבשח). But the septuagintal evidence seems to indicate that a different tradition may have read "Jeroboam" in both cases. The septuagintal reading of 1Sam. 12.11 is often used to emend the Hebrew כרן to כרק. But it is also important to observe that Jeroboam is read instead of Jerubbaal (this is largely ignored). The septuagintal evidence reads as follows:

1Sam. 12.11 (LXX^B)

και ἀπεστειλεν τον Ιεροβοαμ και τον Βαρακ και τον Ιεφθαε
και το Σαμουλ...

Similar is the evidence for 2Sam. 11.21 (LXX^B):

τις ἐπατάξεν τον Αβειμελεχ υἱον Ιεροβοαμ υἱου Νηρ;...⁹⁵

Admittedly, the evidence to read an original Jeroboam throughout the Gideon-Abimelech tradition is not very strong, since it is almost exclusively limited to some Greek mss of the Books of Samuel.⁹⁶ Nevertheless this is a witness to the existence of a different tradition and it is just possible that a first link between Gideon and the

⁹³ See e.g. Halpern 1978:81, "That he (i.e. Abimelech) was a 'son of Jerubbaal' seems to be beyond dispute..."

⁹⁴ ιεροβοαμ is read by Bya₂ while ιεροβοαλ by b, ιεροβολα by a; ...βααλ by A; Ιεροβααλ by MN [Robeam Eth]. 4QSam^a confirms MT.

⁹⁵ a₂ reads also similarly: ιερουβοαμ, while o Arm Sah reads ιεροβοαλ, M N d-g i j m p-w z b₂ c₂ read ιεροβααλ and e₂ ιεροβαλ. The phrase υἱου Νηρ is only found in A and B. This patronimic is strange. According to 1Sam. 14.50f. Ner is Abner's father and Saul's uncle. The phrase "Abner the son of Ner" further occurs in 1Sam. 26.5; 2Sam. 2.8,12; 3.23,25,28,37; 4.12 (not in MT but found in LXX); 1Kings 2.5,32; 1Chron. 26.28. In 1Chron. 8.33 and 9.36,39, the name occurs in genealogical lists though the tradition is confused here. See McCarter 1980:256. However, nowhere else is this name employed for the father of Jeroboam or Jerubbaal.

⁹⁶ An exception is Judg. 7.1 where l reads also ιεροβοαμ.

Abimelech tradition was provided in the Books of Samuel. How the name turned from Jeroboam to Jerubbaal is unclear. What is interesting, however, is to notice that in the textual tradition of the Book of Judges the OL throughout retains the name Jeroboam instead of Jerubbaal. The Ethiopic version interestingly reads Roboam instead of Jerubbaal (1Sam. 12.11; Judg. 7.1; 9.1,19,57) as well as Jeroboam (Judg. 8.29; 8.35; 9.16).⁹⁷

In 6.25-32 the OL apparently retains MT though after v. 32 a long addition is found:⁹⁸

Et vocavit illud in die illa Ieroboan dicens Iudicet sibi
Bahal quoniam deposuerunt altarium eius.

This addition possibly betrays the fact that its Vorlage was basically not different from our MT and that the substitution of Jerubbaal with Jeroboam and Gedeon is editorial. The addition, is however, understandable. If the OL was depending on LXX^A, nowhere in v. 32 does the name Jerubbaal occur. The Hebrew ירבעל is in fact rendered by LXX^A with a paraphrase, Δικαστηριον του Βααλ, then literally rendered in the OL as iudicium Bahal. The ambiguity of identity between Gideon and Jerubbaal/Jeroboam therefore remains. The OL addition puts a remedy to

97	MT	OL	E
6.32	Jerubbaal	Ieroboan	
7.1	Jerubbaal	Ierobaan	Robaam/Robam
8.29	Jerubbaal	Ιεροβοαμ	Ιεροβοαμ
8.35	Jerubbaal	Ieroboam	Ιεροβοαμ
9.1	Jerubbaal	Ieroboam	Roboam
9.2	Jerubbaal	Gedeon	
9.5	Jerubbaal (2x)	Gedeon (2x)	
9.16	Jerubbaal	Ieroboam	Iarobaam
9.19	Jerubbaal	Ieroboa~	Roboam
9.24	Jerubbaal	γεδεων	
9.28	Jerubbaal	Gedeon	
9.57	Jerubbaal	Ieroboam	Roboam

⁹⁸ The OL translation of v. 32 closely follows LXX^A which preserves a shorter, but more original text. LXX^B reads, as MT, a more expanded version.

this. But what this reveals, on the other hand, is first of all that Abimelech is more likely to have been known as "the son of Jeroboam" and that Jeroboam and not Jerubbaal was originally in the list of saviours in 1Sam. 12.11. A further point, however, emerges where, after all, the OL is right. The present Gideon tradition is reminiscent of the Old Testament Jeroboam narrative and it is possible that the two are traditio-historically related.⁹⁹ As Jeroboam made golden calves and led the Israelites into idolatry, so did Gideon/Jerubbaal by the making of the ephod. The association of Gideon with the Jeroboam tradition is particularly made clear by the Ethiopic version which uses the name Roboham and Jeroboam interchangeably in the Gideon-Abimelech narrative with reference to Gideon/Jerubbaal.

What then about Abimelech? The name is usually translated as "my father is king" and its meaning also raises some doubts. The same name occurs for a king in Gerar in the patriarchal traditions (Gen. 20; 21.22-32; 26) and it was also the name of Naomi's husband according to LXX^B and several other Greek mss.¹⁰⁰ The occurrence of this name is therefore linked to relatively late texts in the Old Testament. Further, the name itself makes a beautiful contrast to the Gideon narrative in which the latter hero renounced kingship - YHWH only is king - while the former bear the pretentiousness and expectation of his office already in his name.¹⁰¹ This does not necessarily prove its unhistoricity but at least raises doubts about it. We may now turn to the various traditions in ch. 9.

⁹⁹ Cf. also Ex. 32 which reflects the same motif and should be analyzed with the two texts mentioned above.

¹⁰⁰ See Boling 1975:163.

¹⁰¹ For occurrences outside the OT see Soggin 1981:166f.

2. Judges 9.1-21,23,25,42-54

The whole Jotham episode, as said above, can be safely omitted from our investigation since its use is literary. We are then left with vv. 1-5b,6. As we have suggested, these verses are redactional since they presuppose the precedent narrative without which they would not be understandable. Three points, however, may merit attention.

First of all, in v. 2 we read of Abimelech's claim that Jerubbaal's seventy sons would rule¹⁰² over Shechem against which Abimelech puts forward the alternative of one man's rule. The events which follow, namely the giving of the seventy pieces of silver from the temple of Baal-berith, the hiring of idle and reckless men, and the slaughtering of Abimelech's seventy half brothers, can be safely considered as literary motifs and therefore need not to concern us any longer. But why seventy? Where else do we read of seventy rulers acting all at the same time? In this context v. 2 is usually taken to prove the incompatibility of Gideon's refusal of kingship (8.22f.) with Abimelech's assertion that his seventy sons would in fact rule over Shechem and therefore inherit the very office which their father had declined for himself and his children. The problem, however, may be resolved differently, if we take it as a theological dispute of priestly versus human "kingship". Halpern has rightly pointed towards this understanding. As he comments:

The words, "I shall not rule you, nor will my son rule over you; YHWH will rule over you," indicate that Gideon's intention is to mediate divine intentions to Israel. He has rejected monarchy, it is true. Nevertheless, he appropriates authority. His authority devolves, however, not as the imperium of a king, partly from the people..., but as the

¹⁰² Notice that the same root **למ** is used in 8.22f. as well as in ch. 9. Obviously the writer intended to establish a further link between the two chapters with the use of the same root.

authority of a priest, directly from the god. Samuel, who takes exception to the monarchy on the ground that it denies YHWH's "direct" suzerainty (through Samuel), makes the same distinction (1Sam. 8:7; 10:19; 12:12-13). Gideon, then, is priest and judge. His rejection of kingship in 8:22-23 is mainly a claim to the cloth.¹⁰³

The author might have envisaged in his mind the establishment of a hereditary hierocracy. Within this portrayal the mention of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal ruling over Shechem is then very easily explained. It fits a pattern of legislative assemblies known throughout Israel's history, "from the seventy children of Jacob (Gen 46:27; Exod 1:5; Deut 10:22) to the Sanhedrin, the ruling assembly of the Maccabean Commonwealth (see especially Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 1:6)."¹⁰⁴ The dispute is then again that of divine against human kingship which is carried on from ch. 8. As in the Book of 1Samuel the Israelites opt for a king instead of the present theocratic *status quo* under the leadership of Samuel, so here the men of Shechem (actually the Israelites in the mind of the author) are attracted by Abimelech's aspiration to kingship against a theocratic government. The story, therefore, is wholly theologically oriented and in our view the addressed audience could only have been the post-exilic community.

The polemic is possibly carried on also in the ephod tradition (8.24ff.) which, as Crüsemann has suggested, ought to be understood in relation to Gideon's words in 8.22f.¹⁰⁵ Here, according to Crüsemann, Gideon is depicted as the positive contrast to David and thus almost as

¹⁰³ 1978:84. Halpern's general view is, however, very different than ours, especially as far as historicity as well as the nature of the pre-monarchic Israel is concerned. Cf. also Halpern 1983:196ff.

¹⁰⁴ Halpern 1978:88.

¹⁰⁵ 1978:42-54. Though we accept his observation that 8.22ff. might have been written with David in mind we do not subscribe to his view on separating 8.22f. from any redactional connection with 6.25ff. and ch. 9 nor do we agree with his contention against Boecker to relate Gideon's words to the previous holy war traditions.

an anti-David. In the Samuel traditions (1Sam. 23.9ff.; 30.6ff.) most important political and military decisions were made by David with the help of the priestly ephod and even where we read simply of inquiring with YHWH without any mention of the ephod it is likely that such a cultic object was in mind. It could be said that one of the characteristic features of the rise of David was his continuous consultation of YHWH and thus his being guided by Him. And it is just in this way that he attains kingship. The role of the ephod is thus important in the story of the rise of David and in fact it is from the Davidic traditions that such an emphasized use of this cultic object is known. In a similar way the golden ephod which Gideon made in Ophrah ought to be understood as an oracle object. But the Gideon tradition obviously constitutes an opposite position in a violent battle about the theological legitimization / disqualification of the monarchy. As David was already a hero among the people and thus a "saviour" in the Saulidic Philistine battle, so as this to play a role in his future king acclamation, so Gideon is offered kingship because of his heroic deeds. In both the saviour image is present, yet the course of action is different. While David did become king, Gideon refuses the crown allowing thus YHWH to rule. If these allusions are correct we have here a decisive criticism of the king of Israel *par excellence*. Ironically the ephod, the cultic object through which David was guided by YHWH, becomes here an instrument of apostasy.

Secondly, the mention of the house ^{of} Baal-berith (v. 4 - ^{is worth nothing} בעל ברית¹⁰⁶).

This is certainly the temple of the city. Fritz refers here to its equation in recent research with the great Migdal-temple which has been

¹⁰⁶ Cf. also Rösel 1976:29 and Soggin 1981:170f., 192f.

uncovered by Sellin in his Shechem-excavation.¹⁰⁷ This temple was probably founded in the second half of the Middle Bronze IIB Age (1650-1550) and has existed then after an interruption of the history of the settling from about 1550 till 1450 during the Late Bronze II Age.¹⁰⁸ The date of its destruction cannot be known. In any case, in the 12th century it did not exist anymore as it has been proved by the excavations. The equation of the Migdal-temple with the house of Baal-berith in Judg. 9.4 can only be upheld then when this narrative can be backdated into the Late Bronze Age. It is therefore not implausible to suggest with Fritz, that at the most, at the basis of this narrative lies the presupposition that every city possessed a temple.¹⁰⁹

Thirdly, Beth-millo and the "oak of the pillar" at Shechem. As for the first, there is no clear evidence what this was.¹¹⁰ It is usually explained in analogy to the millo in Jerusalem¹¹¹ or as a more important part of the city which would have been singled out. Whatever the case it does not add much to the verification of this story. The mention of the oak of the pillar¹¹² at Shechem occurs also elsewhere. As Fritz suggests

¹⁰⁷ E. Sellin, "Die Ausgrabung von Sichem", ZDPV 49 (1926) 304-20; and E. Sellin, "Die Masseben im Tempel des El-Berit in Sichem", ZDPV 51 (1928) 119-23. Fritz 1982:135 n.15. For a brief review of the excavations in Shechem see Soggin 1981:167.

¹⁰⁸ G.E. Wright, *Shechem* (1965) 80-102 and R.J. Bull, "A Re-examination of the Shechem Temple", BA (1960) 110-19, have attempted to differentiate between temple 1 (1650-1550) and temple 2 (1450-1200). For a criticism of this position see Fritz 1982:135.

¹⁰⁹ Fritz 1982:135.

¹¹⁰ See Soggin 1981:168f. and Fritz 1982:135f.

¹¹¹ Cf. 2Sam. 5.9; 1Kings 9.15-24; 11.27; 2Kings 12.21 (EVV 20); 1Chron. 11.8; 2Chron. 32.5. Even with respect to the Jerusalem millo, however, it is not clear what it was. Usually, it is taken to be the acropolis of the city.

¹¹² מַצֵּב is usually emended to הַמַּצֵּבָה (so Burney 1920:272 and Moore 1898:244) or following LXX^B to אֵלֶּן (הַנְּמִצָּה) מַצֵּב (so Boling 1975:171-2). Whatever the case no emendation adds to the understanding of the text.

the expression **אלון מצב** should not be separated from **אלון מורה** in Gen. 12.6 and Deut. 11.30; **האלה** in Gen. 35.4; **האלה** in Josh. 24.26; and **חלון מערוננים** in Judg. 9.37 which are all localized in the district of Shechem.¹¹³ Whether we are dealing here with different places or a single tree can no longer be decided, though the holiness of the place is common to all. In any case, the tradition of a tree-sanctuary located in the near neighborhood of Shechem is well established, though the exact location is not known.¹¹⁴

The points so far noted above do only reflect a general knowledge of the area and the city and it is likely to be derivatory.

3. Judges 9. 23,42*,43-54

As we have suggested above, it is more likely to take these verses as later than vv. 26-41. Here we are told of three consecutive campaigns by Abimelech. First, he fights with Shechem and after destroying the city he sows it with salt.¹¹⁵ Secondly, he attacks the tower of Shechem, sets the stronghold on fire and kills the people in it. Finally, he encamps against Thebez, but in the fight he loses his life by the hand of a woman.

Archaeological excavations carried out on this site have shown traces of a remarkable destruction dating from about the end of the 12th

¹¹³ Cf. Campbell 1983:263-55. He too seems to identify at least the sacred places described in Judg. 9.6 and Josh. 24.26.

¹¹⁴ Fritz 1982:136.

¹¹⁵ The act of salting is an ancient cursing rite (see F.C. Fensham, "Salt as Curse in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East", *BA* 25 [1962] 48-50). It does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament but a parallel practice is witnessed by an inscription from Sefire (*KAI* 222A,36). For other views see A.M. Honeyman, "The Salting of Shechem", *VT* 3 (1953) 192-5; and S. Gevirtz, "Jericho and Shechem: A Religio-Literary Aspect of City Destruction", *VT* 13 (1963) 52-62.

century¹¹⁶ and thus it has been customary to correlate these finding with the Abimelech narrative of Judg. 9. But apart from the biblical narrative there is no other evidence that this destruction was due to Abimelech. At any rate, according to the biblical traditions Shechem had to be soon rebuilt. After the death of Solomon we read in 1Kings 12 that "Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king." Nowhere in the monarchical tradition do we find any reference to a former destruction of the city.

The destruction of the city is followed by a second campaign against the Tower of Shechem and its destruction. The location of this place is uncertain. Soggin suggests that it probably was "not a section or quarter of the city but a quite distinct outpost of it, administratively autonomous."¹¹⁷ He also distinguishes the Baal-berith of 9.4 from the El-berith of 9.46 as two different deities.

The very view which Soggin has attempted to deny is, however, re-affirmed by Campbell who concludes that "It is...difficult to believe that the temple of El-berith is not indeed equivalent to the temple of Ba'al-berith in 9.4, and that the Migdal of Shechem is not the same as the Beth-millo of 9.6..." He is not able, however, to explain the curious change in terminology for the features of Shechem's western precinct and, unwilling to attribute it to a different source or redactional development, he suggests for "an as-yet-undiscerned reason for this shift."¹¹⁸

Fritz, on the other hand, attributes vv. 46-49 to the same redactional hand which introduced vv. 5b,7-16a,19b-21. The theme of fire

¹¹⁶ See Wright 1965:101ff.,122 and Soggin 1981:192.

¹¹⁷ 1981:192.

¹¹⁸ 1983:269.

which is announced in v. 15b finds then its fulfilment in vv. 46-49. Since Shechem had already been destroyed, the redactor had to create a supplement which was neither a repetition of the destruction of Shechem nor something unrelated to the place. The name Migdal Shechem is found nowhere else and was perhaps created in imitation of the Migdal in the following narrative. Whether the redactor had a special place in mind is not sure. In any case he intended to indicate a different place from the already destroyed Shechem though it stood in close connection with this.

The identification of Mount Zalmon is also unclear. Soggin asks whether perhaps Ebal was meant.¹¹⁹ Boling identifies it with Mount Ebal.¹²⁰ Fritz excludes any equation with Ebal or Gerizim or a connection with the village Salim west of Shechem.

Whatever may be suggested it seems clear that the writer intended the Tower of Shechem to be a different place from Shechem. The actual details cannot be verified in any case. Vv. 46-49 are then better to be taken either as a traditional growth into this body of tradition or as a redactional expansion. Strictly speaking they do not add any further detail necessary for the Abimelech narrative nor are they indispensable. Whether we should attribute their insertion to the same redactor of v.15b (so Fritz) is not sure. It may also be that this redactor drew his inspiration from this narrative. We may further observe that these verses reflect also common motifs with the Gideon battle traditions and it is just possible that at a certain stage they belonged to the same stock of battle narratives.¹²¹

119 1981:191.

120 1975:131.

121 Cf. e.g. 9.48/8.16, 7.17; 9.49/8.17; and also 9.43/7.16; 9.45/8.17.

The final battle scene is the attack against Thebez (50-54).¹²² Of some interest for us are some of the motifs that occur here as well. Within Thebez (i) there is also a tower and (ii) *Abimelech*, here too, attempts to burn it. But (iii) a woman throws an upper millstone upon *Abimelech's* head, and crushes his skull. He finds remedy, however, to his disgraceful death by the hand of a woman by (iv) asking his armour-bearer to kill him. The last two motifs are especially interesting in hinting to the literary nature of this narrative. The death of *Abimelech* very closely recalls the way in which "Pyrrhus of Epirus is said to have been killed at Argos. He had forced his way into the city, and, in the street fighting which followed, his head was broken by a tile thrown by a woman from the roof of a house."¹²³ The same literary *topos* occurs also in the first pages of the recent historical novel *Ben-Hur* by Lew(is) Wallace.¹²⁴ The subsequent action by *Abimelech* to ask his arm-bearer to kill him is also a characteristic literary motif (a man who had his skull just crashed hardly could have been able to say a word). In the Old Testament we are reminded of Saul's death (1Sam. 31.4).

The shameful death by the hand of a woman is not a motif limited to the Semitic world. The Greek and Romans as well held it also to be unworthy for a brave soldier or a hero to die by a woman's hand.¹²⁵

¹²² The site is uncertain. See Boling 1975:182; Soggin 1981:193f.

¹²³ Moore 1898:268. Plut., *Pyrrhus*, 34.1.

¹²⁴ Cf. also Judg. 4.21 and Jdt. 12.6ff.; 16.6-9.

¹²⁵ Penna 1963:158. As Moore 1898:268 remarks "the older commentators compare the words of the tortured Hercules in the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, 1.1062f.:

γυνή δε, θηλὺς φύσα κοῦκ ἀνδρὸς φύσιν,
μόνη με δὴ καθεῖλε φασγάνου δίχα,

and the imitation of the passage in Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* (1.1180ff.), in which the resemblance to our verse is closer: *dirus o nobis pudor | o turpe fatum. femina herculeae necis | auctor feretur,*

The markedly literary features of this narrative may well allow us to call it a "historical novel" in our modern sense. This is not only suggested by its literary characteristics but also by archaeological data. As Fritz remarks, Shechem existed as a Canaanite city from about 1450 to about 1200.¹²⁶ The settling in the Early Iron Age till about the middle of the 12th century seems also to be the continuation of the previous. However, as archaeological excavations have proved, the Migdal-temple was no longer existing. Also the coming into being of the city wall in the Iron Age is so far not certain and it is possible that the Early Iron Age settling was only an unfortified town. Whatever the case, the narrative in Judg. 9 cannot be referring to the Early Iron age - since the temple cannot be presupposed - and a dating of the narrative in the 13th century is excluded - since Shechem at that time was still a "Canaanite" city. Archaeological excavations seem to indicate then an incompatibility with the historical events of the city as portrayed in Judg. 9. We should therefore deny according to our knowledge of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age any historicity to the events reported in Judg. 9.¹²⁷ So the narrative must be interpreted and appreciated in narrative and theological terms.

4. Judges 9.26-41

It has been suggested above, with Fritz, that it is most likely that Judg. 9.26-41 is the most ancient kernel of chapter 9. Apparently this episode resembles the conditions of a local rule in the Canaanite city

morior Alcides quibus."

¹²⁶ See L.E. Toombs, "Shechem. Problem of the Early Israelite Strata", in *Symposia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 69-83.

¹²⁷ Fritz 1982:137.

states of the Late Bronze Age similar to those described in the el-Amarna letters.¹²⁸

The narrative gives topographical details as well as personal names. Abimelech's residence, we are told, is at Arumah.¹²⁹ The site is *Jabal al 'Urma* which is 8 km southwest of Shechem. The name in v. 41 seems to go back to tradition, while in v. 31 it may be derivative. According to archaeological excavations this site was inhabited from the Middle Bronze IIB Age till the Byzantine and Arabic time. It is therefore plausible to envisage its existence during the Iron I Age.¹³⁰ In spite of this Fritz has also here raised the problem of its historicity. Two main reasons are given: i) if the narrative should be historical, one must count with a change of power in the 13th century. Since the attribution of Judg. 9.26-41 to a Canaanite tradition is difficult, strong doubts must remain over the historicity of this episode. ii) The names Abimelech and Gaal are suspicious. The former has already been discussed above. As to the second, he remarks that the name derives from the root *נעל*, to abhor and other than here such a personal name does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament. He concludes then that at the most, the Gaal episode lies at the basis of a local tradition, the

¹²⁸ See Reviv 1966:252-7.

¹²⁹ Judg. 9.31,41. In v. 31 MT does not read *ארומה* but the *hapax legomenon* *התרומה*. In recent commentaries it has been suggested to keep MT and to render it "secretly" or "by a ruse" (cf. Boling 1975:178; Soggin 1981:187; see also Driver 1964:15). This is perfectly possible but it is more likely that such a rendering, which is found in LXX^B, Vg and Syr grew out of the context (see Schreiner 1957:125). In fact, in order to explain LXX^A *μετα δωρον* (i.e. *בתרומה*) with the support of the Lucianic texts and OL (according to Brooke & McLean's critical apparatus) it is better to envisage a corruption of *בארומה*. The Hebrew for *μετα δωρον* "suggests that the Greek translator may have used a text in which the *ו* was written as in *בארומה*, v.⁴¹." Burney 1920:281; see also Moore 1898:259).

¹³⁰ Fritz 1982:130 n.4.

historicity of which cannot be proven, yet is extremely questionable.¹³¹

Fritz's article has been responded to by Rösel.¹³² Contrary to Fritz this scholar argues for the basic historicity of ch. 9. His main points will be discussed. First of all in a footnote he comments that it is not sure that the name Gaal is derived from the root געל. Moreover, the word is attested as a real personal name in an Aramaic document from the 6th century (KAI 227,6 - געלא). However, though it is true that in KAI געלא is classified under Aramaic personal names the meaning is nevertheless unclear (unklare Bedeutung) and the root even here could be געל (verabscheuen).¹³³ It is actually more likely that we have here a play of words. Abimelech and Zebul are names with positive connotations. The former is a royal name and the latter means "high exalted"¹³⁴ or as it is vocalized by Josephus¹³⁵ "exalted one, prince" (Ζαβουλος). The meaning of these names finds then a fine contrast, already setting the character of the main protagonists, in the name of their opponent Gaal who, keeping MT, may be rendered "despised (son) of a slave".¹³⁶

Secondly, the fact that the episode, which in Fritz's view probably came into being in the Iron Age and hardly can be traced back to a "Canaanite" tradition, presupposes the political relations of the Late

131 Fritz 1982:131.

132 1983:500-3.

133 See KAI 1968:227.

134 The name is apparently the remnant of a sentence name - the mythological creature "Sea" is "Prince Yam" [zbl ym] in Ugarit.

135 Ant. Jud. 5.241-46.

136 We do not see any reason to emend MT, which has also the support of LXX^A and the Lucianic texts. The variant reading עכר probably originated in analogy to the same modern concern to give Gaal a proper patronimic. For a discussion of the textual variants see Nielsen 1959:55 and Soggin 1981:183f. If this is right the meaning of these names and the positive way in which Abimelech is portrayed is a further evidence that vv. 26-41 do not belong within the same milieu in which the rest of ch. 9 originated.

Bronze Age does not point according to Rösel to its unhistoricity but to its historicity. Referring to Reviv's essay "The Government of Shechem in the El-Amarna Period and in the Days of Abimelech" (1966), also mentioned by Fritz, Rösel remarks that this scholar has demonstrated that in Shechem the government structure of the Amarna period lasted till the days of Abimelech, "Unter dieser Voraussetzung kann die Gaal-Episode durchaus entsprechende Vorgänge widerspiegeln, ohne daß man sie auf kanaanäische Überlieferung zurückführen muß."¹³⁷ Again, this is possible, but we must not confuse, as said above, historicity with verisimilitude. Further, we must not forget that Reviv has simply put forward an hypothesis and we must not tend to treat hypotheses as facts. The el-Amarna letters and Judg. 9 are different types of documents and the two cannot be treated in the same way. While the former provides primary data of the period it purports to describe, though still subject to investigation, the latter belongs to that body of Hebrew historiography of which time of composition, circumstances and historical value are difficult to determine and we must rely on a variety of considerations before any judgment can be expressed. Its historicity cannot be accepted only on the basis of possibility and verisimilitude.¹³⁸ To realize the different nature of these two documents we need only to mention e.g. that in the Old Testament pre-monarchical traditions there is no hint

¹³⁷ 1983:501.

¹³⁸ Similarly we find it difficult to accept Buber's reasoning to accept e.g. Gideon's speech in Judg. 8.22f. as historically true. He comments as follows, "The proof of the historical possibility of the Gideon passage would be at the same time the proof of its historical truth. For the attribute 'possible' means here not just something that is not impossible, but an event corresponding with the character of a folk-epoch." (1967:64) We find it difficult to see how something which has been proved to be historically possible must also be historically true. It is still a possibility and not a fact. This becomes obvious when we realize that "the proof of the historical possibility" is never limited to only one period or circumstance.

whatsoever that Palestine was under Egyptian occupation or of the closeness of international connections as they clearly appear in the el-Amarna correspondence between Labaya and the Pharaohs Amenophis III and Amenophis IV (Akhenaten), ca. 1400-1360 B.C. These letters have often been used in support of the historicity of the Book of Judges and Reviv has especially made a good case for placing Abimelech's short rulership over Shechem in the same line with Labaya's. But in spite of all that can be said "verisimilitude" is not by implication "historicity".

A final point which he put forward against the unhistoricity of all the traditions in ch. 9 is the mention of the episode of Abimelech's death at Thebez in 2Sam. 9.21. In his words:

Es kommt nicht häufig vor und ist deshalb von Gewicht, daß eine Überlieferung aus den Büchern Josua oder Richter in einem relativ frühen Text außerhalb dieser Bücher bezeugt ist. Damit stellt 2Sam. xi 21 zwar keinen Beweis, aber doch eine starke Stütze für die Geschichtlichkeit der Abimelech - Erzählung dar; man kann sie - wenigstens in ihrem Grundbestand - nicht für eine unhistorische "Beispiel Erzählung" halten, die "frühestens im 9. Jh. im Nordreich entstanden"¹³⁹ sein soll.¹⁴⁰

Rösel's observation is right, but it is no proof of historicity. What this shows is simply that the story of Abimelech's death at Thebez was known to the writer of 2Samuel. But more than this cannot be said. The fact, however, that the date of composition of the Book of Judges is later than that of the Books of Samuel speaks against its historicity. The traditions preserved in the Books of Samuel witness to a certain fluidity and continuous reworking of the Hebrew traditions. It is possible in fact that originally Abimelech was spoken of as the son of Jeroboam rather than Jerubbaal (see above) and that the so-called period

¹³⁹ Fritz 1982:137.

¹⁴⁰ 1983:502.

of the judges as we learn from the canonical books was differently conceived. Of this there is some evidence even in the Book of 1Samuel.

According to 1Sam. 12.9ff. the delivers were Jerubbaal, Bedan (or Jeroboam and Barak according to LXX^B), Jephthah and Samuel. This list is part of Samuel's historical review. No saviour is known as Bedan in the Book of Judges nor any Jeroboam if we follow the septuagintal evidence. This is an obvious indication of the fluidity of these traditions before their final canonization. This is also witnessed to by v. 8 of this historical review according to which it was Moses and Aaron that led the Israelites from Egypt and "made them dwell in this place", i.e. the central hill country, the implication being that they entered Palestine. This tradition does not know of a conquest under Joshua nor of Moses' death before entering the "promised land".¹⁴¹

This interpretation indirectly supports Fritz's view on the historicity of ch. 9, since this tradition in 1Sam. 12.8 was in a similar fashion known still in the post-exilic period as attested by Hecateus of Abdera (end of the 4th century).¹⁴² By implication it seems difficult to speak here of "ancient" and "valuable" sources for Israelite historiography. Any tradition must simply be considered on its own

¹⁴¹ The Hebrew text clearly reads the plural **וַיִּשְׁכֹּחַ** referring both to Moses and Aaron. The versions (LXX^{B,L}, Targum^B, Pesh and Vg) read the singular **וַיִּשְׁכַּח** thus making Yahweh the subject. In so doing, however, they missed the point.

¹⁴² For a discussion of Jewish origins in hellenistic writings see Prato 1986^B:164-177. According to Hecateus of Abdera in a passage reported by Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica* XL,3,1-3) a pestilence took place in Egypt. This was caused by a religious and ritual decay due to the presence of foreigners (*ξένοι*) in the country. Thus the inhabitants attempted to remedy the situation expelling the foreigners. Among these, a large number went to Judea. They were led by Moses who founded Jerusalem and the Temple (for the text see Stern # 11, 26-29. For a commentary see J.G. Gager, *Moses*). The similarity between this tradition and 1Sam. 12.8 suggests that the Hebrew historiography of the Hebrew canon took shape only at a very late period.

merits.

E. The Idea of Theocracy

1. OT Attitudes to the Monarchy

So far we have analyzed Judg. 9 mainly from a literary and redactional point of view. We may now consider in more detail Old Testament attitudes to the royal institution.¹⁴³

What we do have in 8.22f. is obviously a view which could have arisen within a specific context in which both monarchy and theocracy were realistic alternatives or even the latter more than the former. It is this *Sitz im Leben* which we now propose to investigate.

a) Strands

T. Veijola, as well as others with him, has made the distinction between a positive and a negative strand (DtrH and DtrN) towards the monarchical institution within the so-called Deuteronomistic History (Dtr). This he has tried to demonstrate in his two monographs, *Die ewige Dynastie* (1975) and *Das Königtum in der Beurteilung der Deuteronomistischen Historiographie* (1977). A further distinction which ought to be made is perhaps between two different kinds of negative assessment of the monarchy: firstly, where the kings were judged not because they were kings but because they were bad kings - this strand could still belong to DtrH - and secondly, where the monarchic regime

¹⁴³ For a more systematic treatment of the place of the state in the OT see Smend 1983:245-261.

seems to be rejected *en bloc*. This distinction may be helpful in dating and placing the traditions into a more probable historical setting.

The basic distinction between these two strands originates with the simple observation that in Dtr the judgment of kingship is not unitary. According to one strand (DtrH) the monarchic institution is no problem at all, according to another (DtrN) it has become a most suspicious item.¹⁴⁴

In Veijola's view DtrH betrays his thoroughly positive attitude to the monarchy already in the depiction of this age "In those days there was no king in Israel" (Judg. 17.6; 18.1; 19.1; 21.25).¹⁴⁵ The chapters in which these verses occur he attributes to DtrH. Similarly he attributes to this redactor those passages in the Book of 1Samuel which are favourable to the monarchy though he suggests that at times he used here pre-existing material. He rejects the view of parallel sources about the beginning of the monarchy as well as Noth's view according to which DtrH just in this case acted against his usual attitude of an "honest broker" and so changing the tendency of the given story into its opposite.

The kingly law in Deut. 17.14-20 is the basis of DtrH though here two qualifications are made by Veijola: first of all, one must make it clear that Deut. and DtrH surely do not agree in all questions. Though they are witnesses to similar ideas there are still significant differences especially between the older material of Deut., to which also belongs the kernel of the king-law, and the deuteronomistic historiography. Secondly, one must not exaggerate the king-critical attitude of Deut. 17.14-20.

¹⁴⁴ For the following summary of these two strands we are depending on Veijola's conclusions (1977:115-22).

¹⁴⁵ However compare further our view on these verses.

DtrH's positive attitude to the monarchy is already visible in his description of the first monarch. Saul, later to become the false representative of a royal house, is positively depicted. For the redactor he was a figure of salvation history who was called by YHWH as he saw the need of his people (1Sam. 9.16b). DtrH did not only make him the deliverer of his people as it was known from old traditions but also from the hand of his enemies round about (1Sam. 10.1b; cf. 14.47-48). This also shows that this redactor integrated the pre-kingly saviour into the monarchic institution and he did not see any tension between these two different offices. His positive evaluation of Saul is further seen in the attribution of the title נָגִיד (1Sam. 10.1b). Elsewhere this title is used only for the first representative of the royal house David (1Sam. 25.30; 2Sam. 5.2; 6.21; 7.8b) and Solomon. Good things are also said about Saul: his modesty (1Sam. 10.22), his good external appearance (10.23f.), his moral way of doing with his enemies (11.12f.). In his later depiction of David DtrH also does not portray Saul in a bad light over against David but even admits that YHWH was also with Saul (1Sam. 20.13). Why, however, YHWH chose David rather than Saul for a continuous kingship was an enigma which he neither could nor intended to resolve rationally.

Veijola concludes then his summary with DtrH's negative judgment on some of the later kings. This was not because they were kings but because they were bad kings. The existence of a wholly positive portrayal of Hezekiah and Josiah and half positive of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah and Jotham (1Kings 15.14; 22.44; 2Kings 12.4; 14.4; 15.4,35) in the Israelite king history shows that it was possible for DtrH to make a certain differentiation in his evaluation of kings and that kings were not regarded by him as a single *massa perditionis*.

The second redactor (DtrN) is described by Veijola as antagonist to

kingship. The alteration of the *promonarchic* tone with which DtrH depicts the beginning of the monarchy (1Sam. 8-11*) is due to this redactor who is responsible for a thorough and almost unrecognizable revision of the text. The hostile attitude to the monarchy is already obvious in his first comment, "But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to govern us like all the nations'" (1Sam. 8.6) as well as in the immediately following verses (7-22a). In his view kingship did not arise out of a real need of the people but because of their sinful rebellion against YHWH and Samuel. The idea of divine choice is far from DtrN. For him the king embodies the people's own choice (1Sam. 8.18; 12.13) and thus something which does not belong to the people of God. The same judgment is expressed in 1Sam. 10.18-19a thus putting in a bad light DtrH's positive report about the king's election in Mizpah. The result of all these events is then depicted in ch. 12. Here the innocence of YHWH and Samuel is contrasted with the guilt of the people. To this, then, follows the negative evaluation of the first king. As soon as Saul becomes king he experiences YHWH's rejection for not having kept a commandment (1Sam. 13.13f.). The negative alternative of 1Sam. 12.14f. is thus applied to Saul right away. As to David, Veijola allows an exception. The evaluation of Saul in 1Sam. 13.13f. takes place in favour of David who also for DtrN embodies an ideal figure. This of course does not correspond well with his anti-monarchical attitude. Veijola, however, agrees here with Noth's judgment according to which Dtr together with the whole of the Old Testament traditions has seen in the person of David an exemplaric figure in spite of all his weaknesses. DtrN, attempting to portray David as completely faithful to the law, so allows himself to make an exception

in the case of David.¹⁴⁶ But this exception does not cut off anything of DtrN's basic attitude to the monarchy.

In Veijola's view, however, it is *not* very probable that DtrN was the creator of such a critical way of looking at kings. He rather inherited such a view and at times he directly used critical documents in his polemic against kingship. Among the pre-existing material which DtrN made use of, Veijola points firstly to the Jotham fable (9.8-15). This he found grown together with its historical clothing (9.7,16a,19b-21*) and inserted into the Abimelech story. And secondly, the rite of the king according to the pattern of a king contract (1Sam. 8.11-17) which he put into the mouth of Samuel. Common to both traditions is their attack of the royal institution with purely profane means of society as well as the place of origin in the Northern Kingdom Israel. Thus, they are pointers to the existence of an explicitly intellectual tradition in the Northern Kingdom to which also the prophet Hosea belonged and in which he shared. As Veijola further comments:

Es mag Überraschen, daß diese antimonarchischen Überlieferungen ihren Weg in die kanonische Geschichtsschreibung Israels erst in einer relativ späten Phase der Überlieferungsgeschichte gefunden haben. Dies ist aber nicht dem DtrG nachzutragen, und es liegt in der Natur der Sache, dass antimonarchische Pamphlete - zudem von dieser Qualität - keine besondere Vorliebe in offiziellen Kreisen genießen konnten, solange das Königtum in Ehren stand, sondern sich notgedrungen mit der Rolle einer Art "Untergrund" Literatur begnügen mußten.¹⁴⁷

DtrN, however, did not simply revive old arguments but he thoroughly adapted them to the theological atmosphere of "Deuteronomismus". His basic antagonism to kingship is because of the latter's basic incompatibility with the readiness to rely on YHWH's helping intervention

¹⁴⁶ Cf. e.g. 1Kings 3.6,14; 11.33,38; 14.8 etc.

¹⁴⁷ 1977:120.

only in the situation of danger. So far YHWH himself had appeared on the scene in time of need (1Sam. 10.18aßγb-19a), an intervention which was materialized in the sending of a saviour (1Sam. 12.8-11). But from now on the people wanted to entrust the case for their security to the earthly king according to the example of other peoples (1Sam. 8.20; 12.12). The antithesis between DtrN and DtrH is put by Veijola as follows:

Im Gegensatz zu DtrG hat DtrN im König deutlich einen Rivalen des Retters gesehen, wie besonders die scharfe Gegenüberstellung von Retter und Herrscher/König im Falle Gideon-Jerubaals zeigt (Ri 8,22-23; 9,16b-19a). Das unetablierte Amt des Retters scheint für DtrN die dem Gottesvolk allein angemessene Staatsordnung darzustellen, die nicht gegen Jahwes direkte Herrschaft verstösst. Seine Überzeugung von der Überlegenheit des Retters gegenüber dem König hat DtrN auch ausserhalb des hier behandelten Stoffes in einer selbstverfassten Geschichtsnotiz 2Kön 13,3-5 zum Ausdruck gebracht: Hier lässt er ganz plötzlich einen anonymen Retter Israel aus der Hand Arams befreien, um damit das Versagen des Königtums in einem seiner zentralsten Zuständigkeitsbereiche zu demonstrieren.¹⁴⁸

DtrN's attitude to kingship is rooted in the conviction that YHWH is the real king of Israel and does not allow any human competitor to stand by him (Judg. 8.23; 1Sam. 8.7; 12.12). The designation of YHWH as king has a history of its own before DtrN though it was the latter who drew from the recognition of YHWH's kingship the theocratic consequence "dass es gar kein menschliches Königtum geben dürfte."¹⁴⁹ This, Veijola suggests, belongs to the most precious in the theology of DtrN. It is obvious therefore that such a view would get into conflict with the existence of an institution whose right to existence is questioned and denied.

Veijola has fruitfully contributed in bringing to light a redactor (or strand as we would rather define it) to which so far not sufficient

148 1977:121.

149 Veijola 1977:122.

attention has been paid. As we see it and have already said, the origin of such an attitude is best envisaged during the exilic and post-exilic period. The key is to be found, in our opinion, in two basic attitudes to the monarchy. First of all, in its utter rejection and secondly, in the theological rationalization of this from a theocratic point of view. It is, therefore, the political, social and religious setting of these attitudes which we propose to investigate.¹⁵⁰ But before this, Veijola's conclusions on the nature of DtrH and DtrN need some further comments.

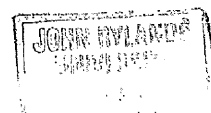
b) Extension of DtrN

As Veijola himself suggests monarchs are also negatively assessed by DtrH. On the other hand, DtrN totally rejects the institution. To this, however, he allows an exception, namely King David who is portrayed as faithful to the law, so allowing DtrN to show admiration and positively approach him. However, we wonder whether this is the case in the first place. David too, in fact, is shown in Dtr in some of his worse aspects. It is true that the writer depicts David with some admiration but this does not detain him from a negative portrayal of the Davidic traditions as well.

This view has been rightly emphasized in a recent article by Garbini.¹⁵¹ In re-assessing the so-called "Succession Narrative" (2Sam. 9-20 + 1Kings 1-2) he suggests that the original work, which he describes as "History of Kings", comprised also the stories of Abimelech, Saul,

¹⁵⁰ See section 2. Theocracy: Ideal and Institution.

¹⁵¹ 1979:19-41. In his later book 1986b:9 he has rejected some of the presuppositions held in this article. However, much of his analysis is still valid.



David (before his kingship), Ahab, and Jehu.¹⁵² The narrative, however, is only partially preserved. A reference in the narrative leads to think that it also concerned Zimri. The results are reached through an analysis of literary motifs, i.e. of those particular *topoi* of which the author shows a clear preference and which generally are not found in other narratives. However, the author's view that the use of content and ideological/theological criteria are not valid has limited him in accepting some traditions in his hypothetical "history of Kings" and excluding others which ought to have been included. Literary motifs might in fact have been borrowed by an author from already existing material, but do not reflect necessarily identity of authorship. But what is relevant for us is his conclusion as to the political position of the author of this literary work. To understand this we must keep in mind that the author of this work describes all these kings, with the exception of Saul, in their worst aspects. Of these are especially underlined those events which are generally criminal and in any way bloody by which many of them have come to the throne (Abimelech, David, Solomon, Zimri, Jehu). Of all the monarchs king Saul (except those traditions which are clearly anti-monarchical) has done nothing wrong, yet he is rejected by YHWH. The answer, as Garbini suggests, is not in the fact of having been a bad king but a king at all and as such he could not be right. Because of the lack of any crime to be attributed to Saul, this king is given some negative connotations because an evil spirit from YHWH came upon him (1Sam. 19.9). When evil is not man-caused it is sent by God. With this the author reveals his true attitude to kingship. He

¹⁵² The respective passages which he attributes to this literary work are Judg. 9.1-25,50-55 (with expansions); 1Sam. 9-10.1-16 (with expansion); 16.14-23; 18.6b-9,12-13,20-29; 19.8-17; 21.11-22.5; 24 (with expansions); 31:1-10; 2Sam. 2.17:32; 3.6-32; 4; 1Kings 21,22, 29-38; 2Kings 9-10.1-14.

is hostile to it because it makes men evil and guilty of terrible crimes. Behind this ethical-political position a further point is expressed from a theological point of view: *God is against the monarchy*. Garbini concludes then pointing to three levels on which this "Narrative" evolves: (a) on a more superficial level it appears with all the elements and literary artifices of the story; (b) under this literary vestige the narrative manifests a political position firmly anti-monarchic for moral reasons; (c) at a deeper level the narrative reveals an anti-monarchic position which is justified neither by political nor moral considerations: it is a theological and totally aprioristic opposition.¹⁵³

If we accept by and large Garbini's conclusions we must also begin to wonder whether DtrN, which is described by Veijola as the anti-monarchic redactor, must not be seen in a wider perspective rather than simply in those few passages which are openly anti-monarchical and whether we do not find ourselves in a much more complex phenomenon which cannot so neatly fit within three well defined redactions. Whether Garbini is right with the existence of a "History of Kings" (it seems to us very hypothetical) this anti-monarchic tendency was not the fruit of a redactor revising necessarily pro-monarchical material. This antagonism was already there from the beginning but to a larger extent than that envisaged by Veijola. Though it is impossible to make definite remarks we hope, however, to have made it clear that David too, in spite of DtrN's admiration for him was not after all positively assessed. He too was a king and as such, in spite of all his splendour and qualities, was guilty of many crimes.

¹⁵³ 1979:31.

c) Judges 17-21: Pro-Monarchic?

Veijola's suggestion to attribute chs. 17-19 to DtrH (the pro-monarchical strand) may also be questioned. Apparently these chapters seem to be pro-monarchic through the note, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes".¹⁵⁴ However, if we look at it from the wider perspective of its occurrence within the historical books and the Book of Judges itself, a different picture emerges. It is usual to connect ch. 19 with the end of ch. 21 to demonstrate the pro-monarchic attitude of this tradition. The chaos, disorder, lack of hospitality and desecration, depicted in ch. 19 is the direct result of the absence of a king whose presence would have, on the other hand, maintained public order and justice. But this view could only be the case, if we had very ancient stories and if the references to the pre-kingly situation were original to them. But this is far from being the case. An early date may just be envisaged for ch. 19. Ch. 20(-21) seems in fact to be the product of a later age. It presents a different picture of the Israelite tribal organization which ultimately makes redundant the monarchic institution. The tribes are organized as a kind of sacral league which in cases like that of ch. 19 is able to set up a process, to pronounce a sentence, and to carry it out. It is obvious that here the monarchy does not have any place, at the most it would be a useless institution which would only create conflict of power with the sacral league. The text, therefore, clearly supports the anti-monarchical thesis such as it is also expressed in 1Sam. 8 and similar texts in which the real causes that brought about the

¹⁵⁴ The phrase fully occurs in 17.6 and 21.25. Partially, in 18.1 and 19.1.

establishment of the monarchy are either ignored or considered as sinful political motivations. A central system was already in existence (cf. 1Sam. 7): it only needed to be properly upheld as it had been done in the past.¹⁵⁵ The lateness of these traditions is also confirmed by their mention of Mizpah, near Jerusalem,¹⁵⁶ as a centre for worship of all Israel.¹⁵⁷ It is only here and in 1Samuel that it occurs as the meeting-place of all Israel (no further mention is found of this place in the Books of Judges and Kings). But it was only after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the exilic period, that Mizpah became not only the capital of the Babylonian province but also the centre of worship of the new Jewish community. In a similar way, it appears once more in 1Macc. 3.44-46 when again Jerusalem was under the Syrians and could not be reached by the Jews. The same Mizpah of Judges 20 and 1Sam. 7.10 is probably referred too in Jer. 40f. and here as well it is intended to be the only legitimate sanctuary in place of Jerusalem. But this did not exist at that early time.¹⁵⁸ The lateness of this tradition is further

¹⁵⁵ Soggin 1982:5f. and 1986:142. Our position, however, differs from Soggin's in that he would attribute ch. 19 as well as the end of ch. 21 to the pro-monarchic strand. This is possible only if we considered these texts in isolation from the whole context in which they are now found. If they were really meant to be pro-monarchic, they have been used here with a different aim.

¹⁵⁶ The site is not sure. Probably it is to be identified with the ancient mound of Tell en-Nasbet, ca. eight miles to the north of Jerusalem.

¹⁵⁷ It is worth noticing that Judg. 20-21 do not only exhibit a close relationship to 1Sam. 7; 8; and 10.17-27 by their general tendency but also by their mention of Mizpah. In both it is a centre of worship.

¹⁵⁸ Wellhausen 1885:256. Wellhausen sees in this "a further proof of the post-Deuteronomic and Jewish origin of these narratives, but at the same time an indication that, with every inclination to the views of the Priestly Code, the writer yet had not that code before him" (256). The historicity of these passages in which Mizpah is mentioned as a place of prayer and worship for all Israel (Judg. 20-21; 1Sam. 7; 10:17-27) is also doubted by Muilenburg according to whom "the passages which refer to Mizpah as a centre for worship bear many signs of lateness and have little claim to historicity, not only because of their language and style

confirmed by the use of the term *קהל* (20.2; 21.5,8) the use of which is post-exilic and especially found in P.¹⁵⁹

The ideology which these traditions reflect is likely to be that of the post-exilic community. Now as "then" there was no king and the newly restored community is confronted afresh with the choice, this time real, between monarchy and theocracy or hierocracy. The history of the monarchy which culminated in the fall of both the Northern and Southern kingdoms is now depicted, in the so-called Dtr, in all of its worst aspects. This was a way to explain theologically the fall of both kingdoms but also, possibly, to legitimize the emerging Jerusalemite hierocracy at a time when the impossibility to establish the monarchy for whatever reason became clear.

A similar line has also been taken by Dumbrell in a recent article (1983). In it he rightly concludes that the Book of Judges can hardly have been an apology for the monarchy.¹⁶⁰ What is of most relevance for

but also because of the way they contradict contiguous passages which are indisputably reliable." The representation of Mizpah as a place of worship originated after the fall of Judah in 597 B.C. in which Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed (1962:408). See also by the same author, for a more detailed treatment of this site, "Mizpah of Benjamin", *Studia Theologica* 8 [(1954) 1955] 25-42, espec. 36-42.

¹⁵⁹ Soggin 1981:290.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Cundall 1970:178-181 who suggests just the opposite. In his view "The high-lighting, by selection and presentation, of the evils of the earlier period constitute...a kind of apology for the monarchy" (181). A similar view is also taken by Smend according to whom the Book of Judges was not an anti-monarchic composition. On the contrary, the leadership deeds of the major judges are the prelude to the rise of the monarchy. The general conditions of those times - times in which there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes - shows drastically the necessity of the monarchy (1983:257). The anti-monarchic texts in the Book of Judges (8.22f.; 9.8-15) as well as in 1Samuel were a later insertion into Dtr which did not see any problem in this institution (259f.). We may remark here that it is just possible that the stories in chs. 17-19* originally may have been meant to support the monarchic Davidic regime. Both the Levite of the first story (17.9) as well as the concubine of the second, came from Bethlehem, the same native place of king David and it is possible that these were meant to promote allegiance to the monarchy which had brought about prosperity,

our thesis is the last section of his article which he entitles, "Judges 21:25 - A Recommendation for Post-Exilic Israel". The point which the biblical writer is making in his view is a simple one:

The ideal of Israel had been preserved throughout this period *in spite of Israel...* Despite the absence of the sort of human support which might have preserved a human religious or political ideal, in spite of the fact that every man did what was right in his own eyes, Yahweh has preserved the reality of a united Israel which the book had commenced. Probably also the author is offering a recommendation to his fellow-exiles by means of such a comment. He is suggesting that the pattern of direct divine intervention, with theocratic leadership, upon which Israel's well-being had always hung, had been never so really demonstrated as it had been in the age of the Judges. It is the revival of this manner of leadership which alone would hold the key to Israel's future.¹⁶¹

Dumbrell rightly perceives that the message is specifically aimed at advocating a certain type of leadership though, in our opinion, he fails to notice the high degree of ideology which permeates these traditions. Theocratic leadership is not a manner of leadership which is being revived but created. The idea of theocracy as we will be arguing later, originated only during the post-exilic period though it is likely that its roots may have been laid in the exilic period.¹⁶²

justice, and peace in a period which was chaotic and in which anarchy reigned. But if this was the original intention it has been transformed in the present Book of Judges. The existence of an organized and functioning tribal league in chs. 20f. makes the royal institution redundant.

¹⁶¹ 1983:31. a similar view is also taken by Soggin (see above).

¹⁶² In Dumbrell's view the Book of Judges was probably redacted within the exile and it is of course with this period in mind that he interprets the Book of Judges. But it seems to us too early for such anti-monarchic views to have been given official expression. This view could have originated only when the possibility of the re-establishment of this office faded away or began to find strong opposition from the religious leaders of the time. As far as we understand from the historical books there was still hope just after the exile that the House of David would again be re-established. It is in the disappointment of or possibly opposition to this hope that we must look for the birth of the rejection of the royal institution.

c) Dating

A final comment which we want to make is regarding the date of this strand. As far as we understand Veijola he seems to imply that anti-monarchic literature was already in existence in the North during the period of the divided kingdom (cf. Hosea), but only as a kind of underground literature. But as he himself remarks, that it may surprise that these traditions found their way into the canonical historiography of Israel only in a relatively late time, we wonder whether we should not then envisage a different time of origin. Moreover, as we have said above, we must differentiate between a negative assessment of kings from the rejection of the royal institution as such. Perhaps, too much has been made of the Book of Hosea to support the opinion that this tendency was already there at the time of this prophet. We must rather envisage a time when there was no king. This means that we must concentrate either during the pre-monarchic¹⁶³ or exilic/ post-exilic period. Only then such traditions could realistically come into being. A definite pointer towards this is the unrealistic situation which these traditions envisage. Veijola rightly describes DtrN's attitude to the monarchy as hostile and thus depicting the king as a rival to the saviour. The latter as well as the unclear institution of the judges seem to this strand the only appropriate form of organization for the people of Israel in that it does not reject YHWH's direct rule. But how this should have concretely taken place is not clear at all neither in the biblical traditions themselves nor in Veijola's treatment of DtrN. Only when the

¹⁶³ So e.g. Penna 1963:139 who thinks that the anti-monarchic text are best set during the very time they describe. He rightly points out that its allocation to the late monarchic period is unjustified since the legitimacy of the monarchic institution *per se*, even in the North, is never called into question.

people of Israel become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19.6), i.e. after the fall of both Israel and Judah, this strand can find a concrete *Sitz im Leben*.

2. Theocracy: Ideal and Institution

From what has been said at various points it begins now to become clearer that we ought to make a basic distinction between theocracy as an ideal and theocracy as an institution.¹⁶⁴ Such a distinction had already been made more than a century ago by Wellhausen and he in turn was indebted to Vatke's *Biblical Theology*.¹⁶⁵

a) Wellhausen on Theocracy

The two different judgments on the monarchy are the product of two different ages which find their line of division in the fall of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile to Babylon. The attitude to the monarchy in the pre-exilic texts is thoroughly positive.¹⁶⁶ It was the greatest blessing of YHWH which brought order and prosperity and gave rest to the people.¹⁶⁷ Hebrew antiquity was unaware of any hostility or incompatibility between YHWH's and the earthly king's rule. We need simply to be reminded of the

¹⁶⁴ For this section we are depending on Wellhausen 1988:254-56.

¹⁶⁵ W. Vatke, *Die biblische Theologie wissenschaftlich dargestellt. I: Die Religion des Alten Testaments*, Berlin: G. Bethge, 1835.

¹⁶⁶ In the post-exilic texts such an attitude, though with different emphasis, is revived in the Books of Chronicles.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Num. 23f. according to which in Balaam's view of the happy future of Israel the monarchy is envisaged. See especially 23.21; 24.7 with reference to Saul and 24.17 with reference to David. Whether, however, as Wellhausen suggests, according to Deut. 33.4f. the monarchy and the Torah are the two greatest gifts of God's grace to Israel is not sure.

title "Anointed of YHWH" which was borne by the king as well as of the prophets' hope the ideal of which would be incomplete without a human king. "The ancient Israelites were as fully conscious as any other people of the gratitude they owed to the men and the institutions by whose aid they had been lifted out of anarchy and oppression, and formed into an orderly community, capable of self-defense. Of this the Books of Samuel afford the most eloquent testimony."¹⁶⁸

The texts of 1Sam. 7; 8; 10.17-27 clearly depict the establishment of the monarchy as a step backward from the ideal theocratic government from the Mosaic times onwards. Even the period of the judges appears in a better light¹⁶⁹ in which theocracy was still maintained (Judg. 8.22f.) and the first attempt to create a monarchy failed. Under the institution of the judges as well as the leadership of Samuel everything was the way it should be. But if we should ask ourselves what was the system all about and how it functioned there is no clear answer. All we are told is about the self-sufficiency of the system. Only faithfulness to YHWH is required and it is he who will intervene and destroy the people's enemy in time of threat. This view is obviously an idealized presentation of an age about which the author had no real knowledge. As Wellhausen pertinently comments:

The ancient Israelites did not build a church first of all:
what they built first was a house to live in, and they

¹⁶⁸ Wellhausen 1885:254.

¹⁶⁹ See e.g. Dragga 1987:38-46 who draws the implicit parallels between the Book of Judges and the story of Saul whose failure is seen in the shadow of the judges. As he concludes, "...though Saul's failure is a religious failure of obedience, it is equally a political failure to satisfy heightened expectations, a failure to eclipse charismatic predecessors, a failure to escape the shadow of the judges" (44). For parallels between Gideon's narrative and Saul see P.R. Ackroyd, *The First Book of Samuel*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971. His observations are summarized in Dragga 1987:44f., ns. 7 and 8.

rejoiced not a little when they got it happily roofed over (xi.15). But we have still to add...that the idea here before us can only have arisen in an age which had no knowledge of Israel as a people and a state, which had no experience of the real conditions of existence in these forms; in other words, it is the offspring of exilic post-exilic Judaism. At that time the nation was transformed into a religious community, whose members were at liberty to concentrate themselves on what they held to be the great business of life, worship and religiousness, because the...Persians had relieved them of all care for worldly concerns. At that time, accordingly, the theocracy existed, and it is from that time that it is transposed in an idealized form to early times. The material basis on which the theocracy rested in fact, namely, the foreign domination, is put out of sight and it is counted heathenism in the old Israelites that they cared for the external conditions of their national existence, that they are a people in the full sense of the word, and seek to maintain themselves as such with the weapons which are found necessary in the work-a-day world. It naturally never came into the heads of these epigoni to conceive that the political organization and centralization which the monarchy called into being provided the basis for the organization and centralization of the worship, and that their church was merely a spiritual survival of the nation. What is added to Moses is taken away from the monarchy.

As Wellhausen has further suggested, the ideal of theocracy is best exemplified in the description of the Mosaic age as a form of theocratic government. Again, here as elsewhere, the narratives which are described from such a perspective are a back-projection into an idealized past, of a situation actually reflecting the exilic and post-exilic age in which the rule of YHWH was given expression in the concrete formation of an institution.

Wellhausen's formulation as well as that of his pupil Budde along the same line, is classical of the older German research which is preceded especially by Vatke's work. Crüsemann, who has particularly dealt with this problem in his 1978 monograph has questioned the validity of Wellhausen's thesis by uncovering the factors which led these scholars to take this view, namely the political climate of 19th century Prussia, i.e. the Reich. To understand Wellhausen fully Crüsemann points to his view of the period of the judges and the monarchy. The former is

depicted a number of times as an epoch of anarchy which is clearly characterized by the formula of Judg. 17.6; 21.25, while the latter as deliverance from this anarchy. Thus, he shows his unlimited positive view of the monarchy as such. This is obvious when he describes the Israelite monarchy as the greatest blessing of YHWH. But this, Crüsemann remarks, was not true only for ancient Israel but surely for Wellhausen himself and it is in the Prussia of the 19th century that we find its true *Sitz im Leben*. For Wellhausen as well as for the entire German historical school it is the indisputably basic value-idea of the state as such as well as that of the monarchy of his time which ultimately lies behind not only his explicit historical value judgments but to a large extent also behind his historical knowledge at all. Since for Wellhausen the state constitutes a genuine product of the YHWH religion he excludes any conflict between state and religion at least in its early time. The identity of state and religion in the monarchy leads necessarily to the lower dating and negative evaluation of the anti-monarchic texts. Also in this Wellhausen reflects the historical interests of his own time in what he describes objectively as historical facts.¹⁷⁰

Crüsemann is clearly right in appealing to the political atmosphere of Wellhausen's time in order to explain how this in turn influenced his understanding of the Old Testament anti-monarchic texts. Yet, it is methodologically wrong to deny the value or even the correctness of a view just because we can trace the origin of an insight to the

¹⁷⁰ Crüsemann 1978:4ff. See also the work by F. Boschwitz, *Julius Wellhausen - Motive und Maßstäbe seiner Geschichtsschreibung*, 2. repr. Aufl., Darmstadt, 1968, upon which Crüsemann relies for the description of Wellhausen in his historical context and the influence of this on him. Wellhausen's basic political stand is clearly stated in his birthday address to the Kaiser of 1900, *Ein Gemeinwesen ohne Obrigkeit. Rede zur Feier des Geburtstages Seiner Majestät des Kaisers und Königs am 27. Januar 1900 im Namen der Georg - August - Universität, Göttingen*, 1900. See Crüsemann 1978:6f. n. 41.

socio-political context in which a writer lived. We need simply to be reminded of how many scientific discoveries were found by mistake, but the mistake does not invalidate the find. In the same way we should rather welcome specific situations which may enhance the imagination of the historian and thus provide insights more difficult to reach in a different context. It is the insight ultimately and not the means which ought to be tested. But by the very fact that several scholars even today would still hold such a view it is obvious that Wellhausen's understanding was not a mere reflection of his age, but that such an understanding may after all be correct.¹⁷¹

b) Theocracy and the Ancient Writers

The first to speak of θεοκρατία and apparently first to coin such a term was Josephus. The idea goes back to the Old Testament and Josephus used it to describe the Mosaic institution. Writing against Apion, Josephus says:

There is endless variety in the details of the customs and laws which prevail in the world at large. To give but a summary enumeration: some peoples have entrusted the supreme political power to monarchies, others to oligarchies, yet others to the masses. Our lawgiver, however, was attracted by none of these forms of polity, but gave to his constitution the form of what - if a forced expression be permitted - may be termed a "theocracy," placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God.¹⁷²

As it is generally acknowledged Josephus was here speaking about and depicting a bygone age having in front of him the sacred community of his

¹⁷¹ We ourselves had thought of the post-exilic age as the most probable time for such texts before finding out that Wellhausen had already thought of this more than one hundred years ago! Cf. Ahlström 1986:8.

¹⁷² *Ag. Apion* II, 164-65.

own days which existed till the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But Josephus' religious community was also the same (or similar) community which had its origin during the exilic period and came to its full expression during the post-exilic period down to the Hellenistic period in which Jerusalem remained under the sole rule of the High Priest.¹⁷³

Of other ancient writers, it is in Hecateus of Abdera (4th century B.C.) that the oldest account of Jewish origins in Greek literature is found.¹⁷⁴ This account is preserved in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*, XL,3,1-8. In it Hecateus appears to be entirely ignorant of the dynastic period of Israel and Judah which preceded the Persian period. He simply describes the Jewish community as one that is ruled by priests. Thus Hecateus as Josephus is influenced by the actual contemporary situation in Judea.¹⁷⁵ It is also interesting to notice that he is aware of Jewish monotheism, the twelve tribes division¹⁷⁶ of the Jewish people, and an unsocial and intolerant mode of life.¹⁷⁷ The reason why they never have a king is traced back to Moses who after having led

¹⁷³ This point needs further comments. See later on.

¹⁷⁴ The first reference to the Jews is likely to come from Theophrastus (372-288/7 B.C.), a disciple of Aristotle. He describes the Jews in a fragment in his work, *De Pietate*. See Stern 1974:8f.

¹⁷⁵ In the post-exilic period the institution of the monarchy was hardly ever associated with the Jews, it is only scarcely mentioned by the Greek authors. Philo and Josephus themselves "tend to ignore the monarchy in their general survey of the Jewish constitution. It was the hierocracy that was considered to be the specific Jewish form of government, the *πάτριος πολιτεία* of the Jews, as it is expressed e.g. in *Ant.*, XIV,41, and in Diodorus, XL,2." Stern 1974:31.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *The Letter of Aristeas* which also refers to the twelve tribes of Israel. Such a reference in a document which is dated very late may after all not be so surprising as it is usually pointed out.

¹⁷⁷ The last motif occurs also in Hecateus' *De Iudaeis* as it is told by Josephus in *Against Apion*, I,183-204. Here Josephus reports, quoting Hecateus, of the Jews' regard of the law and of their obstinacy in defence of it. In one instance Josephus reports, "Again, when temples and altars were erected in the country by invaders, the Jews razed them all to the ground, paying in some cases a fine to the satraps, and in others obtaining pardon (§ 193). Stern 1974:38.

the people out of Egypt into Palestine, having founded Jerusalem and the temple, he appointed priests invested with both political and religious power. The authority over the people resides in the hands of "whichever priest is regarded as superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue. They call this man the high priest, and believe that he acts as a messenger to them of God's commandments."¹⁷⁸

It is worth noticing that the theocracy, as form of government peculiar to the Jews, was already known by the time of Hecateus as an established system and it is therefore likely that by this time it was the accepted and only legitimate form of government of the Jews. The total absence of the possibility of a monarchic institution may suggest that in the fourth century it was no longer a matter of discussion. Besides this the twelve tribe structure as well as the theme of religious intolerance are vivid recollections. These are all aspects which in the biblical traditions are mainly allocated to the pre-monarchic period. The twelve tribe division goes back as far as the Genesis traditions, i.e. at a time when Israel had "not yet" a political identity; the establishment of the theocratic institution as well as the motif of religious intolerance motif (cf. Ex. 34) are attributed to Moses. We may not be far, therefore, in suggesting that especially the pre-monarchic traditions do reflect situations which really find their concrete setting only in the post-exilic community. It is only then that they originated and in our view find the most satisfactory explanation.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Diodorus, *Bibl. Hist.*, XL,3,5. Stern 1974:28.

¹⁷⁹ As to the sacral league see Soggin 1987:11ff. After the fall of Jerusalem the task of Israelite historiographers was now to explain theologically the events. It was not to write a history in our modern sense but to "evangelize" their own people helping them to integrate into a new political and religious reality which was that of the emerging hierarchy. Soggin suggests then that a way to explain it was by recalling the "ancient" system of the tribal league in which the

The idea of theocracy as such, in fact, could have originated only after the establishment of the state without which the practical means to bring out any form of religious organization are just missing. The upkeep of priests, the cult and all that a religious leadership requires can come into being only with the formation of the state which guarantees and supports the existence of a religious system. The beginnings of a theocracy can therefore be seen in the formation of the state itself possibly under Saul and David who, in spite of the former's rejection by YHWH, left a deep impression in the Israelite traditions. But this did not envisage any conflict of ideals in the monarchic period. In fact, it is likely that both the king of Israel and Judah would have acted as priests of the state cult.¹⁸⁰ This attitude changed, however, with the realization of theocracy in concrete terms. The pre-exilic idealistic presentation of YHWH's rule became a concrete reality in the post-exilic age and the high priest, a figure which was unknown or identical to that of the king in pre-exilic times, came to acquire, though with restrictions, prerogatives which had been previously belonged only to the monarch.¹⁸¹ Moreover, we may observe that theocracy as a form of government is hierocracy and to speak of the former as a concrete realization is to speak of the latter: the two are identical. The theocracy which in the historical books is portrayed as back in the past arose only many centuries later. It was only after the destruction of both Samaria and Jerusalem that great changes occurred. It was in

religious element was central and was sufficient, without any need of a monarchy, to bind the various groups together. Whether, however, because an interest in this institution arose only in the exilic and post-exilic period, it never existed cannot be said.

¹⁸⁰ See Garbini 1980:53-69. Cf. Ps. 110.4 a royal psalm surely pre-exilic (Soggin 1982:7).

¹⁸¹ Soggin 1982:7.

this way that the people became "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19.6).

c) Theocracy and Hierocracy

The actual time of the realization of the Jewish theocratic government has been briefly addressed by Laperrousaz. In an article published in 1982 this author suggests that theocracy began not in the Persian but only in the Greek period and thus the dates of those writings which are written from such a perspective should be lowered. His starting point is the publication of new epigraphic material by Avigad according to whom Zerubbabel was followed by other governors till the end of the Persian period.

In his work of 1976 Avigad analyses some bullae and seals from a post-exilic Judean archive. The collection of finds published here includes 67 inscribed items of which 65 are bullae and two are seals. The place of find is, however, unknown since this material reached him through an intermediary. The authenticity is, however, absolutely undoubted by Avigad.¹⁸² Three items are singled out by him as having special significance: the seal of Shelomit, "maidservant of the governor"; the Yehud Bullae (יהוד/יהוד); (c) and the bulla reading the name of Elnathan the governor (לאלנתן פתוחא). We will be concerned only with the last two items. In the light of these finds Avigad rejects some

¹⁸² In spite of Avigad's sure confidence in the authenticity of this material this has been seriously put into doubt by Garbini, "Nuovi documenti epigrafici della Palestina - 1976", *Henoch* 1 (1972) 398-399. A similar judgment has also been expressed by Garbini in regard to the 225 bullae further published by Avigad and considered authentic by him (*Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah: Remnants of a Burnt Archive*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1986). See Garbini's review in *Henoch* 9 (1987) 397-399. With reservations we will assume their authenticity.

scholars' opinion "that after Zerubbabel there were no Jewish governors, for Judah ceased to be an autonomous province, having been annexed administratively to Samaria" and that only "with the arrival of Nehemiah was Judah restored to its former autonomy and freed from Samaritan control" (33) or Alt's further suggestion according to which "Judah had never been an autonomous province, but was annexed to the province of Samaria immediately after the Babylonian conquest."¹⁸³ In his view Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were no actual governors. The first was Nehemiah.

The new finds, however, as well as the previous jar-impressions found on Judean sites are in Avigad's view obvious evidence for the autonomous existence of Judah. On the basis of paleographical considerations he dates these bullae and associated seals as well the Aramaic jar-impressions in the late 6th century B.C.¹⁸⁴

These finds as well as the stamped jar-handles which also bear the names of two so far unknown Judean governors have further allowed Avigad, hypothetically of course, to reconstruct a list of Judean governors. In the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah only three governors of Judah are mentioned, namely Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5.14, 1Chron. 3.7); Zerubbabel (Hag. 1.1, 14); and Nehemiah (Neh. 5.14; 12.26). Between Zerubbabel (515 B.C.) and Nehemiah (445 B.C.) no other governor is mentioned by name with a gap of 70 years. Thus some have suggested that Zerubbabel, the last of the Davidic line, was removed from his office because suspected by Darius of attempting to restore again the Davidic dynasty; others, as said, above,

¹⁸³ A. Alt, "Die Rolle Samarias bei der Entstehung des Judentums, *Festschrift Otto Proksch*, Leipzig, 1934, 5-28 (= *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel II*, München, 1959, 316-337, esp. 333 n. 2). See also Smith 1971:193ff. Avigad 1976:33.

¹⁸⁴ 1976:36.

that there was no further governor after Zerubbabel till the time of Nehemiah. The new finds provide now important evidence to clarify this problem. The names of two governors, namely Yeho'ezer and Ahzai, are found stamped on the jars. The name of a third governor is now provided by the new finds. The three perfectly fill the gap, though not entirely, between Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. On the basis of the typology of the script, Avigad would place Elnathan before his two "extra biblical" fellows. As for the governors after Nehemiah only two names, though the list must have been longer, are known to us. His reconstruction is as follows:

Sheshbazzar, "governor (פֶּתַח)" (Ezra 5.14); "prince of Judah" (Ezra 1.8), ca. 538 B.C.

Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, "governor of Judah (יְהוּדָה פֶּתַח)" (Haggai 1.1, 14), 515 B.C.

Elnathan, "governor (פֶּתַח)" (jar-impression), early 6th century B.C.

Yeho'ezer, "governor (פֶּתַח)" (jar-impression), early 5th century B.C.

Nehemiah, son of Hacaliah, "the governor (הַפֶּתַח)" (Neh. 5.14; 12.26), 445-433 B.C.

Bagoi (Bagoas), "governor of Judah (יְהוּדָה פֶּתַח)" (Elephantine Papyrus 30.1), 408 B.C.

Yehezqiyah, "the governor (הַפֶּתַח)" (coins), ca. 330 B.C.

As Avigad further remarks:

All these governors (except possibly the penultimate) were Jews. Bagoi is thought to have been a Persian on the basis of his name, but among the returnees from exile was an extensive family named Bigvai (Ezra 2.14; 8.14; Neh. 7.7, 18; the name is of Iranian origin). Thus, the name probably lacks all ethnic connotation. The Persians generally appointed rulers from among the local populace (cf. the province of Samaria: Sanballat, Jeshua, Hananiah). If of the eight governors of our list, seven are certainly Jews, there is no room to see in the eighth a Jew as well.¹⁸⁵

Avigad's study further clarifies the mention of other governors,

185 1976:35.

referred to by Nehemiah, but of whom the Bible has preserved no evidence:

The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people, and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. (Neh. 5.15)¹⁸⁶

Similarly, Malachi seems also conscious of this office:

When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that no evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that no evil? Present that to your governor; will he be pleased with you or show you favour? says YHWH of hosts. (Mal. 1.8)¹⁸⁷

The existence of Jewish governors is then well attested during the Persian period. On the other hand during the Greek period (332-63 B.C.) there is no trace of any governor and no evidence of the existence of a secular leader over Judah. It is at this time, then, according to Laperrousaz that the chief of the Jerusalemite priesthood took on both secular and religious powers and that Judea first knew a theocratic form of government.¹⁸⁸ He further remarks that it is exactly at this point that many contemporary exegetes date the Chronicles. Thus Carquot remarks:

The temple and worship are enough to bring into effect *hic et nunc* the 'kingship of YHWH'. As the priestly writer, the 'Chronicler' sees in theocracy and its mediation by the

¹⁸⁶ Avigad takes for granted that this verse cannot refer to Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, who are the only governors mentioned prior to Nehemiah. This, in his view, "hardly seems reasonable, if only because of the time factor...After Zerubbabel, who was suspected by the king of Persia of messianic aspirations, no further governors of the Davidic line were appointed, but only reliable non-entities, who have left no mark in history." (34) The same view is taken by Laperrousaz quoting from Sh. Talmon's review of Avigad's work (*Nouvelles chrétiennes d'Israël*, Ministère des Cultes, Jérusalem, volume XXVI, n. 2 (Printemps) 1977, p. 116) with approval. This silence, however, of the "bad governors" with the implication that these might have been Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel may be more significant for an understanding of the Jewish view on this form of government than Avigad has allowed.

¹⁸⁷ The reference here, however, could just be to Nehemiah since the prophet exercised his ministry either in the first or second half of the fifth century B.C. See W.H. Schmidt 1984:281.

¹⁸⁸ 1982:95.

clearly the unquenchable government of the Jewish state. This is what he thought worth reminding to his contemporaries at the time when 'temporal' lordship was passing from the Persians to the Greeks.¹⁸⁹

If then the setting up in Jerusalem of a theocratic government only goes back to the Greek period, at the earliest from the start of the 4th century B.C., Laperrousaz further asks whether it would not be advisable, to lower the date of composition of the various biblical texts and passages which are considered reflecting the situation in Jerusalem at the time of writing.¹⁹⁰

If Avigad is right in suggesting that Jewish governors were appointed down to the end of the Persian period, it is undoubtedly right, as Laperrousaz suggests, that strictly speaking we can speak of theocracy only during the subsequent Greek period and this was the same situation of which Josephus was aware. But there is still room, in our opinion, to envisage this situation, though in a slightly different form, already in the Persian period. If, after Zerubbabel other Jewish governors did exist it is remarkable how the biblical traditions have misguided commentators. It is in fact just possible that with Zerubbabel the Jerusalemite hierarchy tended more and more to concentrate on both temporal and religious power in the figure of the high priest. After Zerubbabel, with the exception of Nehemiah, the political power invested in the governors became wholly secular so that theocracy at least in spirit was fully realized then. The theocracy of the Greek period did not come into being out of a vacuum but it was developed and consolidated already in the preceding period. The complete silence, except for the

¹⁸⁹ A. Caquot, "Le judaïsme depuis la captivité de Babylone jusqu'à la révolte de Bar-Kokheba", dans *Histoire des Religions* (Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, volume 34), tome II, Paris, 1972, p.148, in Laperrousaz 1982:96.

¹⁹⁰ 1982:96.

names of three governors, point in this direction.

d) Theocracy and the Prophets

The idea of theocracy envisaging the subordination of the political power under the kingship of God is also taken up by the prophets especially in times of crisis and moral and social decay. But we are still far from a rejection of the monarchy and as much as the divine element is emphasized "politics" remain "politics". In the condemnation of Jerusalem by the prophet Isaiah (see e.g. Isa. 1.21-27) he does not envisage any dichotomy between the divine and earthly kingdom. Both human and divine law are the same. Rather, the prophets expect in the future the restoration of an idealized past where justice will reign again.¹⁹¹

In Isaiah's view¹⁹² the human king constituted YHWH's representative on earth and he did not see any tension arising between the divine and the earthly rule. In the messianic prophecy or "prophetic hymn of thanksgiving" (Kaiser) of ch. 9.1-6 (ET 2-7), the prophet expresses the

¹⁹¹ Cf. 32.1-2. The reference to the restoration of "judges as at first" and "counsellors as at the beginning" (1.26), as Kaiser suggests 1983:45, may refer to the members of the renewed dynasty and are to be seen together with the renewed kingdom announced in 9.1ff.; 11.1ff. If, however, we should understand this passage differently, the period in mind may just be that envisaged in the Book of Judges. This suggestion has come from J. Vermeylen, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique I*, EtB, Paris, 1977, p.90, but rejected by Kaiser because at that time Jerusalem was not part of Israelite territory (1983:45 n. 33). However, it could just be that the reference to judges may have been inspired by "the period of the judges". 9.3 (ET 4) seems also to allude to it. If so, this period must have had different connotations than the ones it assumed in the canonical Book of Judges.

¹⁹² The passages which we will be referring to as well as the preceding ones are dated by Kaiser during the exilic and post-exilic period and are not attributed to the prophet Isaiah himself. Whatever the case, what is relevant for us is their attitude to the monarchy rather than, though this is not unimportant, their dating.

idea that after the saving intervention of YHWH the restoration of the kingdom of David [5-6b α (ET 6-7a)] would occur as well as the Davidic king. The hope of a Davidic descendent is again expressed in ch. 11.1-9 when the king is described as the guarantor of social peace. The spirit of YHWH will rest upon him and give him wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of YHWH (v. 2). In such a way the king shares "in God's capacity to see through the disputes which are presented to him, and therefore to arrive to a just judgment."¹⁹³ The fear of God restrains the king from partisan judgments and makes him to recognize the rights of the weaker members of society as well (v. 41). "The king's word is not just a report or an indication of his will; it participates in the power of the creative word of God and of the prophet (cf. Ps. 33.6; Hos. 6.5; Jer. 23.29; Isa. 55.10f.)."¹⁹⁴

Such an understanding of "kingship as the authority which was called to preserve justice on this earth"¹⁹⁵ was also common among the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, the Egyptians and even the Canaanites.¹⁹⁶ If, as Kaiser suggests, these passages did not originate before the fall of Jerusalem they would then express the wish "for the foundation of a new kingship which lived up to the divine will not only ideally, but also in reality."¹⁹⁷

A similar attitude to the monarchy is also found elsewhere. In Lam. 4.20 e.g. the author regrets the absence of a king:

The breath of our nostrils, YHWH's anointed, was taken in their pits, he of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall

¹⁹³ V. 3, Kaiser 1983:257.

¹⁹⁴ Kaiser 1983:258.

¹⁹⁵ Kaiser 1983:238.

¹⁹⁶ Kaiser 1983:238, see n.7 for bibliography.

¹⁹⁷ Kaiser 1983:258.

live among the nations".

An exception seems to be the Book of Hosea in which the prophet expresses condemnation of the monarchy at several points. But we must not forget that Hosea was prophesying in the North and that he was speaking out of personal experience. The Northern Kingdom, in fact, contrary to the Southern, had not been able to establish a dynastic monarchy but theirs was a succession of usurpations.

In the early post-exilic period the king was still a very important figure and the hope was still alive that the kingdom of David would be re-established by Zerubbabel.¹⁹⁸ The prophet Haggai witnesses to this hope as he experienced the period of disorder that took place in Babylon just after the death of Cambyses which threatened to break down the kingdom. Though by this time a dichotomy between the political and the religious power had clearly established itself, Kingship and priesthood were still held together. They perfectly co-existed together and the Book of Haggai concludes with a messianic oracle about the person of Zerubbabel:

The word of YHWH came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judea, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the chariots and their riders; and the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his fellow. On that day, says YHWH of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says YHWH, and make you a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says YHWH of hosts." (2.20-23)

During the early post-exilic period, though the kingly and priestly rule began to be differentiated and assume their own prerogatives, the two were thought to be able to stand side by side with no antithesis between

¹⁹⁸ Apparently (see later on) he was the grandson of Jehoiachin and the last king of the Davidic dynasty. Note incidentally his Babylonian name. This is a clear sign not only of the degree to which the exiles had been assimilated to their new country but also that religious/ethnic preservation was a later phenomenon.

them. The returning community at first organized itself according to the idealistic scheme of Ezekiel (Ez.45) under the leadership of two anointed ones: the prince of Davidic descent and the high priest of Zadokite descent : Zerubbabel and Joshua. It was in fact during the exile that the idea for the priesthood to be from Zadokite descendance as well as the hierarchization of priesthood with the birth of the figure of the high priest originated.¹⁹⁹

The feeling among the Jews was one of great enthusiasm. They knew that they were led by a descendent of David²⁰⁰ and the prophet Zechariah

¹⁹⁹ Sacchi 1976:27.

²⁰⁰ Hayes (Miller & Hayes 1986:456), however, argues for the non-Davidic descendance of Zerubbabel since he is never mentioned as such anywhere in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah. It is only the Chronicler (1Chron. 3.17-24) that makes Zerubbabel explicitly a member of the Davidic family though as the son of Pedaiah and not Shealtiel (cf. Ezra 3.2,8; 5.2; Neh. 12.1). Hayes concludes, therefore, that "if Zerubbabel had been a member of the Davidic family line, it seems almost unbelievable that neither Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, nor Zechariah noted this. In all probability, therefore, Zerubbabel was a non-Davidic Jewish leader whom the Chronicler has made into a member of the Judean royal family in order to emphasize what he considered to be essential - the continuity of the leadership in pre-exilic and post-exilic times." (Along this line see also Liverani 1974:451 n. 2, 452f. who suggests that with Joash we are dealing not with the restoration of the Davidic dynasty but with the foundation of a new one. The Davidic dynasty was interrupted with Athaliah's bloodshed and there is no reason to think that the boy used by Johoiada to achieve her aim was really one of Ahaziah's children. If this falsification happened once it could also happen with Zerubbabel). Even if this is the case it does not, however, affect our argument. The point remains that with the disappearance of Zerubbabel the messianic hopes which had revived with his presence (cf. Haggai and Zechariah) faded as well. We may, however, notice that in 1Chron. 3.17 Shealtiel and Pedaiah are both sons of Jeconiah. In v. 19 Pedaiah could have been mistakenly read for Shealtiel the reading of which is supported by LXX (Σαλαθηλ for Hebrew פדתיא) - though this could have also been a deliberate correction by LXX. Further, the lack of any Davidic designation in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah may simply be due to a disinterest of these books in the monarchic institution. Finally, we may notice that the designation of "branch" (Zech. 3.8; 6.12 - צמח; the designation is likely to be to Zerubbabel) was reserved for a Davidic descendent (cf. Jer. 23.5; 33.15; - possibly also Isa. 4.2, but see Kaiser 1983:86). A different view has been expressed by R. Bauckham in a paper presented at the Ehrhardt Seminar, Manchester, 20th October 1988, "The Book of Enoch and the Lucan Genealogy of Jesus". Taking literally some of the oracles of the

saw a new future for Israel by the miraculous intervention of YHWH. The fifth (ch. 4) of the eight night-visions (chs. 1-6) talks about a renewal of the Davidic kingdom and a hope is laid upon Zerubbabel for the restoration of this kingdom. Besides Zerubbabel there stands the second anointed of YHWH, Joshua, and both formed a kind of diarchy. This, however, lasted very shortly. The Davidic ruler was very soon to disappear and to leave all authority to the high priest.

According to Josephus (*Ant.* XI,21-32) Zerubbabel was a friend of Darius, and was sent to Jerusalem to the Persian court probably to discuss some difficulties. After this we do not hear anymore of Zerubbabel's return to Jerusalem. The reason is not known, but whatever the case, soon the hopes for the re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty must have been suppressed in favour of the new Jerusalemite hierocracy. Zech. 6.9-15 witnesses to this development. The events relating to the more ancient tradition of this passage show that soon this text was manipulated in order to suppress the figure of the anointed of David. The text of Zech. 6.9-15 is corrupt. The corruption is ancient as well as deliberate, meant to minimize the importance of the Davidic anointed in favour of the priestly authority. The corrupted text reads as follows:

וּלְקַחַת כֶּסֶף-וְזָהָב וְעֲשִׂיתָ עֲטֻרֹת וְשִׁמְתָּ v. 11
 בְּרֹאשׁ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-יְהוֹצָדָק הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל: 12 וְאָמַרְתָּ
 אֵלָיו.
 הִנֵּה-אִישׁ צִמְחָה שָׁמָּה...
 וְהָיָא יִבְנֶה אֶת-הַיֵּכָל...וְיֹשֵׁב רִמְשָׁל עַל-כִּסְאָו v. 13

prophetic books (see e.g. Isa. 11.1) and comparing them with the Lucan genealogy of Jesus he suggested that Zerubbabel was not a descendent of David but Nathan the son of David by whom the new line of David would be established. It was the Chronicler who first made the connection of Zerubbabel with the Davidic line. This was because of the Chronicler's own theological attitude to the Davidic dynasty which presents the promise of an eternal dynasty to David as established through Solomon.

It seems likely that in the original text there was written that the prophet had to make two crowns, one of silver and one of gold, for Joshua and Zerubbabel respectively. The words of this passage, which are now directed to Joshua, were originally directed to Zerubbabel (cf. 4.10). It is he who should have sat and ruled while Joshua should have been the "priest by his throne" (והיה כהן על-כסאו). The LXX still preserves a significant addition, "ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ", which is likely to have been an original wording of the text.²⁰¹ These connections witness the development and affirmation of the Zadokite priesthood to the detriment of the king.

What we have attempted to trace is the development of an idea which found its full expression in the post-exilic period, a period in which a variety of different ideologies co-existed and developed each attempting to assert itself. It is a time which could be described, as Sacchi puts it, as a "theocratic revolution" only the echoes of which have reached us. Around 515 B.C. Zerubbabel disappears from both the religious and the political sphere and with him the hope of a dynastic kingship too. Though he was the first to set the first stone of the temple to be rebuilt, unlike David there was no heir who could dedicate the temple. This, Sacchi emphasizes, was a real revolution of incalculable significance. The fact that no royal Hebrew inscriptions (though they were not the smallest of the area) have been found seems to confirm,

²⁰¹ Sacchi 1976:32. See Soggin 1980:332f. for alternative views. Soggin himself favours this view since this "reflects the dualism of 'prince' (*našī*) and 'high priest' which is attested in Ezek. 45-48" (333). K. Ellinger (BHS) proposes to read the singular עשרת rather than the plural though he also suggests that the original addressee was Zerubbabel and not Joshua.

though negatively, of the violence of this clash.²⁰² The historical problem does not lie with the kind of death Zerubbabel died. The scanty documents allow us only to conjecture. He might have died a violent death, which is more probable, or a natural death. But the kernel of the problem is the fact that the son could not take the place.²⁰³ With all this the Persian Empire does not have anything to do. There is no reason why it should have been impossible to restore the monarchy in Jerusalem in the Persian period, as all the Phoenician cities e.g. continued to have their traditional dynasties. Thus there could have been actual dynasties of functionaries in the Persian provinces.²⁰⁴

Within this theocratic revolution, a plurality of views co-existed and developed.²⁰⁵ It is likely that these ferments of new ideologies lasted for many years, if not centuries and often clashed with different views. The Books of Chronicles e.g. are likely to have developed as a reaction against those who opposed the monarchy by advocating an absolute form of theocratic government. The Book of Judges was composed or given

²⁰² See also the interesting discussion by Garbini 1986b:37-41. Why all the royal Hebrew inscriptions have been lost is impossible to answer. Garbini suggests either because of hatred of the royal institution (probable) or because of the necessity to suppress data which contradicted the historical reconstruction of the history of Israel in the sacred texts (not to be excluded). The former seems to us more probable.

²⁰³ A similar view is also taken by Smith 1971:141 in the Italian edition (1983) who insists in the murder and gives the responsibility to the other Davidides, though with incomprehensible arguments. See also the article by the same author in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. by W.H. Davies and F.B.A. Louis Finkelstein, vol. I, *Introduction - The Persian Period*, Cambridge/London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

²⁰⁴ Sacchi 1986:184. A more traditional view has recently been re-advocated by H. Schüngel-Straumann "Kritik am Königtum im Alten Testament", *BK* 36 (1981) 194-200. We have expressed our views above and need not repeat them. We may, however, observe that the author fails to perceive the high degree of ideology that colours these stories.

²⁰⁵ See Sacchi 1986:184-86.

its final shape in this atmosphere by an author(s) who was much sympathetic to the newly established or emerging hierocratic government and in many ways he supported it. The strand which held on the "Promise" and the Davidic House ultimately lost and disappeared together with Zerubbabel, though traces remained throughout and these were revived in the Books of Chronicles in which through the Chronicler's insistence on the reign of David and Solomon he polemically indicated that such a theocracy is rather realized in the monarchy and not in the priestly power of his day. This is the reason why all the monarchs are so positively represented. Even Manasseh, the worst of all Israelite kings, finds in the Book of Chronicles a sympathetic approach in that the author tells us that at the end of his reign he repented of his sins.²⁰⁶ It is interesting to notice that the period of the judges is either completely ignored or unknown. It seems difficult to imagine that the Chronicler was unaware of such a Book, unless we posit an even later date for the Book of Judges than for Chronicles. On the other hand, if he did know it, it was ignored because it was considered to be an anti-monarchic writing thus supporting the very view which he was trying to correct.

²⁰⁶ The more traditional view according to which the Chronicler rigidly interpreted history in the light of the principle of retribution and accordingly resolved the tension of the wicked king who lived a long life presupposing a late conversion of the king after suffering an Assyrian deportation ("Chron. 33.10-13) does not necessarily stand in tension with our interpretation.

PART THREE

IX. CONCLUSION

The present thesis arose on the one hand from the fact that in recent years no major works have appeared on the Book of Judges, yet on the other hand a number of studies have been published on the more general theme of ancient/biblical historiography which would radically challenge the conclusions of the last major contribution on the Book of Judges i.e. that by W. Richter. Thus a fresh appraisal of the narratives and traditions of the Book of Judges in the light of recent developments seemed indicated.

Part one contained an overview of the conclusions reached by Richter in applying form critical methods to the Book of Judges followed by a review of recent trends in biblical scholarship which we deemed to be relevant for a fresh form critical approach to the Gideon-Abimelech narratives in part two.

With reference to the question of any contribution of form criticism to the current debate on the late dating of biblical historiography we must conclude that its contribution is indeed minimal. In our analysis we have been able to detach several individual pericopes which originally stood as self contained units but which were then used and transformed according to the redactor's purpose. Per se these findings do not contribute to the debate on dating, rather the issues raised on the current debate provide form criticism with more valid presuppositions upon which to base conclusions. One of the main issues extensively dealt with was to show the necessity and profitability of taking extra-biblical

evidence into account which by doing so has modified a number of conclusions previously held in biblical scholarship and upon which form critical studies have been based. Some of the issues addressed were e.g. the religion of Israel which was shown to be analogous to that of her neighbouring peoples and the phenomenon of monotheism which did not exist until later. Therefore any extra biblical evidence relevant to a particular text should be used in order to supplement and ^hwere necessary rectify form critical conclusions. In this respect the contributions of comparative studies were also explored, such as Greek historiography and literary analysis which shed further light on to a text.

The second most important point in our findings has been the significance of dating a tradition and considering its possible ideological nature. Thus it could be shown e.g. that the anti-monarchic viewpoint reflected in some of the texts considered is hardly conceivable to have originated at a time when the monarchy was still fully in operation, but rather that it came about at a time when there was no hope or possibility anymore of restoring it, i.e. the post-exilic period should be the most likely setting for such an attitude to arise, especially if it is depicted against the idealized picture of a united Israel theocratically governed. Similarly, also other motifs like syncretism, religious intolerance and Holy War can be best explained as the fruit of a late polemic in post exilic years.

Thus it seems to us that the post-exilic period is the most likely time in which the Gideon and Abimelech narratives, if not the whole Book of Judges, was composed. This implies also that we should consider the Book as a unity composed by one author rather than a developmental product reflecting successive redactional hands. The logical structure in which the individual narratives have been placed as well as the various links between them would render the latter approach less

conceivable.

If then we should set aside the unexpressed presupposition of the implicit historicity of the biblical narratives as it has been largely assumed by form criticism so far and look at them from this new perspective, much new insight might be gained. We should look forward with anticipation to further research in this area of comparative ancient historiography to shed light on our biblical traditions.

Appendix I

The Problem of Gideon's Double name

In any discussion of Judges 6.25-32 a question which inevitably arises is that of Gideon's double name. How did he come to have two names?¹ Is it one or two persons with whom we are dealing? If two, why were they identified?²

In any analysis of this problem the best point with which to start is of course Judges 6.25-32. The complexity of the matter not only arises from the fact that we have an aetiology telling us how Gideon got his second name but also from the fact that in those verses where the two names came to be side by side the name Jerubbaal seems redactional. Moreover in ch. 9 Abimelech is described as Jerubbaal's son and the name Gideon never occurs. In Judges 6.25-32, however, v. 32 is part of it and not a later addition as those who support the idea that here we have two different persons have suggested.³ This means that already in tradition it was known that Gideon had a second name whose theophoric element must have caused embarrassment to the Yahwistic faith. It seems likely that

¹ Surely this question is irrelevant if we take this tradition at its face value. But its genre already suggests what to expect about matters of historicity.

² In this regard scholarly opinions are far from unanimous. Cf. Emerton 1976:289-312.

³ E.g. Lindars, Haag, Mayes, Richter. The fact that v. 32 is held to be redactional is used as a proof that here two different individuals have been identified.

this tradition was not created simply to identify two persons artificially unless it was believed that the two names belonged to the same individual. Aetiologies do not try to bring about something but they start from something which is concrete and try to trace back in the past the event(s) which brought it into being. The question is then whether we can really go beyond the stage of the transmitted tradition and attempt to uncover an earlier stage.⁴

I

Apart from our tradition the two names are also associated at a number of places which now we will consider as well as other relevant passages which might have a bearing on our problem.

a) Judges 7.1

The verse speaks of "Jerubbaal, that is Gideon..." The formulation as such would not strictly speaking raise any suspicion of a redactional hand although **וְהָאָזְנִי** may sound like a gloss. However, what is strange is that as the narrative goes on the hero is named Gideon throughout rather than Jerubbaal as one would have expected. In fact we would then have expected to find "Gideon, that is Jerubbaal" rather than the reverse. Several scholars have attempted to solve the problem taking Jerubbaal as a redactional addition,⁵ yet as Emerton remarks nobody

⁴ Most of the reconstructions were mainly based on the assumption that v. 32 was redactional. If this is rejected new avenues of investigation must be started. Whatever view is taken it will need a certain amount of imagination and speculation. Cf. Emerton 1976:304.

⁵ So Lindars 1965:325; Richter 1963:186f.; Penna 1963:123; Soggin

attempts to explain "why it is mentioned before that of Gideon."⁶ H. Schmid, on the other hand, since in 7.1 Jerubbaal is the subject, conjectures that at the basis of this complex depiction in ch. 7 lies a deed of Jerubbaal into which Gideon was introduced.⁷ The last proposal, which is also dismissed by Emerton attempts to answer the very question which he had asked in regard to the sequence of names in 7.1. Although it is not possible to say whether ch. 7 originally spoke of Jerubbaal, it is not to be excluded that some of Gideon's traditions may have circulated with the name Jerubbaal throughout and if so at a time when the name was not yet offensive to the Israelite faith.⁸ The question then is whether we can still recover those stories which were spoken as Jerubbaal's and those spoken as Gideon's, and how and why the hero acquired a second name. In fact, if we are dealing with the same person he must have got his second name sometimes during his life. There is no evidence that an Israelite would have been given two names at birth.

b) Judg. 8.29-32,35

In these two verses the two names are used alternatively. According to Richter vv. 29,31 are editorial. This identification started in v. 32 through the name aetiology which is carried on by the deuteronomistic redactions in 7.1 and 8.35, through the genealogy of Jerubbaal ben Joash in 8.29 and through the comment in 8.31 that Gideon had a son, Abimelech,

1981:125.

⁶ 1976:300. He asks this question in reference to Lindars' and Richter's proposal.

⁷ 1970:4.

⁸ It is also possible that the traditions originated at two different places where the hero was known under different names.

in Shechem. The only verse according to Richter which may speak of an original connection is 8.31, but the fact that it stands after the mention of the round number seventy (Gideon's sons) is strange and it must therefore be taken as a redactional link between ch. 8 and 9.⁹

A different suggestion comes from Lindars according to whom 8.29-32 dealt with a tradition of Jerubbaal whose name should be read also in vv. 30 and 32. In his opinion these verses have to do with dynastic kingship as is suggested by the mention of "seventy sons" and the "many wives" which are characteristic features of "kings in historical times". This tradition is compared with 8.20 according to which Gideon's first born son is still too young to slay the Midianite kings and with which, according to Lindars, it stands in contrast since "it is difficult to believe that he (Gideon) acquired a sizable harem and had numerous sons after this event. The two traditions do not take cognizance of each other."¹⁰ He further suggests that Jerubbaal exercised the function of Judge in line with the minor Judges¹¹ and of king over Shechem.¹²

A different approach to these verses is taken by older scholars who assume the identity of Gideon and Jerubbaal. According to Budde¹³ vv. 33-35 constitute an excerpt from ch. 9 which is not supposed to introduce it but to substitute it. He suggests in fact that D₂ (nachdeuteronomistische Redaktion) has omitted ch. 9 and filled the hole

⁹ Richter 1963:167.

¹⁰ 1965:323.

¹¹ According to Lindars this is suggested by vv. 30-32, a summary similar to those of the minor Judges (10.1-5; 12.7-5) and by 1Sam. 12.11 in which Jerubbaal is mentioned. However, we may notice that Jerubbaal in 1Sam 12.11 is not mentioned with the minor but major Judges.

¹² Lindars 1965:323f. For criticism see Emerton 1976:300f.

¹³ 1897:68. A similar approach is also taken by Moore and Burney.

with 8.33-35.¹⁴ He finds confirmation in that ch. 9 does not betray any hint of D₂.¹⁵ Vv. 29-32 on the other hand are intended to prepare ch. 9 introducing Abimelech and making the connection between Ophrah and Shechem. This means that if they are older than D₂ they would have fallen away with ch. 9, both would have then been re-introduced by the priestly redactor (Rp).¹⁶ But these verses are not only the work of the redactor. Rather Budde suggests that v. 29 does not belong to the introduction of ch. 9 but to the Gideon story. Formerly it constituted the conclusion of the cisjordanian campaign (7.1-8.3).¹⁷ It must however have been already transposed here by Rje as he connected this campaign with the transjordanian campaign (i.e. 8.4-21).¹⁸ He then concludes that Rp was responsible for 30-32 and suggests that although he himself used the name of Gideon (vv. 30,32) he left it unchanged in v. 29 and probably he was responsible for the insertion of Jerubbaal in v. 35 in order to connect ch. 8 with ch. 9.

A definite conclusion seems difficult but on the whole Budde's view has much to be commended for. V. 29 could have been originally the

¹⁴ Moore 1898:234 remarks here that the reason for it was because "the story of Abimelech and the Shechemites did not naturally fall into his scheme of apostasy, oppression, and deliverance; its moral was of a different kind."

¹⁵ Burney 1920:266 in fact remarks that these verses are superfluous since they were intended to give a summary of ch. 9.

¹⁶ Budde in fact argues that 29-32 carry traces of Rp. יצאי ירכו v. 30 is still found in the same way only in Gen. 46.26 and Ex. 1.5 (both belong to P); מרת בשיבה שוכה (v. 32) is found only in Gen. 25.8 (P), Gen 15.15 (Rp), 1Chron. 29.28; שום שם (v. 31) is shown to be late together with 2Kings 17.34; Neh. 9.7; Dan. 1.7,5,12.

¹⁷ So Nowack 1902:82.

¹⁸ In this regard it seems to us that Burney has not completely followed this argument. In response to Moore who follows Budde he argues that v. 29 could not have preceded it (v. 23). He just allow the possibility that it could have followed v. 23. He himself prefers however its present position.

conclusion of the cisjordanian campaign in which case the conjecture lies near that this tradition on the time was spoken as an act of Jerubbaal and not of Gideon. Further it is possible that Gideon or Jerubbaal in v. 35 is redactional which was introduced to create a closer link between chs. 6-8 and ch. 9.¹⁹

c) 1Samuel 12.11

The reference to Jerubbaal in this verse is especially significant because it is found outside the Book of Judges and there is no doubt that Jerubbaal is here a reference to the hero of Judg. 6-8. This seems to indicate the hero may have more commonly been known, in an older stratum of the Israelite tradition, as Jerubbaal rather than Gideon.²⁰ The bearing of the former name is now justified in the book of Judges with the insertion of an etymological aetiology.²¹

From what has been said above the evidence seems to suggest that the

¹⁹ In spite of the fact that a majority of commentators suggest that in v. 35 it is **ירבעל** rather than **גדעון** an interpolation the septuagintal evidence seems to indicate the opposite: **αυτος εστιν γεδεον** is omitted by glnw L/.

²⁰ The antiquity of this passage would moreover be a further evidence that Gideon was originally known as Jerubbaal. Boling sees such a sign in the sequence of the saviours. In fact provided **ברן** refers to Barak it would fit well the archaeological evidence which would date the Gideon tradition earlier than that of Deborah-Barak (1975:184). However, that this can be used as an evidence is weak. In fact it seems that the MT should be retained. Moreover, as it has been suggested by Zakovitch (1972:123-125) it is possible that **ברן** was another name for **יפתח** "just as the judge Jerubbaal-Gideon had two names (or one could say, two different traditions of his name have been handed down to us)... - the difference being that the Book of Judges contains only one tradition concerning Jephthah" (p. 125). Cf. McCarter 1980:211.

²¹ Another obvious reference to Gideon is found in Judg. 9.17. Outside the Book of Judges the name Jerubbaal occurs also in 2Sam. 11.21 in the disparaging form **ירבשת**.

identification is well grounded in tradition. 6.32 in fact is an integral part of the tradition; 7.1 has all the signs of being editorial and it suggests that originally the story which it introduces may have circulated as an act of Jerubbaal. This view may find indirect support from 1Sam. 12.11 and Judg. 8.29 which originally may have followed 8.3. 8.30-32, where the name Gideon is used, are editorial and where introduced to link chs. 6-8 to ch. 9. The link is made by the mention of Gideon's seventy sons and a son born from a concubine in Shechem. These elements may have their root in tradition. Vv. 33-35 were originally meant to be a summary of ch. 9 and to substitute it.²²

II

A question however which arises from the last point is why, if it was originally joined to the Gideon tradition, it was then broken away and joined again? The usual reply to this, by those who propound this theory, is that it was at first broken away because it did not fit well within the Deuteronomistic scheme in which the stories of the Judges are set, but then included again because of the relevance of such material. IN our opinion, however, it seems more likely that the Abimelech tradition originally may have not belonged to or developed with the Gideon cycle but it was simply summarized in vv. 33-35 which presuppose that the hearer must have been familiar with the story to which allusion

²² However, to argue only from these biblical passages is not sufficient to prove the identity of Gideon and Jerubbaal. It seems that before any conclusion may be stated at least two questions need to be answered: a) if the two are the same how do we account for the difference in style and ethos between chs. 6-8 and ch. 9? b) How do we explain the second name?

was made.²³

This proposal seems to find support in a study by Garbini²⁴ who in his re-examination of the so-called "Succession-Narrative" (SN) (2Sam. 9-20 and 1Kings 1-2)²⁵ has concluded that this literary unit should also include some other narrative sections of the Old Testament. The result of this is that the SN was originally composed neither at the beginning of Solomon's reign²⁶ nor with the political aim to support Solomon's position and affirm the legitimacy of his succession to the throne. He rather suggests that we should talk about a "Story of Kings".²⁷ Analyzing the Old Testament according to literary motifs which are characteristic of the SN (according to him, the only possible methodology in the light of the nature of the extant material)²⁸ he is able to expand the narrative so as to include, going backwards from Solomons's period, Abimelech who was king at Shechem,²⁹ Saul in an unspecified place, David first in Hebron and then in Jerusalem and of course Solomon in Jerusalem.³⁰ Going forwards he traces these characteristic literary motifs also in the narratives about Ahab and Jehu.³¹ The narrative, however, was not

²³ Of course, it could also be suggested that originally the tradition may have consisted of some of Jerubbaal's acts followed by the Abimelech tradition (surely in a different form than that which we have now). In the course of transmission the acts of the two were separated and they grew up independently before they came together again.

²⁴ 1979:19-41.

²⁵ This literary unit was first isolated by Wellhausen 1899:255-60.

²⁶ He assigns the "narrative" to the beginning of Jehu's reign, i.e. between 840-830 B.C. (1979:26f.).

²⁷ 1979:31.

²⁸ 1979:25.

²⁹ He finds evidence of "literary motifs" which are characteristic of the SN in vv. 1-25 and 50-55.

³⁰ 1979:35.

³¹ He further suggests that the narrative may have certainly included

intended to put forth a dynastic history but rather it was intended to dwell upon the events of some kings.³²

This suggestion helps to throw light on the marked differences in style and content between Judges 6-8 and 9. In fact the style of ch. 9 is similar to that which we find in the historical narratives of the books of Samuel and Kings. Moreover it sticks out within the main body of the book of Judges as a foreign corpus. Therefore, it may not be improbable the suggestion that the tradition of Abimelech the king of Shechem was joined to the Gideon tradition once it was not incorporated in the official dynastic history of Israel.³³ Hence the marked difference between this tradition and Gideon's. Indeed the two bodies of tradition grew in two different settings but this is far from meaning that Gideon and Jerubbaal were not already identified in tradition.

Further, it would shed light on the use of the phrase "the people of Israel" in places where its use seems to be mistaken. In ch. 8.33-35 we read as follows:

- v. 33 As soon as Gideon died, *the people of Israel* turned again and played the harlot after the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god.
v. 34 And *the people of Israel* did not remember the Lord their
-

other stories of kings which have not reached us (e.g. Zimri -cf. 2Kings 9.31; 1Kings 16.9-18).

³² 1979:35.

³³ What this means is that we must reckon with the fact that in ancient Israel the historical perspective of the succession of their kings might have been different than that which has come to us through the deuteronomistic compilers. The process of reshaping traditions according to some definite presuppositions of the compiler(s) can already be seen in Josh. 1-12 in which the compiler(s) presents to us the conquest not as the effort of single tribes but of a united twelve tribes Israel. Cf. Garbini 1979:35f. n. 17. We may suggest that the exclusion of an Israelite king at Shechem from Israel's official history is likely to find its background in the post-exilic period when Shechem became the house of the Samaritans and was thus in open conflict with the official Jewish sanctuary in Jerusalem (cf. Lemche 1991:89,170).

God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies on every side;
v. 35 and they did not show kindness to the family of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) in return for all the good that he had done to Israel. (RSV)

Scholars have usually pointed out that in v. 33 as well as in v. 35 the commentator either has missed the point or "Israel" is redactional.³⁴ In v. 33 we are told that the Israelites went after Baal-Berith. Evidently the commentator assumes that the inhabitants of Shechem were Israelites, but in ch. 9 it is clear that they were Canaanites. In v. 35 we have the same problem. The Israelites are accused of ungratefulness towards Jerubbaal's family. Here again the reference is to the Shechemites who equipped Abimelech with the means to destroy Jerubbaal's family.

The same problem occurs also in ch. 9. In v. 22 we are told that "Abimelech ruled over Israel three years". But rulership was in fact over Shechem and not Israel. Therefore scholars usually take this verse either as a later addition or as an indication the framer of the narrative missed or failed to pay due regard to the fact that Abimelech was essentially a Canaanite.³⁵ In v. 55 the expression "the men of Israel" occurs again. The verse is considered either redactional or it is taken by some (e.g. Burney and Gray) as an evidence that some Israelites in the neighborhood of Shechem had also accepted Abimelech's leadership.³⁶

³⁴ See commentaries *ad hoc*. Those who argue that "Israel" is redactional however do not give sufficient reason why this should be so. Cf. Boling 1975:169.

³⁵ Burney 1920:267.

³⁶ These last two verses are attributed by Richter and de Vaux (1978:802) (among other scholars) to a late stratum of the tradition. The former attributes these verses together with 9.16b-19a to "einer letzten Hand" of a redactor who has thus "israelisierte" the so shaped chapter (1963:316). The latter similarly thinks that they were lately

As we have seen these verses have created some difficulties to commentators which would be eliminated if we accepted the proposal that the Abimelech story was at one time part of a different narrative-complex which included him among the kings of a forming Israel. If this was so, it was natural for the narrator to have called the Canaanites of Shechem also under the generic phrase "the men of Israel".³⁷ This would also explain 8.33-35: the summary is not a misunderstanding of ch. 9 but it simply summarizes it under a different historical perspective and through the eyes of the Yahwistic faith.

We may therefore conclude that the marked difference in style between chs. 6-8 and ch. 9 does not necessarily imply that Jerubbaal and Gideon were two different individuals who were identified in order to link the two traditions. It may rather be suggested that the link to join such different traditions was provided by the fact that the two names belonged to the same individual or the two had already been identified in tradition.

III

A further question which needs to be asked is the significance of Gideon's double name. How do we explain it?³⁸

To start with we will briefly review the use of a double name in the

introduced by an editor to give to this episode "a pan-Israelite importance". Yet in our opinion it is better to regard them as an older layer of tradition which need to be explained otherwise. Why in fact should such a tradition be given "a pan-Israelite importance" is incomprehensible in the light of its content. Cf. H. Schmidt 1970:2.

³⁷ Although it may also be the case that the term covered, in the mind of the writer, a wider group of people.

³⁸ For a summary of the various proposals see Emerton 1976:307f.

Old Testament. In fact it is not unique for an Israelite to be the bearer of two names. A number of cases come from Israelites living in foreign countries upon whom a foreign name has been bestowed as in the case of Joseph (Gen. 41.45), Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1.6) and Esther (Esther 2.7). These instances can be safely omitted and would not apply to our case even if we should argue that Jerubbaal was Gideon's name at Shechem.

Secondly, we find a number of instances in the pre-monarchic period such as in the case of Abram-Abraham, Sarai-Sarah, Jacob-Israel, Esau-Edom, Hoshea-Joshua, Jethro-Hobab-Ruel. Yet, a close examination reveals that they are not suitable examples to provide a parallel to our tradition. In the case of Abraham and Sarah it is obvious that we are dealing here not with different names but with dialectical variants. Jacob and Esau do not offer a good analogy either since we are dealing here with the traditions of eponymous ancestors with the aim of explaining relation and descendance among, what probably originally were, different ethnic groups. In the case of Joshua the English translation seems to provide us with two different names which we can compare with our tradition. But this is misleading since in Hebrew the difference between the two is minimal (יהושע/יושע) and again we may have here another instance of dialectical variant. The different names of Jethro are not of any help either since the names are mentioned in traditions concerning Moses.³⁹

Thirdly, further examples may be found in the monarchic period where several kings are explicitly given regnal names or they may be inferred

³⁹ For further discussion see Emerton 1976:306f.

from other traditions.⁴⁰ In this case the personal name would drop out as soon as the regnal name would have bestowed upon the new king. This is the case of Solomon/Jedidiah (2Sam. 21.19);⁴¹ Azariah/Uzziah (2Kings 14.21; 15.13; etc.); Jehoahaz/Shallum (2Kings 23.31; 1Chron. 3.13; Jer. 22.11); Eliakim/Jehoiakim (2Kings 23.34); Mattaniah/Zedekiah (2Kings 24.17).⁴²

The last examples seem to provide a certain parallel with our tradition. Yet, the question which arises is whether or not Gideon was a king and further why, if so, the two names appear side by side or just in specific traditions, namely the use of the name Gideon in chs. 6-8 and Jerubbaal in ch. 9. According to the study of Honeyman a king who had been given a regnal name would stop using his private name. Exception to this are Azariah and Jehoahaz whose private names also occur after their enthronements. A reason for this can be found. According to Honeyman Jehoahaz's "survival of the private name (Shallum) alongside the throne names of his brothers in the royal genealogy of 1Chron. 3.15 is due to the shortness of his reign and the distaste of certain circles for a sovereign who owed his position to popular acclamation."⁴³ As for Uzziah he suggests that an explanation can be found in 2Kings 15.5 and 2Chron. 26.16-23 according to which "during the later years of his life the king was incapacitated by the ritual uncleanness of leprosy from discharging

⁴⁰ Honeyman 1948:15.

⁴¹ The first name is the regal. This order is kept also in the following examples.

⁴² Honeyman would also include in this list king David whose real name according to him was Elhanan (2Sam. 21.19b). Accordingly he argues that אֶרְגִּים in 2Sam. 21.19b has been introduced by dittography from the end of 2Sam. 21.19 and that יַעֲרִי is a corruption of יֵשׁ (1948:23f.). In spite of the supporters which this view has found according to McCarter (1984:450) its critics seems to have the stronger case.

⁴³ 1948:20.

kingly functions. His son Jotham acted as co-regent, and the king reverted to the status of private citizen."⁴⁴

What then about the Gideon-Jerubbaal tradition? To start with we may notice that Gideon was in fact offered hereditary kingship but that he refused for theological reasons (Judg. 8.22-23). Yet whether this is the case is disputed. G.H. Davis for instance interprets Gideon's words "as an acceptance couched in the form of a pious refusal with the motive of expressing piety and of gaining favour with his would-be subjects".⁴⁵ Gray similarly is of the opinion that Gideon accepted the offer. E. Nielsen seems also to assume that Gideon was a Israelite or Manassite king.⁴⁶ Other scholars such as Penna and Malamat suggest that in spite of his apparent refusal he "did *de facto* retain certain important privileges usually belonging to the ruler."⁴⁷ Other scholars, however, have pointed out the lateness of this tradition and consequently its historical reliability.⁴⁸

44 1948:22.

45 1963:154.

46 1959:143.

47 Malamat 1971:148; Penna expresses the same very similarly, "Non si può chiamare 're' nel senso stretto del termine perchè egli rifiutò tale titolo (8.23). È permesso chiamarlo 're di fatto' ma solo per l'autorità esercitata" (1963:164).

48 This is the view e.g. of Soggin according to whom "the episode of the offering of the kingship...has all the characteristics of relative lateness." In this regard he finds interesting Crüsemann's proposal according to whom "this text must be considered together with Num. 23.21; Deut. 33.5; 1Sam. 8.7; 12.12 and dated...between king Solomon and the end of the northern kingdom. According to Crüsemann, these texts express the opposition of certain groups to the royal ideology centred on Jerusalem, especially the temple and the royal palace" (1981:160).

Whatever the case may be with vv. 22-23 we may however observe that in ch. 8 some passages exhibit features which are characteristic of kingship. First of all this may be seen in reference to the seventy children and many wives which Gideon acquired. Especially the number seventy is particularly relevant since it seems to have been used as a designation for the princes of the royal house. Cf. Fensham

Whatever might be the case with vv. 22-23, ch. 9.2 does seem to imply that Gideon-Jerubbaal had exercised some kind of kingly rule at least in Shechem by virtue of which his sons could now claim inheritance: "Say in the ears of all the citizens of Shechem, 'which is better for you that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal rule over you, or that one rule over you?' (RSV). If the two names refer to the same individual this verse seems to contradict 8.22-23 although this does not necessarily need to be so. In fact it is possible that in tradition Gideon might have been upheld as having exercised some kind of kingly rule in Shechem but not necessarily over "the men of Israel".⁴⁹ A solution then to Gideon's double name could be suggested from his supposed rulership in Shechem (or even over Manasseh) on which he was given the name Jerubbaal.

We may now draw some final remarks.

a) Tradition attributed the two name to the same individual. That the redactional notes in the two traditions came into being only to identify two different individuals *ad hoc* seems improbable. If the two were different people their identification must have taken place at a earlier time. This may explain why two different types of material such

1977:113-115. Emerton 1976:298 is probably mistaken in not paying closer attention to this reference. Gideon's marriage to a woman of the Shechem nobility could also be understood as a sort of political-royal marriage common in the ancient world (cf. Malamat 1971:148). Further, we may notice ch. 8.18f. when allusion is made to events which are nowhere preserved for us. What is relevant here is Zebah and Zalmunna's reply to Gideon's question's which seems to assign to the hero and his brothers a royal status: "As you are, so were they, every one of them; they resembled the sons of a king." Finally, the name Abimelech whose etymology is variously explained may have allusions to a royal status: "my father is king". For a discussion of the name see Soggin 1981:166f.

⁴⁹ As to the form of government in Shechem and the way in which Jerubbaal might have ruled over the city see Reviv 1966:252-57. His suggestion is interesting but not tenable from a historical point of view since we are dealing here with traditional material which may have no relation to the actual period which they purport portray.

as ch. 9 and chs. 6-8 were brought together.

b) Provided the identification of the two is accepted it is possible to explain the name Jerubbaal as a regnal name which he acquired as he started ruling over Shechem or even over his own clan.⁵⁰

c) It is possible that the present ambiguity of the relationship between Jerubbaal and Gideon may have been caused by the extant canonical presentation of Israelite historiography. Originally, it is possible that the Abimelech tradition belonged to a narrative collection which comprised some events of the kings of "Israel". In the course of the development of the Israelite history the Abimelech tradition fell out from being incorporated into the Israelite national history though still bearing the marks of a previous incorporation into a "Israelite" collection of narrative. The Gideon-Jerubbaal traditions on the other hand developed and were shaped into a Yahwistic milieu. This may explain why in ch. 9 the name Jerubbaal was kept throughout while in chs. 6-8 not only a justification for the bearing of such a name had to be found but it is also possible that the name Jerubbaal, in some traditions where it was read, was gradually changed into Gideon.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The fact that Jerubbaal might have been Gideon's regnal name does not necessarily imply the historicity of these traditions. These narratives, in fact, may have no bearing on actual historical events.

⁵¹ Compare this with Jehoahaz and Azariah whose personal names appear also together with their regnal names. It seems that here as well as in our traditions there are specific reasons for the appearance of both names.

APPENDIX II

THE GREEK OLD TESTAMENT AND THE GREEK JUDGES

The Greek Old Testament, commonly known as the Septuagint (LXX), came into being to meet the practical need of a Jewish community (or communities) in Egypt which was no longer able to understand the original language of the Holy Writ. The translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek was a phenomenon quite without parallel in antiquity.¹ The practice of translating religious documents was not without precedent to the Greek Old Testament in the ancient Near East but it was so in the Greek world.²

The extant Greek Old Testament manuscripts are many, some of which have substantial differences from others. This has enabled scholars to classify them according to manuscript families in the light of their inner peculiarities, characteristic readings, and so on. This should point out that the generic term "Septuagint" for the Greek Old Testament may be misleading since there is not one manuscript which entirely preserves the original Greek (OG). It is therefore not surprising the statement of G.F. Moore in commenting that it seems to be desirable "in the interest of clearness that the name (Septuagint), with all its

¹ Brock 1969:541ff.

² Brock 1969:541ff. points to a bilingual (Akkadian/Sumarian) hymn to the moon god Sin found in the Assyrian Library of Assurbanipal (7th century B.C.) and to quite a number of Akkadian translations of Sumarian works of religious character.

misleading associations. should be banished from critical use."³ This remark conveniently leads us to make a brief survey of the origins of the Greek Old Testament and its transmission history, before commenting on the present state of septuagintal studies on the Greek Judges.

I. ORIGINS

The primary document which purports to throw light on the origins of the Septuagint is the so-called "Letter of Aristeas."⁴ Unfortunately its legendary character makes its historical reliability very doubtful. But in fact the letter does not claim to write history.⁵

According to the letter the writer himself was involved in the event which led to the translation of the Holy Writ. It tells about Demetrius of Phaleron who having been commissioned by the Egyptian king to collect, if possible, all the books of the world, he suggests the king that a copy of the Jewish law would be worthy a place in his library, but this should be translated into Greek. The king agrees and envoys are sent to the High Priest Eleazer at Jerusalem who at the king's request provides for this enterprise a copy of the Torah and 72 men, six from each tribe. As they arrive in Alexandria they are well received and they carry on their task on the island of Pharos. The work was then completed in 72 days.

This legendary account was later on developed both by Jews and Christians whose main interest rested on the account of the translation itself. This interest is already reflected in Philo (ca. 25 B.C. - A.D.

³ 1989:xliv.

⁴ The Greek text of it is set out by H.S.J. Thackeray in Swete 1914². A translation in English is found in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, London: 1985, by R.J.H. Shutt II, pp. 7-34.

⁵ Jellicoe 1968:32.

40). According to his account (*De Vita Mosis* ii 25-44) the translation was an act of divine intervention. It was done by 70 scholars who worked separately on the translation of the Torah. After 70 days they compared their translation which was identical throughout.

In the first two centuries the church fathers added further legendary remarks and extended the term Septuagint to indicate the entire Old Testament. By this time this translation had become the standard text of the the Old Testament of the early church.

The letter of Aristeas in the light of his character has always been of interest to scholars especially in regard to its date and purpose. Taken at its face value this would fall within the reign of Ptolemy II who occupied the throne of Egypt from 285 to 247 B.C.⁶ Yet, the story itself betrays signs that the writer himself was not an eyewitness and that it was written at a later period than the one it would at first suggest. Consequently, scholars have suggested different dates which range between 200 B.C. to A.D. 33.⁷

Whatever the date may be what seems more certain is its purpose which falls within the range of apologetics its aim being "to demonstrate the high antiquity and respectability of Judaism, for the purpose of strengthening the self-esteem of the Jews themselves and perhaps heightening their esteem in the eyes of their dominant environment (Hadas)."⁸ This purpose was basically superseded by a different

⁶ Jellicoe 1968:47.

⁷ Jellicoe 1968:48.

⁸ Jellicoe 1968:54. H.M. Orlinsky has convincingly argued that the letter of Aristeas was written primarily "to promote the Greek translation in the Jewish community as divinely inspired" (1975:102). In the light of this main purpose he is then able to explain several of the expressions which occur in the letter as well as in the Old Testament with the implication of conferring authority to the document; the choice of the name Eleazer for the High Priest of Jerusalem; and the fictitious story of the 12 tribes in a time in which everybody knew they were no

emphasis since it was now the Greek Old Testament the authoritative test of the Old Testament for the early church.

Even though the letter leaves many questioned unanswered some points may be made which have the consensus of many scholars:

1. The Pentateuch was the first to be translated into Greek and it is possible that this took place already by the end of the 3rd century B.C.
2. This translation was initiated by the Egyptian Jews who were not able anymore to understand Hebrew.
3. It is possible that this enterprise took place with the cooperation of the Jerusalem temple although it is more probable that the translators were not Palestinian Jews but Jews of the Diaspora whose daily language was Greek.

II. EARLY REVISIONS

The reception of the Septuagint among the Jews was doubtlessly high before the beginning and the growth of Christianity. This translation was held very high by Josephus and Philo. Yet, as the polemic between Christianity and Judaism arose and with the former's appropriation of the Septuagint as its authoritative text its use among the Jews began to decrease to the extent that the rabbis could later assert that "the day on which the Greek translation was made was as difficult for Israel as the day on which Israel made the Golden Calf in the wilderness; for the Torah could not be translated adequately."⁹

longer there.

⁹ Masseket Soferim ("Tractate of Scribes"), 1,7 - in Orlinsky 1975:98 note 2.

The ironic end of the Septuagint was in fact, not only that it became the Old Testament Scripture of the early church but also her weapon in the polemic against the Jews. A classical example is the use of the Septuagint reading in Isa. 7.14 "ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τεκεται υἱόν" (Matt. 1.23=LXX) used in defence of the divinity of Christ. Yet, the Hebrew עַלְמָה denotes any young woman even married so that a more appropriate reading would have been conveyed by the word νεανίς. Had the Hebrew wanted to convey the idea of a virgin, בתולה would have been expected.

Even though the LXX was ultimately rejected by the Jews, yet the need for a Greek translation still remained. On the side of Christianity they realized that if any polemic against the Jews had to be of any proficiency it had to be done on an authoritative text. Both needs gave rise to early revisions of the Septuagint from both sides Jewish (Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus) and Christian (Origen).

a) Aquila

According to the Jewish tradition Aquila of Sinope in Pontus was a proselyte and disciple of Rabbi Akiba.¹⁰ He produced an extreme literal translation of the Hebrew Scripture so that it is the easiest to characterize giving us a fairly good idea of the text he used. Where the translation was made is not sure, perhaps in Palestine.¹¹ This translation seems to have been aimed to confute Christian interpretations of the Old Testament. It must have sounded odd to any non-Jew if not ununderstandable, yet, "it was exactly this bold literalism combined with

¹⁰ Würthwein 1980:53.

¹¹ Jellicoe 1968:76.

an almost precious precision, especially in words of similar sounds, that recommended his work to his Jewish contemporaries of about A.D. 130 and gave it considerable authority among them."¹² According to Barthélemy in Aquila we have a revision based on a prior revision of the original LXX, called *kaige*.¹³

Unfortunately, our knowledge of Aquila's revision is based only on a few quotations made in ancient manuscripts, on Hexaplaric fragment, and a few palimpsests from the Cairo Geniza.

b) Theodotion

As for Aquila so for Theodotion information about his life are scanty. According to Ireaneus Theodotion was an Ephesian and proselyte to Judaism. "Jerome makes him an Ebionite, but it is more probable that he was a Jew of the Dispersion who for a time became loosely attached to Christianity... but whose nurture and training, too strong to be permanently overcome, finally brought him back to his native faith."¹⁴ According to the tradition his revision is dated towards the end of the second century.

However, as more inquiries have been made on this revision many doubts have been thrown upon the former assumptions. In fact Theodotionic readings before Theodotion have already been noted. Jellicoe in his examination of the evidence suggests that to this name we should add the name of Ur-Theodotion, a Greek speaking Jew of Western Asia, whose work was then later revised by the traditional Theodotion,

¹² Würthwein 1980:53.

¹³ Klein 1979:6.

¹⁴ Jellicoe 1968:84.

In his reconstruction he suggests the Ur-Theodotion's work took place in Asia Minor probably in the earliest part of the first century whose aim was to complete the Alexandrine partial Greek Old Testament and at the same time he made also a revision of the Alexandrine text itself. Consequently, the Asiatic canon was completed out of Alexandria and in turn it arrived in Alexandria bringing aid to the Egyptian translators which speeded their completion of the Septuagint.¹⁵

A different suggestion is made by Barthélemy (*Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, 1963) who "distinguishes Theodotion as a notable member of the *kaige* group of translators - a group whose work was brought to its climax in the version of Aquila...."¹⁶ Their activity took place in Palestine and it is dated shortly after the turn of the era. According to Barthélemy many texts reflect this recension.¹⁷ What is not sure is the extent of Theodotion's work.

c) Symmachus

The third Jewish reviser is known as Symmachus. According to Epiphanius he was a Samaritan who became a Jewish proselyte. Eusebius (HE vi. 17) makes him an Ebionite.¹⁸ The date is also not sure though Jellicoe has argued for the traditional chronology which puts him after Theodotion.

His translation reflects a good idiomatic Greek and Jerome made use

¹⁵ Jellicoe 1968:83-94.

¹⁶ Jellicoe 1968:92.

¹⁷ Barthélemy assigned to this recension the Minor Prophets, Lamentation, probably Cantica and Ruth, parts of Samuel-Kings, Judges (especially i, r, u, a₂, and B, e, f, z), the Theodotionic recension of Daniel and supplements of Jeremiah and Job, Quinta of the Psalter.

¹⁸ Jellicoe 1968:95.

of it for his preparation of the Vulgate. The extant version is found only in a few Hexaplaric fragments.

III. ORIGEN'S HEXAPLA

On the Christian side the most distinguished effort to establish the correct text of the Septuagint was made by the Alexandrian theologian Origen (184-254) who "stands out as a giant among the early Christian Thinkers."¹⁹ He was the first clearly to see that the starting point for any discussion with the Jews had to rest upon a sound text. Henceforth, Origen prepared his own critical edition of the Greek Bible. The massive work which he produced, the so-called Hexapla, was the labour of thirty years and it consisted of various texts arranged in parallel columns: (1) the Hebrew text, (2) a transliteration of the Hebrew text into Greek, (3) Aquila, (4) Symmachus, (5) the Septuagint, (6) Theodotion. He further made use of other versions which he called *Quinta*, *Sexta*, and *Septima* which according to Eusebius he used in the Psalms.²⁰

Origen's fifth column is of great importance because Origen did not reproduce here simply the Septuagint but he produced his own recension which with the help of the other more literal versions he tried to approximate to the Hebrew text. To this end he made use of the text-critical symbols borrowed from the great Alexandrian textual critic Aristarchus (217-145 B.C.):

~, ~̣, ÷ : obelos

¹⁹ Chadwick 1969:100.

²⁰ It is likely that the names *Quinta*, *Sexta* and *Septima* were given to these versions in relation to the other four Greek versions which Origen had already employed. Otherwise it would have been more logic to call them 7th, 8th and 9th (cf. Jellicoe 1968:113-24).

/., '/. , / : metobelos

X : asterisk

In his *Commentary on St. Matthew* XV.14, Origen himself tells us how he used these symbols. According to it he marked with an obelos those passages which did not appear in the Hebrew daring not to leave them out altogether. Those passages which he marked with an asterisk were those not found in the Septuagint but which he added from the versions in agreement with the Hebrew text. The close of each of these passages so marked he indicated with a metobelos.²¹

However, Origen also emended the text sometimes without acknowledging it in those parts where he could not find any support for such in order to bring it closer to the Hebrew text. Therefore, this column cannot be taken as representing the LXX but it is proper to speak of it as the Hexaplaric recension of the LXX. His recension had a profound effect upon circulating Greek manuscripts so that Jerome could write that "there is hardly a single book to be found that does not have these (Hexaplaric additions)."²²

Unfortunately, Origen's work promoted the circulation of mixed texts so creating more confusion than clarity towards the restoration of the Original Greek. Origen, in fact "made the initial error, as did Jerome after him, of supposing that the Hebrew current in his day was the original text - the *Hebraica veritas* as Jerome calls it."²³ Nevertheless, Origen's recension is still of great value for textual criticism. This is true especially of the manuscripts which preserve the diacritical symbols since they can help us to locate those readings which Origen did

²¹ The text of Origen's explanation is quoted in Soderlund 1985:43.

²² "Vix enim unus aut alter inuenietur liber, qui ista (i.e. additamenta hexaplaria) non habeat". (Cf. Würthwein 1980:56).

²³ Jellicoe 1968:102.

not find in the LXX text and which he included as well as those reading which were present and yet were found in the Hebrew text.²⁴

Unfortunately, the Hexapla is not extant - a great loss for biblical textual criticism. It is thought that it was destroyed around A.D. 638 when Caesarea - the place where the Hexapla remained for a long time - fell under the Islamic conquest. Today it is possible to recover only fragment of this great work. Yet, the Hexaplaric text of the LXX did not get completely lost since its circulation in Palestine was promoted by Pamphilus and Eusebius. The most important witnesses which preserve Origen's critical signs are *Codex Colberto-Sarravianus* (G) which contains portions of the Octateuch and *Codex Coislinianus* (M), which contains Genesis i.1 to 1(3) Kings viii.40 with gaps and *scholia* and Hexaplaric signs and margins. These signs are also preserved in the so-called Syro-Hexapla (Syh), the Syriac translation of Origen's recension which was made by Paul Bishop of Tella in Mesopotamia with meticulous care.²⁵

IV. OTHER RECENSIONS OF THE SEPTUAGINT

In his preface to Chronicles written about 400 A.D. Jerome mentions three recensions:

Alexandria and Egypt attribute the authorship of their Greek Old Testament to Hesychius. From Constantinople as far as to Antioch the rendering of Lucian the Martyr holds the field; while the Palestinian provinces in between these adopt those codices which themselves the production of Origen, were promulgated by Eusebius and Pamphilus. And so the world is in conflict with itself over this threefold variety of text.²⁶

²⁴ Caution, however, is necessary because these sigla are not always reliable due to the transmission history. Some might have got lost, some added and some misplaced.

²⁵ The Syro-Hexaplaric text of Judges has been published, among others, by P. de Lagarde, *Bibliothecae Syriacae* (Gottingae, 1892).

²⁶ Cf. Jellicoe 1968:134.

From this statement it seems that Jerome was aware of at least two other recensions besides Origen's and surely these were not the only ones as studies on the Septuagint have demonstrated. Yet, it offers a starting point in the identification of these recensions.

a) Lucian and His Recension

Little is known about Lucian's life except that he was a presbyter from Antioch who died as a martyr under Maximin in A.D. 311/312.

According to Jellicoe the principle which guided Lucian's recension was that of comprehensiveness.²⁷ At an earlier period it was thought that Lucian based his revision on the Hebrew text, but more recent studies have tended to demonstrate that this was not the case. After all it was the Greek text of the Old Testament which was the authoritative one for the early church and not the Hebrew. What rather seems the case is that Lucian used for his recension very ancient manuscripts so the importance of this recension is that it alone may have preserved elements of the ancient LXX.²⁸ This conclusion is supported, as it has been observed, by the fact that certain readings found in the Manchester Papyrus (Greek 458) and fragments from Qumran IV which antedate Lucian of several centuries resemble Lucianic readings.

b) Hesychius and His Recension

Since less is known of this recension than Lucian's it is normal to

²⁷ Jellicoe 1968:159.

²⁸ Jellicoe 1968:161.

expect a wider variety of scholarly views about it. The author of this recension has been identified as the bishop of an unspecified Egyptian see in the beginning of the 4th century. However, this identification is by no means sure and many scholars would take a different view.²⁹

This recension has been identified by some scholars with the Codex Vaticanus and Jellicoe himself concludes that "the circumstances attending the recension are reflected in the characteristics of Codex Vaticanus."³⁰ Some other scholars have identified this recension with the text A, Q and many minuscules.

However, it should be noted that the variety of views concerning it comprises both extremes. According to H. Dörrie, Hesychius is no more than "eine legendarische Rezension", for Ziegler it is impossible to distinguish such a recension.³¹ Rahlfs remarks that "no conclusive information is yet to be had with regard to this third recension."³² A more positive approach to its identification is taken by H.M. Orlinsky and J.W. Wevers.

c) The Recension of Origen

The fifth column of Origen's Hexapla was re-edited by Eusebius and Pamphilus who propagated its circulation in Palestine. As said before some extant manuscripts still preserve the diacritical signs used by Origen which have been the subject of investigation by the Finnish scholar Soisalon-Soininen (1959). His main conclusion is that the text

²⁹ Jellicoe 1968:146ff.

³⁰ Jellicoe 1968:153.

³¹ Jellicoe 1968:152.

³² Rahlfs 1935:xxxiii.

used by Origen was transmitted faithfully without major changes both in content and linguistically, his approach was objective a parallel of which can be made with the Larger Cambridge Septuagint approach to the Greek text against that of the Göttingen school.

Jellicoe agrees with Soisalon-Soininen's main conclusions although he is more cautious in assessing how far we can really establish Origen's text. It must still be borne in mind that during the transmission of the text it might have undergone deliberate alterations in the hands of scribes.

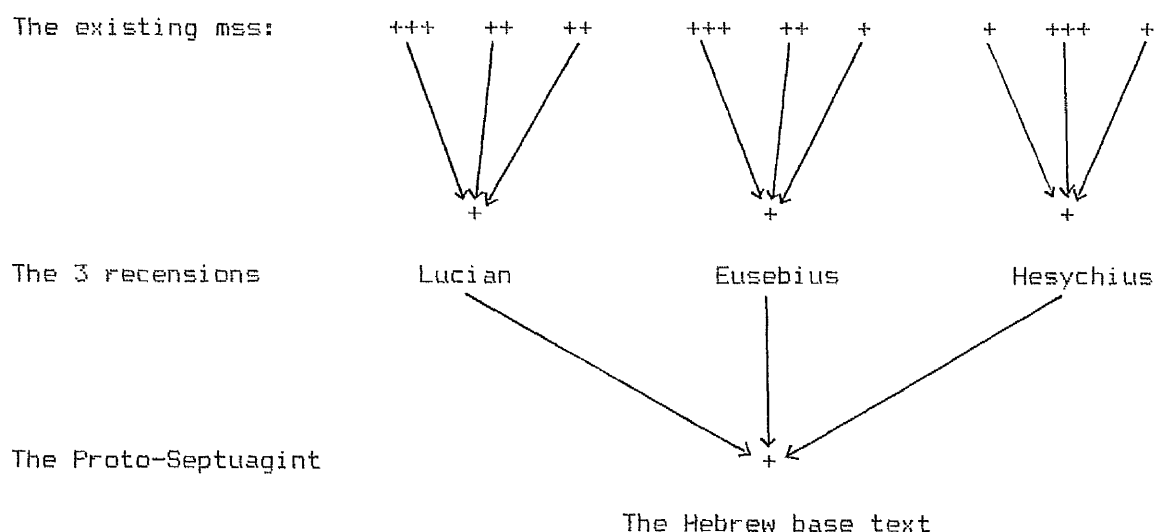
V. MODERN THEORIES OF THE SEPTUAGINT TEXT-TRANSMISSION

The variety of extant manuscripts and the historical evidence to some of the revisions and recensions which took place during the transmission of the text are pointers to the complexity of the Greek Old Testament. For the textual critic it would be of great value if he were able to trace the historical development of the various manuscripts in order to restore the OG. But in fact this is very difficult if not impossible to be done with all manuscripts and even with those manuscripts where a clearer historical development is possible to be traced, this is not done without any ambiguity and the feeling that there could be another possibility. In the light of the complexity of the problem it is not surprising therefore to find several approaches as to the origin of the LXX and its restoration.

a) Paul de Lagarde

One of the classic attempts to recover the Proto-Septuagint was made by Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891) who did much work in Septuagint-studies

during the last century. His programme was defined. He thought he could get to the OG first of all by reconstruction the three original recensions of the LXX attested by Jerome and then to draw conclusions from a comparison of these three texts.³³ Once the Proto-Septuagint had been determined this would have given us access to a much more ancient consonantal text than we have in the MT since the LXX came into being before the canonization of the Hebrew Text. His procedure could be schematized as follows:³⁴



De Lagarde's assumptions behind his method were that (1) the entire LXX had been translated from a single Hebrew manuscript; (2) the three recensions of the LXX text were based on the same Greek text; (3) all the existing manuscripts were copies of these three recensions.³⁵

De Lagarde's approach was then followed up by A. Rahlfs who together with S. Smend and J. Wellhausen was able to found at Göttingen an institute for Septuagint-Studies (the *Göttingen-Unternehmen*) which is

³³ Würthwein 1980:59.

³⁴ This scheme as well as the following ones are taken from Deist 1979:175,178,179 respectively.

³⁵ Deist 1979:175.

currently engaged in producing a critical edition of the Septuagint of which several volumes have already been published.

However, de Lagarde's approach soon proved to be too simplistic as became obvious in Rahlfs' edition of Genesis (Stuttgart, 1926) who could not fit his manuscript classification with Lagarde's simple pattern. He distinguished there *two* main groups (Origen and the Catena Text), *six* smaller groups, *one* Lucianic minuscule, *seven* uncial manuscripts and several minuscules which refused to conform to any group.³⁶ However, what this has shown is that although his pattern needs modification his basic proposal of group classification as a means to get to the Proto-Septuagint proved to be valid.

b) Paul Kahle

A radically different approach than Lagarde's was put forward by Paul Kahle³⁷ who proposed to understand the LXX as a Greek Targum. According to Kahle the LXX came into being not as a unity from the beginning, but this was achieved later as an end-product.

Kahle's starting point for his thesis is the letter of Aristeas. According to him the letter was written around 100 B.C. not to authorize an already existing translation but a new standard translation.³⁸ In his own words: "the letter of Aristeas was a letter of propaganda... with a twofold intention: to win the acceptance in Jewish communities for a Greek Torah prepared with special care, and also to secure withdrawal of

³⁶ Würthwein 1980:60.

³⁷ 1959:209-264.

³⁸ Kahle 1959:211.

earlier texts used hitherto which were described as unreliable."³⁹
Consequently, a standard Septuagint of the Pentateuch came into being around 100 B.C.

An entire Greek Old Testament then came into being to meet the need of the Christian Church which, extending the name Septuagint to the entire Greek Old Testament, attributed to the whole the divine origin which the latter claimed for the Torah. Therefore, according to Kahle, the Septuagint is not a unity but the result of a long process where several Greek translations of individual books circulated side by side but which ultimately were supplanted by only one translation which came together to form first the Pentateuch. He finds confirmation of this in the variety of texts which must lie, for example, behind quotations from Philo, Josephus or in the two extant texts of Judges of which even Lagarde spoke of translations and to which Kahle pertinently remarks: "How can we find an 'Ur-text' of two different translations!"⁴⁰

It is obvious that for Kahle the task for the Septuagint scholar differs from de Lagarde's as he remarks: "The task which the Septuagint presents to scholars is not the 'reconstruction' of an imaginary 'Urtext' nor the discovery of it, but a careful collection and investigation of all the remains and traces of earlier versions of the Greek Bible which differed from the Christian standard text."⁴¹

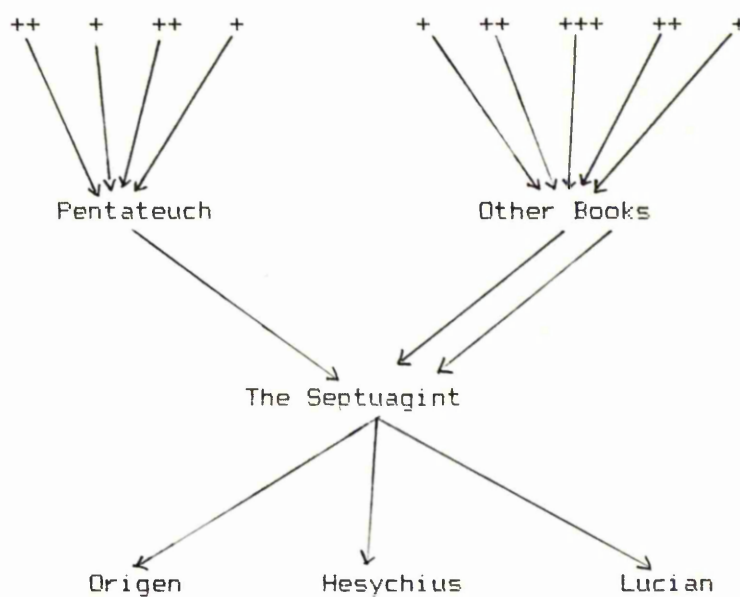
³⁹ Kahle 1959:238. For a critic see Jellicoe 1969:60f.

⁴⁰ Kahle 1959:236.

⁴¹ Kahle 1959:264.

His view can be schematically represented as follows:

Various translations:



Recensions:

c) Dominique Barthélemy

A distinguished contribution to Septuagint-Studies has been given by D. Barthélemy whose thesis is based on the discovery of the Minor Prophets in Greek from the Nahal Hever in the Judean wilderness.

According to Barthélemy this scroll witnesses a recension whose initial but imperfect attempt was to bring the "ancient LXX" in line with the Hebrew. It is the work of two scribes which most probably is to be dated in the mid-first century A.D.⁴² The same text seems to have been used by Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho* in reference to the text which the Jews "adjusted" (Kaige recension) in order to facilitate their struggle against the Christians.⁴³

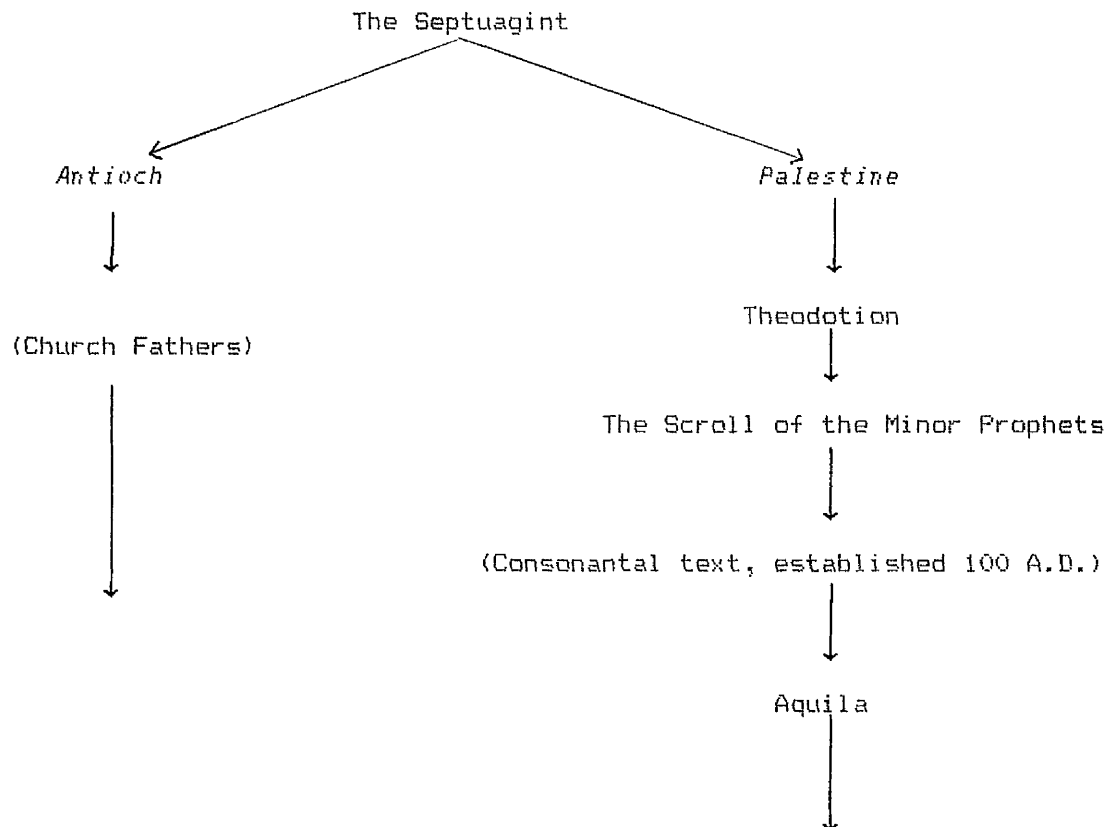
The two Greek texts mentioned by Justin Martyr led Barthélemy to distinguish the existence of two circles of transmission of the LXX: the Antiochian-Christian circle and the Palestinian-Jewish circle. The former is discernible in the LXX texts used by the church fathers while the latter in the scroll of the Minor Prophets. In Jewish circles the tendency was towards an approximation of the Greek text towards the Hebrew while in the Christian circles the text was transmitted only with minor changes.⁴⁴ According to Barthélemy's chronology of the Jewish Septuagint Theodotion antecedes the Scroll of the Minor Prophets while the latter are followed by Aquila's which represents the apex of this process.

⁴² Jellicoe 1968:312.

⁴³ Deist 1979:178.

⁴⁴ On the view that the Kaige group represents a Palestinian recension and that it was the work of the rabbinate Jellicoe differs suggesting that "it is more likely that these supposed Palestinian recensions antedating Aquila were importations from Alexandria, were translational and recensional activity was a continuous process and relations with Jerusalem remained constant and close up to A.D. 70" (1968:93).

Barthélemy as de Lagarde supposed also the existence of a Proto-Septuagint before the Christian era. His approach can be sketched as follows:



VI. THE GREEK TEXT OF JUDGES

The brief overview above has shown the complexity of Septuagint-Studies as well as the plurality of views in regard to its origin and what would be regarded an adequate approach to it. If we follow Kahle's view, for example, an attempt to get to the "original Greek" would be erroneous since there was not such a thing. This approach, however, would be valid if we follow Lagarde's approach as well as that of the *Göttingen-Unternehmen*. Before any clarification can be

attempted in regard to the Greek text of Judges our presuppositions should be stated. We shall accept that there was a Proto-Septuagint and that within limits it is possible to attempt a reconstruction of the OG. This hypothesis has been favoured by the majority of scholars today as more probable against Kahle's and would entail the conclusion that the translation of the Greek Old Testament was completed, or nearly, by the end of the second century as it is suggested by the prologue of the Book of Ecclesiasticus.

a) The Problem

The Hebrew text of Judges, except chapter 5 and if we allow for common errors of transmission, is particularly pure and "is better preserved than any other of the historical books."⁴⁵ The Greek text, however, preserved in the manuscripts A and B is substantially different from one another. This phenomenon is without parallel in the other parts of the Old Testament and many have wondered whether here we have two translations of the same text. This problem had already been recognized a long time ago by J.E. Grabe, and before him by Bonfrère and J. Ussher, who in his *Epistola ad Millium* in 1705 commented: "omnibus mediocriter tantum Graecae linguae peritis primo intuitu patet Vaticano et Alexandrino codice duas diversas dicti libri (Judicum) versiones, vel saltem duas Editiones saepissime ac multum inter se discrepantes contineri." He further tried to establish that the text of A represents the original LXX while he identifies the text of B with the Hesychian recension.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Moore 1898:xlili.

⁴⁶ Burney 1920:cxxiv; Grabe's Latin text is quoted by Burney and by

The next who took into consideration this problem was Lagarde who in his *Septuaginta Studien* (1891) printed in parallel columns the two texts of Judges (only chs. 1-5) and concluded that the two texts represented two different translations. A similar conclusion, though independently, was reached by G.F. Moore who however qualifies his position as follows: "It would probably be going too far to affirm that they are independent; the author of the younger of them may have known and used the older; but it is certain that his work is not a recension or revision of his predecessor's but a new translation."⁴⁷ He further suggests that A was the basis of Origen's critical labours "and in so far as 'Septuagint' is equivalent to the 'oldest Greek version', the text of A and its congeners might justly lay claim to that designation." Regarding the text of B he agrees with Grabe that the version was of Egyptian origin and suggests that this translation of Judges was made in the 4th century since the Alexandrian Fathers from the 2nd to the 4th century (Clement, Origen. Didymus) follow the text of A and its congeners, while Cyril uses the text which is found in B. Yet, he qualifies that much remains to be done before any positive conclusion can be reached.⁴⁸

C.F. Burney, in his commentary on Judges, pays also attention to this problem and after revising the previous views he also concludes that (1) the text of A and B are distinct translations both presupposing the independent use of a Hebrew original; (2) the two Hebrew texts differed from one another as reflected in the texts of A and B; (3) the younger translation was made with the use of the older so explaining the similarities; (4) both translations have been extensively worked over.

Brooke-McLean 1897:v.

⁴⁷ Moore 1898:xliv.

⁴⁸ Moore 1898:xliv-xlvi. Didymus died in 394 or 399; Cyril became Bishop of Alexandria in 412 A.D.

Later studies, such as the work of Pretzl (1926), Soisalon-Soininen (1951), Barthélemy (1963), and Schreiner (1957), have however conclusively demonstrated that this is not the case.⁴⁹ Jellicoe summarizes the problem remarking that : "While these scholars (Lagarde, Moore, Brooke and McLean) were fully aware of the differences, little heed was paid to the marked similarities, linguistic and constructional, between the A and B texts, which are now held to furnish strong presumptive evidence of a common archetype which by successive, and apparently independent, stages of revision has ultimately produced the A and B texts as we know them today."⁵⁰ This conclusion not only throws light on a bewildering problem but would also support the claim of the existence of a Proto-Septuagint and the effort to work towards its reconstruction. It may be remembered that Kahle had used the evidence of the double text of Judges to support his hypothesis: "Whoever is acquainted with conditions prevailing in older Targums at a time before an authoritative text was fixed will recognize in these two Greek texts examples of an old Targum."⁵¹

b) The Greek Manuscripts

The primary *sources* for the reconstruction of the OG are the variety of Greek manuscripts of Judges; next to them it is thought that the Old Latin preserves very ancient readings. Of the other versions the Syro-Hexapla, a translation into Syriac of Origen's recension, is important; the others are of minor value because they presuppose the

⁴⁹ Cf. also Billen 1924-5 and Lindars 1971.

⁵⁰ Jellicoe 1968:282.

⁵¹ 1959:236.

canonized Hebrew text. Of some relevance are also some of the patristic quotations.

As said before, the various differences between manuscripts has enabled scholars to classify them according to families. Although it is not possible anymore to follow Lagarde's attempt to classify all manuscripts according to the *trifaria varietas*, the principle remains valid that manuscripts can be classified. A major study on the Greek text of Judges has been done by Soisalon-Soininen (1951) whose manuscript grouping has been generally accepted. The manuscripts therefore can be grouped as follows:⁵²

B group: B e f i j m q r s u z a₂

A groups: AI = A (G) a b c k x

AII = (KZ) d g l n o p t v w

AIII = M N h y b₂

This classification will be basically followed throughout.

i) The B Group

Of the two groups the majority of scholars today would regard A as standing much closer to the original than B. The value of B as a whole is uneven and as a rule value judgments on a manuscript should be confined to the value of it in relation to a book and ever here the value may not be even if more than a translator was responsible for it. It follows that every reading should be judged on its own merit and no *a priori* judgment can be made as to determine the value of a reading. The

⁵² The sigla are those of Brooke-McLean (B-M). The uncials in brackets do not cover the whole Book of Judges.

comment of Brooke-McLean before the turn of this century still remains valid: "the true text of the Septuagint is probably contained neither in the one nor in the other exclusively (i.e. A and B), but must be sought from by comparing details, verse by verse, and word by word, the two recensions, in the light of all other available evidence, and especially of the extant remains of the Hexapla."⁵³

Of the two texts B seems to have undergone several corrections trying to approximate it to the Hebrew text. Some scholars have also argued that it has also been influenced by the Hexapla. This is the view of Burkitt who remarked many decades ago that "very few scholars have realized till lately the terrible extent to which the text of B is disfigured by unskillful sporadic correction of the Hexapla."⁵⁴ In a different way this is also the view of Soisalon-Soininen who thinks that all text groups are post-Origenic.

The text of B has been usually associated with the Hesychian recension. This was already suggested by Grabe and Jellicoe would also favour this identification. A different identification of this text has been suggested by Barthélemy who attempted to find evidence for a new recension, the so-called *Kaige* recension. He suggested that B and its congeners are part of this recension which took place in the first century with the precise aim of approximating the Greek to the Hebrew text.

W.R. Bodine has taken up Barthémy's suggestion and has attempted to prove that "the B Family of Judges clearly constitutes a part of the Greek recension known as *Kaige*." Bodine's book on the whole is a very fine attempt to carry on the research on the Greek judges, yet some

⁵³ 1897:v.

⁵⁴ Burkitt, *JTS* x, 1909, p.445 in Roberts 1951:154.

scholars have doubted whether because B shows signs of the *Kaige* recension it can therefore be concluded that it is a "genuine member of the *Kaige* recension."⁵⁵ This view had already been expressed by B. Lindars before Bodine's book.⁵⁶ S.P. Brock, in his brief review of the book makes somehow the same point that it is misleading "to assume that manuscripts influenced by the recension can thereby be considered as representatives of that recension."⁵⁷

A. Pietersma has also given consideration to Bodine's work. He does not object to this identification but rather praises Bodine's attempt "to bring the inner-*kaige* diversity into sharper focus than Barthélemy's aim allowed for." His concern is however the failure of LXX-research to attempt a reconstruction of the OG. This he thinks to be the underlying problem in Bodine's otherwise admirable book on Judges. According to Pietersma "one of the author's all-pervasive and, in (his) view, detrimental assumptions is that the B text, because it can be shown to belong to the *kaige* tradition, is by that fact a total revision of OG. Hence whenever B and the other text disagree, the B text is automatically secondary."⁵⁸ Pietersma makes here the valid point made already long ago by Brooke-McLean, that each reading must be judged on its own merit. According to Pietersma this work has not been accomplished yet and he makes a further important remark that how far *kaige* and OG are the same or different is entirely unclear.

From this brief sketch some conclusions can be drawn:

(a) *The B family of Judges is the by-product of a recension.* The

⁵⁵ Bodine 1980:30,185.

⁵⁶ Lindars 1971:1.

⁵⁷ *S.O.T.S. Book List* 1982:33-34.

⁵⁸ Pietersma 1985:305.

question is however whether we should assign it to the Hesychian recension or whether we should consider it as a first century recension. Probably the truth lies in the middle and it may even be that B embodies even earlier corrections. Even though it would greatly help to be able to place B within a chronological framework, all that can be said with certainty is that it shows all the marks of a recension and as such every reading must be carefully examined.

(b) It can nevertheless preserve original readings. To argue that because B is closer to the Hebrew is in all instances recensional is a wrong assumption. We need just to be reminded that while the OG was a translation made from the original, some of the further recension/revisions were made on the basis of other Greek readings. The Greek Old Testament was the authoritative bible of the early church and not the Hebrew text. So it is plausible to suggest that Old Testament readings which do not keep close to the Hebrew text do not necessarily represent the OG but the contrary may be sometimes the case.

ii) The A Group

The A manuscripts fall within three groups as it has been noted above. The AI group comprises A itself, G (it covers only partially the Book of Judges), and the minuscules abckx which stand close to it. The text of A preserves older readings than B, but it is far from being free from either recensional developments or Hexaplaric influence. In this regard A.V. Billen comments that "A... retains many clauses which Origen condemned, but on the other hand generally follows Origen's insertions into the LXX, insertions which are frequently followed by no other group of LXX manuscripts except the B group. A, in other words, has a full

text both when fullness is right and when it is wrong."⁵⁹

Of this group Billen also draws attention on the text of the cursive x which while having with Abc numerous Hexaplaric insertions not found in manuscripts outside this group it has another Hexaplaric characteristic not shared by Abc, namely, "the large number of its Hexaplaric omissions, frequently alone but sometimes with K and occasionally with d." He concludes that in these manuscripts we have a "definite attempt ... to delete passages which on Origen's assumptions ought to be omitted."⁶⁰

The second group (AII) is the most important for any attempt towards the reconstruction of the OG. It is constituted by the nine cursives dglnoptvw and the two fragmentary uncials KZ. This group is commonly designated as Lucianic and it is largely free from Hexaplaric readings. This is especially true of glnow which are often referred to as proto-Lucianic, but even here these cursives are not free from Hexaplaric readings.⁶¹

AII preserves much ancient material and it is therefore our main witness to the survival of the OG in the Book of Judges. This has been repeatedly affirmed by those scholars who have engaged themselves in the study of the Greek text of Judges. According to Billen AII is "one of

⁵⁹ Billen 1942:16.

⁶⁰ 1942:17.

⁶¹ Lindars 1987:6. It has been recently suggested by A. Sáenz-Badillos and J. Targarona that the text of glnw is pre-Lucianic while ptv represents the work of Lucian himself. Lindars however has pointed out that glnw are not free from revisions: "They (sic) are much more inner-Greek, stylistic changes, including Atticisms, interchange of synonyms, explanatory additions and doublets" (1987:6). In regard to doublets he is of the opinion that they are not a feature of pre-hexaplaric texts and therefore advises caution in accepting too readily the claim that these cursives are free from hexaplaric readings.

the most ancient and important of the surviving Greek texts of Judges."⁶²
Similar conclusion were also drawn by Barthélemy and Soisalon-Soininen
and have found support by the study of W. Bodine.⁶³

The third and last group (AIII) comprises a text which had most
influence on B, but on the whole it is much more akin to A than B.⁶⁴
Bodine has shown that this group shows the influence of the *kaige*
recension, as well as that of Theodotion and Origen. Its *Vorlage* however
is a form of the OG and he describes the AIII family of Judges as
post-Origenic and mixed. He further confirms Billen's earlier statement
that AIII tends "to be a shorter text both when the shorter is right and
when it is wrong."⁶⁵

c) The Old Latin

Among the versions the most important as a witness to the OG is the
Old Latin. The generic term Old Latin is used to describe all those
versions which were in circulation in the earlier centuries of the
Christian era in North Africa, Gaul, and in parts of Italy.⁶⁶

The value of the Old Latin is far from being uniform since a variety
of versions were in circulation in the early church, yet what is of
interest for us is that it is a direct witness to the OG since it was
directly translated from it and therefore being free from Hexaplaric

⁶² 1942:12; he designates AII simply as a fourth type of the texts
among the authorities for the LXX of Judges.

⁶³ Bodine 1980:134-5.

⁶⁴ Billen 1942:12.

⁶⁵ Billen 1942:16; Bodine 1980:156f.

⁶⁶ Jellicoe 1968:249.

influence.⁶⁷

The importance of the OL is seen especially in connection with the AII group and it had already been noted by Billen according to whom the many readings of AII which find support in the OL as represented by Cod. Lugd. bring us back to the OG.⁶⁸ Sometimes the true LXX text may be represented by the OL alone especially when AII shows potentially original readings conflated with Hexaplaric ones. Billen points out also that "the agreement of Lugd with the KZ (AII) group... is astonishingly great, providing in fact one of the most remarkable characteristics of the LXX text of Judges."⁶⁹ Bodine, also concludes from his analysis of the Greek text of Judges that the OL is "a primary avenue to the OG of Judges, second only to L (AII) text."⁷⁰

This point has again been made by Lindars who makes the remark that the agreement between the OL and the Lucianic text, especially glnw, "takes us back to OG before contamination by hexaplaric readings." This is even more the case if the OL is of African origin rather than Syrian as the similarities between AII and the OL might suggest. Scholars today tend to favour an African origin⁷¹ and the same is suggested by Lindars according to whom "it is much better to assume that it (Latin

⁶⁷ However, although the majority of scholars have favoured the LXX as the OL *Vorlage*, some have suggested the possibility of a Hebrew original. This theory has been presented in a modified form by Sparks (cf. Jellicoe 1968:251). This possibility is also envisaged by Deist 1979:204f. although he concludes that on the whole the OL is in agreement with the Greek text.

⁶⁸ Billen 1942:12-19; 1942A:140-49. The *Codex Lugdunensis*, an uncial from the 7th century, contains parts of Gen. 16.9 to Judges 20.31 and it is the only surviving manuscript of the OL in Judges. It was published by U. Robert, *Heptateuchi partis posterioris versio latina antiquissima e codice Lugdunensi*, Lyon, 1900.

⁶⁹ Billen 1942A:144.

⁷⁰ Bodine 1980:136.

⁷¹ Jellicoe 1968:251.

translation) is based on manuscripts elsewhere which had features in common with those which lie behind the Lucianic recension."⁷²

VIII. FINAL REMARKS

The study of the Septuagint is a very complex subject with different problems in different books. Yet, the main aim in any study of it must be directed towards the critical reconstruction of the OG. It is the OG, in fact, the starting point for any valid use of the Greek Old Testament as a witness to an earlier form of the MT and as a point of departure as we try to trace both the development of the Greek as well as the Hebrew text. It follows that the Greek Old Testament cannot be used for the textual criticism of the MT without having first done a through study of the LXX. To point only to one or two Greek manuscripts as a basis for any emendation can easily lead to false deductions. This aim can only be achieved by patiently working through the variant readings as provided in the critical apparatus of Brooke-McLean.

The Greek text of Judges presents the very interesting problem of a double manuscript tradition which stemmed from one translation. A close study of the group AII and the OL as well as other evidences may bring us to a possible reconstruction of the OG as well as the transmission history of the two texts.

⁷² Lindars 1987:7.

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