THE FAMILY IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

THE FAMILY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL: SOCIOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

PATRICIA DUTCHER-WALLS

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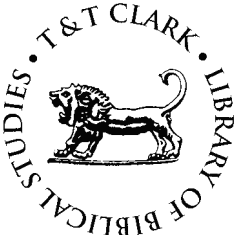

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THE FAMILY IN LIFE AND IN DEATH: THE FAMILY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Sociological and Archaeological Perspectives

edited by

Patricia Dutcher-Walls

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. H. Donner and W. Röllig. 2d ed. Wiesbaden, 1966–69
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen–Vluyn, 1976. 2d enlarged ed. of *KTU*: *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places*. Edited by M.Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995
NAB	New American Bible
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
SBLABS	Society of Biblical Literature Archaeology and Biblical Studies

SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SWBA	Social World of Biblical Antiquity
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

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Preface

The studies collected in this volume all first saw the light of day at various sessions of the Social Sciences and the Interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures Section of the Society of Biblical Literature. In both 2005 and 2006, this Section sponsored an invited session on the family in ancient Israel in conjunction with the American Schools of Oriental Research. Each panel consisted of two biblical scholars with a specialty in sociological methods and two archaeologists. Seven of the studies included here derive from those sessions, although each piece has been updated and edited as each author saw fit for publication in this volume. The eighth study, my own "The Clarity of Double Vision," was presented at a 2007 session of the same SBL Section.

The invited sessions were conceived as a way of fostering cross-disciplinary dialogue and synergy. The original call for papers was phrased as follows: "Towards the goal of promoting dialogue between archaeological and sociological perspectives in looking at various topics related to ancient Israel, the focus selected for this year's session is 'The Family in Ancient Israel.' The session will include two papers grounded in social science methodologies and two based on archaeological research." Within the broad scope given by the session title, the presenters were given latitude to approach the topic as they wished. It is perhaps an indication of the research interests of these two disciplines that the papers presented fell into three broad categories: social relationships within the family, construction and types of houses used by families, and the dynamics of social practices related to death and ancestors. The presentations and the resulting discussion at the sessions showed how both sociology and archaeology have significant contributions to make to an understanding of a social structure such as the family and how these disciplines inform each other. It is hoped that the dialogue and synergy will be evident in the essays appearing in the present volume.

My thanks go to each of the authors, who worked not only on their initial presentations, but who also undertook the significant task of preparing their studies for publication. Special thanks go to Claudia Camp, co-editor of the Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies,

for the initial suggestion of turning the SBL presentations into a book. I also thank Burke Gerstenschlager and his colleagues at T&T Clark International/Continuum for their help in the publishing process, as well as Duncan Burns for his efficient and sharp-eyed editing work. Also, I offer my deep appreciation to my assistant, Margaret Miller, for her dedicated work with the many details of the manuscript that she handled with diligence and competence.

Patricia Dutcher-Walls
August, 2008

The Clarity of Double Vision: Seeing the Family in Sociological and Archaeological Perspective

Patricia Dutcher-Walls

That the family, in all its various forms, is a basic social institution around which much else in society is structured seems to be a tautology. That it, further, should be a significant topic in the historical reconstructions of past societies seems likewise unquestionable. And yet, fifty years ago, if one were a student of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament reading an introductory text or history, one would have looked in vain for much understanding or information about the family in ancient Israel. Today, that situation is changed in many ways and, while a number of reasons may be advanced for those changes, the use of archaeological and sociological methodologies plays a large part. My hope in this essay is to describe some of the history of research on the family in ancient Israel, with an eye to highlighting how the combination of archaeology and sociology has played a part.

In tracing a fifty-year history of research on the family in ancient Israel, I have two simultaneous agendas in mind. First, I propose to review relevant literature on the family in order briefly to summarize the current state of knowledge about the family and the questions yet to be fully explored. Secondly, I will track how the methodologies of archaeology and sociology aided in research on the family with a goal of analyzing the heuristic value of the various sources, methods, and assumptions that underlie that research.

In order to start with a broad scope, I note that research on the family is grounded in the wider fields of anthropology, archaeology, and social history that provide definitions of the terms that are sociologically and archaeologically sensitive as well as wider in scope than the ancient period we are studying. Anderson provides the following definitions:

> The *family* is a group of kin-related people (including fictive kin) who may or may not reside together and whose primary function is to reproduce its members biologically. A *household* is a person or a group of

> people who live together in one or more structures, who carry out daily activities necessary for the maintenance and social reproduction of the group within a specific space associated with the residence, and who interact with other households.[1]

Also helpful is the idea that households are more than isolated economic production units but rather a part of a larger social structure. "[H]ouseholds are to be seen as the nexus of *social* reproduction and production in the forms of practice. [And] they do these [activities of production] in a way that both reifies and transforms the social structure—along with such things as gender constructions and power relations—which on a grander scale are shared with the larger community."[2] We will see below how these wider definitions are made more particular for ancient Israel.[3]

Immediately obvious from a review of research is that "family" is not a simple or unitary topic of research. Because the family is such a basic social institution, it overlaps with numerous related topics: households and household studies; gender roles and gender studies; women; feminist analysis; children and education; family law (marriage, inheritance, divorce, redemption); household or popular religion; agriculture, subsistence strategies and economics; death and ancestors; the patriarchal stories in Genesis; the emergence of early Israel; tribal structures; tribes in early Israel; state formation and the impact of state organizations on families; and ethnicity. I have made no attempt at all to cover all these topics but all are mentioned or referred to in the literature I do review. Further, I make no claims that this review is comprehensive; rather, I have strived for it to be representative of research in the last fifty years.

In the first two decades of my arbitrary fifty-year timeframe, five sources are exceptions to the general disregard of the family, two quite extensive and one signaling a major change in direction. Noth's *The Old*

1. Nesta Anderson, "Finding the Space Between Spatial Boundaries and Social Dynamics: The Archaeology of Nested Households," in *Household Chores and Household Choices: Theorizing the Domestic Sphere in Historical Archaeology* (ed. Kerri S. Barile and Jamie C. Brandon; Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 111.

2. Jamie C. Brandon and Kerri S. Barile, "Household Chores; or, the Chore of Defining the Household," in Barile and Brandon, eds., *Household Chores and Household Choices*, 8.

3. For other anthropological studies, see the references in Carol Meyers, "Material Remains and Social Relations: Women's Culture in Agrarian Household of the Iron Age," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina* (ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 425–44.

Testament World,[4] and a Jewish illustrated Bible companion, *Understanding the Bible through History and Archaeology* by Orlinsky,[5] both use a cultural history approach to give detail on topics such as family structure, domestic architecture, inheritance, elders, and burial practices. Orlinsky, in an analysis that from our vantage point appears prescient, notes that "God too was perceived in patriarchal terms…a member of the patriarchal household."[6] Two other sources anticipate the advent of social scientific study in using social models or cultural parallels. Roland de Vaux implicitly uses a social model in presenting "nomadism" as the social background for Israel in *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. He gives a description of the בית אב, "the house of the father," which is still current, "the father, his wife or wives and their unmarried children but also their married sons with their wives and children, and the servants."[7] In perhaps the only full-length study of the family, Patai in *Sex and Family in the Bible and the Middle East* views the Bible "against the background of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century folk life of the Middle East… This approach is predicated on one basic premise: namely, that folk life in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Middle East is essentially comparable to the life of the ancient Hebrews as reflected in the Bible."[8] While he does not use other sociological analysis or archaeology, he does identify elements of family structure and customs that later social scientific analysts and archaeologists discuss. The fifth scholar from this period, Mendenhall, is well-known, first in the 1962 groundbreaking article in the *Biblical Archaeologist* that is often noted as the essay that precipitated the renewed use of sociological study of ancient Israel, and then in his 1973 book, *The Tenth Generation.* While he discounts the impact of kinship in creating larger social patterns, because of his theory of covenant as the formative structure for early Israel, he uses the blend of methods that will define the best studies in the years to come—historical methodology, archaeological data, comparisons with ancient Near Eastern evidence and written documents, and sociology, in Mendenhall's case, primarily E.R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization.*

4. Martin Noth, *The Old Testament World* (trans. Victor I. Gruhn; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966).

5. Harry M. Orlinsky, *Understanding the Bible through History and Archaeology* (New York: Ktav, 1972).

6. Ibid., 44.

7. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh; New York: McGraw–Hill, 1961), 8.

8. Raphael Patai, *Sex and Family in the Bible and the Middle East* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 15.

The mid- to late 1970s mark a transition point methodologically not only in the study of the family, but in the wider field of biblical studies. The advent of a "second wave" of "sociologically informed studies of ancient Israel"[9] brought a wide variety of social world studies, and in particular the use of social scientific models, to bear on a wide range of topics. The use of anthropology, sociology, ethnography, economics, and other social sciences broadened the perspectives scholars could use to explicate and interpret data from biblical texts.[10] Archaeology itself was in the midst of transitions in the incorporation of processual approaches, which added a wider interdisciplinary approach to the digs themselves[11] and, significantly for our review, deliberately incorporated the use of anthropology in the interpretation of material remains. As Dever wrote in 1977, "The older works…are now being complemented by up-to-date treatments in geography, ethnography, social anthropology, and sociology."[12]

These methodological changes were not enough on their own to bring the family into the spotlight in biblical studies, however; our conception of the past and of what it means to study the past had to change also. As Meyers states,

> We have been concerned with ethnicities and kingdoms, not with individual family groups. The "state" or "city-state" or "tribe" has been reckoned the primary social structure, when in reality the *household*, as

9. Frank S. Frick, "Response: Reconstructing Ancient Israel's Social World," in *The Social World of the Hebrew Bible: Twenty-Five Years of the Social Sciences in the Academy* (ed. Ronald A. Simkins and Stephen L. Cook; Semeia 87; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 233–54 (235).

10. Useful reviews of the use of sociological methods are to be found in, among others: Charles E. Carter and Carol Meyers, *Community, Identity and Ideology: Social Scientific Approaches to the Hebrew Bible* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 6; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996); David J. Chalcraft, *Social Scientific Old Testament Criticism* (Biblical Seminar 47; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Philip F. Esler, ed., *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); Simkins and Cook, eds., *The Social World of the Hebrew Bible*.

11. William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 59.

12. William G. Dever, "The Patriarchal Traditions: 1. Palestine in the Second Millennium BCE: The Archaeological Picture," in *Israelite and Judaean History* (ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 70–120 (109).

> the basic unit of production and reproduction, is the primary socio-economic unit of society and should be acknowledged as the social and economic center of any settlement.[13]

The visibility of the family, kinship, and household in the last thirty years of research has depended on the willingness of scholars to examine "the underside of history," to borrow Elise Boulding's phrase, along with the methodologies that made such examinations possible.

At this point in the history of research we begin to find major studies that used the full range of historical, sociological, textual, and archaeological methods in a reconstructive effort and that, incidentally or deliberately, include data on the family. The bibliography quickly becomes too large to review in a single article, but highlights will indicate the trends in results and methods. Gottwald's *Tribes of Israel* was the first major study, of course, and a paradigm shifter in many ways for biblical studies. Along the way towards his materialist reconstruction of early Israel as an egalitarian re-tribalization, Gottwald closely examines family structures. He reviews the terminology for social units (tribe, clan, family) in detail from biblical passages "to develop a model of the levels and functions of social organization," but also checks the model "by reference to anthropological and sociological research on tribal organization."[14] One lasting contribution to the understanding of kinship systems was his portrayal of the משפחה as a "protective association of extended families"[15] that

> …operated to preserve the minimal conditions for the integrity of each of its member families by extending mutual help as needed to supply male heirs, to keep or recover land, to rescue members from debt slavery, and to avenge murder. These functions were all restorative in that they were emergency means to restore the normal autonomous basis of a member family, and they were all actions that devolved upon the *mishpāḥāh* only when the *bēth-āv* was unable to act on its own behalf.[16]

The study of the family in ancient Israel was significantly advanced by the publication in 1985 of Stager's *BASOR* article, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," which specifically employs both archaeology and ethnoarchaeological studies.[17] The article examines

13. Meyers, "Material Remains and Social Relations," 427.

14. Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250–1050 B.C.E.* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979), 238.

15. Ibid., 258.

16. Ibid., 267.

17. Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1–35.

archaeological data on domestic structures, especially in Iron I Palestine in the frontier situation in the hill country (noting such data as the emergence of numerous hill-country villages, often in new locations, along with agricultural terraces and cisterns); it includes analysis of the transition to Iron II society when the frontier closed and land became less available because of population expansion and the expansion of land holdings by the royal household and retainers. Stager contributes an analysis of domestic architecture; he proposes that the ubiquitous pillar house contained a nuclear family, based on per person living space, with the multiple-family compound of several adjacent houses representing cluster housing of an extended family that shares and works land as a family unit for sustenance of the whole unit.[18] Complementing Stager's study in 1985 was Hopkins' detailed study of agriculture in Iron Age Canaan that explicitly uses ethnography to help reconstruct the agrarian realities of households in ancient Israel which sought to minimize risk and optimize labor.[19]

By the 1990s, other scholars were able to build on, react to, and extend the foundational research of the previous decades. That there were inherent connections among the social realities of family, domestic architecture, household, kinship, and agricultural production seemed well established even as more detail and conceptual clarity became possible as text- and archaeology-based studies continued. Also helpful as research progressed was the conceptualization of history introduced into the field by scholars using the framework of the *Annales* school, especially the understanding of medium-term processes (*conjonctures*) which conceptualize the history of "processes of change in social and economic history, economic, agrarian and demographic cycles…and worldviews and ideologies."[20]

In a text-based study, Bendor accomplishes a highly detailed study of the range of meanings and usages of the terms בית אב and משפחה in the Hebrew Bible,[21] although he makes only indirect use of sociological study (using Gottwald as a source, for example). He helpfully discusses the various stages in the life cycle of a בית אב depending on the makeup

18. Ibid., 20.

19. David C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in Early Israel* (SWBA 3; Sheffield: Almond, 1985).

20. Thomas E. Levy and Augustin F. C. Hall, "Social Change and the Archaeology of the Holy Land," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. Thomas E. Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 2–8 (4).

21. S. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 7; Jerusalem: Simor, 1996).

of the family at any point in time and how that changes its relations with other families in the משפחה. He takes a stance against other studies that hold that the monarchy undermined family and clan cohesion and livelihood. Rather, Bendor argues, "The monarchy did not abolish the kinship structure, and destroyed neither the בית אב nor the משפחה. On the contrary, the monarchy itself was based on the kinship structure and its functioning relied upon this structure. The burden of taxes levied by the monarchy was imposed on the kinship groups."[22]

In a 1995 study of the Iron II period, Holladay uses archaeology and insights from anthropology to examine "the causes for the social organization shift from acephalous (lacking hereditary leadership) segmented society to centralized nation state."[23] Taking the Israelite house "as our best resource for understanding the economic role of the family in Israelite society,"[24] he notes that this house form does not change through the period, which suggests that, "nothing in the archaeological record clearly points either to a dramatic degradation of the living standards of most of those elements of Israelite society who were living in the large villages, town and cities…or to a concomitant rise in the living standards of a few 'great houses.'"[25] The economics of the family was further explicated in a text-based study by Steinberg using a household economics approach that "include(s) analysis of inheritance by social anthropologists and examine(s) family units and their patterns of individual behavior as a function of the survival of the family unit."[26] Steinberg concludes that "anthropological models of family organization emphasize the importance of the following issues in Genesis: marriage choice, heirship, and division of inheritance."[27]

In the 1990s, those interested in particular aspects of the family also pursued research. The study of the role of women within the family and as a part of household production was aided by analysis from feminist approaches. Meyers has been foremost in these studies and in the use of multidisciplinary methods[28] to analyze "the social context of material culture." Noting that self-sufficient households were the basis of economic

22. Ibid., 220.

23. John S. Holladay, Jr., "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah: Political and Economic Centralization in the Iron IIA-B (ca. 1000–750 BCE)," in Levy, ed., *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, 368–98 (375).

24. Ibid., 387.

25. Ibid., 391.

26. Naomi Steinberg, *Kinship and Marriage in Genesis: A Household Economics Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 17.

27. Ibid., 137.

28. Meyers, "Material Remains and Social Relations," 427.

and social power in early Israel and that women made significant contributions to the subsistence economy in such households,[29] she argues that there was complementarity in economic functions that "provided a context for gender mutuality and interdependence, and of concomitant female power."[30] In an article on the family in a feminist collection, Frymer-Kensky argues that the development of monarchic state structures constrained the "closely ordered [patriarchal,] hierarchical system in which ultimate authority resided with the father… [by]…protecting [women] from the worst abuses but at the same time increasing their distance from the locus of political power."[31]

A number of scholars have looked at how family relationships were reflected in the law of ancient Israel, especially against the background of legal documents of the ancient Near East.[32] Some of these studies make minimal use of social scientific insights, but rely on a general understanding of how law embodies aspects of social relationships. For example, Taggar-Cohen, using an analysis of Nuzi texts, concludes that the book of Numbers presents the concept of family inheritance law to express the foundation of Israelite society. "Since the construction of the society is strongly tied to the prospect of the inheritance of the land of Canaan, familial law seems to be a natural way of presenting legal actions."[33] Westbrook builds on studies of tribes and clans to argue that inheritance and redemption laws operate only within the limits of the משפחה because kinship ties within tribe are too vague and tribal allegiance "was based on a fictional, not a real, ancestor."[34]

29. Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 145.

30. Ibid., 187.

31. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Family in the Hebrew Bible," in *Religion, Feminism, and the Family* (ed. Anne Carr and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen; The Family, Religion and Culture Series; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 55–73 (55).

32. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Patriarchal Family Relationships and Near Eastern Law," *BA* 44 (1981): 209–14; Carolyn Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (BZAW 216; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993); Susan Rattray, "Marriage Rules, Kinship Terms, and Family Structure in the Bible," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1987 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 26; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 537–44; Ada Taggar-Cohen, "Law and Family in the Book of Numbers: The Levites and the *Tidennūtu* Documents from Nuzi," *VT* 48 (1998): 74–94; Raymond Westbrook, *Property and the Family in Biblical Law* (JSOTSup 113; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991).

33. Taggar-Cohen, "Law and Family in the Book of Numbers," 93.

34. Westbrook, *Property and the Family*, 22.

A mark of the maturity of family studies in this decade was the production of studies that synthesized research such as that discussed above in more widely accessible formats, some aimed at a student or general audience. Several are worth mentioning. In the Library of Ancient Israel series, McNutt presents a comprehensive reconstruction of the society of ancient Israel, building on research that uses the full methodological range of history, archaeology, and anthropology.[35] Her review of Iron I Israel demonstrates how far-reaching kinship structures are, as scholarship has come to understand it. Such realities as settlement patterns, social group organization, and political structures, as well as economic aspects such as patterns of labor, systems of exchange and trade, land ownership and distribution of wealth, are all based in or expressed by kinship structures.[36] Another synthetic volume, edited by Matthews and Benjamin, likewise presents the results of research on ancient Israel's social world.[37] This study organizes material into two parts, the village and the state, and then under five categories—politics, economics, diplomacy, laws and education. Thus family social relations are integrated into these topics—for example, in chapters entitled "Father" and "Mother" under "Village Politics"—and the volume overall covers many aspects of family organization and dynamics.

The first full-length book completely dedicated to the family as a topic of research came out in the Family, Religion, and Culture series.[38] In three substantive essays divided by period—early Israel, first temple, and second temple, plus a summary essay and a hermeneutical reflection—this volume systematically presents evidence on all aspects of the family. Interestingly, one of the essays makes a brief methodological note that, "[w]here available, data from comparable societies is also taken into account."[39] Yet, in this essay, a quarter of the footnotes cite sources that use sociological and/or anthropological methods, information, or insights—which I take as an indication of how well integrated sociological methods have become in the field. Various synthetic works also use a general understanding of the social and cultural background of family and household in Old Testament to make interpretive points for

35. Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1999).

36. Ibid., 69–98.

37. Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel 1250–587 BCE* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993).

38. Leo G. Perdue et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (The Family, Religion and Culture Series; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997).

39. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Family in First Temple Israel," in Perdue et al., *Families in Ancient Israel*, 48–103 (49).

contemporary audiences. A fine example is Felder's essay "The Bible and Black Families: A Theological Challenge," which uses sociocultural data to interpret Old Testament passages for black churches and families today.[40]

In our current decade, both new research and synthetic studies have continued to employ sociological and archaeological methods in understanding and interpreting the family. Perhaps the most significant study in terms of scope and conclusions is Schloen's *House of the Father as Fact and Symbol.* Schloen undertakes a major study of (1) the social scientific assumptions that have undergirded the discussion of the social world of ancient Israel and the hermeneutics behind those assumptions; and (2) the evidence, starting from his study of Ugarit, that the structure of the household was the primary and extensive social structure of society well into the middle first millennium there and in neighboring cultures.[41] His methodological points about the necessity of a hermeneutical or interpretive approach to ancient data are worth a major study in their own right, but this survey focuses on his argument that a Weberian-based "patrimonial household model" underlies social realities in Israel and its ancient neighbors. "…[I]n the ancient Near East, familiar household relationships, born of personal ties of kinship and master–slave association, provided the local rules for all social interactions… The application of patrimonial rules to social settings beyond the individual household served to integrate many disparate households into a social whole."[42] In the chapter titled "Demography and Domestic Space in Ancient Israel," Schloen makes several additional arguments. First, the observed archaeological variation of Israelite domestic spaces housed a combination of smaller nuclear families (by demographic estimates five people) and larger extended family groups (by demographic estimates ten people) with the variation depending on the natural life cycles of families.[43] Second, there is little distinction between the organization of rural and urban households, all of which are agriculturally based,[44] so there is little evidence to recommend a major split between the rural and

40. Cain Hope Felder, "The Bible and Black Families: A Theological Challenge," in *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class and Family* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1989), 150–66. See also J. Andrew Dearman, "The Family in the Old Testament," *Interpretation* 52 (1998): 117–29.

41. J. David Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001).

42. Ibid., 58.

43. Ibid., 136.

44. Ibid., 138.

urban social structures.[45] Third, beyond the extended family, the clan was the effective level of larger social organization and the clans survived well into the monarchic period. "[The Samaria ostraca] make clear the continuing importance in ancient Israel, well into the monarchic period, of cohesive clans as the basic economic and social units responsible for organizing resources and providing goods and services to their overlords."[46]

Continuing to use archaeology and sociology, other studies in recent years have looked at other aspects of the family. In a study that contrasts with Schloen's conclusions, Simkins uses a Marxian model of modes of production to examine the impact on family and kinship of the shift from a domestic mode of production in early Israel to a patron–client system of social relationships under the monarchy.[47] Sinkins argues that "the inherent contradiction between the clientelistic and the domestic modes of production took the form of a conflict between the interests of the nuclear family, which supported the patronage system, and the interests of the extended family."[48] In response, the state created an "ideological superstructure" of laws and texts that weakened kinship bonds and supported nuclear families.

In an archaeologically based study that links evidence from material remains with the symbolic/conceptual world, Bunimovitz and Faust have argued that the study of domestic architecture, especially the four-room or pillared house, is an expression of the egalitarian ethos of ancient Israel.[49] In a volume that combines textual and cultural study, Berquist examines the socially constructed body in ancient Israel, that is, the definitions, limits, boundaries, and images of the body constituted by culturally shared expectations and practices.[50] This has significance for the study of the family because bodies exist within and are defined by households: "the integrity and wholeness of the Israelite household pattern [is] in parallel with the integrity and wholeness of the body."[51]

45. Ibid., 140.

46. Ibid., 165.

47. Ronald A. Simkins, "Family in the Political Economy of Monarchic Judah," *The Bible and Critical Theory* 1 (2004): 1–17. Online: http://www.epress.monash.edu/DOI:10:2104/bc040006 (accessed 11 November 2007).

48. Ibid., 7.

49. Shlomo Bunimovitz and Avraham Faust, "Building Identity: The Four-Room and the Israelite Mind," in Dever and Gitin, eds., *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past*, 411–23.

50. Jon L. Berquist, *Controlling Corporeality: The Body and the Household in Ancient Israel* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

51. Ibid., 65.

The "tribe" as a social world construct for understanding Israel is examined and critiqued by Coote, who cautions that this construct cannot overly shape the ambiguous evidence in the texts produced by ancient Israel about its social organization.[52] Leeb provides additional research on the role and status of women within the family in an article that uses an anthropological study of polygyny from rural Haiti to understand dynamics of polygynous family systems. Polygyny shapes several family structures and dynamics, including separate dwellings for multiple wives, the "mother's house," insistence on virginity at marriage, advice to young men moving to the city, women active in the market place, and concubinage.[53]

The emerging confidence scholars have in research on the family to date may also account for the number of synthetic works that have been written in the last few years. Two books describing life as it might have been lived by the "average family" in ancient Israel depend largely on family research for the portraits they draw. Borowski's *Daily Life in Biblical Times* surveys topics related to daily life, with family structures and household economics central to that reconstruction.[54] King and Stage draw explicitly on Schloen's patrimonial household model in their volume, *Life in Biblical Israel*, with a discussion of Israelite society which begins with the family.[55] They portray the structure of Israel's society as a series of nested households, noting the conceptual correlate to this structure this way: "The family and household provide the central symbol about which the ancient Israelites created their cosmion, the world in which members of that society expressed their relationships to each other, to their leaders…and to the deity."[56] The usefulness of research on the family for interpretive efforts is evident in such papers as Sanders's "The Family in the Bible"[57] and Peterson's 2004 SBL Presidential address, "Genesis and Family Values,"[58] both of which build on research

52. Robert B. Coote, "Tribalism: Social Organization in the Biblical Israels," in *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 35–49.

53. Carolyn S. Leeb, "Polygyny: Insights from Rural Haiti," in Esler, ed., *Ancient Israel*, 50–65.

54. Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times* (SBLABS 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

55. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

56. Ibid., 5.

57. James A. Sanders, "The Family in the Bible," *Interpretation* 32 (2002): 117–28.

58. David L. Peterson, "Genesis and Family Values," *JBL* 124 (2005): 5–23.

about the family for reflection on contemporary theological and ethical issues.

The comprehensiveness and usefulness of family research so far does not preclude continuing areas of contention and questions for future study. Issues still to be resolved include the following, among others: (1) How do we determine and describe the amount of social stratification within the kinship-based social structures in ancient Israel? If there are not classes per se, how much of a gap was there between the richest and the poorest members of society? How was that stratification expressed within kinship structures? (2) What were the impacts on family households from the institution of the monarchy? What is the best model for conceptualizing the relationship between family households and monarchic structures? (3) More broadly, what are, and how do we describe, the changes in families/clans/tribes over the course of history from Iron I to the Roman era? (4) What more can we know and conceptualize about relationships within family households, from textual evidence, material remains, and anthropological studies?

This review of research on the family also allows us to analyze the heuristic value of the various sources, methods, and assumptions that underlie this research. As we have seen, sources of data have included archaeology, including material remains, site surveys, and epigraphic sources; sociological, anthropological, and ethnoarchaeological studies from ancient, historical and modern eras, and from Middle East societies or from comparable societies; and biblical texts, including narratives and genealogies. Despite the wide variety of sources and topics, several commonalities in assumptions and use of methods can be highlighted that helped produce the creative and detailed research to date.

First, most if not all the scholars reviewed take the approach that all data need interpretation; there are no data from any source that interpret themselves. Further, while the interpreter's assumptions about what is meaningful inevitably guide interpretation, the best scholarship makes this a conscious awareness, in order to remain as open as possible to new or unexpected understandings.

Second, using the various combinations of sociological and archaeological study of the family, analysis is accomplished at the level of repeated patterns over a spread of data. Single occurrences, individual events or persons, and idiosyncratic elements are outside of the purview of these studies. This means that conclusions tend to be drawn from more than one set of data within any source (multiple sites in a site survey, material remains from several sites, social patterns of family relationships from several comparable societies, several narrative or biblical texts).

Third, analysis moves from one source of data to another in order to illumine or explain the data in the sources that need interpretation. This back and forth analysis needs to be done very carefully—the point is to test one's developing understanding, not to re-inscribe faulty assumptions from one set of data to another. For example, domestic house structures in comparable villages in a set of archaeological studies may apparently be explained through reference to family structures found in ethnographic studies of extended families, but that analysis needs to be tested critically against the original archaeological data. In a number of studies, several sources of data are linked in this way. For example, both archaeological remains and ethnographic data on family size together offer an interpretation of domestic architecture which then illumines a biblical text or, in turn, anthropological parallels to a biblical narrative illumine a detail of domestic architecture.

Fourth, the nature of the data to be interpreted and the use of multiple sources of data in explanations do not allow exact determination of meaning of any one element. There is no possibility of concluding "Elijah slept here" even if we can describe rooms on the upper level of a domestic house. This means that judgments have been articulated and evaluated on the basis of several other types of argument. First is *comparability.* The researcher asks: Are these data from a modern Middle Eastern village comparable to an ancient village? Is this pattern of family relationship from African villages comparable to an apparently similar pattern in a biblical text? Interpretation can also be made on the basis of *correlation*, where the case is made that one set of data or one pattern correlates with another set or pattern within the same source. The researcher asks, for example: Is the gradual increase in the use of iron is associated with the extensive deforestation of the same era and area?[59] A similar type of argument is based on *analogy*. In this argument, data from a better understood source can be tested to see if they are explanatory for another type of data. For example, is a particular well-established pattern of family inheritance from cross-cultural social analysis a helpful analogy for what we find in a biblical text?

Finally, any new interpretation of a set of data is usually expressed not as a "proof" or certainty, but as a statement that is probable or plausible, archaeologically or sociologically.[60] The process of research continues when such statements are then tested to see if their explanatory power improves our understanding of other data from a different source, or if the new data illumine aspects of evidence heretofore unexplained.

59. Stager, "Archaeology of the Family," 11.
60. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know?*, 71.

The wide-ranging results of five decades of research on the family speak to the usefulness of sociological and archaeological approaches. Perhaps, with hindsight, it should have been obvious that any social reality as basic and enmeshed in a wider social structure as the family needs examination that uses several perspectives in order to achieve clarity. At least, we have a good methodological model now and that bodes well for the future.

The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth*

Victor H. Matthews

Twenty years ago, Lawrence Stager provided a methodological paradigm for the study of the social world of ancient Israel in his article, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel."[1] In his study, Stager makes it clear that ethno-archaeological analysis of the material culture as represented by domestic architecture can "provide guidelines within which the archaeologist can reconstruct aspects of everyday life."[2] He argues the necessity of employing modern ethnographic methods to help determine kinship relationships and other aspects of social organization. In particular, he notes that "beyond the household, a villager's identity and social status are enmeshed in larger kinship networks."[3] Since that time, additional studies have added to the general familiarity with social scientific theory and method.[4] Most recently, the examination of the social aspects of the four-room house have sparked renewed interest in social identity, inclusion/exclusion, public and private zones, as well as utilitarian space.[5] What each of these studies has demonstrated is the usefulness of examining the biblical narrative within the context of its material culture.

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1. Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 250 (1980): 1–36.
2. Ibid., 18.
3. Ibid., 20.
4. See Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250–587 BCE* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993); Leo G. Perdue et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997); and Kenneth Campbell, ed., *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003).
5. See Shlomo Bunimovitz and Avraham Faust, "The Four-Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society," *NEA* 66 (2003): 22–31; idem, "Ideology in Stone: Understanding the Four-Room House," *BAR* 28 (July/August 2002): 33–41, 59–60; and Douglas Clark, "Bricks, Sweat, and Tears: The Human Investment in Constructing a 'Four-Room,'" *NEA* 66 (2003): 34–43.

Since a great deal of attention already has been given to the social dynamics of the בית אב, the basic household social unit comprised of an extended family of perhaps ten to twelve individuals, and how it relates to domestic architecture, the present study will direct its attention to the formation of social identity in ancient Israel. In particular, the issue raised here is the manner in which displaced individuals are able to reintegrate themselves into a local community. The process, as exemplified in the story of Ruth and Naomi, demonstrates the movement from a liminal social condition to a liminal spatial placement to a defined social condition within an established social space.

The Storytelling Process

Before moving into the biblical narrative, it is necessary first to note the process employed by the ancient storyteller. This creative agent makes conscious decisions about what portion of the real or created social world his/her characters inhabit. As a result, the story as artifact may be a true reflection of society as it existed in the time of the storyteller or it may be a perceived understanding of the society by the storyteller that existed in the time in which the story is set. It may in fact be a complete fabrication generated by the mind of the storyteller. Sometimes, using social-scientific theory and methods as well as archaeological data, it is possible to come to a satisfactory conclusion about the social world depicted in a particular story. Characters in a story are positioned to fulfill particular and socially recognizable roles. Additionally, if the storyteller is hoping to achieve some measure of acceptable reality, then there are also legal constraints that provide focus to character development and shape appropriate behaviors. In this way the audience can intuit much of what is going on and can even anticipate future action within the storyline. They understand power relationships, the implications of conversation, and the relevance of non-human entities or conditions to the story. However, it is when the audience is surprised, shocked, or amused within the context of what is perceived as "true to life behavior" that the storyteller demonstrates true versatility and broad understanding of the social world that serves as the background to the entire narrative.

Story and Social Elements in the Book of Ruth

The story of Ruth begins with a death—actually, three deaths (those of Elimelech [1:3] and his two sons [1:5]). Interestingly, the tie between disasters (famine and death), seasonal markers (the barley harvest), and social transition (Naomi and Ruth as widows) functions as a primary

storytelling device to initiate action and shape character development here.[6] Also intrinsic to this story is its multi-cultural nature. Two ethnic groups, Moabite and Israelite, are involved. Presumably the family-based values and relationships inherent to both are at play here, forming the cement that provides each its singular identity amidst a larger society comprised of crisscrossing social differences.[7] However, while Ruth is identified repeatedly as a Moabite (1:22; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10), exposing in this label the Israelite ethnic prejudices and some understanding of that culture and its values, no trace of what a Moabite believes or considers essential is mentioned in the text. Instead, Ruth is treated as an "uprooted person," who imposes on herself an expunging of her Moabite heritage, creating a cultural *tabula rasa* upon which Israelite social values then can be written. This development is then combined with Ruth's social condition as a widow. As a result, she becomes doubly liminal through the combination of her social status with her decision to immigrate.

Naomi, the other widow in the story, can also be seen as an "uprooted person," doubly so in fact since she has memories of her home in Bethlehem as well as the one she helped to create in Moab. What draws her out of her adopted Moabite social context and back into her previous existence in Bethlehem is the death of her husband and sons, leaving her a widow in a foreign social context without the support of any male to protect or provide for her. Thus she too is doubly liminal based on physical location and social status.

Social Implications: Naomi's Decision to Return to Bethlehem

Naomi's decision to end her family's sojourn in Moab and to return to her own social context represents an attempt both to resolve her initial crisis (widowhood) and to obtain some legal redress for her husband's nearly extinct household. Having begun her journey, she pauses and attempts to grant her daughters-in-law their freedom to return to their own social context. By setting this conversation in the "wilderness" between Moab and Israel, a clearly liminal space, a "no-man's land," the storyteller signals to the audience the moment of crux in a place without affiliation.[8]

6. Brian Britt, "Social Conflict and the Barley Harvest in the Hebrew Bible," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5 (2004–2005): 1–28 (9).

7. Joëlle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 27.

8. Don C. Benjamin, *The Old Testament Story* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 167.

The dynamics of the conversation between the women are also interesting to analyze.[9] Naomi's "moral" position is clearly dominant in her relationship to the two younger women. Orpah accepts Naomi's dominance and accepts her own subservient position and returns to Moab. Ruth, however, disputes this attempted positioning on Naomi's part and usurps the dominant position for herself, forcing Naomi to acquiesce to Ruth's desire. The question then arises: Is Naomi manipulating the situation to obtain the stronger of the two as her traveling companion?

Orpah's quick acceptance of Naomi's release suggests her nervousness and desire to return to safety and familiarity. Ruth's refusal to return and her statement of reaffiliation not only signals her strength of character and provides Naomi with an ally in the wilderness, doubling their chances of survival, but also sets up a legal possibility that did not exist without Ruth's presence in Bethlehem.[10]

If Naomi, a post-menopausal female, returns alone to Bethlehem, she may not call on the custom of levirate obligation. She may only offer the land of her husband for sale/redemption to the nearest male kin. This is exactly the scenario sketched by Boaz when he initially speaks to the family's legal guardian, the *levir*, in Ruth 4:3–4. Presumably, the sale of the land will then provide sufficient funds to support Naomi for the remainder of her life, but it also allows the name/household of Elimelech to become extinct.

A very similar situation is sketched out in a recently published Hebrew inscription in which a childless widow petitions for the usufruct of a portion of her deceased husband's fields. Curiously, this inscription makes no reference to levirate rights or obligations, and that may indicate that this widow, like Naomi, is no longer capable of having children.[11] However, with Ruth present, the legal issue of levirate obligation can be raised, despite her designation as "the Moabite," because she is recognized successively as a valued member of the community by Naomi (Ruth 1:18, 22), by Boaz's servant (2:5–7), and by Boaz (2:11–12).

Ruth's social status is further confirmed by the fact that none of the witnesses before whom Boaz speaks (Ruth 4:5) demures when he asserts that the *levir* must accept the obligation due to Ruth and her husband.

9. Luk van Langenhove and Rom Harré, "Introducing Positioning Theory," in *Positioning Theory* (ed. Rom Harré and Luk van Langenhove; Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 17.

10. Compare Moses' challenge to the people to make a choice in their loyalties in the face of Korah's revolt in Num 16:24–30.

11. Pierre Bordeuil et al., "King's Command and Widow's Plea: Two New Hebrew Ostraca of the Biblical Period," *NEA* 61 (1998): 2–13 (12).

The *levir* also accepts the elders' authority when he refuses to accept these terms, knowing that by impregnating Ruth his own household will eventually lose control of Elimelech's property (4:6). As Stephen Cook puts it, this inscription and, I would add, the story of Ruth, are indicators that "land tenure gave actual social and economic structure to covenantal community."[12] Thus, Naomi's social and economic standing within the Bethlehem community are enhanced by Ruth's presence because it entitles her to claim levirate rights. In that way, as Cheryl Anderson notes, biblical law helps "to define appropriate behavior" and is the way in which "various identities are developed" by the community.[13]

Social Implications: Ruth's Attempt to Transfer her Social Identity

Although Ruth's statement of transference of association and obligation could be thought of as a ritual performance, that term must be used with some caution. Ritual suggests conformist repetition, institutionalization, orchestration, well-understood context and expectation of specific activities or words.[14] Furthermore, there is no other example in the Hebrew Bible of a formalized ritual of transference of allegiance outside the diplomatic and military context.[15] Certainly, this is a moment of conflict/tension in her life, a prime moment for transformative "social drama," as Victor Turner would term it.[16]

If this is not a ritual embedded into the story by the author, but rather an attempt to describe a moment of crux in which Ruth is portrayed as acting spontaneously, then her statement cannot and should not be seen as ritual, but rather as repositioning. Ruth is trying to redefine herself in Naomi's eyes from a Moabite widow into the widow of an Israelite, who wishes to maintain her identity within the context of Israelite culture and community. Where her actions do touch upon the idea of performance is

12. Stephen L. Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 32.

13. Cheryl B. Anderson, *Women, Ideology, and Violence: Critical Theory and the Construction of Gender in the Book of the Covenant and the Deuteronomic Law* (JSOTSup 394; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 13.

14. Gavin Brown, "Theorizing Ritual as Performance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17 (2003): 3–18 (7–8).

15. See Ittai's declaration of fealty below.

16. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974), 36. For a fuller discussion of Turner's "processional pattern" as it relates to the story of Ruth, see Victor H. Matthews, *Judges & Ruth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 207–9.

in the indeterminacy that is created when there is an uncertainty of reaction by her audience. She does not know whether Naomi will accept her as her companion and she is therefore doubly liminal, not wishing to go back to her Moabite context and uncertain whether she will be able to go forward toward the Israelite context.

Furthermore, Ruth's resolution to accompany Naomi may or may not solve her initial social crisis (widowhood) since she cannot count on obtaining a husband in this new/foreign social context, and living in Bethlehem will create a social dislocation that will have to be resolved despite her relationship with Naomi.

It is interesting to compare Ruth's actions here with those of Ittai the Gittite in 2 Sam 15:19–22. David excuses Ittai from accompanying him into exile during Absalom's march on Jerusalem, saying "Go back, and stay with the king [an acknowledgment that David had lost the kingship]; for you are a foreigner (נכרי) and also an exile (גלה) from your home." This sounds very much like Naomi urging her daughter-in-laws to return to their "mother's house" and "find security…in the house of your husband" (Ruth 1:8–9). In both cases a choice is presented by a forced exile to those who have been loyal to seek security elsewhere in a safer context. But like Ruth, Ittai, the "foreigner," in contrast to David's traitorous son Absalom, refuses this offer.[17] Like Ruth, he demonstrates his continuing loyalty by taking an oath, "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be" (2 Sam 15:21).

The implication is that the "foreigner" owes no obligation to Naomi or to David.[18] Furthermore, this person "maintains the connection with his native country or with the country which he has left," in contrast to the stranger (גר), who "has severed the connection with his former country."[19] The גר in fact is even more of a liminal person, "not completely defined" if he/she "is a stranger who has joined a new community, for the allegiance may be of different degrees and so may the rights and duties that result from this new alliance."[20] It would have been appropriate to identify Ruth as a גר after her redefining statement of allegiance to Naomi, her people, and her God, but that was done privately, without witnesses and thus the people of Bethlehem could not be expected to know this.

17. Nadav Naʾaman, "Ittai the Gittite," *BN* 94 (1998): 22–25 (22).

18. Note that Ruth uses this label for herself in 2:10.

19. Michael Guttmann, "The Term 'Foreigner' (נָכְרִי) Historically Considered," *HUCA* 3 (1926): 1–20 (1).

20. Ibid., 2.

Even though Ruth is and wishes to be in transition, she continues to identify herself, as does the storyteller, as a Moabite and a "foreigner." The question therefore arises why she does this. Does she recognize that it is less presumptuous in a new social setting—less likely to invoke overt hostility to refer to herself as a foreigner rather than as a גר? Indications are that a person is considered to be an "alien," a גר, if he or she is residing outside his or her own tribal territory or in another nation. However, they are "foreigners" if there is apparently no intent to stay or take up residence. Examples of this can be found in the story of the Ephraimite living as a resident alien in Gibeah of the territory of Benjamin (Judg 19:16), and the Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who "sojourns" in the hill country of Ephraim with Micah (Judg 17:7–8). Similar language is applied to Elimelech's "temporary" residence in Moab in Ruth 1:1.

This once again raises the issue of Ruth, "the foreigner," and how that label functions within the storyline of her social drama. Does the author portray Ruth as a "foreigner"—an outsider without rights—as a contrast to Naomi's social status? Is there some post-exilic issue being raised here beyond the endogamy requirement that has to do with a larger legal issue of what responsibility the Israelite has for the safety of foreigners, as well as their acceptance into the community through legal practice and marriage?

Certainly, there was a familiarity with foreigners in ancient Israel, based on constant contact with merchants and travelers; this is reflected in their hospitality customs.[21] Thus, Ruth's identification of herself as a foreigner may function as a way to solicit hospitality or חסד, charity, from Boaz (note his response in giving her additional grain in 2:14–16). It may also be an indirect attempt to assert her rights to glean as a widow if she can obtain an acknowledgment from Boaz that she is actually a member of Elimelech's household.

Naomi of course has this social status and is entitled to glean, but she, apparently, is physically unable to do so. Ruth has the physical ability but must obtain through community sanction the desired social identity. Note in 2:2 how "Ruth the Moabite" suggests to Naomi that she go and glean, "behind someone in whose sight I may find favor." This is not just charity or taking advantage of the right of a widow to glean. It is part of a long-term strategy for repairing the widows' social and financial fortunes.

Also at issue is what it means for a person to be identified as an exile. Naomi and David both make the decision to leave their place of residence because a crisis has disrupted their normal existence. Ittai is referred to by David as an "exile" from his home in Gath, indicating that

21. Ibid., 5–7.

he can easily return to that place and that he has no stake in the politics of Israel. Ruth and Ittai choose extended exile from their lands to serve the needs of Naomi and David, both of whom have no immediate ability to aid or reward their clients. Katharine Sakenfeld emphasizes the use of the word חסד in both passages as both David and Naomi invoke God's חסד in gratitude for Ittai's and Ruth's and Orpah's חסד.[22] Sakenfeld includes both women and states that their act of setting out with Naomi on her journey was evidence of חסד. Neither David nor Naomi can do anything more to protect or reward Ittai and the daughters-in-law and so their futures are left up to God and to other patrons/husbands—a "change of primary personal relationships."[23]

Shifts in Social Identity

As social exiles, when Ruth and Naomi leave Moab they both experience a shift in their personal identity; it becomes fluid and indeterminate. Bahloul suggests that the migrant/dislocated person experiences the condition of having his/her collective security erased by either voluntary spatial reorientation or forced relocation.[24] Thus Naomi and Ruth both face the personal loss of status resulting from ceasing to be a wife and becoming a widow and thus a liminal persons. In addition, their status as widows marks them as women without sons, a real tragedy for them personally and for their household in particular.

Furthermore, Naomi faces the uncertainty on her return to Bethlehem of how to maintain control of Elimelech's property and to keep his name alive, and this may contribute to her labeling herself as "Mara" (meaning "bitter") when the women exclaim "Is this Naomi?" (1:19–20). In her study of this text, Sakenfeld emphasizes that Naomi's rhetoric in response to the other women is an "expression of pain and frustration about her inability to provide care for them."[25] It also speaks to her former feelings of social dislocation (while living in Moab) and her current sense of powerlessness upon returning to Bethlehem.

At this point it may be worth injecting the idea of "discourse communities" as a possible key to interpreting the passage. Miles Little et al. define them as "groups of people who share common ideologies, and

22. Katharine D. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 17; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 108–9.

23. Ibid., 108.

24. Bahloul, *Architecture of Memory*, 28, 97.

25. Katharine Sakenfeld, *Ruth* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 28.

common ways of speaking about things."[26] For Naomi to resume her place in Bethlehem, she will have to be accepted back into the "discourse community" that exists in that village. However, the women of Bethlehem raise the question of Naomi's identity, saying "Is this Naomi?" Naomi clouds the issue further by renaming herself "Mara." By doing this she may be communicating her unease with the "world" of the Bethlehem community. Her former identity does not match her current condition and therefore her ability to be at ease in the tiny social world of Bethlehem is not possible at that time.[27]

Based on her personal unease with herself and her social position, Naomi's renaming of herself may be seen as a reflection of her inability, at that point, to fully re-enter her previous discourse community. On a literary level it could also function as a foreshadowing by the storyteller of Boaz's question in 2:5, "To whom does this young woman belong?" In both cases there is a questioning of identity and membership. Michael Moore, viewing the scene from the perspective of the women of Bethlehem, suggests that Naomi the childless widow, renamed Mara, is a "foreigner" to these women, and she only regains her identity and worth to the community when Ruth is married to Boaz and produces a son.[28] This reintegrative act provides both a next of kin, "a restorer of life" for Elimelech's household (4:14–15) and a restoration of Naomi's comfort level, now socially bonded once again to the "world" she has re-entered.[29]

Ruth faces an even greater uncertainty, despite her "pledge of transformation" and her social tie to Naomi and her household, because of her Moabite origins and her childless widowhood. Although Ruth's stated goal is assimilation with Israelite culture as it is manifested in Bethlehem, acculturation processes are not one-sided. The community in Bethlehem will have some choices in their response to Ruth's presence, although some of these responses are proscribed for them and they are restrained by the law relating to resident aliens and widows (see Lev 19:9–10; 23:22; Deut 24:19–21; 27:19).

Despite the fact that "households and communities are often defined simply in terms of the physical space they enclose…[these] households

26. Miles Little et al., "Discourse Communities and the Discourse of Experience," *Health* 7 (2003): 73–86 (78).

27. Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception," in *Free Spirits: Feminist Philosophers on Culture* (ed. Kate Mehuron and Gary Percesepe; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 121–28 (121–22).

28. Michael S. Moore, "Ruth the Moabite and the Blessing of Foreigners," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 203–17 (212).

29. Lugones, "Playfulness," 123.

and communities are social entities; they are not what appears in physical space."[30] When Ruth enters the physical space occupied by the people of Bethlehem, its buildings and facilities immediately become factors in her story. However, it is the people of the community she will have to address and from whom she will elicit a new social identity. Her new persona can only emerge with the "cooperation of others in the social context."[31]

Initially, Ruth is not even addressed by the women when they "greet" Naomi. Ruth's first recognition by members of that community is after Boaz asks about her and his servant identifies her as "the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab." She is not identified as a daughter-in-law, a slave, or by a social designation, but only by country/nation of origin. The text does not tell us how the servant knew Ruth was from Moab. Of course, her speech pattern, accent, manner of dress, jewelry, hair style, tattooing, and so on may have been immediate indicators of her foreign origin, but the storyteller seems only to be interested here and later in 4:5, 10 in revealing to the audience as well as the characters in the story that she is a Moabite.

This label is significant to the author, the audience, and, by intent, the inhabitants of Bethlehem in this story. It places Ruth squarely outside the defined discourse community. Curiously, despite her initiative in going to the field to glean, the term גר, "stranger," normally found in the law (Lev 19:10; 23:22; Deut 24:19–21), is not used here for Ruth. Instead she identifies herself in 2:10 as a נכריה, a "foreigner," and that is a very different social designation and one most often applied to individuals who are not to be extended the same legal guarantees (see Deut 23:20; Judg 19:12; 2 Chr 6:32), and who are shunned if possible (Judg 19:12). In that sense, Ruth is actually echoing what the servant had said about her by calling her a Moabite.[32] A further signal of this labeling process is found in the use of a pun here between נכר, "to recognize," and נכריה—a foreigner is "precisely someone who would not be recognized."[33]

30. Joseph J. Kovacik, "Radical Agency, Households, and Communities: Networks of Power," in *The Dynamics of Power* (ed. Maria O'Donovan; Center for Archaeological Investigations Occasional Papers 30; Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 51–65 (51–52).

31. Steven R. Sabat and Rom Harré, "Recovery of Social Identity," in Harré and van Langenhove, eds., *Positioning Theory*, 87–101 (93).

32. Matty Cohen, "Le 'ger' biblique et son statut socio-religieux," *RHR* 207 (1990): 131–58 (132, 136).

33. Timothy Linafelt, *Ruth* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1999), 36.

Throughout the narrative, Ruth's social identity continues to be in flux. For example, Boaz's servant identifies her as "the Moabite who came back with Naomi" (2:6), Ruth identifies herself as "a foreigner" (2:10), and Boaz, who is identified by the author as a member "of the family of Elimelech" (2:3), describes her as one who has provided and worked for her "mother-in-law" (2:11). The narrator also continues to refer to her as "Ruth the Moabite" in 2:21 and in the legal context at the gate court (4:5, 10).[34]

Resolution and Redefinition of Identity

When Naomi sends Ruth back to Boaz on the threshing floor, she tells Ruth to dress so that she will be recognized as a member of the household of Elimelech. This use of clothing is combined with Ruth's positioning herself in space on the threshing floor. The threshing floor is an agricultural installation associated with the life of the community as well as its legal transactions. As was the case when Naomi initiated her conversation with her daughters-in-law in the wilderness, Ruth's conversation with Boaz takes places in liminal space, in this case a locale that is shared by the community but is not part of the domestic architecture or its immediate environs.

On this neutral ground, Ruth, like Naomi in ch. 1, is alternatively powerless and powerful. She has positioned herself in a legally significant place, but at a time inappropriate for women. She will be initially submissive as she makes her plea for Boaz's legal protection, using the phrase "spread your cloak over your servant" (3:9; compare Ezek 16:8). However, her staging of her meeting with Boaz will ultimately pay dividends. In order to analyze Ruth's actions, it may be helpful to employ "positioning theory." Advocates of this methodology have convincingly argued that positioning within conversation is based not only on what is said, but on the nuances of the words, the emotional and physical situation, and the reaction of the other participants in the conversation.[35]

Every conversation allows the persons involved to play a role. As each speaks, his/her words are understood within the context of his/her social position and are illustrated by recognized "social acts" or gestures. What is remarkable about Ruth's taking the initiative in her dialogue with Boaz is that a person with little social standing is able to seize the dominant

34. Yet another social identity is applied to her when Boaz and Naomi continually refer to Ruth as "my daughter" (2:8 [Boaz]; 2:22 [Naomi]; 3:1 [Naomi]; 3:10, 11 [Boaz]; 3:16, 18 [Naomi]).

35. Van Langenhove and Harré, "Introducing Positioning Theory," 17.

role in the conversation. By confronting him on the threshing floor in the early quiet hours of the night, she forces Boaz "into a defined speaking position" that he might otherwise have "not occupied voluntarily." His eventual acquiescence to her petition and his avocation of her husband's household rights before the village elders are the direct result of her bold positioning strategy.[36]

Final resolution of this social dilemma is found when Boaz marries Ruth and she "comes into his house" (4:11). In this final social setting (4:11–13), she is not referred to as either the "Moabite" or as the widow of Mahlon. Those designations are last voiced during the legal discussion between Boaz and the village elders in 4:5, 10. This is an indication of her final shift into full membership into the Bethlehem/Israelite community. She leaves behind previous social labels and officially joins the discourse community of Bethlehem. In the process, however, both the community and Ruth are hybridized. The social "world" of Bethlehem has gained a new member and in turn it has been transformed into a new social body.[37]

The catalyst for this social transformation is the dual desire of Naomi and Ruth to save the household of Elimelech from extinction and personally to survive physically and socially in the new social environment in Bethlehem. In their persistent efforts, they also transform the society and the economy of that place. The *levir* will not inherit Elimelech's fields by default, Boaz acquires a wife, Naomi acquires a son/heir for her dead husband/sons, and the community as a whole comes to recognize the value of allowing assimilation of foreigners—perhaps the underlying motif of the post-exilic author.[38]

36. Ibid., 20–23.
37. Kovacik, "Radical Agency," 62.
38. For a fuller discussion of this position, see Matthews, *Judges & Ruth*, 209–12.

Lying and Deceit in Families: The Duping of Isaac and Tamar

Heather A. McKay

Introduction

Whereas in many societies lying to outsiders is regarded as acceptable and even, at times, praiseworthy, the practising of deceit upon insiders is considered to be a purposively destructive act of hostility.[1] To go so far as to deceive or betray members of one's own family is treated as utterly heinous and contemptible. In this study, deceptions practised within families in the Hebrew Bible will be scrutinized and the means by which the perpetrators succeed in their unpleasant plans will be analyzed. The full measure of the nastiness of the intentional betrayals will thus be made plain.

As Erving Goffman has shown, many human interactions take place *within* acts of courtesy or courtship, in exchanges that occur in the context of social or other slightly formal settings.[2] However, these interactions may be either of genuine or of deceptive intent; the alcoholic drink may be intended to produce conviviality or befuddlement. With ambiguity built into them these interactions can provide "slippage"; they can be planned in deceptive mode by the would-be manipulator(s) and read and responded to as if genuine by the intended victim. A clear example of this is Laban's deceiving of Jacob as to the identity of his first bride (Gen 29). In carrying out this deception, Laban can, apparently, persuade himself that he is doing the honourable thing by marrying off first his older daughter Leah, thus ensuring both her marriage and Jacob's free labour for seven more years. This is a good outcome for the wily family manipulator to achieve through one deceptive, but arguably honourable, act. Meanwhile, Jacob feels absolutely outraged and cheated since he had asked for Rachel's hand, naming a particular daughter as his choice.

1. Irma Kuttz, *The Lying Game*, BBC Radio 4, 26 April 2003.
2. Erving Goffman, "The Arrangement between the Sexes," *Theory and Society* 4, no. 3 (1977): 303–31.

In terms of male leadership roles, Laban's trick can be regarded as merely an older man's successful outmanoeuvring of a challenging younger male family member, an upstart, one might say, and could earn him nothing but further respect, while the "lesson" learned by Jacob can be seen as fitting him more effectively to be a tribal leader. Besides, as Laban might have told himself, Jacob was not actually a family member when the deceit was affected.

Taking on a rather darker note, two other Hebrew Bible stories provide us with powerful examples of the malign power of this abuse of apparently innocent verbal ambiguity. In each case, two powerful persons conspire against a vulnerable family member in a deceitful way; the loss of perception of an elderly, blind man, Isaac (Gen 27), and the kind heart of a young woman, Tamar (2 Sam 13), beguile both into severe heartbreak and loss.

In the following pages these stories of the Dispossessing of Esau and the Rape of Tamar will be analyzed using insights from two theories of manipulation: Information Manipulation Theory of Steve McCornack (supported by Frame Analysis from Goffman) and Social Manipulation Theory from Beth Peterson.[3]

Creation of False Scenarios: Framing Scenes

The supporting insights of Goffman and Beeman may usefully be discussed here to extend our understanding of how manipulators achieve their ends. First, as Beeman makes plain, there is always some tension between what is said and intended by a speaker and what is heard and understood by the listener that permits the more adroit speakers to exploit that tension and make use of ambiguity to get the better of others in everyday interactions. This is known in Farsi as *Zerængi* or wiliness in speech:

> …[O]ne important principle of communication in Iran is that [when] the relationship between message form (what is said) and message content (what the message is about) cannot be interpreted by a single set of

3. William O. Beeman, *Language, Status and Power in Iran* (Advances in Semiotics; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); S. A. McCornack, "Information Manipulation Theory," *Communication Monographs* 59 (1992): 1–16; Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); Beth Peterson, *People Who Play God: How Ultra-Authorities Enslave the Hearts, Minds and Souls of Their Victims* (Philadelphia: Xlibris Corporation, 2003); see also online: http://www.bethepeterson.com/manip.html (accessed 23 August 2004); http://www.bethpeterson.com/pwpg.html (accessed 26 April 2007).

> criteria, then an important tension is set up between the person initiating the communicative behavior and the person interpreting it.[4]
>
> Furthermore, adroit individuals should be able to know how to *supply* those elements that create the scenes that they wish to have operative in their interaction with others. The art of counseling, the ability to be an adequate hostess, the developing of a good bedside manner for a doctor, all require communication skills that contribute to the establishment of believable and effective scenes.[5]
>
> [T]he process whereby specific frames are established and identified in interaction is one that [Goffman] terms 'keying'. He describes the concept as…the set convention by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else.[6]

Thus, those skills of language and performance that may be used socially and innocently to help a speaker relate difficult events or break bad news and give comfort to the listener, may be used to beguile or mislead a vulnerable or merely less verbally skilled individual.

Moreover, where the social relations involved are asymmetric, whether in terms of power, influence, money or status, a person's speech and behaviour functions, always diplomatically but also ambiguously at times, to protect or increase the more powerful person's standing, or the less powerful person's room to manoeuvre.[7] On the other hand, in a convivial or family situation such protective measures need not, and *should not*, be taken. There, communication should be fair and truthful and any deviation is no less than an act of hostility, whether motivated by instincts of self-preservation or protection of privacy or, less innocently, of intended damage to others.

Thus, a crafty person who seeks to deceive another to whom full trust is owed is shown to be a deceitful and cruel malefactor. Such a self-interestedly adroit person can, by *framing* and *keying* scenes, *create* a scenario that closely mimics a genuine and innocent scenario, such that the unsuspecting target may be taken in and only realize too late the "other," more sinister, meaning of all that has been said and done. The targeted person recognizes only then that they have colluded in their own undoing by complying with what seemed like reasonable or normal requests at the time. We tell children the story of Little Red Riding Hood

4. Beeman, *Language*, 23.
5. Ibid., 66.
6. Ibid., quoting Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 67.
7. Beeman, *Language*, 106.

to teach them to beware of such scenarios and manipulators! Such manipulation, then, is generally regarded as totally inappropriate within the family circle, even though it may be necessary to some degree as an aid to survival or success in the public arena of operations.

Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob

Each of my chosen stories has three characters: there are two who plot together, and thereby "explain" the deception to the reader, and there is the victim (see Table 1 [next page]). In the Genesis story, Rebekah is the powerful, self-confident promoter and main executor of the deception. She overhears Isaac's plan to bless Esau, conceives the plot to transfer that blessing to her favourite, Jacob, explains her plan to Jacob and then convinces him to play his part in it. To do so, she has to convince him that only good will come to him and that if there be any bad outcome she will take it upon herself. She can provide a convincing home-bred substitute for the hunted game that Esau will bring from the field and can have the meal prepared very quickly so that Jacob can extract the blessing from Isaac before Esau returns. She deals with Jacob's anxieties about assuming the identity of Esau in terms of his smoother skin, by applying the skin of the slaughtered kid to Jacob's arms and neck; furthermore, she provides a deceptive body odour for Jacob by laying out for him Esau's best clothes. The only item that is not amenable to effective disguise is Jacob's voice.

Jacob appears to be her hesitant, but willing accomplice, ready to lie by implication about the provision of the readily captured game, even adducing God's aid as the reason for his early success. Furthermore, he lies overtly twice, asserting that he is Esau. Throughout, however, he relies on Rebekah's promises of success and protection and initiates nothing of his own invention.

Isaac, the victim, although elderly and failing in sight, is clear about his role and duties as head of the family and is determined to carry out the key act of passing on his blessing and possessions to his elder son.

Tamar, Jonadab and Amnon

In the story in 2 Sam 13, Jonadab, the crafty and smooth-tongued steward, conceives his plan as a response to finding out what was ailing his cousin and "employer," namely unrequited lust. Jonadab, therefore, invents and prepares a scenario in which Tamar will respond with kindness and courtesy to a request from her sickly half-brother, Amnon, to tend him at home. Jonadab further decides that Amnon should transmit

Table 1. *Characters' Skills and Intentions*

	Appearance, Skills and Attributes	*Role in the Deception*	*Falsity/Misdirection Created*	*Goals*
Rebekah	Mature, clever, quick-thinking, sees ahead, good cook	Conceives plan to cheat Isaac, via smell and touch, of a fond farewell with his older son; also cheats the absent Esau of his long-term future, his "blessing"	The goat stew is allegedly game stew. Jacob is allegedly Esau	Success of Jacob above Esau in terms of Isaac's "blessing"
Jacob	Smooth-skinned, hesitant, self-preserving, deceitful	Pretends to be his older twin; pretends he has hunted game successfully and quickly and that God gave him that success	Jacob acts as if he is Esau and lies twice claiming that he is Esau	Rich inheritance and "blessing" for Jacob, although he has to flee and possesses neither
Isaac	Old and purblind; aware of his role and responsibilities as head of the household	Victim; loses his key function as patriarch by failing to pass on his status to his older son		Unfulfilled in the customary end-of-life ritual
Jonadab	Friend of Amnon, very crafty, subtle thinker	Conceives a plan to cheat Tamar into sexual activity with her half-brother, also to curry favour with Amnon	Amnon is ill with some sort of infection/disease and needs feeding/cheering up	Own success in life
Amnon	David's son, tormented by desire for his half-sister, haggard and ill	Pretends to be genuinely ill, deceives Tamar into coming close to him to cook bread and hand feed him, in a relaxed, sympathetic and vulnerable state	Because of illness he wants comfort of home-cooking carried out by gentle, beautiful sister in his sight	Sexual intercourse and assuagement of his lust/desire
Tamar	Beautiful virgin, full sister to Absalom, half-sister to Amnon, good cook	Victim; loses virginity and, thus, ability to become married; lives desolate in Absalom's house		Unfulfilled in the customary roles of wife and mother

his request via King David, the father of both Amnon and Tamar, and, in this case, a possibly innocent agent. He suggests this manoeuvre so that Tamar will be unlikely to balk at the request.

Amnon, dizzy with inflamed desire, accedes readily to the plan. He has only a very simple role to play: to appear to be ill, which, considering his obsessed state, will not require much dissimulation. He might well, as an invalid, relish home-baking, freshly prepared to tempt his appetite. Once Tamar is busily involved at his side, all he has to do is to grab her, his victim, or—as he sees her in his mind—his tormentor.

Tamar accepts the version of the plan as she is told it, apparently knowing nothing of the deeper forces at work, and goes to Amnon's house ready to cook for her ailing half-brother. She will be encumbered with utensils and ingredients, fire and fuel, hence not readily able to flee from his clutches.

Information Manipulation Theory

It seems apparent to me that how these stories "work" could be made clearer through scrutiny by Information Manipulation Theory, originally set out by Steve McCornack. Information Manipulation Theory presents four maxims that in principle provide guarantees of honest communication:

1. The maxim of *Quantity* refers to a person's expectations that a conversation will be as informative as possible. We do not expect key information to be left out of what is said.
2. The maxim of *Quality* refers to a person's expectation of being presented with information that is truthful. We do not expect to be misled either on purpose or by accident or through misconstruals on the part of our informant.
3. The maxim of *Relation* illustrates the expectation of contributing relevant information to a conversation. What is transmitted must be relevant, even if interspersed with other matters.
4. The maxim of *Manner* relates to how things are said rather than what is said. Much communication, far more than half, is transmitted by means other than the verbal content: by tone, emphasis, facial expressions and body language.

Discussion

The actions of our key players will now be scrutinized against four McCornack's criteria:

1. Provision of minimal information, *Quantity*
2. Creation of some or total falsity/misdirection, *Quality*
3. Concealment of key relevant information, *Relation*
4. Provision of misleading implications and gestures, *Manner*

From Table 1, we notice that Rebekah and Jonadab proceed with their plans in similar ways. They are not exactly secretive in the sense of withholding information, so on the measure of *Quantity* they operate neutrally. However, they do create falsity and misdirection and conceal key, relevant information and can be indicted as guilty of passing information of poor *Quality*, since it is lacking in vital facts, and of deceitfully side-stepping their obligations in terms of *Relation*, for both Isaac and Tamar are owed more faithful communications from people so close to them in their daily lives.

Furthermore, through their fraudulent performances (*Manner*), they and their willing puppets, Jacob and Amnon, create situations in which false inferences are more or less certain to be made by their targets, inferences that mislead and dupe these victims. Isaac and Tamar see their situations quite other than they are and perceive no danger or threat to themselves in the part allotted to them in the events. The cleverly planned false scenarios produce exactly the outcomes that the manipulators wanted.

Social Manipulation Theory

We can apply further scrutiny to the stories by using Beth Peterson's Manipulation Theory, which may be laid out as follows.

The factors and effects involved in manipulation, especially large-scale manipulation of one person or many persons of another or others, are quite complex. To begin with, the manipulation depends upon acting on those aspects and traits each of us have as humans that allow manipulation to occur (the *toeholds*). Then, there are the *techniques* that manipulators use against others, and, finally, there is the *time* it takes for the manipulation to have an effect when the protagonists (as they truly are) are engaged in a relationship.[8] These are the 3Ts of manipulation: toeholds (which allow manipulation to occur), techniques (tools), and

8. Peterson, *People Who Play God*, 27–73.

time (for events or interactions to cause reflection and realignment of thinking and behaviour).

Toeholds are those characteristics within ourselves that make us vulnerable to manipulation. They fall within six main areas:

1. Physical Being
2. Will and Expressions
3. Imagination
4. Memory
5. Thought
6. Emotion

Techniques are the manipulative tools used by manipulators to exert some control over their targeted victims. They fall within three main areas:

1. Environment
2. Information
3. Ideology

Time refers to how the victims' toeholds and the manipulator's techniques act together through time to draw in the manipulator's victim. There are six stages in this process of time:

1. Softening Up
2. Compliance
3. Identification
4. Consolidation
5. Disaffiliation
6. Recovery

Only when the final two stages are reached may the victims escape from the net of manipulation cast around them.

Discussion

Table 2 (pp. 36–37) presents an analysis of what has been done to create the false scenarios that will dupe the two victims. More than words are used to lull their suspicions; there is input for the senses also. Toeholds, techniques and time are all employed to gain the conspirators' ends.

In Isaac's case his senses are manipulated as follows: his sight is dim and he no longer relies on it for information; he hears the voice of Jacob but allows his other senses to quell that doubt; he touches the alleged skin of Esau and recognizes it, and smells and feels Esau's clothes. He has probably heard the sounds of food preparation and smelt the cooking goat stew. Rebekah has invented and set up the false scenario but Jacob makes it happen.

Table 2. *Manipulation in Action*

Name and Role	*Toeholds*	*Techniques*	*Time*
	1. Our Physical Being 2. Will and Expressions 3. Imagination 4. Memory 5. Thought 6. Emotion	1. Environment 2. Information 3. Ideology	1. Softening Up 2. Compliance 3. Identification 4. Consolidation 5. Disaffiliation 6. Recovery
Rebekah Manipulating Isaac	1. Isaac's favourite meal 2. His son came as requested 3. Isaac thought he was blessing Esau 4–6. Isaac is totally deceived	1. Isaac's home, ambience of cooking noises and odours, false "Esau" 2. Isaac totally misled 3. Believed he was blessing the elder son	1. Isaac's home, ambience of cooking noises and odours 2. Apparent following of *his* wishes 4. Senses seemingly confirm the false image 5–6. Occur for Isaac only when Esau returns from hunting
Jacob Colluding in the Manipulation	1. Isaac's favourite meal given 2. Seeming obedience to wishes 3. Jacob felt and smelt like Esau 4–6. Isaac is totally deceived	1. Presenting self for close scrutiny 2. Claimed to be Esau, gave false clues to his identity and lied 3. Used the expected form of words to ask for the blessing	1. At home, ambience of cooking noises and odours 2. Apparent following of Isaac's wishes 4. Senses seemingly confirm image 5–6. Discovery too late for Isaac and Esau

Jonadab Manipulating Tamar for Amnon's Desire	1. Jonadab promised sexual release to Amnon, 2. Brought desire into the open, 3. Conjured up images of ruse, 4. And of Tamar kneeling close, 5–6. Feeds the fantasy	1. Home environment planned 2. Plan involving father's authority 3. Played on arguments that would make the deed nearly lawful and/or sanctioned	1. Time for the proposed images of delight to entice Amnon 2. Amnon ready to agree and to ignore the wrongdoing 3–4. Plan set in motion 5–6. Too late for Tamar's future life
Amnon Colluding in the Manipulation	1–2. Overwhelming desire 3. Delightful images of release 4–6. Memories of Tamar's charms, scent, movements	1. Beside his own bed 2. His father would likely accept it 3. Began to believe the deed nearly lawful and/or sanctioned	1. Non-stop desire now interrupted by images of fulfilment 2. Ready to agree and ignore pitfalls 3. Plan set in motion 4. Outcome soured him however 5. Tamar kicked out and blotted out 6. Tamar could not recover from this act

From the dialogue in Gen 27 we can see how Jacob lies three times to his father to confirm the false scenario:

Genesis 27

> [18] So he went in to his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?"
> [19] Jacob said to his father, "*I am Esau your first-born*. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that you may bless me."
> [20] But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success."
> [21] Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not."
> [22] So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."
> [23] And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.
> [24] He said, *"Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am."*
> [25] Then he said, "Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.
> [26] Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son."
> [27] So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed!
> [28] May God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.

It seems obvious from v. 26 that Isaac remains suspicious and wants to touch and smell his son close up to confirm that it is Esau. He is, nonetheless, fooled by Jacob. All this time, the smell of cooking, the scent of Esau and the touch of his skin are working on Isaac to lead him to give the blessing, the act he has been wanting to perform, perhaps feeling that he is close to losing his powers totally. The techniques have had enough time to convince him. The false scenario has succeeded and Isaac blesses Jacob.

When we look at 2 Sam 13 we find again that the one who planned the scenario takes no further part in it: the conspiracy is carried through to completion by the accomplice. Here, however, the lies of Amnon are more those of omission than commission. He implies that Tamar's cooking will tempt him to eat when nothing else can and implies that he will be able to eat only if they two are alone together. These two deceptions lead her to twice assume that Amnon is helpless and ailing and so to enter a situation where she is vulnerable to rape.

2 Samuel 13

[1] Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her.
[2] And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.
[3] But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very crafty man.
[4] And he said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."
[5] Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be ill; and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand.'"
[6] *So Amnon lay down, and pretended to be ill*; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, *"Pray let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."*
[7] Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him."
[8] So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes.
[9] And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Send out every one from me." So every one went out from him.
[10] Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother.
[11] But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."
[12] She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this wanton folly.
[13] As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the wanton fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you."
[14] But he would not listen to her; and being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay with her.
[15] Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred; so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone."
[16] But she said to him, "No, my brother; for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other which you did to me." But he would not listen to her.
[17] He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence, and bolt the door after her."

> [18] Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves; for thus were the virgin daughters of the king clad of old. So his servant put her out, and bolted the door after her.
> [19] And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent the long robe which she wore; and she laid her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as she went.
> [20] And her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart." So Tamar dwelt, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house.

Tamar is persuaded to go to Amnon's house by her father, whose words act on the feelings of familial duty that she owes her half-brother. As far as we know she may have been quite fond of him, although nothing is said about that in the text. Most likely, she understood the misery of illness and, through her sympathy and empathy, is keen to help Amnon recover. Her father asks her to carry out a simple, if rather menial, household task to aid her brother's recovery and she assents. She busies herself organizing what she needs to carry it out and does not seek darker reasons for Amnon's request. And, even when surprised by Amnon's seizing her, she tries to protect herself by arguing logically for a safe, if delayed, resolution to his lust. But Amnon cannot wait; he overpowers her and rapes her.

Tamar cannot recover from this abuse that effectively eliminated her from marriage and a woman's recognized future; she takes refuge in rituals of grief and lives a desolate life in the house of her full brother Absalom.

Conclusion

As often with Hebrew Bible narrative, we find that the most succinct stories are also the most tantalizing. As with all ancient texts, we are denied the opportunity of interrogating further the bare bones of the narrative, and in our readerly attempts to make coherent meaning, we believe that there must have been "more to it" than we are told. The analytical keys that I have used have shown how we may find coherence and fill, to our satisfaction, some of the narrative gaps.

Both the Jonadab and Rebekah characters are painted as successful schemers and opportunists, and by using the theoretical approaches above we see the steps within their scheming made plain. They created convincing, multi-faceted false scenarios for their male protégés to purvey and backed them up with multi-sensory input of various sorts to make their virtual reality appear real to their chosen targets. They knew the

vulnerabilities of their victims and targeted them successfully through the false scenarios. Moreover, everything was smoothly carried out; there were no gaps or glitches to draw the victims' attention to the staginess of what was being done around them and to them. The colluding accomplices carried out their parts to perfection; there was no faltering that might cause suspicion in the targets. The scenarios seemed real and the victims were led gently to their downfalls.

However, because these deceits were practised on family members, in each case, they led to a build-up of deep resentment on the parts of Esau and Tamar's full brother Absalom, a resentment that the readers also feel. There is an expectation that there will be long-term repercussions for the perpetrators Amnon and Jacob, which expectations are later fulfilled in two stories. For Amnon, retribution in the form of his murder by Absalom's men ensues (2 Sam 13:29), whereas for Jacob, dread of his reunion with Esau lead him to offer a huge placatory gift ahead of their ultimately pacific meeting (Gen 32:16–33:16).

Average Families? House Size Variability in the Southern Levantine Iron Age

Bruce Routledge

Syro-Palestinian archaeologists and biblical scholars have a certain advantage when it comes to thinking about families, households, and houses. While it is well-known that from a cross-cultural perspective one cannot presume that these three categories necessarily correspond to one another,[1] in the specific case of the Iron Age Southern Levant the close correspondence between families, households, and houses seems to have been a principal clause in the social contract. Few words in Hebrew and its cognates carry more resonance than בית and few structures are more repetitious and recognizable than the Iron Age "four-room" house. This means that using houses as evidence for the nature of the Iron Age family is effective, rather than naive, and a number of important studies have been able to offer convincing reconstructions of the demographic, sociological, and economic characteristics of the "Israelite" family on just such an archaeological basis.[2]

Where, however, can we go from here? Research thus far has tended to stress the typical and the average as a means of representing what might be called the central tendencies of Iron Age social life. Such an approach has numerous attractions in that it allows for generalizations and quantification, as well as facilitating the use of ethnographic analogy and sociological models. It may also have a certain appeal to the biblical scholar, in that a singular and relatively changeless picture of Iron

1. See Sylvia Yanagisako, "Family and Household: The Analysis of Domestic Groups," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1979): 161–205.

2. See, e.g., John S. Holladay, Jr., "House, Israelite," *ABD* 3:308–13; idem, "Four-Room House," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. Eric M. Meyers; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2:337–42; Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1–35.

Age housing avoids the thorny textual problem of placing biblical representations of families in time. Yet, a focus on the typical and the average is also relatively static, leaving us with few tools by which to analyze social difference and social change. The problem is that in focusing on the central tendencies of the "four-room" house, archaeologists have paid insufficient attention to the companion measure of variability.

Thinking about variability in Iron Age housing, either over time or across space, offers us the opportunity to inject a dynamic element into our understanding of the Iron Age family. In what follows, I will offer a preliminary exploration of variability in relation to the single attribute of house size. With a few notable exceptions, differences in house size have been downplayed by scholars. The "four-room" house, in its consistent layout and lack of individual elaboration, seems to signify communities in which social and economic differences were either minimal, or minimally expressed. Corresponding as this does with our own biblically derived expectations of an egalitarian ethos in Israelite and Judean villages,[3] the standard view is a comfortable one. Carol Meyers represents this position with precision and clarity when she writes with regards to the Iron I period:

> Even in the larger villages, household buildings were strikingly uniform in size. There may well have been wealth differentials, expressed in greater access to luxury goods rather than in increased house size, but differences in wealth are not the same as a class system.[4]

Meyers states, rather than demonstrates, her point, hence the empirical question remains: Were Iron Age houses in the Southern Levant strikingly uniform in size? As Meyers is concerned specifically with the Iron I period, might differences in house size increase over the course of the Iron Age, perhaps under the influence of state-formation or urbanism? John S. Holladay, for one, acknowledges some variability in Iron II house size but sees it as insignificant since "no residence from Iron II Palestine outstrips the average 'four-room' house by much more than a factor of two, or three at the outside."[5] So, house size variability may

3. See Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006), 79–80, 92–107, for an extended argument that this "egalitarian ethos" is reflected in Iron Age material culture, including the "four-room" house.

4. Carol Meyers, "Kinship and Kingship: The Early Monarchy," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (ed. Michael Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 202.

5. John S. Holladay, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah: Political and Economic Centralization in the Iron IIA–B (ca. 1000–750 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of*

occur, but on what grounds are we to see this variability as significant in relation to the lives of Iron Age families? It seems that we have already raised at least three distinct questions: Were Iron Age houses uniform in size? Did this relationship change over time? And was the variability that did occur socially or economically significant? It is to these questions that we will now turn.

House Size Variability

No systematic attempt has been made to calculate ground-floor areas for the known corpus of Iron Age houses from the Southern Levant. Impressionistic accounts of "average" house sizes usually fall in the range of 50–80 m^2, with the largest houses said to measure in the region of 100 m^2. These averages are based largely on a limited number of "classic" sites (especially Tell Beit Mirsim, Tell el-Farah North, and Tell en-Nasbeh) and are, as I hope to show, somewhat deceptive.

Meaningful calculations of average house size are difficult when working with partially preserved and partially excavated sites, and when using foundations or ground-floor plans to measure the area of potentially multi-storied houses. To standardize measures across sites I have decided to limit myself to measuring complete ground plans inclusive of walls, without extrapolating to include upper stories or to account for courtyard space. I also make no presumptions regarding the amount of living space required per person, and hence provide no estimates of household size. I do, however, presume that whatever the situation regarding upper stories, courtyards, and floor space per person, these factors would have been more or less constant across the Southern Levantine Iron Age making the comparison of total house area a meaningful exercise. I have also shifted my focus from average house size to the range of sizes attested at any given site. Being a measure of variance, the range of house sizes is more sensitive than the mean to those extremely large and small examples that effectively define the limits of difference to be found within Iron Age communities. The range of house sizes is also an innately conservative measure when we are concerned with testing the assertion of limited variability in Iron Age house size, as new discoveries or excluded examples will only increase and never decrease this range.

My interest in house size originates in my own excavations at the late Iron I site of Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya in south-central Jordan. Here,

Society in the Holy Land (ed. Thomas E. Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 368–98 (392).

our excavations have revealed a number of pillared houses laid out as either "four-room" houses or in clearly related plans.[6] The two largest of these houses, numbers 100 and 500, measure 178 m^2 and 238 m^2 in area respectively, in contrast to the smallest recorded house, which measures ca. 71.5 m^2 in area.[7] The two largest houses were also the most prominently located, being positioned at opposite ends of the site, adjacent to both the main and postern gates of the settlement. A considerable proportion of both of these houses appear to have been given over to storage, particularly of barley. If our analytical models are correct,[8] then the stored grain assemblages were processed with the goal of supplementing the feed of village-based herds, allowing the year-round presence of larger herds than could be sustained on free-range grazing alone.

Interestingly, of the five partially excavated houses at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya, none have revealed any *in situ* domestic installations, except building 500, the largest house on the site. Here the central room contained well-built and spatially segregated features including a row of three *tabun*-style ovens, a large basalt saddle quern, a large mortar carved from a limestone boulder, several prepared work areas, and benches lining two sides of the room.[9] Elsewhere, I have argued that differences in the preservation, distribution of artefacts, and internal stratigraphic sequences, between the houses at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya suggests differential abandonment, with House 100 and 500 likely to be amongst the last to be abandoned.[10]

At Kh. al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya, therefore, it seemed that house size was correlated with storage facilities, prominence of location, elaboration of features, and strength of attachment to the site. In looking at Iron Age I domestic architecture elsewhere in south-central Jordan, I noted numerous pillared or "four-room" houses that would qualify as very large according to the standard view, and which also seemed to be prominently located next to gateways or in elevated positions. For example, the Field

6. Bruce Routledge, "Seeing Through Walls: Interpreting Iron I Architecture at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya," *BASOR* 319 (2000): 49–54.

7. For these figures see Bruce Routledge et al., "Excavations at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya, 2000 and 2004," *ADAJ* (forthcoming).

8. See Ellen Simmons, "Subsistence in Transition: Analysis of an Archaeobotanical Assemblage from Khirbet al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya" (M.Sc. diss., University of Sheffield, 2000), summarized in Bruce Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archaeology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 103.

9. Routledge et al., "Excavations at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya."

10. Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 106–8.

"A" "four-room" house at Tall al-ʾUmayri measures 140 m² in area,[11] while the Area "C" irregular "Three Room" house located adjacent to the gateway at Khirbat al-Mudaynat Muʾarradja measured 155 m².[12] Perhaps the most striking of these is the so-called "citadel" recorded by Friedbert Ninow at Khirbat al-Muʾmmariyya. This pillared house is identical in plan to building 100 from Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya, but measures ca. 24–25 × 17–18 m, that is to say an astounding 408–450 m², according to a preliminary report.[13] Besides Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya, Lahun is the only site with enough houses published to consider size range. Excluding free-standing casemate rooms that appear to have been used as dwellings, the eight houses complete enough to be measured range from 52.0 to 160.0 m² in area.[14] This does not include a number of unattached casemate rooms that contained clear evidence for domestic activities. While not the largest house at Lahun, Denyse Homès-Fredericq has designated house 1 as the "Shaykh's house" on the basis of its size, finer construction, and materials.[15]

Of course, this evidence for both large houses and internal differentiation comes from the Iron I period in central Transjordan, and hence one might question its relevance for houses and families in Israel and Judah. Perhaps, one might argue, settlements in Ammon and Moab exhibited more internal differentiation then did those in Israel and Judah. Once one begins to look, however, it soon becomes evident that similar patterns can be found in Palestine as well as Transjordan. Consider, for example, the case of ʿIzbet Sartah Stratum II where an irregular circle of small and mid-sized houses ranging from 41–67 m² in area enclosed a central space that contained one extremely large "four-room" house (109b) of ca. 195

11. Douglas Clark, "Bricks, Sweat and Tears: The Human Investment in Constructing a 'Four-Room' House," *NEA* 66, no. 1/2 (2003): 34–43.

12. Emmanuel Olàvarri, "La campagne de fouilles 1982 à Khirbet al-Muʾarradjeh prés de Smakieh," *ADAJ* 27 (1983): 165–78, Fig. 5.

13. Friedbert Ninow, "First Soundings at Khirbat al-Muʾammariya in the Greater Wadi al-Mujib Area," *ADAJ* 48 (2004): 257–60 (259). For pottery dating this site to (late) Iron I, see idem, "The 2005 Soundings at Khirbat al-Muʾammariyya in the Greater Wadi al-Mujib Area," *ADAJ* 50 (2006): 147–55 (150–51).

14. I have calculated these figures from the complete house plans published in Werner Van Hoof, "Die private architectuur in het Moab-gebied (Jordanië) tijdens de Late Bronstijd en Vroege IJzertijd (ca. 1550–1000 v. Chr.)" (Licentiaat diss., Free University of Brussels, 1997), Figs 16–47.

15. Denyse Homès-Fredericq, "Excavating the First Pillar House at Lehun (Jordan)," in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Beyond: Essays in Honor of James A. Sauer* (ed. Lawrence Stager et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 180–95.

m^2 in area and 43 stone-lined pits.[16] Interestingly, in Stratum I, the outer ring of small houses is abandoned while the centrally located house 109 continues to be occupied. These correlated distinctions in house size, locational prominence, continuity of occupation, and control of storage led Holladay to describe ʿIzbet Sartah Str. II as "a rural hamlet dominated by one household."[17]

This pattern is also not limited to the Iron I or early Iron II periods. The eighth-century B.C.E. village of Khirbet Hadash (Beit Aryeh) contains ten complete houses that range in area from ca. 55–247 m^2.[18] While this range is heavily influenced by what is essentially two houses (890/900) fused into one, this single monumental structure is clearly of some importance to understanding this small village of approximately 6 dunams (ca. 1.5 acres) and hence cannot be discounted as an outlier.

Going further, the class of extremely large "four-room" houses in Iron II towns that Shiloh designated as "citadels," have usually been excluded from generalizations regarding housing as they are thought to be connected to government officials.[19] Some of these houses no longer seem quite so large, given the data reviewed in the present study. Note, for

16. Israel Finkelstein, *ʿIzbet Sartah: An Early Iron Age Site Near Rosh Haʿayin, Israel* (BAR International Series 299; Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986), 12–23.

17. Holladay, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah," 392.

18. Avraham Faust ("Differences in Family Structure between Cities and Villages in Iron Age II," *Tel Aviv* 26 [1999]: 233–52 [242]) gives the range of house sizes at Kh. Hadash/Beit Aryeh as 105–120 m^2. These figures appear to bear little resemblance to those derivable by measuring from the plan published by the excavator (see Shmuel Riklin, "Bet Aryé," *ʿAtiqot* 32 [1997]: 7–20, Fig. 2). My own measurements, inclusive of walls and exclusive of external forecourts, are: house 590, 55 m^2; house 570, 60 m^2; house 450, 74 m^2; house 340, 96 m^2; house 420, 99 m^2; house 190, 100 m^2; house 540, 104 m^2; house 410, 110 m^2; house 195, 127 m^2; house 890/900, 247 m^2. The gate complex 210 and the incomplete House 235 were not measured. These measurements were taken from a scan of Riklin's published plan using software (NIH Image) that measures the area of irregular shapes. Avraham Faust ("Differences in Family Structure," 240 n. 7) states that there is a discrepancy between the figures for house sizes given by Riklin in the text of his 1997 article, and those derivable from the plan and from an earlier publication of the site (Shmuel Riklin, "Bet Arye," *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 12 [1994]: 39), which Faust deems to be correct. This does not explain the divergence between Faust's figures and those measurable directly from Riklin's published plan. Note also that Faust himself reproduces Riklin's plan in his own articles, inserting his own scale that suggests the same absolute dimensions for houses as those I derived above, again making it unclear exactly how his divergent figures were calculated.

19. Yigal Shiloh, "The Four-Room House: Its Situation and Function in the Israelite City," *IEJ* 20 (1970): 180–90.

example, that the large "four-room" houses at Tell en-Nasbeh range in area from ca. 106 to ca. 150 m^2.[20]

The "West Tower and Gate" of Tell Beit Mirsim Stratum A is clearly neither a tower nor a gate, but rather a building in the "four-room" plan with solid walls instead of pillars, and a non-communicating long-room to one side, as is found in numerous other houses from Stratum A.[21] Measuring ca. 243 m^2, the "West Tower" was very prominently located in that the line of the city wall was modified to incorporate this structure. The finds from this building are selectively published, with almost all of the published pottery coming from a cache of serving vessels found in a sealed pit. Hence the absence of published cooking pots and storage jars is not necessarily indicative of an absence of domestic activities. The small finds—which include uninscribed weights and seal impressions, fragments of Judean Pillared-Base figurines, and at least one imported vessel—indicate the building was somewhat unusual, but do not clearly indicate a specialized administrative function. If we treat the "West Tower" as a large "four-room" house, the Stratum A houses at Tell Beit Mirsim range from 35–243 m^2 in area. Even without the "West Tower" the range is from 35–120 m^2.f

Building 416, the so-called "governor's residency" from Beer-Sheba Stratum II, is an irregular structure measuring ca. 270 m^2 in area and is adjacent to the open courtyard in front of the city gate.[22] It appears to be an amalgam of a "Three-Room" pillared house and clusters of small rectangular rooms. One of its interior walls is built of ashlar masonry, indicating the house is specially constructed as well as large. Very few finds are published from this building; specifically an ostracon fragment, two bowls and a pithoi, as well as a Judean Pillared-base figurine from what may be an adjoining street. Again, if building 416 is taken as a house, then Beer-Sheba Stratum II dwellings range from ca. 55 to ca. 270 m^2 in area.

Finally, in Niveau VIId and VIIe at Tell el-Farah North, generally dated to the eighth century B.C.E., the so-called "palais 148" existed adjacent to the courtyard in front of the west gate.[23] This structure measured

20. Jeffrey Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh: A Re-evaluation of the Architecture and Stratigraphy of the Early Bronze Age, Iron Age and Later Periods" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993), 172–73.

21. William F. Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim*. Vol. 3, *The Iron Age* (AASOR 21–22; New Haven: ASOR, 1943), 41–47 Pl. 6, 8.

22. Yohanan Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology, 1973), 14 Pl. 83–84.

23. Alain Chambon, *Tell el-Farʿah 1: L'Age du Fer* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1984), 44–46.

440 m^2 and was laid-out as a "four-room" house with solid walls, a large forecourt, and connected side-rooms. Again, while the finds from this structure show evidence for wealth and external connections, especially the concentration of Neo-Assyrian pottery from VIIe, there is no indication of a specialized administrative function for the building.

Table

Site	*Houses (N=)*	*Range (m^2)*	*Variance*
Tell Beit Mirsim Str. A[24]	32	ca. 35.0–243.0 (35.0–120.0 [no West Tower])	694% (343% [no West Tower])
Tell en-Nasbeh[25] III + Str. II Houses	28	ca. 28.0–130.0 ca. 28.0–150.0	464% 535%
Tell el-Farʿah VIIb[26]	13	ca. 52.0–121.0	233%
Hazor Str. VI[27]	11	ca. 40.0–160.0	400%
Kh. Haddash/ Beit Arye[28]	10	ca. 55.0–247.0	449%
Tell es-Saʿidiyeh V[29]	10	ca. 49.0–52.0	11%
Kh. al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya[30]	8	ca. 71.5–239.0	334%
Lahun[31]	8	ca. 52.0–160.0	308%
Kh. Raddanna[32]	6	ca. 50.0–165.0	330%
Beer-Sheba VII	5	ca. 95.0–153.0	161%
Tawilan[33]	5	ca. 31.0–140.0+	452%
ʿIzbet Sartah II[34]	4	ca. 41.0–195.0	476%

24. Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim*.

25. Zorn, "Tell en-Nasbeh," and "Estimating the Population Size of Ancient Settlements: Methods, Problems, Solutions, and a Case Study," *BASOR* 295 (1994): 31–48.

26. Chambon, *Tell el-Farʿah*.

27. Avraham Faust, "Socioeconomic Stratification in an Israelite City: Hazor VI as a Test Case," *Levant* 31 (1999): 179–90.

28. Riklin, "Bet Aryé."

29. James B. Pritchard, *Tell es-Saʿidiyeh: Excavations on the Tell, 1964–1966* (Philadelphia: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1985).

30. Routledge, "Seeing Through Walls," and Routledge et al., "Excavations at Khirbat al-Mudayna al-ʿAliya."

31. Van Hoof, "Die private architectuur."

32. Zvi Lederman, "An Early Iron Age Village at Khirbet Raddana: The Excavations of Joseph Callaway" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999).

33. Zeʾev Herzog, *Beer-Sheba II: The Early Iron Age Settlement* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology, 1984).

34. Finkelstein, *ʿIzbet Sartah*.

The table appearing on the preceding page summarizes the range of house sizes found at selected Iron Age sites from Palestine and Transjordan. Quite a number of these sites witness house size variability that exceeds 300 percent, a figure that we should remember is conservative and would only increase if more houses were known from each site. Indeed, the site that demands explanation in the table is not one of those with a very large range in house sizes, but rather it is Tell es-Saʾidiyeh Str. V, whose unusually uniform insulae of small houses marks it off as something quite different from any other known Iron Age settlement. In short, the evidence in the table would seem to contradict Meyer's statement that Iron Age "household buildings were strikingly uniform in size." Indeed, even if we limit ourselves to Meyer's primary concern, the central highlands in the Iron I period, we still encounter cases such as the classic "Early Israelite" site of Kh. Raddana, which shows a range of 50–165 m^2 in the area of the houses excavated by Joseph Callaway.[35] Furthermore, other attributes of the largest houses in the table, such as proximity to a gateway, control of storage facilities, or relative wealth of portable finds, suggest that these differences in house size were socially significant. It would appear that within Southern Levantine communities of both the Iron I and Iron II periods, variation in house size was not merely random but was linked in some way to the structure of these communities and their constituent households. But how and to what effect?

Explaining Variation

Avraham Faust is one of the few Syro-Palestinian archaeologists who has recognized and sought to explain variability in Iron Age house sizes.[36] Faust has noted that until quite recently most of our evidence for the "four-room" house came from fortified towns of the Iron II period. While not constituting cities in anything but a relative sense, these sites were nodal concentrations of population and administrative *apparati* within a regional state. Hence, one might expect such sites to be quite distinct from rural settlements of primary agro-pastoral producers.

Limiting himself to the Iron II period, Faust argues that "four-room" houses from rural sites are considerably larger than those from these

35. See Lederman, "An Early Iron Age Village at Khirbet Raddana."

36. Faust, "Differences in Family Structure"; idem, "The Rural Sector," 19–22; idem, "The Farmstead in the Highlands of Iron Age II Israel," in *The Rural Landscape of Ancient Israel* (ed. Aren Maeir, Shimon Dar, and Ze'ev Safrai; BAR International Series 1121; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003), 91–103 (95–96).

town sites, providing a list of recently discovered examples that average ca. 120 m^2 in total area.[37] Faust concludes that this difference in house size is due to differences in family structure between the urban and rural sectors of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.[38] In particular, Faust argues that the larger average house size in rural communities is accounted for by the continued importance of the extended family, while under the economic conditions of urban communities (e.g. dependence on a labor market or non-agricultural trades) nuclear families became the primary residential group.[39]

A careful consideration of the table presented above reveals a central problem with Faust's argument. The most striking feature of Iron Age house size is not variability between sites, but rather variability within sites. Note that this is not because our table is dominated by so-called "urban" settlements of the Iron II period where, as Faust has already argued, distinctions in wealth are attested by house size and quality of construction.[40] Indeed, Iron I sites, which appear for the most part to be settlements of non-specialized agro-pastoral producers, show the same range in house sizes as is found in most of the well-fortified Iron II towns. Furthermore, if we look at Khirbet Hadash (Beit Aryeh), which Faust himself uses as one of his exemplary Iron II rural settlements, we can note that its average house size of 110 m^2 disguises the fact that the smallest and largest recorded houses differ in area by 450 percent.[41] Interestingly, for two of his other exemplary Iron II rural sites (Kh. Jemein and Kh. Jarish) Faust discounts the excavators' own conclusions that at least one house on the site was significantly larger than the others.[42] For the later Iron II period, Faust has gathered together evidence relating to isolated farmsteads from the highlands of Palestine, showing that again many of these rural houses are extremely large.[43] At the same time, Faust notes that late Iron II farmsteads from western Samaria contain houses that are notably smaller in area. Faust credits these differences to political or ethnic differences,[44] but then goes on to show that

37. Faust, "Differences in Family Structure," 242; idem, "The Rural Sector," Table1.

38. Faust, "Differences in Family Structure"; idem, "The Rural Sector," 19–22; idem, "The Farmstead," 95–97.

39. Faust, "Differences in Family Structure," 243–45; idem, "The Farmstead," 97.

40. Faust, "Socioeconomic Stratification," 185–86.

41. According to my measurements from the published plans, see above.

42. Faust, "The Rural Sector," 28, 34 n. 9.

43. Faust, "The Farmstead," 92–93.

44. Ibid., 96.

farmsteads in the southern highlands and those in western Samaria were likely embedded in distinct systems of production, namely, wine production for exchange in the former case, and mixed, perhaps subsistence-oriented, agro-pastoral production in the latter.[45] This suggests a rather more complex role for economic factors than is accounted for in Faust's urban/rural distinction.

In contrast to Faust, David Schloen argues that family forms were relatively constant across the spectrum of Iron Age communities, indeed across all ancient Near Eastern communities.[46] In particular, he argues that Iron Age families uniformly strove to realize the ideal of complex co-resident patrilineal households within the severe demographic constraints imposed by high mortality rates.[47] Schloen argues that both "urban" and "rural" communities were composed of self-sustaining agrarian households, and hence there was no economic or sociological reason to posit distinct family forms in the fortified towns and rural villages of Iron Age Israel or Judah.[48] Differences in house sizes between these communities are explained by Schloen as a product of the higher density of houses found in walled towns where, he argues, one still finds houses large enough to contain complex families given presiding demographic constraints.[49] Within communities, Schloen suggests that variation in house size can be accounted for by differences between households in their life-cycle stage and demographic success.[50]

One problem with Schloen's position is that, as durable structures, houses generally outlast the life-cycle of any one family. Hence, archaeological studies attempting to trace shifts in family composition over time have focused on the internal modification of houses (blocking of doorways, addition of rooms, etc.), rather than their construction.[51] One might credit such modifications for the expansion of irregular houses, such as 890/900 at Kh. Hadash or building 416 at Beer-Sheba. However, such complexes are very rare, despite the wide dissemination of Stager's

45. Ibid., 97.

46. David Schloen, *House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 50–53.

47. Ibid., 135–83.

48. Ibid., 136–47.

49. Ibid., 141.

50. Ibid., 148, 171–75, 181–83; cf. Jack Goody, ed., *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

51. E.g. Edward Banning and Brian Byrd, "Houses and the Changing Residential Unit Domestic Architecture at PPNB ʿAin Ghazal," *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 53 (1987): 309–25; Elizabeth Stone, "Texts, Architecture and Ethnographic Analogy: Patterns of Residence in Old Babylonian Nippur," *Iraq* 43 (1981): 19–33.

argument that they would be the normal locale of the biblical בית אב.[52] Furthermore, the life-cycle argument does not account for singular "four-room" houses, such as house 109 at ʿIzbet Sartah, that were built large and demonstrate no significant expansion or contraction in the course of their occupation. Given that this singular, unmodified, form is the most common one taken by the largest Iron Age houses, one must wonder at the apparent absence of the sort of regular expansion and contraction of living space implied by Schloen's explanation. Even those irregular houses that may show signs of expansion frequently stand out within their own settlements (e.g. Kh. Hadash, Beer-Sheba II), suggesting that such episodes of expansion were not experienced by all households in these communities.

Household Size and Wealth

Both Schloen and Faust offer, but do not explore, an interesting alternative explanation for house-size variability by noting the link between household size and wealth found in many studies of agrarian communities where labor is the primary input in the expansion or intensification of production.[53] Our interest lies not so much in the fact that "where resources gather, so do people,"[54] as this varies between specific configurations of inheritance, land-tenure, mode of production, and preferred residency patterns.[55] Furthermore, wealth as a singular category is a rather blunt tool for understanding Iron Age social life, as it can encompass a wide range of distinct materials and relations, including such things as direct consumables (plants and animals), portable assets (e.g. luxury goods), fixed assets (e.g. houses and fields), human resources (e.g. labor power), exchange media (e.g. silver), credit and debt relations, as well as social capital (e.g. alliances, obligations, status, reputation). All of these are resources that enable people to act in the world and ensure both social and biological reproduction. At the same time, each of

52. Stager, "Archaeology of the Israelite Family"; cf. Schloen, *House of the Father*, 150–51.

53. Schloen, *House of the Father*, 117–20, 181–83. Faust (Avraham Faust and Shlomo Bunimovitz, "The Four-Room House: Embodying Iron Age Israelite Society," *NEA* 66 [2003]: 22–31 [26–27]) acknowledges the relationship between house size, household size, and wealth, but only for the walled towns of the Iron II period.

54. Robert McC. Netting, "Some Home Truths on Household Size and Wealth," *American Behavioral Scientist* 25, no. 6 (1982): 641–62 (642).

55. See Donald Kertzer, "Household History and Sociological Theory," *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991): 155–79.

these categories will have different meanings, relevance, and implications depending upon the given social-historical context that potential for, and modes of, accumulation, exchange, and consumption. What is interesting is thinking about the possible processes by which some households expand through the acquisition of labor power (e.g. taking on servants or laborers, adoption, marriage, attaching peripheral kin) and some households remain static, shrink, or cease to be viable (hence becoming a source of servants, adoptees, or peripheral kin).

Of course, we do not know for certain that variation in house size in the Southern Levantine Iron Age directly reflects variation in the size of domestic groups (e.g. number of people under one roof). When both mode of production and cultural values are relatively constant, as seems to be the case within most Iron Age communities, this equation seems reasonable, but one must consider other sources of variability, such as storage space, work areas, or simple ostentation (public display).[56] There is, however, a happy coincidence in our particular case in that most of the factors that might reasonably account for systematic differences in house size can also be correlated with one or more aspect of wealth, as defined above. Indeed, going further, when one begins to think about the relationship between factors such as storage facilities, work or sleeping space, and issues such as the number of dependants supported, the amount of land worked, or the ability to carry out key social activities such as contracting marriages or hosting communal or religious celebrations, one can begin to see these various categories of wealth linking up in complex ways that could revolve around house size.

An Ethnographic Example

Our interpretative imagination can be helped along on this point by reference to Martha Mundy's ethnographic study of domestic groups in al-Wadi, North Yemen.[57] Mundy focuses on the historical, economic, and strategic aspects of patronymic groups, households, property, and marriage in this pseudonymic settlement of tribally organized irrigation agriculturists. Census data from al-Wadi identifies 324 households (defined as commensal units) spread across 237 domestic structures,[58] of

56. Cf. Richard Wilk, "Little House in the Jungle: The Causes of Variation in House Size among Modern Kekchi Maya," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 2 (1983): 99–116.

57. Martha Mundy, *Domestic Government: Kinship, Community and Polity in North Yemen* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1995).

58. Ibid., 96.

which 316 households can be identified according to 127 patronymics, in the pattern "House (*bayt*) of PN."[59]

If organized by land-holdings, one finds that the patronymic groups with the most land also tend to have the most constituent households.[60] Indeed, these differences are quite striking, ranging from landless families that are virtually nuclear to large land-holding "houses" that contain over 100 individuals spread between 13 different households. The largest patronymic group (*bayt ʿAkish*) is primarily concentrated in the one ward of the settlement bearing its name, but the second largest group is spread between four different wards,[61] showing that these patronymic groups are not simply kin-based neighborhood associations. More interestingly, despite the differences in size, these various "houses" cannot be said to be operating at different levels in society (as a lineage, patronymic association, a complex family, a nuclear family etc.), since the largest groups are not composed of the smallest but are separated from them by wealth, personal history and structural complexity.[62] In other words, these patronymic groups were not balanced segments incorporating all households as the next structural level in a kinship system. For those with little or no land their patronymic "house" was often little different in size and structure from their household. As Mundy notes, "for some people a *bait* is just a house. But not for all…"[63]

This same pattern was replicated on a smaller scale for individual households. Neither of the two shaykhs of al-Wadi at the time of Mundy's field study was from the largest patronymic groups, but both were the heads of individually large and wealthy households. Mundy shows that differences in household composition at al-Wadi cannot be explained by life-cycle differences alone.[64] Indeed, in comparing the size of each household with the age of its head, consistent patterns only emerged when she controlled for differences in wealth and occupation.[65]

Overall, Mundy argues that wealth, status, and "house" size were not accidents of demographic success, but closely interwoven features of marriage alliances in this settlement. Large, wealthy patronymic groups could work through marriage to consolidate or expand their land-holdings and retain conjugal couples from one generation to the next. As

59. Ibid., 93.
60. Ibid., Table 5.1.
61. Ibid., 93.
62. Ibid., 95, 223 n. 27.
63. Ibid., 93.
64. Ibid., 97–101.
65. Ibid., 99.

one female informant commented, "they don't marry girls, they marry fields."[66] Not all households outside of the largest patronymic groups were poor by any stretch, but individually well-to-do households were uniformly large, with correspondingly large land-holdings. By contrast, many landless craftsmen and agricultural workers had to practice neo-local residency, often at some distance from their fathers, simply to maintain a viable household. As Mundy notes, "we should not hope romantically that among the poor it is simply their mobility which hides their cousins from our tabular representations…the links of the poor with distant kin are often anything but intense."[67]

From the perspective of the Iron Age, one of the more interesting aspects of Mundy's work is not simply the correlation between household size and wealth, but also the dynamic interaction between households, property, marriage, and groups which, in genealogical terms, might be construed as structurally "higher" than the household, such as the biblical משפחה. In al-Wadi at least, this interaction would appear rather different depending upon the household and patronymic group to which one belonged.

Wealth, Class, and Iron Age Families

One might object to this ethnographic analogy, due not only to the rather obvious differences in history, culture, and mode of production (irrigation versus dry-farming), but also due to the clear presence of class relations[68] in al-Wadi in the form of landed tribesman versus landless craftsmen and agricultural laborers. If we return to Carol Meyers's quote we see that she was careful to distinguish between wealth and class in relation to house size, denying the existence of the latter in Iron I highland Palestine. Holladay presents a more nuanced perspective, recognizing the significance of the differential accumulation of wealth during the Iron I period as a possible pre-cursor of state-formation,[69] and noting the class relations implicit in the very existence of kingship.[70] In addition, Holladay stresses the continued autonomy of the household as a unit of production and consumption under the monarchy and hence the limited nature of centralized surplus extraction and relations of direct dependency even

66. Ibid., 178.
67. Ibid., 95.
68. Here meaning ones relation to the means of production.
69. Holladay, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah," 376–79.
70. Ibid., 376.

under Iron II monarchies.[71] On current evidence it is hard not to agree with the broad outlines of Holladay's reconstruction. Certainly, evidence for labor service (e.g. the Mesad Hashavyahu ostracon) or full-time craft specialization, not to mention kingship itself (e.g. 1 Sam 8) would suggest class relations in the strictly descriptive sense[72] in the later Iron Age. At the same time, it seems true that class relations were "underdeveloped" in the small-scale kingdoms of the Levant, relative to either Egypt or Mesopotamia, and that they were shot through by a complex network of both dyadic relations and intense ideological conflict as indicated by biblical evidence. It is important to remember that the relationships noted by Mundy between property, marriage, and household composition applied within landholding households as well as between the landed and the landless. Hence, it might be interesting to link up Holladay's stress on wealth accumulation with house and household size, but not limit ourselves to the Iron I period.

First, we need to recognize that, contrary to many characterizations of the Iron I period, towards the end of this period, if not earlier, many settlements in the highlands and desert margins of Palestine and Transjordan exhibited marked differences in the control of grain, and that this correlated with the size and prominence of the houses involved. As is well known, a number of biblical place names contain lineage or family names in combination with some form of site descriptor (e.g. *Hazar-addar*, "enclosure of Addar"; *ʾAbel Bêt-Maʿakah*, "meadow of the house of Ma'akah"), and the suggestion that this relates to the lineage or family who founded the settlement, has been made on many occasions.[73] It is, therefore, not much of a stretch to see in the prominence of certain houses within village contexts the material realization of something like a "founder's privilege," whereby priority for land, labor, and leadership fell upon a limited number of households within the community. The relationship between individual households, as represented for us by

71. Ibid., 386–93.

72. That is, without necessarily implying the existence of class consciousness or solidarity. Pierre Bourdieu ("Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory* 7 [1989]: 14–25 [17]) distinguishes between classes as specific groups of people, and classes "on paper" as structural positions implied in given social relationships. It is to this latter sense that I am referring here.

73. E.g. Faust, "The Rural Sector," 31; Lawrence Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (ed. Michael Coogan; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 90–131 (101–2); cf. Shunia Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1996), 98–107.

excavated domestic dwellings (e.g. individual "four-room" houses), and larger patronymic groups, such as the biblical משפחה, is an interesting question. On analogy with Mundy's ethnographic work, it is likely that this relationship was much more complex and dynamically related to demography, property, and marriage alliance than current models of Iron Age society allow, although how this might be investigated archaeologically remains unclear.

It seems evident that the basic pattern of differentiation between house sizes within the same community, and especially the existence of a limited number of houses marked by size, prominence, and storage facilities, is already established in the Iron I period. The palaces and larger settlements of the Iron II period are built on this social foundation, incorporating rather than replacing pre-existing relations between households. This continuity in Iron Age settlement structure has been recognized by numerous scholars, yet it has seldom been pushed far enough. In particular, the tendency of scholars to bracket off the large urban "four-room" buildings of Iron II as a special case of government, or public, architecture—without attempting to explain how such special institutions worked or why they looked so much like houses—seems rather problematic. Indeed, the fact that we find a similar pattern in both small Iron II villages such as Kh. Hadash and in larger Iron II settlements such as Tell Beit Mirsim makes it difficult to justify the special treatment given to the large urban "four-room" houses.[74] Calling these structures houses does not mean that their inhabitants were uninvolved in governing, nor that the buildings themselves were not the loci of administrative activities. What it does suggest is that such activities were channelled along the same pathways as wealth, property, and status, attaching themselves to particular households—and perhaps also particular patronymic groups—in the course of Iron II state formation. In this sense, we may find many parallels with what Levi-Strauss termed "house societies," that is, societies in which the language of kinship (e.g. the "house") serves as a vehicle for the accumulation and reproduction of wealth, status, and privilege across generations, rather than as a means of collective integration.[75] According to Levi-Strauss, such societies are characterized by

74. Note that house 890/900 at Kh. Hadash is slightly larger than the West Tower at Tell Beit Mirsim.

75. E.g. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Way of the Masks* (trans. S. Modelski; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 170–87; see also Rosemary Joyce and Susan Gillespie, eds., *Beyond Kinship: Social and Material Reproduction in House Societies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

the strategic nature of marriage, inheritance, and property exchanges, in which the perpetuation of the "house" and its material and social wealth takes precedence over the idealized "rules" of kinship. Hence, wealthy "houses" could expand through the inclusion of servants, various adoption arrangements, and the retention, rather than marrying-out, of daughters. While this last option may seem contrary to the patrilocal ideals we usually associate with the Hebrew Bible, one needs only to think of Jacob in the house of Laban, or David in the house of Saul, to realize that wealthy and powerful houses could seek to acquire son-in-laws against convention. The tensions in each of these stories also reveals something of the small-scale politics and internal dynamics associated with alliances between families of unequal wealth or power.

All of this is not to imply that wealth differences between households were unusually, or even particularly, pronounced in the Iron Age of the Southern Levant. Rather, my point has been to show that, contrary to some characterizations of Iron Age communal life, these differences both existed and were likely to have been of some social-historical significance even without reference to class relations. More unexpectedly, it now seems evident that the most significant shifts in household and community organization began to occur not in the transition from the Iron I to the Iron II periods, but rather towards the end of the Iron Age with the dispersal of settlement to single-farmsteads under conditions of intensive agricultural production. This settlement pattern distinguishes the landscape of the Hellenistic and Roman periods from the Bronze and Iron Ages, and has been noted in both the Southern and Northern Levant.[76] Interestingly, the 600-year history of the "four-room" house ends soon thereafter. Perhaps the consistent reproduction of the standard "four-room" house plan was dependent on the kind of relations between households that encouraged the wealthiest residents to represent their houses as not terribly different from their poorer neighbors. If this was the case, then the dissolution of this communal life, through imperialism, exile, dispersal, and agricultural intensification, may provide a context for understanding the end of the "four-room" house in terms that avoid the circular "black box" of ethnicity.

76. Tony Wilkinson, *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 128–50; Jesse Casana, "Structural Transformations in Settlement Systems of the Northern Levant," *AJA* 111 (2007): 195–221; Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age*, 192–201; Faust, "The Farmstead."

In Conclusion

By emphasizing averages over variability, and typical examples over extremes, many Syro-Palestinian archaeologists seem to have missed the fact that large houses are neither unusual nor unimportant in Iron Age communities. In this study I have attempted to explore what we can learn by taking seriously the variability evident in Iron Age house sizes. I willingly admit that much of the interpretative portion of this essay is open to serious debate, but I would suggest that minimally the terms of this debate must now change and include both the reality and social implications of variability in that most repetitious of artifacts, the "four-room" house.

"Home Economics 1407" and the Israelite Family and their Neighbors: An Anthropological/Archaeological Exploration

John S. Holladay, Jr.

You can tell a lot about someone by visiting their house.
But what if it's just a 3,000 year old robbed-out
six-inch high ground plan?

Houses are the commonest architectural form typically encountered, and at the same time one of the most neglected, whether in terms of fieldwork, reporting, or interpretation. There are many points at issue. Particularly since archaeologists seldom recover more than the ground floor plan of any building, despite frequent indications of a second story, it becomes important for model-building (below), to explore other avenues of knowledge in order to discover the spatial and functional characteristics and potentials (including "second stories") of any "typical" house, or, to put it another way, of any particular "house type." Both theoretically and predictably, these "types" may vary depending upon the household's economic pursuits: for example, full-time traders, weavers, or members of the ruling elite would all have differing access to resources and requirements, and all would differ from those of a farmer, or full-time herder.[1] But this is often a matter of degree or nuance. During the Syro-Palestinian Iron Ages most settled people in Israel and Judah were farmers living in fortified settlements. Therefore, most

1. For examples of long-distance foreign traders' "non-local" residences and/or "quarters" throughout Anatolia and the Levant during the Middle Bronze IIA–Iron I Periods, see my contribution to the second volume of the Paul Dion Festschrift ("Toward a New Paradigmatic Understanding of Long-Distance Trade in the Ancient Near East: From the Middle Bronze II to Early Iron II—A Sketch," in *The World of the Aramaeans II: Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul-Eugéne Dion* [ed. P. M. M. Daviau, J. W. Wevers, and M. Weigl; JSOTSup 325; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001], 136–98), together with anthropological/social-historical and bibliographical references throughout.

presently known houses should have belonged to farmers, with atypical houses possibly belonging to people in other professions (although how this applies to urban versus non-urban settings might be problematic).[2]

2. Useful background materials for readers unfamiliar with contemporary socioeconomic studies into the Israelite family, its houses, and those of its nearest neighbors in the light of radically new understandings of the overall Israelite economies (John S. Holladay, Jr., "Hezekiah's Tribute, Long-Distance Trade and the Wealth of Nations ca. 1,000–600 B.C.: A New Perspective: 'Poor Little [Agrarian] Judah' at the End of the Eighth Century B.C.—Dropping the First Shoe," in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* [ed. Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright, and J. P. Dessel; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006], 309–31; and "How Much is That In...? Monetization, Money, Royal States, and Empires," in the forthcoming Lawrence E. Stager Festschrift) would include the following: John S. Holladay, Jr., "The Stables of Ancient Israel: Functional Determinants of Stable Reconstruction and the Interpretation of Pillared Building Remains of the Palestinian Iron Age," in *The Archaeology of Jordan and Other Studies Presented to Siegfried H. Horn* (ed. Lawrence T. Geraty and Larry G. Herr; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1986), 103–65; idem, "House, Israelite," *ABD* 3:308–18; idem, "Stable, Stables," *ABD*: 6:178–83; idem, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah: Political and Economic Centralization in the Iron IIA-B (ca. 1000–750 BCE)," in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land* (ed. T. E. Levy; New York: Facts on File, 1995), 368–98; idem, "Four-Room House," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (ed. Eric M. Meyers; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2:337–42; idem, "House: Syro-Palestinian Houses," in Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 3:94–114; idem, "The Eastern Nile Delta During the Hyksos and Pre-Hyksos Periods: Toward a Systemic/Socioeconomic Understanding," in *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives* (ed. Eliezer D. Oren; University Museum Monograph 96; University Museum Symposium Series 8; Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 183–226; idem, "Toward a New Paradigmatic Understanding"; Patty Jo Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography in Western Iran* (Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology 57; Tucson: University of Arizona Press for the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 1979); Carol Kramer, "An Archaeological View of a Contemporary Kurdish Village: Domestic Architecture, Household Size, and Wealth," in *Ethnoarchaeology: Implications of Ethnography for Archaeology* (ed. C. Kramer; New York: Columbia, 1979), 139–63; idem, *Village Ethnoarchaeology: Rural Iran in Archaeological Perspective* (New York: Academic, 1982); Linda Jacobs, "Tell-i Nun: Archaeological Implications of a Village in Transition," in Kramer, ed., *Ethnoarchaeology*, 175–91; Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1–35; David C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in Early Israel* (SWBA 3; ed. J. W. Flanagan; Sheffield: Almond, 1985); David J. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Harvard Semitic Museum Publications; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001).

Once we have secured the generalization, for example, the Israelite "three-" and "four-room house," different realizations of the same general "type," the emergent exceptions come into clearer focus and demand their own interpretations. The prime instance of this tendency in ancient Israel is the emerging dominance of the "Israelite Four-Room [farmer's] House" as the basic architectural model for all "Residences" (e.g. the "Small Palace" up to the "Northern Command's" Citadel at Hazor).[3] Talk about "The House of the Father"![4] An illustration of the strength of these observations comes with the identification not only of "foreign" Solomonic or post-Solomonic "Israelite" houses, but also of a Syro-Israelite chariot stable in Philistine tenth-century Tell Qasile (below).

An Overview of the Israelite House

When we are interpreting archaeologically preserved remains of ancient houses, the lowest agreed-upon parameter is the ground plan, which is not always well excavated, planned out, or analyzed. Until recently, there was an unsubstantiated consensus that all Israelite houses had an open center court surrounded by roofed rooms on two or three sides. Given the model one would develop on the basis of the ethnographic data (below), however, together with the fairly recent recognition (fieldwork at Shechem in 1962)[5] that the cobbled or flagstone-hardened pillared side-room was a stalling area for domestic traction and transport animals,[6] it quickly becomes obvious to all but the most entrenched that there simply was no room for a family and the sheep/goat herd and the transport and traction animals (typically, heifer or cow or team of bullocks and a donkey or donkeys), and storage capacity for the year's food-stuffs, seed grain, and agricultural tools—all on the ground floor!

That realization drove me toward seeking ways of determining just how much space an Israelite (or any other Middle Eastern) family would

3. Yigael Yadin, *Hazor, the Head of All Those Kingdoms* (The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1970; London: Oxford Press for The British Academy, 1972), 170.

4. Schloen, *The House of the Father*.

5. Edward F. Campbell, "Archaeological Reflections on Amos's Targets," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. Michael D. Coogan, J. Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 32–52.

6. Holladay, "The Stables of Ancient Israel," and the other publications listed in n. 2, above.

have required and, for that matter, just how large a family one might expect. The 1979 appearance of two archeoethnographic books on the subject, both dealing with western Iran, by Watson and Kramer,[7] provided the necessary ethnographic models to drive the study to a reasonable set of conclusions.[8] The graphic analysis below makes the point clearly (Figs. 1. A-C).

During the periods covered by the present study, the dominant modes of agricultural production in ancient Israel, particularly in the highlands, but also, by expansion and/or population movements, in the Negev and along the coastal plain, were intensive plow-assisted dry farming,[9] horticulturalism (principally vines and fruit-trees), and pastoralism. Typically, each household practiced two or three modes of agriculture as a way of managing the risks inherent in the subsistence agriculture of such marginal areas as the Israelite and Judaean hill-country.[10] Such factors presumably operated even within the larger state-initiated border forts and caravan service-centers such as Tel Masos and, particularly, Beersheba (Tell es-Sabaʿ),[11] the inhabitants being largely responsible for raising their own crops and livestock, even in this marginal setting, where crop failures could be predicted two out of every four years.[12] Similar constraints and risks still determine life in traditional farming communities in the region today. For this reason, particularly given the direct and very long historical linkages, Middle Eastern ethnoarchaeogical research has proven to be of great value for modeling the sorts of "constants" that should appear in Middle Eastern agriculturalist housing arrangements of bygone eras (Fig. 1, p. 66).

7. Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*; Kramer, "An Archaeological View," soon followed by idem, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*.

8. Holladay "Stables"; idem, "House, Israelite"; idem, "Four-Room House."

9. The *ardh*, or scratch-plow, initially prepares the ground to receive the sown seed, and then, whether on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, keeps the sub-soil moist during the late spring to early fall droughts by breaking up the transpiration channels in the top-soil. Olive groves require bi-weekly plowing to bring the fruit to harvest in good condition. Many row crops require the same treatment; hence the *necessity* for a good heifer or bullock in the successful farmer's stable. Donkeys are a poor substitute, but far more important for travel and trade, since oxen can only be worked a half-day.

10. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family"; Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan*, 245–50; Holladay, "House, Israelite"; idem, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah"; idem, "Four-Room House."

11. Holladay, "Hezekiah's Tribute," 309–31.

12. Tel Arad, a much smaller entity, seems to have more "outside" provisioning.

A Basic Ethnographically Determined Model for Settled Agriculturalists[13]

The architectural requirements of typical Middle Eastern peasants are: (a) living space, (b) working space, (c) kitchen space (although this may be subsumed into the living or "working" spaces), (d) storage space for household goods and foods, (e) quarters for the family's donkey(s), cow/ox/bullock(s), and sheep/goat herd, and (f) seasonally adjustable heavy storage space for fuel (dung cakes, brush), straw or chaff (an important commodity both sold and used in house construction and annual maintenance, for making dung cakes, and for animal feed), fodder, grain and legume reserves (including next-year's seed reserves), agricultural implements, young animals, spare beams or posts, etc., and, in olive-oil producing regions, large wine and oil jars, possibly in a 4:1 ratio, as befits their relative economic worth[14] and consumption rates. Courtyards are considered essential, although in tightly packed fortified villages many of their functions can be taken over by the roof.[15] In such settings, the strongly built flat roofs are used for a wide variety of outdoor activities, especially on the part of the women and children. Holes through the roof allow for communication between living rooms and roof-top activities. Windows often are extremely primitive, mere holes (blocked in winter) sometimes sufficing.

In the family compound marked "A" in Fig. 1 (unfortified "Hasanabad"), one of the two living rooms is where the family prepares food, eats, and sleeps. The other may be used for entertaining guests or be rented out. Typically, having two living rooms is a sign of wealth and prestige. During the day, some cooking and other women's work is done at and near the hearth just outside the living room doors. Stored straw/chaff is a valued commodity, both for animal feed and as a necessary constituent in wall plaster, annually applied to all exterior walls to prevent erosion of the mud-brick or china/tauf ("puddled mud"). It is frequently, though not invariably, used in mud-brick making.

13. This section benefits enormously from my readings in Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*; Kramer, "An Archaeological View"; idem, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*; Jacobs, "Tell-i Nun"; and Gerald Hall, Sam McBride, and Alwyn Riddell, "Architectural Analysis," in David French et al., "Asvan 1968–72: An Interim Report," *Anatolian Studies* 23 (1973): 245–69, in the light of the vast body of economic data on subsistence agriculture summarized in Colin Clark and Margaret Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture* (4th ed.; London: Macmillan, 1970).

14. Clark and Haswell, *The Economics of Subsistence Agriculture*, 240–44.

15. Jacobs, "Tell-i Nun," 179.

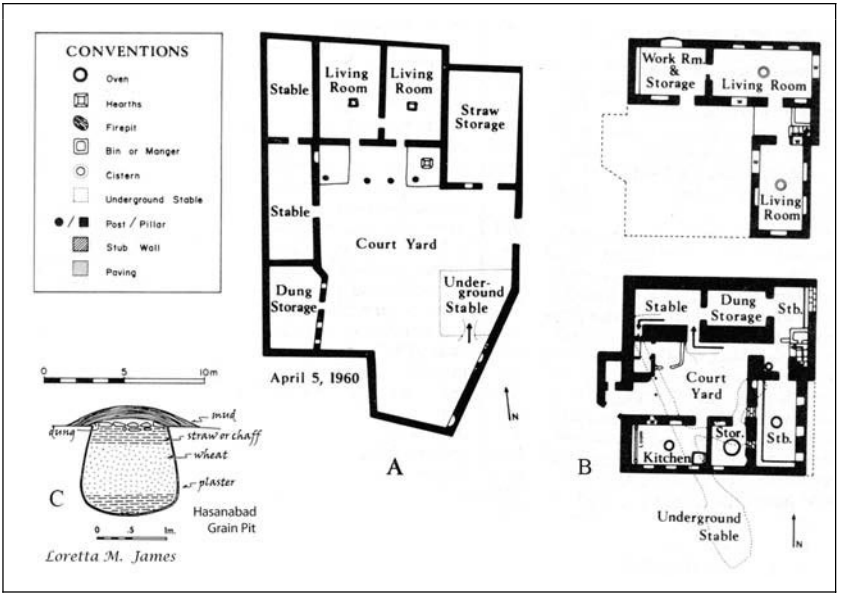

Figure 1. Ethnographically documented peasant housing. (A) Expansive housing compound from the unwalled village of "Hasanabad," Iran (Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*, 139–40 Fig. 5.16 [modified]). (B) Constricted urban housing from the fortified village of "Shahabad" / "Aliabad," Iran (Kramer, "An Archaeological View," 150 Fig. 5.4, and *Village Ethnoarchaeology*, 96 Fig. 4.7). (C) Grain storage pit from "Hasanabad" (Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*, 126 Fig. 5.4). (Original images modified by J. S. Holladay and L. M. James.)

A typical family requires something on the order of 2000 dung cakes[16] per annum, which are variously made during the dry summer days in

16. The importance of ethnographic data for interpreting ancient remains is highlighted by the presence of entire rooms being given over to dung cake and chopped straw storage at both "Hasanabad" and "Shahabad/Aliabad." Similar rooms or portions of rooms in ancient houses must have been equally important for ancient agrarian societies (see Campbell, "Archaeological Reflections on Amos's Targets"). This is not trivial, since a quick review of the treatments of "dung" (Ezek 4:9–15), "dung gate" (Neh 2:13; 3:13–14; 12:31), and "dung heap" (Ezra 6:11) by biblical scholars reveals a high degree of either revulsion or callous disregard. In plain words, a strong cultural bias coupled with ignorance exists. H. Neal Richardson's entry in the *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible, A–D*, 874, and J. A. Patch's entry in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, A–D*, 995–96, are welcome exceptions. The significance of dung in ancient and modern Near Eastern societies is the exact opposite of "curious": sustainable supplies of inexpensive fuel are a primary requirement for organized societies, and, in an agrarian society primarily

"fuel-processing areas…at the village's edge…(characterized by pitting for brick making and) piles of moldering dung…as well as dung cakes (laid flat and then stacked on end to dry thoroughly)."[17] The making of dung cakes is always women and girl's work. Sheep/goat dung is too dry and hard to burn readily. It is not used as fuel, although blackened pellets, presumably from clean-up operations, regularly appear in ash-heaps. Archaeologically, I have observed only one dung cake storage room, in a craftsmen's quarter in Field Q at Tell el-Maskhuta, the pile of cakes being identifiable because of the circular/spiral patterning, within each patty, of the silica skeletons of the constituent chaff. More pains-taking, time-consuming, field-work, particularly involving soil special-ists, would probably turn up a great many more examples.[18] During the Iranian winter the (dung-fueled) central hearth (visible in each of the Living Rooms shown in Fig. 1, above) was the villager's only heat source, and on cold nights families would construct a blanket-covered framework over the living room hearth, and all the family would sleep with their feet under it and near the smoldering fire. Stables under the close control of the compound-holder are a necessary component of every peasant family's holdings.

In the Iranian materials summarized in Fig. 1 above, the same ele-ments, including underground stables, in roughly the same proportions, appear in "A," Patty Jo Watson's expansive unwalled village of "Hasanabad" in western Iran; and in "B," the two-storied house to the right, from Carol Kramer's fortified village of "Aliabad," also in western Iran. In Linda Jacob's Tell-i Nun, a much older fortified village in transition to becoming an open village, the two-story houses are found exclusively on the fortified tell (48 of 59 compounds) and the sprawling exclusively one-story buildings are in the adjacent "suburb."[19] In both

subsisting upon bread, the by-products of threshing (chaff) and of the requisite traction animals (the dung of ruminants and ungulates, which must be cleared out of home stables on a daily basis) yield inexhaustible supplies of slow-burning fuel for bread-ovens and hearths. Dung is therefore available to all, easily made in a secure social setting, and, once sun-dried, easily stored (see Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*, 37 Pls. 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).

17. Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*, 89.

18. One of the largely still-unlearned lessons of Syro-Palestinian archaeological fieldwork is: "What we *dig through* is potentially as informative as *what we dig for*." Extensive sieving has helped, but "disaggregated remains" are not the complete answer.

19. Jacobs, "Tell-i Nun," 176–84. Jacobs notes: "The mean area of combined roofed and unroofed living space in compounds of the old village is 219.5 square meters (median = 192.5) as opposed to 520 square meters for [one of the largest]

Hasanabad and Aliabad, a second-story room or rooms is/are generally an addition to the original structure. Kramer's formal kitchen (which seems to have been the original living room before the construction of the second story), suitably cleaned up and featuring a rug or rugs, may also serve as a living room for dependent senior relatives. At Hasanabad, which had no formal kitchens, "kitchen" activities were carried out in the living rooms ("A").

Archaeoethnographic Data and the Israelite House

What do we learn from all this with regard to Israelite houses? Given that most Israelites lived in fortified villages, towns, or cities, we should expect two-story construction. Overall, each nuclear family requires its own living room, in which it lives, works, eats, entertains, and sleeps. This will always be on the second story. Larger houses should have more than one living room, the second being used for entertaining or for rental, if not required for members of the extended family. Living rooms are characterized by a central hearth (necessary—in the absence of a kitchen—for cooking and for winter heating, though, ethnographically, supplemental portable braziers are also used). Casual cooking in courtyards or in the central ground-floor space should be expected. Where there are kitchens, living room hearths typically have mud plugs inserted for the summer. Rugs probably were ubiquitous. Living rooms are often whitewashed, and have better flooring than the mud plaster or packed earth that characterizes store and utility rooms.[20] Ethnographically, even in non-urban settings, second-floor living rooms are considered more desirable, as they catch the summer breezes. Where there is a second story, it invariably houses a living room.[21] In the restricted space of the fortified village of Tel-i Nun, 48 of the 59 compounds (81%) were two storied, "of which the lower story is used for animals, and the upper story for humans."[22] In addition to the living room, there is often a

…compound[s in the new village]" (p. 181). Exceptionally, 28 people live in five rooms of this one compound.

20. Given that none of these, with the exception of occasionally whitewashing the floor and possibly the walls of the central space, apply to any portion of the familiar ground-plan of the "Israelite House," one either needs rather foolishly to question the generalization, or look elsewhere for the living room's location: "upstairs"! Note the perfectly preserved and beautifully constructed slab of doubly layered second-story "terrazzo-like flooring" from Shechem cited below.

21. Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*, 102.

22. Jacobs, "Tell-i Nun," 179.

second-story "utility room" for storing light goods (foods and household goods) and, in some areas, a kitchen.

Our understanding of ancient Israel's economics, both at the state and domestic levels, has recently shifted radically.[23] This inevitably had its effects upon domestic and state buildings, something we had not seriously considered earlier. Suffice it to say that it is now incontestable that the Israelite state arose in response to and in various liaisons with extremely strong and wealthy neighbors (Philistia, particularly Ashkelon, and Tyre). In short, the advent of unprecedented quantities and varieties of highly sought-after goods from South Arabia, Africa, India, and almost certainly the Spice Islands (the present Sri Lanka and Indonesia) on the borders of nascent Israel and Damascus brought a whole new "world order" into being.

This new order was one in which all this previously unimaginable material wealth suddenly entered the Mediterranean trade by means of newly created camel caravans, which traversed the countries of the southern Levant—Israel, later Judah and Israel, and Damascus—on their way to the Philistine and the Phoenician ports, and, from there, to the known world. Undoubtedly, the Philistines were lured to the Levantine coast by earlier, much smaller, trade caravans during the latter portions of the Late Bronze Age. This was also the age in which the Phoenicians, who had previously enjoyed, with Egypt and—especially—the Hyksos,[24] a monopoly on the overland donkey caravans and Egyptian shipping trade (e.g. the Punt trade) of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, rose to their greatest heights. But, equally, this was also the age during which the small nation-states of the southern Levant reaped the greatest ever monetary rewards through transit taxes levied upon the two-way traffic crossing their territories: traffic paying in gold and eastern commodities on their way west and in silver and Mediterranean commodities, including purple wool and manufactured goods, on their way home. Frozen out by their mishandling of earlier South Arabian trading ventures further to the north,[25] and unable to break through the southern alliance in 853 at the Battle of Qarqar, Assyria could do little to participate in sharing this wealth prior to the days of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B.C.E.).

Given the fact that ethnographic data demand something like Fig. 2a (below), to house a typical agriculturalist family, their flock, and large animals, and sufficient storage space for agricultural tools and a year's

23. Holladay, "Hezekiah's Tribute," and "How Much is That In…?"
24. Holladay, "The Eastern Nile Delta."
25. Ibid.

food supplies,[26] the "classic" Plan 2b clearly is impossible as a one-story house.[27] Moreover, since the central space ("courtyard") was (1) not hardened against the winter rains, (2) multi-layered, and (3) clearly worn down through to earlier levels in the middle by wear and regular sweeping, with thin white plaster surfacings surviving only near the walls, it could not have been unroofed and open to the sky. That should have been apparent to us from the start, but we were guided by "expert opinion"—not a dependable guide. Had we already come to that conclusion (by comparing the "courtyard" with surrounding exterior [!] surfaces), our observational conclusion would further have been solidified, as it was, by the discovery of a large fragment of a sophisticated second-story floor surface and its carbonized supporting timbers which fell straight down, with no intervening debris, directly in the middle of the central space in Edward F. Campbell's drawing (Fig. 2, below), which, with its captions, is self-explanatory in the light of the foregoing discussion of the archaeoethnographic data.

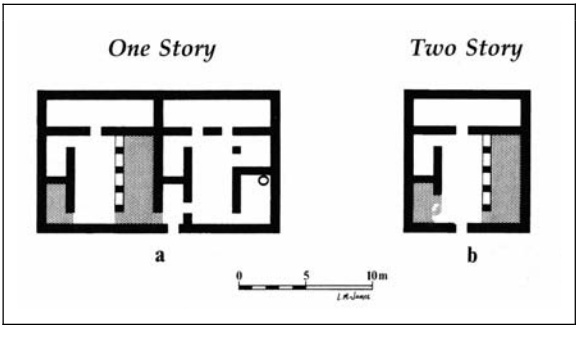

Figure 2. a. (Reconstructed) Shechem House 1728 shown as a one-story building corresponding to the expansive housing compounds from unfortified Iranian villages.
b. House 1728 shown as the first story of an originally two-story building, corresponding to the situation in fortified Iranian towns. (J. S. Holladay after Campbell, "Archaeological Reflections," Fig. 2.)

Thus, the earlier consensus that the "courtyard" was essential as a family activity area now is replaced by the essentiality of the family's second-story living room, precisely where the ethnographic data would locate it.

26. Cf. especially Holladay, "House, Israelite"; idem, "Stable, Stables"; Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family"; Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan*; and Schloen, *The House of the Father*.

27. Holladay, "House, Israelite"; idem, "Stable, Stables"; and Campbell, "Archaeological Reflections on Amos's Targets."

The central space on the ground floor, in this exceptional, though not completely unique, case,[28] went through two phases as the male work-area, at first as an olive press,[29] while other evidence points clearly in the direction of largely women's activity, but with some male activities as well, in the central space of James W. Hardin's more typical house at Tell Halif.[30]

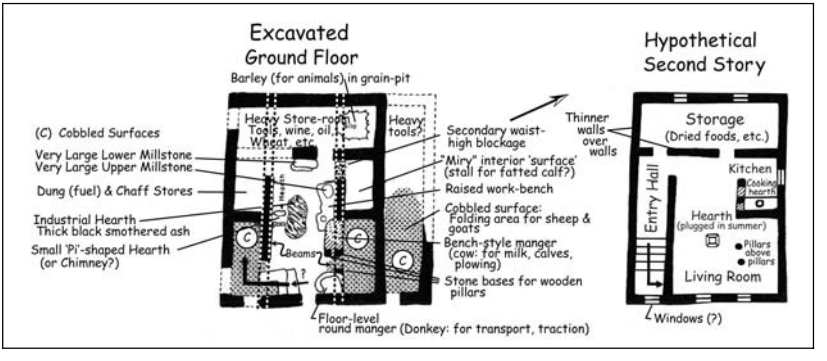

Figure 3. Shechem House 1727 (J. S. Holladay and L. M. James after Campbell, "Archaeological Reflections," Figs. 3.6 and 3.7). The final phase of Shechem House 1727 and an architecturally dictated and archaeo-ethnographically informed reconstruction of its first and second floors.

Official Residences or Palaces for Highly Ranked Government Officials

Ahab's Stratum VIII Stable with its attached Granary at Hazor suffered some disaster, apparently involving a collapsed stable roof. Both the Stable and the Granary were, perhaps sketchily, restored in Stratum VII, but in Stratum VI, VIb, and V the entire area was given over to presumptive variants of the standard Israelite House.[31] For what follows, it is important to understand that the poorly restored "Stratum VII Stable" cited above was soon destroyed, possibly during or after Jehu's rebellion

28. Compare the second phase of the "Small Palace" ("House 2") in Field A at Hazor, below.

29. Campbell, "Archaeological Reflections on Amos's Targets," 43 Fig. 3:5.

30. To be discussed in a publication by Hardin that is still in preparation.

31. Amnon Ben-Tor and Shulamit Geva, eds., *Hazor III–IV: An Account of the Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavation, 1957–1958* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israel Exploration Society, 1989), 41, with important references to Yadin et al., *Hazor I: An Account of the First Season of Excavations, 1955* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1958), Plans XIII–XV.

ca. 842 B.C.E.,[32] and in Strata VI–V (Jeroboam II [Albright 786–746 B.C.E.] until the fall of Samaria in 723–721 B.C.E.) there is indirect evidence that the stables probably were relocated to Area G.[33] We know very little of the two "standard" houses in Area A, but we do have excellent plans for two phases of one very large nonstandard house, something that, in its original form, one could, without embarrassment, call a high official's "palace." Given the above and further arguments below, probably the official residence of the Commander of the Northern Chariot Forces.

Thus, this beautifully built large, but by no means enormous, "house" proves not only to be more of a very specialized government-built "palace" than a "house," but also a very "specialized" Palace, not only with five of the typical palatial/governmental store-rooms—quite unlike domestic store-rooms—but also a private horse-stable on the north side, to the right as one enters the ground floor.[34] As opposed to the smaller "standings" in typical "Israelite Houses," this one-row stable had standard horse-stall dimensions and room for either four, or (possibly) six horses (only three of the pillars survived, and apparently the excavators did not find any clear traces of where others once stood). The horse-stable aside, however, this building turns out to be quite typical for the late eighth century in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

The somewhat larger "West Tower" at Tell Beit Mirsim[35] is amazingly similar to the above, although, unlike the Hazor Area B buildings discussed below, it had storerooms all around the central "court," which must have been roofed. The large spans probably demanded cedar beams, well-documented elsewhere for royal building projects.

32. William F. Albright, "The Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel," *BASOR* 100 (1945): 16–22.

33. Cf. the severely edited reference in Holladay, "The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah," 397 n. 53. The original read: "The prime candidate for a public storage complex during the period of the Monarchy is that in Area G at Hazor (A. Mazar 1990: 412)." Detailed analysis suggests, however, that these facilities probably served yet unexcavated stables, relocated in Stratum VI to a position near the new city gateway.

34. At a full 3 m depth, the standings are "standard" for horses both in antiquity and in present-day settings. Similarly, at somewhere around 1.2 m, the main door width, and those of the two rear rooms (ca. 1.2 and 1.1 m, respectively), fit well enough into the modern range of acceptable door widths ("four feet" = 1.22 m); see Holladay, "The Stables of Ancient Israel," 150–51, especially Fig. 6.

35. William F. Albright, *The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim*. Vol. 3, *The Iron Age* (AASOR 21–22; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1943), Pl. 6.

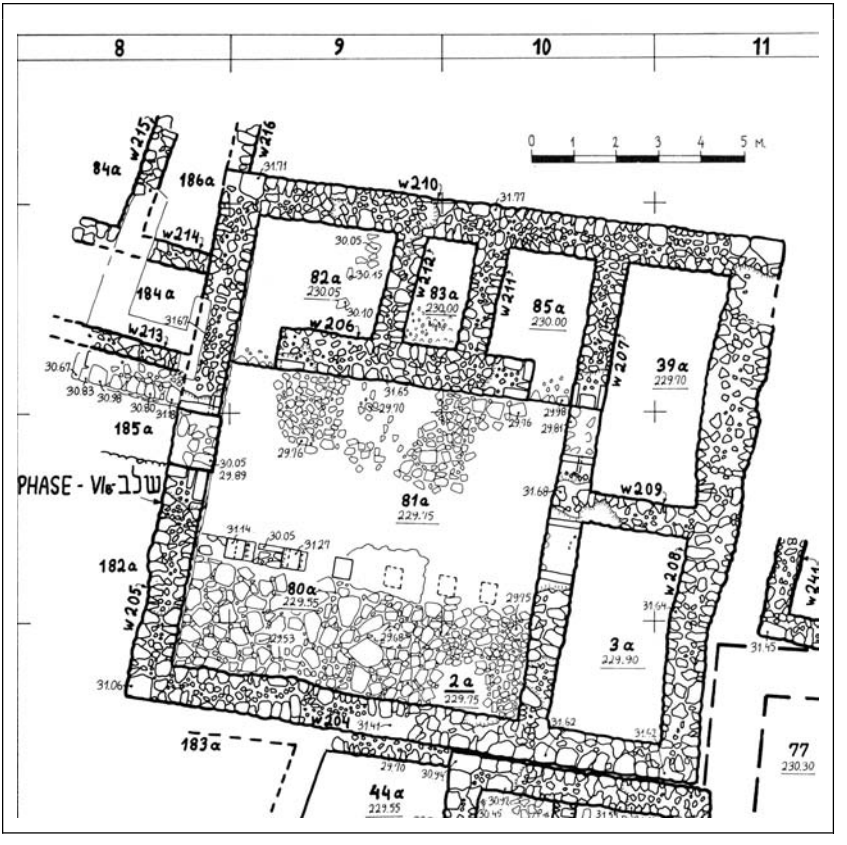

Figure 4. Hazor Area B Stratum VI (J. S. Holladay after Ben-Tor and Geva, eds., *Hazor III–IV*, Plan XIII) showing the "Small Palace" 2a, a typical Royal "Store's" building exceptionally featuring a line of horse (!) standings. Note the broad spans involved for the second story (the stable would not have been open to the elements), the dressed masonry at the corners and door-way openings, and the outside staircase, presumably leading to the official reception room on the second story, as is also the case at the Area B Citadel and, likely, the two adjacent "Small Palaces" above Royal "Store's" as well.

As already suggested, apart from the horse standings, the concepts and general plan shared between Hazor House 2a and the West Tower at Tell Beit Mirsim are remarkably similar in size and plan to two of the three structures flanking the Area B "Citadel" at Hazor, Plans XX–XXIII,[36] particularly with respect to their original design and functioning. They

36. Ben-Tor and Geva, *Hazor III–IV*.

undergo significant changes in their later history, clearly having to do with the massive movement of goods and/or supplies. Given the times, they may have been taking provisions to troops in the field or, alternatively, bringing supplies into the fortress to withstand a siege. Compare the later central "court" setup in Stratum VB Building 3067b, where the doorway is perhaps 1.1 m wide, suitable for horses (or laden donkeys?), but where the eight (?) standings are not adequate for horses. These standings are, however, entirely suitable for donkeys. The paved portion of the central "court" in 3100b/2, to the west (also Stratum VB), similarly appears to be set up with bench-style mangers for donkeys, though the door width has been reduced from an original ca. 1.6 m to ca. 1.2 m (seemingly wide enough for pack-donkeys, but not donkeys with panniers). Given that these two "Small Palaces" together have ten storerooms of varying sizes on their ground floor, while the somewhat different but also large Building 3208, on the southern side of the Citadel, has a complex set of storerooms on its ground floor, while also probably controlling those of Building 3197, to its east, in addition to the sixteen store-chambers of varying dimensions in the basement of the Citadel itself, we clearly seem to be looking at something similar to the "quarter-master's stores" of the Israelite "Northern Command." If only we had more data… South of Samʾal/Zincirli, I know of no other concentration of administrative storage facilities of this size in the Levant, although obviously we have only excavated a very small fraction of what there originally was there.

As it happens, we probably do have data bearing on some goods likely stored in and around the Citadel, and that from an interesting direction. By a stroke of good fortune, we have not only one, but two nearly contemporary accounts of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib following his 701 B.C.E. campaign against Philistia and Judah. The "Chicago" prism, familiar to most students of the Bible from A. Leo Oppenheim's translation in James B. Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*,[37] dates to 691 B.C.E., and has the shorter tribute list. The earlier Rassam Cylinder (700 B.C.E.), inscribed on clay within months of receiving Hezekiah's belated tribute in Nineveh, gives essentially the same account but gives us a highly significant insight into one critical aspect of the Judaean Palace Economy. Mordechai Cogan's translation of those portions of the account which are exclusive to the Rassam Cylinder lists some goods regularly gained from Palace Sackings

37. A. Leo Oppenheim, trans, "Babylonian and Assyrian Historical Texts," in James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3d ed. with suppl.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 287–88.

or Forced Tributes throughout the entire area, "multicolored garments, garments of linen, wool (dyed) red-purple and blue-purple," together with uncommonly listed (for royal treasures) "vessels of copper, iron, bronze and tin," "chariots," and then almost unique listings: "siege shields, lances, armor, daggers for the belt, bows and arrows, countless trappings and implements of war."[38]

This is virtually unique in the Neo-Assyrian booty lists,[39] and suggests that, instead of manufacturing their own weapons of war, Judah, and presumably Israel as well, simply outsourced them, which meant that military preparedness required huge stores of (imported) weapons rather than locally manufactured weapons in the hands of "citizen soldiers" bearing military obligations. The latter undoubtedly was the case with at least the early Neo-Assyrian army, operating under the *iškaru* and *ilku* systems,[40] whereby goods were locally made from governmentally supplied materials under a loose form of contract, and whereby land grantees were obligated to do military service, although this changed with the creation of a standing army. Israel's elite professional charioteers, part of a standing army, would have had their own weapons from whatever source was best. Neo-Assyrian horsemen took their mounts (and chariot horses?) home with them during the winter and spring, but what about foot soldiers? Israel's foot soldiers were farmers in their daily lives, did not conduct yearly campaigns, and their family's lands were theirs in perpetuity, at least in principle and probably mostly in fact. But, given the quite understandable inclination of freehold farmers to beat seldom-used swords into plowshares and spears into reaping-hooks, the government of the day did well to maintain a well-stocked armory, bought with governmental silver from Northern suppliers.[41] That armory had to exist somewhere, in some secure facility. And whatever had been in the armory would presumably (a) have been in the hands of the armies, and would (b) have been taken as booty by the victorious Assyrians. If there is even a bit of accuracy in that description, what better place for an armory than the Citadel of Hazor? Presumably, the Assyrian fortresses in Israel (e.g. Megiddo) and, later, in Judah, also had their own stockpiled armaments.

38. M. Cogan, "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem (2.119B)," in William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *The Context of Scripture*. Vol. 2, *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 303.

39. See the discussion in Holladay, "Hezekiah's Tribute," 326.

40. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 BC* (2 vols.; London: Routledge, 1995), 2:534–35.

41. Holladay, "Hezekiah's Tribute," and *forthcoming*.

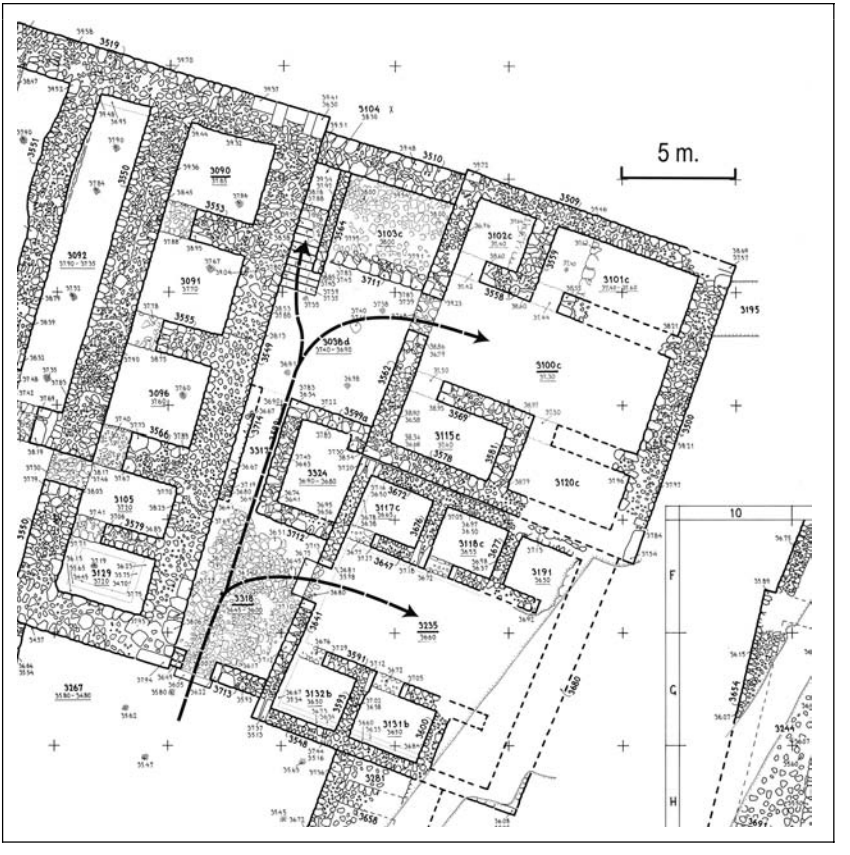

Figure 5. Hazor Area B Stratum VIII with arrows indicating main traffic patterns (J. S. Holladay after Ben-Tor and Geva, eds., *Hazor III–IV*, Plan XXIII). Large, extremely well built Stratum VIII structures organically connected with the Hazor Area B Citadel. Formally distinct from "Four Room Houses," they exhibit the same constructional techniques and building attributes as "House 2a" in Fig. 4, above. On the other hand, they unquestionably reflect the same mental template as "the Israelite House," as does the Citadel itself once one considers only the layout of the upper floors. As residences (the upper story or stories), these three buildings surely reflect the needs and rank of very highly placed officials: probably, given the locations, high-ranking military commanders responsible for the chariotry (Area A House 2a, Fig. 4, above), the Army, and—possibly—the City respectively.

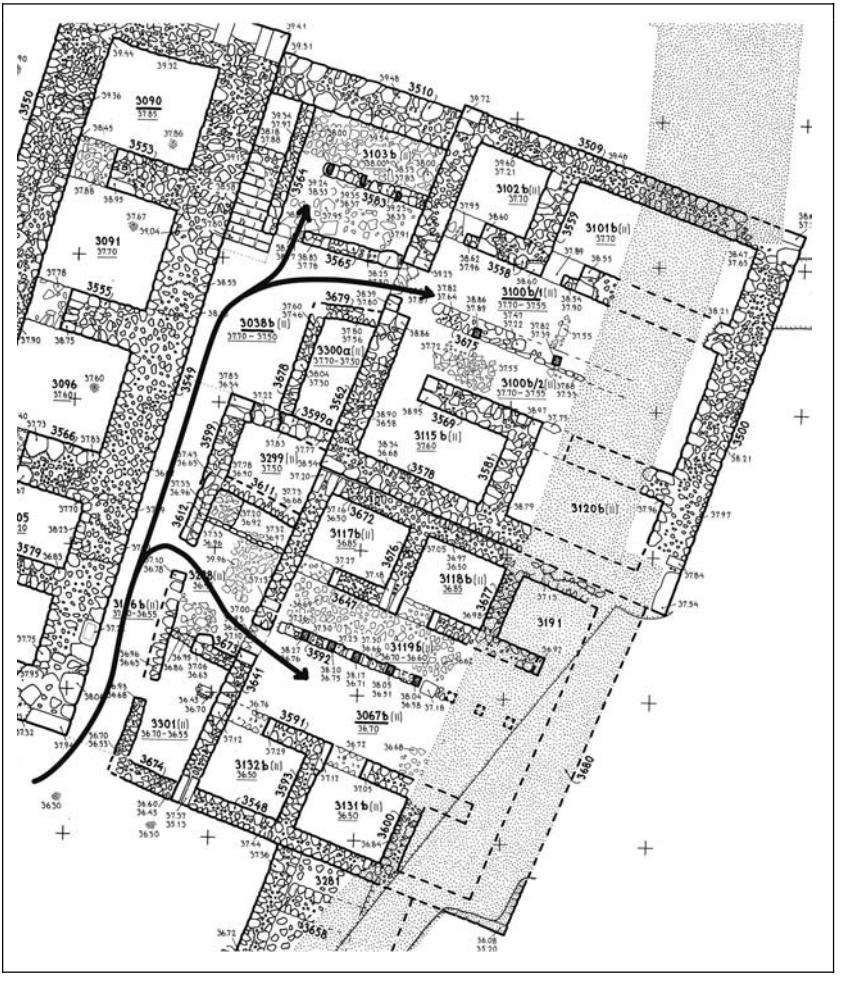

Figure 6. Hazor Area B Stratum VB with interiors converted to donkey standings (J. S. Holladay after Ben-Tor and Geva, eds., *Hazor III–IV*, Plan XXIII). The same structures as those shown in Fig. 5, but significantly modified to incorporate donkey standings. Note also the small extra (riding?) donkey stable beside the stairs to the Citadel. These arrangements indicate a serious need for moving supplies, presumably in the face of a looming threat. In the next phase (Stratum VA), the massive new fortifications (shadowed on this plan) have encroached upon both buildings, causing major changes, especially to the lower one. At that point the entire area in front of the Citadel is in-filled with new store-buildings, replacing the major group of stores to the south of the Citadel, now lost to the massive fortification wall in that sector. Without question, these stores and fortifications were considered vital to the defense and well-being of Hazor during the last years or months prior to the summer of 733/732 B.C.E.

Non-"Israelite" Houses in Philistia and Israel-Judah: Stability of Design and the Meaning of Foreign Traits

Both cuneiform records and ethnographic parallels indicate that house-building in Middle Eastern societies was a craft profession,[42] although people often did their own work.[43] It seems equally clear (below) that various ethnic groups preferred certain architectural configurations. These twin observations go a long way toward explaining similarities, differences, and eccentricities in house form across large culture areas and through long stretches of time, "punctuated" at moments or instances of population relocation, cultural innovation, or stress by the evolution—or local introduction—of new (or new to the region) house forms. These presumably reflected either new arrivals or altered social organization and changing modes of production. We can discuss two examples here: (1) early Philistine "villas" (or "Live-Above Business" buildings); and (2) mass Babylonian insula-style housing in Megiddo Strata III–II.

Philistine Buildings at Ashkelon[44]

Dating between roughly the second quarter of the twelfth-century B.C.E. and 1050 B.C.E.,[45] the three phases shown in Fig. 7, below, as far as I presently know, have no architectural kinship whatsoever with any other buildings in the southern Levant. Their architecture, central hearths, pillars, plaster floors, and benches, to say nothing of the spool-shaped loom-weights, or the Cypro-Minoan ostracon and twelve jar handles likewise inscribed in Cypro-Minoan script,[46] all point toward the Helladic culture sphere. In southern Palestinian terms, they are Philistine!

42. Elizabeth C. Stone, *Nippur Neighborhoods* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1981), 27; "*Šitimgallu*," in *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Vol. 17, *Š Part III* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1992); Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*, 121–22; cf. Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*, 94.

43. Watson, *Archaeological Ethnography*, 121; cf. Kramer, *Village Ethnoarchaeology*, 94.

44. I am indebted to Lawrence E. Stager, not only for making materials available to me, and discussing various options from his perspective, but also for allowing me to utilize the plans published in Frank Moore Cross and Lawrence E. Stager, "Cypro-Minoan Inscriptions Found in Ashkelon," *IEJ* 56, no. 2 (2006): 129–59, and Lawrence E. Stager, "Tel Ashkelon," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. Ephraim Stern, Hillel Geva, and Alan Paris; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2008), 5:1578–86, which I have only seen in xerographic copy. In particular, I have his permission to engage in creative speculation concerning the limited amount of data published to date.

45. Cross and Stager, "Cypro-Minoan Inscriptions," 130–31.

46. Ibid.

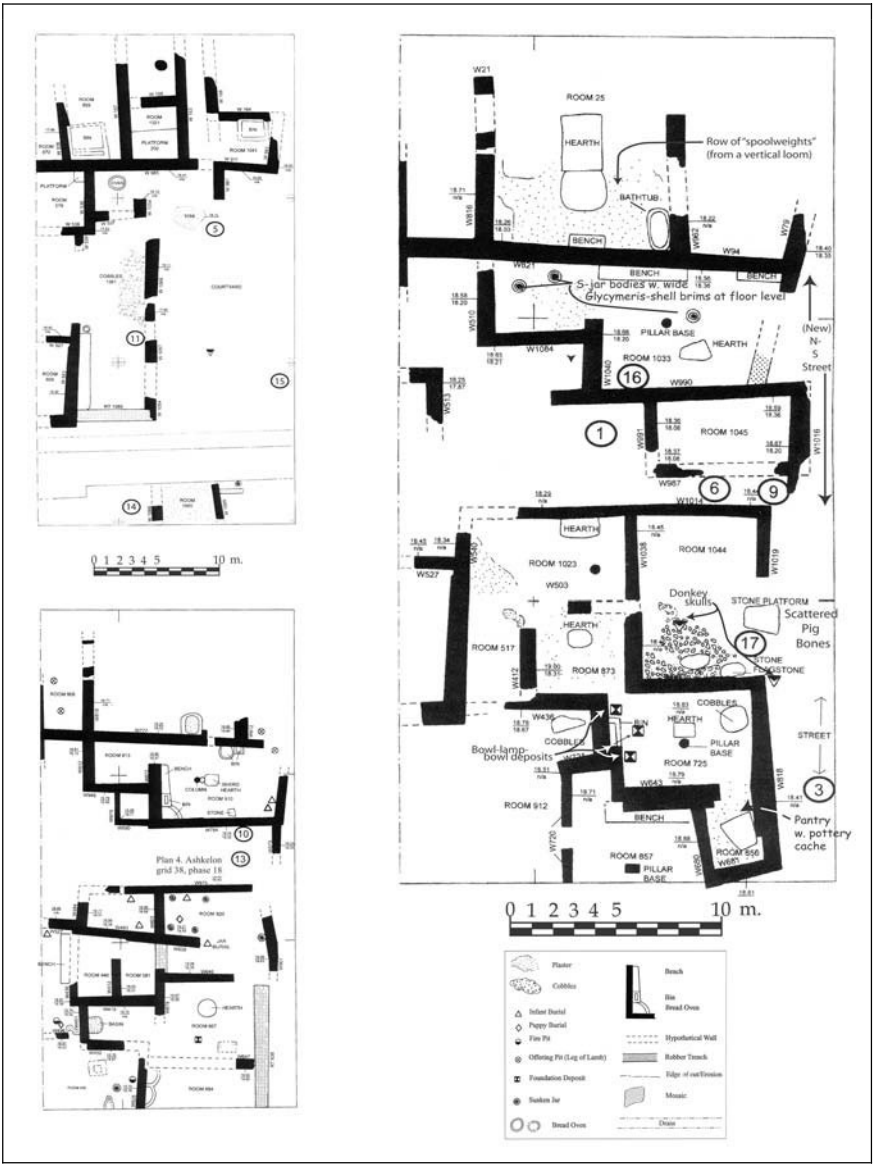

Figure 7. Three early phases from Ashkelon respectively covering the periods characterized by Philistine Monochrome only, mixed Philistine Monochrome and Early Philistine Bichrome, and Early Philistine Bichrome only (modified, with permission, from Cross and Stager, "Cypro-Minoan Inscriptions," 154–56).

Architecturally, these buildings are characterized by curious "zig-zagging" and interlocking walls reminiscent of the sorts of folded paper constructions whereby a single sheet of paper or cardboard may be converted into a remarkably capable load-bearing platform. These early Philistine walls also feature numerous short extensions off major wall corners which also seem designed to stabilize the structures against lateral movements. All in all, it would appear that they were originally designed to be, despite their materials (mud-brick upon stone foundations), earthquake resistant. In this respect, it is probably well to point out that, despite the near proximity of the Rift Valley, earthquakes are more characteristically an Aegean problem than a Levantine one.

At first blush, roofed spans do not seem to be heavily dependent upon pillars, which, instead, seem almost "iconic"; that is, isolated and generally associated with hearths and "formal" rooms. Under closer analysis this proves not to be the case, since, in every case where this can be controlled, the identified (and at least one unidentified) pillar bases are carefully positioned to accomplish the most good in materially reducing the spans of second-floor joists while, unlike the pillars and longitudinal walls in Israelite houses, having little or no independent effect upon internal circulation.[47] In my opinion, however, they still seem terribly iconic and "centering" in their placement, and it is not hard to visualize the owner, or the owner's father, occupying the place of honor nearest the hearth on a cool winter's day.

Given their location within 200 m of Ashkelon's waterfront, it is obvious that these buildings are urban or, more specifically, functional commercial seaport buildings utterly new to the southern Levantine

47. Israeli architectural archaeologist Ehud Netzer's comments on material dimensions and availability are extremely useful, but cannot be detailed here except to note that "the problem becomes more serious when a bigger room or hall is to be roofed. The stresses operating within the beams increase in a squared proportion to the width of the aperture. In a ceiling 4 m wide, the stresses are four times (and not twice) as great as the stresses in a ceiling 2 m wide, and in a ceiling which is 6 m wide, they will be nine times as great as those in a ceiling 2 m wide (3^2). Therefore, while for a 2 m aperture beams 8–10 cm thick [in the critical *vertical* dimension…] would suffice, a ceiling with an aperture of 4 m requires beams 15–18 cm thick, and for a ceiling 8 m wide (in which the stresses are 16 times as great as those in a 2 m ceiling), one needs beams 25–30 cm thick. Beams of this thickness, and 4.5–8 m long (and of course, straight), are much more difficult to obtain and transport and their cost is naturally much higher" (Ehud Netzer, "Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age," in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from the Prehistoric to the Persian Period* [ed. Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992], 17–27 [24–25]).

coast.[48] It follows that, as elsewhere at Ashkelon, they exhibit "business" traits on the first floor, with living quarters inferable on the second floor, a tried and true pattern throughout urban history to the present.

In the present study, we can press that model further. It would appear that the owners of the northern building(s?) in Plan 2 (Phase 20) were dealing in a commodity that typically was stored in large bins (Rooms 859 and 1041), most likely grain for human consumption on something more than a "household" basis. Bread would be an obvious guess. The oversized oven—compare the very small one ca. 8 m to the south-southwest, in an (open?) courtyard—supports the notion of large-scale bread-making. In the same building, Room 1021, with its Platform 202, and the pillared room to the north can securely be interpreted as textile factories: "weaving rooms…replete with spool weights, both cylinders and parallelepipeds, and spindle whorls made of bone…and on occasion even part[s]…of the bone spindle."[49]

Conservatively estimated, the extrapolated footprint of this building, not all of which fell within the excavation area, is at least 11.5 m wide (assuming bilateral symmetry), by at least 8.7 m deep (assuming no rooms beyond the pillared room). Thus, including internal walls, each floor should be almost exactly 100 m^2, more than a third larger than House 1728 at Tell Balatah/Shechem (below). Assuming only two stories, at 100 m^2 the available dwelling space, excluding exterior walls of ca. 0.7 m thickness, should accommodate a family of 9 persons by Raoul Narroll's 10 m^2 average and eleven by Schloen's rounding up to 8.0 m^2 of Steven Leblanc's[50] 7.3 m^2 roofed dwelling space per individual.[51] In other words, the second story of this building clearly could accommodate either a large family, or enough room to house a normal nuclear family with space left over for servants, renters, as at "Hasanabad," or senior relatives in a separate living-room.

48. In a private communication Stager observes that Ashkelon "depend[ed] on trade for most of its livelihood, including what would pass for subsistence commodities in an agrarian kingdom. The arable land and support villages in Ashkelon's hinterland in the Bronze–Iron Ages are far too limited to support a population of 12,000–15,000 within walled Ashkelon. To support such a population on contiguous arable land would require a kingdom stretching north of Ashdod, east to Lachish, and south beyond Gaza. Such a kingdom makes no sense when we consider the boundaries of Amarna kingdoms or Philistine "cities"/kingdoms in the Iron Age."

49. Stager, "Tel Ashkelon," 1581.

50. Steven Leblanc, "An Addition to Naroll's Suggested Floor Area and Settlement Population Relationship," *American Antiquity* 36 (1971): 210–11.

51. Schloen, *House of the Father*, 174.

The skull of an ass in the lower courtyard of Plan 2 is illusory. It obviously was intrusive at the bottom of a ("missed") post-Phase 19 pit, the outlines of which are clearly visible in the robbing-out of cobbles and part of a wall to the west of the northernmost donkey skull in Plan 3, Room 1044. Originally, that skull would have been closely associated with the other two donkey skulls and the "scattered pig bones" of Phase 19 (Plan 3). Unburied, none of these would have long survived the city's scavengers, so they must have witnessed the last, late, festive evening at an interesting locale. Room 1044 was obviously open to the street. The entrance is too broad to be closed by any normal single door. Particularly given the "Pantry," with its pottery cache in Room 850, the bin in Room 725, the outside litter and short-term "advertising" of the availability of donkey meat (compare any traditional Levantine butcher-shop), coupled with the three hearths in Rooms 1023, 873, and 725, it is hard to arrive at any other interpretation than that this must have been one of the earliest Greek fast-food restaurants in the Levant, serving an international clientele of variously Greek and Phoenician sailors with no food taboos and an apparent love of horse-meat.[52] In all likelihood, the walls fronting upon this sheltered exterior space had doors or pass-throughs for serving customers, who could presumably eat in Room 1044 or take their food with them to the wine shop[53] immediately to the north, also possibly featuring a "wide-open" facade, where there were three non-tip in-floor amphora sockets, ancient equivalents of "wine-buckets," each framed by cockle-shell borders, practically the symbol of the Mediterranean itself,[54] and two benches for those unwilling either to stand, squat, or sit on the floor (now-vanished wooden benches, stools, and tables actually seem more likely).

In the succeeding Phase 18 things have changed, and, from our perspective (if not Amsterdam's, also a noted "Port City"), not for the better. The new focus is somehow witnessed by seven infant (and two puppy) burials within Rooms 910, 820 and its back room, and in an incomplete room or "out-back" area behind Room 440.[55] These burials

52. Stager, "Tel Ashkelon," 1582.

53. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 2001), 102.

54. For another interpretation, which I am disinclined to follow, see Stager, "Tel Ashkelon," 1582.

55. For later canine burials with possible Phoenician linkages at Ashkelon, see Lawrence E. Stager, "Ashkelon," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (ed. E. Stern; 4 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993), 1:108.

are uniformly near walls, out of traffic patterns, and apparently unique within this series of building remains.[56] Wine was on offer in Room 820, and it is not impossible that there was also some food. The entrance to Rooms 820, its back room, and 440 and 581 appears to be screened by a bent wall at street-side, and it seems likely that the entrance to Room 910 to the north was similarly screened. Taken together with its location and seafaring clientele, it seems likely that, at this stage of the port's existence, this was a significant part of Ashkelon's red-light district.[57]

Another important aspect of Ashkelon's economy may be gained from our analysis of "Philistine Houses." Given Stager's estimate of 12,000–15,000 inhabitants of Philistine Ashkelon,[58] and reckoning a high figure of occupancy of 15 persons per building, it would appear that there were some 800–1000 houses in the city, in addition to any uninhabited buildings. Since one of the important characteristics of Philistine Ashkelon is that it was quintessentially a seaport, lacking any substantial hinterland, it follows that even the second-floor joists and roofing beams had to be imported, presumably from the Lebanon. In fact, as Stager has stated, apart from some local viticulture, almost everything its economy demanded, even wheat, had to be imported, either by sea or overland (e.g. the locally produced olive oil from Tel Miqne/Ekron). In our present case, taking the quantity and quality of beams required for the second story and roof construction of our "Greek Restaurant" as reasonably "typical" of a well-to-do Ashkelonite entrepreneur's business and residence, multiplied by the estimated number of similar families at Ashkelon, gives some indication of the volume and nature of the traffic in wood alone. Assuming Stager's lowest population estimate of 12,000 inhabitants and a family size of 8, which is certainly too high unless we include unfree dependents, we would need 1500 buildings (mixed commercial/residence) worth of building materials, that is, close to 200,000

56. Cf. Stager, "Tel Ashkelon," 1583. To my mind, the parallel with intramural burials at Late Helladic IIIC Lefkandi in Euboea (ibid.) is weakened by (1) the absence of adult burials and (2) the likelihood that here, as elsewhere at Ashkelon (e.g. the market area—see i 1584), the ground floor was given over to business and commercial ventures, with the family occupying the upper floor.

57. Given the probability that "the girls" (and "the boys"?) were slaves, with no ties to the local population, quiet intramural interments of lost babies (and small pets) seem touchingly human actions in an inhuman mode of existence. Given, again, the universally high rate of infant mortality in all pre-penicillin societies, particularly in urban settings, it seems "uneconomical" to invoke the spectre of either plague or even high infant mortality in only these two adjacent buildings in only one of the five strata so far published for Ashkelon.

58. Stager, "Tel Ashkelon," 1585.

beams in the 2.5 to 6.5m range (see Netzer's work on building materials, n. 47, above), all from some distant heavily timbered region. There would be no serious possibility of local supplies.

Megiddo under the Neo-Assyrians

The Neo-Assyrian palaces, gateway, and orthogonal streets with insulae-style domestic architecture have always challenged archaeologists, including the original excavators.[59] In general, we tend to shy away. Even serious treatments seldom get past "Residential quarters extended over large areas of the city, with houses arranged in blocks separated by evenly spaced and parallel streets."[60] In other words, to my knowledge, no one has even hazarded much of a guess as to what was going on.

My "lucky accident" encountering "a prepared mind" incident occurred some years ago, when I was purposefully browsing through Sir Leonard Woolley's Ur Excavations series.[61] That "recognition" was furthered during the course of researching the present study. Given that the excavators were clearing large areas with very large work-gangs in far too little time, the actual quality of their work and their architectural recording are little short of astonishing, but clearly they had no certain idea of positively assigning some sections of wall or flooring to any particular stratum. Moreover, Megiddo "Strata" II and III surely were not discrete "wholesale rebuildings," but, rather, a succession of building phases in various buildings at various times over something like a century or more. Given that situation, I thought it might be a good idea carefully to superimpose the neatly drawn "plans" of the "two strata" and seek to analyze the result with an eye toward (possibly) seeing complete, or largely complete, plans.

59. Robert S. Lamon and Geoffrey M. Shipton, *Megiddo I: Seasons of 1925–34. Strata I–V* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 62–69 Figs. 71–73. Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, Vol. 11, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732–332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 48–49 is the most recent archaeological treatment known to me, but see also the very fine set of notes and comment on 2 Kgs 17:24–41 in Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; Garden City: Doubleday, 1988), 209–14.

60. David Ussishkin, "Megiddo," in Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 3:460–69.

61. Sir Leonard Woolley, with a contribution by Maxwell E. L. Mallowan, *Ur Excavations*. Vol. 9, *The Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods* (Publications of the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, to Mesopotamia; Published for the Trustees of the Two Museums, London, 1962), Plate 71.

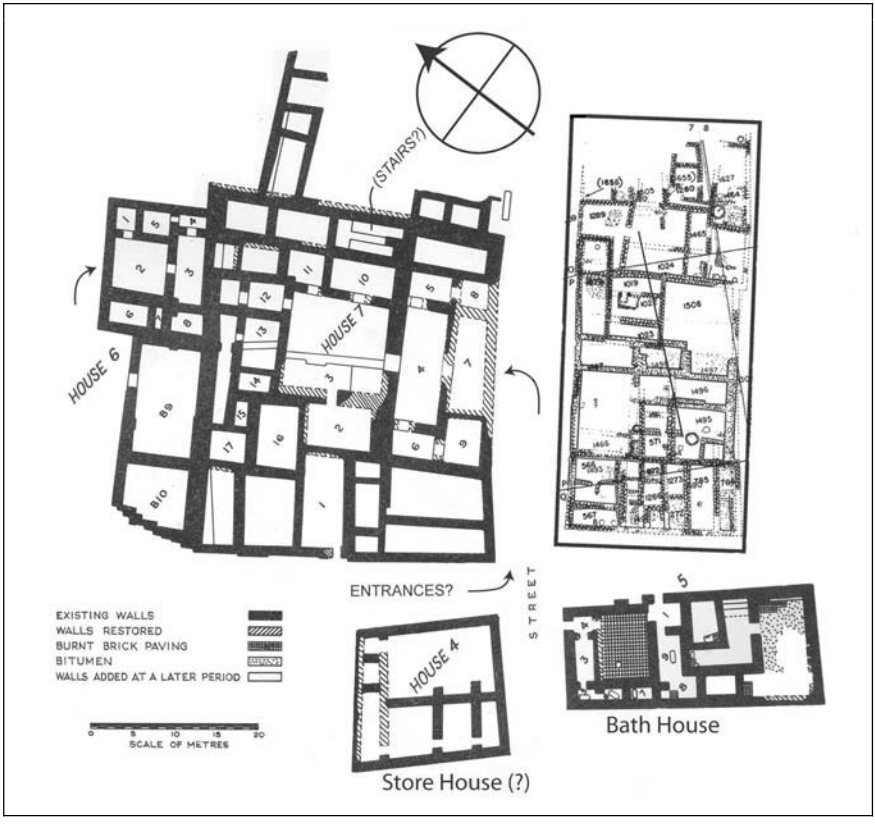

Figure 8. Multi-unit private Neo-Babylonian private houses, Store House(?), and Bath House (after Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, Pl. 71). This relatively small "apartment"-style housing unit, likely four or five different "houses," possibly multi-storied, are grouped around a large central courtyard. Internal lines of communication within any particular house are "private," as are entrances from outside. Obviously not all doors were identified, but the overall pattern is clear and needed external doors are easy to point out (the notional arrows in the figure). The double-house insula from Megiddo, shown to the right, occupies more land than would have been available in urban Ur: this would be typical for an "expansive" settlement. A "Bath House," likewise, seems to have been a "necessary" part of Neo-Babylonian urban life. Cf. Fig. 9.

Figure 9. Superimposed Strata II and III Area A plans with ninth-century Israelite house plans from Tell el-Farʿah(N)/Tirzah at the same scale for comparative purposes (lower left). A bounding box surrounds two typically conjoined Neo-Babylonian houses (upper mid-left), each with a corner courtyard, and a partial bounding box (lower middle) encloses a typical Neo-Babylonian Bath House (cf. Fig. 8 above). Drainage channels can be made out near the fired brick flooring (see above), and in the adjacent street. The (comparatively) large Babylonian houses at Megiddo are expansive, probably mostly spread out over only one story as a straightforward interpretation of Fig. 8, above, would suggest. This hypothesis is supported by the apparently very tight stratification and frequent indications of modifications encountered during excavations (J. S. Holladay after Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 62–63).

This seemed more worthwhile in some insulae than others, so I picked one candidate and developed the comparative plan (Fig. 8) showing that one Megiddo III–II insula at the same scale as Woolley's 1962 plan, which also included his "Bath House." The fired brick floor of that Babylonian Bath House, typical for Mesopotamian civilizations (intentionally

fired mud-brick "just doesn't happen" in Palestine before the Roman Period), kept reminding me of a similar configuration in the Megiddo plans, which had also attracted the in-field attention of the excavators: "…in Stratum II a remarkably well preserved brick floor was unearthed (in square Q 8 north of 1501, see Fig. 73 [the Stratum II plan of Area A])."[62] Arguably, that floor was at least lightly fired mud-brick, which can be yellowish, but I doubt we will ever know. Figure 8 shows both the insula featured in association with Woolley's Ur housing plans and the composite "strata" of the Megiddo Bath House in their original relationship, one to the other. That illustration tells the entire story. The insula contains two Neo-Babylonian houses with corner courtyards. The lower house has carried out fairly extensive modifications in its lower portions, but most of the original plan can be made out. The real icing on the cake comes when we see Fig. 9, which shows this insula in its original relationship to other Megiddo insulae, including the one having this floor: the Megiddo inhabitants' local bath house!

Significance

These are new insights, and it will take time and effort to sort things out, but it is already clear that most of the tell of Megiddo, which was never heavily occupied by a civilian population, was covered by Neo-Assyrian Palaces and the houses of displaced Babylonians, probably largely in service to the palaces: an exiled population more than displacing native Israelites who, by the same token, are "missing," that is, deported. In other words, the notion that deportations were largely fictitious is wrong on all counts. When Tiglath-pileser III made Megiddo the capital of the Assyrian province of *Magiddu*, the archaeology makes it clear that at least some northern *Israelites* were displaced, probably exiled to Assyria (2 Kgs 15:29), and *Babylonians* were brought into exile to serve the needs of the Assyrian palaces at Megiddo. This occurred a significant amount of time before Sargon II's well-documented massive exile of "southern" Israelites "to Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kgs 17:6b; cf. 2 Kgs 17:24 for the "reverse exile"), and Assurbanipal's long-remembered exile of "the men of Erech, and of Babylon, and of Susa…[to] the city of Samaria and the rest of the province Beyond the River" (Ezra 4:9–10; cf. 2 Kgs 17:6).[63] On the other hand, the pottery in use is almost entirely "local," meaning that a reasonable number of Israelite potters are still in residence

62. Lamon and Shipton, *Megiddo I*, 64.

63. I thank Paul-Alain Bealieu for discussing this subject with me.

somewhere, presumably in small outlying settlements, but clearly not on the mound. And, since there are no indications of stalls for traction animals visible, it would appear that the "townsfolk" were being fed by cultivators living off the site, probably "Israelites." And so it went throughout the Assyrian period. With the Babylonian conquest, however, the Babylonians either went home again, or simply disappeared. And, at the conquerors' behest, the Israelite potters and the cultivators disappeared into other lands. Again, speaking of deportations, as far as I can see, and, far more significantly, as far as Ephraim Stern can see,[64] after 597–586 B.C.E., with the exception of "the region of Benjamin…and probably the [largely unexplored] land of Ammon," there is virtually no clearly defined period that may be called "Babylonian…for it was a time from which almost no material finds remain,"[65] …an empty land!

64. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 303–5.
65. Ibid., 350.

Exodus 12 in Light of Ancestral Cult Practices

Naomi Steinberg

The origins of the Passover rituals have prompted a long history of interpretation in the modern era, without consensus. Critical scholarly research on the origins of the first Passover in Exod 12 began with the reconstruction of Wellhausen. Wellhausen pioneered contemporary study of the prehistory of Passover by relating the literary sources of the Documentary Hypothesis to Israelite historiography in order to explain how Passover came to fit into the ancient Israelite cultic calendar as the commemoration of the Israelite exodus. In his *Prolegomena*,[1] Wellhausen argued that two discernible traditions were incorporated to form the canonical Passover: a pastoral slaughter ritual of פסח and an agrarian seasonal celebration of מצות.

Wellhausen's source approach was accepted by Rost, who looked to apply data from theories of comparative religion to penetrate the prehistory of Passover. For Rost, this prehistory could be explained by relating Passover's sacrificial elements to the apotropaic rituals of semi-nomads during their annual spring migration.[2] Although Segal, like Rost, relied on comparative data in his work on Passover, he turned to the ancient Near East to locate the origins of Passover rituals.[3] Most recently, Tamara Prosic reconstructs the origins of Passover in an earlier so-called fertility cult, based on her reading of the Hebrew Bible as a reflection of Hellenistic Judaism.[4]

1. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (trans. A. Menzies and J. S. Black; New York: Meridian, 1957).

2. L. Rost, "Weidewechsel und altisraelischer Festkalender," *ZDPV* 66 (1943): 205–15.

3. J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover: From the Earliest Times to AD 70* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

4. T. Prosic, *The Development and Symbolism of Passover Until 70 CE* (JSOTSup 414; London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

This brief historical overview makes clear that any attempt to explain the original meaning of the practices of Passover has forced interpreters to probe ancient Israelite ritual practices, which are now obscured by the later reinterpretation of Passover as part of Israel's sacred history.[5] The overview also underscores the absence of social-scientific research into the possible origins of Passover, which provides the focus for my study of the origins of the ritual structure of Passover as a feature of ancestral cultic practices. Thus, my aim in this study is to build on past research into the origins of Passover, but to broaden the methodological approaches to the text of the early Passover in Exod 12 by applying social-scientific ideas to our understanding of both the Priestly text (12:1–20) and the pre-Priestly tradition (12:21–27) on Passover.[6] In particular, I will employ insights from the social sciences to explain the differing levels of familial social relations in the ritual practices in the pre-Priestly and Priestly traditions. In the pre-Priestly tradition of Exod 12:21–23, Moses emphasizes the משפחה as the social unit for carrying out the Passover sacrifice when he addresses the elders; this is as compared to the Priestly tradition of Exod 12:3–4, 46, where God addresses Moses and Aaron in introducing the organizational unit of the בית אבת, לבית, and ביתו.

My interpretation of the origins of the Passover rituals employs what in social scientific literature are referred to as middle-range theories of cultural and social formation. The concept of middle-range theory goes back to the writings of sociologist Robert Merton, who took the following position:

> Middle-range theory is principally used…to guide empirical inquiry. It is intermediate to general theories of social systems which are too remote from particular classes of social behavior, organization and change to account for what is observed and to those detailed orderly descriptions of

5. Scholars have also employed linguistic analysis to argue that the Hebrew פסח does not mean "to pass over" but instead refers to "limping" or "halting," although matters of the prehistory of the Passover rituals are less clear from this methodological perspective; see the discussion in W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 399, 401, 436.

6. J. Van Seters ("The Place of the Jahwist in the History of Passover and Massot," *ZAW* 95 [1983]: 167–82 [173–75]) argues that 12:1–27 is all from the P source. T. B. Dozeman attributes Exod 21–23 to the pre-Deuteronomistic tradition and argues that 12:24–27a are Deuteronomistic; see *God at War: Power in the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 48–51. My point of departure for the literary and tradition-historical relationship of these passages relies on the two-tradition analysis in his *Exodus: A Commentary* (trans. J. S. Bowden; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962).

> particulars that are not organized at all. Middle-range theory involves abstractions, of course, but they are close enough to observed data to be incorporated in positions that permit empirical testing.[7]

Middle-range theory, as applied to the literature on family religion in the Hebrew Bible, allows the modern interpreter to interpret shifts in ancient Israelite family structure and organization in the pre-Priestly text (vv. 21–27, משפחה) to the Priestly text (vv. 1–20, בית אבת, לבית) in light of analogical ethnographic data from diverse settings on patrilineally organized social structure. Applying analogues from cross-cultural data, I will argue that as ancient Israel developed from a system of local socio-political organization grounded in family religion in the משפחה in its earliest social structure to a hierarchically organized, centralized, state-level government with a state religion, with its basic unit of organization in the בית אבת, it shared structural shifts in family organization seen in the model predicted by middle-range theory. In arguing for generalized patterns of social organization development across diverse cultures, I do not wish to universalize about human behavior or to undermine cultural differences over time and place. The model used must account for both similarities and differences between the analogical model and Exod 12.

My theory on the origins of Passover as related to the family religion of ancestral cult practices is based on analogues from the ancient Near East—which is both spatially and temporally related[8]—and ethnographic cross-cultural data, in combination with textual analysis of Exod 12. Thus, Passover can be seen to be as much an off-shoot from ideas of ancestor worship as a reflection of a pastoral sacrifice ritual. I do not contend that drawing on anthropological literature about family and social life in order to reinterpret a specific text can resolve all the issues about the prehistory of Passover. Analysis of the limits of such an approach—that is, what does not get explained through ancestor cult practices—will at the conclusion of this study allow for discussion of methodology and investigation of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the particular perspective of the present study is aimed not only to provide insights into Passover but to further methodological discussion of Hebrew Bible analysis in general.

It is impossible within the scope of this essay to provide a comprehensive review of ancestral cult practices in anthropological research. However, before proceeding further it is important to stress that

7. R. K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (3d ed.; New York: Free Press, 1968), 38.

8. See A. B. Stahl, "Concepts of Time and Approaches to Analogical Reasoning in Historical Perspective," *American Antiquity* 58 (1993): 235–60.

> [a]ncestor cults are not simply "worship" of the dead. They are ways of organizing relations among the living. Ultimately the dead are only important as they integrate and differentiate relations among their living descendants… Like other articles of human manufacture, ancestors require continual maintenance, and sacrificing is the most effective means of maintaining them.[9]

The above quotation makes clear that kinship is a social construction; it arranges agnates, individuals organized through the male line of descent. This construction may be either a social fiction or a biological fact. According to social scientists, sacrifice is one means by which agnatic relations are created and maintained and one descent group is differentiated from the next. Moreover, "in most cases, ancestor worship is not the only religious practice of a society; rather, it exists as part of a more comprehensive religious system."[10]

Thus, cross-culturally, ancestral worship is a term used to refer to the rituals and beliefs concerning deceased kinsmen. Since ancestor worship underscores notions of continuity and preserving social order in society, sacrificial offerings should be understood not as gifts to the ancestors but rather as the fulfillment of the obligations of the living to the dead. Those who predeceased the living are the very individuals who provided the living with the earthly goods necessary for survival of the kinship group; they are entitled to share in the successes of the living.

Ancestral Cult Practices in the Ancient Near East and in Israel

In his 1996 monograph, van der Toorn argues that family religion in Old Babylonian times (c. 2000–1600 B.C.E.) and in Ugarit was based on a cult of the ancestors. Using this ancient Near Eastern data as the context for interpreting the biblical text, he develops his thesis that there is evidence of a cult of the ancestors in early Israel. Of these fossilized remains in the Hebrew Bible, van der Toorn writes, "The Israelite cult of the dead is in many ways a hidden heritage—hidden because deleted from, or at least disguised and obfuscated in, the written records."[11] Van der Toorn, relying on Stager,[12] argues that in the Early Iron Age the

9. N. Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 46.

10. H. Hardacre, "Ancestor Worship," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade; 16 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1987), 1:263–68 (263).

11. K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 225.

12. L. E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1–35.

משפחה was the basic family unit in the practice of a cult of the dead. Van der Toorn argues that people lived in nuclear families but that these nuclear families clustered together around a common area and that they were typically of the same kinship unit. Thus, regarding spatial organization, one's neighbors geographically were also typically one's kinsmen based on both marriage and genealogy. The archaeological and textual data, particularly from Babylonia and Ugarit, would lead us to believe that the משפחה had a small sanctuary, a במה, which was the focus of ancestor rituals and local protective gods. This point is confirmed in the writings of E. Bloch-Smith.[13]

Van der Toorn turns to 1 Sam 20 as the locus for establishing ancestor rituals in early Israel, emphasizing that the group of kinsmen involved in the ritual is on the level of the משפחה. To make his case, he focuses specifically on 1 Sam 20:6. There, David, searching for an excuse not to appear at the feast to be given by Saul the next day at the time of the new moon, says to Jonathan, "If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city; for there is a yearly sacrificial meal there for all the entire extended kinship group'" (my translation; זבח הימים שם לכל־המשפחה). David's words indicate that as a member of the kinship group he was obligated to attend this periodic family sacrifice that requires him to travel to his hometown of Bethlehem from somewhere outside Naioth in Ramah. Presumably this was a common occurrence that happened at different times for different families or it would have been questioned by Saul.[14]

My aim now is to extend van der Toorn's search for evidence of a cult of the ancestor to the kinship level of לכל־המשפחה in the Hebrew Bible. I now turn to Exod 12 to find out more about the belief and care of the ancestors in the text of the first Passover.

Exodus 12

When compared with descriptions of other sacrifices[15] in the Bible, the Passover ritual of Exod 12 is recognized to include anomalous practices. We are left to wonder: Why is the lamb selected on the tenth of the month, but not sacrificed until the evening of the fourteenth (vv. 3, 6)? Why is it roasted (v. 9) rather than boiled, as it is in Deut 16:7? Why

13. E. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practice and Belief about the Dead* (JSOTSup 123; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 132; idem, "The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains," *JBL* 111 (1992): 213–24.

14. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 212–18.

15. E.g. Deut 16:1–8; Lev 1; Num 19.

must the entire animal be consumed by the morning and any remaining parts burnt at that time (vv. 3–4, 10)? Why is the ritual carried out in a domestic setting instead of at an altar (v. 7)? Why should the lamb be eaten with the condiments of unleavened bread and bitter herbs (v. 8)? Why must the blood of the animal be spread on the doorposts of the house rather than drained from its body (v. 7)? And finally, why are the celebrants to be dressed in a manner resembling shepherds on the move—staff in hand, wearing sandals (v. 11)—when other biblical rituals do not specify particular garments to be worn? How do we explain the occurrence of these anomalous aspects in the Exodus Passover?

Possibly the most remarkable example of Passover's distinctive character in Exod 12 is that it contains two separate anomalous apotropaic blood rites which not only differ from each other but contrast with standard biblical blood manipulation. The first episode, vv. 1–20, is traditionally attributed to P, and the second episode, vv. 21–27, is assigned to a pre-Priestly tradition, although critical commentators differ on the precise source-critical label for this stratum. Most commentators agree that vv. 21–23 are attributed to a source earlier than vv. 24–27a, with v. 27b seen as a later addition.[16] In both traditions animal slaughter and blood manipulation are performed by ordinary humans, rather than by trained cultic personnel. This is in contrast to Deut 16 where there is no blood manipulation. Exodus 12:6–7 states that the people (identified by third person plural verbs) slaughter and manipulate animal blood, while Exod 12:21–23 commands the elders to kill the Passover sacrifice. When Exod 12 is read synchronically, vv. 21–27 are presented as a speech by Moses to the elders providing instructions for the Passover that reiterate instructions provided by God to Moses and Aaron in vv. 1–20. However, a close reading of the vv. 21–27 reveals that Moses' repetitive speech both shortens and changes the details of the instructions coming from Yahweh. Moreover, vv. 21–23 should be separated from vv. 24–27, which teach about how the later memory of these events should be explained inasmuch as they contradict the details of the Exodus tradition. Verse 23 attributes the upcoming slaying to a "destroyer," whereas the Exodus story understands Yahweh as the agent of the final plague of death (Exod 11:4). Further, the final plague is directed only against the first-born (Exod 11:4–5). Exodus 11 does not specify how Yahweh will be able to distinguish the first-born of Egypt from the first-born of Israel. Only by harmonizing the earlier Exod 12:21–23 with the later 12:1–20 can one harmonize the blood in vv. 21–23 with the Exodus plague story.

16. For a history of scholarship on these source assignments, see Dozeman, *God at War*, 48–50.

Moreover, in vv. 21–23 the blood is never specifically said to protect only the first-born; instead, the blood is a sign of an entire family. Thus, vv. 21–23 must be separated out from the surrounding texts in order to interpret the origins of Passover.

Four important features characterize Exod 12:21–23, the earliest of the traditions. First, Moses is the central figure in the text who issues the instructions on how to carry out the Passover ritual (v. 21); second, instructions for the Passover are directed to the elders of Israel (v. 21); third, religious celebration occurs on the social level of the משפחה (v. 21); and fourth, no mention is made of a meal to be eaten nor is there provision for the consumption of unleavened bread. Rather, the text speaks of the slaughter (זבח) of a lamb and the ritual use of its blood. Furthermore, this text does not specify the age of the animal sacrificed, whereas that information is provided in 12:5. In addition, based on the authority of Moses, instructions are given for practicing this ritual in the Promised Land and for explaining its significance to future generations.

I begin my analysis of Exod 12 in its specific context by focusing on the distinctive features of the contrasting accounts of blood manipulations in light of theories of political organization and family structure in biblical Israel. In an earlier study on the Deuteronomic law code and the politics of state centralization, I argued that the connection between elders and the משפחה, the extended kinship group, rather than elders and the בית אב, a term that can refer to various social groupings, including the nuclear family as a residential grouping, characterizes the sociopolitical organization in ancient Israel before the rise of centralized government.[17] In that work, based on middle-range sociological theory grounded in diverse ethnographic data, I argued that Deut 19:1–25:19 serves the interests of a centralized political authority and works to break down extended kinship ties reflecting earlier local political structures.[18] A shift of loyalty towards the Temple and the state in place of the extended family lessens the possibilities for rebellion against the state and ensures

17. N. Steinberg, "The Deuteronomic Law Code and the Politics of State Centralization," in *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis* (ed. D. Jobling et al.; Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim, 1991), 161–70. For more on how Deuteronomy works to break down kinship organization, see J. Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomy and the Politics of Post-Mortem Existence," *VT* 45 (1995): 1–16.

18. For examples of middle-range theories in archaeology that illustrate what sociologists label the "hierarchy theory," referred to here, see H. T. Wright and G. A. Johnson, "Population Exchange and Early State Formation in Southwestern Iran," *American Anthropologist* 77 (1975): 267–89; C. S. Peebles and S. M. Kus, "Some Archaeological Correlates of Ranked Societies," *American Antiquity* 42 (1977): 421–48.

that more resources are available for the state and the Temple. References to the משפחה as the primary unit of family life reflect the sociopolitical organization of ancient Israel before government centralization. Cross-cultural data on early state formation predict that a shift towards a hierarchically based system of leadership will aim to subvert local political organization in the interest of strengthening the centralized authority.[19]

In light of these theories, it makes sense to interpret Exod 12:21–23, where Passover is a ritual celebrated by the משפחה, as an earlier sacrificial celebration than the tradition of 12:1–20. Van der Toorn, in his monograph, makes the point that religious activity before the monarchy took place on the family level of the משפחה and adds that religious celebration organized around units relating to the individual household, the בית אב, are late.[20] Gilders, based on traditional literary-critical source analysis, reaches similar conclusions.[21] As noted earlier, Exod 12:1–20 occurs on the level of the בית אב.

Thus, I am arguing for an early core of ritual tradition taking place on the level of the clan, the משפחה, that involved the sacrifice and consumption of a lamb, or perhaps another animal, among the משפחה as a means to constitute the kinship unit. The elders, according to Gilder's analysis, are the authorities on this level of family organization. Blood manipulation by non-cultic personnel is precisely what cross-cultural data on ancestor rituals leads us to expect. Although biblical sacrifice requires a priest (Deut 16:1–8), social scientists note that ancestor rituals are carried out by the kin group and rarely rely on an established priesthood.[22]

We further distinguish the two accounts of the first Passover by noting that the pre-Priestly text in vv. 21–23 provides instructions for a non-alimentary sacrifice while the later Priestly text in vv. 1–20 elaborates on an alimentary sacrifice. The evidence accumulates for a non-alimentary sacrifice on the social level of the משפחה and an alimentary sacrifice on the level of the nuclear family. It is difficult to imagine one lamb feeding an entire משפחה but not difficult at all to consider that one lamb would be enough for a nuclear family. Exodus 12:1–20 indicates concern that the nuclear family will be too small to eat the lamb and makes provisions

19. See, e.g., Y. A. Cohen, "Ends and Means in Political Control: State Organization and the Punishment of Adultery, Incest and the Violation of Celibacy," *American Anthropologist* 71 (1969): 658–87.

20. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 194–205.

21. W. K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 187.

22. Hardacre, "Ancestor Worship," 263.

in v. 4 for neighboring families, people living in close proximity to each other—who one would expect would be kin anyway—to share in the lamb.

Although the pre-Priestly text specifies that the Passover should be observed when Israel enters the Promised Land, vv. 21–23 contain no information on when the celebration should occur or how often it should take place. The result is that the date of the pre-Priestly Passover is variable, which is what van der Toorn's study reveals for the annual clan celebration of ancestor cult rituals. In contrast, in the P text the Passover is locked into the cultic calendar in the first month of the year (v. 2). However, as it stands, his reference is ambiguous: if the text is pre-exilic the first month is in Spring, but according to the older agricultural calendar, the first month is in the Fall.

Based on his investigation of 1 Sam 20, van der Toorn concludes that the yearly sacrifice took place on different dates for each משפחה. Exodus 12 leads us to believe that by the time vv. 1–20 were edited into their present context, what formerly occurred at the time of lunar eclipse—though varying between clans—later became celebrated on the same date as the family celebration (בית אבת, לבית, ביתו, vv. 3–4, 46) was aligned with a national centralized pilgrimage festival (Deut 16).

Van der Toorn argues that the date of the celebration of the ancestor cult was variable according to the חדש. He argues that neither original meaning of חדש—either as new moon or the day of the appearance of the lunar crescent, which by extension comes to mean the first day of the month—makes sense in 1 Sam 20 because "according to v. 5 David intended to hide himself during the *ḥōdeš*, due to begin the next day, 'till the third evening.'"[23] However, neither the new moon nor the first day of the month lasts for three days; thus van der Toorn understands the term חדש in this context to be the equivalent of the Babylonian interlunium and "at the end of the month, between the time of the moon's disappearance and the observation of the new moon."[24] The point is that the Israelite חדש lasted for several days, like the Babylonian interlunium, and could involve activities over several days, which would be consistent with an earlier version of the Passover celebration. There is, however, a problem: the interlunium is at the beginning of the month when the moon is absent, whereas the Passover sacrifice occurs in the middle of the month when the moon is full. If we keep in mind that the final redactors aimed to separate the Passover sacrifice ritual as much as possible from

23. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 212.
24. Ibid., 218.

the earlier ancestor worship, we can easily surmise that the middle of the month would have been the obvious choice for the time of the sacrifice.[25]

As ancient Israel developed, individuals came to live further away from ancestral villages and time was needed for family members to travel home to be present for the celebration of the sacrificial meal with the ancestors.[26] This need to travel to one's משפחה may explain the delay between the time at which the lamb is chosen on the tenth day of the month and the actual sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the month. Thus, as ancient Israel became centralized and the clan was broken down in the interest of emphasizing the nuclear family, perhaps for political and economic reasons, the understanding of the pre-history of Passover was modified in accordance with this shift in family organization, even as the ritual components of the tradition were constrained by the ritual precedent. Moreover, as the history of ancestral cult practices was erased as family religion gave rise to state religion, a means had to be found to identify earlier practices with later explanations of these rituals.

In vv. 1–20, the Priestly text, reference to the level of family social organization is in terms of the בית אבת, לבית, and ביתו, rather than the משפחה. In fact, the most complete details for food, family, and clothing requirements in the Passover celebration appear in the P text, rather than in the earlier pre-Priestly text. Moreover, as noted at the outset of this study, the authoritative voice in the P tradition is God, who addresses himself to Moses and Aaron, whereas the authoritative voice in the pre-Priestly text is Moses, who gives his message to the elders of Israel. I suggest that both traditions preserve memory of this earlier level of ancestral cult practices and that the distinctive levels of family life reflected in each represent adaptation of ancestral cult practices to changing circumstances in the larger socio-political structure.

25. J. A. Wagennaar argues that the Priestly calendar has been influenced by the Babylonian calendar in his recent study *Origin and Transformation of the Ancient Israelite Festival Calendar* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift fur Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte 6; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005). Hence, the New Year of Exod 12:2 closely connects to the Babylonian New Year. A fixed date for the New Year in P contrasts with the pre-Priestly identification of festivals according to agricultural conditions. This conclusion accords with the evidence of Exod 12:21–27 which does not specify when the non-alimentary sacrifice is to take place.

26. On the location of the family burial tomb near the family's land, see Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family," 23; Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 115, 148; and J. D. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 346–47.

In the pre-Priestly text, the blood of the Passover lamb is explained in v. 23 as a marker of houses that Yahweh will protect from the משחית. However, whether or not the משחית is an aspect of Yahweh or a destroyer separate from Yahweh continues to puzzle biblical interpreters. Most scholars agree that the blood manipulation serves apotropaic functions in relation to this destroyer. However, as the recent work of Gilders establishes, the meaning of blood manipulation is far from clear in Exod 12:21–23.[27]

Some have interpreted vv. 21–23 in the light of another text from Exodus, the enigmatic story of the so-called blood bridegroom in 4:24–26. Although the story is cryptic, the reader is able to appreciate that (someone's) blood is used to thwart destructive forces of Yahweh. Propp understands the blood in the story to be blood of circumcision and relates Exod 4:24–26 to Passover. He understands the former to reflect a stage in the history of Israelite tradition when circumcision symbolized the blood of the Passover lamb that saved the first-born of Israel.[28]

According to this interpretation, the blood of the lamb is analogous to the blood of circumcision owed to Yahweh. Circumcision signals membership in the covenant community (Gen 17:9–14); it establishes kinship and descent. Eilberg-Schwartz correlates the blood of circumcision in ancient Israel with ethnographic data on marking social structure.[29]

Further, van der Toorn argues that the rituals of ancestor practices establish a communion between the living and the dead, which was the essence of family religion. He suggests the possibility that in Ps 16 there is an allusion "to acts of self-mutilation to make one's blood drip upon the grave," and that the references to libations with the dead (although done with wine) may be compared to blood rituals.[30]

However, the Bible does not directly indicate the meaning of the use of blood; thus, it is possible to consider the symbolism of the Passover blood to be multivalent. In Lev 19:28; 21:5, and Deut 14:1 prohibitions against self-mutilation for the dead are stated; such a practice is presupposed in Jer 16:6. The connection of human blood as an aspect of mourning the dead may be commemorated in the manipulation of animal blood in ancestral cult practices, which remember these dead. It is possible to understand the blood rituals of the Passover in both the pre-Priestly and the Priestly tradition as fossilized traits of this earlier ancestral cult.

27. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible*, 43–47.

28. W. H. Propp, "That Bloody Bridegroom," *VT* 23 (1993): 495–518 (515).

29. H. Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 162–64; see the full discussion on pp. 141–76.

30. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 210.

The meaning of the ancestor rituals shifted and the necessity of destroying food that earlier would have been given to the ancestors resulted in both the expansion of the group eating the sacrifice (12:3) and the inclusion of non-kinship members as long as they were circumcised (Exod 12:43–49). On the off-chance that there might still be food left over, the requirement to burn any leftovers was added in the interest of leaving nothing for other ritual purposes. To emphasize this, Moses' instructions in 12:22 includes the detail, "None of you shall go outside of his house until morning"—thus precluding any visits to the local במה to bring food to the ancestors in order to appease the Destroyer (12:23) and to protect the משפחה.

Thus, I suggest that the community-based family religion preserved in the pre-Priestly tradition of Exod 12:21–23 has its locus of origin in rituals of a cult of the ancestors. These anomalous rituals of blood manipulation construct the kinship unit united in family religion in early Israel. The later addition of vv. 24–27 obscures the tensions between vv. 21–23 and the larger Exodus story and the fossilized remains of ancestor rituals become reinterpreted in light of the canonical story of the plagues. In other words, vv. 24–27 reinterprets the memory of family religion ritual into the national religion of the canonical text.

We should also note the attention to the garments specified in Exod 12:11. That the individuals in attendance at the meal are dressed in shepherd's garb—wearing sandals and carrying a staff in hand—suggests a wandering setting for the Passover sacrifice. Yet the text suggests that the sandals and staff are intentionally brought out for this sacrificial event, rather than being items that the participants would routinely wear in their daily activities. In fact, the clothing worn on this occasion, like the food eaten, indicates that the ritual connects both the living and dead of the lineage. It may be that the seeming nomadic dress has historic-symbolic significance that points back to an "ancestral time" of nomadic life, regardless of whether such a period actually exists. The clothing serves then symbolically to tie the living with the dead. In addition, alternatively, the unique clothing prescribed in Exod 12:1–20 may be linked to the clothing of mourning, that is, tearing one's garments—as, for example, in Josh 7:6 and Job 1:20—now transformed into the clothing worn when the living connect with the dead.[31] In the non-mourning setting of the ancestral rituals, the clothing of mourning is remembered.

31. On this topic, and other ritual aspects of mourning in ancient Israel, see S. M. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning, Ritual and Social Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

In the Priestly unit, Exod 12:1–20, a domestic sacrificial meal on the level of the בית אב is prescribed similar to the food and drink rituals proscribed in Ps 16.[32] However, Exod 12:4 constructs a unit of those who eat together in one house, regardless of blood ties. This construction enlarges the number of individuals in the בית אב to a unit large enough to consume an entire lamb, avoids leaving any meat for the ancestors, and transcends the narrow ancestor group. The unit's construction is affirmed by the blood that concretely delineates the limits of the house when the blood is spread on its door frame (12:7). What distinguishes those (males) inside the house is the requirement of circumcision now expanded to include not only those of the משפחה but outsiders to the community who became circumcised. Through circumcision they become part of the kinship unit, a social creation that organizes social relations. As Nancy Jay argued, "participation in alimentary sacrifice both signifies and causes membership in the group with rights to participate."[33]

The laws of the Passover sacrifice continuing in Exod 12:43–49, where God is talking to Moses and Aaron the second time about the Passover sacrifice, seem strangely separated from this earlier section. Indeed, the preceding verses, Exod 12:40–42, seem to be a concluding section. Similar to the first passage, the second in 12:43–49 adds restrictions on the use of the sacrifice and specifies in Exod 12:46, "It shall be eaten in one house (בבית אחד); you shall not take any of the animal outside the house," paralleling Exod 12:22, "None of you shall go outside his house until morning." As I already mentioned, this is consistent with the hypothesis that the author is trying to keep the sacrifice from being offered elsewhere, be it at the local clan shrine, to other gods, ancestors, and so on. However, as will be discussed below, in Deut 16 the ritual is completely turned around. The sacrifice is at the place where "God will choose to establish his name" and the sacrifice is not eaten at home—"and in the morning you may start back on your journey home."

Exodus 12:43–49 says the circle of individuals allowed to consume the Passover meal includes only circumcised males. At first thought one might argue that restricting the eating of the sacrifice to circumcised males means the Israelite lineage through Terah. But, there is additional detail in the second Passover commandment not present in the first. The Priestly author emphasizes that ancestry is not necessarily a part of this ritual by letting "strangers" partake of the sacrifice if they are circumcised. The second commandment closes with what may be the first declaration of equality before the law "There shall be one law for the

32. On Ps 16, see van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 210.
33. Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever*, 6–7.

native and the stranger that sojourns among you" (Exod 12:49). Here again, the Priestly author seems to be moving away from an earlier family-based sacrifice to a more universal national sacrifice including "strangers" that, as we know, becomes a temple sacrifice in Deuteronomy rather than a home sacrifice.

I suggest that the author here expands the group of individuals allowed to consume the Passover meal in order to prevent some other, unstated use of the sacrifice outside the house, in addition to restricting the eating of the sacrifice to the circumcised. The restriction to the house and the circumcised again hint at an earlier ancestor ritual distinct from the later historicization of remembering the exodus. The inclusion of neighbors in 12:4 and then later non-family members in 12:43–49 results from a need to consume the food that otherwise might be left over after everyone has eaten and to create a sharp distinction between the described practice and earlier rituals which were still prevalent. Perhaps, also, the Priestly writer wanted to insure that leftover meat is not eaten by any uncircumcised males (cf. 12:43–44), unclean individuals, or left for ancestors.

Deuteronomy 16:1–8

In contrast to Exod 12, in Deut 16:1–8, פסח and מצות are presented as a combined festival on a precise date (16:1) and the festival is now the occasion for a sacrifice to Yahweh, rather than a meal consumed by the family. The animal is offered as a sacrifice "at the place where Yahweh your God will choose to make his name dwell in it" (v. 6), and the animal is boiled—rather than roasted (12:8). No mention is made in Deut 16:1–8 of blood manipulation of any kind. Thus, it is evident that in Deut 16:1–8, unlike in Exod 12, Passover is not an aspect of family religion celebrated on the local level.

Although a firm conclusion regarding the dating of the three Passover texts, Exod 12:1–20; 12:21–27, and Deut 16:1–8, is not possible within the scope of this study, it is interesting to follow the proposals on the relationship of these traditions. Beginning with Wellhausen, scholars have argued that the Passover sacrifice was originally a domestic ritual, which was then centralized in Jerusalem by the Deuteronomic reform, only to be returned to the family setting after the Exile and the loss of the Temple.[34] By contrast, Haran has suggested a shift in the direction of the development of Passover and maintained that locating the Passover sacrifice in family religion in the pre-monarchical period is an anachronistic

34. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 83–120.

retrojection of a temple-based ritual.[35] Recently, Wagenaar reconstructs Deut 16:1–8 as the oldest festival calendar in the Hebrew Bible.[36] Van Seters has argued the same in light of the absence of Passover from Exod 23:14–19.[37] By contrast, despite their different views on the rationale for the unique calendric legislation in Deut 16:1–8, Levinson and McConville argue that it is the latest of the calendric observances.[38] The history of scholarship on the relation between the components of Israel's festival calendar is long and complicated and cannot be settled here. However, I accept the position that Deut 16:1–8 reworks an earlier local family-based sacrificial ritual, first found in Exod 12:21–27. Deuteronomy 16:1–8 thereby attempts to subvert local household authority in favor of the centralized authority of the monarch and of Yahweh, and converts it into a national pilgrimage event that merges פסח and מצות and understands them to commemorate the exodus from Egypt. Deuteronomy 16:1–8 ignores distinctions of levels of family organization.[39]

As argued by Cooper and Goldstein[40] and later by van der Toorn,[41] Passover was developed by Jeroboam into a "charter myth" intended to be a national celebration as a northern expression of the split of the United Kingdom; Israel's liberation from Egypt became paradigmatic of the northern tribes' escape from the oppression of the southern monarchy. With this shift in meaning, rituals of an earlier ancestor cult were reinterpreted and an earlier level of family religion became obscured.

35. M. Haran, *Temple and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 317–45.

36. Wagenaar, *Origin and Transformation of the Ancient Israelite Festival Calendar*, 161.

37. Van Seters, "The Place of the Jahwist in the History of Passover and Massôṯ," 167–82; idem, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus–Numbers* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 113–27.

38. The chronological sequence of the exchange runs as follows: J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (JSOTSup 33; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984); B. M. Levinson, "McConville's *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*," *JQR* 80 (1990): 396–404; idem, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65–66; McConville, "Deuteronomy's Unification of Passover and *Massôṯ*: A Response to Bernard M. Levinson," *JBL* (2000): 47–58.

39. The reference to "tents" in v. 7 does not identify a level of social organization. For an interpretation of this term, see the two explanations offered by R. D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 208–9.

40. A. Cooper and B. F. Goldstein, "Exodus and *Massôṯ* in History and Tradition," *Maarav* 8 (1992): 15–37.

41. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 287–315.

Summary and Conclusions

Exodus 12

In the final redaction of Exod 12, the Priestly account of the instructions initiated by Yahweh and addressed to Moses and Aaron in v. 1 supersedes the pre-Priestly tradition of v. 21 where authority is in the mouth of Moses and instructions are given to the elders of Israel. The P text overshadows the earlier tradition in light of the authority of Yahweh and the supervision of Moses and Aaron. Consequently, the distinctive features of the pre-Priestly text are read synchronically as a repetition of the instructions in vv. 1–20.

By plumbing the discrepancy between distinct social levels of sacrifice in the pre-Priestly (משפחה) and Priestly (בית אב) texts, this study has provided insight into the remnants of earlier ancestral cultic practice of the משפחה preserved in vv. 21–27. Overall, this analysis tends to corroborate and expand the argument of those, such as van der Toorn, for evidence of ancestral cult practices in early Israel that are now fossilized in the canonical texts of ancient Israelite ritual practice. The anomalous blood manipulation in vv. 21–23 constructs the family unit connecting the living and the dead in this ritual.

Analogical Analysis

My purpose in this study is programmatic. In their attempts to understand the past, biblical commentators have turned to analogues both from the ancient Near East and from diverse patrilineally organized societies to make the argument for remnants of ancestral cult practices in the Hebrew Bible. Since analogical reasoning is central to the argument of this essay, I close with some final thoughts on analogical reasoning, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of comparative analysis and consider briefly principles for determining the relevance of an analogue.

Although specific details of ritual practice in Exod 12 are still open to debate, the goal of understanding the past based on analogy can be shown both to expose meaning and to hinder identifying significant differences between societies. For example, van der Toorn argues that in Old Babylonian society, normal, everyday food, such as, flour and water, was used in connection with the veneration of the dead.[42] Deuteronomy 26:14 may reflect the same practice. However, cross-cultural data indicate that special food is often part of ancestral cult practices, serving as a means to signal the distinctive character of this ritual. The latter may well account for the anomalous food and clothing in Exod 12:1–20, and

42. Ibid., 49.

blood manipulation in vv. 1–20 and 21–27, even though the ancient Near Eastern material does not specifically identify such practices.

Thus, analogical inquiry need not only be undertaken based on historical and geographical continuity. Analogical ethnographic data are relevant as determined by sources with comparable models of societal organization, that is, in this case, patrilineal endogamy and patterns of social change from local kinship relationships to centralized authority. The value of investigating the polyvalence of meaning revealed through analogical reasoning based on cross-cultural data from societies comparable to ancient Israel has been shown in this study of the early traditions behind Exod 12.

I maintain that cross-cultural analogues are no less speculative than earlier comparisons, such as those of Rost, who turns to the lifestyle of semi-nomads for his theory of the pre-history of Passover. Moreover, one advantage of the anthropological analysis offered here is that it provides a coherent explanation of the diverse aspects of the pre-history of Passover, namely, the food, family, and clothing, described above—something that other methodological perspectives have failed to do. In addition, this interpretation allows the distinctive characteristics of the Passover rituals to emerge rather than subordinating them to presumed ancient Near Eastern analogues. Without wanting to make claims for the history of the Passover which the evidence cannot support, I am arguing that a new interpretation of the origins of these rituals with a more anthropologically oriented methodology offers insights into aspects of these complex rituals that have gone unexplained in past works. Cross-cultural data on ancestral rituals have relevance for illuminating biblical tradition—not because they "prove" the meaning and symbolism of this particular ancient Israelite ritual, but because familiar texts can take on new meaning when analyzed from alternative methodological perspectives. I suggest that consideration of the social meaning of rituals reveals that the death of an ancestor is not only a physiological phenomenon, but a social one as well. It is not simply that death is not the end of an individual's membership in the family, but that social organization of the family unit is reconfigured to accommodate a death. By means of ancestral cult rituals the kinship group is maintained despite changes to it. Exodus 12:21–23 provides yet another example of the fossilized remains of ancestral cult practices grounded in early Israel family religion.

Death, Kinship, and Community: Afterlife and the חסד Ideal in Israel

Stephen L. Cook

Taking a stand against Sheol's dissevering power, biblical Israel's beliefs about afterlife and its practices surrounding the dead helped buttress a conviction that death's power can somehow be overcome. Death can be resisted, and ultimately vanquished, the Hebrew Scriptures suggest, through faith in the bonds and ties of lineage and land-vested community. These family bonds and ties to ancestral territory are guaranteed permanent by the Sinai covenant. They are so permanent, in fact, as to transcend Sheol's power and to point to Sheol's ultimate defeat.

Relying chiefly on ethnographic evidence from traditional African societies, I have constructed a provisional social-scientific model for illuminating the problem of death and the Hereafter in biblical Israel. Because of its parallel norms and practices relating to dead ancestors, African society and religion is particularly relevant to elucidating the biblical view of afterlife. As always in such an approach, biblical exegesis must be allowed either to confirm or to disconfirm a comparative model's applicability.[1]

A comparative approach is particularly helpful in interpreting death and afterlife in Israel, because the Hebrew Bible leaves a lot unsaid about this subject. Even what is discussed is often expressed euphemistically. The subject of the dead, I am afraid, probably belongs in the same scriptural category as toileting and sexual technique. These topics either go without saying or are referenced only obliquely through the use of idioms and allusions.

The biblical reticence to talk about the spirits has misled many biblical scholars, who consistently misunderstand the Israelite concept of the soul

1. For discussion, see, e.g., Stephen L. Cook and Ronald A. Simkins, "Introduction: Case Studies from the Second Wave of Research in the Social World of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Social World of the Hebrew Bible: Twenty-Five Years of the Social Sciences in the Academy* (ed. R. A. Simkins and S. L. Cook; Semeia 87; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999): 1–14 (5–7).

(נפש) as mere breath, the mere presence of psychosomatic life within a body, or, at best, a sort of impersonal life-force. These commonplace descriptions are misguided. The shade of Samuel, for example, appears before the medium at Endor as a fully personal yet immaterial being, separable from his corporeal body (1 Sam 28). This fits a view of souls found across the biblical evidence, a view virtually incontestable at such places as 1 Kgs 17:21–22; Isa 8:19; 14:9–10; Ezek 32:21; and Gen 35:18. It is even clearer in the Hebrew Bible's Near Eastern milieu. Compare these passages to the language about King Panammua's soul in the eighth-century Aramaic Panammua Inscription (*KAI* 214; also cf., from Ugarit, *KTU* 1.108.1–3).[2]

The soul (נפש) is separable from the body in biblical faith, as in ancient Near Eastern culture in general, but the eventuality is feared and lamented. The anarchic waters of death represent pure chaos to the Israelite, shear rebellion against God (Ps 18:4–6). Death, in the ancient world, was an unclean, irrational, and intruding enemy of life, purity, and holiness (see, e.g., Num 5:2; 6:6; 19:11; 2 Sam 22:5–6; Ezek 43:7–9).

Hélene Nutkowicz has recently suggested that the Hebrew people believed in *a-mortality*.[3] This appears to be a helpful rubric, since it conveys that the soul does survive death but not in any positive or beatific condition, as might be implied by the term *immortality*. A disembodied spiritual life in an ethereal heaven is certainly not God's ultimate plan for the soul as far as biblical theology is concerned (see, e.g., Deut 30:19; Pss 6:5; 16:10; 30:3, 9; 36:9).

Not all modern interpreters agree that biblical thought considers death an enemy force. Some argue it is not necessarily God's enemy (e.g. James Barr). Others have found death to be a part of an ordered, harmonious creation (e.g. Lloyd Bailey).[4] Such views fit in well with some modern understandings of death as a natural part of life. Pushing this sensibility to an extreme, the celebrated naturalist, John Muir, wrote:

2. For sample discussions of the Panammu inscription, see Klaas Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (AOAT 219; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), 207–8; Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 134–35; Philip S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002), 140–41; Hélène Nutkowicz, *L'Homme Face à la Mort au Royaume de Juda: Rites, Pratiques et Représentations* (Patrimoines Judaïsme; Paris: Cerf, 2006), 251–52, 288–89 Fig. 59.

3. Nutkowicz, *L'Homme Face à la Mort*, 334.

4. James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (The Read-Tuckwell Lectures for 1990; London: SCM, 1992), 26–27; Lloyd R. Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 58–59.

> Let children walk with Nature, let them see the beautiful blendings and communions of death and life, their joyous inseparable unity, as taught in woods and meadows, plains and mountains and streams of our blessed star, and they will learn that death is stingless indeed, and as beautiful as life, and that the grave has no victory, for it never fights. All is divine harmony.[5]

I believe the biblical writers would be bewildered at Muir's position. Just compare the anguished cries about death in the Psalms (e.g. Pss 69:1–3, 14–15; 88:4–7, 10–12; 116:3) and the parallel expressions in traditional African cultures. In Africa, the underworld at best offers mere shadows of life's present joys. According to a proverb popular among the Tschwi people, "One day in this world is worth a year in *Srahmandazi* (the underworld)."[6]

In traditional African thought, death is always and everywhere unnatural and preventable. When someone dies, the people immediately suspect some evil force to be at play: most likely magic, sorcery, or witchcraft. For the Akan of Ghana, death is never anything other than a curse and a wicked destroyer. There is no hope of placating death: "If you call him father it will take you, if you call him mother, it will take you."[7]

All across East Africa too, death is a monster that one longs to extirpate. In Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, death is a terribly fearful thing. The Madi of Uganda, for example, equate death with fear, sorrow, and the dreadful dissolution of the body.[8] It is to be resisted by all means possible. The Acholi sing, "If I could reach the homestead of Death's mother, I would make a long grass torch… I would utterly destroy everything!"[9] If only…

The biblical writers would fully empathize. In the mind of the Hebrews, injury, sickness, and death were forces that cut off the person from the land of the living, from blessings, and from Yahweh, God of the

5. John Muir, *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf* (ed. W. F. Badè; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916), 70–71.

6. Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective* (Kijabe, Kenya: Kesho, 1989), 140.

7. Uchenna A. Ezeh, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor: An African Contextual Christology in the Light of the Major Dogmatic Christological Definitions of the Church from the Council of Nicea (325) to Chalcedon (451)* (Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 130; Bern: Lang, 2003), 76.

8. Ibid., 77.

9. John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (2d ed.; London: Heinemann, 1990), 153; cf. A. B. C. Ocholla-Ayayo, "Death and Burial: An Anthropological Perspective," in *The S. M. Otieno Case: Death and Burial in Modern Kenya* (ed. J. B. Ojwang and J. N. K. Mugambi; Nairobi, Kenya: Nairobi University Press, 1989), 36.

living. Yahweh and death, in fact, were considered polar opposites. Death is so diametrically opposed to God and holiness that it has active, semi-demonic power to contaminate the Israelite community and the shrine (see, e.g., Num 19:11–22; Ezek 39:14–16; 43:7–9; Hag 2:13).[10]

The view that death has real demonic qualities finds literal expression in the Punic mortuary finds at Pozo Moro, Spain.[11] The Pozo Moro funerary monument (ca. 500 B.C.E.) gives us a disturbing visual image of death as a ravenous deity. In the image, Death is devouring a child sacrifice, whose small head and legs are visible sticking up from a basket in the monster's hand. A pig lies on the offering table in front of the fiend. What scene could be more defiling and horrid? (Compare the mood of revulsion at such underworld-religion in Isa 66:3; Jer 19:5; Ezek 23:37.)

The term *demonic* suggests unclean power manifesting itself on earth, and, indeed, in the ancient world one sometimes turned to death in order to access such power and manipulate nature and the course of events (e.g. 2 Kgs 3:27; Jer 32:35; Ps 106:37–38). Within the biblical corpus, Isa 57 illustrates well the concept of infernal, preternatural power.[12] Those who do not fear God in the passage are trying to access the demonic forces of the underworld for help and support (57:9). To do so, they sacrifice human babies (57:5). They journey to Molech deep down in Sheol (57:9), forsaking their communal support-networks of kin and land. The wicked in this passage have no interest in family, kinship, and covenant (see the discussion below). They long for dark, foreign, occult power.

10. See Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (trans. J. A. Baker; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 2:215; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. C. Meyers and M. P. O'Connor; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 399–414; Baruch Levine, *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 468–72; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 977. Milgrom clarifies that although death is a completely negative, defiling force in Israel, it has "clipped wings" in comparison to its much more aggressively live status in Israel's surrounding milieu.

11. See George C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek: A Reassessment* (JSOTSup 43; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 189–92; Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 36.

12. See, e.g., John Day, *Molech: A God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 41; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 16, 50–52, 63; Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 143–58; Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 175–78; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 152–66.

One sends envoys to Sheol and makes covenants with Molech, the infernal god of infant sacrifice, because one recognizes death's numinous assets. In biblical thought, death and Sheol are parallel concepts, as seen in the parallelism of Pss 6:5; 18:5; 55:15; 89:48; and Hos 13:14. Both are deemed to be of demonic quality, wielding preternatural, occult power on earth.

John Muir may have his modern proponents, but many in today's world hold death as horribly demonic. Let me quote Yale's Nicholas Wolterstorff, who wrote on this topic in his book *Lament for a Son*, a response to the death of his child:

> Someone said to Claire, "I hope you're learning to live at peace with Eric's death." Peace, shalom, salaam. Shalom is the fullness of life in all dimensions. Shalom is dwelling in justice and delight with God, with neighbor, with oneself, in nature. Death is shalom's mortal enemy. Death is demonic. We cannot live at peace with death… He did not say that on that day we would live at peace with death. He said that on that day, "There will be no more death."[13]

The quote expresses a theological hope that death may be successfully opposed. At least someday, Wolterstorff says, death may be overcome. A scholarly consensus holds that such belief arises only at a late date in biblical thinking. Allow me my skepticism. Was not death God's enemy in biblical thought from early on? Did not Israel even share this view with surrounding, preceding Canaanite culture? Surely faith's struggle against death has archaic roots.

I believe I can trace these roots. They run deep down into old, village-period Israel and its family-based, lineage-based culture. In what follows, I defend this thesis.

Contrary to almost every scholarly discussion you read about Sheol—the city of death—biblical faith is not resigned that every soul must end up captive there. Not all realms of death are deep down, "far away" (עד־מרחק, Isa 57:9), cut off from kin and land. Scholars assume this, but no biblical text does. Instead, we catch many glimpses of faithful persons expecting to feel some warmth of communion and sense of security in the Hereafter, despite its reputation for bone-chilling loneliness.

David, for example, is able to trust that his soul will someday join the soul of his dead baby (2 Sam 12:23). In a spasm of spiritual insight, Job is able to imagine a zone of refuge and asylum within the realm of death

13. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 63. Cf. Eichrodt's affirmation that God's sovereignty is "deliberately concentrated on this world; it was on this earth that God's kingdom was to be set up" (*Theology*, 2:221).

(Job 14:13). And Ps 16 is able to speak of the living continuing to delight in the godly deceased (16:3).

The Hebrew Bible and archaeology attest to the persistent efforts of surviving relatives to buttress the ties of kinship believed to bind together both the living and the dead. At death, it is these family ties of intimacy and communion that insulate the huddle of saints against Sheol's cold breath. For biblical Israel, *family* is the key to resisting death.

Faithful Israelites turned to their local kin networks, not temples or priests, as their source for security and hope after life. In priestly thought, priests are defiled by contact with death (Lev 10:6; 21:1, 10–12), so that funerary matters cannot be their bailiwick. Care for the dead, rather, is the duty of the family and clan (Num 19:11–22; Lev 21:2; Ezek 44:25).

Before exploring the relevant Israelite Scriptures and archaeology, let me outline the contours of my comparative model. In traditional African religion, each family's ongoing possession of ancestral land and family tomb symbolizes and insures kinship ties and the bonds of community. It grounds and vests a mutuality of persons, which, after death, ensconces the faithful deceased and wards off Sheol's tentacles.

Among the Ndali people of southwest Tanzania, for example, each kin-group has its own special cemetery plot (*masheto*) for burying its dead. Informants tell us that burial in the family grounds signifies and ensures that the deceased will join the fellowship of the ancestors and find warmth of community in the Hereafter. So too in Kenya, burial with the ancestors symbolizes and guarantees that the clan spirits will admit the person's soul into their tight-knit ranks.[14]

Among the Nyakyusa in southwest Tanzania, one's body lies buried close to home, near other family members who have passed on ahead. This is a sign that one's soul is sleeping with the ancestors. Everyone respects the grave, as if someone lives there, symbolizing the valuable ongoing existence of the deceased.[15] The people comfort the bereaved by assuring them that the deceased relative "has gone to his fathers." When asked about the location of the dead, one informant named Mwaikambo explained, "Our parents have not gone to heaven above but 'have gone to their forefathers.'"[16]

14. Peterson Asajile Mbisa, "Burial Customs and Beliefs of the Ndali in Christian Perspective" (Diploma in Theology thesis, St. Mark's Theological College, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1993), 19; Ocholla-Ayayo, "Death and Burial," 49.

15. A. A. B. Mwakilema, "Death and Life After Death in the Nyakyusa Belief" (Diploma in Theology thesis, St Mark's Theological College, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1997), 50; see also Mbisa, "Burial Customs," 20; Ezeh, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor*, 82.

16. Mwakilema, "Nyakyusa Belief," 20, 25, 39; cf. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 148.

In some traditional African cultures, the Hereafter is divided into two different parts. One part is associated with togetherness and remembering, the other with isolation and forgetting. In Nyakyusa belief, for example, the Hereafter (*Kubusyuka*) has one division known as *Kubusyuka Bwa Babibi*, which is a realm cut off from the living and populated by "irrelevant" shades. Another division known as *Kubusyuka Bwa Banunu* is, in contrast, a place of safety and fellowship. It is populated by those who are interconnected with their living descendents, who share in their family meals, and who hold the status of *ancestors*.[17]

Various African peoples view the domain of the ancestors as a circumscribed realm, from which many deceased souls find themselves excluded. The ancestral spirits do not welcome those whom God has smitten, those cursed in their lives, and those not properly buried by their relatives.[18] Rejected and excluded by the ancestors, such souls wander aimlessly in outer darkness. How lucky one is to find oneself approved and welcomed by one's ancestors in death! One has escaped Sheol's loneliness.

As in the African model, faithful Israelites considered proper burial crucial. Interment in a family tomb on family-owned land was of the utmost urgency (see 2 Kgs 9:10; Jer 8:2; 16:4; 22:19; 25:33). Kin should lie buried together, traditional Israelites believed, especially closely related kin (see, e.g., 2 Sam 17:23; 19:37; 21:14; 1 Kgs 13:22). This insured that after death family members would not be alienated from the insulating ties of communion with their kin.

One did not want to end up in Sheol, the equivalent of *Kubusyuka Bwa Babibi*. For a soul to become alienated like that would mean being "cut off" (גזר, Lam 3:54; Pss 31:22; 88:5–6; Ezek 37:11). It would mean isolation (cf. Pss 31:11–12; 88:12, 18), banishment from one's kinfolk and their territory. One would lose all that supports one's existence and spiritual life.[19] For the traditional Israelite, as for the traditional African, "I am because we are"—that is, "I owe my existence to my communal ties."

The opposite fate to being "cut off" was to be "gathered" to one's people, one's ancestors (אסף, e.g., Gen 25:8; 35:29; Deut 32:50; Judg 2:10; 2 Kgs 22:20). It was to remain ensconced in *Kubusyuka Bwa*

17. Mwakilema, "Nyakyusa Belief," 27–28, 43.

18. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion*, 137; Ezeh, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor*, 61.

19. Death's threat of isolating the soul was endemic in Israel's environs. For the idea of death as an isolation chamber at Ugarit, see Michael C. Astour, "The Nether World and Its Denizens at Ugarit," in *Death in Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the XXVI^e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (ed. B. Alster; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 227–38 (229).

Banunu. To be "gathered" to one's people was to escape the fate of Sheol. Sheol is never referenced in biblical texts that speak of the dead being united with their kin in the Hereafter.

What did it mean for an ancient Hebrew person to be "gathered" to their people when they died? It meant for one's surviving shade to find refuge in the tight-knit company of one's deceased relatives. The protective ties of extended family and kin-group are literally cut into the rock of ancient Israel's family tombs, built to symbolize the protective huddle of kinfolk that one hoped to join in the Hereafter. These family tombs are known as *bench tombs.*

Bench tombs were definitely the preferred type of burial in areas of Iron Age Israel such as the Shephelah, where village, kinship-based culture long flourished. In fact, as Elizabeth Bloch-Smith writes, "From late in the eighth century B.C.E. through the fall of the southern kingdom in 587/86 B.C.E., the bench tomb constituted the overwhelming preference for Judahite burials" in general.[20] They were constructed so that extended-family members of the same generation could lie together on benches in death. The bones of the deceased were eventually gathered together in special bone repositories within the tomb, piled in with the bones of the ancestors of lore. This cleared space on the benches for more newly deceased, junior lineage-members.[21]

Some important and wealthy families were able to build tombs that allowed the members of an entire kin-group to remain interconnected in burial. Take, for example, the large Israelite tomb complex under the St Etienne Monastery in Jerusalem, dating to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. It contains several burial chambers, designed to house the remains of a cluster of related family lineages, one lineage per chamber. Taken together, the chambers of the complex combine to hold the remains of an entire kin-group.[22]

The complex as a whole allowed the members of the kin-group who owned it to remain interconnected in death according to the very same ties of family and lineage that bound them together in life. The structure of the tomb reflects the branchy nature of a segmentary genealogy. This

20. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead* (JSOTSup 123; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 137.

21. E.g. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:213; Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 41–52, 55, 137, 257; Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 58–62; Nutkowicz, *L'Homme Face à la Mort*, 83–119.

22. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 221, 237–38; Nutkowicz, *L'Homme Face à la Mort*, 90, 93, 96–97 Figs. 11/1 and 11/2, 192–93 Fig. 22. For a very accessible discussion with images, see Gabriel Barkay and Amos Kloner, "Jerusalem Tombs from the Days of the First Temple," *BAR* 12, no. 2 (1986): 22–39.

is the branchy, tree-like genealogical structure that organized the life of all the kin-groups of old, village-based Israelite society. It forms its characteristic branchy clumps as a group's descendents proliferate and their family tree fills itself out.[23]

The verdant life of such a genealogical tree was not of benefit merely to the living. The dead found it nourishing as well. The structure of the St Etienne Monastery tombs symbolizes this truth.

At one's death, one hoped to be gathered to one's people in order to avoid the dark forces of Sheol, which isolate and "cut off" the soul. To have one's body among the recently deceased of one's family, and, later, one's bones in a repository with one's long-dead ancestors, symbolized a spiritual antidote to Sheol, an apotropaic counter to Sheol's threat of excision from one's family communion.

Other symbols besides burial in the company of dead kin buttressed the recently deceased person against Sheol's threats. Relatives sometimes placed amulets attached to cords around the necks of the dead. A burial cave in Ketef Hinnom from the late seventh or early sixth century B.C.E. contained silver amulets, inscribed with prayers of protection from the evil associated with death.[24]

In addition, relatives brought furnishings, vessels, and food stuffs into the tomb with the dead soul's body. Clay lamps in great numbers aimed to fend off Sheol's dark shroud (see Pss 88:6; 143:3; Lam 3:6). Such deposits, typical of Hebrew burials,[25] show the concern of the living for the wellbeing of the dead.

Unlike at surrounding cultures, such as at Ugarit, traditional Israel's grave deposits were not restocked. Rather, as the soul was more and more "gathered to the ancestors," the living let it slip away gradually from the pressing flow of everyday events. Eventually, the bones of the deceased were unceremoniously swept into the repositories.

African religions supply a parallel.[26] Traditional Africans generally distinguish two categories of dead persons. The recently deceased, whom

23. For discussion and bibliography, see Stephen L. Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism* (Studies in Biblical Literature 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 151–69.

24. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 235; Nutkowicz, *L'Homme Face à la Mort*, 166–73, 192–93 Figs. 47 and 48.

25. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 49–51, 72–108, 137; Johnston, *Shades of Sheol*, 59–60, 62–65; Nutkowicz, *L'Homme Face à la Mort*, 121–99.

26. Ifeanyi A. Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," in *African Philosophy: An Introduction* (ed. R. A. Wright; 3d ed.; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984), 175; Mbisa, "Burial Customs," 4; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 21–24.

the living knew personally, are thought of as "living-dead." They remain in the thoughts and prayers of their living relatives. Over time, the living-dead slip away from *Sasa* time, when they are remembered personally, by name, by living kin, and move into *Zamani* time, less connected with ongoing history. In *Zamani*, they join the company of their silent kin.

Biblical faith took up pre-state, village-Israel's traditional practices relating to the dead and overlaid them with covenantal reinforcement and refinement. It used the traditional bonds of kinship, vested in inherited lands and burial sites, to ground and support the sacred bonds of loving-kindness (חסד) advocated by the Sinai covenant.

For Israel's covenantal faith, it was sacred loving-kindness—grounded in kinship ties and kin-territory—that had the power to fend off the terrors of Sheol. חסד was able to preserve one's shade in the bundle of the living-dead under the care of the LORD. Here, in this bundle, one's נפש was not slung away, as from the hollow of a sling.

Take the illuminating example of Jacob as he nears death. His deep longing is to lie with his ancestors, to be buried in their burial place. To accomplish this would be to show him a great act of חסד (Gen 47:29; see also Gen 49:29–30; 50:25). Clearly, the commitment of חסד is of meaningful postmortem aid to its recipient—here, to Jacob. To receive this commitment is to lose a great amount of anxiety over the fate of one's נפש as death's terrors draw near.

Perhaps our best examples of the power of חסד over Sheol come from the book of Ruth. Ruth and Naomi go to great efforts to show loyalty to dead Mahlon and dead Elimelek by keeping them associated with kin-owned inherited land and the kin-community tied to it, "raising up the name of the deceased on his inheritance" (Ruth 4:5). They are desperate to keep their dead linked to the branching, verdant tree of shared descent planted on ancestral grounds. Their determined commitment is to keep them cocooned within family ties.[27]

For Ruth and Naomi, it is not just a matter of their dead living on in memory and reputation. The emphasis on the tie to ancestral land (Ruth 4:5) is all about buttressing and solidifying the land-based communion of all kin-group members, living and dead. It is about keeping connected to the great, living family-tree of descent, firmly rooted in family land.

Preserving the binding ties of communion is חסד on behalf of the living-dead (Ruth 2:20). The specific wording of Ruth 2:20 leaves us

27. See especially Herbert Chanan Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife: A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973): 1–54 (5, 9, 13, 15–16, 20). In my view, Ruth and Naomi certainly share the African stress on the "umbilical" linkage of generations (see, e.g., Menkiti, "Person and Community," 171–72, 179–80; Ezeh, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor*, 59, 69, 286–91).

with no doubts: in the biblical world, dead souls (מתים) are conceived of as *living-dead* (cf. Deut 18:11), still grateful to receive loving-kindness (חסד) and to remain nourished by the umbilical connections of kinship.

Look at the same reality from another angle, that of Ruth's closest relative—the one who refuses to jeopardize his own inherited land by performing his moral duty of fathering a child for Mahlon (Ruth 4). Why is this person, Ruth's natural redeeming kinsman, so worried about jeopardizing his "own patrimony" (Ruth 4:6)? Why does he put it this way, instead of articulating worries about, say, *his children's* patrimony, *their* ongoing welfare, and the honor of his lineage?

I assert that his focus on his relationship to his "own patrimony" is a self-oriented concern for his personal welfare after death. His "own patrimony" would not be under any threat during his own lifetime. Only after his death would it be apportioned and allocated. Only after his death might his shade be adversely affected by this eventuality, his name not perpetuated on the ancestral land. Only then might he be catapulted like a sling-stone away from land-based communion with his kin.

The land remains his "own patrimony" even in death, and the kinsman does not want his demise to jeopardize its integrity. His focus centers on retaining the family land intact when he passes on, because it is his *personal* solace and asylum in the Hereafter that he is worried about. He is a selfish man, after all. After his demise, he wants his own name raised up on his *own ancestral inherited land*, preserving his umbilical sustenance.

A three-part system preserved welfare and communion within Israel's Sinai covenant: upholding one's living kin + preserving the ancestral land (the patrimony) within the family + honoring the living-dead buried on the land. Parallels to this system abound in traditional African religions.[28] In Africa, landed inheritance (patrimony) is the necessary planting ground supporting and nourishing all who populate a kinfolk's genealogical tree, both living and deceased.

In Africa, an interlocking chain of life connects living kin, patrimony, and living-dead. Drawing on the agricultural assets of the clan's land, the living members of a kin-group support one another, both socially and economically. They support their living-dead as well, keeping their memory alive on the land and their burial sites honored. The dead ancestors, in turn, function as senior elders of the clan. Their burial spots mark the land that they worked in life as the inheritance of their descendents. They

28. See, e.g., Gehman, *African Traditional Religion*, 141; Ocholla-Ayayo, "Death and Burial," 33; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 26, 59, 105–6, 158; Ezeh, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor*, 82–83, 288.

guard and inspire the community of kinfolk rooted in this selfsame land (cf. Jer 31:15; Isa 63:16), and offer asylum to members of the family who pass on into the Hereafter.

The idea of a family tree, planted on family land, giving life to the living and the dead is a core ideal in the book of Ruth. Thus, Ruth 1:16–17 spells out that maintaining real חסד means burial in a common tomb and togetherness in the Hereafter. With חסד maintained, not even death will be able to separate Naomi from Ruth (NRSV). At this point in the book, the women's hope for an ongoing reputation after death and for prosperous, grateful descendents is all but nonexistent. Ruth's promise of togetherness in burial is meant to assert one thing only: her transcendent, death-defying commitment to perpetual communion with Naomi.

Communion with the living as well as with the dead helps ensconce the deceased in חסד. In Ruth 4, the way to show חסד to the dead is to *remember* them, to ensure that their name is not "cut off" (Ruth 4:10). To be cut off is to grow dry and withered (Job 14:2, 11–12; Ezek 37:11). The soul must languish in Sheol, the land of "forgetfulness" (Ps 88:12–13). To be remembered is to retain one's identity as part of the verdant, branching faith-community nurtured by God (Ps 88:5–6; Isa 38:18).

But how can mere *remembrance* work to fend off Sheol and effectively counter its power to parch and wither the soul? To understand this, I would argue, we need to keep in mind the rich suggestiveness of the vocabulary of memory in the Hebrew Bible. Parallel evidence from the ancient Near East (cf. the Panammua Inscription, *KAI* 214:21) and from traditional African religions is also helpful.

In Africa, among the Akamba, to die is to become disconnected from the communal chain of life, to "dry up, wither, and evaporate." The Basoga also speak of the deceased as dry: Death (*walumbe*) "has made him dry," they say.[29] The antidote is *re-membering*—that is, re-actualizing the communal body *in all its members* and in all its nourishing vitality.

The corporate group must cling to its deceased members, regularly recalling their names, perpetuating their personality, character, and words. Their wisdom must be preserved and enacted. They receive symbolic offerings as tokens of respect and ongoing communion. All this keeps them vital, fresh and green, and full of sap.[30]

Remembrance is of the essence of biblical Israel's faith and entails much more than simple recollection and commemoration. In the Hebrew

29. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 152; also cf. pp. 78, 131.

30. Ibid., 24–25, 84, 88, 117, 147–48, 154; Ezeh, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor*, 66–67, 78.

Bible, remembrance means action, re-creation, and encounter (cf. Gen 8:1; Job 14:13; Ps 106:4). It has to do with bridging gaps, creating solidarity, renewing fellowship, and participating in its power.

In biblical faith, remembrance of the living-dead, in its full dynamic character, is about the *re-membering* of the community. It is about restoring fellowship up and down a genealogical tree. In re-membering, ancient Israelites re-vivified mutuality between all community members, dead as well as living, keeping together what belongs together. This work bundled up the living-dead in God's care with the living faithful.

All of what I have argued thus far involves a tremendous tension. Death is unclean, awful, and antithetic to God so that one must keep away (see, e.g., Num 19:13; Lev 21:1). At the same time, one is obligated by חסד to come into contact with the bodies of one's deceased family members (Lev 19:11–12; 21:2), to preserve an ongoing fellowship with them, especially those close relatives counted among the living-dead. This tension is longstanding within biblical religion, and presents an intolerable dilemma to faith.

It has been said that long before it made its overt appearance, the concept of resurrection was etched in the logic of Scripture. This may well be true, since only resurrection faith appears able to overcome our two conflicting biblical mandates: to keep away from the dead and lovingly to embrace them. If earth is ever to see this dialectical antithesis resolved, then Sheol must surrender its prisoners and itself suffer death.

Not every Israelite was respectful and careful about the uncleanness of death. After all, as we have seen, death possesses many infernal assets. The temptation is present to go too far in one's communion with the dead and attempt to exploit the powers of the preternatural and the occult. The dead may appear to have aid and knowledge to offer the living. 1 Samuel 28:13 illustrates this well in having the medium at Endor exclaim that she sees "preternatural beings rising" (אלהים; cf. NAB).[31] In biblical Yahwism, this is one of the real threats at stake in interaction with the realm of death. It has its own *preternatural* power that stands in tension and foolish competition with the power of Heaven.[32]

31. Compare how the "dead" referenced in Ps 106:28 are revealed to be "preternatural beings" in light of the verse's parallel text in Num 25:2. See Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 7; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 234.

32. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:215; Astour, "Nether World," 231–34; Alan F. Segal, *Life After Death: A History of the Afterlife in Religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 126.

Although the bonds of fellowship between living and living-dead are positively valued in biblical Yahwism, the idea of accessing the numinous power of the underworld is fraught with danger and betrayal. In the story of the medium of Endor in 1 Sam 28 one sees Saul crossing a line that biblical faith wants held firmly in place.

Why are mediums a problem? The realms of life/purity and death/defilement must be kept separate, but mediums link them together. Indeed, they do so in ways that often have nothing to do with the Yahwistic ideals of loving-kindness and kinship loyalty. Mediums are most often interested in necromancy, not loving-kindness (at least in the African ethnography that I have read). Their goal is to find out things that would otherwise be impossible to know: who stole one's money; who will one marry; where is one's lost garment; why is one's spouse sick? They may connect with spirits with whom they are not close, with strange spirits, and with spirits so long dead that they have been fully gathered away. These latter spirits belong to the sphere of the *Zamani*.[33]

Because their clients may want contact with shades unfamiliar to a medium, the medium often relies on a go-between spirit with whom she is familiar (and for whatever reason, mediums are usually women). The Hebrew behind the term "medium" in 1 Sam 28:7 reads literally "a wife, a mistress, of a spirit" (אשת בעלת־אוב). Cross-cultural parallels help illuminate this idea.[34]

Among the Dahomean people, mediums observe strict chastity during two years of training. Then, the medium says to her god/spirit, "Today you have completed marriage with me."[35] To a faithful Yahwist, this would sound a lot like covenant infidelity toward God, Israel's only true spouse. As Eichrodt wrote some time ago, "Yahweh's claim to exclusive lordship covered not only alien gods but also those subterranean powers which might offer their help to men."[36]

But the medium of Endor uses her underworld connections to summon up Samuel himself! What do we make of this? Can occult practitioners take heart from the apparent success of necromancy here?

A plain literary reading of the narrative leaves little doubt that although God had forbidden necromancy (v. 9), God allowed Samuel to appear as a final judgment upon Saul. Necromancy sometimes works!

33. Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife," 8; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 26, 171.

34. See, e.g., Gehman, *African Traditional Religion*, 160; Gerald O. West, "1 and 2 Samuel," in *Global Bible Commentary* (ed. D. Patte; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 92–104 (94–95); Mbiti, *African Religions*, 82, 167–72.

35. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169.

36. Eichrodt, *Theology*, 2:221.

The Hebrew Bible does not condemn necromancy because belief in the afterlife is a sham and fraud, but because accessing the preternatural powers of Sheol gets one entangled in what is unclean and idolatrous.

And, upon closer inspection, 1 Sam 28 is far from supportive of the normal assumptions and practices of ancient mediums. Rather, the details of the passage actually represent a biblical "slap in the face" to necromantic arts. Samuel appears suddenly (the Hebrew of v. 12 uses the waw-consecutive), making a mockery of a medium's normal possession behaviors (in the African parallels we find such things as jumping like a frog, banging one's head hard on the floor, and losing awareness of what one is saying). So too, the woman's familiar spirit is rendered irrelevant.

With a shade such as Samuel who is no relative of hers, she would normally expect mere chirps and mutterings (Isa 8:19), but now lucid prophecies confront her. The medium of Endor is in over her head, and things move immediately to judgment.

Samuel's rare, shocking appearance is exceptional, and it allows us to confirm some of the observations about the Hereafter that I have offered in this essay. In particular, 1 Sam 28 clarifies that Samuel has not been ensnared in the lonely, murky depths of Sheol but has been bundled in relative safety. He is not emaciated, soaked with water, or caked with dust. He is not in rags, has not lost his voice, and is not even cut off from God's word. He can do far more than chirp and mutter (see Isa 8:19; 29:4; 45:19). He can still prophesy! In short, none of the very real fears about a fate in the bowels of Sheol have overtaken Samuel. The Hebrew Bible really does support the idea of postmortem safety in the "bosom of Abraham."

Notice the plural language in 1 Sam 28:13. It is easy to miss this language, because all the major English translations ignore it. Nevertheless, it is clear that Samuel emerges from the Hereafter along with a full company of souls. Interpreting the text from an African perspective, Temba Mafico immediately recognizes his entourage.[37] They are Samuel's deceased kin and forebears, to whom he has been gathered, especially the family elders, who hold each other in safety in the Hereafter.

Most Western scholars have missed this datum, but Africans are able to understand this text. Among the Ndali in southwest Tanzania, for example, greetings are sent to the entourage of living-dead ancestors by speaking words over a deceased relative's body. Such words, spoken to

37. Temba L. J. Mafico, "The Biblical God of the Fathers and the African Ancestors," in *The Bible in Africa* (ed. Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 481–89 (483–84).

the corpse, include requests for forgiveness, current news about the family, and notifications of pressing problems.[38]

Such an entourage of the deceased is mentioned at ancient Ugarit at *KTU* 1.161. Old Babylonian records similarly speak of death using language of the deceased's ancestors/gods leading him/her away.[39]

A final question concerns the dating of the beliefs that I am treating. Did they arise early in Israel, say from the pre-state, village period, or only during monarchic times or later? In my view, an early dating is requisite. From before the time of Deuteronomism, Israel believed in *a-mortality* and struggled against Sheol.

When Deuteronomism does crystallize in writing, it sets about the task of supporting and refining extant, lineage- and village-based traditions about the afterlife. 1 Samuel 28 affirms the entourage of the living-dead, but repudiates its contact through necromancy. Deuteronomy 26:14 affirms the archaic practice of grave offerings, but gives the practice key new restrictions.

The beliefs about the Hereafter that I have uncovered in this essay align perfectly with old, pre-state Israel's segmentary organization along genealogical lines. I admit to being fully persuaded—these beliefs have their roots in old Israel's kinship-based, village society. What the covenantal traditions of Torah do is temper and direct them along the lines of purity and חסד.

38. Mbisa, "Burial Customs," 2, 14–16.

39. See Segal, *Life After Death*, 140; van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 57; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*, 144.

From Womb to Tomb: The Israelite Family in Death as in Life

E. Bloch-Smith

Archaeologists bring considerable new evidence to biblical studies for which we can, often with envious certainty, identify the *Sitz im Leben*, provenience and date. While individual items (our "verses") may be transmitted over generations and reworked over time, the bulk of our evidence remains in its original context within a contemporaneous assemblage. This data base (our "text") allows us to study chronological developments through time—in this case, burial practices through the rise and demise of the ancient Israelite states.

Eight different styles of burial were practiced in the Iron Age southern Levant (ca. 1200–586 B.C.E.),[1] the period conservatively considered to cover from Israelite highland settlement through Judah's fall to the Babylonians. Most burial types defined by a constellation of features are named for the space or receptacle housing the body: simple grave; cist grave; jar burial; anthropoid, wooden, and stone coffin; bathtub coffin; cave, chamber, and shaft tomb; arcosolia and bench tomb; and cremation burial. Among the eight types, cave/chamber and arcosolia/bench tombs, virtually the exclusive choices of the highland population, are the focus of the present study since they contribute to our understanding of ancient Israelite society. These burials illustrate embryonic Israelite practices (Iron I, twelfth to eleventh century), the character of the state of Judah in Iron IIA (tenth to ninth century), and national and societal responses to the devastating Assyrian invasions of the late eighth century.

Features of Burial

For cave tombs, bodies and accompanying objects were deposited in natural or hewn caves usually located in the tell slopes or proximate wadi

1. All dates are B.C.E. unless otherwise noted and follow the conventional "High Chronology."

cliffs. Individuals lay extended on their backs, near the center of the cave, with objects positioned around the body (detailed below). To create space for subsequent burials, bodies with their accompanying mortuary goods were moved to the periphery. Published osteological evidence shows that men outnumbered women 2:1 and infants outnumbered children and adolescents, suggesting all family members were interred together. Chamber and shaft tombs differed only in regularity of plan and method of access. Chambers likely began as caves with additional hewing to create a rectangular plan and squared-off walls and corners. Shafts both provided access into and a means of closing off the entrance for tombs hewn in flat-lying bedrock.[2]

Arcosolia and bench tombs differed in number of occupants; arcosolia and loculi were intended for single permanent burials whereas benches accommodated single or multiple individuals who could in turn be moved to a corner or repository within the tomb and new individuals lay in their place. Iron Age arcosolia and bench tombs followed the same plan: a square or rectangular doorway in a rock-cut façade opened onto steps leading down to the chamber floor. The rectilinear or rounded chamber had waist-high benches carved or built along or into the side and back walls. Functional and decorative features of these tombs, such as imitation sunken wooden panels, gabled ceilings, lamp niches, parapets along the exposed edge of the burial bench, and headrests, replicate home architectural features and furnishings to create a new home for the deceased. As in cave tombs, individuals with burial gifts (detailed below) lay supine and extended, on the raised, bed-like benches.[3]

Based on archaeological evidence, the population initiating the hundreds of new highland settlements around 1200, collectively identified as "Israelites," followed the indigenous practice of burial in caves and rock-cut tombs. Identified tombs clustered in multi-period cemeteries and in tell slopes and proximate wadi cliffs, a distribution attributable in part to where we have looked for tombs. Virtually no isolated burials have been found and *not a single intact highland simple or pit grave has been excavated and published.* It must also be noted that the number of retrieved burials falls far short of the estimated population of this period, a common phenomenon. Accordingly, known burials do not constitute a representative sample.

2. See E. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs About the Dead* (JSOTSup 123; JSOT/ASOR Monograph 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 36–41.

3. Ibid., 41–52.

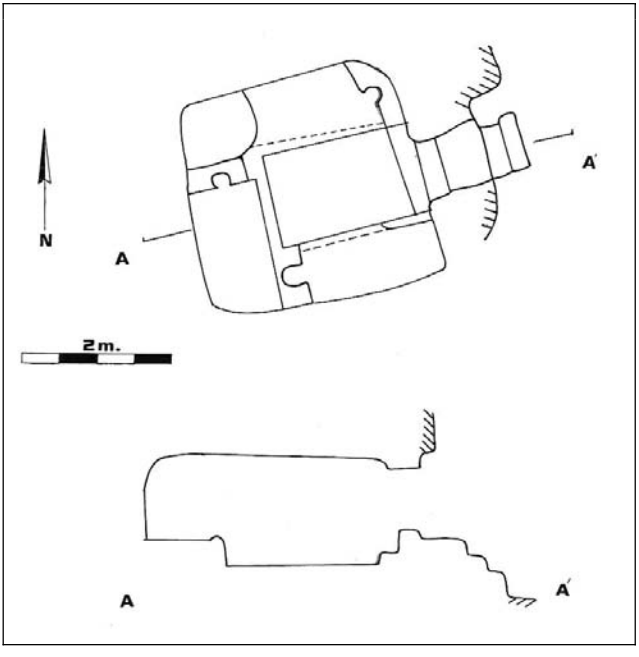

Figure 1. Gibeon Tomb 8—Plan and Section.
(H. Eshel, "The Late Iron Age Cemetery of Gibeon," *IEJ* 37 (1987): Fig. 9.
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Osteological analysis is limited and primarily dates from before the mid-1980s C.E., after which time religious considerations impeded study. Based largely on excavators' field assessments, tombs in use for ca. 50 to 100 years held from 50 to 100 bodies, with most accommodating 50 to 30 individuals of varying ages. Very few publications specify the age and gender of the deceased. A later eighth- or seventh-century Mt Zion tomb held 43 individuals: 17 infants and juveniles and 26 adults (13 male, 5 female, 8 indeterminate). Thirty percent died by age six, and a total of 48 percent by age 16.[4] The excavators mentioned signs that *hint* that at least some of the deceased were related, but the osteologists made no such claim. The osteologists did note that 31.5 percent of all individuals displayed *cribra orbitalia*, which may be caused by a blood pathology such as malaria, nutritional anemias, or other conditions. Men

4. Ten percent died from age 16 to 30, 22 percent from age 30 to 40, 14 percent from age 40 to 50, and 6 percent lived past age 50. See D. Davis and A. Kloner, "A Burial Cave from the End of the Period of the First Temple on the Slopes of Mt. Zion," *Qadmoniot* 11 (1978): 16–19 (19) (Hebrew).

stood 157–167 cm tall (5'1"–5'6") and women 144–152 cm (4'8"–5'0").[5] The seventh- or sixth-century Khirbet Beit Lei Tomb 1 housed eight individuals: four adults, of which three were women, three adolescents including one male, and one child.[6] Tel Ira Tomb 15, dating to Iron II, held at least 36 individuals: one child, eight sub-adults, and nine adults (three men and six women, including one 60-year-old). Tomb 23 accommodated ten people: one child, one female adolescent, and seven adults (three female and four male).[7] On average, Tel Ira *adults* lived 36.9 years. All the identifiable Tel Ira tomb bones attest to 24 children (aged 0 to 18) accompanying 21 females and 20 males (aged 18 to 55).[8] Throughout the Iron Age, family relations are presumed among those interred together but osteological confirmation is lacking. Inherited congenital disorders that would demonstrate family ties, such as club-foot, dwarfism, or cleft palate combined with a cleft (or hare) lip, all attested in ancient Egypt, have not been identified in Israel.[9]

Mortuary assemblages supplied for the dead mirrored the possessions of the living, as though the dead were provisioned for continued life. In twelfth- to eleventh-century tombs, northern highland ceramics characteristically included pilgrim flasks, pyxides, and craters, all for liquids. Southern highland tombs typically yielded a lamp and chalice. Shephelah burials contained the combined assemblage. The regional variation of Iron I did not continue into Iron II. Tenth- to ninth-century tombs from across the region displayed a new repertoire of specialized vessels for the preparation, serving, and storage of foodstuffs and beverages (e.g. wine decanters, storejars, dipper juglets, bowls, platters, and cooking pots). As for imported vessels, Iron I Mycenaean, Cypriot, and Egyptian imports were replaced in Iron II by Assyrian, Cypriot, Cypro-Phoenician, and Phoenician vessels.

A small number of objects typically augmented the ceramic assemblage: jewelry, including Egyptian or Egyptianizing scarabs and amulets; personal items for dress (toggle pin, fibula), grooming (comb, mirror,

5. B. Arensberg and Y. Rak, "Jewish Skeletal Remains from the Period of the Kings of Judah," *PEQ* (January–June 1985): 30–34; Davis and Kloner, "A Burial Cave." See also "Derekh Hebron," *Hadashot Arkhiologiyot* 53 (1975): 22 (Hebrew).

6. N. Haas, "Human Skeletal Remains in Two Burial Caves," *IEJ* 13 (1963): 93–96.

7. V. Eshed et al., "Human Skeletal Remains," in *Tel ʿIra: A Stronghold in the Biblical Negev* (ed. I. Beit-Arieh; Tel Aviv University Monograph 15; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1999), 496–97.

8. Ibid., 499.

9. J. Filer, *Disease* (Egyptian Bookshelf; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 53–66.

cosmetic palette, hair clasp), amusement (gaming piece), and identification (stamp, seal); tools/weapons (e.g. blades, spearheads, fishhooks, spindle whorls, grinding stones); and miniature models (Judean Pillar Figurines, quadrupeds, and furniture). Based solely on archaeological evidence, it is not possible to reconstruct death cult rituals in tombs; identical finds in both tombs and houses and public buildings preclude identifying distinctive mortuary practices.

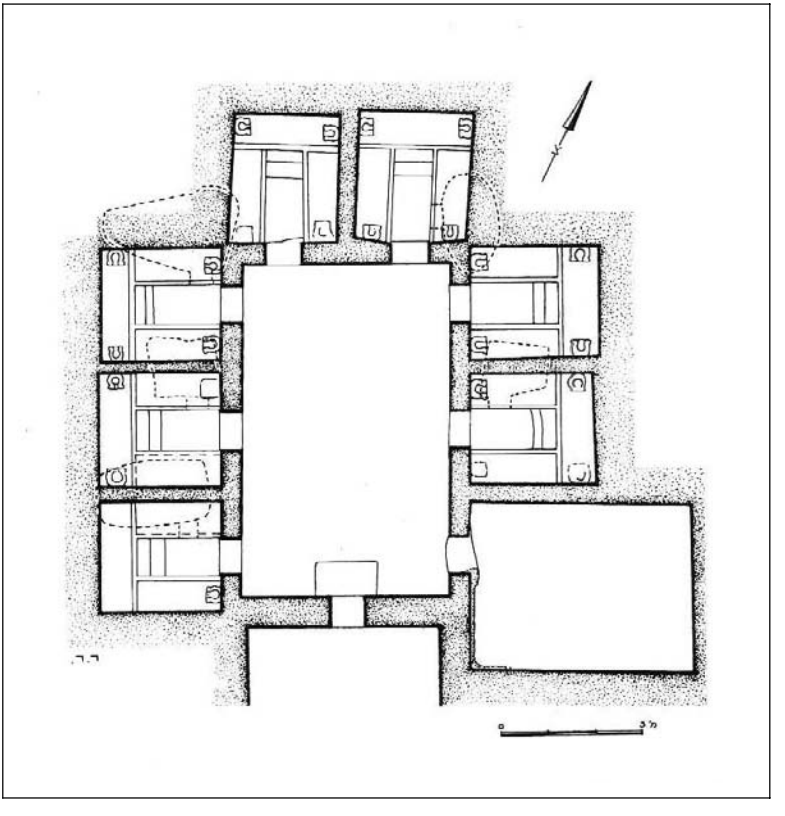

Figure 2. Tomb Drawing, St Etienne Monastery, Jerusalem.
(D. Ussishkin, *The Village of Silwan: The Necropolis from the Period of the Judean Kingdom* [Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Tzvi and the Society for the Exploration of the Land of Israel and her Antiquities, 1986 (Hebrew)]: Fig. 189. Reprinted with the permission of Yad Ben-Tzvi.)

Tenth-century and later changes in tomb execution and mortuary assemblages mirror the increasing wealth and cosmopolitan caché evident among the living. The Silwan Valley tomb for the Royal Steward

may provide evidence of status rather than exclusively wealth-based differentiation, but the court official may also have prospered in his official capacity. Lavish tombs, particularly in Jerusalem, but also at Tel Judeidah to the south and Gibeon to the north, boasted various embellishments: multiple chambers; interior decorative flourishes including right-angle cornices and imitation sunken wooden panels; Egyptian and Phoenician architectural elements such as an Egyptian cornice and pyramid-shaped superstructure, Phoenician ashlar construction, and stone-carved gabled ceilings and individual sarcophagi; inscriptions identifying the deceased, and a better-stocked kitchen (see Fig. 2). The living invested increasing resources in their ultimate retirement home. Beginning in the tenth century, Israelites deviated from the burial practice of their ancestors and predecessors, and the *rate* of change accelerated through the ninth and eighth centuries.

Interpretations of Burial Evidence

Burials are designed and implemented by the living, not the dead, and so reflect social structure, cultural identity (the shared ideas and beliefs expressed in material culture), and social identity (how people identify themselves). Archaeological interpretive methodology begins by identifying repeated or patterned behavior in identifiable contexts (our grammar and syntax). This replicated constellation of features is then interpreted on the basis of texts and inscriptions, ethnographic and ancient analogues, and theories and models from other disciplines. Archaeologists consider this "social-science informed orientation" to be their version of "grounded theory," but readily acknowledge that reconstructions rest on preserved archaeological and literary constructs of ancient Israel, neither of which represents the full societal spectrum.

According to the Bible, the archetypal burial was that of the patriarchs and matriarchs buried together in a cave on land owned by the family. Generations (presumed but not proven) interred together constituted an incontrovertible claim to the patrimony. So, land and lineage, foci of early Israelite identity or ethnicity, converged in the tomb. Rachel and Joshua's tombs, situated at patrimonial boundaries, served as territorial claims (Josh 24:30; Judg 2:9; 1 Sam 10:2). Except for kings and royal functionaries buried in their capital cities, the deceased mentioned in the Deuteronomistic History were interred "in an ancestral tomb" on the patrimony or in their home town (Judg 10:2, 5; 12:7, 10, 12, 15). All who served Yahweh merited burial; sinners forfeited family burial or were exhumed (Deut 28:25–26; 1 Kgs 13:22; 14:10–11; Jer 16:4).

Excavated communities of the deceased in their residence-like tombs *mirrored* the living. Ancestral bones kept in the tomb, replicating generations living in the same house or compound, perpetuated familial rather than individual identity. Death meant the final change of address from the family home of the living to the family home of the dead ("Their grave is their eternal home, the dwelling-place for all generations," Ps 49:12a). The 15 to 30 individuals buried together likely represented three or more generations, depending on estimates of average family size (and given poor preservation and recovery of skeletal material from infants and small children). The three-generations calculation is derived from Israel Finkelstein and David Schloen's estimates of an average nuclear family size of approximately 3.5 to 4 persons (7 persons in a patrilineal, extended, joint family) based on Roman and Ottoman period censi in the region.[10] The Tel Ira team estimated nuclear families of 5 to 7 living individuals, based on a limited osteological sample.[11]

The living provided nourishment for the dead. Vessels for drink and food (some with preserved food) accompany the deceased in all tomb types, including jar burials, where the food could not possibly have been offered to visitors but must have been intended for the dead. The Israelite's vow uttered upon presenting tithed food to Yahweh presumes feeding the dead: "I have not eaten of it while in mourning; I have not cleared out any of it while I was unclean, and I have not deposited any of it with the dead" (Deut 26:14). Offering consecrated food to the dead was sufficiently widespread to require a verbal disavowal. Additional evidence for feeding the ancestors includes the clan's periodic sacrificial meal in the home town (the location of the family tomb, 1 Sam 20:6, 29) and perhaps the Ps 16:4 mention of the living pouring blood libations to the dead and invoking their name.[12]

While all dead seemingly continued a form of existence, at least some dead were considered divine. The woman in En-Dor conjuring up Samuel sees אלהים rise from the underworld (1 Sam 28:13), Isaiah mocks the people for consulting "the dead (אלהים) on behalf of the living" (Isa 8:19), and in Deut 26:14, quoted above, the Israelite's vow

10. I. Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988), 268–69 n. 22; D. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 122–23 Table 1.

11. Eshed et al., "Human Skeletal Remains," 500.

12. K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 208–14.

that no tithed food was offered presumes the dead are divine and recipients of the tithe.

The divine dead possessed benevolent powers. The deceased Samuel foretold Saul's demise (1 Sam 28:19), Elisha's bones revived a dead man (2 Kgs 13:20–21), and (depending on your reading of Isa 8:19–20a) the dead offered "instruction and message." Judean Pillar Figurines, pole-shaped symbols likely representing Asherah, perhaps invoked ancestral powers or intercession with a higher divinity on behalf of the living. Serving tithed food to the dead plus other indications of their divine status, in conjunction with the attested belief in post-mortem powers, evidence a cult of the dead continuing through the life of the Israelite kingdoms.

Reconstructions of Israelite Society

The dead are conjured up in discussions of early Israel's identity and faith and also in discussions of developments in Israelite society following the Assyrian invasions of the late eighth century.

Beginning with early Israel, the bone of contention is the explanation for the small numbers of Iron I highland burials. Raz Kletter initiated lively debate by claiming that the impoverished Iron I Israelites rejected Canaanite-style burial in tombs and instead interred their dead outside the settlement in shallow, simple graves without accompanying goods.[13] Erosion or burial under a later accumulation eradicated all signs of these burials. Avraham Faust accepted Kletter's proposed mode of burial and offered an ideological rationale. Simple burial without goods conformed to an egalitarian ideal, an ideal elusive in life but realized in death.[14] Kletter and Faust's reconstruction is problematic. Not a single Iron I simple grave has been published, the egalitarian ideal is debatable, and biblical texts describe families buried in caves rather than individuals in simple graves. Furthermore, Kletter and Faust's reconstruction presumes widespread adherence to an innovative ideology and attendant burial

13. R. Kletter, "People Without Burials? The Lack of Iron I Burials in the Central Highlands of Palestine," *IEJ* 52 (2002): 39.

14. A. Faust, "'Mortuary Practices, Society and Ideology': The Lack of Iron Age I Burials in the Highlands in Context," *IEJ* 54 (2004): 174–90. Such developments might underlie the exhortation expressed in Ps 49:17, "Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, when his household goods increase; for when he dies he can take none of it along; his goods cannot follow him down." For further connections to the dead, see M. S. Smith, "The Invocation of Deceased Ancestors in Psalm 49:12c," *JBL* 112 (1993): 105–7.

practice already in Israel's formative years and, even more problematic, does not account for the existent evidence.

Excavated burials demonstrate that Iron I settlers buried their dead in well-provisioned cave and chamber tombs following the indigenous ("Canaanite") custom in burial form and location, treatment of the corpse, and mortuary provisioning—not surprising given that twelfth- and eleventh-century highland Israelites continued many Bronze Age practices. This reconstruction of early Israelite burial, which conforms to the ancestral tomb Jacob described on his deathbed (Gen 49:29b–31), is grounded in the archaeological evidence and Israel's own literary record.[15]

Fast-forwarding to the late eighth and seventh centuries, burials are cited as evidence of *dramatic* cultural changes precipitated by the Assyrian invasions. Based primarily on archaeological evidence—and discounting the literary record—Israel Finkelstein and Neil Silberman date Judah's transformation from "a rather insignificant local dynasty" to a "state" to the late eighth century. Israelite refugees fleeing south forced Judah to interact with foreigners, precipitating a higher-order of political complexity.[16] However, tenth- to eighth-century burials in Judah display Egyptian, Philistine, and Phoenician connections (evident in the imported pottery and foreign building techniques and features), belying Judah's alleged isolationism. The invasions likely accelerated rather than jump-started political developments in Judah that began in the tenth century.[17]

Baruch Halpern argued for a late eighth- to seventh-century undermining of the traditional lineage-based social structure with a concomitant rise in individualism. After Sennacherib's devastating campaign of 701, Hezekiah resettled survivors according to military dictates, rather than

15. The disparity between the estimated population and retrieved burials, not unique to Iron I Israel, remains to be explained. Several factors, both specific to Iron I and more general, contribute to the situation: (1) twelfth- to eleventh-century abandonment left a diminished highland population, (2) difficulty in differentiating Iron I from Late Bronze II material remains with the propensity to assign "Canaanite"-looking burials to the Late Bronze Age, and (3) tomb robbing by humans and wild predators. (For further details, see E. Bloch-Smith, "Resurrecting the Iron I Dead," *IEJ* 54 [2004]: 77–91.)

16. I. Finkelstein, "State Formation in Israel and Judah: A Contrast in Context, a Contrast in Trajectory," *NEA* 62 (1999): 35–52; I. Finkelstein and N. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

17. E. Bloch-Smith, "Life in Judah from the Perspective of the Dead," *NEA* 65 (2002): 122–23.

family land claims, thereby promoting state allegiance over kinship ties.[18] While a shift in social organization and rise of individualism is clearly evident, their genesis, timing, and reflection in burials are disputable. The eighth-century dissolution of clans allegedly prompted abandoning multiple for single chamber tombs without repositories. While most eighth- to sixth-century tombs consisted of a single chamber, most tombs in *all* periods featured a single chamber. Individualized burial in a stone coffin and, I would add, inscriptions naming the deceased, certainly celebrated the individual, but the miniscule number in ninth- to seventh-century Jerusalem and seventh-century Gibeon represent the exception to the rule rather than the general demise of a lineage-based social structure.[19] Multiple burials in tombs, presumably of family members, persisted as the norm throughout the Iron Age, despite national initiatives to centralize power at the expense of the lineages and cultic legislation to curtail the cult of the dead.

In conclusion, with all the usual caveats, twelfth- and eleventh-century highland settlers adopted the Bronze Age mode of burial in caves and rock-cut tombs. Following rural abandonment through large swaths of the highlands from the mid-twelfth to mid-eleventh century, the tenth-century population altered the form of burial to incorporate foreign features and invested greater resources in tomb execution and provisioning. This was particularly true for tombs in the Jerusalem vicinity and in towns through the Shephelah, the border zone between Judah and Philistia to the west. Based on burials, the Assyrian invasions may have hastened but did not initiate dramatic social change in Judah.[20] Multiple family burials, perpetuating the lineage and patrimonial claim, continued throughout the life of the kingdoms. Finally, tombs with their dead help bring ancient Israel to life and suggest that the tenth century was a formative period of Israel's cultural and social identity.

18. Halpern's few examples of burials with one hundred or more individuals demonstrating clan fealty range in date from the Late Bronze Age through the seventh century and are situated outside the Israelite heartland. B. Halpern, "Jerusalem and the Lineages in the Seventh Century BCE: Kingship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability," in *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel* (ed. B. Halpern and D. Hobson; JSOTSup 124; Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1991), 11–107; idem, "Sybil or the Two Nations? Archaism, Kinship, Alienation and the Elite Redefinition of Traditional Culture in Judah in the 8th–7th Centuries B.C.E.," in *The Study of the Ancient Near East in the Twenty-First Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference* (ed. J. Cooper and G. Schwartz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 291–338.

19. Bloch-Smith, "Life in Judah," 128.

20. Ibid., 128–29.

Indexes

Index of References

INDEX OF AUTHORS

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