DAVID THE HEBREW

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Since George Mendenhall published his seminal work, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," [1] there has been a growing trend in OT scholarship toward the interpretation of the conquest and settlement as a sociological development within an existing settled population. In very brief outline, Mendenhall's political thesis saw a small religious community becoming the nucleus for a sweeping revolutionary movement that in the space of two or three generations restructured Canaanite society. The Yahweh covenant constituted an overt rejection of the political, social and religious values in effect at the time of the establishment of the community and provided the basis for a unity among a disparate, nonrelated people. Our purpose in this paper is not to deal specifically with the early revolutionary phase of this movement but rather with what Mendenhall characterizes as the failure of the social experiment in the successful counter-revolutionary return to the old values under the Davidic monarchy. [2]

While we must reject the presuppositions that underlie his work and, with the presuppositions, many of his conclusions, we must also acknowledge gratitude for the scholarly spadework that has gone into Mendenhall's work. What he has done is to call our attention to a level of complexity in the history of Israelite origins that is all too often overlooked in evangelical treatments of the subject. While his basic approach is to reinterpret the Biblical record radically on the basis of extra-Biblical history, ours will be an attempted synthesis with the goal of better understanding the Biblical text.

There is a fine distinction to be made here. While Mendenhall asserts that he takes the Biblical traditions "seriously if not literally," [3] we will take those traditions both seriously and literally, while recognizing that the objectives of the Biblical writers often led them to omit information that twentieth-century scholars dearly wish they had included.

Our intention will be to extend the vexed problem of the *'apirū* to include the establishment of the monarchy, arguing that the picture of David in 1 and 2 Samuel is consistent with what M. B. Rowton has called the "parasocial element" in tribal society. [4] We will further argue that Saul fits Rowton's description of the

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[1]G. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine," *BAR* 3 (1970) 100-121.

[2]Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973) 206-208.

[3]Ibid., 143.

[4]In developing his thesis in a series of 13 articles, M. B. Rowton uses some terminology, adopted in this paper, that requires definition. We thought it preferable to give those definitions in a footnote rather than in the body of the paper.

Dimorphic state: "A social structure based on two essential morphemes: tribal and urban society." In this definition "urban" is narrowly understood as "nontribal" ("Dimorphic Structure and Topology," *OrAnt* 15 [1976] 17-31). This involves a hybrid polity blending city-state, tribe and nomadism. The state exists as part of a structure characterized by "the double process of interaction between nomad and

dimorphic chief.[5] To do this we will attempt to demonstrate connections between *'apiru* and *'ibrî* as used in 1 Samuel. Our next objective will be to examine specific statements about the careers of Saul and David and demonstrate the applicability of such enquiry to those careers.

I. 'APIRU AND 'IBRÎ

It is a fairly simple matter to identify the derogatory nature of the term *'apiru.* It is less easy to determine who the people so designated were. Rather than attempting to pursue the wide range of theories to their possible conclusions we will deal with points of correspondence that seem to represent the scholarly consensus. That consensus is expressed by Rowton when he says, "Opinion is virtually unanimous among Assyriologists that *'apiru* represents a social element." [6]

From their earliest appearance in Near Eastern texts the *'apirū* are, with few exceptions, a societal element characterized by dependency to states, cities or individuals.[7] That dependency seems to be conditioned by the fact that they exist outside normal societal status, presumably lacking legal rights.[8] Their options seem to have been banditry, service as mercenary troops, self-imposed slavery, caravaneering (if Albright [9] is followed), or (with Rowton) reintegration into a

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sedentary, between tribe and state" ("Urban Autonomy in a Nomadic Environment," *JNES* 32 [1973] 201).

Enclosed nomadism: A type of nomadism involving seasonal migration within well-established political boundaries governed by a sovereign city-state. It is practiced by tribal units that constitute autonomous polities functioning in a symbiotic relationship, both economic and political, with the sovereign state ("Enclosed Nomadism," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17/1 [1974] 1-30).

Dimorphic chiefdom: A polity intermediate between tribe and state. A tribe or tribal confederation, with a town as a tribal center and a local dynasty. A polity of this kind has something in common with a city-state, and it has a similar potential for growth ("Enclosed Nomadism," 17).

Parasocial element: A social element existing on the margin of tribal and urban society consisting of "detribalized labor, mercenaries, predatory bands, and tribal splinter groups, all impelled from tribal society by lack of food, sometimes amounting to famine, and also by intertribal wars and disputes . . . joined by similar outcasts from urban society. . . . In dimorphic society one has to reckon with a social element intermediate between established tribal society and established urban society, not belonging fully either to one or the other" ("Dimorphic Structure and the Problem of the *'Apiru-'Ibrim*," *JNES* 35 [1976] 13-20).

Parasocial leader: Sometimes an adventurer who has left urban society and gained control of a tribal element. Some operate in a semi-official capacity as an intermediary between the two societies. In tribal societies the military potential of the tribe and the open avenue to a life of banditry sometimes offer "unlimited possibilities" for personal aggrandizement ("Dimorphic Structure and the Parasocial Element," *JNES* 36 [1977] 191-193).

A bibliography containing 12 of the 13 titles in this series may be found in "Dimorphic Structure and Topology," *OrAnt* 15 (1976) 2-31. The thirteenth article is "Dimorphic Structure and the Parasocial Element," *JNES* 36 (1977) 181-198.

[5]Rowton, "Enclosed Nomadism," 17.

[6]Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure and the Problem," 17.

[7]M. Greenberg, *The Ḫab/piru* (AOS 39; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1955) 86.

[8]E. F. Campbell, "The Amarna Letters and the Amarna Period," *BAR* 3 (1970) 66.

[9]W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969) 84-85.

new tribe made up either of splinters from disintegrated tribes or an original tribal nucleus or absorption into the village peasantry.[10]

Their lack of status is attributed to a political process of withdrawal, "not physically and geographically, but politically and subjectively, of large population groups from any obligation to the existing political regimes, and, therefore, the renunciation of any protection from those sources." [11] The closest analogy to this process might be found in English and American practice until fairly recent times with respect to the outlaw who, by an act of political or legal transgression, placed himself outside the protection of the law.

The dominant approach emerging in the work of those following Mendenhall's original development of this problem[12] is to deny the traditional nomadic or semi-nomadic model in favor of a Marxist class struggle pitting the peasantry against the dominant monarchic city-state system. As Gottwald reconstructs Israel's early history, he sees a segment of Canaan wresting control from another segment, city-oriented and hierarchic, in favor of a village-centered, autonomous "low politic." [13] It may be noted that this is partially anticipated by Greenberg when he asserts that the ‘apirū were an element of the settled rather than of the desert or nomadic population.[14]

It must be admitted in defense of Mendenhall and his compatriots that, when it comes to the discussion of Israelite origins, the stereotyped, linear evolutionary model of the sedentarization of nomads has been developed beyond the ability of the data to support it. Braidwood and others trace the development of culture from food-gathering through incipient agriculture and the domestication of animals through village farming communities to the ultimate period of towns and cities.[15] No nomadic stage is posited in this reconstruction. It does not follow, however, that if nomadism is not posited as an essential stage in the evolution of urban society it should be excluded from consideration. Indeed we would argue that, freed from its obligatory place in the evolutionary process, nomadism may occur at any point in the development of human society where the geographical, historical and cultural environment dictates. Just such a model is suggested by Rowton in his series of articles on the dimorphic state.

Rowton begins by contending that the problem of the ‘apiru has eluded solution because its key is to be found in the process of tribal disintegration.[16] The models espoused by other systems presuppose a kind of stability or unilinear development that, on reflection, seems unrealistic compared with other societal

[10]Rowton, "Parasocial Element," 186.

[11]Mendenhall, "Conquest of Palestine," 107.

[12]F. Frick, The City in Ancient Israel (SBLDS; 1977); N. Gottwald, The Tribes of Yahweh (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979).

[13]Gottwald, "Domain Assumptions and Societal Models in the Study of Pre-Monarchic Israel" (VTSup 28; 1976) 94.

[14]Greenberg, Ḥab/piru, 86.

[15]R. J. Braidwood and B. Howe, Prehistoric Investigations in Iraqi Kurdistan (Chicago: University Press, 1960) 170-172.

[16]Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure and the Problem," 14.

processes. While the rejection of the nomadic model by Mendenhall and Gott-wald is a reaction to a simplistic, evolutionary understanding of that model, it has been replaced by an equally simplistic depiction of a homogeneous, city-dominated society. Rowton combines the two models in a synthesis that sees a "continuous seepage" from the tribe. It is not so much that entire tribes evolve into a sedentary population but that when a nomadic tribe is in close proximity to an urban center, as is the case in dimorphic societies, the marginal tribe members frequently leave their tribe to seek a living in urban society.[17] When a tribal unit reaches a certain critical level it can no longer sustain itself, and tribal disintegration takes place. This could be a very gradual process by which a tribe could cease to exist altogether while at the same time maintaining tribal kinship patterns for some time.[18]

Robert McCormick Adams insists that the city and the hinterland must always have been part of a closely integrated whole but that there is a danger of interpreting the "symbiotic region within which early states arose" as being too narrowly sedentary. In his study of the evolution of urban society in Mesopotamia he finds that nomadism is one of the "strategic disequilibrating factors" that may have set the core processes of the urban revolution into motion. Further, he argues that the earliest structures of a political nature extending beyond the boundaries of the individual state received their impetus from recently detribalized groups "whose recent nomadic background can be assumed."[19]

Oppenheim describes a "hard core elite" of both urban and tribal people. This elite consisted of a minority group whose vested interest in the city or tribe made a shift of loyalty impractical. Outside this elite, however, a large population shifted back and forth between city and tribe. Difficult economic conditions in cities forced delinquent debtors, factions who had lost their positions in intra-city power struggles and defectors of all types to flee their urban centers and join dispossessed village dwellers, detribalized elements and infiltrators from mountain and desert. It can be assumed that in times of stability and prosperity this segment would be relatively small, but at times of national weakness it could swell and actually engulf city-states.[20]

Splinter groups at Mari were known to join together to form new tribes. As tribal units disintegrated, their nuclei could on occasion draw fragments of other groups together to re-form the disintegrated tribe. On other occasions the fragments might be drawn together by mutual necessity and form entirely new tribal societies.[21] Without going into the elaborate case built by Rowton, what we may conclude from the above is that the structure of urban and tribal societies in the second millennium B.C. was extremely fluid. It is not necessary to see people of that period as exclusively tribal or urban, nomadic or sedentary, but rather it is

[17]Ibid.

[18]Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure and the Tribal Elite," *Anthropos-Instituti Studia* 28 (Posieux, Switzerland; May 1976) 219-257.

[19]R. M. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966) 18.

[20]A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1964) 82.

[21]Rowton, "Parasocial Element," 183.

advisable to see the boundaries between the two populations as flexible. It is in the gap between the two societies that we find the *'apiru.* Here you will find a social element consisting of detribalized labor, mercenaries, predatory bands and tribal splinter groups, driven out of their particular social structure by lack of food, lack of stability, or political animosity. This element would include the disenfranchised from both sides, a group intermediate between settled tribal and settled urban society but belonging to neither.[22]

The term "Hebrew," as it occurs in our OT, has an interesting and instructive range of usage. Most of the occurrences are grouped in the Joseph story and in the story of the exodus prior to Israel's departure. Occurrences in Gen 39:14,17; 40:15; 41:12 are predictable. Gen 43:32, however, is suggestive. There it is noted that Joseph and his brothers dine separately because it is an "abomination" (*NEB*) for an Egyptian to eat with a Hebrew. Joseph's segregation from the Egyptians is explained by considerations of caste and cult,[23] but his separation from his brothers must be construed as the isolation of an Egyptian from foreigners. It is clearly not an ethnic matter but rather one of citizenship and allegiance.

The use of the word "Hebrew" in the Exodus passages (1:15,16,19; 2:6,7,13; 3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1,13) is, as in Genesis, fairly straightforward and to be understood as the usual general designation occurring in the speech of, or in dialogue with, a foreigner. The account of Moses' murder of the Egyptian contains, in 2:11, a slightly different use. Translating literally, we read that Moses saw an Egyptian beating "a man a Hebrew from his brothers." *NEB* translates this consistently as "fellow-Hebrews," but we would agree with the suggestion that "one of his brothers" is a narrowing of the more general "Hebrew" and intends to make the statement refer specifically to one of the segments of that broader category.[24]

The word occurs elsewhere in the legislation of Exod 21:2 and its parallel in Deut 15:12. While the passages are not exactly parallel, the use of *'ibrî* seems the same in both contexts. In those two settings it seems plausible that the word is used in its general nonethnic sense denoting a foreigner who has voluntarily accepted slave status in the service of an Israelite.[25] Jeremiah's use of the word in 34:9,14 reflects the Pentateuchal regulation.

In Jonah the word is found in its usual context, on the lips of an Israelite speaking to non-Israelites. A possible element in the choice of the word here might be Jonah's act of rebellion and flight from Yahweh. "Hebrew," as it is used here, has overtones of the fugitive connotation familiar from the texts of the ancient Near East. If we read 1:9 without the usual assumption that "Hebrew" equals "Israelite," it may be that Jonah is telling the crew of the ship that he is a fugitive from the Lord God of heaven. The logic of the narrative argues that the fear attributed to the sailors in v 10 is in response to Jonah's statement in v 9. If *'ibrî* in v 9 is merely a synonym for "Israelite," then Jonah has done nothing more than identify his nationality and religious preference. It seems plausible to as-

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[22]Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure and the Problem," 14.

[23]C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 2. 361-362; J. Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC) 42; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB) 328.

[24]R. A. Cole, *Exodus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977) 59.

[25]J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975) 189-190.

sume that v 9 and Jonah's use of the word *'ibrî* constitute a confession of a fugitive status.

The last use of the word outside 1 Samuel occurs in Gen 14:13 in the story of the four kings of the east. The passage is rendered difficult by the martial nature of Abram, who is elsewhere depicted as a peace-loving pastoralist. The explanation for this pacifistic image lies in the nomad's desire to maintain stable and peaceful relations between himself and the sedentary population in the uneasy symbiosis that existed in the dimorphic state.[26]

For the situation in chap. 14 it is instructive to note the important military role of the tribal elements at Mari. In the days before large standing armies were inaugurated, nomadism and military service were related. For instance, the Mari archives mention the Haneans either in contexts of nomadism or of military service. They were used for escort duty, as an advance guard and for garrison duty. They are in fact listed in the texts as being a part of the elite troops of the king of Mari.[27]

It may also be significant that Abram the Hebrew is mentioned in connection with Mamre the Amorite. Rowton notes that the term *'apiru* appears first in Mesopotamian urban society at a time when that society was being infiltrated by Amorites. He concludes that the word is brought in by the Amorites and is of West Semitic origin.[28] Genesis 14 is one of those accounts in which we could wish for more details. The 318 retainers of Abram are mentioned, but the part of Mamre, Aner and Eshcol is not. It merely states at the end of the account (14:24) that these men went with him. Could it be that Abram did not, in fact, best the four kings of the east with only his 318 fighting men but rather acted in concert with the three men mentioned, who also commanded their own fighting forces? Whatever else we may make of Abram the Hebrew, the two sides to his character depicted in Genesis are in keeping with the various roles possible for a dimorphic chief. Because of the fragile nature of the symbiosis between tribe and town, a quest for peaceful relations under ordinary circumstances would be in order. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the invasion of the four kings, however, the military function of the tribal leader comes to the fore.

Before we move on to our discussion of David we must deal with one more problem: the patronymic nature of the word *'ibrî*. Eber son of Shem is the ancestor of Abraham and hence the Israelites, and his name is implicitly the etymological source of the word "Hebrew." It might be objected that if *'ibrî* is used in the Bible as a social and not an ethnic term we must explain his place in the genealogy. It actually presents little problem if we recognize that Eber is the ancestor of more than simply the Israelites. From a logical point of view the lineage of Eber might easily include many Arabic tribes as well as the Arameans and Syrians.[29] The discovery of a King Ebrium, whose name is cognate with *'ibrî*, is a case in point.[30]

[26]Rowton, "Parasocial Element," 197.

[27]Rowton, "Tribal Elite," 242.

[28]Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure and the Problem," 17.

[29]Greenberg, *Hab/piru*, 93.

[30]G. Pettinato, "The Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla," *BA* 39 (May 1976) 47.

While a great deal more could be said on the relationship between 'apiru and 'ibrî, we feel that the equation of the two as linguistic variants of the same word, designating a specific nonethnic social class, is plausible in the interpretation of the occurrences of 'ibrî outside 1 Samuel. We will now turn our attention to Samuel's use of the word and the descriptions of David and Saul as they correspond to that interpretation.

II. HEBREWS IN PALESTINE

The world into which 1 Samuel ushers us is a world dominated by the Philistines. In many respects they are the successors to the Egyptians in their control of the cities of the Palestinian coast. It may well be that the Philistine cities were originally settled as colonies of mercenaries recruited from the Sea Peoples defeated in the eighth year of Ramses III. Their subsequent dominance resulted when the collapse of Egyptian influence in Canaan left the five Philistine fortress cities independent.[31] As heirs to what had been Egyptian territory, they were also heirs to the Egyptian attitude to the "motley crew from the hinterland" whom they both called "Hebrew."[32]

The border between Israel and Philistia ran north-south through the Shephelah, effectively restricting Israel proper to the hill country and the Philistines to the coastal plain. Even though Judges 14:4 speaks of a Philistine dominion over Israel the stories of Samson revolve around that border, and the early events of 1 Samuel also gravitate to the eastern margin of Israelite territory. The battle of 1 Samuel 4 must have been in the vicinity of the Philistine Aphek, again on the fringe of Philistine occupation. Even though archaeological evidence indicates the likelihood of a Philistine expeditionary force following up on the victory at Ebenezer by sacking Shiloh,[33] the Philistine presence seems to have been represented by governors and garrisons (1 Sam 10:5; 13:3,23). It is not until Saul's rebellion at Micmash that they seem to have come into the highlands in force. The impression that emerges from chap. 13 is one of rebellion of a vassal people and the response of its overlords.

The Philistines' use of the word "Hebrew" in 1 Samuel is in keeping with this impression of a rebellious element among subject peoples. In chap. 4 it occurs twice in a clear context of rebellion. The camp of Israel is called the camp of the Hebrews or, in our interpretation, the camp of the rebels. In v 9 the status of the Hebrews is illuminated by the statement of the Philistines. The Hebrews were slaves and, if the rebellion is not quelled, Philistine and Hebrew will exchange positions. The word appears three times in 1 Samuel 13 at vv 3,7,19. Verse 3 states that Saul had the trumpet blown to "let the Hebrews hear"—that is, hear the news that the revolt had begun with a victory over the Philistines. Saul's intention here depends on the interpretation placed on "Hebrews." *NEB* translates the verse rather loosely: " . . . the news spread among the Philistines that the Hebrews were in revolt. Saul sounded the trumpet all through the land; and when

[31]R. de Vaux, *The Early History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 511.

[32]H. Cazelles, "The Hebrews," *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (ed. D. J. Wiseman; Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 2.

[33]Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) 58.

the Israelites all heard . . . ''—a rendition based on the conclusion that the text is out of order.[34] The emendation seems to be on the strength of the translators' understanding of the word "Hebrews." Ackroyd makes the usual assumption that it is a non-Israelite synonym for "Israelite." The intention of the reordering would be to place the word in a non-Israelite context. We can see no other reason for it.

LXX renders the verse differently, translating "let the Hebrews hear" with "let the slaves fall away." The meaning here would likely be that those in bondage might hear of the revolt and fall away from their masters—that is, join the rebellion. Keil and Delitzsch point to the use of "hear" in v 4 as continuing the idea introduced in v 3 and arguing for the MT rendering. The *NIV* translation of vv 3-4 understands "Israelite" and "Hebrew" to be parallel: " 'Let the Hebrews hear!' So all Israel heard." With reference to our interpretation, the LXX use of "slave" for "Hebrew" may be significant. It may indicate that from the perspective of the Greek version the word indicates a slave rebellion, as the event itself must have been interpreted by the Philistines.[35] At the very minimum, usage in v 13 reflects the rebellious outcast picture for which we are arguing. The apparent difference between the Hebrews of v 3 and the Israelites of v 4 that prompted the harmonizing emendation of the *NEB* might support our position that the Hebrews of 1 Samuel are not necessarily ethnic Israelites.

In v 7 we see another similar distinction, again harmonized by *NEB*. Verse 6 records that the men of Israel hid themselves in caves, thickets, cliffs, cellars and pits (*NASB*). Then v 7 begins: "Then Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead." *NEB* in v 7 reads "Some of them," clearly intending to make the Israelites of v 6 and the Hebrews of v 7 synonymous. Given the usual use of the word "Hebrew" elsewhere in the OT it seems unlikely that here in 1 Samuel the writer, speaking from an Israelite perspective, would equate the words in that way. Verse 19 is of a different order than the other two occurrences in chap. 13, since there "Hebrews" is the Philistines' word. Even here, though, it may partake of the rebel flavor seen elsewhere, a point that may expand the meaning of the Philistine statement somewhat. Verse 11 of chap. 14 is a similar Philistine statement, characteristically derogatory, that speaks of the Hebrews coming out of their holes.

It is 1 Sam 14:21 that is significant. When Jonathan's assault on the Philistine garrison results in chaos within the garrison and reinforcement from Saul's men outside, the Hebrews who were with the Philistines "turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan." Again the usage is atypical. In view of the frequent appearance of *'apirū* as mercenaries elsewhere in the Near East, it seems justifiable to see here a reference to Hebrew mercenaries who may or may not have been ethnically related to Israel but who chose to cast their lot with the rebels at this point.

We find the incident of David and the lords of the Philistines (29:1-6) provocative. Achish of Gath takes David with him to the staging area where the Philistines are gathering. As far as Achish is concerned, David is a loyal vassal. The Philistine commanders ask, somewhat elliptically, *māh hā'ibrîm hā'ēlleh*

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[34]P. R. Ackroyd, *The First Book of Samuel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971) 105.

[35]H. W. Hertzberg, *I and II Samuel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 104. It is also possible, of course, that LXX is reading *'brym* as *'bdym*.

("What these Hebrews?"). The answer of Achish would indicate that he is rather proud of the caliber of mercenary in his employ and that David himself is an unidentified mercenary who requires identification. The response of the Philistine commanders may indicate the kind of recognition that comes when one is confronted with an individual of whom one has heard but whom he has not met. It is certainly not clear that their initial reaction was called forth by the identification of these men as Israelites. As non-Philistine mercenaries they are automatically Hebrews. Since the question as it appears in Hebrew is ambiguous and requires expansion to make sense in English, it is usually rendered, "What are these Hebrews (Israelites) doing here?"—with the clear sense that David and his men have been identified as Israelites and their presence in a force going out to war with the Israelites is suspect. Rejecting the equation "Hebrew" equals "Israelite," we might suggest that the gist of the question is rather as follows: "What kind of Hebrews are these?"

We recognize that our interpretation of some of these passages rests on our presupposition that the Hebrews of 1 Samuel are not necessarily ethnic Israelites. This is an admitted weakness in our presentation, but we might call attention to the fact that the contrary interpretations are similarly based on presuppositions. Hertzberg's comment on 29:1-6 serves as an illustration: "The Hebrews are recognizable at once by their distinctive weapons and their *marked racial characteristics*; as the war is against Israel they are, of course, regarded with mistrust."[36] That sentence fairly bristles with presuppositions. What distinctive weapons did the Israelites possess? Are we to assume, on the basis of 13:21-22, that David and his men marched on parade before the lords of the Philistines with goads, mattocks, forks and axes? Or is it more reasonable to assume that they have acquired weapons—probably of Philistine make—through capture? It is inconceivable that a band of men of the type depicted in 1 Samuel could exist without armaments, and the only source of arms in Israel at the time, we are told, was a Philistine smith. It is further inconceivable that a king would garrison a city with unarmed men, and further plausible that, if not adequately armed, David's men would have been armed by Achish. We might further ask what "marked racial characteristics" differentiated between Israelites and any of the other indigenous Semitic people of Canaan? Since the Philistines were of western origin it may be conceivable that the residents of Palestine were distinguishable from Philistines, but there is no evidence that an Israelite would be different racially from a Jebusite, Ammonite, Edomite or any of the other groups known from the area. In this array of presuppositions we may be allowed to point to the Israelite-Hebrew equation as another. Similarly, Ackroyd argues for the concept of the foreigner's use in the harmonistically emended 13:3[37] without offering evidence for that usage.

Recognizing that it is less than overpowering, we still contend that a case can be made for the use of "Hebrew" in the Bible as a nonethnic designation that may include, but is not restricted to, "Israelite." Further, certain events recorded in 1 Samuel are capable of an interpretation that would place Saul and David within the ranks of the dimorphic chiefdoms described by Rowton. He points to a

[36]Ibid., 222 (italics mine).

[37]Ackroyd, *First Samuel*, 105.

process that takes place on the fringe between urban and tribal society. In times of political or economic uncertainty, as we have already noted above, individuals from both sides of the fringe flee to those areas outside the sphere of influence under which they have become destitute, dissatisfied or dispossessed. These people were outcasts in a world in which group affiliation was a necessity. Individuals of this type—what Rowton refers to as the "parasocial element"—would merge with tribal splinter groups or with one another and, over the course of time, become new tribes. At their inception such groups would constitute little more than a predatory band.[38]

We must add, before going further, that Rowton's data are clustered primarily in two periods, first millennium A.D. and second millennium B.C., with an emphasis on the Mari materials. His focus seems to be on the patriarchal narratives and their historical milieu, although he makes only minimal reference to that period. We feel justified in using his material for two reasons. First, he describes sociological processes that can be attested over a 3,000-year date range. It is only reasonable that processes that can be seen at work during the Mari period and then again as recently as the nineteenth century should also be operative at the beginning of the Israelite monarchy. Second, while we are dealing with a period that is not characterized by any kind of attested nomadic activity on the part of the Israelite confederation, the pertinent data apply equally well to the urban dweller. The late eleventh century B.C. was a period of instability in Palestine marked by intermittent warfare and the economic dislocation attendant on it. It is, in other words, a situation ideally suited for the development of the kind of parasocial element of which Rowton writes. It is in this milieu of withdrawal from the dominant power structure, whether by choice (Saul) or of necessity (David), that an Israelite may become a Hebrew.

We referred earlier to the distribution of the Israelite and Philistine centers. It should be noted that, as has been pointed out by a number of commentators, they distributed themselves geographically: Philistines to the coastal plains, and Israelites to the highlands. While there is evidence of Philistine expansion of control into the highlands[39] we have suggested that it was control by vassalage rather than by occupation. During the Kassite period, for example, the use of chariotry enhanced security and control in the level countryside surrounding the city-states of Mesopotamia, disrupting the tribal way of life of the residents of the controllable hinterland. This tended to polarize western Asia into areas of control and areas, nominally subject to the Kassite rulers, where control was virtually impossible. It was to these areas that the uprooted gravitated, primarily because they were hilly and chariots were at a disadvantage.[40] What we are suggesting is the continuation of a policy of vassalage begun by the Hyksos, continued by the pharaohs[41] and inherited to a large extent by the Philistines.

In the dimorphic system described by Rowton, the chiefdom in tribal society

[38]Rowton, "Parasocial Element," 184.

[39]K. A. Kitchen, "The Philistines," Peoples of Old Testament Times (ed. D. J. Wiseman; Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 63.

[40]Rowton, "Topology," 29.

[41]A. Alt, Essays on Old Testament History and Religion (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1968) 185-207.

was useful to the state and has to be viewed to some extent as a part of the government at the district or provincial level.[42] Acquisition of such a position might come about through a rise to power as a leader of the disenfranchised parasocial element. In tribal society the most predatory elements are those smaller and poorer or splinter groups that lack the strength to assert their right to territorial claims. Their option is usually to resort to banditry, which can be a stepping stone to a military career. In a time of tribal discontent or national emergency, this can open almost unlimited possibilities to the leader willing to seize the opportunity.[43]

It may be fruitful to consider the rise of Saul and then David in this kind of setting. If we are seeking a fierce and predatory group among the tribes of Israel, Benjamin is our most likely candidate. The blessing of Jacob describes Benjamin as a "ravenous wolf" devouring prey in the morning and dividing spoil in the evening (Gen 49:27). In the war between Benjamin and the rest of Israel (Judges 20), regardless of how the numbers are interpreted, the clear intent of the passage is to demonstrate that Benjamin, though badly outnumbered, was defeated only by the use of an ambush. The skill of Benjamin militarily is indicated here, and so is the situation by which the tribe becomes a prime candidate for parasocial status. Judges records the decimation of the ranks of Benjamin, leaving them with a total of 600 fighting men (Judg 20:47), a number echoed in the band of men gathered around David (1 Sam 27:2). It is just such a tribal splinter group that would provide the nucleus of a parasocial element that would ultimately develop into a rejuvenated tribe.

If we accept the idea that the Philistines ruled the highlands of Canaan by a system of vassal chiefs, then Saul's reluctance to accept the kingship forced upon him by Samuel might be recognized as an initial refusal to become a rebel leader. Given the fact that Saul mobilized Israel for a war in defense of Jabesh Gilead (1 Samuel 11) without any recorded response from the Philistines, he must have been viewed by them as a leader functioning under their auspices. It is difficult to explain the apparent Philistine indifference to what on any other basis must have been considered an act of war. A subject people does not mobilize an army without the permission of its overlord. It is not until Saul makes an overt move against the Philistines themselves that there is an armed response (1 Sam 13:2-5). The assault on the garrison at Geba, apparently using only the detachment of a thousand men under Jonathan, must be considered a token strike rather than the inauguration of all-out war. The people are clearly unprepared for such a thing, as evidenced by the mass flight from the retaliating Philistines (13:6-7), and it may be that the assault was a declaration as much as a military operation and was intended to draw the uncommitted, both Israelite and Hebrew, to the struggle for freedom. This is not without parallel in history. John Brown's assault on Harper's Ferry was also a raid with two goals in mind: the arming of an unarmed slave population, and the spark to ignite a fight for freedom. In light of what has been said above about the need to arm the people for war this may have been one objective for the raid, and Saul's proclamation of the battle "throughout the land" for the hearing of the Hebrews could very easily have been intended to call the unaffiliated to join the Israelites in their war.

[42]Rowton, "Tribal Elite," 227.

[43]Rowton, "Parasocial Element," 193.

The phrase "each to his tent" in v 2 may hint at the dimorphic nature of Saul's reign. Archaeology has established the presence of a strongly fortified but crude citadel at Gibeah, surrounded by a village, of which Kenyon says, "Nothing survived of any pretension and its occupants were certainly not acquainted with luxury."[44] The second citadel of which she speaks is usually associated with Saul. Rowton describes the dimorphic chiefdom, with a town at its center, controlling tribal people from that town. Usually fortified, it fits into what he calls "the usual picture . . . of a castle atop a great rock brooding over a town at its foot, with camps of the nomads scattered throughout the countryside."[45] This is a picture extracted both from work with tribesmen from fairly recent times and from eighth-century-B.C. Kassite nomadic tribesmen who also maintained such towns. This particular historical analogy seems to be based on remarkably tenacious sociological forms. We would characterize Saul's reign as a dimorphic chiefdom, built around the remnants of the tribe of Benjamin and reinforced by the addition of the nonaffiliated Hebrews, both residents of Israelite territory and Philistine mercenaries. He is able to mobilize his army because the Philistines like their Egyptian predecessors rule the hinterlands by a system of vassal rulers, and the anointing of still another vassal ruler was no threat to their security. Only when that vassal ruler makes an armed foray against a Philistine outpost do they respond with force. As a final point, the treatment of the bodies of Saul and his sons is reminiscent of the later policies of the Assyrians[46] towards rebellious vassals.

David presents a slightly different picture. He is more clearly the parasocial leader operating in the wilderness until pressures from Saul become so intense that he is driven into a vassal relationship with Achish of Gath. We have already discussed the process by which individuals might be forced to become part of this parasocial element. The statement of 1 Sam 22:2 is almost a dictionary definition of that process. "And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented, gathered to him; and he became captain over them." The "everyone" may be interpreted as an inclusive everyone. Heterogeneous origins are characteristic of members of a parasocial unit. If we may deduce anything about the nature of David's group from the list of those who became leaders, it was characteristically heterogeneous. As might be expected, members of Judah predominate, but there is a strong representation from the tribe of Benjamin as well. We have no intention at this point of trying to unravel all the textual problems associated with the comparative lists in 2 Samuel 23 and 1 Chronicles 11, but dealing simply with those individuals who are readily identifiable by point of origin a wide range is in evidence.

Uriah the Hittite is the most famous non-Israelite in the list. It has been noted that his is a theophoric name bearing the element "Yah," thus indicating that his family had been in Canaan and in contact with Israel for some time.[47] But it might be argued that a shift in political alignments could affect resident aliens

[44]K. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (New York: Praeger, 1970) 275.

[45]Rowton, "Tribal Elite," 224.

[46]G. Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (Suffolk: Chaucer, 1976) 263.

[47]Ackroyd, *The Second Book of Samuel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977) 266.

even more profoundly than citizens. Eliphelet son of Ahasbai (with *NIV*) is a
Maacathite, which would place him, at least genealogically, in a small kingdom
to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee adjoining Dan. Zelek the Ammonite is simi-
larly listed among David's command staff. There are also individuals from within
Israel but outside the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin. As would be ex-
pected, though, the main body of this inner circle consists of those who would
find it geographically convenient to join David in the wilderness. The Judahites
can be explained simply by association with David. When an individual falls
from favor in any administration, those close to him generally share in his fall.
Those from Benjamin might be explained as members of the tribe out of favor
with its dominant member.

David's career in the wilderness is not really well developed in 1 Samuel, but
the incident involving Nabal the Carmelite might indicate something of the para-
social lifestyle. There is a hint that David had enough strength to remain in a sin-
gle place for some time when Saul was not actively pursuing him. He had been
close enough to Nabal to offer protection for his herds and herdsmen and still
close enough to request some kind of payment for that protection when spring
shearing came. Nabal's response to David's request speaks again of the attitude
toward individuals involved in a parasocial element: "Many servants are break-
ing away from their masters these days" (2 Sam 25:10). We would hesitate to
identify David's career at this point as an Iron Age protection racket, but it does
seem that there are some affinities with that more modern type of career.

His time in the wilderness may have been cut short by Saul's solidifying of his
control over the south. Mendenhall notes that, as any such outlaw band must
when governmental control becomes fairly well established, David's band had to
establish a relationship with a foreign power—in this case Achish of Gath—for
survival.[48] In this alliance David marks out a place for himself as a true Hebrew.
He has been an outlaw in the tradition of the Amarna *SA.GAZ* and now enlists
with a foreign king as a mercenary. Greenberg notes several instances in which
'apirū were given cities in which they were quartered alongside the other inhabi-
tants.[49] David's acceptance as a vassal by Achish may have been dictated by a
policy of division and control attested in the Mari archives. In that setting Zimri-
Lim is known to have set up situations that would foster tensions between the
major tribal groups, thereby neutralizing any possible threat they might pose to
Mari.[50] Similarly, Aharoni suggests that Achish may have given Ziklag to David
out of animosity toward Saul in hope of drawing Judah into conflict with the
northern coalition being formed under Saul.[51]

After Saul's death the crowning of David as king over Judah at Hebron went
unopposed by Philistine power, but as with Saul he is apparently left unmolested
to rule until he becomes king over the entire tribal confederation. John Bright
notes that his initial elevation to the throne of Judah was certainly with Philis-
tine consent but that they recognized his acclamation by all the tribes as a virtual

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[48]Mendenhall, *Tenth Generation*, 136.

[49]Greenberg, *Ḫab/piru*, 95.

[50]Rowton, "Tribal Elite," 237.

[51]Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *Atlas*, 63.

declaration of independence.[52] It is further possible that the Philistines welcomed the division between the house of Saul and David, a division that would theoretically widen the split between Judah and the other tribes. At this time Achish must still have considered David a loyal vassal.[53]

With the spread of Israelite control throughout Palestine and beyond, a new era of consolidated government began in the region. If the reconstruction of pre-Israelite government presented above is accurate, there had been no such thing in the country since at least the days of the conquest. With consolidation came urbanization, and urbanization neutralizes the kind of forces described as operative in the rise of the state. Tribal life loses its hold and people gravitate to the city.[54] The consolidation of empire throughout the Near East during the subsequent years stemmed the flow of dislocated people as the hinterlands gradually came under the control of central governments. As this control is established, terms such as 'apiru and SA.GAZ vanish from the written records.[55] After Saul the term "Hebrew" similarly disappears from the Biblical text with the exception of Jeremiah's use of the Deuteronomic legislation and Jonah's suggestive use of the word in his flight from Yahweh. Under the monarchy as established by David the land became organized to such an extent that there was no longer a hinterland within the geographical limits for potential parasocial leaders to flee to. When under Solomon it was necessary for Jeroboam to seek asylum (1 Kgs 11:26-40), it was to Egypt, not to the hinterland, that he fled. When David the Hebrew became David the king he established a system of governmental control that made it virtually impossible for another to come to power along the same route he had followed.

In the structure we have described we see no necessity for interpreting David's rise to power as a denial of covenant, or of the egalitarian social ideal reflected in the work of Mendenhall and the sociological school, but rather a rise to power along lines that are as old as the history of the Near East. We see only the kind of untamed society in which a man of ability might retreat to the hinterland, driven by forces both political and economic, and there gather around himself similar refugees—refugees who were ejected from their society by the same social forces operative intermittently in that part of the world for at least 3,000 years. They did not flee an egalitarian social experiment based on a covenant relationship; they fled poverty and physical dangers. If there was such a social experiment, it had collapsed before the time of David the Hebrew.

[52]J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959) 175-177.

[53]Aharoni and Avi-Yonah, *Atlas*, 65.

[54]Mendenhall, "Conquest of Palestine," 105.

[55]Rowton, "Parasocial Element," 182.